

CONNECTING

Healthy Information from the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center  September/October 2008

Tough Times Take Their Toll on Mental Health

There is a strong connection between the economy and mental health. The pressure created by the state of the economy increases the levels of anxiety, stress, and depression among the general population. People feel inadequate and helpless about being able to solve their problems. They are plagued by worry, anxiety, insecurity, and pessimism about the future. They are often angry and irritable, or withdrawn and fearful. Historically, rates of depression and suicide tend to climb during times of economic uncertainty.

What can people do during these challenging times to help themselves deal with their stressful situations? Some suggestions follow.¹



How to help yourself

- Slow down. Hurrying, especially around one's children, is almost always counterproductive and stress producing. Try to be mindful of your pace throughout the day. Clear your mind by taking time to meditate, pray or just sit quietly. Reduce excess muscle tension by using relaxation exercises.
- Be mindful of the power in the present moment. Taking a breath, pausing, and paying attention to the moment you are in, is an ancient practice that can bring about emotional wellness.
- Move your body. Walk, run, swim, bike, dance, play tennis, mow the lawn. Endorphins released during exercise are natural mood enhancing chemicals. Even moderate exercise will help with worry, anxiety, and depression.
- Help someone less fortunate. Letting go of your self-focus and concentrating on the well being of another is one of the most powerful and healing things you can do.
- Moderate your lifestyle. Practice living on less and consuming less. So-called comfort foods and substances are expensive and unhealthy habits that do not help your mind-body-spirit to function at your best. Eat balanced meals, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly.

When you are taking care of yourself, then you can approach the reality of your circumstances with more equanimity. Find out where you stand and learn about implementing systems that can help you work toward getting

out of debt, saving money, and cutting costs. If you take even small steps, you're going to feel more in control of your finances.²

However, it is important to realize that there are a lot of feelings, including grief, involved in many of today's financial scenarios: loss of job, loss of income, loss of home, lack of financing for college, reduced assets, forestalled retirement, diminished nest egg. One of these scenarios is difficult enough; many families are facing several at a time. What adds to a sense of feeling overwhelmed is that the embarrassment, shame, or guilt that often surround money issues keep us from talking with anyone about them. The first step toward getting a handle on your finances can be opening up about them to someone you trust.³



When to consider professional help

Sometimes the stress, feelings, and/or grief may get so difficult and out of control that self-help isn't enough and you may need to seek professional help. The following symptoms⁴ may indicate a need for outside help:

- You are depressed. (Some signs are difficulty falling asleep, waking a lot in the night and too early in the morning or sleeping constantly; constant crying for no reason; skipping baths/showers; feeling numb as if you don't want to do anything; fatigue; unreasonable fears; inability to concentrate; change in appetite.)
- You hit, shove, kick your partner (or vice versa).
- You think of suicide.
- You over-react to little things.
- You discipline your child too harshly.
- You hear voices or see things.
- You consider separating from your partner because of problems.
- You feel overwhelmed by bills.
- You can think of nothing good to say about one of your children, or find yourself constantly down on a family member.
- You drink in the morning. You hide liquor so no one knows how much you're drinking. You have more than two or three drinks or beers almost every night. You get "mean" while drinking.

- You feel guilty, as though you aren't being a good parent to your kids.
- You feel you can't cope. You are "down" on yourself.
- You notice your child is starting to act out a lot, getting in trouble with the law, or acting "crazy."
- You find you're starting to lie to people about what happened to you or what you're doing. You start lying to yourself.
- You have attacks where you feel extremely panicky, have a high pulse rate and have difficulty breathing.

If these symptoms resonate with you, before your problems get too big to handle, call the Center. Our trained, skilled counselors can help you and your family cope with these tough times.

References

- ¹ Davis, John, LMHC. "Economic Uncertainty Takes a Toll on Mental Health." June 11, 2008. <http://www.prlog.org/10079070-economic-uncertainty-takes-toll-on-mental-health.html>
- ² Scott, Elizabeth. "Financial Stress – How It Affects You and What You Can Do." <http://stress.about.com/od/financialstress/a/financialstress.html>
- ³ Linder, Sarah. "Feeling financial anxiety? Take some steps in the right direction." August 31, 2008. <http://www.statesman.com/life/content/life/stories/other/08/31/0831guide.html>
- ⁴ University of Georgia. "Surviving Tough Times: Controlling Stress." <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/pubs/PDF/HACE-E-23-11.pdf>

Other

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Affect Regulation, Attachment and Trauma

A workshop by Pat Ogden, Ph.D., for mental health professionals of all skill levels

Co-sponsored by Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center and Department of Behavioral Medicine, Des Moines University (DMU)

In recent years, psychotherapy has begun to shift its emphasis from models of cognitive development to the significance of "affect" in an inter-subjective context. Psychotherapy is redefined as the "affect communicating cure" rather than the "talking cure" (Schoore, 2005).

This workshop will explore the nature of procedural learning, trauma- and attachment-related issues, and the interface between affect regulation, emotions, and the body. It will introduce and clarify non-verbal interventions that promote adaptive intimacy and affect regulation. It will highlight the use of directed mindfulness to enhance affect regulation and allow traumatized patients to address past events without becoming dysregulated.

Dr. Pat Ogden will explore theory and technique for working at the regulatory boundaries of the window of tolerance as the patient's arousal begins to challenge his or her integrative capacity. Interventions and concepts will be discussed and illustrated through lecture, video excerpts of sessions with patients, brief experiential exercises, and handouts.

