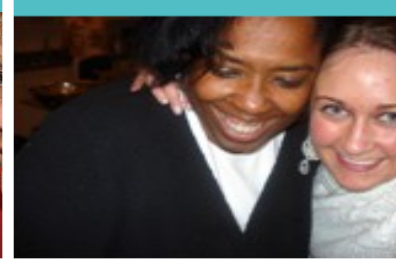




American Foundation of
Counseling Services, Inc.



Conversations

with AFCS

integrating mind, body, and spirit



Bob Johnson, LCSW

Director of AFCS

Bob is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, as well as a Certified Clergy Coach, and has significant training and experience in clergy, congregational and denominational consultation. He also holds a state certificate in divorce mediation. Bob has worked in the Behavioral Health and Consultation field for over 30 years.

Our Mission:

Acting with justice, Loving tenderly, Serving one another, and walking humbly in faith.

(Adapted from Micah 6:8)

American Foundation of Counseling Services promotes optimal mental health by providing counseling, education, consultation, foster care, and relationship-building services.

Reclamation & Renewal

Counseling is not an inherently comfortable activity. "I am going to sit down in an unfamiliar office and talk to a stranger about the most private aspects of my life." YEAH, RIGHT!

When people walk through the doors of our office for the first time we often assume that they have already talked to their confidants - be it family or friends. All of the family wisdom and societal advice that could be mustered has been applied, and still they have not found an answer to their concern. By the time a seat is taken in my office, they are like someone with a toothache who has waited too long to go to the dentist. They want to feel better now!

First time visitors also come with a recipe for a desired change. Initially, they want to feel better because of the emotional discomfort which brought them through the door. To do that they must be willing to take a look at how their actions may have contributed to the emotional discomfort. If this proves promising, the person sitting across from me must then be willing to explore the more abstract world of their attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, values and morals to see how these may be influencing their life.

It is easy to see our patients get confused, and at times discouraged, when we gently tell them that their recipe for change is backwards. First they must start with attitudes and beliefs, move on to their behaviors, and the last thing that will change is how they feel. That is why true, long lasting change is so difficult to achieve.

A patient, who was in the midst of this journey, told us that she appreciated our effort to develop relationships and provide services which gave her the opportunity for "Restoration, Reclamation, Rehabilitation and Renewal." While grateful for her experience, what was unsaid was the amount of hard work - by herself and her therapist - that was required to achieve this outcome. Oftentimes, this hard work starts with forgiveness.

Patients are surprised and sometimes irritated when we suggest they explore their beliefs and attitudes about forgiveness. When people begin their journey for change they are suspicious of forgiveness. They may fear that they are not forgivable, or that by forgiving others they become vulnerable to be hurt or treated unfairly once again.

It can be hard for people to understand and accept that the first target of forgiveness is ourselves. Anger, fear, bitterness, guilt and confusion, all of the emotions which accompany our mistakes and losses, provide important information and guidance for us. However, when we hang on to them too long, they begin to eat away at us like internal rust. When we understand that our healing begins not by changing others or our circumstances, but rather by clearing away our internal rust, then our true, valuable, lovable self is free to live with abundance once again.

Written by: Bob Johnson

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Twice yearly newsletter

Change

Do I want to go there?

Ethics in Business

November 11, 2010 awards banquet

"I don't like change." "Why should I have to change?" "I will do it if I don't have to change." These are phrases I have heard people say and I have spoken them myself. The idea of change can be very scary. It can imply we are doing something wrong. Change will break us out of our comfort zone and we may feel like we don't want to go there.

A book in one of my first social work classes at UW-Green Bay was called "*Change, Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution*." I remember being struck by that title. I wondered why we were learning about change. I was expecting to learn how to get people to understand themselves and how to help people "feel better."

Thirty years later, I still have that book on my bookshelf. My education and experience taught me that therapy is all about change. People should leave a session different than they were when they arrived. Progress, healing, growth and improvement all require change.

How can an outpatient therapist promote change? Here are some ideas: First, we need to accept the idea that change will need to happen. Sometimes it is forced from an unexpected event. The issue is not whether we will change...but it is how we will do it. Coping with a death or other unexpected loss are examples of that.

Leaning on our spiritual beliefs can help us cope with unexpected change. I have the Serenity Prayer in my office. It states "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change." The action word in this phrase is **accept**. Therapy can help us find a way to accept some things that we do not have control over.

The second phrase of the Serenity Prayer is "the courage to change the things I can." The action word here is **change**. Therapy can help us overcome fears and develop more courage. Some fears can be resolved and other fears can be managed. Courage does not imply fearlessness, but rather going on in spite of the fear.

The final phrase of the Serenity Prayer is "and the wisdom to **know** the difference." Again, therapy can help bring a sense of clarity to knowing if something can be changed or if we need to change how we deal with it.

Sometimes what we need to change is how we think about something. We can see the glass as half empty or as half full. Both perspectives are correct, however the focus on the empty leaves a feeling of loss while the focus on full brings forth feelings of gratitude.

Following through on a decision to change will be easier if you believe it is "the right thing to do." Long term change usually requires repeated effort and knowing it is "the right thing to do" can provide the energy to follow through.

Lastly, therapists can be helpful in facilitating change by being supportive. It is easier to accept change when we know we are not alone. Enlisting family, friends and a spiritual connection is helpful. Therapists can encourage this. Having hope that change can help us feel normal again, or in some cases feel even better than we were before, will help us take the first step and "go there."

