

CONNECTING

Healthy Information from the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center  July / August 2004

Creativity: The Playful, Healing Spirit

We are all creative beings, but sometimes as we grow up, we “forget.” For many adults, creativity is buried under daily activities and responsibilities. Stress begins to wear away the sense of playfulness that brings pleasure and meaning to life, resulting in depression and anxiety. Or perhaps for some adults, early trauma has kept them from ever being able to fully develop their creative, playful selves.

D.W. Winnicott, a British psychoanalyst, said, “It is in playing and only in playing that the child *or adult* is able to be creative and use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self . . .”¹ Accessing our creativity, our capacity to play, can put us on the path to wholeness and healing.

In order to play, we must be able to step outside of ourselves and let go of our egos; this allows us the freedom to experiment and explore. Because creativity can be messy, we need to be able to give ourselves permission to “mess up” or “make a mess.” Not recognizing and nurturing our creative spirit can result in a fear of failure and a fear of attempting new things.

There are many things that call forth our creativity; however, tragedy and suffering seem to elicit a great deal of creative expression. Art is a way of communicating deep emotion when words may not be possible or don’t seem enough. Words may need to be set to music, or a vision may need to be painted, or an encounter may need to be reenacted in a play, because just to *speak* words doesn’t go deep enough to get to the level of feeling or meaning. Words can be similarly inadequate in therapy, in processing human events or emotions.

Engaging our creativity sparks a process that is healing. While we are creating something, we are re-creating ourselves. Mari Messer, author of [Pencil Dancing: New Ways to Free Your Creative Spirit](#), says creativity is “a dance between conscious and unconscious, creator and critic, left brain and right brain . . .”²

When we can get ego out of the way so that the playfulness of creative spirit can take over, we are utilizing the unconscious parts of our mind and allowing these to communicate with our conscious self. Therapeutically, when we can make known to ourselves what lies within, healing takes place. Through the act of creating something as a form of emotional expression, pent-up feelings and long-forgotten images can be externalized as a way of acknowledging them and letting them go.

My work with clients consists of assisting them in finding, or reconnecting, with their playful, creative, healing self. Usually this work involves traveling through the pain of trauma, loss, grief, and/or stress. That journey is often facilitated by symbolic expression. When we were children and before we developed spoken language, we had symbolic language. A child’s special blanket, for example, became a symbol for the comfort of the mother when she couldn’t be there immediately to fulfill needs. This “transitional object” allowed the child to be comforted until the mother could attend to his/her needs. With the use of art materials, clients are able to find and understand their own symbolic language, enabling them to understand what their unconscious process is trying to tell them. Adult symbolic language, uncovered through creative expression, can touch on early experiences for which the client has no words.

There is healing in our creative spirit. Healing happens when we are able to allow ourselves to be playful, to embrace silliness and curiosity. Healing happens when we allow ourselves to forget what we know in order to see what is beyond consciousness. There is healing when we begin to see our everyday world as though seeing it for the first time. It is when we approach creation with awe that we are able to experience our own truly creative response to the world and events around us.

Rebecca Kemble, M.S., A.T.R.

Becky Kemble is a licensed mental health counselor and a registered art therapist. She provides counseling to individuals, families, and couples at the Center’s West Des Moines office.

¹ Davis, Madeleine and Wallbridge, David, [Boundary and Space](#) (London, England: Karnac Books, Ltd., 1981)

² Messer, Mari, [Pencil Dancing: New Ways to Free Your Creative Spirit](#) (Cincinnati, OH: Walking Stick Press, 2001)

C.O.O.L. Corner

Children Overcoming the Obstacles of Life

Words are not the only, nor necessarily the best way to express feelings. The following are ways ART is used as a medium for expressing feelings at C.O.O.L. (Children Overcoming the Obstacles of Life), our department for children and adolescents:

- ▶ Creating an animal collage to represent family relationships
- ▶ Identifying color codes for feelings (e.g., "What color is your heart feeling today?")
- ▶ Drawing an animal or other picture that represents your feelings
- ▶ Throwing paint at the paint wall as a physical expression of the heart
- ▶ Writing poems, stories, and developing other written expressions
- ▶ Dancing and moving to express feelings
- ▶ Using drawings to create boundaries/containment for "out of control" feelings
- ▶ Constructing feeling boxes (e.g., for worries, treasures, holding, safe place, self)
- ▶ Creating your world with toys and objects in the sand tray

