THE COUNSELOR

Lake Autumn Leaves, Gatekeeperto, Lyons OR

President's Message

Greetings, fellow ORCA members!

Change is in the air as autumn is upon us, and your counseling association is in the midst of change, as well. As you know, I have stepped into the role of your president this year, and I am excited about all that we plan to accomplish for you. I would like to thank our now past-president Ryan Melton for his year of dedicated service. ORCA has benefitted greatly from his vision and leadership.

In addition to a changing of the guard in the president's role, we are thrilled to welcome our longtime friend Doug Querin as he steps back into his role of Ethics Committee Chair for the Oregon Counseling Association. Doug has held this post for a number of years and recently took a sabbatical from the position to focus on his other leadership roles in the field. We are lucky to have Doug's expertise and knowledge at work for ORCA members. In addition to welcoming Doug back to the board, we have recently welcomed a number of new committee chairs in the past few months: Kathleen Coleman (Human Rights), Sue Ujvary (Networking), Meghan Opbroek (Graduate Programs), and Caity Morgan and Taylor Wolf (Professional Development and Education). We would also like to welcome Joseph Hernandez into his role as Oregon Career Development Division President, and Kara Eads as our new Treasurer. We are also thrilled to welcome OACES Division President, Joel Lane, into his new role as President Elect. We are so happy to have you all!

We are also excited about our upcoming Oregon Mental Health Practitioners Conference on Friday and Saturday, November 4th and 5th, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Portland. Our conference has a new interdisciplinary focus this year—serving not just counselors and therapists but a number of our important allies in the mental health field. Conference Chair Candice Elliott and her outstanding committee have worked hard all year to plan and organize an exciting lineup for us. We are thrilled to have Scott Miller of the International Center for Clinical Excellence present the all-day workshop, "Achieving Clinical Excellence: Three Steps to Superior Performance." We are honored, as well, to have Dr. Craigan Usher of OHSU as our keynote speaker on Saturday. He will present "Supportive Psychotherapy and Supervision for the Busy Clinician," which will help many of us in various settings. We have a number of other outstanding presenters who will discuss a variety of topics for your enjoyment and education. If you haven't already registered for the conference, I encourage you to visit our website today.

One more change this fall that I'm excited to tell you about involves ORCA's look, feel, and message. Over the past year, through interviews and surveys with members and non-members, we have been working to refine and update our organizational vision, message, and look so that we may better represent all of you and also grow our association. Among these changes, you will soon see our new logo and, eventually, a new website. If you feel so inclined, we'd love to hear your feedback as these changes roll out over the next few months.

Amidst the changes, some important things remain the same: if your job is to support the mental health of Oregonians, then we're here to support you. Thank you for your membership with the Oregon Counseling Association. We're honored to serve you!

I wish you all a lovely fall season, and I look forward to seeing and visiting with many of you at the conference in November.

Sincerely,

Raina Hassan, MS, LPC
President, Oregon Counseling Association

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The Ethical Meditating Therapist

by Nelly Kaufer, LPC

Whether you already meditate or wish you would and feel guilty that you don't– as a therapist these days, meditation is likely a consideration. This was quite different not that long ago. At my internship at San Francisco Hospital in 1989 it was just fine to be "out" as a lesbian, while I carefully hid that I was a Buddhist meditation teacher.

There are many different kinds of meditation, each with their own processes and benefits, as well as side effects. Perhaps what they have in common is an increased ability to be settled with inner experiences. A more unstructured form of meditation or therapy follows the interests, direction and inclinations of the client or meditator. Recollective Awareness Meditation is founded on a kind of trust born of experience– that caring, attentive listening will reveal what needs to be known and explored. Positive growth will occur in unpredictable ways.

Research has proven that meditation has many benefits and therapists reap additional professional advantages. Sophie Davis-Cohen, a meditation student that I trained and who is now a meditation teacher, completed a qualitative study of Recollective Awareness Meditation (RAM) for her master's degree thesis last year. "RAM encourages a meditator to know and tolerate one's inner world; this study suggests it is highly protective for therapists, whose jobs entail effectively working with others' pain, thoughts, and emotions… This study's major findings show RAM offered therapists in the study a powerful process of self-care with many significant benefits."

What does meditation have to do with ethical development, and how, as therapists striving for ethical conduct, can we harness this? Again, this depends on how we meditate, though all Buddhist meditation is deeply rooted in ethics; when we act with ethical integrity our minds tend to more easily settle and our inner worlds are more peaceful. The highest level of ethical development entails grappling with internal values and complex issues rather than adhering to rules or "being good".