**Written by: Cindy Bartel
therapist**

2010 Winners were:

Non-Profit category: Wisconsin Public Radio
Business category: MCL Industries, Inc.
Individual category: Bill Jartz



Pictured from left: Bill Jartz, Rick Reyer (WPR) & Gary Lofquist (MCL Industries)

Keynote speaker—Dick Bennett;
former UW-Green Bay head
basketball coach



Over 500 guests, representing
75 businesses were in
attendance

**Photos by:
Dennis Rosloniec**

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Spotlight

Adults with Asperger's Group



Top 10

BENEFITS OF FORGIVENESS

"Darren" came to therapy downhearted about how his life had turned out. He dropped out of high school due to severe anxiety and because he had a history of being bullied and made fun of throughout his school years. He did complete his high school equivalency diploma after he dropped out. He tried his hand at a variety of jobs, but because of his anxiety problems and social phobias he was never successful in the workplace. Eventually, he was able to get disability based on his mental illness diagnoses (Asperger's Syndrome).

At age 36, he was feeling hopeless that he would never be employed in any kind of meaningful way and he was lonely. He lived alone in a fairly remote setting, by his choice, so he wouldn't have to deal with neighbors and people in general. Because he was desperate, and feeling like he was running out of time to improve his life - and because AFCS is one of the few agencies in town accepting his form of payment for services (Medicare & Medical Assistance), he took the risk.

- In 2010, AFCS served 1,561 clients; we provided 3,940 hours of service to 511 uninsured or underinsured persons

- Total donated and subsidized services provided to uninsured / underinsured in 2010 was \$116,293

It was slow-going at first, due to his anxiety and skepticism that therapy could help him. He had been in therapy as a youth and as a young adult and it hadn't helped him very much at all.

Fast-forward to today. Darren is now enrolled in college with a goal of earning his bachelor's degree and possibly going on to graduate school. He is a changed man. Previously, in a classroom setting, he sat in the back of the room hoping he wouldn't be called upon and dreading having to talk in class. Today, he sits wherever he chooses in the classroom and he is often the first one with his hand up to answer the instructor's questions. He has confidence in his ability to be successful as a student. He even looks different. He makes eye contact, he smiles a lot, he talks loud and clear wanting to be heard, and most importantly, he is no longer hopeless.

- AFCS is one of the few providers in Brown County that serves uninsured persons and those with Medical Assistance (MA) - and yet the community's need is still unmet.

- AFCS is one of the only providers who specialize in providing treatment for adults with Asperger' (a form of autism). Last year we ran six 8-week session groups and we currently have a waiting list.

How you can help

- Make a general donation or a donation to the Women of Strength Fund (services for uninsured/underinsured) - any amount can help
- Sponsor a foster child for Camp Kare summer program - \$1,200 (entire summer); \$133 (one week). A camp that works to increase independent living skills for foster children.

Wish List Items

- Magazines (for waiting room)
- Gift cards to department stores (foster children)
- Card scanner (use for Insurance cards)
- Van (foster care summer program) - donate or loaned
- Bean bag chair (child therapist office)
- Guitar &/or keyboard - (educational program for foster children)

For more information on how to support programming at AFCS please contact Vickie Patterson, at (920) 437-8256 or vpatterson@afscounseling.org or simply complete and send the enclosed donation envelope.

Studies show that there are psychological, and even physical benefits to forgiveness. Forgiveness has been associated with all of the following:

- 1 Lower heart rate and blood pressure
- 2 Greater relief from stress
- 3 Decrease in medication use
- 4 Improved sleep quality and decrease in fatigue
- 5 Decreased physical complaints such as aches and pains
- 6 Reduction in depressive symptoms
- 7 Strengthened spirituality
- 8 Better conflict management
- 9 Improved relationships (not just with the offending party, but in other relationships as well)
- 10 Increase in purposeful, altruistic behaviors

So, if you are holding on to anger or holding a "grudge", let go of the bitterness and start enjoying all of the above. It takes practice and effort to forgive, but it is well worth it in the long run - spiritually, physically, and psychologically.

Source: <http://purposebeyondpain.wordpress.com/2010>

Adapted by Vickie Patterson
staff

Find us online at:
www.americanfoundationonline.org



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Help support your neighbors in need

2011 Spring Appeal—
in April



Save the Date for the
2011 Ethics in Business
Awards

November 10, 2011

Thank you to all of our 2010 Sponsors!

You helped us raise over \$84,000 for individuals & families in need.

2010 event Presented by:



Green Bay Packaging Inc.

Major Sponsors

- WS Packaging Group, Inc.
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- iod Incorporated
- Nsight / Cellcom
- Associated Bank and Associated Wealth Management
- American Foundation of Counseling Services
- Ariens Company
- St. Norbert College

Upcoming Events:

Groups

Self-Esteem/Social Skills Group for 6-8 year olds

- 8 sessions -
3/29 · 4/5 · 4/12 · 4/19 · 4/26 ·
5/3 · 5/10 · 5/17

Please call for information on when the following groups will be held:

- Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Adults
- Anxiety Management Group
- Self-esteem/Social Skills Group for 9-12 year olds
- Adults Affected by Asperger's Group
- Emotional Adolescents Group (16-19 year olds)

Social Work Month
March

Foster Care Month
May

