

Stress Buster Tip

Practice Good Breathing Techniques.

Stressed and anxious people often have very rapid and shallow breathing. When they speak they may barely take a full breath. If you notice that you do this and you want to prevent yourself from getting super stressed and anxious, learn to practice good breathing patterns.

Here's how: inhale deeply, exhale deeply, and breathe from your diaphragm. Let your tension release as you breathe out. Practice these techniques using relaxation tapes, music or during quiet times. Monitor your breathing closely throughout the day and view good breathing techniques as you being proactive in the management of your stress. You will soon notice improvement.

William Lidkea Memorial Social Work Scholarship Announced

Tom Venema and John Stob recently announced the establishment of a scholarship in honour of Bill Lidkea, former partner of Lidkea, Stob, Venema & Associates, who passed away in March of 2010.

John Stob made the announcement at the Annual General Meeting at the Niagara Branch of the Ontario Association Social Workers, held on September 16, 2010 at Rodman Hall in St. Catharines. Wilma Lidkea, Bill's wife, accepted a certificate in commemoration of the establishment of this new scholarship. Several of Bill's friends were also in attendance.

The scholarship of \$750.00 will be awarded every year at the Annual General Meeting to either a part-time or full-time Masters of Social Work student who can demonstrate financial need, can provide 1 professional reference and can write a 2-3 page essay on "How do you see yourself promoting the unique voice of social work in your professional and personal life?" Deadlines for submissions will be March 31st of each year. The Niagara Branch of OASW will administer the scholarship on behalf of Lidkea, Stob & Venema. For further information email oasw.Niagara@gmail.com or google OASW Niagara Branch.

Pull Out the Map:Your Love Map

Dr. John Gottman, relationship expert, best selling author, researcher and psychologist, talks about 'love maps' in his books.

Love maps is a term he uses for that part of our brain where we store all the relevant information about a loved one's life. Love maps are based on the idea that being very familiar with the details of one another's lives help us have happier, more stable relationships. The more we know about their daily experiences, feelings and preferences, the more we will connect with them emotionally.

Complete this exercise to determine how your love map is going:

My spouse's: (Fill in the blanks)

Favourite meal _____
 Favourite musical group or instrument _____
 Two closest friends _____
 Favourite TV show _____
 Ideal birthday present _____
 Favourite sports to watch and follow _____
 Favourite relative _____
 Least favourite holiday _____
 Toughest problem he/she has faced _____
 Happiest life event _____
 Current stresses or worries _____
 Saddest life event _____
 Best parts of his/her current job _____
 Worst parts of his/her current job _____
 Two reasons this person is proudest of himself/herself _____
 Fondest unrealized dream _____
 Favourite way to exercise _____
 Best recent day _____
 Worst recent day _____
 Secret ambition _____

When you take the time and interest to connect more deeply with your spouse, you will have a happier and more stable relationship. Put your spouse on the map, your love map and make it your priority to connect more deeply.

* Dr. John Gottman 'Exercise Love Map'

The Lidkea, Stob, Venema & Associates' Family Counselling Team

Partners: John Stob, MSW RSW and Thomas Venema, MSW RSW.

Our Associates:

Alice Carter BA MSW	Kimberley Gunning MSW RSW	Lorraine Arbuckle MSW RSW	Diane Keenan MSW RSW
Len Dykstra MSW RSW	Diana Cunningham BA MA	Catherine Doan MSW RSW	Geoff Harvey MSW RSW
George Nicolaidi BA MEd	Ruth Beekhuis MSW RSW (Brock University only)		

Our secretary/receptionist: Anne Kennedy
 Our office manager: Debbie Ecker
 Administrative Asst./Receptionist: Christine Hamm

* RSW indicates Registered Social Worker with the Ontario College of Social Service Workers and Social Workers. All associates are registered with a professional organization assuring a Code of Ethics is in place.



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Get Out of the "Past Lane"

Many people who struggle with depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, low self confidence, etc. often spend a lot of their time and energy dwelling on all the negative or perceived negative events that have happened to them in their lives.

