

the Bert Nash Community

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N E W S L E T T E R

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200 MAINE STREET | LAWRENCE, KS 66044 | (785) 843-9192 | www.bertnash.org

For almost 60 years, the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center has advanced the mental health of the Douglas County Community through comprehensive behavioral health services responsive to evolving needs and changing environments.

Local Students & Staff star in DVD

Baldwin and Eudora School District Staff, as well as Baldwin drama students have starring roles in a locally produced DVD. The DVD will be used as a training tool in both districts to help staff recognize mental health problems, the barriers they can create to learning, and how to make referrals.

Called, "Be The Link to Healthy Minds: Recognize the Problem – Connect the Solution," the DVD is part of the work completed through the Integration of Schools and Mental Health Systems Initiative, a project funded through the U.S. Department of Education. The Initiative helped partnering agencies create some infrastructure that enables them to work together more seamlessly. The DVD and supplemental materials can be utilized at Linktohealthyminds.org.

"Acting students were excited to observe and experience filming opportunities far beyond what is offered in our curriculum," said BHS drama teacher Michelle Kirk. "Being a part of something this meaningful made an immediate positive impact on students that they will remember the rest of their lives."

The Integration Initiative is a partnership of: Baldwin School District, Eudora School District, The East Central Kansas Cooperative in Education, Douglas County Youth Services, and Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center. The DVD was produced by Tallgrass Studios.



Baldwin High School drama students watch at the DVD premiere party.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

page 2

- + Donate Online
- + In Focus: Anxiety Disorders Clinic

page 3

- + Meet Sandra
- + De-Stressing

page 4

- + Winter Blues
- + Mental Health First Aid



Is there an end in sight? Layoffs & Restructurings: HOW TO COPE

In economically stressful times, people with no previous mental health symptoms may experience anxiety or depression. Unless those symptoms are addressed, they may lead to: difficulties in social relationships, abuse of alcohol or medications, physical health problems, or other negative consequences. Josh Klapow, Ph.D, a professor at the University of Alabama, recommends the following strategies for coping with financial uncertainty:



- 1. Take action.** Make a family budget, meet with an accountant, trade in a vehicle for a more fuel-efficient model, carpool - do things to help reduce your stress.
- 2. Take a step back.** Don't saturate yourself with stressful information. Stay informed, but take a news break. Most people don't need to track the markets minute by minute.
- 3. Stay connected.** Don't let the rest of your life dwindle away. Make sure you are paying attention to daily activities: family,

- friends, social occasions and recreation.
- 4. Pay attention to yourself.** Remember that stress takes a physical toll. Learn meditation and do muscle relaxation. More simply, pay attention to your stress level throughout the day and occasionally breathe slowly and deeply.

For those who feel that they might benefit from additional support and counseling then please contact the Bert Nash Mental Health Center's Access Center for more information about services at (785) 843-9192.

*“We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life by what we give.”*

- WINSTON CHURCHILL

We are especially excited this year to offer online donation capability at bertnash.org! This is a secure, simple way for you to provide accessible, quality behavioral health services to the members of our community.

Grow Together, Give Today.

The Bert Nash Center’s Endowment Trust Fund supports crucial programs fully financed by public funds and client fees. A volunteer citizen board oversees the fund.

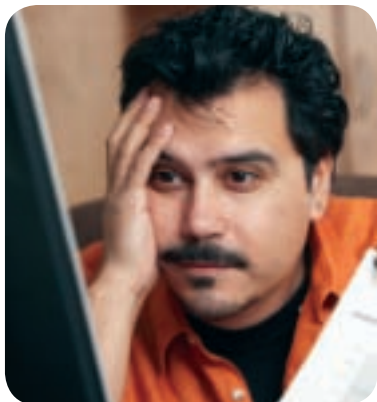
Every week, our staff works with hundreds of Douglas County individuals and families. Our endowment gives the Bert Nash Center staff the resources they need to serve our community.



In Focus: Anxiety Disorders Clinic

The Anxiety Disorders Clinic is a specialized program of the Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, providing research-based treatment of anxiety disorders, including Panic Disorder, Agoraphobia, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Social Phobias, and Specific Phobias.

