

The West Towns Link Newsletter is published by Conley Outreach Community Services to connect residents in the Kaneland and surrounding communities with local health and human services and to provide the latest information on a variety of mental health topics. It is published twice a year and distributed free of charge to all postal patrons in Big Rock, Blackberry, Kaneville, Sugar Grove and Virgil townships thanks to a grant from Mental Health/Mental Retardation Services. Contact us at P.O. Box 931 Elburn IL 60119 or 630-365-2880.

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### Why Are We So Angry? By Trang Rose, M.A., LCPC, TriCity Family Services

On any given day, look around and you will see people arguing with co-workers, gesturing at fellow motorists or swearing at each other. People don't just seem angrier today, studies show that society really is more hostile. A recent study by Scripps Howard News Service found 88 percent of respondents believe that people are more likely to express anger today than they would in the past. Also, a recent study by the Yale School of Management found as many as one in four U.S. workers may be chronically angry on the job. Additionally, a study by the American Automotive Association's Foundation for

Traffic Safety found that incidents of aggressive driving continue to increase every year.

With everything now available at the touch of a finger, our society has become one of impatience. Our fast-paced, hectic lifestyles rely on instant gratification and having everything readily available. Impatience, combined with factors like divorce, a general breakdown in the family structure, more anonymity, and increasing levels of violence in the media are all factors experts believe to be contributing to the rising anger epidemic in America.

Whatever the cause, more and more Americans are letting their anger get to a .....(continued on page 5)

### Should Mom Still be Living Alone? A Home Safety Checklist

Items on this list are indicators of safety issues for a person with a short term memory loss. Adjustments in the home should be made to insure your loved one's safety.

- Lives at home alone.
- The home has stairs to the basement or upper level.
- Drives a car.
- Smokes and leaves burn marks on the floor, furniture or clothing or forgets to put out matches/cigarettes.

- Uses the kitchen to prepare meals, including stove and/or microwave.
- Has forgotten a pan on the stove.
- Refuses to receive Meals on Wheels or other prepared meals.
- Meals do not contain the different food groups (dairy products, meat or fish, cereals, fruits and vegetables).
- Cannot tell the difference between fresh and spoiled food.
- Confuses medications.

.....(continued on page 6)

## Survivor Island: Handling the Holiday By Fox Valley Hospice

The holidays are a traditional time of joy and laughter, sparkle and glitter, sharing and gift giving. But for people who are grieving, the holidays may seem inappropriate, affronting, and painful.

The holidays are a time of remembrance of past celebrations, of present get-togethers, and of future opportunities to break away from everyday stress. But for people who are grieving, the holidays may be a time of mixed emotions, feelings of being overwhelmed with multiple demands, and the pain of loves lost. As the holidays approach, think about how you take care of yourself during this vulnerable time.

### *Helpful Hints for Surviving the Holidays:*

- Acknowledge Grief Work as Real Work. Adjustment to the death or dying of someone close to you does not simply come with time. The work of grief demands that you deal with all the feelings that loss engenders. This work takes emotional and physical energy that you can leave you unable to deal with the extra demands of the holiday season.
- Allow Yourself To Be Merely Human. Avoid perfectionistic expectations during the holidays. Let some things slide. If you really want to do all the cooking and baking, let the dusting go. Enlist the aid of others "in the holiday spirit of sharing." You do not have to do it all yourself this time.
- Plan Ahead. Sit down with your family and friends ahead of time to discuss those activities, experiences, and people

that make the holidays special for you. Decide to do a few special things with a few special people, not everything with everybody.

- Set Limits. Tell your family, friends and yourself now – and continue to remind them – that you are on a stress-reduction diet this holiday season. You will not be overdoing, over-shopping, over-cooking, over-complying, or over-worrying. Put a sign on your bathroom mirror or refrigerator to remind yourself or others.
- Change *Shoulds* to *Wants*. Be aware of your own statements to yourself. Are you saying, "I should do this or that?" Decide which of your "shoulds" you really "want" to do and make those your priorities. Remember: You should not "should" yourself; there are enough other people doing that already.
- Strive For a Balanced Lifestyle. With all the parties and demands of the holidays, it is difficult for anyone to get enough rest and exercise. It is easy to overindulge.
  - Set Exercise as a Priority – It is an antidote to depression.
  - Learn Relaxation Techniques – They are an antidote to stress.
  - Don't Overdo the Eggnog – Alcohol is an antidote for nothing.
- Tell Others Clearly What You Want and Need For The Holidays. Do not be shy or embarrassed to let others know what you want from them in terms of emotional

support, help, or sharing. Mind-reading of yours or others' needs is best left up to fortune tellers. Unknown expectations generally go unfulfilled and lead to disappointment and bad feelings.

- Honor The Old/Create The New. This holiday time may not be like previous ones. But what will it be like? Realistically, this may be the last holiday with your ill family member. How can you make it the best?

If this is the first holiday time without your family member, include your deceased loved one to the extent that you can; the memory of him or her will be with you this holiday season no matter what you do. Consider giving gifts in memory of the deceased; consider giving love to others in honor of the love you have received. Only you can put the joy back into the holidays.





## The Cutting Edge....Real Treatments for Today's Real Problems

### Parenting

- The Grandparent Support Group addresses the very real needs of grandparents raising grandchildren. This free group meets on the last Tuesday of the month from 7-8:30 pm at First Baptist Church in Geneva. Call TriCity Family Services to register (630-232-1070).
- TriCity Family Services also sponsors a weekly Single Moms Support Group. This group costs \$5 per session, with free child care provided. Call 630-232-1070.
- Breaking Free has a free parent support group, "Inside the Mind of Your Teen" that meets on the first Tuesday of the month, from 6:30-7:30 at 120 Gale Street in Aurora. Call 630-897-1003.

