

Counseling Connection

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Edited by Gracie McCarroll

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Grandma's Couch
Acrylic on canvas
Madalyn Wofford
(AKA MADDOG)

Images retrieved from <https://www.skunk-trunk.com/artists>

Series on Ritual

By Gracie McCarroll

As we get into the thick of the spring semester, I think it might be important to consider what rituals/routines help us cope with a busy schedule. For this series, I will provide a look into the rituals of prolific thinkers with hopes that we may become more aware of the things we can do for ourselves to become more present and efficient with our time. I also hope that we can learn to think of our rituals and routines as opportunity for self-care.

Consider, for example, American poet and novelist Gertrude Stein's (1874-1946) rituals as rendered from a 1934 *New Yorker* piece by Janet Flanner, James Thurber, and Harold Ross:

Miss Stein gets up every morning about ten and drinks some coffee, against her will. She's always been nervous about becoming nervous., but her doctor prescribed it. Miss Toklas, her companion, gets up at six and starts dusting and fussing around...Every morning Miss Toklas bathes and combs their french poodle, Basket, and brushes its teeth. It has its own toothbrush.



Picture of Stein, Toklas, and the poodle, Basket from *Life Magazine*

Miss Stein has an outside bathtub that was especially made for her. A staircase had to be taken out to install it. After her bath she puts a huge wool bathrobe and writes for a while, but she prefers to write outdoors, after she gets dressed. Especially in the Ain country, because there are rocks and cows there. Miss Stein likes to look at rocks and cows in the intervals of her writing. The two ladies drive around in their Ford until they come to a good spot. Then Miss Stein gets out and sits on the campstool with a pencil and pad, and Miss Toklas fearlessly switches a cow into her line of vision. If the cow doesn't seem to fit in with Miss Stein's mood, the ladies get into the car and drive to another cow. When the great lady has inspiration, she writes quickly, for about 15 minutes. But often she just sits there, looking at cows and not turning a wheel (pp. 49-51).

While Stein devised rituals that may not work for everyone, she allowed her needs to be informed by creativity and intuition. The relationship between her creativity, work style, and intuition enabled her to produce a copious amount of work. How can you allow the interplay of different parts of yourself to inform your routine? Give yourself permission to cultivate a ritual that works for you. Do you need to go on a drive into the mountains and work on your studies in the presence of a river? Could you get up 10 minutes earlier to incorporate some outdoor time in your neighborhood? How can you be creative and intentional in your 15 minute breaks?

References:

Currey, M. (2013). *Daily rituals: How great minds make time, find inspiration and get to work*. New York: Random House Inc.

Self-Care in Action

EMOTIONS AS A FORM OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

By Jill Cox

When I began my internal endeavours sometime ago, I regularly felt defeated and frustrated upon continuing to experience perceived negative emotions after investing so much time on my internal well-being. Around that time, I attended a talk given by Dan Millman, author of the partial biographical novel *Way of the Peaceful Warrior*. He acknowledged having a similar struggle on his path and shared how his experience of himself improved when he started observing the quality of his responses to these perceived negative emotions opposed to simply marking himself as a failure when they occurred. This understanding significantly impacted the way I started interacting with myself. I began to see challenging emotional states as opportunities for further development.

In recent times, I have come to perceive emotions as a form of personal communication. They let me know when I am aligned and when I am out of tune. The less I can judge my emotions as good and bad or positive and negative, the more apt I am to listening to them. Outward indicators that emotional attunement is needed can become evident when behaviors like complaining or criticism appear. When I find myself out of tune, instead of feeling upset by an unwanted emotional state, I am typically able to look towards aspects of myself, such as physical care, relationships, responsibilities, values, etc. to figure out what adjustments need to be made. So what are your emotions saying to you? Where are they leading you and how can you assist future clients in listening to their own?



