

## Abuse in Relationships

Relationships change and evolve. Some start healthy and then become abusive. Others have always been abusive and then get worse. Many times women find themselves in an abusive relationship. If you are in such a relationship right now, we encourage you to see a counsellor as soon as possible. Please call us.

Please ✓ the characteristics that apply to your current relationship.

- He has limited or no social network. You are the closest person he knows.
- He is very jealous and possessive of you.
- He tends not to trust other people and can be very suspicious of you and of others.
- He has low self-esteem and low self-confidence but many people may not be aware of this.
- He tends to express all his negative feelings by getting angry; verbally as well as physically.
- He gets his needs met by controlling you through threats, put downs, degrading comments, insults or violence, etc.
- He can be very pleasant and friendly outside of the home; yet he is very mean and cruel at home.
- He is very emotionally dependent on you.
- He is subject to depression and/or frequent mood swings, that is known only to you or other close family members.
- He often holds traditional stereotyped views on male and female roles and relationships.
- He can be frequently demanding and/or assaultive in sexual behaviour.
- He minimizes or denies his own abusive behaviour.

Do you recognize any of these characteristics in your partner? Is there a pattern of behaviour that has developed over time? Do these characteristics seem very familiar to you? If so, know that help is available from us and from many other organizations that specialize in abuse. Get the help you need today. If you are a man who shows characteristics that are abusive, take responsibility and obtain the help you need. Call us.

## Managing Work Stress

Five Quick Tips to Leaving Your Work at Work

1. Use your car or other mode of transportation as your 'decompression chamber'. Put on music you enjoy on your ride home, have comfort smells or tastes present, set comfortable temperatures, have comfort pictures hanging from rearview mirror, etc. Buy a coffee or a tea on the way home from work.
2. Change out of your work clothes into your comfortable home clothes immediately.
3. Take a short 2-5 minute (or longer if you wish) warm shower to 'wash off' the stress as soon as you get home.
4. Immediately put your purse, bag, briefcase, laptop or knapsack in a closet, cupboard or other storage places away from sight.
5. Spend your first 15-30 minutes doing something fun and /or lighthearted before you start your busy routine. ie. Play with the kids, have a healthy snack, watch a comedy or other favorite program, read a magazine, book, newspaper, go for a walk, jog or hike, etc.

## Quick Parenting Tip

A simple, yet very effective, tip in raising children is to lower your voice. Using a calmer, cooler and softer voice will produce more positive results versus a raised, loud or yelling voice. Lowering your voice will reduce your stress, your children's stress and will also promote more positive feelings between you and your children. Additionally, it's a great skill to model for your children.

"Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you too can become great."

Mark Twain

## Goodbye to...

Kim Penwarden and best wishes in your new ventures.

### The Lidkea, Stob, Venema & Associates' Family Counselling Team

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## From the 'Waiting Room' to the 'Living Room'

Many people wait for something from their parents that they may never receive. Some people wait for their father and/or their mother to affirm them, validate them, approve of them, spend time with them, show interest in them or tell them that they love them, etc. Many people consciously or unconsciously put their emotional health and well-being on hold while they wait for their parent(s) to be the kind of parent(s) that they have always wanted and needed. Often this can be a very long and difficult wait.

Some wait and hope that their father and/or mother will have some kind of break-through or breakdown and change. Some look for any small change that is positive. Some people still wait for this to happen when their parents are already well into their sixties, seventies or eighties. Sometimes change does indeed happen, but many times it does not.

Some of our parents just do not have the emotional, social intellectual or spiritual capacity to parent us the way that we would have liked. They never have and they never will. Some may be too self absorbed, too distracted, too emotionally

frozen, too angry, too nasty, too difficult, too bitter or too addicted, etc. There may be many reasons why they are the way they are. On some occasions, parents may get worse as they age.

Stop waiting. Don't put your own health and well being on hold as you wait. Choose to be healthy and well in all the various areas of your life. Obtain the support and assistance you need now. Go for counseling and find good friends and healthy family members to support and nurture you. Develop and nurture a strong, healthy spiritual faith. Be your own best nurturer, parent and friend, and live life to the fullest. It's time to step out of the 'waiting room' and into the 'living room'.

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"You will never find time for anything. If you want time you must make it." Charles Buxton

## Social Phobia Quiz

Check out your knowledge on social phobia.

### CIRCLE TRUE OR FALSE

1. Social phobia involves intense anxiety and excessive self-consciousness in everyday social situations. **TRUE FALSE**
2. People with social phobia have an intense and often persistent fear of being looked at and judged by other people, and of being embarrassed or humiliated by their actions. **TRUE FALSE**
3. For some people with social phobia their fear may be so intense that it interferes with their work, school, social and other activities. **TRUE FALSE**
4. People with social phobia sometimes experience anxiety in just one type of situation, ie. public speaking, eating in front of other people, socializing with people, engaging in small talk, or anytime they are around other people. **TRUE FALSE**
5. Some people with social phobia often "self medicate" with alcohol and/or street drugs to help them cope. **TRUE FALSE**

Questions 1-5 are all true. Social phobia is very common and often begins in childhood or adolescence. Depression and low self esteem often co-occur. Social phobia can be treated successfully with cognitive behaviour therapy and/or medication.

## Sweet Dreams

We all require a good sleep to help us function at our best, physically, emotionally and intellectually. With today's busy lifestyles it's more important than ever to obtain good quality sleep. Here are some helpful tips.

