



Community Matters

Community Counselling & Resource Centre's Voice for Public Education and Advocacy

Bids for Connection

Your relationships can be improved by noticing the other person's "bids for connection." If they say to you, "I noticed today that the forsythias are blooming!" and you ignore the remark, act distracted, or change the subject, you have missed the opportunity. Say, "Yes, I saw some too and are they ever gorgeous!" Connection made!



Hold Me Tight

Most of us intuitively recognize the importance of the human relationships

in our lives. When we feel lonely, disconnected, or in conflict with significant others we tend toward despair and loss of energy and optimism. Feelings of belonging, love, and connection, on the other hand, give us "warm fuzzies" and positive mood.

title above mirrors that of a new book from Sue Johnson, the chief proponent of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy.

Ms. Johnson points to research that shows that loving contact is as important for humans as physical nutrition. She says that emotional responsiveness has 3 main components:

- Accessibility: Can I reach you?
- Responsiveness: Can I rely on you to respond to me emotionally?
- Engagement: Do I know you will value me and stay close?

In this issue of "CCRC: Community Matters" we are looking at a few of the working ideas our counsellors use to help our clients maintain and repair connection and community.

Expressing Negative Feelings

All relationships contain potential for hurt, anger and frustration. It is destructive to use hurtful ways to express these feelings, especially by attacking, blaming, or even harsh, cold tones of voice.



Each of us has the potential to wait until our initial negative feelings subside.

Then we can use an "I statement" to report in a neutral tone how we feel: "I felt really hurt that you took so long to return my call." We express what we need to say, but in a way that is non-aggressive and informative.

Much of the work of CCRC's Counselling Program is devoted to helping with relationships, whether these are couples relationships, parent-child, friendships, work colleagues or extended family. The

The "Relationship Bank Account"

Researchers have observed that relationships remain viable when there are at least 3 positive interchanges for every negative one. Every instance in which you are supportive, loving, respectful, or considerate represents a "deposit" into your "relationship bank account." Any negative interaction is a "withdrawal." When the

account has a substantial "balance," there is growth of confidence and optimism. In this case, the relationship can withstand the occasional "withdrawal." However, when "withdrawals" accumulate and the relationship becomes "overdrawn," trust is eroded, and further withdrawals threaten the survival of the relationship.

No one is turned away from CCRC's counselling services due to inability to pay. Due to the generosity of our community support through the United Way and additional support from Ontario provincial ministries, we are able to provide counselling for all. Fees that are paid are "geared to income" and go toward supporting the services offered.

To book a free and confidential appointment with one of our counsellors, call 705.742.4258 or visit www.ccrcc-ptbo.com.

How Healthy is Your Relationship?

It is a sad fact that most of the violence in our society is perpetrated by someone who is personally known to the victim, usually a family member. The usual pattern is that abuse begins with the exercise of power and control, moves to verbal (emotional) abuse, then sometimes to physical violence.

The good news is that during the past 30 years family violence and abuse of power within families has been taken out of the shadowy sanctuary of "it's a private matter." There is now a widespread policy of zero tolerance for violence and provision of extensive services for both victims and perpetrators. If you are in an unhealthy relationship, help is available.

Some of the markers of an unhealthy relationship are:

- Your partner bosses you around, gives orders, and makes most decisions
- Your partner keeps you from being in touch with family and friends
- Your partner shouts, yells, puts you down, calls you names

- You fear talking openly with your partner
- Your partner denies there is a problem

If you believe you are in an unhealthy relationship, CCRC is one of many agencies that can help. Give us a call. We'll make sure you find the help you need.



Masters and Disasters

Since 1973, Dr. John Gottman has studied what he calls the "masters and disasters" of marriage. By examining partners' heart rates, facial expressions and how they communicate to each other Dr. Gottman is able to predict with more than 90% accuracy which couples will make it, and which will not. Below are some of his top suggestions for how to keep your relationship strong.

- **Edit yourself.** Couples who avoid saying every critical thought when discussing touchy topics are consistently the happiest.
- **Soften your "start up."** Bring up problems gently and without blame;

avoid using a critical or confrontational tone.

- **Accept influence.** A marriage succeeds to the extent that one partner can accept influence from the other partner.
- **Learn to repair and exit the argument.** Successful couples know how to exit an argument that is getting too heated, or how to cool it down. Repairs that work include use of humour, making a caring remark, and offering signs of appreciation for your partner.

Dr. Gottman's website is at:
www.gottman.com/marriage/

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