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LCSW & BCD



Dear Clients,

As most of you know, I am on vacation touring Glacier National Park, Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons. Hence, I have added a new section called “breathing space”. Hope you enjoy the photo.

This edition mainly focuses on how to determine when teens need professional help.

As the new school year starts, so do the teen groups. See below for additional information.

Many Blessings,



LCSW, BCD

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When do Teens Need Help?

As most of you know, adolescence is one of the most dynamically changing times in human development. It is characterized by:

rapid mood swings; push-pull relationships with parents where the teen switches between being independent and dependent; during any one day they can show both the maturity of an adult and the irrational behavior of a three year old; and in addition we have the very real physical changes including the development of their sexuality.

So, with all these changes, how does a parent know if their teen needs help? It is not so easy but if you're teen is displaying more than three of the below symptoms it is time to call for help:

1. **Isolation** – when your teen begins to isolate from their PEERS. Remember that teens' peers become their family during this stage of development.
2. **Sleeping** – major changes in their sleep habit, like sleeping more than 10 hours per day everyday or waking early in the morning and not being able to go back to sleep or staying awake all night and sleeping during the day.
3. **Grades** – if their grades go down more than one grade point average for more than two semesters. They refuse to do homework and avoid taking tests. If their teacher(s) call concerned about significant changes in learning or behavior in the classroom.
4. **Hygiene** – they no longer take time to maintain their appearance; wearing dirty clothes and/or not showering; if they choose clothing that is mostly black or dull colors.
5. **Oppositional** – not just with you but in every environments – home, school, work, sports and relatives. You may be getting calls from teachers, coaches, family members reporting that your teen is being disrespectful and refusing to follow directions.

6. **Relationships** – they define themselves solely by their relationship with their boyfriend/girlfriend. They no longer spend any time with their other friends. This teen would be at high risk if a breakup occurs.
7. **Weight** – significant increases or decreases in their weight (more than 10% of their body weight). You may notice that their recently purchased clothes no longer fit, they are refusing to eat or they eat too much and generally unhealthy food (comfort food).
8. **Death** – the death of a peer or loved one, especially if it is the teen's first time dealing with grief.

If you are concerned about your teen it is best to get a professional evaluation performed by a qualified psychotherapist. He/she would be able to validate your concerns, refer you to appropriate resources and put together a treatment plan.

What out-patient help is available? Depending on the presenting problem(s) a psychotherapist may recommend individual, family and/or group therapy. Most health care insurances will cover at least a portion of these therapies. I have found that group therapy is the most effective treatment plan because teens will take directions from their peers much more readily than from adults. Generally, I combine all three therapy modes when the teen is at high risk.

For the last two years I have been facilitating a powerful group called "*Becoming the Woman You Want to Be*". This group will start again in October. The group is for female teens that attend high school or are home schooled. The Valley Center group meets Monday's 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. Most insurance companies cover at least a portion of the group fee. The group size is a maximum of eight teens (if more want the group another session will be set up). Last year six of the teens graduated from high school and ALL six will be attending college.

Below are a few comments made by those graduating teens:

- "I wish I started the group when I was a freshman."
- "What I found most amazing is that even though we are from very different "cliques" we have a lot in common."
- "I felt that I could say or ask anything in the group"
- "I learned how powerful a group of women can be"
- "I like the body image work we did – I have learned to love me just for me."

If you know any teen that would benefit from this group please contact me!

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. The 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!

Public Events

On **September 20th** 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, especially 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

A dear friend of mine recommended “*The Shack*” by William Young for a good vacation read. Well she certainly was right! This book will make you laugh, cry, reflect and help you clarify your beliefs. No wonder it was on the New York Times Bestseller list!

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

Wise Words

“Calmness is something a deaf person can hear and a blind person can see”

‘If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you’ll most certainly be right.’

Breathing Space

