

Connections

The Newsletter of the Connections Program

A Partnership between the Health District of Northern Larimer County and the Larimer Center for Mental Health

Biofeedback

Submitted by: Jen Strating, MA, BCIA

Imagine...You are a hunter-gatherer foraging for food in the wilderness. You come across a tiger and your reflexes are amazingly quick. Without thinking, you sprint to safety. Luckily, you just experienced your autonomic nervous system in action.

In today's world, not many of us are faced with these kinds of emergencies on a daily basis, but our bodies still react to our life stressors with this "fight or flight" response. Although the stack of bills, traffic or a hectic day at work is not life-threatening, our nervous system may respond the same. Our body prepares to fight or take flight by releasing hormones like adrenalin and cortisol, which speed heart rate, slow digestion, tense muscles, activate sweating and trigger other autonomic nervous system responses. When the perceived threat is gone, our body is designed to return to normal functioning. But with chronic stress, this doesn't always happen and as a result, stress takes a toll on our health.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, up to 90% of doctor visits in the USA may be triggered by stress related illnesses. Excessive stress response can cause conditions such as increased blood pressure, headaches, digestive problems, anxiety -- just to name a few.

A valuable tool to reduce the negative effects of stress on our health is biofeedback. Biofeedback is a method used to gain control over our body processes to increase relaxation, relieve pain and create an overall healthier life.

What conditions can biofeedback help?

- Anxiety/Depression
- Headaches/Migraines
- TMJ/Jaw Pain
- Insomnia
- Hypertension
- IBS

General Stress and Other Stress Related Conditions

How does biofeedback work? During a biofeedback session, instruments record, measure, and display a patient's physiological information such as muscle tension, heart rate, breathing rate, and blood flow. The "feeding back" of this real-time information gives the patient body awareness, enabling them to gain conscious control over their physiology by implementing skills acquired in training.



Biofeedback makes individuals aware of their various body systems so they can learn to control them, relieving stress and improving general health. An individual in a state of chronic stress may not even recognize what a relaxed state feels like.

With the "feedback", an individual knows when their body is in the desired state and ultimately learns to obtain this state on their own --with no feedback.

In addition to the biofeedback, patients learn self-regulation and relaxation skills like body scanning, progressive relaxation, diaphragmatic breathing, autogenic training, and visualization. These techniques are critical in learning to control one's body and as with any new skill, requires practice.

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We encourage you to submit short articles (50-500 words) on therapeutic approaches, mental health topics, case studies, or therapeutic book/movie reviews, etc., & will publish them as space allows. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

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Dee Colombini, Mental Health Services
Program Coordinator for
Health District of Northern Larimer County
dcolombini@healthdistrict.org

Vicki Grassman, Chief Operations Officer
for Larimer Center for Mental Health
Vicki.grassman@larimercenter.org

Mental Health Specialists:

Andrea Atherton
andrea.atherton@larimercenter.org

Joan Cmar
jcmar@healthdistrict.org

Ann Cope
acope@healthdistrict.org

Anne Marie Cronin
Anne.Cronin@larimercenter.org

Bonnie Inscho
Bonnie.Inscho@larimercenter.org

Susan Jacobs
Susan.jacobs@larimercenter.org

Stacy Overton
soverton@healthdistrict.org

Stefan Price
sprice@healthdistrict.org

Patti Marqui-Hilker
Consumer Advocate
pmarquihilker@healthdistrict.org

Admin. Phone: 970-494-4370
Fax: 970-494-4303

Direct Services: 970-221-5551

Web: www.mentalhealthconnections.org

To view Connections Newsletter and the
Professional Bulletin Board online:
www.healthdistrict.org/connections

Connections is published 6 times/year. The purpose of *Connections* is to offer information on current therapy groups and services in the community;

Individuals who experience any of the conditions listed previously, and are motivated to gain more control of their body's response to stress – instead of having it control them – would be great candidates for biofeedback. In addition, biofeedback works well in synergy with other forms of therapy and can be a great addition to an individual's treatment plan. For more information, contact Jen Strating, MA, BCIA at jenstrating@yahoo.com, or call (970) 690-2153.

The NeuroDevelopment Center of Colorado is seeking a part-time or full-time psychologist. Current license required. Health insurance affiliations would be helpful.

Join a team of children's behavioral health providers and educators in a newly constructed office on the E. Harmony corridor in Fort Collins. Send letters of interest to Aaron Skalicky, Ph.D. at admin@neuro-development.com.

