

# Healing News

Healing Waters Counseling Newsletter



## Helping children to mentally and emotionally prepare for returning to school

By Phyllis McColister-Cunningham, MS, LMHC, CAP

Adults, Imagine with me for a moment that you have been given a 2-month vacation. How difficult would it be to return to the office or your place of employment?

This edition of Healing News is devoted to preparing our children to return to a structured and disciplined environment after having the freedom of summer vacation. This will take an enormous amount of concerted effort from home and school, parents, students, school teachers, and staff. Patience and planning will be prerequisites to success.

It is our hope to share some tips and techniques designed to help with the transition from home to school. Remember, as you organize your days moving forward, **simplicity will be the highest form of success.**

Because it takes tremendous effort to rise but much less effort to fall, have a game plan. Find what works and stick to it. Restart daily routines, re-establish household rules, and reorganize your rewards and behavior charts to encourage compliance and cooperation from your little ones. We offer this quarter's newsletter as a lesson plan or family battle plan to mentally and emotionally prepare your children for school.

**BACK TO SCHOOL BONUS:** If your family is experiencing particular difficulties or wishes to create your family battle plan for transitioning back to school, Healing Waters Counseling is offering pro bono family therapy sessions from July 18, 2022 to August 2022 (4 Session maximum).

Call the office at 772-448-4189 and ask about the "Back to School Bonus."



### IN THIS ISSUE

**CLINICAL DIRECTOR'S CORNER**

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**CLINICIAN SPOTLIGHT**

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**CLINICIAN ARTICLE**

---

**CHRISTIAN COUNSELING CORNER**

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**COMMUNITY CORNER**

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

## Clinician Spotlight: Ashonna Williams



Welcome our newest member of the team, Ashonna Williams! Ashonna is a graduate student of Family and Marriage Counseling at Capella University. She holds her bachelor's degree in Social Sciences from Florida State University. Some of Ashonna's hobbies include reading, planning events, traveling, and listening to sermons. Ashonna is passionate about youth and young adults and served for the State of Florida for over 20 years before changing her career path to counseling. One thing that makes Ashonna unique in her approach to counseling is being "unmasked" and using her prior experience as a youth group leader to better serve her clients. If Ashonna could learn one new thing by tomorrow morning, it would be learning to operate a sewing machine. Ashonna is a devout Christian and stated that the Bible would be her source of sanity if she was stuck on a deserted island. She is so excited to work with you all!

## Beating Back-to-School Anxiety:

*by Stacy Heflin*

Back to school is a parent's dream and a kid's worst nightmare. The end of summer is here which means it's time to put away the swimsuits and get ready to head back to school. For some it means starting a new chapter, going to a brand-new school with unfamiliar faces and for others, it will be reconnecting with old, familiar classmates. Some kids may be excited to get back to the routine and see their friends again. However, many kids experience extreme anxiety at the thought of returning to school which may begin when that alarm clock goes off and it's time to get ready for school. Your child may exhibit signs of school anxiety that can cause a lot of stress for the child and frustration for the parent. When experiencing school anxiety, your child may feel distressed or sad, complain of headaches or other body complaints, and exhibit disruptive behavior such as temper tantrums and crying spells. Don't be surprised if your child completely refuses to go to school. To avoid starting your day off this way, here are some tips to help ease school anxiety and create a smooth transition from summer time to school time.

1. Teach your child to do deep breathing exercises that would significantly reduce anxiety: taking a few minutes to take a few mindful breaths: counting slowly to five on the inhale through the nose 1-2-3-4-5 and exhale through the mouth 1-2-3-4-5.
2. 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding skills are another way to cope with anxiety by anchoring the child in the present moment using the five senses of sound, touch, smell, taste and sight. Help them to focus on their environment and name 5 things they can see, 4 things they can touch, 3 things they can hear, 2 things they can smell, and 1 thing they can taste.
3. Talk it out: It is a well-researched fact that when children put words to their emotions, they become more tolerable and less frightening. Take time to talk through your child's emotions rather than becoming frustrated by them.
4. Sensory items: Fidget spinners, molding clay, stuffed animals, or a favorite small toy could be used to refocus attention and calm or soothe an anxious child.
5. Reward good behavior: Nothing brings a smile to the face of a child than the anticipation of a treat or reward. Use this to your advantage and reinforce positive interactions with planned weekend activities to reward a week free of resistance and compliance to the new school routine.

**Continued on page 3....**

6. Be prepared: Begin conversations about behavior expectations before school begins. This is a way to prepare your child for the necessary changes that the transition from summer to school entails.

Feel free to include as many of the above 6 tips as possible. Even the smallest adjustment can bring monumental returns. However, do not delay in getting outside help if necessary. Doing so as early as possible in the school year will avoid long-term consequences of behavior issues at home and/or school throughout the year. "In a global economy, where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity, it is a prerequisite." Barack Obama.



## Prayer is the Key:

By Krista Brown, RMFTI



It is that time of the year again when parents and children are preparing for a new school year. Here are some words of wisdom and encouragement to carry you through the year.

A key is used to unlock something, such as a door or a box. Using this same symbolism, we will refer to prayer as the key to unlocking the door to your relationship with God and a more peaceful you. For so long, many of us have fallen short in our prayer life. "Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually." 1 Chronicles 16:11

Throughout the Bible there are many benefits of prayers that are helpful to one's mental health? Let's take a look!