Ministry Resource Center

Dianne Christopher

The Ministry Resource Center of the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center provides a variety of opportunities for professional support and instruction to clergy and ministering professionals. The Center evaluates clergy candidates, consults with congregations, clergy, and staff regarding collegial relationships and personal spiritual growth issues, and offers an extensive list of topics for adult education programs within congregations. The Center is broadening its ability to respond to ministering needs and to explore new offerings by affiliating with the team of Rev. Dianne Christopher, M.A., and Rev. Diane Mitchell, M.A., conflict ministry intervention specialists and Intentional Interim Ministry trainers and practitioners. They have over 20 years of experience within the institutional church, serving clients nationwide. Consultations and further information can be obtained through Eileen Burtle at the Center (274-4006).



Diane Mitchell

Healing Touch Therapy

Center staff share a deep respect for the complex integration of mind, body, and spirit that exists within all persons. This shared holistic premise provides the foundation for the Center's approach to offering hope and healing through counseling services. Healing Touch Therapy is one of our holistic healing approaches. Healing Touch is a type of alternative healing using hands-on and energy-based techniques to balance and align the human energy field that integrates and connects mind, body, spirit. Healing Touch is gentle, respectful, and non-invasive. We have found Healing Touch to be helpful in the treatment of chronic pain, chronic and terminal illness, and other bodily disorders. It also offers effective support for persons experiencing grief, depression, and a variety of emotional or spiritual crises.

For additional information on healing touch, check out an article published in a recent edition of *Spirituality & Health*: www.spiritualityhealth.com/newsh/items/article/item_8412.html.

To find out more about Healing Touch at the Center, contact Kathy Reardon at the Center (274-4006).

Pastoral Care Specialists Program 2004-05

The Ministry Resource Center of Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center is once again proud to offer this two-year program of professional development and renewal. The Pastoral Care Specialist Program is designed for pastors, chaplains, and other persons involved in ministries of pastoral care. Participants meet monthly to learn about areas critical to effective pastoral care, and for support, encouragement, and consultation on their work. Participants can solidify what they already do well and integrate new knowledge and skills into their ministries. Seminar topics vary each year.

The program begins the second Tuesday of September (September 14, 2004) and runs through the second Tuesday of June (June 14, 2005). Participants meet from 8:45 am to noon. Tuition for the program is \$500 for each of the two years. The deadline for registrations is August 25th; registration is limited to a total of 8 persons each year.

For those who qualify, this program is designed to meet some of the requirements for certification by the American Association of Pastoral Counselors as a Pastoral Care Specialist. Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary also offers academic credit for participation in the program for those enrolled in its Doctor of Ministry Program in Theology and Leadership.

For additional information, contact J. Jeffrey Means, Ph.D., Director of Professional Education, at (515) 274-4006 or check our website, www.dmpcc.org/classes/classes.html.



Pastoral Care Specialists Spring 2004

Successfully completing the Pastoral Care Specialist Program in June 2004 were:

- ~ Pamela Avaux, Care Ministry Director, Lutheran Church of Hope, West Des Moines
- ~ Reverend Carl Fulk, Slater, IA

Testimonials of previous graduates:

"The classes are an opportunity to discuss ministry frustrations with colleagues outside your regular circle."

"I looked forward every month to the intellectual stimulation and support."



MANifest:
A Gathering of Men
Sharing the Masculine Journey

With societal changes in male roles, men often find themselves struggling for a foothold, sensing that something is missing from their lives. MANifest is a program for men facilitated by male counselors, built around weekend retreats and Saturday workshops. MANifest is for men of all ages and from every walk of life.

MANifest Weekend

September 10 – 12, 2004

5:00 p.m. Friday – Noon Sunday

Men may talk easily about work, sports, and politics, but there are few opportunities for men to talk about their journey as a man. Manifest weekends provide opportunity for this discussion. Manifest weekends offer fresh approaches and explore the latest findings regarding male role changes, masculine nature/nurture needs, and how these impact men growing up and maturing in American society.

Retreats are held in a rustic outdoor setting that provides a sense of connection with nature. Retreats are limited to 12 participants to provide optimal interaction. The weekend is open to any interested man. Lowell Houts, D.Min., and Mike Sears, Ed.D., will facilitate the weekend. The cost for the entire weekend is \$175 (includes lodging and 5 meals). Early bird registration on or before August 27, 2004, is \$150. Call the Center to pre-register (274-4006) or e-mail info@dmpcc.org.

