

Connections

The Newsletter of the Connections Program

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

Finding Contentment

Submitted by: Michele Faris, PsyD

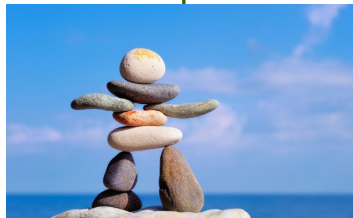
I ran into a friend in Whole Foods yesterday. I hadn't seen her in a while. When we caught each other's eyes, she gave me a big hug and asked, "Are you taking care of yourself?" I said yes I was, and she told me that she was living a happy life and taking good care of herself. Our conversation was brief and I walked out to my car. I sat in the driver's seat, ignition off, processing what had just occurred. I mused at her question and wondered, had we time for the long answer; Would she see me as someone who met her criteria for living a well-balanced life?

I long ago abandoned regular exercise, meditation, proper eating or engaging in a hobby as indicators of my happy life. It's been about a year since I've taken the proverbial bubble bath. Instead, I work 55 (or more) hours per week, managing a full time job at CSU and a part time private practice. I eat supper in bed next to my sweetie (who made the supper) after 8:00 pm several nights a week while we talk about our days during BBC commercials. I'm asleep by 10:30 pm. Before I get out of bed in the morning, the aforementioned sweetie and I do a NYT crossword puzzle on the laptop (two if we're lucky) and then I'm off. Lather, rinse, repeat. On weekends, I have traded sweating in the gym for cooking for my friends (and occasionally watching their children.) "This is happiness?" you ask. Gloriously so. Self-care? Definitely.

I love my work and the people with whom I have the privilege of sharing it. I am energized by the rich, complex stories I hear and enjoy the challenge of finding the best path to their version of a good life. Meaning and purpose, along with optimism and gratitude, are all highly correlated with happiness. I loved the essay on "Balance" that Elizabeth Gilbert ("Eat, Pray, Love") wrote last year when she described life as a pie someone dropped on the floor. Amen, Liz.

I work with a number of young, brilliant psychotherapists who drive themselves to distraction trying to be Martha Stewart, Super/Yoga Mom and Dad, Buff Bombshell and Amazing Therapist all at once. They are stressed to the max and I can almost see the self-critical thought bubbles above their heads that say, "Never enough" and "Never enough time." Yet people

all around us are taking very good care of themselves. Some of them are compulsive knitters, or the man who delivers warm tamales to my office. They are truck driving home brewers, PhD students, nuns, and refugees. What they all may have in common is that on the 1-10 Life Satisfaction scale, they are a solid "7." Good enough. Happy enough. Balanced enough. I wish like anything to pass on the wisdom that finally came with living over six decades: when I let go of the tyranny of "balance" and embraced what I love with self-compassion, empathy, and imperfection, I found deep peace and joy. And yes, thank you for asking, I am taking good care of my best possible self.



Michele Faris, PsyD has been a licensed psychologist in practice in Fort Collins for over thirty years. Besides being on staff at the CSU Health Network, Michele maintains a part time private practice and co-facilitates weekend Daring Way™ retreats for women, which are based on the work of Brené Brown, PhD. If you'd like to contact Michele about this article or about her retreats for women, please email her at dr.michelefaris@gmail.com.

Upcoming Retreat:

Cultivating Courage: Weekend Retreat for Women

During our weekend together, we explore topics such as vulnerability, courage, shame, and worthiness. By examining the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that are holding us back and identifying new choices and practices, we move towards more authentic and wholehearted living.

The Daring Way™ - the foundation of Cultivating Courage – is a highly experiential methodology based on the groundbreaking research of Dr. Brené Brown. This method was developed to help us learn how to show up, be seen, and live braver lives. The primary focus is on shame resilience skills and developing a courage practice that transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead.

March 4-6, 2016 in Loveland, CO.

For more information about this retreat and other upcoming retreats, visit www.cultivatingcourage.org or call 970-391-8292.

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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.

March-April 2016

Connections

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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: May/June 2016
Article Deadline: Apr. 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.

Meet Connections' New Teammate!

Connections at the Community Crisis Clinic



Paula Daniels, MA has joined the Connections team as a Mental Health Specialist working at the SummitStone Crisis Clinic. Paula began her career at the Health District in 2012 where she completed her practicum and internship at Connections to obtain her Master's degree in Clinical Counseling. Since that time, she has been a PRN Mental Health Specialist with Connections while doing full-time work as a Program Manager for Spectrum - an agency that provides services and support to individuals with developmental disabilities. Through the Connections partnership with SummitStone, Paula will be joining the SummitStone crisis team to provide information, referrals, and follow-up to those individuals who access crisis services at SummitStone's crisis services on Riverside Avenue.

