

Connections

The Newsletter of the Connections Program

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

Personality and Attachment Style Changes from Cult Involvement

Submitted by: Connie Mitchell, MA, LPCC

We all know someone who represents the face of abuse, either personally or professionally, through domestic violence, human trafficking, toxic environments, or narcissism. Cult involvement can include these and the addition of spiritual abuse. Cults are defined as an organization with an authoritarian structure, a closed system of logic, often utilizes thought-reform and manipulation tactics obtaining control over an individual's thought content and time, and by gaining power over major elements of the individual's physical and social environment. Typical responses to such control begin with *voluntary* isolation, subtle changes in vocabulary, dress or friendships. Observers view the changes externally. What happens internally—psychologically—with their personality and attachment style? Additionally, are these psychological and personality changes permanent?



To begin, one must define the terms. The independent personality is one that can speak what they believe, what food they prefer and, who their friends are. They can decide what they like to wear, how they desire to spend their money and what they like to do in their spare time. Conversely, an excessively demanding relationship is one in which typical boundaries are not respected—if personal boundaries exist at all. Further, a person's individuality and personal choice are coerced and slowly meld into the desired characteristics of the cult leader. The subjugated person *seems* to voluntarily relinquish their personal agency and dedicate their loyalty to the controller. Cult members do not understand these changes are offered as a bounded choice with no healthy alternatives. From the outside, this can appear as if they are "willful victims." Alexandra Stein, PhD calls these *voluntary* personality changes "suicide of the inner self." In addition, fear is often the driving factor in the vulnerability to such voluntary subjugation. Fear can keep the victim's brain working in fight, flight or freeze mode, preventing sound decision making. In fact, natural psychological defenses, individual boundaries, and individual personality characteristics are demonized and pressured to

be withdrawn. Hence, personality can change from cult involvement.

Attachment Theory describes categories of secure-based and insecure-based attachment styles. The secure-base attachment style includes autonomy and agency. The multiple insecure-based attachment styles vary; however, they are all described as foundationally fear-based. The fear-driven relationships in cults can evolve into a disorganized attachment, regardless of their original attachment style, to all three of the following: cult leader, the cult organization, and with peers within the cult. The power of this triple trauma bond cannot be undervalued. The trauma bond becomes excessively hard to break and makes leaving the cult very difficult. In fact, separating oneself from this internal and external social cult structure is described as "psychological self-mutilation," and identity divorce. To summarize, attachment styles often alter within a cult member due to the intense pressure of cult environment to that of disorganized.

Fortunately, researchers believe that the original pre-cult personality still exists deeply within the individual, and it can resurface, in time, after leaving the cult. Furthermore, research indicates that insecure attachment styles can be repaired through "earned-secure" relationships. Regarding methodology, any trauma-informed modality can be effective, as long as there is a trusting relationship. Finally, trust is extremely difficult for a cult survivor to share, and it will take time and patience from both in the counseling dyad for trust to be granted. (References are available upon request.)

Connie Mitchell is currently in private practice where she focuses on mind control, spiritual abuse/religious trauma, high-demand group recovery/cult recovery, PTSD, depression, anxiety, abuse and trauma. She is a trained in EMDR, Collaboration in the Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS), and is a facilitator in "Ending The Game" of sex trafficking. She provides individual and group counseling, and does clinical intakes and assessment at SummitStone Health Partners. Connie can be reached at Connie@FreedomsHopeCounseling.com.

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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March-April 2018

Connections

Program Manager
Kristen Cochran-Ward
kcochran@healthdistrict.org

Operations Specialist
Emily Leetham
eleetham@healthdistrict.org

Mental Health Specialists:

Michelle Clark
Adult Team Supervisor
mclark@healthdistrict.org

Tasha Steinbach
tsteinbach@healthdistrict.org

Caroline Schumacher
cschumacher@healthdistrict.org

Jenna Raymond
jraymond@healthdistrict.org

School Liaison
Sharon Kreider
skreider@psdschools.org

Child Psychologist
Marybeth Rigali-Oiler
mrigalioiler@healthdistrict.org

Community Navigator
Lindsay VanZant
lvanzant@healthdistrict.org

Care Coordinator
Megan Winick
mwinick@healthdistrict.org

Care Coordinator
Ana Pasini
apasini@healthdistrict.org

CAYAC Program Assistant
Tara Gilstrap
tgilstrap@healthdistrict.org

Admin. Phone: 970-494-4370
Fax: 970-494-4303
Direct Services: 970-221-5551

Web: www.mentalhealthconnections.org

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. The purpose of the newsletter is to offer information on community happenings of interest to mental health and human services providers and updates on services available through the Connections Program. Thank you.