Blue Duende
Acrylic on Canvas
Madalyn Wofford

PLANTS AS ANXIETY REDUCERS AND
MOOD REGULATOR

By Amy Savini

I recently signed up for an herbal medicine making course through the Chestnut School of Herbal Medicine located in Weaverville. I enrolled in their online herbalism course, which enables me to move through the course at my own pace. I am learning so much about various plants and their healing properties, and I am realizing that the study of plant-based medicines could last a life-time! I am still working through the first few modules, but so far I have learned so much regarding the proper preparations of tea infusions and decoctions, tinctures, herbal syrups, and topical creams. To tie it back to counseling, I am especially interested in studying the ways in which specific plants can be used as anxiety reducers and mood regulators. There are many herbs that directly interact with the nervous system, and when prepared and taken properly, the effects are extremely therapeutic and safe. Some of my favorite anxiety reducing/mood boosting herbs that I have been working with for past few weeks are Lemon Verbena, Holy Basil, Calendula, and Lemon Balm. I have also been working with immune boosting herbs in hopes of staying strong through this flu season. Elderberries are powerhouses against the flu! You can buy Elderberry syrup at many health food stores, and it is also simple to make at home. Thanks for reading, and cheers to our health!



Pearls
Acrylic on Canvas
Madalyn Wofford

“When the opportunity came to present this research at the North Carolina Counseling Association (NCCA) conference, I brought it up to my classmate and we began working towards submitting our research on psychedelics. Our research was accepted, and we began working on our poster presentation. I had presented at national conferences with oral presentations, but I had never done a poster presentation. There was anxiety, mostly of the unknown questions and reactions, but I had confidence that we would rock it out of the park. The fact that the director of our program and other faculty were attending this conference added to the anxiety, as well. I mean who wouldn't be afraid of presenting research to someone who grades your papers and has an influence in future career endeavors.

One thing we did not expect was having lunch with them all. This gave us the opportunity to connect or at least experience the faculty in a way we had not yet had the chance of. One of our professors was the keynote speaker and being able to support him was a pretty cool feeling as well. We were only able to attend one oral presentation on Hip-Hop and it's influence and implications with counseling. Then it was time to set up our poster and present with other graduate Counseling students from North Carolina. People were immediately drawn to the title of our poster and were intrigued by the idea of psychedelics being integrated into the counseling setting. Most read the poster and asked a few clarification questions and our perspective on the future of the topic, but some asked questions that took our topic to another level. Those questions made me realize that there is still a ton of research that needs to be done with this topic and that there are areas of research that have not been touched on. The experience of going to a conference with colleagues and faculty was one that I will never take for granted. It has been engrained in us that connections matter in areas such as career and education, but I believe connections with those who are more experienced in your field of story are much more than that. I was able to take this research and experience and grow not only as a counselor, but as an individual that is just trying to make it in this world.”

-Alex Bass



Portrait
Acrylic on Canvas
Madalyn Wofford

“The NCCA conference was a new experience for me, so I was a little nervous going into it. Once we got there, though, I felt at ease almost immediately. Most of the counseling faculty were there, and they were so supportive throughout the entire process. The whole day was so informative, and our poster session just topped it all off. It was great to have the opportunity to see the fantastic research other graduate students have done, have conversations about it with them, and vice versa. Aside from simply presenting our research, it was so wonderful to meet other counseling graduate students and share their passion for this field. Many people who read our poster and asked us questions about it hadn’t heard about using psychedelics to treat mental illness, so it was great to be able to share this research with them. I had never entertained the idea of presenting at a conference like this before, but after having this experience, I would definitely do it again. It’s a great opportunity to meet new people and learn about the counseling profession.”

--Chrissy Weiner



Alex Bass and Chrissy Weiner presenting at the 2018 NCCA Conference

In-Depth Look into Presented Research

By Alex Bass

Some people cringe at the idea of group research projects. I used to be one of those people; however, when the topic of psychedelics in an addictions class was brought up I was ecstatic. A classmate and I began reading research papers that focused on psychedelics as a form of treatment for addiction, but we soon realized that this was not the only mental health disorder that psychedelics were a topic of discussion. We found articles regarding depression, anxiety, and PTSD. The psychedelics we found that had shown promise for treating these mental illnesses were LSD, Psilocybin, MDMA, Ayahuasca, Ketamine, and Marijuana. The psychedelics and our findings are as follows:

LSD: Reduces anxiety (Tupper et al, 2015).

Psilocybin: Reduces depression and anxiety symptoms in cancer patients (Marrian, 2017).

MDMA: Reduces PTSD symptoms and addiction (Marrian, 2017).

Ayahuasca: Improved measurements of mental health and self-reported use of alcohol and cocaine (Tupper et al, 2015).

Ketamine: Reduces depression and its symptoms in relation to alcohol dependence (Buranyi, 2016).

