

Upside Down, Inside Out

Understanding the Grieving Process

The grieving process may perhaps be the most difficult and powerful experience you will ever go through in life. When grief occurs, it can turn your life as you know it, upside down and inside out. The following information will help you understand the grieving process. It is:

A natural reaction to a significant loss of any kind

A deep and intense sorrow and pain

A mixture of thoughts, feelings and sensations

A necessary, yet often extremely difficult process for working through the losses that occur in our lives.

A process of healing; of rearranging and reshaping our lives, our values and our beliefs

A part of being human

Unique to each person and each family member

When experiencing grief, be patient with yourself; accept the intensity and range of feelings, take care of yourself; seek help from sympathetic friends and family. When necessary, seek help through counselling.

Welcome To:

- Kimberley Gunning
- Bob Gilmore
- Michelle McPherson
- Clair Jutras
- John McLachlan

Goodbye and best wishes to:

Ena Koole-Vandezande

Margaret Muir

Great Parenting Tips

Here are five parenting tips to help you towards raising great kids:

1. Provide unconditional love and acceptance. Create a home where there is an atmosphere of care, love, support, warmth, nurturance and connectedness. Say "I love you" often. Show it even more. Do not shame or humiliate your children.

2. Provide clear structure. Have clear and consistent rules and guidelines, as to what is expected behaviour for all family members. Have set routines and responsibilities (i.e..) bedtimes, mealtimes, calling when late etc.

3. Teach thinking skills. Encourage your children to think for themselves, to consider options and choices. Encourage them to ask questions and to ponder things.

4. Teach optimism. Encourage and model a sense of hope for the present and for the future. Optimism provides the immunity for anxiety, stress and depression in childhood, adolescence, and in adulthood. Encourage enthusiasm and creativity in working through difficulties. Avoid pessimism.

5. Teach nutrition, exercise, sleep, relaxation and rest. Teach children to care for their bodies and minds. Encourage a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Children today are very vulnerable to health concerns due to unhealthy lifestyles.

Location Change

Our Beamsville office has moved to 4438 Ontario Street, #201.

Reminder: We have one central number for all our offices: 905-684-5050. Our toll free number is 1-866-684-5050.

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

Partners: John Stob, MSW RSW and Thomas Venema, MSW RSW. **Our retired partner:** William Lidkea, MSW RSW

Our Associates:

Alice Carter BA MSW
Len Dykstra MSW RSW
Judy Cook BA MEd
John McLachlan MSW
Sue Mahaffey MSW RSW

Kimberley Gunning BSW MSW
Diana Cunningham BA MA
George Nicolaidi BA MEd
Diane Keenan MSW RSW
Catherine Doan MSW RSW

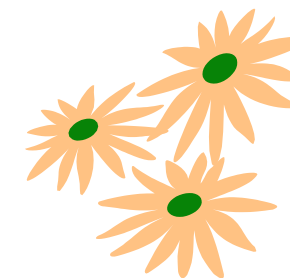
Sherry Campbell MA RSW
Bruce Murray BA MASc
Mary Gostlow MSW RSW
Ruth Beekhuis MSW RSW
Claire Jutras MSW RSW
Michelle McPherson MSW RSW
Bob Gilmore BA MASc

Our secretary/receptionist: Anne Kennedy
Our office manager: Debbie Ecker
Our statistician: Cheryl Heaslip

* RSW indicates Registered Social Worker with the Ontario College of Social Service Workers and Social Workers. All associates are registered with a professional organization assuring a Code of Ethics is in place.

Lidkea, Stob, Venema & ASSOCIATES

FAMILY COUNSELLING SERVICES



Employee Assistance Program Newsletter

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Spring/Summer 2006

Different Seasons, Different Opportunities

The time for enjoying that extra injection of sunshine, fresh air, and the outdoors is back! Because it is a new and different season, an adjustment to new opportunities is also required. It's a very rare occasion that any Canadian resents the arrival of spring and summer.

Like the differences in seasons, our life journey is also packed with the challenges of dealing with differences. It is an interesting process, in our daily interactions, to do an inventory of our own thought patterns in this regard. Do we embrace differences? Do we view them as an expanding of our own horizons, or do we resent differences? Is it difficult for us to respect the opinions of others? Do we get defensive, upset, or feel the need to win or impose our own views of the "truth"? Do we react with anxiety, distrust, or resentment towards people of different ethnic backgrounds, different dress, different food choices, different traditions etc.? Are we most comfortable with our own rituals and are therefore rigid in maintaining our own ways?

What is our own personal success in accepting and resolving differences? Do we know how to listen without judgement, or do we feel the need to correct others who hold different values and beliefs? A little introspective inventory may be interesting for all of us from time to time. Failure to do so may actually sabotage our own happiness and hinder a sense of closeness and peace with others.

But, back to summer; most of us do not tend to differ in the sense of freedom and pleasure we experience with a warm weekend breeze on our faces. Enjoy the season!

