

Valley Center Counseling, Inc.



Dear Clients,

This month's newsletter focuses on how to quite smoking, hypnosis benefits, bipolar disease, schizophrenia, drug interaction cautions, Salvia and some exciting news from Congress.

Many of you have called confused about some recent ads that ran in the Valley Roadrunner. It is important for you to know that Valley Center Counseling, Inc. is NOT associated with Joan Salat. The confusion has occurred because her ads and other marketing tools look very similar to what Valley Center Counseling has been doing for the last 5 years. We wish Joan the best in starting her practice here in Valley Center.

Hope you enjoy this edition!

Many Blessings,

Penny Blazej, LCSW, BCD
President of Valley Center Counseling

What is the Best Way to Quit Smoking?

That really depends on you. Some people can stop after many years of smoking and never start again. Unfortunately, they are a small minority of the smoking population. The vast majority of smokers are truly addicted to nicotine. So what does this mean? Your body and mind physically need nicotine, hence the withdrawal symptoms and the cravings. Many have said that nicotine is as addictive as heroin therefore you will need a well thought out plan on how to quit and stay sober from nicotine.

There really is no need to tell any of you that smoking is bad for your health. So I will not! This article will focus on different ways to quit smoking. There are many options to kicking the nicotine habit from going cold turkey, to using nicotine patches, to trying new medications such as Zyban or Chantix, to behavioral modification, to hypnosis. So how do you choose the right way for you?

The first step is to contact your primary care physician to discuss the possibilities. In my practice, each client who has successfully quit smoking (defined as being smoke free for over 5 years) has succeeded by using a combination of the "stop smoking" methods. For example, a step down nicotine patch or drugs like Zyban or Chantix, in combination with hypnosis. The medications need to be monitored by your physician. The professional performing the hypnosis should be certified by the National Association of Clinical Hypnosis. The latter organization requires numerous courses and supervision before granting a certificate. Many studies have shown that hypnosis for smoking cessation is very effective. Some studies have reported that other methods have about a 33% success rate whereas hypnosis

has a 67% success rate (these studies do not include use of Zyban or Chantix).

Once you have withdrawn from the nicotine, the actual work of changing your behavior must be undertaken. It is important to remember that you are breaking not just a physical addiction but also an emotional one. Developing new and healthier habits is important in ensuring you stay smoke free. A good psychotherapist can help you develop a healthy plan, monitor your progress and empower you to overcome obstacles that could derail you from maintaining your new healthy way of living.

Here are some interesting facts from the Cleveland Clinic that may motivate you to quit. From the moment you quit the following health benefits kick in:

- After 20 minutes: Your blood pressure and pulse decrease. The temperature of your hands and feet increases.
- After eight hours: The carbon-dioxide level in your blood returns to normal. Oxygen levels in your blood increase.
- After 24 hours: Your chance of heart attack decreases.
- After 48 hours: Your ability to taste and smell starts to return.
- After 72 hours: The bronchial tubes (airways) relax.
- After two weeks to three months: Your circulation improves.
- After one to nine months: Cilia (tiny hairs) in the lungs re-grow, increasing the lung's capacity to handle mucus, clean itself, and reduce infection. Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath also decrease.
- After one to five years: Your risk of dying from heart disease is cut to half that of a lifelong smoker's risk.
- After 10 years: Your risk of dying from lung cancer drops to almost the same rate as that of a lifelong nonsmoker. Your risk for mouth, larynx, and other cancers decrease.

If you want more information, go to the American Cancer Society website and get the "Guide to Quitting Smoking" www.cancer.org, contact your physician or call me at 760-685-3403.

Resources: WebMD January/February 2008; Source Harvard Mental Health Letter, March 2008 Edition: Hypnosis as mental health therapy. www.health.harvard.edu; and American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis Vol. 50, No. 3 January 2008 edition.

Shorts

- A Mount Sinai School of Medicine study of 200 women concluded that women in the hypnosis group experienced less pain, fatigue, nausea, and emotional distress compared to the women who didn't have hypnosis. And curiously, surgical time was reduced in the hypnosis group, resulting in lower surgical costs.

In the August 2007 Journal of the National Cancer Institute David Spiegel, M.D., of the Stanford University School of Medicine writes in support of hypnosis, noting that the mind can be a powerful resource for pain control.

In my practice, when I have met with the patient in the pre-operation room and preformed hypnosis, they not only used less drugs including tranquilizers, anesthesia and post-operation pain medications their recovery was faster then that of a typical patient.