It is not uncommon for many people to spend most of their time, thoughts and energy on things that have already happened, rather than on the present and the future. They persistently and excessively focus on past situations, often using a very negative and defeatist lens. In order to obtain good mental health and wellness, it is very important for people to "move forward" and to get out of the 'past lane'. While we can't ignore the past, good mental health usually means we learn from the past, we grow, we get a fresh new perspective and move forward. Are you one of the people who are always in the "past lane?" Is your spouse, parent, child, friend, or colleague? If so, it's time to switch lanes!

Need help with this? Call today to book an appointment with one of our experienced counsellors.

Parent Check-Up Quiz

Take a few moments to complete this quiz based on your role as a parent within the last month or two. Please check (✓) yes or no.

	Yes	No
I have told my child/children that I love him/her.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have affirmed and encouraged my child/children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have shared positive, healthy activities with my child/children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have shown active interest in my children's friends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know their current worries and/or concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know their current dreams and aspirations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been consistent and fair in my discipline.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a positive role model to my child/children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you have answered "yes" to all these questions/statements, congratulations and keep up the wonderful work. If you have answered "no" to some or all these statements, please take the time and make it an immediate priority to improve your relationship with your children. Honestly reflect on why you are not investing in your children as much as you need to be. Don't be afraid to call us for support and assistance in your parenting skills.

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"I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it is." WAYNE GRETZKY

Telltale Signs Your Teen Has a Drug Problem

If you are concerned your that teen has or is beginning to have a drug problem, there are some telltale signs you as a parent should be aware of. These signs include: (please check ✓)

- Chronic eye redness
- Persistent dry cough
- Mood swings (ie hostility, withdrawal, over reactions, depression)
- Poor or deteriorating relationships with family members
- Increased time with friends (possibly many new ones you don't know)
- Loss of interest in favourite activities (ie sports, hobbies, family events)
- Poor grades in school, poor attitude about school
- Absenteeism in school
- Paranoia
- Language includes drug terminology/ references
- Hysterical crying
- Hysterical laughter
- Chronic sore throat
- Chronic fatigue
- Changes in eating patterns
- Changes in sleeping patterns
- Stealing from you or others , shoplifting
- Having lots of money or no money
- Drug slogans on clothes
- Drug paraphernalia
- Drug odours

If you suspect your teen is using drugs, get the assistance you need by seeking professional support, assistance and information.

(List taken and adapted from Partnership for a Drug Free America)

Me? Molested... Maybe?

"It wasn't anything", "I don't like talking about it?", "It's too embarrassing", "It's no big deal", "Yes... and it was someone I knew very well".

These are often some of the common responses counsellors hear when they ask people the question, "Were you molested as a child or as a teenager?"

Many adults, whether they are male or female have walked through their life with lots of shame, guilt, embarrassment, anger, depression or anxiety because of incidents of being molested when they were younger. Many have had little or no insight, perspective or healing on that part of their lives.

If you have been molested as a child or as a teen, it may be very beneficial therapeutically to meet with an experienced and sensitive counsellor to discuss it in a safe and confidential setting. Counselling can provide the peace and healing in your life that may be long overdue. Do yourself a favour and call for an appointment today.

Did You Know ?

• That grief is a natural and normal reaction to a significant loss of any kind, not just death? Many people experience significant feelings of loss and grief when it comes to changes in their jobs or careers. These feelings can emerge after they retire, when laid off or terminated, when they take a job position elsewhere or when they switch jobs or positions in the same company.

• That the new television show "Hoarders" has become very popular? The show has increased awareness of hoarding and obsessive compulsive disorder. It's important however to realize that there are many other features of obsessive compulsive disorder besides hoarding including: fear of harming others or self, fear of harming others through carelessness (ie. hit and run), contamination obsessions (ie. dirt, germs, cleaners, toxic waste), sexual obsessions (ie. forbidden or perverse sexual thoughts, images, impulses), obsessions with symmetry, exactness or order, belief in lucky or unlucky numbers, counting compulsion, excessive list making and so on. Increase your knowledge of OCD by contacting a counsellor or physician or by doing some research.

• That when trying to meet or connect with other people a common mistake that is often made by many is to think that the secret to a good conversation or connection is to be "interesting". The truth is it's not that we need to have interesting things to say, as much as it is to be very interested in the person you're talking to. Show your interest with your body language, your questions, your supportive comments, your tone of voice, etc. Try these techniques and watch your connections grow.

