

# Connections

The Newsletter of the Connections Program

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

## What is Geek Therapy?

Submitted by: Vonie Stillson, BC-DMT, LPC, ATRIC, ACS, NCC

Geek Therapy is using fandom, cosplay, and geek culture to help clients move forward.

**Fandom**—a subculture of fans characterized by a feeling of empathy and camaraderie, typically interested in even minor details of the object(s) of their fandom spending a significant portion of their time and energy involved with their interest, often as a part of a social network. (En.wikipedia.org, 2017).

**Cosplay**—a contraction of the words costume and play. A performance art in which participants (cosplayers) wear costumes and fashion accessories to represent a specific character. The term was coined by Nobuyuki Takahashi while attending the 1984 World Science Fiction Convention (Worldcon) in Los Angeles (En.wikidedia.org, 2017).

**Geek Culture**—Geek is a slang term that emerged in the 1980s to designate a newly marginalized group: smart, tech-savvy but socially awkward young enthusiast of emerging computer technologies. Nerd, the term in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, similarly described an unpopular, overly intellectual young person interested in science or math. Nerds were not considered cool. In the 2000s, geek and nerd become nearly synonymous, and were labels no longer to be ashamed of. Today Geeks are smart, well-informed individuals who care passionately about something and are often an expert in technology, science or math, or can be a specialist or fan of almost any subculture imaginable (dictionary.com, 2017) including “comic con” attendance, creation and participation.

Fandom is not new. Sherlock Holmes fans are widely considered the first modern fandom, after holding public demonstrations of mourning after Holmes was “killed off” in 1893. Considered the first cosplay in 1939 Forrest J. Ackerman attended the first World Science Fiction Convention, or Worldcon, in “futuristicostume”

with his friend and designer of his costume, Myrtle Douglas. (Movies, 2017).

It is likely fandoms have been used throughout the history of psychology but weren’t discussed publicly due to stigma surrounding perceptions of “being a geek”, being childish or the stigma around comic books since the 1954 “comic book hearings” (U.S. Senate, 1954). (For more information about the hearings, see “U.S. Congressional Senate Hearings Before the Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency”.)

Jung, once an outcast in the psychological community, has strong connections in several fandoms. It’s argued all fandoms are manifestations archetypes on a hero’s journey. Being an outcast often brings together members of fandoms making their connections stronger due to a sense of belonging after long periods of isolation.

How a fan chooses a favorite character or fandom may be based on where in their own hero’s journey they are. The shadow discusses the aspects of self one keeps hidden away from the world; the “dark side of one’s self”, but it isn’t always “bad”. Remember, Clark Kent’s shadow is Superman.

Many struggle to find balance with all aspects of the self, both in reality and in fiction. Robert Lewis Stevenson’s “Strange Case of Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde”<sup>1st</sup> published in 1886 was referenced by Jung himself (Jung and Franz, 1964, p. 7).

Dance Therapist Trudi Schoop discusses disconnection: “All individuals encompass the complete range of every feeling, action [and] thought...”(Schoop, 1979, p.37). But, due to societal taboos, one side of the individual must go “undercover” (Levy, 1992, p. 76). The search for balance is seen in characters chosen to cosplay. Cosplaying the shadow provides an opportunity to bring balance to the whole self.



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We encourage you to submit short articles (50-600 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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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.

## What is Geek Therapy?

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Cosplay allows individuals of all ages, races, gender, sexual orientation and social economic status to come together and play. It is a direct outlet for creativity suppressed and hidden away when it has no place in day to day life. It is an example of active imagination in action and allows an opportunity to be seen, to be witnessed in a way they are not in their day to day lives, or in some cases at all. Being seen changes lives, it decreases loneliness and increases connection to the world overall.