In Recollective Awareness Meditation we allow whatever occurs in our inner worlds to naturally unfold. This means we allow thinking and emotions, even about uncomfortable or difficult subjects such as ethical dilemmas. I teach continuing education workshops where Recollective Awareness Meditation becomes the doorway through which we explore the complex ethical demands of our work.

As a mental health professional it is natural to encourage clients to allow and explore their thoughts and feelings, but I wonder if you fully allow your own thoughts and emotions when you meditate? Meditation can be a time to connect with and "hold" ourselves in ways we hopefully relate with our clients– with kindness and genuine interest in the range of your inner experiences.

Nelly Kaufer, LPC is a psychotherapist in private practice and lead teacher for Pine Street Sangha, A Recollective Awareness Meditation center in Portland. She has been teaching meditation, mindfulness, and Buddhist psychology to therapists in CE workshops for over a decade. Contact her at nelly@pinestreetsangha.org or www.pinestreetsangha.org.

Conference Schedule

Downtown Crowne Plaza Convention Center, Portland, OR. **Register now** at www.or-counseling.org

November 4, 2016

7:45 AM – 8:30 AM	Registration
8:30 AM – 11:45 AM	**Scott D. Miller: Clinical Excellency: Three Steps To Superior Performance - Part I** *(includes a break)*
11:45 AM – 12:45 PM	**Awards Luncheon**
12:45 PM – 4:00 PM	**Scott D. Miller, Clinical Excellency Part II** *(includes a break)*
4:00 PM – 4:15 PM	Announcements / CE Forms Signed *(6 CEs for November 4th)*

November 5, 2016

7:45 AM – 8:30 AM	Registration
8:30 AM – 8:45 AM	**Presidential Welcome and Legislative Update**
8:45 AM – 9:45 AM	**Keynote Speaker: Craigan Usher, MD** *(1 CE)*
9:45 AM – 10:00 AM	Break
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	**Workshop Session 1** *(2 CEs)*

How to Change the Brain in Pain – *Kris Fant*
Authentic Identity Development for Young People who Experience Psychosis – *Katie Hayden-Lewis*
Aligning Clients' Sensitivity: Parts Work and Use of Self – *Rick Johnson*
And Now for Something Completely Different – *John McCarthy*

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	Lunch (provided)
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	**Workshop Session 2** *(2 CEs)*

When Trauma Leads to Psychosis – *Ron Unger*
Neuro Alignment: Bringing the Nebulous into Focus – *Josh Sizemore*
EASA Magic – *Laticia Sainz & Megan Sage*
What's Sensory Got to do with It? – *Sue Wimmer*
Working with 21st Century Teens and Families: A New Template for Connection in a Digital Age – *Yshai Boussi*
Ethics in the Digital Age – *Paul Cooney*

3:00 PM - 3:15 PM	Break
3:15 PM - 4:15 PM	**Workshop Session 3** *(2 CEs)*

Occupational Therapy and Supported Employment: Collaboration Ideas for Job Outcomes in EASA – *Halley Read*
Clinical Development for Paraprofessional Counselors – *Dominique Sotelo*
Dismantling Rigidity, Developing Curiosity: Learning from the Peer Support Model – *Reggie Lee*
A New Way to C.A.R.E: Minimizing pediatric anxiety and trauma – *Julie Lerwick*
So Your Client Has Career Questions? Exploring Career Counseling through the Mental Health Lens – *Tina Anctil*

4:15 PM – 4:30 PM	CE Forms Signed *(up to 6 CEs for November 5th)*

Sponsors: Cedar Hills Hospital; Jackson County; Portland State University; Cooney, Cooney & Milligan; Eating Recovery Clinic.
Exhibitors: Trillium Family Services, Doterra, Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Monte Nido and Affiliates, Talkspace.

Career Corner

Identity Shift: Insights to Keep Work From Preoccupying Our Lives

by Dave Gallison, MS, LPC

How many of you who read the newspaper – be ready to symbolically raise your hand – read the obituaries? Hand-raisers don't worry, you're actually in good company, as over half of newspaper readers do. I do, and for me, these abbreviated biographies, the time and place of a person's beginnings, their educational and career milestones, family connections and travel, can be a window into the meaning of a life well-lived.