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Don't be afraid your life will end, be afraid it will never begin.

Grace Hansen

Secrets to a Long Healthy Life

In recent years researchers have gone out across the world to find the secrets to a long life. The National Geographic recently highlighted the best practices of many of these seniors and discovered the following common practices of those who lived to a ripe old age.*

- Put family first
- Don't smoke
- Be active every day
- Be socially engaged
- Eat fruits, vegetables and whole grains

Simple, yet significant secrets to practice.

*Funded in part by the US National Institute on Aging

A Little Encouragement ...goes a long way

Getting along well with others includes being encouraging and supportive of others. Positive, healthy relationships are based on encouragement, support and recognition. If you want to connect in a more meaningful way with people, whether at work or at home, be more encouraging. Recognize people's efforts, strengths, value and importance. The following are helpful examples of encouragement statements:

1. "That's a great idea. Thanks for your input."
2. "You are doing really well. I'm very excited for you."
3. "You are definitely on the right track."
4. "You handled that situation beautifully."
5. "I really appreciate everything you've done."
6. "Thanks so much for your support and friendship."
7. "That was such a great job."
8. "I appreciate your company. Shall we set another time to get together?"
9. "That's a really unique perspective. I'd like to learn more."

I'm an optimist; it just doesn't make sense being anything else.

Sir Winston Churchill

Managing Change in the Workplace

1. Accept the fact that change is a part of life in today's modern world. Go with the change rather than resisting or challenging it.
2. Develop realistic expectations of what your work environment can do for you.
3. If you are able, try to be involved in the change making process at work.
4. Make the decision to not be drawn into negative and pessimistic attitudes and conversations.
5. Develop many healthy interests outside of work to enrich and fulfill your life.
6. Practice good stress management to help you cope with change and uncertainty.
7. Upgrade your education and practical skills thereby increasing your choices and options
8. Make the decision not to take the stress of change at work home with you. Learn to be flexible and resilient regarding change.
9. View change as natural and expected.

Stress Buster Tip

When you are frustrated, nervous, or angry, one very effective way to release pent-up emotional energy is through physical activity. Any vigorous exercise burns off excessive fuel, which can wear your energy system down. Activities such as walking, running, lifting weights, vacuuming, yard work, etc. can lead to the following benefits:

- Increased muscle strength
- Increased heart and lung capacity
- Improved sleep
- Increased motivation and concentration
- Higher stress tolerance
- Improved self confidence and self image

Exercise is one of the most effective ways to manage stress, and should be part of your regular routine. Make small, manageable steps to making exercise your number one stress buster.

Dear Counsellor

I am in my mid-thirties and have dated "Bill", age 40, for the past two years. We both were married before; myself for five years in my early twenties, and he for eight years until four years ago. I have no children and he has a daughter age 7 whom he sees on weekends.

Initially our relationship went really well; it was exciting and fun. However, over the last year he has become moody and sullen. He relies on me more and more and has few friends. He doesn't like my friends and he is very critical of my family. He says people cannot be trusted. Lately he's been very critical of me; afterwards he always apologizes. I can hardly stand this anymore. What should I do?

Signed: "Frustrated Girlfriend"

Dear "Frustrated Girlfriend",

There are many "red flags" in this relationship and you are very wise in seeking assistance. Book an appointment with a counsellor immediately for the two of you. If he won't agree to attend, then attend the session on your own.

The behavior you have described that Bill has displayed is serious and has serious implications. Perhaps he is depressed, perhaps he is showing abusive traits, or perhaps he is showing his "true colours" after two years. How is he with his daughter? Regardless of the reasons for his behaviour, your relationship is in trouble and you recognize that, and that is a very good sign. It is time to set some boundaries and limits to his behavior as to what is acceptable and not acceptable to you. A counsellor can help you explore all your options and choices. Listen to your feelings, trust them, and take your next step. Best wishes,

Signed, Counsellor

*"Perfection is the voice
of the oppressor..."
Anne Lamott*

Book Review

Title: Mind over Mood. Change How You Feel by Changing the Way You Think

Authors: Dennis Greenberger PhD
Christine A. Padesky PhD

Publisher: The Guilford Press; New York, New York. 1995

ISBN: 0-89862-128-3

Mind Over Mood is not only an excellent book, but also a helpful manual that beautifully connects both knowledge and skill application. The strategies described in this book will help you live your life better by improving your self esteem, your confidence, your relationship with others and yourself, your mood, as well as help you eliminate your fears and anxieties.

This book/manual combination is one of the most thorough resources available that is easy to read, easy to work through and can be done on your own and/or in consultation and support with a counsellor.

Mind Over Mood has relevant stories and examples, clear focused chapters, helpful hint sections, clear practical exercises and great chapter summaries. The authors' basic premise is that our "cognitions," that is our thoughts and our perceptions, have great influence over our moods and our view of our circumstances; past, present and future.

This book is a must-read and definitely deserves a four star rating.

Reviewed by Len Dykstra MSW RSW

