
Providing counseling and other services since 1960 for individuals and families, church congregations, organizations and businesses throughout the Puget Sound area

Going From: "How 'bout those Mariners?"

To: "Oh, I understand."

What brings men to counseling and what happens when they come?

It may happen in their 30s, 40s, 50s or later. Men who have dealt with everything life has handed them -- those whom Michael Rogers, Clinical Director at Samaritan Center, describes as "testosterone-driven fixers"-- find that their defenses are wearing thin. The pressures come at them from all sides. Frustration, depression and anxiety threaten to overwhelm them and their relationships. At the point when they can't outrun their fear, Michael said, it's often through someone close to them who sees or feels their distress -- a doctor, wife, employer, or friend -- that they come to counseling."



"I think men initially tend *not* to view therapy as their domain," said Steve Franks, one of 13 men who provide therapy at Samaritan Center. "They view it as the domain of women: a place where you talk about feelings, problems, relationships. It can be difficult for men to ask for help. They view it as a sign of weakness."

"In fact," said Rob Erickson, "it's generally the women in their lives who ask them (either lovingly or with some level of hostility) to come to counseling."

Jim Aultman said, "The American culture revels in the self-reliant, self-contained and unflappable male hero. These portrayals don't lend themselves to being in touch with real-life despair, vulnerability, or any deep reflection on one's emotional process."

This idea was voiced also by Douglas Johnson. "From my experience working with men in both individual and couple therapy, they often enter into the therapeutic relationship with some fear about having to give up some of themselves and/or be feminized in order to participate in the process. To their delight, they discover that they're invited to be more of themselves, to fully embody their maleness and masculinity and grow in appreciation for themselves and their qualities. In the process, they develop a self-awareness as well as a language that more accurately expresses this and are able to put themselves forward effectively in the world and in their relationships."

Ron Kirstein sees it primarily as a sociological construct. "Men get caught in a kind of 'Catch 22,'" he observes. "They're expected to be traditional, Mr. Fixit, emotionally steady and responsibility-oriented and, on the other hand, they're supposed to be Modern-Man, sensitive and caring, people-oriented. They get confused trying to do it all, and it results in exhaustion, anger and damaged relationships." Ron sees the benefit of therapy occurring when men are able to identify their true selves in the midst of all the "should dos" and "should-bes."



"I see a lot of men who come in because of work stress or transitions like retirement or divorce," Doug LeRoy said, and I find that they respond to a real, practical approach. They want results. They like homework." Doug, a social worker who is trained in transactional analysis (TA), has worked with men for more than 30 years, both at Samaritan Center and in his earlier work with the government. (continued on page 3)

The Samaritan Community

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Marty Hawkins, Michael Rogers,
Gary Steeves

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Kathy Heffernan, Bil Kareta,
MaryHelen Lewis, Ada Mak,
Michael Samsel, Karen Smith,
Allison Spiceland, Eric Stroo,
Dominique Walmsley, and
Natasha White Marsh

Locations

Seattle

Main Office (Greenlake)
Beacon Hill Presbyterian
First Presbyterian
Woodland Park Presbyterian
West Seattle

South

Family of Grace Lutheran (Auburn)
Wabash Presbyterian (Auburn)
Lake Burien Presbyterian
Steel Lake Presbyterian (Federal Way)
Washington Baptist Convention (Kent)
Renton First Presbyterian
First Presbyterian (Puyallup)
Immanuel Presbyterian (Tacoma)

North (Shoreline)

Trinity Presbyterian
St. Luke Parish

West

Rolling Bay Presbyterian
(Bainbridge Island)

East

First Presbyterian of Bellevue
Trinity Lutheran College (Issaquah)
St. Andrews Lutheran (Bellevue)
Overlake Park Presbyterian (Bellevue)
Redmond Presbyterian (Redmond)

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The main office of Samaritan Center of Puget Sound is located at 564 NE Ravenna Blvd, Seattle WA 98115. We can be reached by phone at (206) 527-2266. For more information about Samaritan therapists or programs, please go to our website: www.samaritanps.org.

President's Message

Beverly Shrumm, MC, LMHC

In nearly 50 years of the life of Samaritan Center of Puget Sound/Presbyterian Counseling Service, we have had four directors: our founder and director emeritus Neal Kuyper, Doug Anderson, Terry Steig and myself.