- **Bipolar Disorder Tied to Age of Fathers** [New York Times article by Nicholas Bakalar (Sept. 8, 2008)] reported on a large (13,428 patients) Swedish study that concluded that the older a man is (55 years

and over) the more likely he is to father children who develop bipolar disorder as adults.

Previous studies have found an association between paternal age and both autism and schizophrenia, but this is the first time a connection with bipolar illness has been suggested. The study appears in the September issue of *The Archives of General Psychiatry*.

- New York Times Editorial (September 18, 2008) reported a government-supported study concluded that Zyprexa and Risperdal, newer drugs (since 1990) used to treat schizophrenia in children and teens, work no better than an older, less expensive drug. However, they do reduce such side effects as uncontrolled shaking or tremors. The questions -- is the higher cost worth these benefits? One needs to balance the latter side effects with the two drugs own side effects namely rapid weight gain.

Parents, psychiatrists and other physicians will need to rethink whether the newer antipsychotics should still be deemed the first line of treatment for most youngsters.

- Many of the symptoms of the drug interactions seniors may experience mirror Alzheimer's and similar conditions like Pick's disease. It is key that physicians first look to drug interactions before giving such diagnosis. Also, with such diagnosis it is important to receive a second opinion before starting on any new medications.

In 2003, the *Archives of Internal Medicine* published a list of medications that were deemed "potentially inappropriate for use in older adults." There are over 75 drugs on that list (to review it, visit <http://www.dcri.duke.edu/ccge/curtis/beers>

[.html](#)).

- A new hallucinogenic herb that is sold legally over the internet, costing as little as \$5.00, has become popular with teens. There have been over 5,000 YouTube videos of kids trying this short acting (about 5 minutes) potent hallucinogenic drug called Salvia.

When the federal government this year published its first estimates of salvia use, the data astonished many: some 1.8 million people had tried it in their lifetimes, including 750,000 in the previous year. Among males 18 to 25, where consumption is heaviest, nearly 3 percent reported using salvia in the previous year, making it twice as prevalent as LSD and nearly as popular as Ecstasy.

It is legal in most states, only 13 states and several local governments have banned or otherwise regulated the plant and its chemically enhanced extracts.

Known on the street by nicknames like Sally D and Magic Mint, salvia can have vastly different effects depending on dose, potency and the mindset and tolerance of its users, according to researchers and experienced smokers (though bitter, it can also be chewed or consumed as a tincture). Users often report a sudden dissociation from self, as if traveling through time. The experience tends to be solitary, introspective and sometimes fearful.

Announcements

- ✚ On October 1st at the Lower Elementary School (near Adams Park) Penny will be presenting "The Psychology of Trauma" to CERT new class. All are welcome to come.
- ✚ On September 24th the Congress, Senate and House, passed the Mental Health

Penny Blazej's Life Transitions Newsletter: October 2008

Parity Bill. This bill ensures insurance-coverage parity for mental health and addiction services. Millions of people who did not have access to covered mental-health services will now do so as a result of this legislation. President Bush has said in the past that he would sign it if passed. For more information go to:
http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/vote_menu_110_2.htm

Book Reviews

The September 22, 2008 edition of TIME Magazine had an article titled “Are Teen Girls Growing Up Too Fast?” www.time.com. This short article gave a good summary of what teen girls are facing today. For a more in-depth description of the teen’s culture plus some suggested ways to communicate with your teen I would recommend reading “Unhooked – How Young Women Pursue Sex, Delay Love and Lose at Both” by Laura Sessions Stepp.

Another excellent book is the classic “Reviving Ophelia” by Mary Pipher. Though written over 10 years ago, I found that the information is valid for today’s teen girls. It is worth a second read!

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

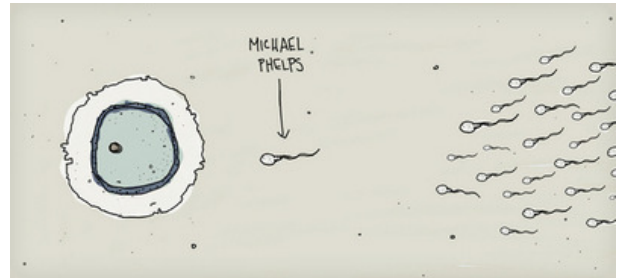
Wise Words

“Kindness should become the natural way of life, not the exception” by Buddha

“Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind.” by Henry James

Just for laughs

Michael Phelps when he was young:



Breathing Space



California Poppy Fields