



The Counseling Center News

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TCC NEWS

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BIG HAPPENINGS AT TCC We are in the business of promoting personal growth, and we like to practice what we preach. You will notice signs of growth when you visit TCC. In January we were fortunate enough to acquire some additional office space in a newly renovated building right next door to our current offices. This new space has allowed Linda Beam, our newest staff addition, to have her own lovely office space. Wayne King, who had been making do with a very small office, now has a large office which is much more accommodating for the work he is doing. And, we have a large, open room that will be utilized for our group work, for yoga classes, and for meditation. We look forward to welcoming you at what we are calling “the annex,” at 606 East Joppa Road. Our first priority continues to

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The Dark Side of the Internet

By Wayne King

Some experts estimate that as many as nine million people are in need of intervention for Internet pornography addiction. These individuals have lost control over their behavior and find that they are spending more and more time in sexual chat rooms or in viewing pornographic images online. As they continue to engage in these behaviors, their real-life relationships begin to deteriorate, their job performance suffers, and they experience more and more guilt as they find themselves helpless to stop their behaviors.

The Internet provides an environment where anonymity, convenience, and escape can lead individuals to engage in increasingly deviant behaviors. The belief that one can be anonymous provides a measure of security in engaging in behavior they might otherwise engage in. Under the guise of anonymity, someone can engage in sex chat rooms or view pornographic images without letting their real identity be known. The Internet also offers convenient

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CBT Corner Part 3 – The Tyranny of the Shoulds

By Jim Gach

One of the basic tenants in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is the importance of the words that we use. The choice of words will, to an extent, determine our feeling state. It is thought that the use of the word *should* is the source of a great deal of human misery. Karen Horney, an early 20th century neo-Freudian, referred to “the tyranny of the shoulds” as the source of much neurotic behavior.

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When we say that something *should* be different than it is, we are in effect setting up an internal demand that reality be different than it is - that's crazy since it is a denial of reality. In fact, we can clearly show that everything and everyone is exactly as it should be. The reason that anything exists, whether it is good or bad, is that all of the necessary pre-conditions for it to be exactly the way it is have been met - or it would be different. Therefore, everything is as it should be. And that is acceptance of reality.

You might say, “but Jim, what if the way things are is not good?” That may well be the case but demanding that we or the world should be different will not change anything but will leave you angry or depressed. Angry if you demand that others or the world should be different. And, depressed if you insist that you should be different. Some level of emotion will help you to rally the effort to try to change things. However, as I described in a previous column, we are prone to overreacting and thus frequently end up to angry or depressed to accomplish anything.

The path out of this dilemma is to accept that things are the way they are. We may *prefer* or *desire* that they be different. And, we can work at changing some things in the future but we had best start by accepting things they way they are and work forward from there.

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be personal care for our individual clients. We are happy to offer the benefits that mind-body practices such as yoga and meditation can contribute to wellness for our clients. We are also looking forward to offering more group learning opportunities.

Consider visiting the new location any Wednesday beginning March 21st for Meditation from 8:00-8:30am, or for yoga class 11:30-12:30. Call 410 583 7443 to inquire.

Transforming Relationships through Listening

By Terry McGeehan, LCPC

Listening with the intent of transforming a relationship is a radical act that not only enhances the quality of the relationship and promotes collaboration but it improves the thinking and creativity of the participants. Most people think they listen well, but they rarely do. The pace of our day-to-day lives and the numerous commitments and responsibilities that fill each day create a sense of urgency and “tunnel vision” to get things done. We often become defensive because we feel vulnerable and exhausted. Interactions can become more about getting what we need than about communing with one another. Conversations are characterized by interrupting, finishing the speakers sentences, thinking the other's perceptions or feelings are “wrong” or offering solutions and advise before we have really understood the speaker.

Most of us know what we need to do... and if someone would just listen, really listen, we might be able to figure it out for ourselves! **Listening** requires temporarily suspending the expression of our own thoughts, feelings and beliefs. In fact, during deep listening, we may not be even aware of our thoughts, feelings and beliefs because we are completely absorbed in listening. How is this possible? What are the key elements of great listening? Think **AWARE**. An **Attitude of Wonder** in which we embody childlike curiosity, “It is amazing how s/he thinks.” “I wonder what s/he will say next?” “I can't wait to observe how it all turns out!” The image of an adoring grandparent may be helpful. **Attention** that is undivided, opens us to perceiving with our whole being, our ears, our eyes, our hearts, and our minds. We receive all that the speaker is expressing and can hold that information like a mirror holds an image. This way of listening improves the quality of the speakers thinking! **Respect** allows us to hold the information, the thoughts, feelings and images objectively, without judgment and without agenda. This is an act of compassion for the human condition. We are all perfectly imperfect! **Ease**... creating a space in time that is indulgent, that says, “we have all the time we need” and “nothing could be more important than what you have to say.”

Creating this kind of time actually saves time because it enhances relationship, promotes better thinking and encourages a willingness to collaborate in problem solving. Listening well, deep abiding listening, can transform the speaker, the listener and the relationship.

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access to a world of sexual images and fantasies never before imaginable. Almost any sexual interest or perversion can be explored from the computer. To the sexual addict, this often means pursuing more and more explicit images or becoming more and more engaged in sexual chat rooms. Finally, the Internet provides a means of escape. The Internet provides an environment where someone could get lost in his or her online activities. Hours can go by as they click from one site to another. So, anonymity, convenience, and escape are factors in the Internet environment that can contribute to cybersex addiction. What about the factors in the individual who becomes addicted to Internet pornography?

Paul Simpson, Ed.D. has identified seven motivators for compulsive sexual behavior: excitement, comfort, escape, affirmation, power, revenge, and helplessness. A person motivated by excitement participates in increasingly risky behavior, such as viewing pornography where he or she might be caught or becoming more engaged in potentially dangerous online relationships. People motivated by comfort and escape compulsively act out to combat stress or boredom. Affirmation and power are motivators that address needs such as feeling worthwhile or in control. Many who are motivated by revenge have been abused or hurt in some way and use compulsive sexual behavior as a way to get back. The person motivated by helplessness feels he or she has no power over the compulsive behavior and “gives in” to the addiction.

Identifying a person's motivation for compulsively acting out and learning new ways to meet those needs are the major components of treatment. **TCC will soon be offering a group to explore these issues.**

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In addition, to *should*, you might want to be cautious of its siblings: *must*, *ought*, *got to*, and *supposed to*. Here are some substitutes that will help you stay more rational, using preferential words, rather than demanding ones. Instead of the “*should*, *must*, *ought*” words, try, “*It would be better if*”, “*I would prefer it if*”, or “*I would rather it be.*”

It is helpful to try to stay away from perfectionistic and demanding ways of thinking. Strive for more flexible ways of seeing the world. Despite the fact that we may desire the world or others to be better or the best they can be, humans are not required to be their best and many conditions exist that are far from ideal.

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As always, we invite you to continue to dialogue with us about our newsletter. We appreciate your feedback.

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