

Connections

The Newsletter of the Connections Program

A Partnership between the Health District of Northern Larimer County and SummitStone Health Partners

Four Basic Self-Calming Approaches for Children

Submitted by: Holly Shaw, PhD, RPT, LPC

Many of our child clients have never experienced moments in time when they felt calm, grounded, and centered. Or they have experienced those feelings only with others, so they do not believe that they can get to that state on their own. For those children, it becomes reflexive for them to always look outside themselves for something, or someone, to change their state. We can greatly empower our clients by helping them find a state of calmness within themselves. These methods can change a client's relationship to his or her own body, and body sensations, and are known as "bottom-up regulation" (Ogden 2006, Siegel 2010, van der Kolk 2014). They include awareness of calming activities, breathing patterns, and body sensations.

The Calming List for Home: One of the simplest, and most important tasks, is to have the child begin to identify *what is calming for them*. After making the list, the child can create a decorative box to keep it in, and continue to add to the list as they develop more skills. Some of the most common answers: sitting with a pet, getting fresh air outside, taking a cold drink, and listening to favorite songs.

The Calming Kit for School: Another activity is to help the child make a Calming Kit for school, to fit in a small box, fabric bag or zipper pouch. The kit should include *only items that work for that individual child*:

- Mini aromatherapy-bottle of favorite scent
- Squeeze stress ball, or texture ball
- Something cold to the touch (could be rubbing stone)
- Mints or gum of different flavors
- Reminder Card: Notice 5 sights and 5 sounds around you, then 4 sights and sounds, then 3, then 2, then 1
- Small drawing pad to make calming spiral drawings
- Small mandala coloring book and pencils
- Photograph of favorite pet

Ocean Wave Breathing: They need a deep breathing method they can use anywhere. I teach them Ocean Wave breathing (Shaw, 2013). I say, "The in-breath is like the ocean wave building, as we take in lots of air. The out-breath is like the ocean wave breaking, and the water is S-L-O-W-L-Y going into the sand. If we can take in lots of air, we have enough to make the out-breath really long, and we are relaxed for that entire out-breath. Our body already knows how to be relaxed!" Then I take five deep breaths with them. Teach parents the method, and encourage them to do this with their child.



"Getting the What If's" Worksheet: Another activity is to help the child identify body sensations when they are worried or nervous. I call this body condition "Getting the What If's." Using a worksheet that has kid-friendly images of body sensations like shaking hands, tummy in knots, sweaty brow, I have them circle any of them they might have when they "Get the What If's." By identifying the body signals, they are using Siegel's "name it to tame it" method. It also helps children identify how their own body is letting them know it is time to stop and take a break. The formerly-dreaded body sensation is reframed as a friendly reminder to "take 5 Ocean Wave Breaths, do something from my Calming List, or get an item from my Calming Kit." Parents and Teachers can be taught to help the child make these empowering connections as well.

Using these four self-calming techniques, we provide our clients not only with vital experiences of being grounded and centered, but also with the life-changing belief that they have the power to calm themselves. Through this work, they also come to befriend their own emotions and bodies -- learning to appreciate their innate sensitivities, rather than fight against them.

Holly Shaw, PhD, RPT, LPC is a private practice therapist in Ft. Collins specializing in working with children and working with trauma using EMDR. If you have any questions regarding this article, please contact Holly at (970) 266-8062. You can also view her website at <http://www.hollyshawphd.qwestoffice.net/>

We encourage you to submit short articles (50-500 words) on therapeutic approaches, mental health topics, case studies, or therapeutic book/movie reviews, etc., & will publish them as space allows. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

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To view Connections Newsletter and the Professional Bulletin Board online:
<http://connections.healthdistrict.org>

Connections is published 6 times/year. The purpose of *Connections* is to offer information on current therapy groups and services in the community; provide updates on services available through the Connections Program; and offer a place where information on community happenings of interest to mental health and human services providers can be shared.

Submissions are welcome. E-mail them to Emily Leetham at eleetham@healthdistrict.org by the following deadlines:

NEXT EDITION: Mar/Apr 2016
Article Deadline: Feb. 15, 2016

Submissions printed in *Connections* do not necessarily reflect the views of the Connections Program. Our editorial staff do not check the credentials of individuals wishing to submit groups or other listings. If you have concerns regarding credentials or other issues, please contact the group leader or author of the article directly. Thank you.

Resources for the Professional

Books available!

Margalis Fjelstad, Ph.D., LMFT will soon be retiring and she has boxes of books she would like to donate or give away. She has two boxes of books on borderline personality disorder and narcissistic personality disorder and a box of books on various counseling theories and on building a private practice. If you think any of these books could be helpful to you or anyone you know, please contact Margalis at (719) 310-2482 or by email at margalistherapy@gmail.com.



Resources for the Community Groups, Classes and Workshops oh my!

