



Unity Family Services

Newsletter

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Raising the bar in mental health services™

Issue 4

Unity Family Services has been providing community-based mental health services to adults, children, adolescents and families in Armstrong, Butler, Indiana and Westmoreland Counties since 2000 when our Executive Director, Michelle S. Gould MSW, LCSW, founded Unity Family Services, Inc.

We offer an array of services including:

In Home Family Based Services with a competent team approach to therapy using the systemic structural family therapy approach. This service is for kids at risk for hospitalization and out of home placements and families in need.

Out Patient & Tele Psychiatric Services for individuals, couples, and families as well as children, adolescents and adults. We have several specialty services dealing with court ordered custody evaluations, PTSD, and mood

disorders, as well as numerous psychiatric disorders both common and rare. We even have a clinical specialist (CSOTS) treating sex offenders and related offensive disorders.

Peer Support Services are offered with over 20 highly respected certified peer support specialists, some of which are also certified as recovery specialists by the Department of Drug and Alcohol Program and all services are authorized from the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

We are proud to be a leader in recovery teachings with a focus on freedom of choice and wellness of all participants in the program. Every member of the program has been through the state approved peer support training curriculum. We operate two free standing facilities one in downtown Kittanning located in Armstrong County and one in Indiana County.



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Mental Health and Diet

Mental health can be negatively or positively affected by a person's diet choices. Research has shown that vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and metabolites have been shown to augment antidepressants, improve symptoms in anxiety disorders, depression, neurodegenerative diseases, brain injury, ADHD, and schizophrenia, and to reduce medication side effects. A balanced mood and feelings of wellbeing can be supported by ensuring that our diet provides adequate amounts of

complex carbohydrates, essential fats, amino acids, vitamins and minerals, and water. Some examples of these foods include, but are not limited to; wholegrain cereals, nuts, beans, lentils, fruit/fruit juice and vegetables. Limited sugar can also help regulate moods, due to sugar being quickly metabolized which causes a spike in energy and is often followed by a crash (or sudden loss of energy). Much like any diet changes consultation with a PCP and/or dietician will help find

the best diet options for each person and their symptoms.

(sources; NCBI, APA, MHF)



Outside your Comfort Zone

People often ask the question, "Why should I push for change when things are ok as they are?" In other words, life in the comfort zone of mediocrity suits them just fine. This article explores why people often prefer to stay in their comfort zone and why it is good to step out of it.

If you made a list of words that you associate with the concept of your staying within your comfort zone, I'm willing to bet that the words would be positive, for examples, "easy", "safe", "relaxed", "comfortable". Conversely words associated with leaving the comfort zone would be negative, for example, "stressful", "risky", "unpleasant", "hard", "anxiety producing", etc. This is why some people, many people, want to keep things just the way they are.

Imagine that your comfort zone is represented by a circle and when you step out of your comfort zone a few times, the size of the circle expands. You get used to doing things that you couldn't previously do and capabilities that were once outside of your comfort zone become consumed into it. You can

then expand your comfort zone and repeat the process until your circle becomes very large.

Now imagine that two people have identically sized comfort zone circles. First person regularly steps out of their comfort zone and it grows. The second person stays inside their zone and the circle stays the same. If you stay inside the comfort zone while others grow around you, the relative size of your comfort zone is actually "shrinking".

We all need to recognize that to achieve your true potential you have to leave your comfort zone. I like to think that Henry Ford of the Ford Motor Company as someone who pushed the boundaries, stepped out of the circle/box and created an assembly line to revolutionize the auto industry. And of course, we have the Wright Brothers of flight innovation.

I would like to challenge you to rethink the comfort zone. Instead of using positive words to describe the comfort one, as I mentioned earlier, think of negative words like 'boring', 'stagnant', and

'unfulfilling'. Then do the opposite for leaving the comfort zone. Think of positive works like 'rewarding', 'challenging', 'exciting', 'energizing' and think of it as a learning opportunity.

I am challenging you readers to think of a goal you would like to achieve. Write a list of benefits associated with leaving your comfort zone and positive outcomes from achieving the goal. Then write a list of negative consequences associated with failing to do this.

Let's all make our comfort zone circles bigger!

- Michelle Gould



Employee Spotlight - Jason Simpson

As the executive director of Unity Family Services, I would like to recognize Jason Simpson for his commitment to recovery! Jason works the recovery principles that make the Peer Support Program the success that it is. This agency recognizes and appreciates the outstanding achievements that he continues to make in his personal and professional development.