Putting Geek Therapy into use for clients, even if you aren't a Geek yourself, begins with connection. Ask clients about what their interests are. When discussing a fandom of connection, ask who their favorite character is. Dive a little deeper, ask what it is about that character they connect with, the strengths, story lines, the challenges the character faces, the world that character exists in. Ask clients what about this character they see in themselves. If your client is into RPGs (role playing games) ask about what kind of characters they play (ex. warrior, magic user, thief). Willingness to look into our client's fandoms opens doors to seeing them in new ways and to understand how they see the world a little better.

Vonìè Stillson's practice, Equilibrium Counseling Services, is located in Loveland, CO. Vonìè uses a variety of methods in her practice including dance movement therapy, aquatic therapy, Geek therapy, CBT, and DBT. If you have questions about this article or items referenced in this article, you can reach Vonìè by email at [equilibriumcounseling@gmail.com](mailto:equilibriumcounseling@gmail.com). You can also visit Vonìè's website to learn more about her practice at <https://equilibriumcounselingservices.com>.

## Resources for the Professional

### Job Opening



Harmony Foundation is looking to hire a full-time Medical Director. Harmony provides treatment for alcohol and drug addiction. This position will help promote physical, emotional and spiritual healing... empowering clients to embark upon their lifelong journey of recovery.

Harmony is seeking an individual to develop, evaluate and revise clinical policy and protocols. The ideal candidate is skilled in consistently demonstrating personal effectiveness and credibility/ implementing strategies and tactics to improve client outcomes. This highly visible role will supervise NP's, ensuring that staff are mentored and coached in a positive and respectful manner. Proven success in collaborating with key internal stakeholders in developing behavioral health and recovery programs is key. Psychiatry experience and background is a plus!

MD or DO degree is required as well as an active and unrestricted medical license and controlled substance license from the State of Colorado. This role reports to our President/CEO and works closely with our Chief Clinical Officer.

Please visit the website to apply <https://harmonyfoundationinc.com/history/careers/> or send an updated resume to [HR@harmonyfoundationinc.com](mailto:HR@harmonyfoundationinc.com).

## Resources for the Professional

### Training: Process, Progress and Proven Successful Outcomes

The Recovery Village at Palmer Lake invites you to their last continuing education and networking event of the year! Presenter Valerie J. Shinbaum, MS, LPC, MAC, NCC, will discuss techniques, tips and takeaway tools for effectively integrating 12 step recovery resources to address addictions (process and substance) in clinical treatment modalities.

**When:** Friday, November 8th  
10:00am-1:00pm

**Where:** The Agave Room  
149 W. Mountain Avenue, Fort Collins

**Cost:** Free



THE RECOVERY VILLAGE  
PALMER LAKE

Lunch will be provided and 2 continuing education credit hours will be awarded.

To register, visit [www.trvplnovemberevent.eventbrite.com](http://www.trvplnovemberevent.eventbrite.com).

### Play Therapy Workshop

#### Developmental Ages and Stages in Play Therapy: Part One – Developmental Tasks of the first 6 years

With young children, the rate of development can be so rapid that developmental shifts are likely to occur during the course of play therapy. It is essential to understand the young child in the context of both their chronological and developmental age. This workshop will provide tools for assessing a child's development to facilitate treatment planning and measuring progress.

**When:** Saturday, November 9th  
8:30am-4:00pm

**Where:** 333 W. Drake Road, Suite 141, Fort Collins

**Presenter:** Jane L. Johnson, LLC, RPT-S

**Cost:** \$120 for early registration  
\$150 after November 1st

Colorado Play Therapy Training, LLC is APT approved provider 10-277.  
This workshop will count as 6 hours continuing education for the Registered Play Therapist credential.

For more information, download a brochure, and register at:  
<http://www.colorado-play-therapy-training.com/contact-us/register-for-workshop/>.

## Resources for the Professional

### Group Supervision



Maggie Tibbetts, LCSW and Rachel Isenberg, LCSW are running two supervision groups that have openings. These groups are 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 who are newer to the field and continue learning. Both groups meet for 2 hours once a month 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](mailto:maggiestibbetts@gmail.com), or Rachel Isenberg at [rachelisenberglcsw@comcast.net](mailto:rachelisenberglcsw@comcast.net) or 970-297-8907 if you are interested in joining!