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S., affecting 1 out of every 5 adults each year. Anxiety Disorders do not typically go away on their own, and can get worse without treatment. Anxiety disorders cost billions of dollars each year in medical expenses and lost income, but the emotional cost is immeasurable.



In an effort to address the suffering of those afflicted with persistent anxiety, Bert Nash has developed the Anxiety Disorders Clinic (ADC), under the direction of Sandra D. Lawrence, Ph.D. ADC is committed to providing quality, research-based treatment to individuals with a primary diagnosis of an anxiety disorder. In addition, specialized assessment and consultation are available for both consumers and professionals in the community.

assessment

ADC provides comprehensive assessment of anxiety symptoms, leading to a well-established diagnosis.

treatment planning

ADC provides individualized treatment plans specific to the symptoms and needs of each consumer, using research-based models of treatment.

consultation

ADC clinicians are available to other clinicians and service providers for professional consultation regarding assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of anxiety.

*“The only thing we have
to fear is fear itself.”*

- FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT



Sandra Lawrence

COORDINATOR, ANXIETY DISORDERS CLINIC

What is your favorite memory working at the Center? My favorite memory is being offered the coordinator position in the new Anxiety Disorders Clinic about a year ago. I was really excited about the possibility of developing a new program from the ground up, which ultimately could benefit clients and staff alike. I love learning new things, so I was particularly enthusiastic about doing something I had never done before. At the same time, because I had been at Bert Nash for three years, I already felt comfortable and supported, so I did not have to deal with many of the stressors typically associated with a job change.

What is most important to you about your work? I love watching clients grow in their ability to manage anxiety and in their overall confidence. I have seen remarkable change in a relatively short time, as a result of following evidence-based treatment protocols. I am inspired every day by the courage my clients show in facing their fears, which keeps me motivated to continue working on their behalf. I am also grateful for all of the support and encouragement I receive from my coworkers, who make coming to work every day an easy task.

Bert Nash Member SPOTLIGHT

What else should we know about you?

I am literally a “soccer mom.” All three of my children are passionate soccer players, so I spend most of my free time driving them to practices and games, and sharing in their wins and losses. In addition to our children, my husband and I share our home with two dogs, two cats, three guinea pigs, two turtles, and two fish. We also have a family match with a “little brother” through Big Brothers/Big Sisters, which has greatly enhanced our lives. Although we have only been in Lawrence for a few years and have no relatives in the Midwest, we certainly feel like we are “home.”

De-stressing during stressful times

Glance at the 10 leading causes of death in America, and you won't find the word “stress” anywhere. Yet many well-respected studies link stress to a variety of ailments, including heart disease, stroke, and cancer. Depression and anxiety, which afflict millions of Americans, can be caused or exacerbated by stress. Stress also triggers flare-ups of asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, and gastrointestinal problems, such as irritable bowel syndrome.

Sometimes just thinking about embarking on a program of stress control can be stressful. Start small: Pick just one stumbling block or source of stress in your life, and see if these suggestions work for you.

Often angry or irritated? Consider the weight of cognitive distortions. Are you magnifying a problem or leaping to negative conclusions without checking to see if they have any foundation in fact? Take the time to stop, breathe, reflect, and choose.

Overextended? Clear the deck of at least one time-consuming household task. Consider what is truly essential and important to you and what might take a backseat right now.

Feeling unbearably tense? Try massage, a hot bath, mini-relaxations, progressive muscle relaxation, or a mindful walk. Practically any exercise — a brisk walk, a quick run, a sprint up and down the stairs — will help, too. Done regularly, exercise wards off tension, as do relaxation response techniques.

Upset by conflicts with others? State your needs or distress directly, avoiding “you always” or “you never” zingers. Say, “I feel _____ when you _____.” “I would really appreciate it if you could _____.” “I need some help setting priorities. What needs to be done first and what should I tackle later?”



mini-relaxations

Mini-relaxations are breathing techniques that can help allay fear and reduce pain while you sit in the dentist's chair or lie on an examining table. They're equally helpful in thwarting stress before an important meeting, while stuck in traffic, or when faced with people or situations that annoy you. Here are a few quick relaxation techniques to try.

