

Phone: 604-585-1411
 Email: info@cascadecristiancounseling.com
 Website: www.cascadecristiancounseling.com
 Address: **Unit #201** The Guildford plaza
 14980 104 avenue, Surrey, BC V3R 1M9
Unit #207 Ambassador Building
 33119 South Fraser Way
 Abbotsford, BC V2S 2B1



Winter Newsletter 2024

Staff Updates



Rachel moved to Alberta in September and we miss her already! Her absence is deeply felt, but we know she will be a blessing to all in her new Counselling position.



Julie Corona-McLean



Renee Hui

We are excited to have both Renee & Julie join our Cascade Team! Renee is working with Surrey clients & Julie has taken over for Rachel in Abbotsford. Both have settled in and are already in demand!



Yolanda is enjoying her new baby girl while on maternity leave. Her date of return is unknown at this time.



The Needed Art of Destressing

"The enormity of life's tasks weigh and press on the day... they demand and insist on a constancy of attention that is relentless."

Cheryl Sanders-Sardello.

At some levels modern life resembles a roller coaster stuck on acceleration. With the daily noise and constant stimulus of phone calls, emails, texts, updating and downloading info, posting, texting, and tweeting, not to mention relational and work place complexities, many of us find ourselves in a general state of stress. A scattered exhaustion and distracted breathlessness that lure us to finish off the day mindlessly numb in front of the latest flickering Netflix series. How often do we need to be reminded each day to simply breathe or calm down?

Finding ways to live, thrive and adapt to this sped up life requires one to enter proactively into the learning curve of caring for oneself and discovering the art of de-stressing (decompressing, defragging, grounding and centering). More and more, my counseling office functions as a safe refuge to breathe and be known, while the load of stress that is being carried day in and day out gets unpacked and named, sorted out and de-cluttered.

The advice of the ancient poet/musician feels like needed healing medicine: "Step out of traffic! Take a long loving look at me, your High God, above politics, above everything" (The Message, Psalm 46:10). What would it look like in our modern stressed out commuting routines to pull off into a rest area for a needed mental health moment, to recalibrate, breathe deeply and be still, letting go gently of trying to

control and manage everything? This kind of stillness leads to an invitation to pay attention to beauty, birds, and clouds (which are ultimately glimpses of God).

In Curt Thompson's book Anatomy of the Soul, the author states that focused attention exercises, such as contemplative prayer and mindfulness practices, form a key component to the neuroplastic triad** that enhance the flexible growth and healing activation of the mind/brain. So it looks very much like the old poet comes to us as a modern therapist with advice that we need to hear. It also fits in seamlessly with the sweet words of Jesus aimed again at our over-burdened souls:

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (The Message, Matthew 11: 28-30)

I love the suggestion that getting close to spirit and spiritual things, and exploring the possibility of relating to God, might bring one into a sustainable lifestyle of lightness and freedom. I also love how the counselling process can assist clients in learning how to de-stress and find these sustaining rhythms of living more lightly in our sped up world.

by: Brent Unrau, MA, RCC

**By the way, if you are wondering what the other two parts of the neuroplastic triad are, they are aerobic activity (ideally 5 times a week for at least 45 minutes at a time) and novel learning experiences that expand your level of creativity on a meaningful level.

1. The problem that I sought help with through counselling with Brent Unrau was lust and difficulties in my marriage. I wanted to be able to work through my challenge with lust, to cultivate a pure mind, and to work through some of the challenges of connecting with my wife when she is struggling to stay sober.
2. Brent Unrau is a great counselor and he helped me with both of these problems by enabling me to talk through these issues at length. He provided a forum in which I could express my emotions in an honest and reflective way. He gave me thought-provoking philosophical and theological books that have given me a new perspective in the midst of challenging times.
3. What makes Cascade special and unique is that it is a quiet, comfortable space in which we can be ourselves and open up while seeking healing. The counsellors and the administrators work together to create a calming place where we can find healing and work through our trauma and issues from the past. Through taking time in this reflective space, we are able to make progress in the present and approach challenging times with a prayerful and mindful headspace.
4. I have had a very positive experience with Cascade Christian Counselling. I have built a great relationship with my counsellor and he has guided me through challenging issues with a godly perspective. The ideas and resources that he suggests provide a deep, thought-provoking, and encouraging perspective that helps shed light on some of the darkness that I have been struggling with. His great advice and wisdom have helped me make better decisions and work towards harmony in my marriage.



“Clear is Kind”

Brene Brown’s famous quote “Clear is kind” from her bestselling book *Dare to Lead* has given many the insight that effective leadership requires clear communication even if it means tough conversations that might offend others. Yet in the field of counselling psychology, the first time I heard this phrase was from my internship supervisor during one of my meetings with her. As my supervisor provided more insight into the case I was working with, she embarked on the insight “Clarity is kindness”. It was such an “Ah-Ha” moment for me as if I was granted an oasis in a hundred miles of desert when I explored the difficult clinical terrains.

We talked about what it means to be “clear” or “have clarity” when collaborating with clients about their treatment plans. This idea that it is kindness when one communicates with clarity has since been ingrained as a center piece in both my personal and professional motto. To be clear in communication may evoke disagreement or even argument; however, the act of speaking the truth is an act of kindness to oneself and others. Oftentimes it's the discrepancies between how we really feel and what we say how we feel that trap us in the bottomless spiral of self blame, guilt and shame.

The idea of kindness isn't just another cliché we speak about on a daily basis. As I continue my work at Cascade, kindness has surprisingly become a bedrock of my clinical conceptualization. As I listen to my clients' stories, I have often raised the question about kindness, particularly self-kindness. What can they do to be kind to themselves despite the struggles and problems they experience? Dr. Kristin Neff, the pioneer research expert on self-compassion, talks about self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness as the three essential elements of self-compassion. Dr. Neff contends that the antidote to self-criticism is self-kindness. The concept of self-kindness is loving oneself, and offering oneself unconditional warmth and acceptance. In our ever-increasingly challenging world, how can we extend the loving kindness we often give so easily to others also to ourselves? Being kind is not just another slogan of “to-dos”. Being kind is doing for ourselves what we would do for a good friend when they face a difficult time.

If we could expand the “clarity is kindness” idea, how can we be kind to ourselves by providing clarity to our thoughts, feelings and actions? It could be a simple gesture of recognizing that we are going through a tough time. Or allowing ourselves to feel what we are feeling without screening out the negative emotions. Or it could be inviting ourselves to enjoy a cup of our favourite tea or coffee. Or it could mean taking a much needed break by going for a nature walk, or reading a novel that we have wanted to read for the longest time. For me, being kind to myself may mean acknowledging my feelings when I lose my temper during a traffic rush and offering loving kindness to myself in phrases such as “May I forgive myself” or “May I be kind to myself”. Kindness is not just a cliché but an act of loving oneself as we embrace what life offers– it gives us a canvas for painting our life experiences. As we welcome Christmas around the corner, what could be one thing you could do to show kindness to yourself this holiday season.

by: Renee Hui BA, MA, RCC



ALL of our therapists offer **ONLINE** Counselling sessions. We are finding more often clients are wishing for online sessions as life gets even busier. For some it is because they don't have a **local Christian counsellor** available to them, for others it is the convenience of being able to meet anytime, anywhere.



ANNUAL DRIVE

We wish to **thank everyone** who donated to our Fall 2023 Annual Drive. Each year, the drive enables us to offer a sliding scale to our clients, determining their fee by their income level. Without this type of assistance, **many** people would not be able to get the help they need.

We gratefully accept donations all year long. If you would like to support the work we do by making a donation, please contact the office @604-585-1411.