Location: Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ • 4126 Ingersoll Ave. • Des Moines, IA

Date: Thursday, October 30, 2008

Times: 8:00am (registration), 8:30am-4:30pm workshop

Registration: \$135 if registered by 10/15/08; \$150 thereafter

Go to website to register: www.sensorimotorpsychotherapy.org

Local Contact: Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center, 515-274-4006 or info@dmpcc.org

Continuing Education Hours Offered: 6.00 hours, with full attendance required; CME credit will be provided by DMU



Pat Ogden, Ph.D., is the founder and director of the Sensorimotor Psychotherapy Institute, an internationally recognized school that specializes in training psychotherapists in somatic/cognitive approaches for the treatment of trauma, developmental and attachment issues. She is a co-founder of the Hakomi Institute, served on the faculty of The Naropa University in the Somatic Psychology and Contemplative Psychology departments from 1985 to 2005, and lectures internationally. As a pioneer in somatic psychotherapy and the treatment of trauma, she has 34 years experience working with individuals and groups. She is the first author of the groundbreaking book, *Trauma and the Body: A Sensorimotor Approach to Psychotherapy*, which was published in the fall of 2006 in the interpersonal neurobiology series of W.W.Norton and is in its second printing.

Welcoming New Staff to the Center



Jeneice Dickey, M.S.W.

Jeneice Dickey is a licensed master social worker. She holds undergraduate degrees in business administration and psychology from Iowa State University as well as a Master's degree in social work from the University of Iowa. Jeneice works with adults on a variety of issues including depression, anxiety, and marital and relational issues. With a special interest in personal growth and development, Jeneice enjoys helping clients embrace their authenticity and create lives that reflect their values and passions. She also has a special interest in working with couples, families and other social systems.



Nicole Kruger, Psy.D.

Nicole Kruger is a licensed psychologist. Nicole received her B.A. in psychology from Arizona State University, completed a psychology internship at Children's Hospital in Minneapolis, MN, and received her doctorate in psychology from the University of Denver. Nicole provides therapy to children of all ages, as well as to families and women. She specializes in the treatment of developmental disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, mood and anxiety disorders, parenting issues, and has training in psychological assessment. Nicole is currently seeing clients in the Center's C.O.O.L. (Children Overcoming the Obstacles of Life) program during evening and Saturday hours.

Our Mission

*To bring understanding,
hope and healing to
persons of all ages
through counseling
and education.*



Grace Percival appointed to Iowa Autism Council

The Center's lead child psychologist, Grace Percival, M.A., has been appointed by Governor Chet Culver to a 13-member Iowa Autism Council to study the unique needs of children and adults with autism spectrum disorders. The council will advise the state on the development of a coordinated support system to provide diagnostic, intervention and support services for individuals with varying severity levels of autism. The council will focus on addressing the unmet needs of individuals with autism, including: early identification and appropriate intervention, integration and coordination of support systems, general and special education services, in-home services, training, enhancement of community agency responsiveness, financing options, and data collection. Grace's term began 8/21/08 and will run through 4/30/10. Congratulations Grace!

Grace Percival joined the Center staff in 1999 and is one of the founders of the Center's C.O.O.L. program ~ Children Overcoming the Obstacles of Life ~ a safe and nurturing space within the Center for counseling youth ages 2 through 18.

An Early Autumn Day



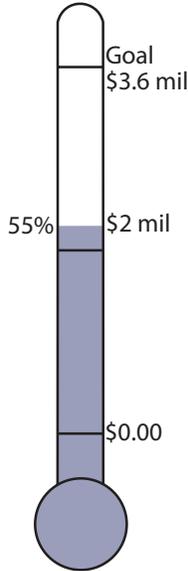
An early autumn day is a good time to notice and express gratitude for the blessing of lives lived in sunshine and in rain. Balance in nature, as in life, can sometimes be a delicate thing. A gift to the Center's annual fund drive can help restore balance to lives thrown out of kilter by circumstances and limited resources. Your generosity could help subsidize counseling for those who can't afford counseling at times when they need it. Send your tax-deductible gift to the Center or contact Kathleen Murrin at 274-4006.

Campaign for Hope and Healing

The Center's *Campaign for Hope and Healing* is our commitment to ensuring the community that the good work of the Center will grow to meet the increasing need for quality affordable counseling in a new permanent home for the Center.

Call Kathleen Murrin at the Center to request more information about the *Campaign for Hope and Healing* and/or a pledge card.

In these tough times, consider whether a significant gift to the *Campaign for Hope and Healing* could be beneficial to your year-end tax considerations.



Please let us know if you would like to receive this newsletter by e-mail notification rather than having a paper copy sent to you. Contact info@dmpcc.org and indicate you would like to receive *Connecting* by e-mail. Make sure to include your name and street address so we can remove you from the postal list. (You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader (free software) to access the newsletter by e-mail.)

If you would like to comment on the *Connecting* newsletter or have questions about the Center, please contact Kathleen Murrin at the Center, (515) 274-4006 or kmurrin@dmpcc.org.

Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation

Leaving a legacy is more than passing funds to the next generation. Leaving your legacy is also about an opportunity to send a message that reflects your values and continues your commitments. We encourage you to consider a bequest or planned gift to the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation. Contact Kathleen Murrin at the Center for further information.

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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