A One Day Experiential Workshop

Join Trauma Dynamics for a full day training focusing on an innovative approach to somatic psychotherapy for trauma. This informative, practical and experiential workshop introduces the Trauma Dynamics model which gets at the heart of trauma by putting in place what is necessary for the body to release traumatic memories and resolve symptoms from the bottom up. It is a highly technical, strategic, somatic modality that draws from current research on neurophysiology, memory systems, mindfulness, the 5-state model of the autonomic nervous system and traumatic transference theory.

As part of the workshop, watch video clips of actual trauma therapy sessions, discuss current research, including the FDA study on MDMA assisted psychotherapy and how it applies to this model and participate in experiential exercises which will connect the theory into clinical experience.

When: Saturday, January 23, 2016
9:30 a.m.—5:30 p.m. (Lunch will be provided)

Where: Wholeness Center
2620 E. Prospect Road, #190
Fort Collins, CO 80525

Cost: \$95.00

Continuing Education: This program qualifies for 7 NBCC CEU's.

For more information, please visit the Trauma Dynamic website at <http://www.traumadynamics.com/trainings/trp-intensive>.

To register, please contact Jen Fiser at jen@traumadynamics.com.



Resources for the Professional cont.

Adult ADHD Management Group

Lead by Molly McLaren, PhD and Lauren Maples, PhD, this group will use empirically-supported cognitive behavioral therapy techniques to help improve ADHD symptom management.

Topics include: Time Management, Avoiding Procrastination, Prioritizing, Project Planning, Organization, and Overcoming Emotional Obstacles.

When: Thursdays, 5:30-7:00pm starting in January 2016 and consist of 8 weekly sessions.

Where: 343 W. Drake Road, Suite 200, Fort Collins, CO 80526

Cost: \$45/session, reimbursable by most insurance plans

Group enrollment is limited. Please call (970) 889-8204 or email contact@coloradocac.com for more information on how to register.



DBT Groups for Addictions, and Anxiety and Trauma

Learn psychosocial skills to manage thoughts, feelings and behaviors that are associated with **ADDICTIONS**.

When Thursdays, starting February 11, 2016, 5:15-7:15 p.m. (Please register by Feb. 4th)

Cost: \$350 for 10 week session to be paid in full by February 4, 2016

Learn psychosocial skills to manage the symptoms of **ANXIETY** and **TRAUMA** through the use of DBT and group support.

When: Wednesdays, starting January 13, 2016, 5:15-7:15 p.m. (Please register by Jan. 6th)

Cost: \$350 for 10 week session to be paid in full by January 6, 2016

Topics for both groups include but are not limited to:

- Distress Tolerance—Radical Acceptance, Living in the present moment, and distractions from self-destructive behaviors
- Mindfulness—Negative judgments, Beginners mind, States of mind, Describing emotion
- Emotion Regulation—Recognizing emotions, Emotions & your behaviors, Self-destructive behaviors, balancing thoughts and emotions
- Interpersonal Effectiveness—Mindful attention, Interpersonal skills, Toxic relationships, Assertiveness,

Facilitator: Marnie Richter, MA, CACIII

Where: Bridgeways—109 W. Olive Street, Fort Collins, CO 80524

These are an educational, skills, as well as therapeutic group so there will be ample opportunities for open group discussions. This group will meet one time a week for 10 weeks and participants must commit to all 10 weeks.

For more information or to register, please call (970) 420-4526.

Resources for the Community cont.

Mindfulness for Teens

Teens will learn how to effectively use mindfulness to deal with stress, change and strong emotions. Mindfulness reduces stress and anxiety, improves mood, improves sleep quality, increases focus and attention and much more. This class will give teens the ability to learn how to slow down, find calm in their stressful lives and live in the present moment.

For ages 12-17. Class includes handouts and CD.

Facilitated by: Jen Strating, Biofeedback Therapist and Yoga Teacher

When: Saturday, February 6, 2015
1:00—4:00 p.m.

Where: Wholeness Center
2620 E. Prospect Road, #190
Fort Collins, CO 80525

Cost: \$50



Mindful Balance

During this 4 week class, you'll learn how mindfulness can help you find calm in the chaos of your busy life. Mindfulness reduces stress and anxiety, improves mood, improves sleep quality, increases focus and attention and much more. You'll be introduced to several mindfulness practices you can incorporate into

your daily life. You'll receive course handouts and accompanying audio downloads that you can practice at home.

Facilitated by: Jen Strating, Biofeedback Therapist and Yoga Teacher

When: Tuesdays, January 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th
6:30—8:00 p.m.

Where: Wholeness Center
2620 E. Prospect Road, #190
Fort Collins, CO 80525

Cost: \$75

To register for either of these classes, please call (970) 221-1106.

• c o n n e c t i o n s •

mental health & substance abuse resources

525 W. Oak Street
Fort Collins, Colorado 80521

If you wish to be removed from the *Connections* mailing list, your address is wrong, or you would like to receive the publication via email, contact Emily Leetham at eleetham@healthdistrict.org or call 970-494-4370.