Throughout this time, the integration of spirituality and psychotherapy has been our deeply held core value. In Neal's words, "we are called to be the Gospel in action, the arms and legs of Christ in the world." This winter and spring, we're using our "Second Tuesday" continuing education program for clinical staff to further explore and deepen this integration, with Doug Anderson providing guidance in his inimitable way for our inquiry.

I am aware that we have a second strongly held, shared value -- the belief that the body of Christ is expressed in the context of community. We are strengthened and enlivened by the Living Christ, the presence of one another, and united by shared faith. We choose to do our work within the context of the Samaritan Center community of staff, board, clients and supporters.

Thirdly, this unique community that we think of not as separate entities of donors, staff or board, but simply as "all of us" is deeply committed, as a matter of justice and compassion, to serving those who have limited financial resources. As Bill Collins notes in his article about our low income clinic (p. 7), we are often the "last resource for many who have looked elsewhere but have been unable to find affordable help." We thank you for your prayers and support of this ministry.

When Men Come to Counseling

(continued from page 1)

"When men can't fix it, whatever 'it' is, there's shame associated with that," Doug said. "And it's a lot harder to say 'I'm sad' or 'I'm afraid' than it is to be angry. But when men get hooked in and begin to grow and see results, their whole system gets better and they begin to trust themselves."



Sculpture by Peggy Hansen

Gary Steeves noted that he eventually had to admit that he couldn't fix himself in the aftermath of an auto accident several years ago. Physical therapy and "dealing with it myself" was only helpful up to a point, he said. "It was as if I was carrying that traumatic experience around in my body. I was like a block of concrete." When he finally went to a movement therapist, he said it was transformative. "First of all, the roles were reversed. Someone was working with me—not 'fixing' me but, rather, helping me manage those forces within me. I think it is incredibly powerful when we face our limitations and our vulnerability. We can stop carrying this mantle of having to do everything by ourselves."

Mark Houglum, a pastoral counselor as well as a marriage and family therapist, said that he thinks it is "a huge step for men to seek help. They resist the notion that talking with someone who listens in a safe, affirming, empathic way could be helpful. I find that when they take that risk, they find a sense of greater ease with themselves—a generosity with themselves."

Michael Rogers notes that there are a number of men's groups in the area, including Teleios (see www.teleios.org) and a breakfast group that draws several hundred men at First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue. "I've been part of a small men's group for 16 years," Michael said, "and I have to tell you that we aren't nearly as good at self-disclosure as women are. It takes us a long time to get to an authentic level of sharing."

"Coming into therapy," said Bill Collins, "seems to give men 'a Walden Pond.' A reflective space where they can take stock of themselves and consider healing possibilities. In *The Way of Man*, Martin Buber notes that Yahweh asks Adam in the garden, 'Where are you, Adam?' not because Yahweh does not know the answer, but because Adam doesn't know the answer."

-- Peggy Hansen

In 2005, 'The Men's Fund' was created by a donation of \$1,000 to help low-income men receive needed therapy. This donation, made by a Samaritan staff member who wished to remain anonymous, was matched by other staff contributions. Since then, other donors have joined with Samaritan staff in supporting this fund. You may contribute to 'The Men's Fund' and to Samaritan's other areas of service by using the enclosed donor envelope or contacting us directly (see bottom of page 2). Thank you.

Alignment of Brain Science and Attachment Theory Can Provide More Effective Tools for Change

by Kay Abramson, MS

"Can Tony Soprano Rescue Freud From Managed Care?" That question headlined in the Boston Globe (2/9/03) hinted at the revolution occurring in the field of mental health treatment. The famous TV gangster seeks help for his panic attacks from the TV psychiatrist. What becomes clear in their conversations is that one source of his anxiety is early abuse perpetrated by his mother. In his story, we see the effect that childhood trauma has on the adult's ability to manage life's challenges. The drama not only makes for good TV; it also points to the growing body of neurobiological information which is informing choices for treatment of behavioral problems. It turns out that early developmental experiences have a profound affect on how each of us gets along in the world.



The tool of functional magnetic resonance imaging (real time MRI's) allows researchers to "see" what is happening in the brain when a person feels distress. The information from these pictures of the brain in action confirms (and in some cases, debunks) hunches that therapists have had about "good therapy" since the days of Freud. The science of the brain corroborates a wide body of behavioral research regarding the importance of early mother-child experiences and their effect on life-long functioning. It points toward those ways of relating to others in life and in therapy that align with attachment theory as more effective processes for change.

