

Connections

The Newsletter of the Connections Program

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

Compassion and Self-Care for Helping Professionals

Submitted by: Amanda Mahoney, MA, MFT

When we moved to Colorado in the winter of 2010, my husband and I were excited to start a new adventure with our family. With this outward presentation of excitement to friends, family and colleagues, there was a silenced inner trepidation regarding my work as a grief therapist. I knew this painful truth was going to get exposed sooner than I wanted to admit.

I was experiencing empathy fatigue, commonly referred to as compassion fatigue. Honestly, empathy fatigue was pulling me down the rabbit hole of burnout quicker than I wanted to admit, or was even aware. Thankfully, Dr. Leah Weiss - founding faculty and inaugural director of Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) developed at Stanford University - and I were at an event in California where she introduced me to CCT.

Ironically, the training was being pitched as a valuable asset for my grieving clients. Mindfulness, compassion and self-compassion became the sustenance I required to continue as a helping professional.

Compassion is often described as an awareness of and having empathy for the suffering of another, having motivation to see that suffering end and a desire to do something active to achieve the cessation of that suffering. In a 2012 article in The Huffington Post, Roshi Joan Halifax discussed the idea that, "...in a time when we hear the phrase 'compassion fatigue' with increasing frequency, compassion as we are defining does not lead to fatigue. In fact, it can actually become a wellspring of resilience..." (Halifax, 2012) With this perspective shift, there's an inherent value intentionally choosing a compassionate mindset to combat the compounding effects of bearing witness to trauma.

When we help process trauma our clients report, we experience their emotional and physiological pain via what Dr. Daniel Siegel refers to as 'resonance circuits' (Siegel, 2009) which can be likened to mirror neurons, the mechanism responsible for empathy. Over time, as we are exposed to our clients' experiences, our empathy becomes fatigued. Although an often hidden occurrence, when we compound the trauma

we vicariously experience over time, the trauma is concretized in our brain as if it is our own. Rationally, we know this is not the case, but from a neurological perspective, the trauma has become real. In a serendipitous turn of events, the thing that brought our clients to us for support could become the very thing that stops us from supporting clients, now and in the future.

For over half a decade I have been using and teaching tools a compassionate mindset provides to combat empathy fatigue. From an introductory standpoint, here are a few tools to begin your journey toward sustainability and self-care:



Practice mindfulness. In a society where self-help and contemplative practices are becoming more and

more a part of the popular culture and, at times, are diluted in the quality of presentation and practice, mindfulness, at its core, holds an inherent value in self-care. Most simply described as stability of attention, mindfulness grounds us in real time thoughts, feelings and senses. This week, try sprinkling mindfulness throughout your day in the following ways:

- ◆ When washing hands- feel the water, smell the soap.
- ◆ Take a deep breath and feel the cool air coming in, warm air going out.
- ◆ Taste your food and feel its texture.

Choose a compassionate mindset. Through trainings like CCT, participants learn how to choose a compassionate mindset during distressful experiences. In a 2012 study done by Klimecki et al they observed that, after a compassion training, brain regions associated with positive affect and affiliation were activated when witnessing another in distress compared to control groups. Learning to choose compassion becomes a coping strategy that builds resilience.

(continued on page 2)

In this issue

Compassion and Self-Care for Helping Professionals	1-2
Resources for the Professional.	2-3
Job Openings.	3
Resources for the Community.	4-5
Connections Community Education	6

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 2019

Connections

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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.

(continued from page 1)

Practice Self-compassion- In a 2007 study by Leary et al, they observed that those with self compassion were less judgmental and better at accurate self-evaluation, among other things. Dr. Kristin Neff describes self compassion as having mindfulness, befriending ourselves and recognizing our common humanity. Common humanity can be best described as 'just like me' or I am not alone in this experience as a human. Essentially, self-compassion becomes the idea that 'I am not my thoughts.'



As we continue to honor our clients and their stories, our best practice can be one of self-care and self-compassion.

Amanda D. Mahoney, MA, MFT is a therapist, a compassion educator speaker and Senior Certified Teacher of CCT. Amanda is a co-founder of Grief Support of the Rockies and provides support to grieving children and families. To learn more about compassion cultivation training or about Amanda, visit <https://coloradocct.com>. Amanda can be reached at amandadmahoney@me.com.

Resources for the Professional

0-5 Diagnostic Criteria Training

DC: 0-5 Diagnostic classification of mental health and developmental disorders of infancy and early childhood.