Job Announcement

Join a thriving group of psychologists in Fort Collins, CO. Looking for a full-time, Colorado licensed (or license eligible) doctoral level practitioner. Build a practice around your areas of interest and specialties. The Stress Management Family Counseling Center has multiple, established referral sources and on site administrative support.

Join us!

Send cover letter and CV to
sgstone_893@msn.com.

Resources for the Professional

New Online Resource: The Therapist Toolbox

Local therapist, Ariel Friese, MC, LPC, has created an online resource that allows therapists to share favorite tools and interventions in video format.

The Therapist Toolbox is a growing video library of therapists sharing or demonstrating their favorite clinical tools, interventions and assessments. Videos are searchable by clinical issue, therapeutic approach and population. Videos are brief in nature and intended to be used outside of full therapeutic protocols, with the aim to help you get creative, unstuck and find momentum with your clients once again! Currently there are 80+ videos, and new ones added every month!



For more information and to view the website, click on
www.thetherapisttoolbox.com.

Webinar: Treating Complex PTSD and Dissociation with Integrative EMDR Therapy: A Resilience Informed Approach

Upcoming webinar hosted by The Therapist Toolbox

Complex PTSD occurs as a result of long-term exposure to traumatic stress rather than in response to a single incident and typically arises as a result of repeated traumatic events that occur during childhood. Growing up afraid has ramifications on cognitive, emotional, and physical development that persist into adulthood until one has sufficient support to heal. This is not a character weakness; it is a learned stress disorder. You can help your clients reclaim their lives from the costs of childhood trauma by deepening self-acceptance and reducing the shame that often accompanies developmental wounds. In this presentation, you will develop a greater understanding of Complex PTSD and discover ways to mitigate its effects through Resilience Informed Therapy, which applies research on trauma recovery to form a strength-based, trauma treatment model that includes EMDR Therapy, Somatic Psychology, and time-tested relational psychotherapy. We will explore the existential issues that can arise for clinicians when working with dissociative clients.

When: March 7th, 10:00-10:30am

Presenter: Arielle Schwartz, PhD

To Register, visit: www.thetherapisttoolbox.com

Resources for the Professional

Certified International Integrative Psychotherapy Training Group

Welcome to the Integrative Psychotherapy training program, sanctioned by the IIPA (International Integrative Psychotherapy Association).

In this group, we'll help therapists move beyond the techniques of regulation, and into the relational work of client transformation. You'll emerge from this training program with an in-depth understanding of your clients, identifying unmet relational needs, unraveling the complexity of their traumatic injuries, and understanding how to liberate clients from the "transference of everyday life" (where clients unconsciously relive unresolved issues through fixed coping mechanisms and rigid relational patterns.) With insight, caring, and depth techniques, you'll learn to help clients uproot attachment styles, integrate the forgotten, hidden and wounded parts of themselves, and emerge not just regulated, but whole.

The group is a blend of presentation, role play, live work, experiential activity, and self-exploration. The pace and rhythm are gentle, allowing you to not only understand the work, but to experience it. You'll carry the richness of this work with you both personally and professionally.

When: The group meets monthly for two hours. Meetings are currently planned for Tuesday mornings from 8:00-10:00am, but a late day training group is also possible. Group will begin in late March.

Cost: \$75 per monthly meeting

Facilitator: Carl Nassar, PhD, LPC, CIPTS (Certified International Integrative Psychotherapy Trainer and Supervisor)

For therapists in more remote areas, a distance based tele-training group is being formed.

Contact Carl by phone or text at 970-388-7274, or by email at drcarl@mac.com to register, or to learn more. You can also contact Diane at magick37@yahoo.com for further information.

Resources for the Community

Sexual Assault Survivors Group

This closed group is appropriate for those who identify as adult women and who have experienced sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and/or relationship violence. This group is support based, skill based, and confidential. Participants should also be connected to an individual therapist if they are actively working through symptoms of trauma and need additional support.

When: Fridays from 2:00-3:15pm—March 2nd, 16th, 30th, April 13th, 27th, and May 11th.
Members must commit to attending all 6 sessions.

