

The Compass

Spring 2018

THE ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE PRACTICE THERAPISTS

Being Nice Matters

Being nice matters. Good manners are the lubricant that greases the skids of our difficult profession, taking care of people's health.

Healthcare is a business in which we must care for the ill. Ill people are not at their best; they have pain, discomfort, and worries of all kinds. They can become upset because they do not know what is wrong with them, or because they do know what is wrong with them.

People come to us to make them feel better. We must listen to them, examine them physically or mentally, and make a decision to further their care.

We cannot complete our work without help from others. Secretaries make appointments and follow-ups. The lab runs tests. We must sometimes consult with, and refer to, other healthcare professionals to do what we cannot do in the scope of our own practices. Frustration can occur when waiting for things to get done, trying to explain an important patient issues to another professional, or dealing with dropped balls.

It is common to have to endure stressful situations when working with other professionals to ensure a successful patient outcome. Horizontal violence can occur between nurses. Horizontal violence can also occur between physicians, due to a physician's field, training, or perceived competence. Nurse practitioners can receive painful comments from physicians, and vice-versa. Healthcare professionals who look down on a colleague's field of practice may treat that colleague with condescension. Healthcare team members might also disrespect social workers, therapists, and psychologists. The list of disrespect, anger and horizontal violence is endless.

Sometimes, in the midst of all this upset, I wonder, "Does anyone remember that all of us are trying to help restore a human being's health and well-being?" I find that focusing on the person who seeks help makes it easier to deal with the difficult professionals and services I may encounter. I may want to rip someone's head off and do terrible things to that person's neck. However, if that person can help my patient, I must use skills to successfully elicit that help.

Volume 2018, Issue 1
First Quarter



Joyce Sasse, APRN

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June Workshop Coming Up...

Sarri Gillman, LMFT
5 CEUs
Transform Your Boundaries

From the President's Desk



Craig Caspari, LIMHP

Hello! We are now well into 2018 and we on the board are busy planning various educational and social events for APPT members. Relationships are at the center of our practice and are important in our personal lives.

One of the goals of APPT is to promote networking and relationships among those in private practice or those who have an interest in private practice. Our relationships with colleagues can help us gain new perspectives and aid in resolving ethical dilemmas. These relationships can also help us to relax, laugh,

and have a break from the emotional toll our work can take.

We have some great upcoming events, including our first social of the year at First Watch! You can learn more about our events in this newsletter, on our Facebook page, and on privatepractice.org. I encourage you to attend such events to grow your network and learn new skills that can help you in your practice. There are always interesting, fun, and insightful people at the events. We can feel isolated at times in private practice and making time to

cultivate relationships with other therapists can help us both personally and professionally.

We are also working to find new ways to reach more practitioners, including offering webinars and using other digital/electronic means to connect us with others in our field. We are always open to suggestions for networking events and new ways to link with other therapists. Please feel free to contact us with any suggestions.

SAVE THE DATE

March 9, 2018	Lunch and Learn Creative Expression Sempeck—Oakview	11:00am to 12:30
April 13, 2018	Networking Breakfast First Watch near 72nd and Dodge	8:30 am to 10:00
May 2018	Lunch and Learn Lisa Basile, LMHP	TBD
June 2018	Sarri Gillman 5 CEU Workshop	TBD

Thanks to all contributors.

Your Editor:
Ryan Evans, LIMHP, LADC

Parenting Mantras 1-4

Caregivers have to balance the need to enforce rules and structure while, at the same time, maintain an emotional connection with their children. How on earth is one person supposed to do both? Ever hear of the phrase, “good cop, bad cop”? Yes, because it is so much easier for one person to only focus on limit setting, while another person develops the relationship. If this works for you, great, but children need an emotional connection to as many adults as possible, including BOTH caregivers. That way they can go to the adult that will be the most helpful on a certain topic, instead of the one adult who they can actually talk to. Here are some short phrases you can say to yourself to help you walk the delicate tight rope of “good cop” and “bad cop”. If they are helpful, repeat them over and over as much as needed.

1. I have to raise the kid I have, not the kid I was.

This is a new day and age, and although we think the way we grew up or was parented worked

pretty good, it most likely will not work in today’s society, culture and educational system. Kids are taught starting in preschool to have critical thinking skills, so they are learning to think for themselves and evaluate situations on their own. This will be great when resisting peer pressure, but it also means they will be less likely to follow your advice just “because I said so”.