- Avoid all forms of caffeine such as coffee, tea, cola and chocolate several hours before bedtime.
- Gently prepare for sleep by slowly relaxing as the evening progresses, turn down lights, play soft music, avoid over stimulating television, news or movies, meditate, take a warm bath or shower, drink warm milk.
- Have a consistent bedtime and rising time routine.
- Cooling down your body temperature will encourage better sleep.
- Don't use bedtime as worry time. Keep a worry journal or workbook and record your thoughts, concerns and feelings earlier in the evening or afternoon. Play soothing soft music or have white noise in the background in your bedroom.

## Did You Know?

- That as the days get darker earlier in the Fall and then get really dark in the middle of winter, most of us are not producing enough serotonin, the neurotransmitter in our brain that makes us feel happy, content and positive. Increase the amount of sunlight or other healthy light producing options and keep your serotonin levels and mood boosted through the Fall and right through the Winter.
  - That when men are persistently stressed it suppresses their sex drive. Elevated stress levels increase the levels of the stress hormone cortisone. This in turn reduces the production of testosterone. Simply put, interest in sex is lost. More reason than ever to manage and reduce stress! (source - The Cortisone Connection, Shawn Talbot PHD)
  - That in recent studies done by the Universities of Chicago, Harvard and Duke, loneliness in people over age 50 was linked with increased risk of high blood pressure. The research showed the importance of social connectedness to physical health and well-being as we age. "As we get older, friends and family move away, retire, become ill and die, so there needs to be a constant replenishment of social relationships", says Richard Suzman of the National Institute of Aging. Helpful information and helpful advice.
  - That depression in women often occurs during periods of hormonal changes such as prior to menses, immediately after pregnancy and during or shortly after menopause. For example post partum depression is associated with low levels of estrogen and is seen in 10% of new mothers and is still present 6 months later in 30% of them.
- Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) is considered to be a very severe form of premenstrual syndrome that affects about 5% of women of reproductive age. The symptoms include depressions, anxiety, irritability and moodiness.

### The Better Half



"Anxiety didn't interfere with my sleep last night. Now I've got 8 hours of worrying to catch up!"

## Dear Counselor...

Our friends Tim and Linda split up last year after a fifteen year marriage. Not only have they been our friends for the past 10 years, they also lived only one block away from us so we saw them very frequently. To say their separation has been messy and rocky would be an understatement. Fortunately, there are no children involved. We still visit with each of them separately as we are trying to be supportive and not take sides. When Tim and Linda do come over individually, the one always 'trash talks' the other. This 'trash talk' is very mean-spirited and ugly, and it makes us both very uncomfortable. We are both getting very frustrated as to what to do and we now find ourselves starting to avoid both of them. Do you have any suggestions for us?

### Signed, Frustrated Friends

### Dear Frustrated Friends,

The situation you find yourself in with Tim and Linda is very common, whereby friends and family get caught in the "crossfire" of a messy and difficult separation and divorce. Very often it does appear like the couple does indeed now hate each other.

Many times friends and family try to be supportive as well as neutral to both parties in a separating and/or divorce, with the end result being where you find yourself – stuck right smack in the middle of their mess. It is often thought that support means we must completely and blindly endorse and agree with every thought or opinion. This is not what true support is. Support is encouragement, hope and assistance in looking at healthy choices and options. It sounds like its time to set some clear boundaries and limits with both Tim and with Linda. People tend to withdraw and avoid when they feel they have no other options and choices, which may be the feelings you have had recently.

Here are some options and choices to consider:

1. Sit down with each of them individually and inform them that they are both equally important to each of you and that you will no longer listen to the trash talking of the other.
2. Advise them that your new stance is in your best interests as well as theirs, as it appears that they both may be stuck in the "anger stage" of grieving and loss. Advise them as good friends that the two of you want and need to move on. Inform them that you want to support them and not enable them to remain 'stuck' as unhappy and angry.
3. Advise each of them to seek out other alternatives: individual counselling, group counseling, exercise, new hobbies, interest, etc.

## Our Picks

We have some great book selections for you again in this newsletter. Three of our counsellors have recommended books they believe will be very beneficial to you and family or friends. Books such as these are a great way to help you learn how to live life more fully and completely. They can sometimes be used in combination with personal counselling and/or family counselling. Enjoy our picks.

Title of Book:

### **The Mindful Way through Depression. Freeing Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness**

Author: Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal and Jon Kabat-Zinn

Publisher: The Guilford Press 2007

ISBN 13: 978-1-59385 128-6

ISBN 10: 598 35 128-6 includes CD

Recommended by Alex Carter MSW

Title of Book:

### **The Hard Questions – 100 Essential Questions to Ask Before You Say "I Do"**

Author: Susan Piver

Publisher: Tarcher/Putman 2000

ISBN: 1-58542-004-2

Recommended by Lorraine Arbuckle MSW

Title of Book:

### **Learned Optimism How to Change Your Mind and Your Life**

Author: Martin E.P. Seligman PHD

Publisher: Vintage Books, Random House 2006

ISBN: 10-1-4000 7839 3

Recommended by Len Dykstra MSW RSW

4. Suggest activities with each person whereby you can spend time together engaged in healthy activities. Ie. Sports, projects, games, travelling, etc.

5. Advise each of them to seek out other alternatives ie, individual counselling, group counseling, exercise, new hobbies, interest, etc.

Hopefully each and both of them will come on board with you. If they choose not to, then you must accept their choice. You, however, must remind them that you will not choose to go back to the stage everyone was at in the first year. Best wishes,

**Sincerely, Counselor**