When: Thursday Evenings
Where: 205 S. Meldrum St., Ft. Collins, CO
Times: 6:30pm – 8:00pm
Fee: \$45.00 per session

Facilitators:
John Reynolds, LCSW and Paul Slaughter, LMFT

Come and join us in discussing the topics of the day that are of importance to men, such as work and identity, friendships, fathers and masculinity, families, relationships with women, self worth to name a few. Contact John at (970) 484-7868 or Paul at (970)482-3107. We look forward to seeing you!!

A presentation for bereaved persons providing ideas to navigate the holiday season. For more information please call (970) 663-3500.

When: November 23, 2009
1:00 - 2:30 p.m. And 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Location: Pathways for Grief and Loss
305 Carpenter Road, Fort Collins

Cost: No fee, no registration required.

Resources for the Community

Group Supervision

This is an ongoing group providing supervision for people who need hours for licensure. Space is limited. This group meets two times per month for an hour each time.

The cost is \$35.00 per session. The location is in Old Town, Fort Collins. There are two facilitators: Rachel Isenberg, LCSW, ACSW and Maggie Tibbitts, LCSW.

If you are interested in participating in this group, please call Rachel at (970) 490-6851 or Maggie at (970) 988-4173.

Beginning in October 2009, the Parent-Child Interaction Center began recruiting participants for the Promoting Responsible Fatherhood (PRF) Grant. This Grant funding allows fathers 12-20 sessions of Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) with their children.

What is PCIT? Parent-Child Interaction Therapy focuses on teaching parents skills to create a warm and secure relationship with their child. Parents are also coached in techniques that will help them better manage their child's behavior.

PCIT is appropriate for children who:

- Are currently living (or will soon be reunited) with their father
- Have had a break in attachment with their father
- May be on medication to manage behavioral problems
- Exhibit behavioral concerns

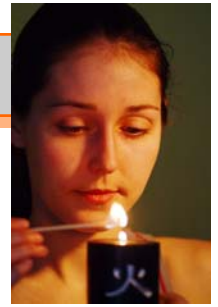
Who can benefit?

- Caregivers including fathers, grandfathers, guardians, foster dads, adoptive fathers and step-fathers.
- Fathers involved with child protection.
- Children's ages 2-12 with the behavioral or attachment issues.

If you have a client that may be a potential referral for this program and/or if you need further information please visit www.p-cic.com or call (970) 472-1207.

REMEMBER to visit www.healthdistrict.org/connections to view our online bulletin board for things such as therapist office space that is available for rent in Larimer County or

2nd Annual Candlelight Tribute for Bereaved Parents



Please join us for our 2nd annual, *A Candlelight Tribute for Bereaved Parents*. This is an evening designed for you and your family to honor the memory of your baby or child, and to connect with other parents and families facing similar losses.

Date: Sunday, December 6, 2009

Time: There will be two services -
5:00 p.m. - perinatal and early infant loss
7:00 p.m. - child loss (all ages)

Place: The Fort Collins Senior Center
1200 Raintree Drive
Fort Collins, CO

Hosts and Facilitators:

Betsy Strafach is a professional photographer and owner of Portraits by Betsy. She is also a volunteer photographer and trainer for the non-profit group, Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep.

Bonnie Cochran is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in private practice and a bereaved parent.

Kristen Glenn is an educator for the Fort Collins Women's Clinic of Northern Colorado and a bereaved parent.

We look forward to sharing this special evening with you and your family. Please contact us to learn how you can honor your baby and child during this tribute, to receive further clarification regarding the evening events, if you need further information and/or have any questions:

Betsy Strafach: (970) 222-6720
portraitsbybetsy@frii.com

Bonnie Cochran: (970) 222-1517
bonnie@growtobestrong.com

Kristin Glenn: (970) 472-1276
kmglenn@comcast.net

A special thanks to our sponsors for helping make this evening possible: Poudre Valley Hospital, Paul Wood Florist, The Fort Collins Women's Clinic of Northern Colorado, and The Fort Collins Senior Center.

• connections •

mental health & substance abuse resources

525 W. Oak Street
Fort Collins, Colorado 80521

If you wish to be removed from the *Connections* mailing list, your address is wrong, or you would like to receive the publication via email, contact Carrie Husted at chusted@healthdistrict.org or call 970-494-4370.