2. It’s harder for them than it is for me.

I know parenting is really hard and sometimes you have to put up with so many hassles that you wonder why you wanted to have kids in the first place. But no matter how hard it is for parents, it is much harder to be a kid, and especially a teenager today. They have more pressures than prior generations, including being asked in 8th grade to choose their career paths and the issues with social media are unprecedented. If you don’t believe me, check out a book by Chap Clark, *Hurt Kids 2.0*.

3. It’s not about me, they just take it out on me.

Kids have a tough time managing their emotions, and they have to spend all day at school being calm, following directions and managing the peer social strata of high school or middle school. Kids get about 500 commands a day, plus the hormones which lead to mood swings. They are literally “fried” when they get home from school. My 12 year old daughter yelled at me one day when I asked about her day at school. I could have punished her for “being disrespectful”, but instead I gave her some time to cool down and gently approached the subject again later. Come to find out, the boy she had a crush on did not say “hi” to her in the hallway that day at school. I know, seems silly as an adult, but to her this was devastating and her disrespect had nothing to do with me.

4. Timing is everything.

One of the key lessons I learned the

hard way was to always ask first before talking to my teens and pre-teens. Whether I just wanted to chat or focus on a problem behavior or a teaching moment, I eventually learned to ask if “this is a good time to talk?” The key word is “time” as they don’t always get a choice to talk, just a choice on when to talk. If a kid is not in the mood to talk and you go ahead, it will very likely turn out badly, trust me.

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Sheryl Overby, MS,
LIMHP



Anne Barker, LICSW

A Call to Prioritize Relationships

People Often say you can tell what’s important to someone by scanning a few lines of their checkbook. I think there’s a certain truth to that, but I think an even more telling reveal of a person’s priorities is what’s listed on their to-do-list. Or what would be on this list if we were honest about how we actually spend our time.

So in case you think I’m about to get preachy here, you should know that I just took a mental peek at my own activities this morning and guess what? My priorities today are apparently hanging out on Facebook, organizing my closet (for the umpteenth time) and getting today’s outfit just right.

Wow! What if more of us, therapists and clients both, aligned our to-do-list with our stated priorities? What would that look like? I can’t speak for the rest of you but, in my life, it would look something like this:

- I would spend less time on social media and more time with my family
- I would spend less time reorganizing various nooks in my home and more time organizing a networking coffee with a colleague
- I would spend less time kvetching about political issues with my Facebook friends and more time joining actual friends to work toward real change.

In other words, I would reconnect with people and relationships. As I ponder the stated concerns of many of my clients, I believe most of them would acknowledge the need for a similar shift in their own lives. Maybe it’s time for a sea change here. Anyone down for coffee?



Gail Olson,
LIMHP, LADC, NCC

*“...collaboration
and consultation
provide perspective
and direction...”*

One is the Lonelist Number?

It doesn't have to be! Two great benefits of private practice are autonomy and creative purpose; two challenges: isolation and lack of relational connection.

Although as counselors, we are busy giving to others, the last thing we may focus on is our need for relationship (professional and personal). Collaboration and consultation provide perspective and direction, and just as importantly, human connection. In the counseling field we are spending the day “giving” and intently focusing on others. At home we face challenges of either being alone or being in a couple (one can create built-in isolation and the other, little opportunity to refresh self if focusing on others at home too).

We may have few opportunities to connect with our colleagues at work because of back-to-back sessions, conflicting schedules, or client overload. The first thing that goes on the back burner is camaraderie and collaboration with our colleagues. When working in agency settings or large institutions we may have expected client load numbers so there is no time to connect; in smaller private practice agencies we may have no mandatory meetings, so it's easy to allow ourselves no time to have relationships with our colleagues.

Melissa Danielson in her book [The Other Side of the Couch](#) (2010) wisely states: “Some counselors find themselves working in physical or emotional isolation. Counselors in private practice must strive to consciously build a professional support system.” In larger agencies the counselor may be working in a non-supportive environment leading to isolation as well.

When counselors become over-booked or over-peopled the first things that get neglected are self-care and relationships with colleagues.