Location: 736 Whalers Way, Building G, Suite 200
Fort Collins, CO

Cost: \$200 (includes initial screening)

Facilitator: Jessica Grant, LCSW

For information or to schedule an initial screening, contact Jessica at jessicagrantsw@gmail.com or by phone at 970-556-3063.

Resources for the Community

NADA Addiction/Recovery Acupuncture Treatment Program



Fort Collins Community Acupuncture & Massage (FCCAM) will begin offering \$10 NADA acupuncture treatments beginning March 6th. These are the same NADA protocol acupuncture treatments offered through public, private and governmental institutions in well over 40 countries around the world, designed to help people deal with stress from addictions, relapses, traumas, withdrawal symptoms and more.

NADA stands for the "National Acupuncture Detoxification Association." Many nations have NADA associations dedicated to teaching and certifying NADA practitioners.

The patient fee for FCCAM's NADA treatments is \$10, with sessions offered every Tuesday and Wednesday between noon and 2 pm. Appointments are by walk-in only with no pre-scheduling. Sessions last between 15 to 30 minutes, depending upon each patient's needs.

See FCCAM's flyer about these NADA treatments, its benefits, and how the protocol works here: http://www.communityacu.org/uploads/1/0/3/8/10384959/1st_nada_flyer.pdf.

If you'd like postcards with information about this program for your clientele, have questions, or would like to invite a presentation by FCCAM's coordinating acupuncturist, please contact Robert Evans at 970-689-7281 or email him at robert@communityacu.org.

Social/Emotional Groups for Youth

Mark Grebener, LCSW, will begin running social/emotional groups beginning the first week of April, 2018. Groups will be interactive (and fun) with an emphasis on interaction and social/emotional growth, and will consist of kids experiencing or having anxiety, depression, ADHD or Autism Spectrum Disorders. Groups will run 90 minutes and be limited to 10 members per group. Prior to group attendance, the child and parent(s) will have an individual family session to set goals. Each group will track goals that have been agreed to by the family.

When: 3rd-5th grades, meets 4:00-5:30pm
6th-8th grades, meets 5:30-7:00pm
9th-12th grades, meets 7:00-8:30pm

Insurance: Mark takes most major private insurances—Aetna, Anthem BC/BS, Beacon, Cigna, Magellan, and United/UBH/Optum.

Mark has worked in school settings (K-12), an adolescent treatment center and private practice. To inquire more about the group's exact start dates and location, please contact Mark at grebener@mac.com or by phone at 303-883-4808.



Resources for the Community

De-Stress With Aromatherapy

Learn how essential oils can help reduce stress and bring a sense of calm into your life. You'll experience several different scents and even make your own essential oil blend to use at home.

When: Tuesday, March 6th from 6:30-8:00pm
Cost: \$30 (includes oil blend)



Organize to Calm—Bullet Journal Workshop



Do you feel unorganized or overwhelmed in your life? Do you have lots of to-do lists floating around? Learn how to use the bullet journal system to organize your life and find calm. Keeping a bullet journal will not only keep you organized, but will bring mindfulness and creativity into your day.

You will get your own notebook and pen and all materials will be provided, so you can create your own unique bullet journal. If you have a favorite pen or notebook, feel free to bring them along.

When: Tuesday, March 20th from 6:00-8:00pm
Cost: \$60

Be Happy Workshop

Come learn about the science of happiness—happiness can in fact be learned. You'll experience techniques from positive psychology. You'll leave with tools and strategies you can incorporate into your daily life to create a happy and healthy life.



When: Wednesday, April 18th from 6:00-8:00pm
Cost: \$45

Mindfulness Series



Attend this 4 week mindfulness series to find more calm, balance, and ease in your life.

When: Tuesdays, April 3, 10, 17, and 24 from 6:30-8:30pm
Cost: \$150

For all classes on this page:

Facilitator: Jen Strating, Biofeedback Therapist and Yoga Teacher
Location: Wholeness Center 2620 E. Prospect Road, Fort Collins

To register, visit www.fortcollinsbiofeedback.com or call 970-221-1106.

Resources for the Community

Seven Principles to Making Marriage and Relationships Work

Join Suzanne Rudolph, Ed.D.P.C. Licensed Psychologist and Jennifer Dunkle, LPC for a skills building program based on the research of Dr. John Gottman, focusing on what makes committed relationships work. This workshop features an interactive series of lectures, videos and activities designed to teach couples how to deepen their connection, build fondness and admiration for each other, manage conflict constructively and move from gridlock to dialogue on perpetual problems. Please note that couples will complete all exercises privately. There is no group work, sharing or public disclosure.