As a career counselor, however, why would I bring up obituaries? To start with, I meet people under the stress of having to find a new job, or longing desperately to improve their positions or salaries—either way, career tends to have an outsized place in their life. Don't get me wrong, the issue is not work per se, it's the obsessive striving and preoccupation that seems to take over their perspectives. Back to the newspaper connection, if career were that important in our lives, you'd think it would be reflected proportionately in obituaries, right?

In order to test this notion, I performed a content analysis on 11 randomly selected obituaries in Sunday's paper, five women and six men, aged 73 – 96. I measured the number of lines devoted to describing career and work accomplishments and then calculated this as a percentage of the total lines for each one. Finally, I averaged them all together: the range was from 0% to a high of 27%, with the most common value of 10%, and an average of 11% obit space devoted to one's work.

This limited sample suggests that the family members who wrote the obituaries used almost 90% of the available lines not on describing their departed's career accomplishments, but on their relative's early life, family connections, and describing their values and what kind of person they were. Warmth, thoughtfulness, humor, generosity and one's place in a loving family were valued in the family text.

To wit, here are several of my favorites:

- And he was beloved. His kindness was legendary; he made time for everyone and found something to encourage in each individual.
- Marcia had irrepressible visions for improving the life of all. She was optimistic, enthusiastic, volatile and excited by the creative.
- A 63-year old woman identified only as a mother and grandmother ended with, "She was love, so she was loved by many."
- We remember Dad for all the good times we shared, and being in the presence of a kind, gentle, steady, understanding, adventurous, and loving man. He was a man of quiet presence and thoughtful action, and all who knew him always felt safe and supported.

The latter was actually my father, who died six months ago, which is partly why I felt moved to pick this topic.

The reality is, in our adult years, many of us spend too much time on work and all things related to career, when it is borne out in the end to have very little meaning to significant others or connection to our souls. Maybe some of you are with me in beginning to shift ourselves (as well as help our clients), away from a pre-occupation with work that can consume our waking moments, ever worrying about never having enough or endlessly achieving.

Similar to obituaries, equally powerful prose about overwork and misplaced values can be heard in messages from the deathbed, such as "Top 5 Regrets of the Dying." Number two is the classic, "I wish I didn't work so hard." Assisting clients to let go of or reduce their fixation on work can be much like dealing with a form of addiction.

How can counselors, in our all-too-brief one-hour meetings, help prompt a client's realization of life-affirming values before it is too late? Engaging clients in an exercise like the Career Values Card Sort can result in surprisingly motivating insights when clients compare their top ten ranked values like "Family" or "Work-Life Balance" with their current work and lifestyle that seems to exclude experiencing those. In this way we can begin to point the way that it is possible to simplify their lifestyle and make conscious choices

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along the way, so that they do not need the income that they think they do.

Finally, to help us catch ourselves in our momentary choices, often no truer words about living exist than those spoken when a loved one leaves life:

> "Isn't that finally the measure of a man – the way he lives, how he treats others, no matter what life may throw at him? We do not know how long we've got here. We don't know when fate will intervene. We cannot discern God's plan. What we do know is that with every minute that we've got, we can live our lives in a way that takes nothing for granted. We can love deeply. We can help people who need help. We can teach our children what matters, and pass on empathy and compassion and selflessness." – Barack Obama, eulogy for Beau Biden

Thus, the sweet essence of obituaries and eulogies give us reminders and leading questions to live, and perhaps work by in the here and now: Isn't the legacy of how we live more important than fleeting accomplishments? What would it mean to live and work more fully aware of the greatness of one's being? As we strive to be more fully conscious and answer these questions in our lives, we in turn model new possibilities for clients who desire to live life as a whole.

Dave Gallison, MS, LPC, has a practice in Portland, OR that emphasizes career and personal development to help clients find rewarding work. He collaborates with a guild of local career counselors that also publish a biweekly blog, *Career Transition: The Inside Job*. Visit www.gallisonconsulting.com or e-mail dave@gallisonconsulting.com.

COPACT Corner

by Chad Ernest, LPC, COPACT Board President

COPACT, the Coalition of Oregon Professional Associations for Counseling and Therapy (whose parent organizations are ORCA and OAMFT) has been busy this past year planning for the upcoming legislative session as well as developing a rebranding effort to make our information more accessible to all counselors and therapists. We have created a new mission statement, a Facebook page, a twitter account (@OregonCOPACT), and have been filming videos to in order to reach out to counselors and therapists across Oregon.