MANifest Workshops

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| Men and their Fathers | October 16, 2004 | Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. |
| Men and Sex | November 6, 2004 | Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. |
| Male/Female Communication | January 15, 2005 | Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. |

Look for more information about the workshops in upcoming newsletters, or check our website, www.dmpcc.org/support/support.html.

Mark Your Calendar! Defeat Autism Now! Presentation

Tuesday, September 21, 2004
7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center is bringing to Des Moines, James F. Murphy, Jr., D.O., of Cornerstone Progressive Health, Omaha, NE, to discuss the latest developments in treating autism and related neurological disorders. Watch the next newsletter for more specific information.

Interactional Group Counseling Theory and Practice A Ten-Week Course



Debbie Reed

Dates: September 17, 2004 – November 19, 2004
Time: Fridays, 8:15-10:45 a.m.
Location: Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center
Cost: \$300 plus optional text
Registration Deadline: September 3, 2004
Instructor: Debbie Reed, Ed.D., L.M.H.C.

This course is designed to introduce participants to the theory and principles of group counseling and group leadership as advocated by Irvin Yalom, M.D., and Gerald Corey, Ed.D. Because group counseling addresses psychopathology as it is manifested in difficulties with interpersonal behavior, this course will address how group counseling accomplishes change towards healthier interactive styles.

Participants will explore the interplay of therapeutic process and group leadership skills in facilitating growth of group members. Participants will learn the skills and responsibilities of the group leader across various stages of group development. Participants will practice the application of group leadership technique while co-facilitating, with faculty supervision, a small-group session. Participants will also gain experiential understanding of what it is like to be a group member.

The course will be particularly relevant for therapists who are interested in learning a prototypic model of interactive group therapy that can be applied to a variety of client populations.

Debbie Reed, Ed.D., L.M.H.C., earned her doctoral degree in counselor education from Drake University. Debbie's group counseling experience includes work with survivors of incest/sexual abuse and with cancer survivors.

The Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center is an Iowa Board of Social Work Examiners approved provider #0087 and Iowa Board of Behavioral Science Examiners approved provider #AS98-13. This course is approved for 25 hours of continuing education credit. To register, call (515) 274-4006 or e-mail info@dmpcc.org.

Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation

The Center's Foundation was created to ensure that the Center will continue to be able to offer the hope and healing available through counseling to any who are struggling with the challenges of life. If you or someone you know has benefited from or been comforted by the services of the Center's fine staff, won't you consider a gift that will make that same benefit and comfort available to those who come after you? We encourage you to consider a planned gift to the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation.

Contact Kathleen Murrin at the Center for further information.

Connecting Available Through E-mail

Please let us know if you would like to receive this newsletter by e-mail rather than having a paper copy sent to you. To be added to our newsletter e-mail list, contact info@dmpcc.org and indicate in your message that you would like to receive *Connecting* by e-mail. Make sure to include the name and street address to which we have been mailing the newsletter so that we can remove your name from our newsletter postal list. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader (free software) to access the newsletter by e-mail.

You Can Make a Difference

Access to quality affordable counseling at critical moments in people's lives can mean so much. Your monetary gift to the Center can help individuals and families, less fortunate and with fewer resources than you, to afford the counseling that is needed during times of extreme stress or crisis. Over 50% of the Center's clients are on a sliding scale fee structure. This is possible thanks, in part, to the generosity of the contributors (see insert listing 2003 Contributors).

In the words of one of our clients who benefits from our counseling assistance fund, "In this time of decreased resources and increased needs, I urge you to recognize and celebrate the powerful healing process the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center offers to people." Please take time today to send a gift. You really can make a difference.

www.dmpcc.org

Visit the Center's website for more information on the Center's Counseling services and staff, special events and classes.

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is a publication of the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center; an independent, interfaith, not-for-profit organization. For over 30 years, the Center has been providing counseling and educational services to adults, families, adolescents, and children for the purpose of enhancing emotional, spiritual, and relationship health. The Center has satellite offices in West Des Moines, Altoona, Ankeny, and Urbandale.
Editor: Kathleen Murrin

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Des Moines Pastoral

**Counseling
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