Key examples of information emerging from brain science that have profound implications for therapists and clients include:

**the importance of early bonding experience (called attachment),
the fact of brain plasticity, and
the healing power of intimate pair bonding.**

Early bonding between mother and child is key to a person's interpersonal functioning through the life span.

"Good enough" early mother-child relationships contain:

- a reciprocal and attuned relationship between adult and child (the mother notices the child's cues and responds quickly, often before a distress cry occurs);
- a solid, bodily connection to emotion (eye to eye, skin to skin, mood to mood);
- an exchange of energy and information between the minds of the adult and the child (the activity in the brain of one begins to be matched in the brain in the other within three hundredths of a millisecond);
- the co-construction of autobiographical narratives by adult and child (talking about and making symbols of the experience solidifies the child's sense of identity).

The secure primary relationship commonly forms and maintains a shared exclusive mental-emotional space protected from the outside world, within which it generates frequent and extended periods of mutually amplified positive feelings, regulates negative emotional states by attenuating their intensity and shortening their duration, and tracks emotional state transitions via periodic unbroken attention.

According to Allan Schore, assistant clinical professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Science at UCLA's School of Medicine, a major conclusion of the last decade of developmental neuroscience research is that the infant brain is designed to be molded by the environment it encounters....specifically the relationship with primary caregivers. "This relationship acts as a template, as it permanently molds the individual's capacities to enter into all later emotional relationships."

The human brain has qualities of plasticity allowing it to change throughout the life span in ways which earlier were thought to be impossible. Under appropriate circumstances, the actual shape of the organ continues to develop. This means that effective therapy can make lasting changes which can approximate or compensate for failures in the early attachment experience between mother and child.

Focused emotional intensity enhances the brain's ability to change. "Because more brain systems are typically active during emotional states than during non-emotional states and the intensity of arousal is greater, the opportunity for coordinated learning...[improves.]", says J. LeDoux in *The Emotional Brain, Fear and the Amygdala (2002)*. Developing better ways of functioning in daily life and creating a more integrated sense of who one is as a person can actually happen!

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Alignment of Brain Science and Attachment Theory . .

Intimate pair bonding, such as in a committed marriage, is arguably the most effective context in which healing of early attachment wounds can be experienced. Because in many significant ways this replicates the early primary bond between mother and child, it can provide the safety and closeness ideally found in that loving relationship. With conscious attention to the attunement between them, a couple can learn to provide a safe emotional space for each of them to learn and grow.

An example of this would be "John" who, at the beginning of therapy, reported irritation when his wife would enthusiastically describe her day's activities upon his returning home tired and exhausted from work. They learned to create a time of quiet connection between them before they would begin to do any verbal sharing of their day's events. In this way, they could avoid the clash of moods between his tired irritability and her joyful enthusiasm by recalibrating and mirroring each other's emotional states before talking. Just as in the mother-child relationship, the communication between partners happens brain to brain, mind to mind, before words have a chance to be spoken. Couples need to (and can!) learn with each other how to use the dynamism between them for enhancing emotional safety and security in the relationship and sidestepping the danger of misunderstanding the meaning of their verbal exchanges.

Brain science supports the long-held hope and belief that people can change in the ways they prefer. It points toward directions for psychotherapy that have a higher likelihood of producing positive change. Therapeutic models that are based on attachment theory have gained credence. Among these therapies are Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) originally developed by Francine Shapiro for the treatment of trauma and successful in treating many other disorders; Lifespan Integration (LI) developed by Peggy Pace for treating adults who have experienced abuse or neglect as children which has been found to be helpful with many populations and issues; and Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT) developed by Susan Johnson which deescalates negative interactions between couples and fosters the development of positive cycles that promote bonding. Websites that may be helpful include: www.emdr.com, www.lifespanintegration.com, www.allanschore.com (check out the links), www.eft.ca, and www.ahealthymind.com.

Kay Abramson has been a member of the Samaritan Center staff since 1984 and is a clinical member and approved supervisor of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). She sees clients at the main office at Ravenna. "I feel privileged to work at Samaritan Center/PCS," Kay says, "where staying current with developments in the profession is highly prized and encouraged."

WAMFT Presents Workshop On Internal Family Systems

Dr. Richard Schwartz, author and widely known family therapist, will be the presenter at the 2008 annual conference of the Washington Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (WAMFT) Saturday, March 8, at Seattle Pacific University.

The workshop will focus on the basic principles and techniques of his therapeutic approach, Internal Family Systems (IFS) and how it is used in working with trauma.