### Recovery Coach Training

Harmony Foundation presents the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR) training. The CCAR Recovery Coach Academy® is a 4-day intensive training academy focusing on providing individuals with the skills needed to guide, mentor and support anyone who would like to enter into or sustain long-term recovery from an addiction to alcohol or other drugs.

#### This training will:

- Describe Recovery Coach role and functions
- List the components, core values, and guiding principles of recovery
- Explore many dimensions of recovery and recovery coaching
- Describe the stages of change and their applications
- Address ethical and boundary issues

#### Participants will:

- Build skills to enhance relationships
- Discover attitudes about self-disclosure and sharing your story
- Understand the stages of recovery
- Increase their awareness of culture, power and privilege
- Experience recovery wellness planning
- Practice newly acquired skills

**When:** November 7th-10th  
9:00am-5:30pm

**Where:** 109 Cameron Drive, Unit A, Fort Collins

**Cost:** \$650 (TPAS members receive discount). 30 CEU's provided.

Space is limited! Register at [www.harmonyfoundationinc.com/ccar](http://www.harmonyfoundationinc.com/ccar). For more information, contact Brian Tierney at [btierney@harmonyfoundationinc.com](mailto:btierney@harmonyfoundationinc.com) or by phone at 970-797-2665

#### Who can be a recovery coach?

- Credentialed addiction professionals
- Treatment center support staff, volunteers and alumni
- Staff from behavioral health and government agencies
- Representative from inpatient and outpatient centers and sober living homes
- Individuals, family members and advocates of recovery

## Resources for the Professional

### Colorado Farm and Ranch Stress Summit

Colorado State University Extension AgrAbility will host Michael Rosmann, Ph.D. He is dedicated to improving the behavioral health of people engaged in agriculture. This training is for professionals working with farm and ranch families.

Mike's full-day training will be an interactive experience designed to increase participants' knowledge and skills with stressed ranch and farm families. His talking points will include:

- Why do people farm?
- What are unique stressors that farmers and ranchers experience?
- What are symptoms of behavioral health conditions that farmers and ranchers may develop when stress is overwhelming?
- How does substance misuse (opioids, alcohol, methamphetamine, etc.) factor into farmers' adaptations?
- Why is suicide a particular problem of the people engaged in agriculture?
- What are signals of possible suicide among farmers?
- How does one approach a person who needs assistance with behavioral health issues, including concerns about suicide?
- How does one make an effective referral to behavioral health professionals?
- What can farmers, ranchers, and farm workers do to maintain optimal behavioral health?

**When:** Tuesday, December 3rd from 9:00am-4:00pm

**Where:** Lory Student Center at CSU  
Room 302 Longs Peak

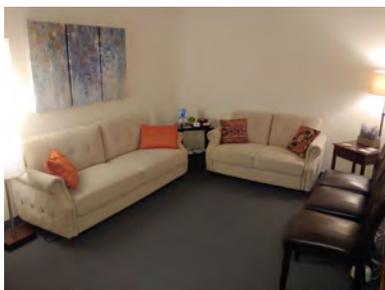
Free lunch at Spoons in the Lory Student Center is provided by the Prevention Research Center and Dr. Doug Coatsworth for the first 60 professionals who register by November 26, 2019.

To register, email or telephone your name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number no later than November 26 to Dr. Bob Fetsch at [robert.fetsch@colostate.edu](mailto:robert.fetsch@colostate.edu) or 970-491-5648.



### Office Space Availability

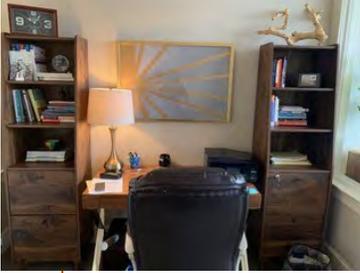
Nice windowed office with new paint and carpet. 140 sq ft. Includes shared waiting room and storage room with fridge and microwave. All utilities, internet, and janitorial included. Wheelchair accessible. Drake Professional Park. Available second week of November. \$550. Contact Dustin Johnson at 970-444-2815.



