

2012

▶ January 1st —New Year's Day

○ Issue 11

○ January 2012

Marriage and Family Health Services, Ltd.



▶ January 16th – Martin Luther King Jr. Day



▶ January 23rd —Chinese New Year

Mental Health *focus*

HIGHLIGHTING VARIOUS MENTAL HEALTH NEWS AND INFORMATION TO EDUCATE, ADVOCATE, AND YES, SOMETIMES TO ENTERTAIN!

Frequently Asked Questions: Migisi PART 1

Here is the follow up to our FAQ, with answers to the most frequently asked questions of our Migisi Program. Please contact your local Marriage and Family Health Services office for more information.

We believe that therapy is the best place to start with any issue. If a child does not respond to group therapy, we modify our approach with that child to include more individual attention. However, if a child is not benefitting from group therapy, we will make a referral for alternate programming that best fits the child's needs.

What is the daily schedule?

Our Eau Claire, Rice Lake and Hudson Programs run from 1:00-5:00 p.m. Monday –Friday while our Marshfield program runs from 12:30-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. (Our half-day programming allows children to remain connected with their academic materials, staff, and peers. As you know, removing children from their school setting, significantly decreases their likelihood of graduating from high school.)

How do you know if a child might be a good fit for Day Treatment?

Generally speaking, if a child is having multiple problems in multiple environments (home, school, day care, etc.) that can be a fairly strong indicator of the need for more intensive services, like Day Treatment. Other strong indicators include but are not limited to:

1. A child receiving outpatient individual counseling services yet making little to no progress
2. A child who has been abused, neglected, or abandoned.
3. A child who has been removed from their biological home
4. A child who is receiving care and psychotropic

medication management from a physician or psychiatrist yet continues to have issues that impair academic, social, and/or family functioning. Therapeutic Day Treatment is most effective in these scenarios because group therapy experience is the most powerful change agent.

Therapeutic Day treatment produces significant treatment gains because of the licensed, experienced staff. This environment is structured, therapeutic, consistent, safe, and nurturing. The children are supported, validated, challenged, confronted, and held accountable by their peers.



Spotlight on Psychologist Nina Albanese-Kotar, PhD

Dr. Nina Albanese-Kotar is one of our two psychologists on staff here at Marriage & Family Health Services, Ltd. She is currently accepting clients!

What is your training/credentials as a therapist?

PhD University of Wisconsin-Madison, Dept. Counseling Psychology
Licensed in State of Wisconsin

What locations/populations are you currently working with?

I work with teens, adults, and couples in the Eau Claire location. There is the potential that I may expand to the Chippewa Falls office.

What or who was most influential in you becoming a therapist?

I changed careers after an unsatisfying entry into science. I learned the hard way that person-environment fit is more important than academic abilities and that academia is a highly politicized arena which offers little support. At the time there were few programs for women or first generation students. I was originally interested in specializing in career issues for women especially in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math professions and also considered specializing in industrial/organizational psychology.

What was your "Plan B" if being a therapist didn't work out?

I have additional experience in emergency management and public health and sometimes wonder if I should have continued on that track as I am interested in prevention programming and promoting personal, family and community resiliency. I am currently involved in our local public-private partnership for business preparedness, Disaster Ready Chippewa Valley, and have trained extensively in disaster mental health.

What is something not many people know about you?

For people I work with, they may not know I am an avid outdoors person. I have completed 20 Birkebeiners, 3 Kortelopets (and registered for my fourth Korte in 2012). I love to hike, bike, and kayak. I have been trekking in Patagonia and plan to trek in Tibet/Nepal in 2013. I visited major Buddhist temples in Japan, have studied yoga and meditation for years, and consider Buddhist practice to be a major influence on my current therapy.

What "issues" do you feel most competent and experienced working with?

I have a very diverse set of clients and have experience dealing with a variety of issues. I think my "favorite" issues are anxiety, existential concerns, and personal growth. I would like to develop programming for parents and caregivers of the children and teens in our day treatment program. I also conduct evaluations.

What is your response to those who can't understand why you would choose to be a therapist?

It is extremely satisfying to help people make choices and decisions that improve their well-being, but there is still the mindset out there that psychologists are "shrinks" and that they must be analyzing your every move. In reality everyone is a psychologist to the extent that understanding the behavior of fellow human beings is core to our survival. I agree with the American Psychological Association, that we need to give psychology to the public and thereby help the greatest number by empowering them to make healthy lifestyle and relationship choices.

What is your biggest "in-session pet peeve"?

I often give clients "homework" which they fail to do. The key to deriving benefit from therapy is what the client does between sessions. It is also difficult to watch people minimize their concerns and flee from therapy as soon as they begin to feel a little better.

What would you want the world to know about about you, your practice, and/or therapy in general?

I think it is important to seek out challenges and to set goals, but to avoid becoming overly identified with success or failure. The key to a happy life is to stay active, to cultivate many interests, and to care about people.



SAVE THE DATE

Please mark March 21, 2012 on your calendars for an upcoming event being co-sponsored through our agency and Wood County UW Extension in Marshfield. The program is titled "Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessments of Children and Adolescents". It will include presentations by a psychiatrist, psychologist and licensed professional counselors. CEU's will be awarded through UW Continuing Education. Brochures for the workshop shall be available in January. This workshop will be valuable for school and county staff, families as well as professional mental health providers. We look forward to seeing you there.



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For questions, comments, or suggestions regarding this newsletter, please contact the editor,
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