



# Newsletter

March/April 2017

## What's New?

### Community Nights

Join us on the first Thursday of every month for our new **free** educational series open to clients and the public. Staff psychologists and local experts will present on a variety of topics which address the interests and needs of our community.

At each presentation participants will have the opportunity to meet our staff, ask questions, and discuss that week's topic with other interested members of the community.

#### April's Topic:



### Helping a Child on the Autism Spectrum Transition from Home to Independence

Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup> | 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM |

Led by Julie DiMatteo, Ph.D.

The transition from high school to college is a critical period of psychological development in late adolescence. During this time, teens begin to establish independent lifestyles and adjust to the academic demands of college. For teens on the Autism Spectrum, this transition can present a unique set of challenges and opportunities for growth. This workshop will address concerns parents have about social, academic, and work adjustment as their teen transitions to independence. Discussion will include consideration of factors from high school onward which will prepare your adolescent and your family for this transition. As it is never too early to start preparing, families of middle school children are also welcome.

#### May's Topic:



### Helping a Child with Test Anxiety

*(For Parents and Professionals)*

Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup> | 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM |

Led by Ilana Luft, Ph.D.

Between admissions tests, standardized tests, and this week's vocabulary quiz, testing is a significant part of students' lives and can be a source of stress for them and their families. This workshop is for caregivers of students of all ages who would like guidance on supporting their child around exams. Participants will learn strategies for helping students manage stress and test-taking anxiety and signs of when a student may benefit from professional assistance. We will also suggest ways to help students prepare effectively for exams without making them the centerpiece of their education.

## Staff Spotlight: Julie DiMatteo, Ph.D.



Dr. Julie DiMatteo is a post-doctoral fellow at CBT/DBT Associates. She currently co-leads the Adolescent DBT Multifamily Skills group and is eager to start a DBT skills group geared towards young adults on the Autism Spectrum beginning in summer 2017.

Dr. DiMatteo earned her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Fairleigh Dickinson University. Prior to attending FDU, she graduated from William Paterson University with an M.A. in clinical & counseling psychology and earned a B.S. from Fordham University with a double major in psychology and sociology. Dr. DiMatteo completed her pre-doctoral internship at Northwell Health System's Zucker Hillside Hospital. Dr. DiMatteo's primary interests lie in preparing adolescents and young adults on the Autism Spectrum to successfully navigate independence in their personal, academic, and professional lives. She also has specialized training in the assessment and treatment of mood and anxiety disorders in women across the reproductive cycle, as well as generalized CBT training for anxiety and mood disorders in adolescents and adults.

In addition to her role at CBT/DBT Associates, Dr. DiMatteo serves as an Adjunct Professor at William Paterson University. Dr. DiMatteo was drawn to DBT due to its focus on mindfulness and balancing acceptance with change. She incorporates these components into her personal life in addition to practicing Pilates for well-being.

## DBT Skills Training Groups

Ongoing Schedule and New Entry Points

**We offer multiple ongoing DBT Skills Training Groups that meet on a weekly basis.** For information on the groups schedule and entry points, please visit our DBT Skills Training Groups webpage.

In addition to our DBT Skills groups for children, adolescents, adults, and parents, we also offer a number of **group therapy treatments for specific problems**, including Social Skills development, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), and Parenting a Child with Anxiety.

## Skill of the Month

### Participate

As Spring approaches, we can expect our families, friends, and communities to gather to enjoy the warmer weather and longer days. Whether for upcoming holidays, spring break, or your neighborhood street fair, use these opportunities to practice the Mindfulness Skill: *Participate*.

*Participating* is "entering wholly and with awareness into life itself." It is non-judgmental experience of the present moment, incompatible with boredom, self-consciousness, and a sense of exclusion. In many ways "*Participating* is the ultimate goal of mindfulness."



For this reason, practicing *Participation* can feel overwhelming if not impossible at times. This is okay. As with each of the other DBT skills, to be "experts" we must practice. Here are some tips on how to effectively *Participate*:

- *Throw yourself completely into activities.*
- *Let go of self-consciousness by acting opposite to it.*
- *Act intuitively from wise mind, doing just what is needed in each situation. (Go with the flow)*

This month, begin your practice by fully *Participating* in an activity you already do - whether DBT group, dinner out with family or friends, or even a solitary activity such as on your commute or while washing the dishes. As you begin to feel more comfortable, you can use *participate* to throw yourself into all of the exciting experiences life has to offer.

While an eventual goal of participation is to become more comfortable with new, and possibly worrisome, experiences, by fully and truly *participating* even in life's "everyday" exchanges, we can become more aware of the present moment - our feelings and thoughts - increasing our day to day mindfulness and happiness.

#### References and Additional Resources on *Participate*

Marsha M. Linehan, Ph.D., DBT Skills Training Manual 2nd Edition (p. 192-194)

## What We Like

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### Should Emotions Be Taught in Schools?

From the people behind *Ted Talks*, an interesting look at the importance of emotional intelligence and the role schools (and parents) can play in teaching our children emotional awareness.



### How to Meditate A Guide from *The New York Times* Wellness

This helpful guide includes an introduction to basic meditation practice as well as short exercises and mindfulness tips to keep you engaged and motivated.

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