Although our professional code of ethics affirms the need for professional collaboration and support, it is generally assumed this mandate is for the clients' well-being. So who mandates collaboration and connection for the counselor? Well, it is an inside job, but those of us who love taking care of others feel a little guilt and even feel selfish when taking care of our emotional needs. Some of us have come from backgrounds where giving was the ultimate and self-care, frivolous or unnecessary! One counselor shared the message received growing up was that self-care was only to keep you going to serve others!

Although consulting and collaboration are essential components in being a skilled therapist, a greater good is also being in relationship with one another! The benefits of professional organizations (APPT, ACA) offer opportunities for self and professional growth, yet personal connections with those in these organizations or within our offices offer companionship and self-nurturance. Since giving is so important to therapists, and therapists are often guilted into self-care, the best gift you can give your client is your own well-being! And, personally, nothing is as rewarding as having a professional colleague who shares your love for the profession as well as for mutual connection. Our challenge is to not let one be the loneliest number but rather to seek out and enjoy our professional connections and friendships!

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Being Nice Matters (continued from page 1)

Tips to remember:

Most practitioners with whom you deal are competent to superb.

Yelling and screaming will not further you in any situation and may actually prove counterproductive.

If a professional whose help you need disrespects you or your profession, be polite. That person may perceive your polite attitude as respect and become more willing to see your patient's need for their skills. *Their disregard for the hard work and energy you put into your practice of healthcare speaks about them; not you.*

Practice being calm and polite as you speak. This helps you stay in control and better serve your patient. *Remember, we teach our patients to do this!*

Practice treating everyone with the respect and dignity that we say we give to everyone. *It is so nice not to be a hypocrite.*

You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

So now, go in peace and be calm and respectful to each other. We all deserve it, and it feels much better, too!

Parenting Mantras 5 and 6 (Continued from page 2)

5. They have their own brain.

Your children are not little robots, and therefore, can not be completely controlled by you. Whether we like it or not, they have their own brain and they are able to use it to make their own decisions. This is the nature vs. nurture argument. It is very important how you interact with your child and develop a relationship. But it's also important to remember that you can't control everything. If you have a kid who is compliant and eager to please, thank your lucky stars. You might want to take credit for it, but it's actually more likely that it's part of their "natural bent". I had 3 kids; one just complied because she wanted to, one was rebellious, one was a perfectionist, which looks like a compliant kid on the outside. Not scientific proof, but true.

6. Their brains are the reason.

A child's brain (mostly the pre-frontal cortex) does not fully mature until they are 24 or 25. This part of the brain manages their ability to make good decisions, plan ahead and problem solve. This is a developmental thing, just like learning to walk, parents have almost no control over when it actually happens. So based on this fact, the following mantras apply:

a. I can't fix lack of maturity.

They are going to make dumb decisions, it's not a matter of IF, it's a matter of WHEN and WHAT KIND, so don't be surprised when they... don't use their book for an open book test, pick a loser boyfriend or want to buy a \$400 dress for homecoming.

b. Don't expect them to plan ahead, for anything

Planning ahead is an adult thing, not a kid thing. You can help train them, but it will not come naturally until they are out of college. They especially have a hard time deciding what to do when they go out as a group as teens. The best you can expect is that they tell you where they end up, not where they are going. Since they literally change their minds on the way to place X to go to place Y instead. Hopefully they have good critical thinking skills that they have honed since preschool and will have a way to get out of bad situation if needed.

c. They are more likely to learn from their own mistakes.

You can preach, lecture, give consequences and scold, but kids who learn from their own mistakes are more likely to actually remember the lesson. It is so painful to watch as parents, because you know if they just listened to you, you could save them heartache and pain. But, what was the best way you learned?



THE ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE PRACTICE THERAPISTS

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The Association of Private Practice Therapists (APPT) is a multi-disciplinary group of mental health professionals in Nebraska. The organization provides a forum for the exchange of practice management information and the development of advocacy plans for mental health practitioners and consumers.

APPT is the result of grassroots meetings of private practice professionals who were interested in impacting the regulation and legislation of mental health services. At the time the meetings were held in the fall of 1993, 45 participants established the initial organizational structure of APPT. Currently the organization has close to 200 members. Any mental health practitioner in Nebraska is invited and encouraged to join.

We are on the Web!

www.privatepractice.org