



Valley Center Counseling, Inc.

Life Transitions Newsletter: May 2009

Dear Clients,

This has been a unique month starting with the Swine Flu Pandemic alert and closing with the soul inspiring colors of Spring. This month's feature article



focuses on "What is a Pandemic and why has the CDC put out an alert?"

In addition, this issue contains: safety tips; tips on how to save your

home from foreclosure; on whether technology improves family closeness; updates on the effectiveness of cancer support groups and where to receive accurate data on the Swine Virus.

Also, this year Rotary has elected me to run for honorary Valley Center major – check out the announcement section for more information.

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

What is a Pandemic and why has the Center for Disease Control put out an alert?

A pandemic is defined as a disease that has caused sustained community level outbreaks in at least two countries. There are 6 phases: Phase 1 there are no new flu subtypes in humans; Phase 2 animal infection poses substantial risk to humans; Phase 3 human infections but rare human-to-human transmission; Phase 4 small clusters of human-to-human transmissions – the infected areas are highly localized; Level 5 larger clusters of human-to-human transmission, however the infected areas are still localized and finally, Phase 6 - global pandemic risk in the general population. Worldwide Health Organization (WHO) has stated the Swine flu is a Phase 5 and warns that a pandemic is imminent.

This virus started to effect pigs first (hence the name swine flu), mutated to pig to human transmission then mutated again to go from human to human. It is now air born and easily transmitted. The good news is that most of the reported cases have been mild with complete recovery. The only deaths were reported out of Mexico and one in the United States (the young child recently arrived from Mexico to the US).

It is important to note that a confirmed case is one which tests positive in a laboratory for the influenza A (H1N1) virus. WHO and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) only report confirmed cases.

What does this mean to you? You should take the same precautions you would for any flu virus. Washing your hands several times a day is the best precaution. The second is that if you are sick stay at home – if your children are sick keep them home. In other words, isolate yourself from your community. If you fly you may want to use a mask. These are sold at any drug store and carry alcohol based sanitizers.

Remember, the current flu shot does not protect you from this new virus. Most likely it will be included in the upcoming shot this fall.

We are fortunate that this new virus is mild!

Shorts

🍷 You may remember that a young woman was recently abducted from a Target parking lot in Overland Park, a suburb of Kansas City. Her body was discovered many miles away in Missouri. They were able to locate her by the sequence of cell phone towers that picked up her cell phone location. She had not attempted to dial out, but when her family was trying to call her the towers could sense her phone. Sadly, the authorities were not able to reach her in time. However, they were able to locate her body which was in an area where they never would have searched without the cell phone tower information. There are two ways to set the cell phone locator:

1. **911 only** ... in which case you must dial out to be located; or
2. It can be set to be on all the time ...

Location on

Battery usage does not increase from having it on all of the time. With it on all the time, you can be located by emergency services through the police if you fail to respond (sick, injured or worse). ALL cell phones have this Location feature. To turn on go to settings & tools then to phone settings and tools and select location on instead of 911 only. If you cannot find the location feature, call your carrier and they will walk you through turning it on (sent to me by one of you – thanks JJ!)

🍷 Many of us or a loved one is faced with the possibility of losing a home. There have been many TV ads and e-mails from organizations that claim to be able to negotiate a deal with your mortgage holder. BE CAREFUL. Most of these organizations charge high fees. You might want to first check with **Hope Now**. They are a non-profit organization dedicated to helping in Loss Mitigation and forbearance agreements. This is a FREE service offered by our government. The people at Hope Now know all the in's and out's of what needs to be done when payments can't be made on your home. Those who have used the service were

pleasantly surprised at how professional these people are and highly recommend them to anyone that is having financial issues that affect their mortgage on their home. For more information go to: www.hopenow.com

🍷 Do cell phones and the internet increase the closeness of a family? The answer is both yes and no. Researchers have shown that there are more connections and more communication between family members who use electronic devices, however, that connection is not one that develops intimacy. Net – there is nothing like sitting down at the dinner table and having face-to-face interactions. Studies have shown that families who eat dinner together at least 3 times per week have teens that are less likely to be in trouble with the law.

🍷 The controversy over whether cancer support groups increase a patient's immunity system continues. Small studies have shown that those attending support groups do have a significant increase in their T-cells which indicates an increase in their immunity system. As many professionals have pointed out, the size of the study, 227 women with breast cancer, is really too small to make any valid conclusions. My opinion is that more studies are needed, but they also need ways to measure quality of life. Does attending support groups increase the quality of life for those patients?

🍷 We need to add one more question to ask a future therapist – have they been in therapy themselves? About 25% of therapists out there have not been in therapy! A new study will be published in Psychotherapy that concludes that a therapist finds it an extremely useful experience to be the “client” – it allows them to experience first hand the feelings of vulnerability. Yes, I have and occasionally go into therapy – so do all the therapists that I refer clients to.

Book Reviews

“*Mistakes Were Made But Not By Me.*” By Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson. This is a book about why we justify foolish beliefs, bad decisions and hurtful acts. In other words, why we do not own up to our mistakes. The book gives excellent insights to human behavior – certainly worth a

read. On a scale of 1-10 I give this book a strong 8.

Wise Words

“You can measure a person’s greatness by how much it takes to discourage them.”

Author Unknown

There is a great presentation with 39 pieces of advice to help us live happier lives. The photos are GREAT! Just double click on either of the below links to see the presentation.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkaHTLEEpMs>

or

<http://www.slideshare.net/gretacalinda/advicepml>



E-mail me if you would like to have the powerpoint file.

Announcements

❖ This year Rotary Club of Valley Center has elected me to run for Honorary Mayor of Valley Center. My platform is “Drug Free Valley Center” focusing on getting teens to say no to drugs. If you wish to donate to this cause please contact me at 760-685-3403. The donations will go to the Rotary Scholarship Foundation which gives scholarships to graduating seniors annually.

❖ Swine Flu Pandemic Alert – by now all of you know that there is a Pandemic Alert level 5 (out of 6) for the Swine Flu. As of May 4th there have been 286 confirmed cases in 36 states. Worldwide there are 1085 confirmed cases in 21 countries. So far the vast majority of cases have been mild with full recovery. There have been many misleading figures put

out by the media. For the real facts go to Worldwide Health Organization’s website www.who.int or Center for Disease Control website www.cdc.gov. They give daily updates on the location of confirmed cases. You can also go to Kaiser Permanente’s website for answers to frequently asked questions www.kaisepermanente.org. Remember the best protection is to wash your hands frequently.

Breathing Space



South Africa

This is really worth the 4 minutes to listen too – it will make you smile and feel good!

This dance piece was organized on 3/26/09 in the Central Station in Antwerp.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vq6b9bMBXpg>

Just for Laughs