Next year, the Oregon Legislature will convene for a regular session lasting about five months, which means LOTS of new bills for COPACT to analyze. Fundamentally, COPACT will always work to protect the Practice Act, which established our rights and responsibilities as mental health professionals. We will also look closely at anything that impacts counselors' and therapists' abilities to provide the best care for our clients—especially bills that might either support or impede access to that care. As bills come up, the team at COPACT will keep everyone updated through regular updates via social media, emails, and the newsletter.

COPACT is also working to add LPCs and LMFTs to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) Rules, so we have the same opportunity as social workers to be Forensic Evaluators. This may happen through rulemaking, or it may have to be legislated. Additionally, COPACT is involved in conversations around what is happening at OBLPCT (our professional board) with regard to the changes to the Legislative Rules and Ethics that govern all counselors and therapists.

As always, if there is anything that you feel COPACT needs to look at or address, please feel free to contact COPACT Board President Chad Ernest, at president@copactoregon.com. Also check out at our website at www.copactoregon.com for the latest updates. While you're there, consider making a donation to the cause, and remember that **you also support these important efforts when you renew (or begin) your ORCA or OAMFT membership!**

Please support our lobbying efforts through COPACT:

Coalition of Oregon Professional Associations for Counseling and Therapy

COPACT is ORCA's and OAMFT's legislative advocacy organization working on behalf of LPCs and LMFTs in Oregon. The funds we raise go directly to paying our lobbyist, Elizabeth Remley, to pursue the passage of legislation that supports and protects our professions. To learn more about what COPACT is doing for LPCs and LMFTs, visit www.copactoregon.com.

You can donate directly to **COPACT** via PayPal at www.copactoregon.com/donate. All donations are tax deductible as business expenses. In addition to direct donations, a large percentage of ORCA membership dues go to our lobbying efforts. Please keep your ORCA membership current, and encourage your colleagues to become members as well! Thank you for your support.

Keeping Yourself Nourished by Setting Good Boundaries

by Elsbeth Martindale, Psy.D. – part 2 of 3

Remember Carla, the fictitious and stressed therapist I wrote about in the last newsletter? She served as a model for improving self-care. I suggested in that article that Carla needed to take time for reflection as a way to create more objectivity. This stepped-back position allows a shift from being a responder to being a designer of one's life.

I'd like to offer another important aspect of self-care: clear boundaries. I'll use Carla again as an example of what can be done to keep nourished and vibrant as a therapist. Hardworking Carla found herself taking her work home, not only chart notes but the emotional concerns of her clients. She was reviewing her sessions, talking with others about her client's problems, and worrying about her client's when she was away from the office. Carla didn't know how to "turn her work off".

How often do you take your work home? Do you struggle under the emotional weight of your clients' challenges. Are you losing sleep from client worry? Do you catch yourself talking about your clients outside the office or consultation/supervision? Are you texting or emailing clients from home regarding their treatment? These are signs your boundaries are thin or nonexistent and it is one of the hazards of our profession. It can be a difficult task to leave the concerns of your clients behind when you've just spent the day deeply invested in examining, understanding, and attempting to solve their challenges with them.

You may be like Carla, needing to find a way to leave your work at the office so you could be fully present in the other aspects of your life. I often use the metaphor of being a garden tool-seller as a therapist, in contrast to being a gardener. My job is to assess what tools my clients need in order to accomplish their goals. I cannot do the work for them but I can equip, support, and train them to use effective tools in a skillful manner. If their garden remains weedy and disorganized, I may need to help them sharpen their tools or show them different strategies for using them. Progress is really dependent on an equipped client's own investment in doing the hard work to make desired changes.

If you integrate this concept into your work, you can give the responsibility for your client's change and growth back to them. You can train your clients to become skillful and self-supportive. This will relieve the sense of obligation to be the agent of change in your clients' lives. You don't need to blame yourself if they choose to remain stuck, and you also can't take the credit when they skillfully direct their lives to be more fulfilling. If Carla could grasp this idea, she could find some needed objectivity and relief from the worry about her clients.

Carla can also make a clear boundary between her work and the rest of her life by designing a little ritual to do before leaving her office. She might put her hand on her office door as she exited, mentally asking herself for all of the worries shared in the office to remain in the office

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Good Boundaries (continued from p. 7)

and not follow her home. This kind of intention setting, made concrete by a ritual, can be surprisingly helpful. It really is okay to leave the heaviness of your work at the office, to be picked up and managed again when you return.