When: May 5, 2018, Registration begins at 8:40am
Workshop begins at 9:00am-noon/ Lunch on own/ Resumes 1:15-4:15pm

Where: Foot Hills Unitarian Church 1
815 Yorktown Ave, Fort Collins, Co

Cost: \$159.00 per couple. Fee includes a copy of the "Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work" by Dr. John Gottman and Nan Silver.

Space is limited to 10 couples. For more information and to register visit:
www.coloradocounselingservices.com.

Adult DBT Group

The adult DBT groups is designed to teach members practical strategies for handling intense emotions effectively, increasing awareness of the present moment, improving relationships, and tolerating emotional pain without resorting to self-harm or self-destructive behaviors.

Group members are required to be in individual therapy during their participation in skills group. Individual therapists do not need to be DBT-oriented, as long as they are willing to support the use of DBT skills. Participation in group is a 6 month commitment.

Facilitators: Kelly Sonnenfeld, PhD and Mica Adesso, PhD

When: Monday evenings from 6:00-8:00pm

Where: 1006 Robertson Street, Fort Collins

Cost: \$40 per group session

For more information or to register, contact Kelly Sonnenfeld
at kelly@drkellysonnenfeld.com or call 970-658-0949.

Psychiatric Services Available

If your clients need Psychiatric Services, Heart-Centered Counseling (HCC) is adding a few new psychiatric providers to their team. If you're a therapist in town working with a client in need of psychiatry, we'd be happy to collaborate with you, Please call 970-3406 to schedule.

Visit www.heartcenteredcounselors.com to learn more.

(Note: Our psychiatric providers are currently completing the insurance credentialing process and, within a few weeks, will be paneled with Medicaid, Medicare, and most private commercial insurances.)

Connections Community Education

Mental Health Speaker Series

Connections is holding seven weeks of dinner and mental health education courses free of cost for community members! Learn about the important mental health issues in our community and how you can help yourself and others cope with these issues.

2/28 — Eating Disorders

Presenter: Elena Estanol, PhD

3/7 — Adult ADHD

Presenter: Jeremy Sharp, PhD

3/21 — Anxiety

Presenter: Jackie Johnson, LPC, CHT

3/28 — Opioids

Presenter: Kiley Floren, MPH, CHES & Jess Fear, LPC

4/4 — Couples Communication

Miriam Bellamy, LMFT

4/11 — Trauma

Chis Woodward, LCSW

4/18 — QPR: Question, Persuade and Refer

(Suicide Prevention Training)

Presenter: Michelle Clark, LPC, CACII

When: Wednesday evenings from 5:30-6:30pm

Where: Health District, 120 Bristlecone Drive, Fort Collins

Please reserve your space by emailing Brian Lothrop at blothrop@healthdistrict.org.

QPR Trainings

Connections is offering QPR training, which stands for Question, Persuade and Refer. QPR is an hour long suicide prevention training for community members, which covers warning signs, how to talk with someone who is suicidal and local resources to refer to.

Upcoming training dates:

Evening training dates:

All evening training dates are held from 5:30-6:30pm

- ◆ Tuesday, June 19th
- ◆ Tuesday, August 21st
- ◆ Tuesday, October 16th
- ◆ Tuesday, December 4th

Day time training dates:

All day trainings are held from noon-1:00pm

- ◆ Wednesday, May 16th
- ◆ Wednesday, July 25th
- ◆ Wednesday, September 19th
- ◆ Wednesday, November 14th

To register for a QPR class, please contact Emily Leetham at eleetham@healthdistrict.org or call 970-494-4370.



Mental Health First Aid Trainings

Mental Health First Aid is an all day training designed to assist community members with identifying symptoms or behaviors of developing mental illness and equip them with the tools they need to reach out and offer help in a crisis or non-crisis situation.

Upcoming Trainings:

Youth MHFA—Tuesday, March 20th

Adult MHFA—Wednesday, April 18th

Youth MHFA—Friday, May 11th

To learn more about Mental Health First Aid, visit www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org.

If you would like more information or to RSVP to any of the MHFA trainings listed above, please contact Emily Leetham at eleetham@healthdistrict.org or call 970-494-4370.



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