



Penny Blazej

LCSW & BCD

Life Transitions Newsletter: August 2008



Psychologists and Clinical Social Workers. All are trained to provide psychotherapy. It may be easier to remember by looking at the below graphic.



Dear Clients,

Happy summer to all of you. It is my hope that you are taking the time to relax and enjoy our Southern California perfect weather.

This issue focuses on why you may need to be referred to you MD's for evaluation. Check out the new "Just for Laughs" column.

Sincerely,

Penny Blazej, LCSW, BCD

What is a psychiatric or medical evaluation and why would you need one?

Many of you have asked why you would need a psychiatric evaluation. Before I explain the reason why, it is important for you to know the differences between Psychiatrists,

All fall under the umbrella of psychotherapy. However, each has their own specialties. A psychiatrist is a physician who has completed medical school and received a M.D. degree. In addition, they go for an additional four years of residential training to become a psychiatrist. They are the only ones that can prescribe psychotropic drugs.

A psychologist can have either a two year Master's Degree or a 5 years Ph.D. or Psy.D. degree. The latter two can perform clinical testing of IQ and for behavioral problems such as Attention-Deficit Disorders, learning disabilities and more.

A clinical social worker has either a Master of Science (MSSW) 2-year advanced degree or a 5 years doctorate degree (DSW). Clinical

Social Workers are trained in the General System Theory, which simply put considers the effects of society, family life, work place and community on the individual.

Holders of all three degrees, psychiatrist, psychologists and clinical social workers must also go through several years of post graduate studies to become licensed in the States they practice. In addition, to maintain that license, they must have a certain number of advance learning credits from specialty courses and schools.

With this background information, let's return to the question at hand. I would make a referral to a physician or psychiatrist to determine whether your symptoms can be explained by other medication conditions. Physicians have the knowledge to discern whether your mental health issues, like depression or anxiety, are organically based or emotionally based.

Let me give you an example: depression can be caused by certain types of chemotherapy, thyroid problems, tumors, and menopause, strokes etc... Why is this important? Because, the treatment regimen depends on the cause of the depression. If it is a thyroid dysfunction antidepressants will not be successful. What would be needed is a specific thyroid medicine like Synthroid.

If your mental illness is not caused by a physical source, then a psychiatrist should determine if psychotropic drugs are needed. So why go to the psychiatrist, why not just have your general practitioner prescribe you the needed psychotropic drugs? Because the psychiatrist has in-depth knowledge of mental illness. It is akin to you going to a specialist, like a cardiologist, when you have a heart problem. Both the cardiologist and the general practitioner can prescribe the same drugs, but would you not want the more experienced specialist to at least evaluate you and recommend the best treatment plan?

In summary, a general physician is needed to rule out possible organic causes for your mental health illness and a psychiatrist is needed because they are specialist in mental health and psychotropic drugs.

Resources

A great website for Moms called www.cafemom.com lists a wide variety of support groups. Many focus on giving support for Domestic Violence. Thanks TJ for bringing this website to my attention.

Here are some excellent resources for those dealing with a family member with Alzheimer: AARP www.aarp.org ; Alzheimer's Association www.alz.org; American Medical Association – Older Driver Safety www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/8925.html

Shorts

- The August edition of the Harvard Mental Health Letter stated 3 interesting facts about depression treatments: (1) Most adults will try two or more medications before finding one that alleviates their depression; (2) They suggest taking a medication for at least eight weeks before trying another; and (3) If the first medication fails, switching medications or augmenting the first drug with another is equally effective. This data supports that patience is needed to find the correct medicines and psychotherapy to effectively treat depression. For more information go to: www.health.harvard.edu
- Did you know that the U.S. Social Security Administration allows the appointment of a representative payee – a family member, mental health worker, or other designee – to manage money for a patient unable to do so on their own. For more information go to www.socialsecurity.gov

- Researchers at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University have concluded that more than half of bipolar diagnoses may be wrong!

Announcements



Teen Groups will start up in October. This will be the third year of running the group **“Becoming the Woman You Want to Be”**. This year we want to start a group in Escondido as well as Valley Center. The group is for female teens that attend high school or are home schooled. Valley Center group meets Monday’s 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. Depending on interest, the new Escondido group will meet Thursday’s 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. The fee is \$450.00 for ten sessions. Most insurance companies cover at least a portion of the group fee. If you know any teen that would benefit from this group please contact me!

NOTE: My private practice name has changed to **Valley Center Counseling, Inc.** Please make future checks out to that name (in other words, do not make them out to Penny Blazej – the bank will not cash them!).

Public Events

On September 19th the Rotary International Club will be featuring their annual wine tasting event along with an art show. Artists from all over are donating pieces of their work – all profits will go to support community and international projects specially scholarships for

local graduating seniors. If you, or if you know of an artist, can donate a piece please contact me. The artists that donate a painting receive two free tickets (\$80.00 value). If you want to purchase tickets (\$40.00 each) just contact me.

Book Reviews

“For One More Day” by Mitch Albom. This is an outstanding book that is an easy, fast read. It is about a man who decides to commit suicide and was allowed on final day with his mother. Mr. Albom is also the author of two other outstanding books about life and death: **“Tuesdays With Morrie”** and **“The Five People You Meet in Heaven”**.

You can order these books by going to www.amazon.com or you can borrow it from my library.

Wise Words

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.”
Marianne Williamson

“It does not matter what path you take, but it does matter if the path you are taking is something that you believe is appropriate. Nothing is more damaging to you than to do something that you believe is wrong.”
[Abraham-Hicks](#)

Just for Laughs

As most of you know, laughter is a wonderful outlet for emotions. The process of laughter actually changes your chemistry -- pumping in “feel happy” chemicals. Hence, I have added this section **“Just for Laughs”** to give you a little health chuckle.

A man was riding his lovely Harley motorcycle along a California beach when suddenly the sky clouded above his head and, in a booming voice, the Lord said 'Because you have TRIED to be faithful to me in all

ways, I will grant you one wish. The biker pulled over and said. 'Build a bridge to Hawaii so I can ride over anytime I want.

The Lord said, 'Your request is materialistic. Think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking. The supports required to reach the bottom of the Pacific. And the concrete and steel it would take! It will nearly exhaust several natural resources. I can do it, but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things. Take a little more time and think of something that could possibly help mankind.'

The biker thought about it for a long time. Finally, he said, 'Lord, I wish that I, and all men, could understand our wives and girlfriends. I want to know how she feels inside. What she's thinking when she gives me the silent treatment? Why she cries. What she means when she says nothing's wrong. And how I can make a woman truly happy.

The Lord replied, 'You want two lanes or four on that bridge?'



Have Fun in the Sun!

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