

MHASI Matters



Volume 5 Issue 2

Spring 2008

Forgiveness is Healthy

The funniest thing about forgiveness is that when we forgive someone, we think we are doing that person a big favor. Unh uh! WE receive the biggest favor when WE forgive someone.

The body manufactures adrenaline and cortisone when we don't forgive. These chemicals lead to tension-related ills such as headaches and abdominal pains. If we don't do something about forgiving, more serious problems such as ulcers, gastritis or irritable bowel syndrome will break down the immune system. The pent-up emotions of hurt and anger cost us the lack of peace we blame others for creating.

When we forgive, anger and resentment dissolve and the body ceases to pour these chemicals into the bloodstream. We can stay healthy physically, but if our mental and emotional health are compromised by resentment and self-anguish, we are guaranteed emotional and mental health issues which will lead to physical illnesses.

Forgiveness is a process of rebalancing our internal distortions to recreate a harmonious flow between ourselves and others. The most difficulty we have is forgiving ourselves.

Forgiving is not forgetting or condoning. It is a decision not to dwell on the hurt. Realize that forgiveness is for our own sake.

Steve Duncan, MSU Extension Service

Mental Health and Aging Systems Integration Objectives

Involvement of:

**County Teams
Primary Care Physicians
Consumers/Families
Quality Improvement
Working Agreements
Assessment Instruments
Referrals for Assessment
Mental Health Integrates
Case Manager for
Older Adults
Consumer/Caregiver
Support Groups**

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Rules for Living

- Avoid using words to speak against yourself or to gossip about others.
- Nothing others do is because of you. Don't take it personally.
- Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstanding.
- Simply do your best, which will change from moment to moment.

Don Miguel Ruiz

Change

Change appears to be the word in today's political circles. How do we go about bringing about a change? First, we need to know what we want to change. This means we must educate ourselves to learn about negative emotions and behaviors. Learning alone is not sufficient, we have to increase our awareness until it is a firm conviction. This will strengthen our determination to change. Finally we must put that determination into action, exert the effort to establish new habit patterns. A sense of urgency gives us energy

Change can be invigorating, but it isn't always easy. It means opportunity. We need to work on our lifestyle to decrease our apathy and lack of energy. It may be due to insufficient sleep, unhealthy diet, high stress, or use of alcohol or other drugs. These will not make our mind more alert.

We want to make positive changes in our lives and have healthier behaviors. We have become accustomed to doing things in certain ways. Genuine change does not happen overnight; it occurs slowly and can take a long time. It is easy to become discouraged when it takes so long. Look at it from a larger perspective, take a global look at it, not the short term. Drive and determination applies to achieving happiness also. Set reasonable expectations.

The start of change is facing reality and realizing it's time to move on. Be alert to physical and emotional signs that it's time for a change, such as not wanting to get out of bed in the morning, feeling bored or restless, being easily annoyed, angry, or resentful. You will leave part of yourself behind, even if you are looking forward to the change. Regret, resentment, fear and anger keep us from embracing change. This may be from us or our family and friends. Making good choices means discovering our true passions; what gives us joy.

Change takes time, work, and energy. Break down big tasks into smaller steps. This makes it look more doable. Fatigue feels more like reluctance; embracing change requires letting go. Even plans for change can change.

We can grudgingly adapt, unconsciously adapt or proactively adapt to change. Choose to take charge of change.

Paul and Sarah Edwards and the Dalai Lama

DID YOU KNOW*

- One in eight Americans is 65 or older?
- 40% of American adults over age 65 take 5 or more different medications per week?
An increase in the number of medications used per week leads to an increased risk for drug-drug interactions and medications misuse and abuse.
- Alcohol and prescription drug problems affect up to 17% of older Americans?
- Up to 50% of all prescriptions are not taken according to the physician's directions?

*TIP 26, Administration on Aging, 2001 www.aoa.dhhs.gov,
JAMA 2002:287, Harm Reduction Journal 2004:1

Multi-Tasking, the Bane of the 21st Century

We have bought into the thinking that we can defy the laws of physics and master time. We think we can be in two different places at the same time and extend the 24 hour day to 32 hours or more. We cannot accomplish two projects at the same time.

We have become overachievers and perfectionists who have lots of ideas but can rarely finish one project before other great ideas pop into our head. These projects may be “sitting out” to be finished at a later date and never finished, just sitting there letting us know that we have failed. This failure causes depression, anxiety, and other mental problems. We then try to find a pill to fix the mental symptom.

Usually those who are college educated with advanced degrees or several careers will have this situation. We may be very intelligent, but we are very dysfunctional in other areas of our lives. It keeps us from understanding the simple things.

Having too many options in our lives from over-learning causes us to believe that we can accomplish anything without thinking of the time involved in doing them. Yes, we may be able to do these things, but we need to know that they have to be done one project or idea at a time, not the hundreds of ideas we have.

These thoughts and great ideas cause our mind to become cluttered. This becomes physical clutter in our surroundings—home, car, office, and relationships. Our mind has created the environment that we live and work in. Undone projects become clutter that we hide from ourselves by putting more clutter on top of it. Our life soon becomes unmanageable.

Are we addicted to think that more is better? All of the advertisements lead us to believe that we are deficient somehow if we do not have the latest gadget. If we change our thoughts, we could change the behaviors that have kept us from having a free life to create everything and anything we truly want in our life.

Disaster Masters.com

Educational Opportunities:

March 4-5	Long Term Care Ombudsman Hawthorne Suites, Champaign, IL Neyna Johnson 217-785-3140
March 7, 21 April 4, 18 May 2, 16	Multi-Disciplinary Certificate Program in MH and Aging Naperville, IL DePaul Campus 630-548-9378
April 17-18	Mental Health and Aging Conference Lincolnshire Marriott. IL Maureen Squires 217-785-8683
May 19-20	CDC Prevention Healthy Aging

Questions or Comments?

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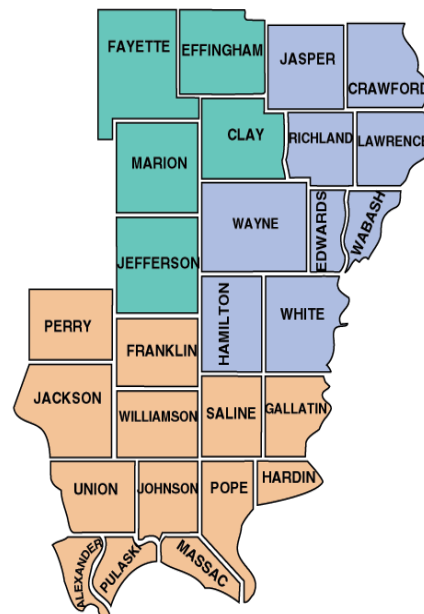
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