This extended day training is designed for clinicians from the fields of mental health, health and early intervention who are responsible for supporting diagnosis of infants and young children. This intensive extended day training will provide clinicians with the history and background around the need and development of a specialized diagnostic classification system for infancy and early childhood. Participants will learn about the multi-axial approach to diagnosis, an approach which is developmentally informed, relationship based, contextually and culturally grounded.

Facilitator: Corinna Crandall, LMFT, Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist

When: Wednesday, March 27, 2019
8:30am-4:00pm, 5:00-7:00pm

Where: Courtyard Marriot
1200 Oakridge Drive
Fort Collins, CO 80525

Cost: \$95 for registration and manual
\$35 for registration only
(Manuals are required for this training)



To register, click on <https://www.healthdistrict.org/dc-O-5-training>. For more information, contact Emily Leetham at 970-530-2883 or by email at eleetham@healthdistrict.org.

Resources for the Professional

Group Supervision



Maggie Tibbetts, LCSW and Rachel Isenberg, LCSW are beginning a second supervision group due to demand. This group is for master's level social workers or counselors who are needing hours to qualify for licensure. The group is structured so that we spend the first part discussing professionally relevant topics through the use of articles and online resources. We might cover a particular diagnosis, review counseling theories or go over case vignettes. The second half of the group is dedicated to case consultation where members can discuss clients, workplace issues, or any other topic affecting them and their work. The group is a great place to network, get support from other professionals and continue learning. We meet for 2 hours once a month on Friday mornings 9:00 to 11:00am in our Old Town office. This is not a drop in group. The cost is \$80 per group.

Please call Maggie Tibbetts at 970-988-4173 or email maggiestibbetts@gmail.com if you are interested joining!

Job Announcements



Partnership opening for full-time psychologist in longest standing outpatient psychology group practice in Fort Collins. Includes administrative support, reception, scheduling, billing and collecting. High volume referrals from medical offices and community. Ideal for building or expanding your practice. Must be licensed in CO.

For more information, contact Jennifer Gray at drjennifergray@yahoo.com.

KIDSTUFF Child & Family Counseling, PC. is expanding their team in all three locations: Greeley, Loveland and Fort Collins. They are also hiring for their new site in Longmont! KIDSTUFF primarily works with children, adolescents and families of low SES, but serve individuals of all ages.

KIDSTUFF is seeking licensed, skilled therapists for full time or part-time contract positions. They are looking for enthusiastic, self directed, ethical, and responsible licensed counselors who prefer providing direct services for clients. Additional KIDSTUFF staff take care of maintaining a thriving private practice including all billing, credentialing, marketing, referrals, administrative, clerical tasks, record keeping, compliance, managing office space and more. You must be licensed in Colorado. Other aspects of contracting, job responsibilities, credentialing process and training will be discussed at interview.

**KIDSTUFF's Greeley location has been approved for the NHSC rural loan reimbursement program, which means that you receive up to \$30,000 compensation toward your school loans in trade for a 2 year full time (32 hours) service agreement.

KIDSTUFF offers:

Excellent compensation, various training and continuing education opportunities, Aflac benefit packages available at group rates, flexible hours and caseload based on your clients' needs and your specialties and availability. (After school, evening and weekend availability is helpful, but not required.) Variety of work site and locations.

If interested in this exciting opportunity, please submit your resume to lu@kidstuffcounseling.com for review.

Resources for the Community

NAMI Walks

Join NAMI for their annual fundraiser and walk with NAMI Larimer to raise awareness of mental illness and raise funds for the important work of NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI provides support, education and advocacy to those experiencing mental illness and for friends and family of the mentally ill.

When: May 18, 2019

Where: Centennial Center Park
Centennial, CO

Cost: There is no cost to register

To register, click on

<https://www.namiwalks.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.team&teamID=27568>.

You can also use this link if you aren't able to walk but would like to donate.

To view information about the event, click on :

<https://www.namiwalks.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.event&eventID=780>.



Women's Trauma Recovery & Empowerment Group



If you have experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse or assault, and are interested in re-building your life from the inside out, improve self-esteem, and decrease the obstacles of guilt and shame, please join us as we make positive steps toward healing in a community of women. All sharing will be done in an atmosphere of safety and respect.

Topics to be covered are: What it means to be a woman, developing ways to feel better, self-esteem, emotional and physical boundaries, intimacy and trust. The group also includes female sexuality and gaining understanding about trauma and abuse in relationships. Further topics are decision making, trusting your judgment, and healthy communication skills.

