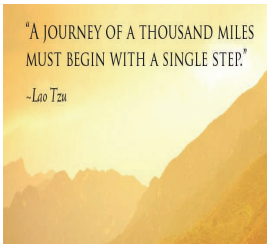
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2015

Ascension Counseling Center

Director: Suzanne Berteau Hamilton *Parish President: Tommy Martinez*

Editor: Dawnyelle Bennett

A READINESS TO CHANGE



Often, one of the first skills I teach my clients with anxiety or panic disorders is deep breathing techniques. It's a very simple, effective way of limiting the physiological effects of anxiety; yet not surprisingly, even after I've explained the rationale behind the technique the client often looks at me as if to say, "Is this what I'm paying you guys for?" These same skeptical clients usually return to the second session often experiencing the same level of anxiety; yet admittedly have not even tried the simple breathing exercises already prescribed. It's a Catch 22 of sorts, the client expects the therapist to give them a magic bullet technique or ancient secret that will alleviate their problems, but at the same time they resist taking the smallest of steps towards their goals. Why is that? Why do we fight against the same things we say we want most? I think it's because change requires action, and change, even for the better, can often be scary. The moment we pick up our foot to take that first step towards positive action the questions come flooding in. Will this really work? Will I ever feel better? What will happen if I fail? What will happen if I succeed? Is change even possible? Sometimes, I think the questions that come up when we decide to take action can make change seem as scary as remaining stuck. Besides countering the physiological effects of anxiety, one of the reasons most therapists begin with deep breathing techniques with anxious clients is not only because it is a simple, yet effective first step; but it is also a gauge for the therapist to see if the client is ready to take even the smallest of steps towards their goals. Often, when we try to create positive change in our lives, we are met by a lot of inner-resistance, even if we logically know that change is in our own best interest. If you focus on putting one foot in front of the other instead of completing the journey, one day you might just look up and see you are well on your way down the path towards your goals. Everyone has goals they have been putting off for one reason or another, what's something you could today to take a small step towards big, positive change?

Ryan Schuette, LPC

A NEW YEAR, A NEW YOU

Most of us will make at least one New Year Resolution, whether it is to earn more, go back to school or lose a few pounds. Nearly all of us take the beginning of a new year to focus on what we want to achieve. There is nothing wrong with that. After all, focusing on change and looking closely at what we would like to achieve and setting goals for ourselves are all constructive things to do. The problem with resolutions is that resolutions rarely last. Many fall by the wayside by the third week of January. The most common reason is that we don't set realistic goals and we lack the willpower to complete the goal. In order to reach our goals, we must be realistic, be dedicated and take action.

- Be Realistic: When setting a goal, we must decide on a realistic resolution. We must ask ourselves: is this resolution something I really want or just something I feel compelled to do. If we really don't want to give up junk food or get a better job, then we are more likely to fail. If we know we want it, we then have to look at how we will go about achieving our goal. All resolutions must have a plan of action.
- Time and Dedication: We don't wake up on January 1st and discover that our resolutions have taken place. We must be prepared for it to take time and dedication. We must set our goals based on the time and dedication we are prepared to give them in order to achieve them.
- Take Action: Once we have a goal and a plan, next we must take action. Quitting smoking? Then join a smoking cessation group like the one offered at Ascension Counseling Center. Also, rip up your cigarettes and find a friend who has quit to get some motivation. Want to eat healthy? Buy fruit instead of cookies. Join a health club or start walking. Nothing can get done without action.

TRAINING & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

HIV/AIDS AWARENESS EVENT

Face to Face Enrichment Center's " All About You" HIV/AIDS Awareness Event: Ascension Counseling will be participating in this community event on Saturday, March 7th at the Geismar Community Center from 10:00 am—2:00 pm. This event is open to women and girls in conjunction with National Women and Girls HIV/Awareness Day. This observance sheds light on the increasing impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls. Participants will receive information and resources to make healthy life choices. There will be food, fun and fellowship and pampering services. For more information, contact Face to Face Enrichment Center at 225.644.9992.

ST. ELIZABETH FAMILY FEST

Ascension Counseling Center will be participating in the St. Elizabeth Family Fest: Adventures in Health on Saturday, January 31th. The fest will be from 9-1 at the Lamar Dixon Expo Center in the Trade Mart building. There will be live entertainment, great food, interactive exhibits, shopping, free screenings, AND a kids Play Zone! This event is free and open to the public.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE FAIR

Ascension Counseling Center will also be an exhibitor at the Ascension Parish Headstart's Community Resource Fair on Friday, February 13 from 10:30-11:30. This event will be held at the Donaldsonville Head Start Gymnasium. The event will offer information to parents and community members about ACC's services. Other vendors will be on hand to offer free health screenings and health information.

www.AscensionParish.Net/MH

ASCENSION COUNSELING CENTER

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HELPING INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES CHANGE BEHAVIORS AND CHANGE LIVES.

Ascension Counseling Center provides comprehensive therapeutic services to individuals and families in an effort to foster healthy coping skills that will improve their quality of life.

HOURS

Gonzales:

Business Hours

Mon - Thur: 8 am - 5:30 pm; Fri: 8 am - noon

Counseling Hours

Mon - Thur: 7 am - 8 pm; Fri: 8 am - noon

Psychiatrist Hours

Monday and Tuesday: 8 am - 6 pm

Donaldsonville:

Business Hours

Wednesday: 7:30 am - 5:30 pm

MONTHLY EVENTS

Mondays:

- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 10– 12 pm & 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales.

Tuesdays:

- ***Women's Empowerment Group,*** 10 - 11:30 am, Gonzales.
- ***Nurturing Parenting, adult & children groups***: 5 - 7:30 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Anger Management Class,*** 4 - 5 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Stop Smoking Group***, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales
- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.

Wednesdays:

- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group:*** 1 pm, Donaldsonville.
- ***Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 3 - 4 pm, Donaldsonville.
- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group:*** 10 - 12 pm & 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Living Strong Cancer Survivors group***, 3 - 4 pm, Donaldsonville. 2nd Wed of each month.
- ***Grandparents Raising Grandchildren***, 10:30 am - noon, lunch provided, Donaldsonville, 3rd Wed of each month

Thursdays:

- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group:*** 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Anxiety Reduction group***: 4 - 5 pm, Gonzales.

At Ascension Counseling Center you are at the center of your own care. We aim to treat you the way you want to be treated, with dignity and respect. If you are not receiving the services you want in the way that you want them, please speak to your counselor or ask to speak with Lisa Weber-Curry, Clinical manger (225-450-1172) or Suzanne Hamilton , Director (225-450-1160).