Jason was previously employed as a technician for a global aluminum manufacturer for over a decade and when the company downsized was a displaced worker. Instead of

being distraught and devastated by this unfortunate event he chose to recover out loud as a Certified Peer Specialist for Unity Family Services and start his own business. He continues sharing his recovery with his peers and instill hope in many individuals that recovery is possible. In addition, his E-Liquid company Ferrum City Liquid is not only growing but was recognized at the MIDWEST VAPOR EXPO as Voted Midwest's BEST "Cereal Flavor" in Cleveland Ohio. This is no small accomplishment, there where hundreds of flavors to choose from in the contest!

Jason, we congratulate you for taking responsibility for your recovery and being an outspoken advocate for others in recovery. Your continued service to others and ability to use recovery tools to overcome barriers is a shining example that we are more than what society and our jobs define us as. Jason you demonstrate to us all that we are what we choose to do. Your numerous accomplishments prove that when we strive to reach our goals and continue to be part of the solution we can define ourselves.

The Importance of Self-Care

In the field of counseling and psychology, we find ourselves having a deep desire to help others. But what happens to us when we don't help ourselves?

Self-care is just as important to the helper, as the intervention is to the person being helped. Self-care is vital for several reasons, including allowing you to appreciate and accept yourself for who you are. Self-care also allows you to feel relaxed and calm, depending upon what your method of self-care is. It

also reduces the amount of stress placed on your mind and your body.

Self-care can be done in several ways, and there are few limits to how you should take the time to care for yourself. In what ways do you engage in self-care?

For more information, visit: <https://plusguidance.com/blog/importance-of-self-care/>



Behavioral Charts

Using behavioral charts and or chore charts within a home has many implementations to set clear boundary lines on what is expected within the home. Implementing the behavioral charts in a home, have been effective, and a stress reliever for many parents as well.

The chart allows a gentle reminder of what is accepted in the home such as behaviors, affects, and sets a boundary line that children can understand in their own perspective. The chart is a clear indication for children to be reminded, by looking at the wall and understanding what the parents or guardians have set in place for their specific home.

Many children will challenge the chart by pushing the limits to see if the chart will be enforced when they have their parents see that it will not be accepted by them. When this occurs, it is best for the

parents to have a reward and consequence system in place.

Parents usually implement a jar, bowl, or treasure box to provide the children a visual about what rewards can be earned, with a good result from the behavioral chart in place. It is important for the parents to also explain to the children what the consequences are, to encourage the positive outcome for the children to implement the behavioral chart to see positive results. Behavioral and chore charts have been a good example for children to understand and gain more responsibility for themselves within the homes.



“Change your brain, change your life”

How many individuals would like to change their life? From my experience, almost everyone would like to change their life in some shape or form. However, changing our life is difficult, change in routine is a pain, and nobody likes to change things if it takes a lot of effort to do. Dr. Amen wrote, “Change your brain, change your life,” which provides an understanding of how the brain functions, and how changing our thought process can ultimately

change our life style in a positive manner. Dr. Amen provides knowledge regarding mental illness, and why an individual’s brain functions in a certain way due to the illness pertaining to each individual. The book provides scientific evidence regarding how human brain functioning projects in many different behaviors. Dr. Amen provides remedies such as deep breathing techniques, dietary strategies, and memory boosting steps. If you’re looking for ways to

change your life in a positive manner, check this book out!



Recognizing Depression

Many times, Depression often becomes confused with the word, “lazy.” Understanding the difference between laziness, and Depression can change someone’s life. This type of misconception, may deter clinically depressed individual from seeking needed treatment. It is important to recognize the signs of Depression.

A lack of interest in activities, mood swings, feeling discontent,

overwhelming feeling of sadness are all signs of Depression in one’s mood. However, an excess sleepiness, and insomnia may also be a sign of Depression regarding sleep habits.

It is important to recognize an increase or decrease in appetite or fatigue. Do you often feel like you are irritable, maybe even crying excessively but unsure of the cause? There are many signs of

Depression in our mood, sleep habits, appetite, and behaviors. It is important to pay attention to what our body is telling us by these symptoms.

If you’re feeling these symptoms, please reach out to someone – you are not lazy for feeling this way, and it certainly, not your fault.



Family-Based Program

Peer Support Services

Outpatient Services

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