Find ways to clearly mark your work time as separate from your family, play, or personal time. Set boundaries around your clients' access to you during your personal time. Let them know the kinds of contact, including calls, texts, and emails you are willing or unwilling to take when you are not in the office. Be fierce in your protection of your time. These strategies will keep you from burning-out in the important work you are doing.

Think of the demonstration on an airplane flight. We are instructed, every time we fly, to "in case of emergency, don your own mask first, before assisting others." This is good advice, but apparently we need to be reminded of it over and over because of our kind-hearted predisposition to help others before ourselves. No where is this more true than in our profession. We can't help others effectively if we, ourselves, are not being nourished and breathing deeply into our own lives.

Elsbeth Martindale, Psy.D., LP, has a private practice in Portland. In addition to working directly with clients, Elsbeth is invested in training and supervising young professionals to be excellent therapists. She offers trainings on her Psychotherapy Toolkit and retreats on Restorative Self Care. She can be reached at elsbethmartindale.com or elsbeth@elsbethmartindale.com.


Under a Blood Red Sky, Ian Sane, Marion OR

Improving Our Relationship with Our Spouse by Shifting Into our "Big-I"

by Jon Fox, MS, LPC Intern

Many clients would like to improve their relationships with their spouses or partners. I'd like to share ideas about using mindfulness along with a particular "parts" approach to help your clients improve their relationships with their significant others. Conflicts are an inevitable part of relationships. I believe conflicts, if handled with some care, are a pathway to overcoming personal wounds that began way before we met our partners.

When we are triggered into an emotional state, a part of us shows up with unconscious and conscious past memories related to our current emotions. For instance, our partner tells us "You never do this right" and suddenly we feel shame fueled by the time when we were 13 that our father called us stupid for not understanding our math homework. Other times of unconsciously feeling incompetent add fuel to our feelings of shame in this present conflict.

In this moment, our partner is not dealing with our adult, mature self, but more likely our 13-year-old self, whose impulse is to react and protect ourselves with the best strategy we were able to come up with at the time. This strategy could be to get angry and hurl an insult back, or shutting down, numbing out and taking space from our partner by retreating to another room.

Jon Eisman, a co-founder of M.E.T.A. (Mindful Experiential Therapy Approaches), calls the above mentioned part of ourselves one of our "little I's". We go into a "little I" state when we feel hurt. We then use a strategy to protect or defend ourselves that doesn't honor our deeper needs. Our "little I" state might long or lobby for our authentic wishes, such as "Why don't you notice or acknowledge me when you walk in the room?", but the reaction covers up the possibility of getting this need met. In this instance, our authentic wish is to be seen and feel important to our spouse.

We're in a "Big I" state when we can feel or express our emotions authentically, and our thoughts, emotions, and actions are easy and harmonious. This is our preferred state of being, when we feel mature, whole, expansive, and connected to ourselves and others. It is not just a question of feeling positive emotions, because our "Big I" knows that all emotions are important to feel. For instance, I feel sad, so I cry because it feels right to let the sadness out and move through me. Also, by showing my sadness, my partner is drawn towards me to comfort and soothe me. So our "Big I" naturally embraces even unpleasant emotions, if they are true to ourselves and the situation.

First, clients need to learn the difference between "little I" and "Big I," and then recognize when they're in their "little I" versus their "Big I" state. You can use these examples to communicate the difference.

"Big I" experience: You're driving your car and notice someone wants to get in your lane. There's room, so you let them in without adding tension to the situation.

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"Little I" experience: You're driving and someone wants to get into your lane. You tell yourself, "People are such jerks and always are trying to intrude on my space!" You speed up and don't let them in.

Another "little-I" example might be screaming in anger at your child because they forgot to clean their room. Screaming at them for the messy room might only motivate our kids to avoid us more and feel more disconnected.

A "Big-I" reason for screaming at your child could be because they walked out into the street and you needed to warn them of an oncoming car to avoid getting hit. The screaming then served an appropriate protective function.It does take practice to learn to be mindful of these states of mind, so be gentle and compassionate with yourself in this process.

As I've mentioned, it has to do with understanding the deeper needs and intentions of our "little-I's". Well let's get to it. Here is a step-by-step process using mindfulness that can help your clients learn how to shift from their "little I" to their "Big I".