### Grief

- The Grieving Parent Support Group meets on the second Tuesday of the month from 7-8:30 at the Village Bible Church in Sugar Grove. Call Conley Outreach at 630-365-2880
- Mourning After, a self-help group for young widows and widowers, meets on the third Thursday of the month at the Elburn Community Center, Room 10. Call Conley Outreach at 630-365-2880.
- Anything Goes, a group for grieving high school students, meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm at the Conley Farm, 47w085 Main Street Road just west of Kaneville. Supper is provided. Call Conley Outreach at 630-365-2880.
- Herbie's Friends is an 8-week program designed to help grieving families cope with death, loss and grief. Call Fox Valley Hospice at 630-232-2233 ext. 225 for information about upcoming sessions.

### In-Home Support for Seniors

- Free caregiver coaching and support services for those who care for older loved ones is available from Elderday Center. Call 630-761-9750.
- The Alzheimer's Association's Safe Return Program is a nationwide identification program that provides 24-hour assistance when a registered person with Alzheimer's or related dementia becomes lost locally or far from home. Call 888-572-8566.

### Divorce Support

- RAINBOWS is a 14-week program that provides support to children in kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade who are suffering a loss due to divorce, death, abandonment or serious illness. Call Conley Outreach at 630-365-2880.
- Bridges is a six-week workshop for children ages 7-11 who are adjusting to their parent's divorce or separation. Cost is \$75 for one child or \$125 for two or more children (scholarships available). Call TriCity Family Services at 630-232-1070.
- Divorce Recovery is a 10-week co-ed support/therapy group for adults going through a divorce. Call Family Counseling Service of Aurora for session and cost information 630-844-2662.

## Why Are We So Angry? (continued from page 1...)

boiling point before dealing with it. At that level, the anger is often acted out in harmful behaviors, such as swearing, road rage, or other aggressive or violent acts. Further, children are learning poor anger management skills from a young age, either by modeling after their parents, the media or peers.

Anger is a very natural human emotion that is experienced by everyone. It only becomes negative when people allow it to facilitate behaviors that are harmful to themselves or others. In adults, learning effective ways to manage anger takes patience, insight, and the ability to recognize problematic behaviors. Some signs that indicate current or potential problems requiring help are as follows:

- Short temper/impatience.
- Restlessness and agitation.
- Hitting and slamming objects, pets, or people.
- Desire to inflict harm.
- Verbal outbursts toward family, friends or coworkers.
- A sense of losing control over your life.
- Poor concentration or attention span.
- Physical health affected; increase in blood pressure, dizziness, headaches, clenched jaw, tight muscles, etc.
- You feel life should be fair,

but it is not; and things are not how you want them to be.

In children, anger is often a substitute for other feelings that they cannot identify. However, when it truly is anger that they are experiencing, children are often frightened by the feelings of being out of control. For this reason, it is helpful to encourage children to talk about what is bothering them and to teach them how to identify anger triggers before they feel out of control. Signs of anger in children that may require intervention include:

- Behavioral outbursts, many times without obvious cause.
- Sleep problems.
- Fights at school or home.
- Physical attacks on others or animals, even among preschoolers.
- Disobedience from an otherwise well behaved child.
- Other reactions similar to those of adults.

TriCity Family Services, a private, not-for-profit counseling agency in Geneva, recognizes anger as a growing problem and as a response to community need, currently offers Smart Choices - anger management programs for children and teens and I C.A.N. (I Control Anger Now) for adults. Both I C.A.N. and Smart Choices are facilitated by qualified counselors and teaches participants the skills to resolve

conflict, manage anger, and develop alternatives to a potentially vicious cycle of violent behavior. Sessions focus on topics such as the nature of conflict, emotions and anger response patterns, elements of effective communication, tools for successful conflict resolution. I C.A.N. targets adults who are self-motivated and self-referring.

For more information  
or to register,  
call 630-232-1070.

### Dealing with Anger: Other Resources:

- Tools for Life 12 week Anger Management goal-oriented program for adults. Individual and group sessions available. 630-906-1200.
- Family Counseling Service of Aurora M.A.R.S. (Men Anger/Abuse Recovery Support), F.A.I.R. (Female Anger/Abuse Intervention Recovery) and Teen M.A.R.S. and F.A.I.R. programs addressing domestic violence issues. Meets court-ordered domestic violence treatment requirement. 630-844-2662.
- Taking Control has anger groups for children and teens as well as a therapeutic martial arts program for youth. 630-801-1669.



## POSTAL PATRON

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### Should Mom Still be Living Alone? A Home Safety Checklist (continued from page 1...)

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- Takes medicine to help sleep or relax.
- Suffers from health problems.
- Refuses to accept treatment for physical health problems.
- Gets lost in familiar surroundings.
- Has gotten lost.
- Cannot find his/her way home.
- Does not dress appropriately for the changing weather (cool clothes in summer, warm clothes in winter)
- Does not recognize poisons or may accidentally eat them.
- Owns a firearm.
- Does not maintain a clean and sanitary environment.
- Would let a stranger in the house.
- Would not let a relative, friend, neighbor or rescuer in the house.
- Would not know what to do in an emergency, such as fire, tornado, or evacuation.
- Would tell someone on the phone that he/she is alone.
- Would dial 9-1-1 at an inappropriate time or not at all.

For more information about creating a safe home environment or about in-home assistance, contact Senior Services Associates at 630-897-

4035. Day care programs for seniors with short term memory loss are also available. Contact Elderday Center (630-761-9750), Rachel's Place (630-896-9022) or the Senior Citizen's Center (815-758-6550) for more information about their services.