IFS is a collaborative, nonpathologizing approach that helps clients access the Self, an innate state of compassion and wisdom from which they begin to heal the extreme parts of them that result from trauma and constrain their lives. IFS also provides a safe framework for working with couples in which one partner is a survivor of trauma.

Six CEU hours will be provided for LMFTs, LMHCs, LASWs, and LICSWs. For further information and registration, go to www.wamft.org, email at wamft@wamft.org, or call 1-888-553-1228.

New Staff ---- Joanna McGuire

Joanna has joined Samaritan's Youth and Family team, seeing clients at the Ravenna office and in Shoreline.



She is a licensed mental health counselor with extensive experience with youth of elementary, middle and high school age.

Most recently she worked as a school counselor and, before that, at a community agency with youth who were struggling with emotional and behavior issues.

Joanna has a MA from Lewis and Clark College in Portland and BA from the University of Washington. "I view all my clients holistically, within the context of family, peers and the larger society," she said, "and when I work with children, I believe it's important to involve the whole family in treatment in some way."

Resource Development

Significant Donations At Our Annual Luncheon Help Ensure Low Income Women Will Continue To Be Served

On October 10th, 2007, Samaritan Center held its 11th annual Women's Event Luncheon at the Bellevue Hilton Hotel. More than 130 men and women joined together to support low-income women who seek counseling for themselves and their families at Samaritan Center. Along with contributors who were not able to attend the luncheon, supporters raised \$24,242 for the coming year.

Author and lecturer Reverend Jane Vennard, spoke to the group about the "Healing Power of Prayer." Her reflection on the mystery of prayer for each individual and how God works in our lives was encouraging and related closely to the mission of Samaritan Center. It was a reminder that when we act with intention and love, the Spirit works through us in mysterious ways, bringing change and healing to lives and relationships.

Traditionally, we invite a Women's Fund recipient to speak and, as always, this year's client was inspirational. She shared with us how she had experienced change and healing in her life made possible by the dedication of her therapist and support from the Women's Fund. A series of catastrophic events had led her to the point of being homeless. When she was seeking shelter at Lake Burien Presbyterian Church, she was referred by a former Samaritan therapist who volunteers in that program to Samaritan Center for therapy, knowing that the Women's Fund could assist her on her road back to financial self-sufficiency and health. She told us how her time in therapy was pivotal in her recovery and how grateful she was to be talking with those who make significant donations to Samaritan's Women's Fund.

Hearing this former client's testimony reminded us all of the healing power of therapy which is faith-based, and how grateful we at Samaritan Center are to those of you who contribute to this ministry.

-- Heather Christensen

Want to put a penny in Samaritan's pocket? When you do an internet search, use "GoodSearch." This Yahoo-powered search engine donates half its advertising revenue (about a penny per search) to charities its users designate. So go to www.goodsearch.com and enter Samaritan Center of Puget Sound as the charity you want to support.

Thanks and have a very happy 2008!

Mediation Services

How Can You Improve Communication? "Reflect Back."

Mediators are peacemakers. One of our specialties is helping people move from being angry to being agreeable. We use a variety of tools to accomplish this, and one of them is simple but effective: reflecting back what we hear from our clients. *Reflecting back* means restating the basic facts, statements and/or emotions expressed by another--a skill anyone can use.

Let's say two coworkers are having a heated conversation: George says: "I'm tired of answering all the phone calls. Can't you ever answer the phone?" And Laura replies: "That's ridiculous. I answer the phone as much as you do."

Clearly, their conversation is heading toward hostility. What if Laura, instead, had *reflected back* by saying: "It sounds like you're pretty frustrated when the phone interrupts your work." This *reflecting back* statement could turn the conversation in a positive direction by: 1) showing that Laura is listening and that she understands both the facts *and* George's emotions, and 2) inviting *discussion* rather than *argument*. So ... back to the scenario.

When Laura says: "It sounds like you're pretty frustrated when the phone interrupts your work," then George is likely to respond with: "You bet I am. So why don't you start answering the phone instead of waiting for me to get it?" Laura could then say: "It sounds like you'd like to make sure we each do our share of phone-answering. Do you have any ideas?" Then when George suggests: "Well, what if we take turns?" Laura could say: "Okay, let's give it a try."

Next time you're presented with a hostile communication, resist the temptation to make a killer retort and, instead, use the mediator's tactic of *reflecting back*. It will help you solve the problems and discover new solutions.