## Resources for the Professional

### Office Space Availability

Beautiful office space available for sublet in downtown Fort Collins across from the Exchange. Office is fully furnished and has play therapy items, as well, if necessary. \$400/month. Please call Alison at 970-402-7029 if you have questions or would like to see the space.



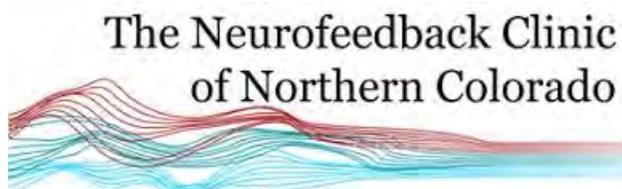
### Would Neurofeedback Help Your Client?

Neurofeedback therapy allows an individual's brain and nervous system to begin to work more effectively together. Neurofeedback training targets optimal brain functioning by providing real-time feedback to the brain in session. Psychotherapy aided by neurofeedback can result in improved stress management, performance at work or school, thought patterns, behaviors, choices, and relationships.

Neurofeedback can impact a person's symptoms and change the way their brain is responding to the environment. With anxiety, on a conscious level, their mind might understand that their fears are irrational, but their brain is responding from a fight or flight place. This could prevent a person from doing daily tasks like grocery shopping. Neurofeedback helps retrain the brain and regulate the nervous system so a person can respond accurately to their environment.

Many people know they need the support of therapy but also feel anxious, shut down or triggered when talking to a therapist. With neurofeedback calming down the nervous system, a person becomes more emotionally regulated and over time, can begin talking about their issues without becoming completely overwhelmed. If you have clients that would benefit from doing neurofeedback in conjunction with talk therapy, please don't hesitate to call the Neurofeedback Clinic of Northern Colorado. They will work in conjunction with you to provide the best care and to foster the best results for your clients!

Insurances accepted: Aetna, Anthem BC/BS, Cigna, Medicare, Tricare and VA (Veteran's Benefits)



**Phone:** 970-493-4580  
**Email:** [consultation@ncnoco.net](mailto:consultation@ncnoco.net)  
**Address:** 4115 Boardwalk Drive  
Fort Collins, CO 80525

## Resources for the Professional

### Community Awareness Series

#### Drug Trends in Our Community

Lynn Riemer is a nationally renowned expert trainer and advocate on the issues related to substance abuse. As an expert chemist and prior member of the North Metro Drug Task Force in Colorado, she is frequently asked to speak to parents, teens, teachers and administrators, health care providers, case workers, law enforcement personnel, judicial officials and those in the workplace about common and uncommon drugs and other abused substances.

**Speaker:** Lynn Riemer

**When:** Thursday, November 21st from 10:00am-12:00pm

**Where:** Timberline Church  
2908 S. Timberline Road, Fort Collins

**Cost:** Free



To register, visit

<https://www.facebook.com/events/576498123109676/>.

If you have any questions about this event, please contact Annette Hoyt at [annette@casalarimer.com](mailto:annette@casalarimer.com).

### Open House!

Join behavioral health professionals:

Katherine Combs, PsyD  
Kelly Sonnenfeld, PhD  
Jason Collison, MD  
Melissa Connally, PhD  
Laura Sanders, PhD  
Dan Dworkin, PhD  
Lindsey Phillips, LPC  
Renee Wieszcholek, LCSW

For an open house/networking event in their brand new office building! Snack and beverages will be provided.

**When:** Friday, November 1st from 4:00-7:00pm

**Where:** McMurry Business Sweets  
4786 McMurry Avenue, Suite 2B, Fort Collins

Kindly RSVP at [https://www.punchbowl.com/party/page/81bf2a0128be42a4?utm\\_campaign=Invitation&utm\\_source=Punchbowl%20Transactional%20Mail&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.punchbowl.com/party/page/81bf2a0128be42a4?utm_campaign=Invitation&utm_source=Punchbowl%20Transactional%20Mail&utm_medium=email).



