



# Valley Center Counseling, Inc.

## *Life Transitions Newsletter: February 2009*



*Dear Clients,*

*In this issue you will read about hypnosis as a powerful mental health tool. In addition you will read about a major New York court ordered reassessment of what insurance companies reimburse for “out-of-network benefits”. There are also some exciting book recommendations.*

*Wishing you a Happy Valentine’s Day!*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Penny Blazej". To the right of the signature, the text "LCSW, BCD" is written in a smaller, less legible font.

*Penny Blazej, LCSW, BCD  
President of Valley Center Counseling*

### *What is Clinical Hypnosis?*

When many of us think about hypnosis images of people running around a stage howling like dogs or pecking like chickens come to mind. Well, that is the entertainment view of hypnosis. In truth, it is one of the most ancient forms of mental health and physical treatment.

Clinical Hypnosis is a highly relaxed state where you can focus on yourself. In essence, you stop the earthly clock and focus yourself inwardly. In this altered state powerful changes can occur. You are in complete control and can not be made to do anything you do not want to. You are not unconscious and are aware of everything. The only aspect that changes is time – many have no idea how much time has passed. When asked they say 10-15 minutes when in actuality it has been 40-50 minutes.

Hypnosis is not sleep even though in the deeper forms it may appear that you are asleep. Actually, the opposite is true – there is a great deal of mental activity, and measurements of brain activity during hypnosis show a significant level of neurological activity.

Hypnosis is one of the oldest forms of healing, dating way before the 1700s. It is used by mental health professionals, physicians, dentists, nurses and other health professionals.

These trained professionals use hypnosis in a wide variety ways. In the mental health area, it is used for phobias, anxiety, sexual problems, alcoholism, smoking control, speech disorders, weight control, chronic pain, age regression therapy, self-esteem/ego strengthening, memory/concentration improvement and forensic work. In medicine, its uses include anesthesia for surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, control of bleeding, pain control, burn therapy, dermatology and habit control. Dentistry uses it to control fear, dental surgery, saliva control, gagging, bruxism, control of bleeding, tongue biting and general oral hygiene.

Most mental health professionals use hypnosis in combination with other treatments like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. It takes years of training and practice to become a licensed hypnotist. It is important that you ask your provider what their training and experience has been.

I have been studying hypnosis since 1990. At first, I used it to help hospice patients deal with pain so they could take less pain medications and be more alert. For the past several years, I have been studying under Dr. Michael Yapko, PhD who is a worldwide known expert in clinical hypnosis and depression. I have been trained and certified at the national level to use hypnosis in my practice.

For more information go to the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis: <http://www.asch.net> or Dr. Michael Yapko's website at [www.yapko.com](http://www.yapko.com).

### ***Key Insurance Update:***

UnitedHealth Group has been ordered by the New York attorney general to update their out-of-date schedule that determines how much a patient will receive for out-of-network benefits. The industry has engaged in "a scheme to defraud consumers" by systematically underpaying the nation's patients by hundreds of millions of dollars over the last decade. Since UnitedHealth Group operates the industry databases this settlement will apply to the majority of insurance companies.

The investigation concluded that the schedules understated the true market rates by 28%. The New York Courts have order that an independent database be developed by a university. Because insurers typically reimburse patients for only 70 to 80 percent of the "reasonable and customary" cost this schedule is critical in determining what the patient will receive. For an example: A patient receives a bill for \$100 but the insurer says that the "reasonable and customary" fee should be \$72.00 based on local rates. So instead of receiving \$80 or \$70 dollars the patient only receives \$55.00. No criminal charges have been sought in the case. Nor was UnitedHealth required to pay restitution to consumers, although the disputed reimbursements are the subject of class-action lawsuits around the country.

**NET:** So how much money are we talking about? Of UnitedHealth Group's **\$80 billion** annual revenue, the out of network portion is less than \$25

million a year – a small fraction of their total income. But these unwarranted charges have a significant impact on patients using out-of-network providers. Hopefully this court ordered change will affect ALL insurance companies since they base their reimbursements on the same databases as UnitedHealth Group.

### ***Shorts***

- Science Daily reported (Apr. 9, 2008) that a recent University of Iowa study reveals a biological link between pain and fatigue. This link may help explain why more women than men are diagnosed with chronic pain and fatigue condition like fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome. For more information go to: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/04/080407153037.htm>
- Hooking up culture – if you are interested in learning more about this culture that your preteens and teens are exposed to, go to: [http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/878389/teens\\_preteens\\_and\\_the\\_hooking\\_up\\_culture.html?cat=7](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/878389/teens_preteens_and_the_hooking_up_culture.html?cat=7)

### ***Resources***

Below are two websites that give up-to-date health and mental health updates:

[www.fibrocenter.com](http://www.fibrocenter.com)

[www.johnshopkinshealthalerts.com](http://www.johnshopkinshealthalerts.com)

### ***Book Reviews***

***"Fight Your Health Insurer and Win"*** by Laurie Todd. For those of you that have had claims denied or were surprised to discover that the 80% of Usual and Customary resulted in you paying 80% of your therapist fee, this book is for you. For more information to go:

[www.theinsurancewarrior.com](http://www.theinsurancewarrior.com)

***"If You Really Loved Me – 100 Questions on Dating, Relationships and Sexual Purity"*** by Jason Evert. Mr. Evert has compiled an excellent list of questions and answers on how to have the real intimate relationship that most of us desire. This is a must read for teens and young adults.

***"Healing Your Sinuses"*** by Dr. Ralph B. Metson, MD @ Harvard Medical School. This is one of the easiest to understand books on sinus problems that

I have ever read. Some of you have come to me in depression after fighting years of sinus infections. For you this book is a must read!

You can order these books from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or you can borrow them from my library.

### *Announcements*

Penny will be giving a presentation at the Valley Center Library on February 28<sup>th</sup> on “*What is Hypnosis*”. The talk begins at 11 A.M.

San Diego Science Festival 2009 is April 4 from 10:30 am – 6:00 pm at Balboa Park. It’s **FREE!** There will be hundreds of exciting hands-on-activities for all ages. The goal of the Expo is to get kids and adults interested in the sciences. The vast majority of our future scientists are NOT coming from the United States. This is one of many programs – for more information go to [www.sdsciencefestival.com](http://www.sdsciencefestival.com).

### *Just for Laughs*



Handle every **Stressful** situation like a dog – If you can’t eat it or play with it, Pee on it and walk away.



"Sir, it seems that the insurance company considers your stupidity to be a pre-existing condition."

### *Breathing Space*



Glacier National Forest