When you've got 1 minute.

Place your hand just beneath your navel so you can feel the gentle rise and fall of your belly as you breathe. Breathe in slowly. Pause for a count of three. Breathe out. Pause for a count of three. Continue to breathe deeply for one minute, pausing for a count of three after each inhalation and exhalation.

When you've got 2 minutes.

Count down slowly from 10 to zero. With each number, take one complete breath, inhaling and exhaling. For example, breathe in deeply saying “10” to yourself. Breathe out slowly. On your next breath, say “nine,” and so on. If you feel lightheaded, count down more slowly to space your breaths further apart. When you reach zero, you should feel more relaxed. If not, go through the exercise again.

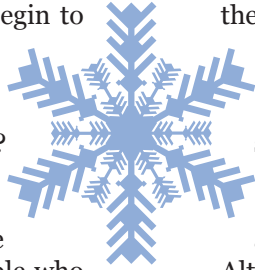
When you've got 3 minutes.

While sitting down, take a break from whatever you're doing and check your body for tension. Relax your facial muscles and allow your jaw to fall open slightly. Let your shoulders drop. Let your arms fall to your sides. Allow your hands to loosen so that there are spaces between your fingers. Uncross your legs or ankles. Feel your thighs sink into your chair, letting your legs fall comfortably apart. Feel your shins and calves become heavier and your feet grow roots into the floor. Now breathe in slowly and breathe out slowly. Each time you breathe out, try to relax even more.

Banning the Winter Blues: Seasonal Affective Disorder

When the dark days of winter approach, do you feel slowed down and have difficulty waking up in the morning? Are you tempted to snack more, do you find the pounds begin to creep on? Maybe you find it hard to focus at work or in your relationships or feel down? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be one of the millions of people who have problems with the changing seasons. Winter depression (or winter blues) is a common affliction for those who live in our northern climate. Its clinical name is seasonal affective disorder (or SAD) and up to 5% of the population may suffer from it. Seasonal affective disorder is characterized by feelings of sadness and depression that occur in the winter months when the temperatures drop and the days grow

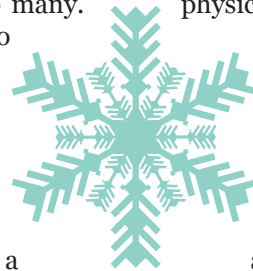
short. The depression is often associated with excessive eating or sleeping and weight gain. Women are twice to three times more likely to suffer from the winter blues than men.



There are many effective treatments for winter depression, some of which you can do to help yourself. Increasing your daily exposure to as much natural light as possible can be helpful to many. Although it may be difficult to do, maintaining your schedule and lifestyle will help to keep the depression at bay. A regular pattern of sleep is the most important thing to maintain. It may be helpful, for instance, to have your bedroom lights on a timer to turn on a half-hour before you wake. This may help in waking at a regular time every morning, when it is still dark outside in the winter months.

Replace commonly used light bulbs in your home with brighter full spectrum (also known as broad spectrum) light bulbs. While more expensive than regular light bulbs, these bulbs provide light that is similar to natural sunlight.

If none of these techniques seem to help your depressive symptoms, you should consider consulting your family physician or a mental health professional. The winter blues are a form of depression and can be readily treated with medications or psychotherapy when other self-help methods aren't effective. Don't be afraid to talk about this condition with a professional, it's nothing to be ashamed or afraid of. With a little effort, the winter blues can be beaten.



Source: *Winter Blues: Seasonal Affective Disorder, What it is and how to cure it* (1993). Norman Rosenthal. New York: Guilford Press.

What would you do
IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS SITUATION ?

Bert Nash
COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

Mental Health First Aid Classes offered through the Center

Classes are offered most months through four, 3-hour sessions. Classes are FREE but donations are accepted and encouraged. Visit bertnash.org to enroll today >

February Classes
Dates: 2, 9, 16, 23
Time: 2-5 p.m.

March Classes
Dates: 2, 9, 23, 30
Time: 4-7 p.m.