An event happens in their day that triggers them into an uncomfortable emotional state…

1. Have them notice the emotion they're feeling right now and name it to themselves...get really specific….not all dislike is anger and not all disappointment is sadness.

2. Have your client locate the "part" of them that feels this particular emotion. As you all know, we can experience multiple emotions at the same time, so we usually can say that just a "part" of us feels a certain way. First, locate the "part" by guiding them to find where that emotion resides in their body. You might say to them, "When you feel worried, does your stomach tighten, feel sour, cause you sharp or dull pain?"

3. Next, have them mindfully observe this part of their body, moment to moment, taking care to breathe naturally. Notice if just the act of paying attention to their body and noticing their breath releases the tension. If so, they might find themselves already in a "Big-I" state and realize how they could have asked their partner for help with that household chore in a non-guilt inducing way. But if the insight doesn't come from the body awareness, go to this next step….

4. Have your client bring some mindful presence again to the emotion they're feeling and have them notice if this emotion in this situation feels familiar to them. Have them feel some of the memories related to times in their life when they felt this way. They might notice that this feeling goes back to childhood.

5. You might have them visualize this part of themselves as a person, animal, or creature other than themselves. This "ignored" part of them might bring an image up of an ugly monster that feels too undesirable for anyone to pay attention to it. Help them name this part of themselves…. maybe "my Ignored Monster" or any name that is meaningful to them.

6. With a non-judgmental, compassionate attitude, have them ask their inner Ignored Monster what it needs or wants right now. "What do you need from me?" See how it responds. Have them continue this conversation until it feels heard and understood. Maybe it just needs their "Big I" to say, "I care about you" or "I won't leave you by yourself" or "I know how scary it is to feel like you don't belong".

7. They might find this inner dialogue gives them some motivation to express their hurt feelings to their partner, taking ownership for how their own wounded parts feed into how they respond to their partner. When their partner hears how deep this goes for them, they may feel more empathy and take responsibility for their part in the hurt. They might also be more attentive and careful around this trigger for their partner.

As a therapist, you might practice this technique on yourself, and after you feel very comfortable practicing it, introduce it to your clients. This approach draws some ideas from Jon Eisman's Recreation of the Self (RC-S) approach to psychotherapy. You can learn more about M.E.T.A. trainings for this and other mindful-experiential approaches at www.meta-trainings.com.

Jon Fox, MS, LPC Intern holds an M.S. in Counseling Education from PSU. He completed his internship at the M.E.T.A. Counseling Clinic and is a graduate of M.E.T.A.'s Two-Year Comprehensive Training in Hakomi, RC-S, attachment interventions, and trauma release methods. He currently runs a private counseling practice in Southeast Portland where he works with individuals and couples with relationship issues, a history of trauma, and codependency. He can be reached at 503-954-4852, jonfoxcounseling@gmail.com, or www.mindfulnesstherapyportland.com.

Working with Parents of Estranged Adult Children

by Tina Gilbertson, LPC, DCC

If you've been a counselor for a while, you've probably run across at least a few adult clients who don't talk to their parents. Whatever the reasons for this estrangement– criticism, self-centeredness or general "cluelessness" in the parent being typical examples – the client finds the relationship too painful to continue.

It's easy to empathize with clients who describe damaging behavior by parents. How many of us have diagnosed narcissism in a client's mother or father from afar, in order to normalize and validate the client's experience? Without personal contact, you might imagine these abandoned parents as a thoughtless, personality-disordered, unappealing bunch. When I began offering counseling to parents estranged from their adult children, I was struck by how much I enjoyed them as people. Yes, each of them was someone's "difficult" parent. But as clients, the vast majority were appropriate, polite, and even sweet.

How do you reconcile the expectation of full-blown narcissism with the reality of nice, well-behaved people? What I've pieced together from sitting with these parents is that they often have unmet emotional needs. This isn't the only cause of parent-adult child estrangement, but it's a biggie.

Normal emotional needs that have gone unmet complicate the practice of parenting. This is true even for people who are intelligent, good-hearted and in most ways high-functioning. Being a parent requires uniquely high levels of empathy and patience. These are impossible to pull off consistently when your "emotional bucket" is less than full– i.e., when your own needs for empathy and patience have not been adequately met. Every struggling parent is also a wounded adult child. Parents whose children have cut them off deserve compassion and a chance to heal in an atmosphere of acceptance and caring. Below are some tips for working with them.