## Resources for the Community

### Rise Above Pain—Empowered Wellness Group

“Rise Above Pain” offers skills and support to effectively manage chronic pain. Group therapy not only offers skills, but a place to receive support from others who understand exactly what you’re going through, and who can literally “feel your pain”.

In this group, you will gain new skills, learn how to make simple lifestyle changes to improve function and enjoyment, and dig deeper into issues of identity, meaning and purpose.

**When:** Tuesdays, 1:00pm

**Where:** Polaris Partners  
300 E. Horsetooth Road, Ste 200, Fort Collins

**Cost:** \$50/group. Many insurances accepted (Medicaid, Cigna, Aetna, Anthem BC/BS, United)

\*Group will start when 4+ people are enrolled\*

To learn more or to register, contact Vicki Gerber, LPC, CAC II, ADS at [victoria.gerber@polarispartnerscc.com](mailto:victoria.gerber@polarispartnerscc.com) or by phone at 970-270-9418.

### Everything DISC Workshop: Getting to Know Your Communication Style

Take a short self-assessment where you will learn how to describe your communication and behaviors in various situations, understand how others may perceive your tendencies and develop more effective relationships in school, work and life. Understand your stressors and motivators, and how to work with others.

**Facilitator:** Dr. Colorosa

**When:** Thursdays, November 7th and 14th  
6:00-7:30pm

**Where:** 1302 S. Shields, Suite A-2, Fort Collins, CO  
(northern most office suites; upstairs)

**Cost:** \$150 for both sessions and online assessment with results

To register and pay for courses, email [scolorosa@theengagementcatalyst.com](mailto:scolorosa@theengagementcatalyst.com); course tuition must be paid in full (no refunds will be provided).



## Resources for the Community

### New! Book on Grief/Loss



“Dear Brave Friend” is a gentle and heartwarming story that captures the love between a boy and his dog, and the sadness that follows after his cherished dog passes away. Written in the form of a letter from the dog to the boy, the letter shares relatable, real life examples of how the boy (and therefore anybody who has lost a dear pet) may be feeling and suggestions on what he can do to help himself get through this most difficult time. The letter also touches on simple acts of kindness that can follow the reader throughout his or her lifetime. The message in this story is applicable to young and old, girl or boy, and to any family pet that has stolen your heart. Story starters, drawing pages, and a place to add pictures of your own beloved pet are also included in the back of the book.

Author Leigh Ann Gerk, MA, LPC has been in the counseling field for over ten years and offers counseling services in Loveland, CO. She can be reached by email at [leighann@mourningtolightpetloss.com](mailto:leighann@mourningtolightpetloss.com) and you can visit her website at [www.mourningtolightpetloss.com](http://www.mourningtolightpetloss.com).

To purchase this book on Amazon, visit <https://amzn.to/35Jz5jd>.

### Chronic Illness Support group

This group offers integrated therapy, psychoeducation, and neurofeedback in a group setting for innovative and comprehensive support.

#### What to expect from this group:

- Improved resilience and calm
- Greater sense of you-are-not-alone in your struggles
- Meaningful tools for coping
- Help to understand chronic illness from a broader perspective
- Improved self-confidence

Forming now in Fort Collins!

**When:** Thursdays, 12:30-2:00pm

**Cost:** \$45/session

To learn more or to set up an initial consultation, contact Miriam Bellamy at [miriam@marriagehelpcolorado.com](mailto:miriam@marriagehelpcolorado.com) or by phone at 303-222-5118.

You can also visit <https://marriagehelpcolorado.com/chronic-illness-support-group/> to learn more.



# Connections Community Education

## 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

- ◆ Wednesday, November 13th
- ◆ Tuesday, December 10th

To register for a QPR class, please contact Emily Leetham at [eleetham@healthdistrict.org](mailto:eleetham@healthdistrict.org) or call 970-530-2883.