• That a good way to manage stress and keep up your energy is to take "fresh air breaks". If you can, step outside at your breaks or lunchtime for a few minutes or longer if possible. Inhale the fresh air, go for a walk or a run and be replenished by the sunshine, the light, the break in routine and surroundings. Try it, you might like it.



"We'll have to have dinner out;
the toaster's broken."

Dear Counsellor...

My name is Janette* and I am 48 years old. I married my high school sweetheart Tom* when I was 18 years old. We had 2 sons right away. That marriage ended after 12 years due to Tom's excessive drinking and verbal abuse to me and the boys. I left as I did not want my boys to witness these behaviors. After a few years I met Brian* and we married when I was 35. At first he was really good with the kids, but when they became teenagers he became very strict, demanding and controlling with them. He constantly pressured me to parent them 'his way'. 3 years ago he left saying "he was sick of everything" and took up with a female co-worker. I was devastated. I went for counselling for several months and I am doing well. My 2 sons are now in their twenties and are doing great in university and working part-time. I am very proud of them. At this time in my life, I am feeling lonely; yet I am very nervous to date again. I don't want to be alone; yet I am so scared to even start a third relationship. What ideas or suggestions do you have for me?

Signed,
Janette* "scared and nervous"

DEAR JANETTE:

Congratulations on raising two fine sons. I'm sure they bring great joy to your life. It sounds like there has been a lot of stress in your life because of two difficult marriages. You use the words "scared and nervous" to describe yourself. What are you scared and nervous about? Are you afraid to trust someone new in a relationship or do you lack confidence in your own ability to make good decisions regarding a new relationship? Do you fear being abandoned or rejected?

Your fear of being alone and lonely may be making you vulnerable to pressuring yourself to find someone as soon as possible, thereby risking making unwise choices.

My suggestions are that you focus on your own self-care by involving yourself in activities that you enjoy and that nurture you. Try something new. Spend time with friends (old and new) who enjoy your company and treat you with respect. You want to approach a new relationship as a "whole" person who feels good about who they are with or without a partner.

Take your time. Don't try to rush the process. You deserve the "right" partner, not just "any" partner.

Be aware of what you want and need in a relationship. You mentioned that you had some professional counselling after your last marriage ended. Since this was a helpful intervention in the past, a few sessions with a counsellor may prove helpful in assisting you to focus on your priorities.

Look at your loneliness as a challenge – not as a chronic condition. Best wishes.

Signed,
The Counsellor

* fictional - not real names

Our Picks

Our Picks this time are somewhat different as compared to our previous newsletters. Our selections are two magazines available for purchase by subscription or by single issue. Many people today enjoy magazines as they are often very easy to read; have short, interesting articles, as well as great pictures; They are also easily picked up and put down.

The magazine picks we have selected are health, mental health and wellness related. Many of our counsellors are subscribers or are regular readers of these magazines. Enjoy our picks!

Title of Magazines:

Moods Magazine, Healthy Living
377 Burnamthorpe Road, P.O. Box 29548
Mississauga, Ontario
L5A 4H2
www.moods.mag.com

Prevention Magazine
66 E Walker Place 11th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601-3708
312-726-0365
www.prevention.com

Parenting Resources for Divorced Parents

Building a cooperative parenting relationship after a divorce can often be difficult., Parents who are divorced or are divorcing need to provide their children with a positive, secure, nurturing and stable environment despite the fact that there is a divorce.

Both parents need to put aside their marital conflict, and do all that they can to build a positive co-parenting relationship. There have been far too many incidences of children caught in the crossfire of a nasty and bitter marriage, a nasty and bitter separation and then a nasty and bitter divorce.

There are many valuable resources available to parents who are divorced or are divorcing. Take the time to learn all you can about parenting, so that you can be the best parent to your children . Some helpful resources are :

Helping Your Kids Cope with Divorce: The Sandcastles Way

Gary Newman and Patricia Romanowski, 1999
New York Random House Publishing

Surviving the Breakup. How Children and Parents Cope with Divorce.

Judith Wallerstein and Joan Kelly, 1996
New York Basic Books Inc.

Divorced Dad's Handbook – 100 Questions and Answers

Robert Bernstein and Richard Worth, 1996
Tempe Arizona, Blue Bird Publications

"The will to succeed is important, but what's more important is the will to prepare." BOBBY KNIGHT