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Estranged Parents (continued from p. 11)

Tips for Working with Estranged Parents

You may already have clients whose relationship with an adult child is troubled. If so, they may downplay this for fear of judgment -- not because they believe you're judgmental, but because of their own shame. Deep down, most parents blame themselves when their children reject them. It might be buried under anger, hurt or indignation, but you'll almost always find shame at the base of it all. So…

- **Tread softly with clients whose adult children are unhappy with them.** Avoid jumping straight into problem-solving, or asking them for details about how they interact with their child.
- **Take time to acknowledge the parent's pain, and help them understand the emotional impact of being rejected.** Having worked with many abandoned parents, I can tell you their pain is excruciating. Be a sturdy container and don't minimize; this is core material.
- **Avoid labeling or diagnosing their estranged adult child based on what you hear.** Model compassion and kindness toward everyone involved, not just the parent. The client relies on this model to help him forgive and find compassion for himself, as well as his adult child.
- **Encourage the parent to focus inward instead of rushing to reconcile.** Underline personal growth and healing as prerequisites to repairing the relationship.
- **Instill hope.** Most estranged children would love to be able to cherish their parents. It's never too late for sincere, supported attempts at repair. I've seen miraculous reconciliations happen after parents attend to their own healing.

Tina Gilbertson, LPC, DCC works with estranged parents throughout Oregon and Colorado at a distance, and in person from her office in Denver. Reach her at tina@TinaGilbertson.com.

Seasons Change by Ian Sane, Marion OR

Art in Session

by Kris Fant, LMHC, LPC

Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words. I am not a registered art therapist, but I have been using and learning about expressive arts throughout my career. I want to share two ideas that might help others in their practice as well.

Project One: Boundaries

Best suited for: teens and adults
(can be adapted for children)

Materials needed: Paper, drawing utensils

Purpose: to create a meaningful metaphor to use in therapy sessions

Boundaries is a challenging concept to describe, especially for people whose boundaries have been violated consistently. One project I enjoy doing with clients is a physical representation of their boundaries drawing. I will ask them if they would be willing to do a project with me, and if they say yes, I give them paper and art supplies. I ask them to take a moment, and to think of a physical object that could represent the boundary between themselves and others. If they struggle with this idea, I expand with ideas such as "a fence can divide property, a shoreline divides land from water, the walls of a house divide inside from outside. Is there a physical object that you can imagine around you that separates you from others?"

Usually, at this point, people have a picture in their head that will work. I give them time to draw it, and when they are done, we lay it on the floor between us. I ask them what they see. We discuss how people can get in and out and who can get in and out. We compare that to who they want to be able to let in and out, and see if those are congruent; if not, we discuss either strengthening the boundary or adding access, depending on the type of boundary, and I ask them if they'd like to modify their picture. Once the client has a clear visual, we can apply that metaphor to actual situations in their life. We come back to their chosen metaphor throughout the therapy process, and clients will sometimes ask to update or redo their picture.

Project Two: Coloring Outside the Lines

Best suited for: all ages

Materials needed: Adult coloring book pages, chalk pastels

Purpose: to discuss perfectionism, thinking outside the box, challenging ideas of beauty

When I have a client struggling with perfectionism, I ask if they'd do an experiment with me. I present them with a stack of adult coloring pages to look through, and ask them to choose one to color. Then, I bring out the chalk pastels. I tell them they can take as long as they'd like to color the page they have chosen, and I will also choose one and do the same. While I am using the chalk pastels, I will often do a big area of the picture, and smudge it with my fingers, and do another area and smudge it with a Kleenex. I'll layer and mix colors. Sometimes the client is completely absorbed in their own experience, and other times, they follow my lead in how to use the pastels. When they feel they are complete, we discuss the experience. The discussion ranges from the tactile nature of the chalk pastels, the anxiety about trying to keep the colors in the lines, the lack of precision, or the lack of pressure. We discuss how this experience is like life, and what we can learn from this experience to carry forward.

If these appeal to you, the books I frequently turn to for additional ideas are "Art Therapy for Groups" by Marian Liebmann, "The Art Therapy Sourcebook" by Cathy Malchiodi, "Square the Circle" by Rebecca Bloom, and The Expressive Arts Activity Book by Suzanne Darley and Wende Heath.