Paula enjoys rock hounding in the mountains, shopping at thrift stores, creating art, building things, and attending concerts in her free time. She also loves to spend her time with her two dogs, Karma and Sage (and would love to own an alpaca someday).

We are excited to have Paula. She will be a great asset to both the Connections team and the SummitStone team!

Resources for the Community

Connections Psychiatric Medications Clinic

The Psychiatric Medications Clinic (PMC) is an interim service through Connections that offers short term access to psychiatric medication for client's who would otherwise have to wait a long period of time before getting in with a prescriber in the community. Gail Dawson, the prescriber for the PMC, is a psychiatric nurse practitioner who comes to Connections twice a month to see clients who are referred to the PMC. Our client advocate also helps clients establish a plan for on-going services with a prescriber, whether it be through SummitStone Health Partners, a psychiatrist in the community, or a primary care physician. Clients are generally seen 1-4 times in the PMC before connecting with their permanent prescriber. Here is more information about the group to help you decide if this is a good referral for your client:



- Cost is \$25.00 per group. Clients do not use their insurance.
- Clients meet with the Connections Client Advocate, who if needed, will facilitate linking the client to a permanent on-going prescriber.
- The group does not endorse prescribing medications that have the potential for abuse or addiction.

If your client could benefit from the Psychiatric Medication Group, please have them walk in to Connections (M-F, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) to be screened by a Mental Health Specialist or call (970) 221-551.

Resources for the Community cont.

Cultivating Compassion Training

Do you crave a more authentic connection with others during your daily interactions, wanting to see life through a more compassionate lens? Learn to intentionally choose compassionate thoughts and actions that help relate to others and yourself in a more connected way. Register today for Stanford University's Compassion Cultivation Training.

Facilitated by Amanda Mahoney, MA, Certified CCT Teacher

When: Wednesdays, March 23rd —May 11th
(8 consecutive Wednesdays)
5:30—7:30 p.m.

Where: Riverside Community Room
1300 Riverside Avenue
Fort Collins, CO 80524



To learn more about this training, call Amanda at (970) 235-0898 or email Amanda@coloradocct.com.
You can also view the website and register at www.coloradocct.com.

Yoga for Recovery



Join yoga instructor, Cat Lauer, to learn and practice simple breathing, meditation, and movement skills that support recovery from addiction and mental illness. Classes are designed to complement on-going therapy with physicians and mental health therapists.

When: Last Wednesdays of the month, 5:30pm

Where: Masonic Temple
225 W. Oak Street
Fort Collins, CO 80521

Cost: Free

For more information, please contact Cat at catleaslauer@gmail.com.
You can also view the website at www.yogaforrecovery.wordpress.com

Resources for the Professional

Conference Room for Rent

Gorgeous, professional conference room that comfortably seats 10 available for rent. Perfect for meetings, trainings, or group therapy.

Conference room is in a suite of mental health therapists in a professional building just north of Harmony on Boardwalk. Separate entrance if needed. Waiting room, Wi-Fi and microwave are available for use. Reservations can be made for one-time use or regularly scheduled use. Rental fee flexible.

Please contact Dorinna Ruh at (970) 227-1439 with inquiries.

Therapist Spotlight

Supportive Services for Parents of the LGBTQ Community

At Life Skills Counseling, Linda Anderson, LPC, NCC provides a wide spectrum of services for the depression, anxiety, childhood trauma and other adjustment issues to life changes. She also has a heart for parents of LGBTQ children, especially those of a religious or spiritual background. Often it is as if these parents have to come out of the closet as well. They may feel shame to talk about their child to their social group, especially if their social group is tied to their religious or spiritual beliefs. They may have a difficult time affirming and loving their child as the child is, and sometimes feel they must reject either their religious and spiritual beliefs or their child. Linda provides a comfortable place for these parents to reconcile beliefs and love for their child without shame or guilt, as well as coping with the backlash that might accompany "coming out" about their child.

If you would like more information about Linda's services, please contact her at (970) 219-5942. You can also visit her website at www.andersonlifekills.com.



Youth Outpatient Aftercare

At Connect Therapies, PLLC, Sally Blevins, LPC provides therapy and group services for youth who are dealing with developmental delays, learning differences, school failure, Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADD/ADHD, ODD, CD and TBI issues.

Groups provided include juvenile first offender groups, court ordered anger management, social skills group for DD, and teen depression art therapy groups.

Please contact Sally at (970) 663-1065 for more information about her practice.



• 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 leetham@healthdistrict.org or call 970-494-4370.