-- Marty Hawkins, MEd

Low Income Clinic Provides Services For Many

Clinical service through the Low Income Clinic at Samaritan Center is offered across a wide spectrum of needs. There are many reasons couples or individuals need help and many reasons they must seek help within a low-income reality. These include dealing with chronic illness, sudden changes in circumstances such as layoffs, disability, relationship breakups, or simply being part of the “working poor” despite their many hours of hard work each week. Even the stress for someone pursuing graduate school in order to prepare to serve others as a therapist creates a situation where counseling can help but is hard to afford.

We are able to offer more than 3,000 hours of therapy for low income clients each year because of the collaboration of those who volunteer to provide therapy as they work toward state licensure, those who supervise the clinic providers at a pro bono rate, and because Samaritan Center provides office space. In this setting, good therapists learn to be better therapists, and Samaritan Center is able to carry out its mission to educate and support young therapists, a mission that began 35 years ago in the founding of the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Training Center.

Our current clinic providers point out that our clinic is a last resource for many who have looked elsewhere but have been unable to find affordable help. Currently, our average fee for clients is \$15 per session. (To qualify for service in the Clinic, a client must earn less than \$50,000 per year.) Contrary to the spirit of managed care, there is not a limit to the number of sessions available when clients are being helped by contact with their therapist. This allows for a therapeutic relationship where the focus is on growth rather than just the resolution of symptoms.

-- Bill Collins, VP/Training and Operations

Compassion for Clients (and Ourselves) Changes Lives

By Dominique Walmsley, MA

Many of the presenting problems our clients bring to The Clinic concern relationships. People feel really lonely. They have difficulty being alone but they also have difficulty being in relationship. Rather than focus on solving the immediate problems, I have sensed that there is a more fundamental difficulty that comes from individuals losing touch with themselves, and, in losing touch, they have a weak inner guiding system which then brings about anxiety.

For example, a woman came to The Clinic with an eating disorder. Over time, we spoke about her inner life and thoughts to help her tune into them. What happens in the hours before she becomes desperate enough to turn to over-eating? What is she saying to herself? Can she feel the adrenaline rising and her heart beating faster? What does she take in as truths about herself? Are there alternatives to over-eating, even though she doesn't feel able to take them? Can she notice what is going on in her mind and body just before she purges?

This problem might not be everyone's, but it is the way in which anxiety expressed itself in her. Over time she grew to understand what was going on within her and to calm her anxiety. She felt permission to trust her inner messages in order to figure out what to do and what not to do. The same approach can be taken with the symptoms of depression, grief, anger and domestic violence. Not that there are no other treatments, but the underlying problem lies in our lack of self-knowledge and self-love.

We often have very little compassion for ourselves. Yet through compassion we might learn to accept the world as it is, allowing it to be as difficult or opaque as it is. We can then live in ease both when we are satisfied and when we are disappointed.

When we can truly love ourselves, care about what our inner senses are telling us, and act accordingly—even when we might disappoint someone else – we will notice that we are able to relax, reduce our anxiety and think more clearly. We also will have more energy for doing the things that will help others and ourselves.



Dominique is an extern at the Ravenna office of Samaritan Center where she sees individuals, couples and families through the Low Income Clinic. She completed her MA in psychology at Seattle University in 2006.



Formerly Presbyterian Counseling Service

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Resource Center for Ministry

Active Parenting Class To Be Offered in South King County

Getting kids through the pre-teen and teenage years safely (and living through the experience) may be one of the toughest challenges parents have to face. Fortunately, they don't have to go through it alone.

Samaritan therapist Gary Steeves, who has been teaching parenting classes alongside maintaining an active counseling practice in South King County for many years, will present a six-session class on "Active Parenting of Teens" in cooperation with Southminster Presbyterian Church in Des Moines. The class begins Wednesday, February 27, and will meet weekly from 7 to 9 p.m. through April 2. The fee for the class is \$30 per person or \$50 per couple, plus the \$13 cost of a parenting book by Active Parenting expert Michael H. Popkin, PhD.

Parents will strengthen their communication skills, increase their understanding of the goals of teen behavior and develop discipline and problem-handling strategies.

For more information and registration, contact Jane Davis at 206-824-8912 or call Southminster Presbyterian Church at 206-878-8133.



In addition to providing speakers for workshops, retreats and classes, Samaritan's Resource Center for Ministry has staff members who are trained and experienced in doing consultation and conflict resolution with church staffs and congregations. For more information about any of these services, contact us at 206-527-2266.