Kris Fant, LPC/LMHC works at Progressive Rehabilitation Associates. She specializes in working with individuals who have persistent pain or traumatic brain injury. She has run expressive arts groups for individuals dealing with substance abuse issues, people involved with the legal system, and people experience persistent pain. You can reach her at 360-828-8912, kris@progrehab.com, www.progrehab.com. When she's not at work, you'll find her riding off into the sunset on her motorcycle.

Japanese Garden by Sasquatch I, Portland, OR

Join the ORCA Technology Committee!

- Use your skills in a way that helps other counselors! Be part of the team that supports this amazing organization that provides lobbying, resources, and connection to counselors all across the state.
- Our meetings are 100% online, so you can participate from anywhere. Most of our projects are online as well!
- There are dozens of ways to contribute. Whether you're interested in troubleshooting tricky software problems, helping us keep the website up to date and helpful, coordinating A/V for events, hosting webinars, or think you're a really good Googler, we'd love to have you.
- The time commitment is very small. Most members spend less than an hour or two a month on what we're working on, and the more people we have, the less time is required! You don't have to commit to anything you don't have time for. There's no minimum investment, other than attending a meeting every other week.
- We have a great sense of humor!

http://or-counseling.org/volunteering/

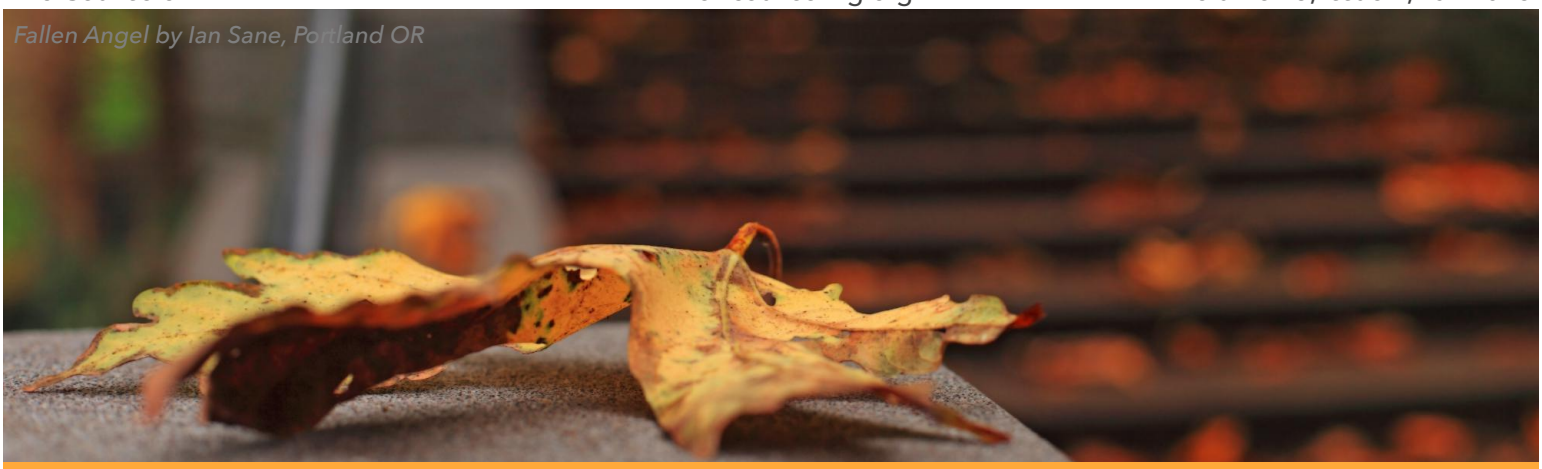
Join the ORCA Human Rights Committee!

Are you a professional who is passionate about addressing the intersection of human rights and mental health? If so, the Oregon Counseling Association (ORCA), Human Rights Committee is actively seeking volunteer committee members who are interested in:

- Writing book reviews and short articles on relevant topics to be publishing on the ORCA website and in the quarterly ORCA Newsletter.
- Collaborating with other social justice groups and non-profits to address barriers to mental health, and ways we can support these groups through attending events and workshops, fund raising, and spreading awareness.
- Collaborating with COPACT (www.copactoregon.com) to address ethical, human rights, and legal issues that impact counselors and clients in Oregon.

If you are interested in joining the HR Committee and would be willing to volunteer a few hours each month, please contact Kathleen Coleman at:

humanrights@or-counseling.org


Fallen Angel by Ian Sane, Portland OR

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