Marijuana: Reduces PTSD symptoms (Ruglass et al, 2017).

Even though we found many risks with using psychedelics as a form of treatment (psychotic breaks, flashbacks, etc.), there were additional interesting benefits (Tupper et al, 2015). One that sparked my interest was memory reconsolidation (Rehm, 2014). This occurs when the client takes a memory and restores it with different emotions and perspective. For example, if a client has a traumatic experience they will remember that event with negative emotions. When clients undergo psychotherapy with psychedelics, they can discuss the traumatic event in a safe environment while feeling the positive emotions due to the psychedelics. This then restores the traumatic event with the feeling of safety and whatever positive emotions were experienced while under the psychedelics’ influence.

Buranyi, S. (2016, July 21). Researchers in the UK and US are running studies to see if ketamine could help prevent alcoholics from relapsing. *Motherboard*. Retrieved from https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/ezpmvn/new-trials-are-using-ketamine-to-treat-alcohol-addiction

Marrian, A. (2017, January 5). Psychedelics for depression and PTSD? *Berkeley Wellness*. Retrieved from <http://www.berkeleywellness.com/self-care/preventive-care/article/psychedelic-drugs-depression-and-ptsd>

Rehm, D. (interviewer), Mithoefer, M. (interviewee), Blackston, N. (interviewee), & Giordano, J. (interviewee) (2014). Using psychedelic drugs to treat mental disorders [Interview Transcript]. Retrieved from <https://dianerehm.org/shows/2014-10-02/using-psychedelic-drugs-treat-mental-disorders>

Ruglass, L. M., Shevorykin, A., Radoncic, V., Smith, K. M., Smith, P. H., Galatzer-Levy, I. R., ... Hien, D. A. (2017). Impact of cannabis use on treatment outcomes among adults receiving cognitive-behavioral treatment for PTSD and Substance Use Disorders. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 6(2), 1-15. doi:10.3390/jcm6020014

Announcements

Save The Date!

25th School and Community Counselor Conference
 Friday May 4th, 2018
 8am – 3:30pm Covenant Community Church
 Navigating Bias and Self in Counseling Contexts
 Dr. Nickolas Jordan, Marriage and Family Therapist

Contexts such as Race, Class, Gender, Sexual Orientation, religion, and ability status (to name a few) can be difficult to negotiate as a counselor, therapist, or administrator. In this workshop, participants will be introduced to theory, concepts, and interventions related to Bias, Inclusion, and Social Justice in the workplace and in the broader community. Participants will discuss vignettes of common issues when working and communicating with diverse individuals, families, and communities. Participants will share their own experiences of working with diverse persons. Finally, participants of this workshop will examine their own biases and context to address blind spots in decision making.

Nickolas Jordan, PhD is a practicing, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) and Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Program Services and an Associate Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy within the Department of Human Development and Psychological Counseling at Appalachian State University.

Registration info Coming in March 2018.

If you have any announcements or would like to share your thoughts, please email me at gmccarroll1@catamount.wcu.edu

Hope you enjoyed this issue!

~Gracie McCarroll



SIMON SAYS...

HOROSCOPES FOR COUNSELORS

Astrologer Simon Peter wakes up from a nap.

ARIES

3/21-4/19

Before aries season starts engage in some self care. Find something within your budget to do.

TAURUS

4/20-5/20

Its time to let your thoughts be known. Speak up in a work or school situation from your truth.

GEMINI

5/21-6/20

Who are apart of "tribe" and how can you strengthen your bond with them?

CANCER

6/21-7/22

You deserve an amazing opportunity coming your way. Know this.

LEO

7/23-8/22

Don't fight the upcoming transformation. You have all you need to grow from it.

VIRGO

8/23-9/22

After the explosion of self awareness that you recently underwent, its time for a change.

LIBRA

9/23-10/22

Accept the feedback coming your way. It will benefit you in the end.

SCORPIO

10/23-11/21

Don't let your busy schedule keep you from carving out time to be creative.

SAGITTARIUS

11/22-12/21

You been educating yourself on some really powerful topics. Provide some psychoeducation to your community.

CAPRICORN

12/22-1/19

Now is the time for collaboration. Seek someone out with similar interests.

AQUARIUS

1/23-2/19

Some core beliefs might be getting stirred up causing you to question old patterns of thought.

PIECES

2/20-3/20

Be discerning about the projects you choose to avoid burn out.