When: Wednesdays, March 6th - May 15th
10:00-11:15am

Where: 1006 Robertson Street
Fort Collins, CO

Cost: \$40 per group session

Participants must attend all 10 weeks. For more information, or to inquire about registration, please contact Connie Mitchell, MA, NCC, LPCC at 970-829-1968 or by email at connie.mitchell@freedomshopecounseling.com.

Resources for the Community

3 Hopeful Hearts Child Loss Support groups

Child Loss—3rd Monday of the month from 6:30-8:00pm

Child Loss by Substance Passing—2nd Wednesday of the month from 6:30-8:00pm

Child Loss by Suicide—1st Thursday of the month from 6:30-8:00pm

Dad's Support Group—2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:30-8:00pm

Grandparent Support group—2nd Tuesday of the month from 10:00-11:00am.

To learn more about these groups, call 970-430-6136 or email hope@2hopefulhearts.com.
You can also visit <https://www.3hopefulhearts.com/support-groups/>.

Huge Barn Sale!

Triple T Haven provides therapeutic treatment for trauma survivors through intensive equine assisted therapy. Triple T Haven will be hosting a barn sale to raise money to provide scholarships for adults with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Shoppers and Donations wanted!

- ◆ Partnering with local antique dealers as well as the community.
- ◆ Antiques and new (gently used) one-of-a-kind items.
- ◆ All proceeds go towards scholarships for adults with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
- ◆ Donations are tax-deductible thanks to our fiscal partner Operation Kids.

Triple T Haven unites survivors, community, clinicians and horses to provide a safe place to heal... Treating Trauma Together.

When: Saturday, March 9th, 8:00am—2:00pm

Drop off donations:
Corner of Highway 14 and Weld Country Road 31
14943 Highway 14
Ault, CO 80610

For questions and donations, please call Sheila Ash at (970) 430-3263.

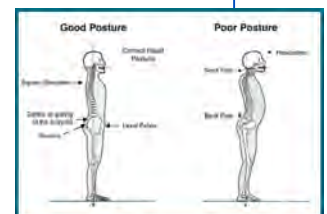


Neurosomatic Therapy—Free Postural Assessment and Therapy

Join Lifechange Services and experience a demonstration of advanced soft tissue therapy combined with postural analysis. Discover your unique postural asymmetries and how they relate to your condition or pain. Receive a sample treatment that is personalized to you!

When: Wednesday, March 6th from 3:00-7:00pm

To book an appointment or for more information, send an email to anikolovarts@gmail.com.



Connections Community Education

Mental Health Speaker Series

Connections is continuing to host mental health and substance use education courses free of cost for community members! Dinner is provided! Learn about the important mental health and substance use issues in our community and how you can help yourself and others cope with these issues.

2/27 — Men's Mental Health

Presenter: Chuck Hancock, MEd, LPC

3/6 — Eating Disorders

Presenter: Rebekah Knight-Baughman, PhD

3/13 — Anxiety

Presenter: Jeri Newlin, MS

3/27 — Marijuana Policy and Enforcement

Presenter: FCPD Officer Jim Lenderts

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

Where: Health District, 120 Bristlecone Drive, Fort Collins

Please reserve your space by emailing Emily Leetham at eleetham@healthdistrict.org.

2019 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.

Daytime training dates:

Daytime trainings are held from noon-1:00pm

- ◆ Tuesday, March 26th
- ◆ Wednesday, April 17th
- ◆ Monday, June 10th
- ◆ Thursday, July 18th
- ◆ Monday, August 12
- ◆ Friday, September 6th
- ◆ Wednesday, November 13th
- ◆ Tuesday, December 10th

Evening training dates:

Evening trainings are held from 5:30-6:30pm

- ◆ Thursday, May 9th
- ◆ Tuesday, October 8th

To register for a QPR class, please contact Emily Leetham at eleetham@healthdistrict.org or call 970-530-2883.



TNT Save-the-Dates

If you are interested in attending future TNT's, please be sure to add these dates to your calendar!

April 18, 2019 (TNT focused on substance use)

July 18, 2019

October 17, 2019

TNT stands for "Therapist Networking & Training" and is held quarterly for behavioral health professionals. This free event is a time for providers to learn from each other through trainings and also gives attendees the time to network and catch up with fellow colleagues. TNT's are held from 7:45-9:30am. Look for invitations to come!

If you have any questions about the TNT events, contact Emily Leetham at eleetham@healthdistrict.org.