Prayer can:

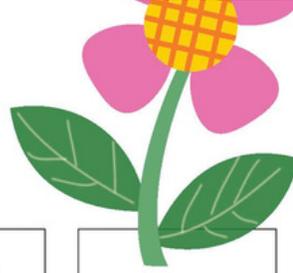
- Releases Control - Prayer releases control from oneself and gives it to God, which in return decreases the stress of you needing to control the outcome of a situation. When you release control to God, He can guide you. God wants to take care of you. Talk to Him, read His word, and listen for His guidance. 1 Peter 5:7
- Increases Peace - Prayer encourages peace in our hearts. God seeks to give us peace, but we must rely on Him. It doesn't eliminate trials, but by giving our concerns and fears to God, we are able to endure the challenges of life. John 14:27
- Increases your Connection - Prayer can help one begin to have a loving relationship with God, where one feels close to Him daily, and sees Him as loving and caring. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
- Increases Positive Feelings - Prayer can encourage feelings of gratefulness, compassion, forgiveness, and hope, all of which are connected with overall wellbeing. Proverbs 17:22

As you can see, prayer can be a stress reliever that decreases the negative effects of stress on the body and mind and promote spiritual healing. Psalm 147:3

Going into this new school year, pray, meditate, and follow the principles of these scriptures. Be less anxious and more prayerful. Find hope in God and He will give you peace. You will find some helpful resources below for children and adults to get started with being more intentional about your prayer life.

**Christian Corner Continued on Page 4....**

# 31 Days of Prayer



pray for a purpose

pray that you will seek God first

pray about something that you fear

pray for our country

pray for someone who is sick

pray for someone you struggle to get along with

pray for a family member

pray for your church

pray that you will see God at work around you

ask God to take your burden... something that is bothering you

pray for a friend in need

pray for a kind heart

pray for a desire to be closer to God

pray for your pastor

pray for your spouse

thank God for a specific way God worked in your life

pray for discernment

thank God for the people in your life

pick a Scripture to pray

pray for peace in your home

pray for a deeper relationship with God

pray for a need in your life

thank the Lord for one of your many blessings

pray for something you're struggling with

pray for strength

pray for wisdom  
—  
pray for contentment

pray about your job  
—  
pray for your neighbor

pray for the lost  
—  
pray for missionaries

## The 5 Finger Prayer

**Thumb:** Those closest to you (Family)

**Pointer:** Those that point you in the right direction (Mentors); Ask for wisdom and support.

**Index:** Those that lead us (Government); Ask for guidance and wisdom.

**Ring:** Those are weak, in trouble, or in pain. We cannot pray too much for them.

**Pinkie:** Our prayers for ourselves and our own needs.



# Caring less vs. Negligence

By Ivonne Fraga, RMHCI



**As a therapist, learning doesn't stop when you get your degree. Actually, it is the start of a never ending life learning journey. This past week, I found an article that grabbed my attention, "The case for caring less. 'Don't sweat the small stuff' is actually great advice" by Allie Valpe.**

According to Pew Research Center surveys, 60 percent of adults said they were sometimes too busy to enjoy life. Busy-ness, unsurprisingly, intensifies once you have kids: 74 percent of parents with children under the age of 18 reported being too busy to enjoy life.

The never ending "to-do list" is part of our daily stress in our efforts to keep going, moving on, the expectation that as a woman I have to work harder to perform at work and home effectively and successfully. Mona Eshaiker, a licensed marriage and family therapist stated "we are socialized" and continue explaining how the role of a woman to provide and help does not have boundaries and/or limits to the point that we are completely burned out.

The idea is to replace our drive for "perfectionism" with "good enough". For this purpose we will consider managing our personal expectations, finding our priorities, zooming out, and setting boundaries.

1. Managing our personal expectations. According to Sarah Knight, "Seventy-five percent of the time, the guilt is coming from within. We are making it up in our own head." Our own beliefs drive our thoughts creating high self-imposed expectations. Learning to say "no". Sarah Knight advises to consider whether saying no will have actual negative consequences or is the guilt coming from our own faulty beliefs.
2. Finding our priorities. Exploring our emotions and thoughts will help to answer what are my needs? and what do I really want? The answers will need to be aligned with our beliefs, our values, morals and principles. With this information we can make an educated decision and stop compromising our time, and ourselves. Defining the non-negotiable obligations will separate ourselves from the belief of "I HAVE to do it" Knight stated. Compromising our time and making our lives miserable does not pay well when the only purpose is to fulfill an obligation that is not a priority.
3. Zooming out. When we start to feel overwhelmed. We can use the STOP technique. Telling yourself to Stop pausing the thoughts immediately, next Taking a breath, noticing your own breathing for a second and continue breathing slowly. Become the Observer of your thoughts, emotions and physical reactions, tuning in and sitting with whatever arises for a few moments. Then Proceed to mindfully (being present here and now) find your specific purpose in the situation. This helps to narrow down your focus, taking one small step at a time. Then you are ready to make an educated decision based on your priorities, values, morals, principles and beliefs. Looking at the bigger picture, as Eshaiker says "prioritize rest and center yourself."
4. Setting boundaries. Knight suggests a way to set boundaries is to ask yourself "What is the best way to protect your values, morals, principles and beliefs."

Caring less doesn't mean to be negligent. Caring less is not a lack of attention to the well being of something or someone including yourself. What it really means according to Eshaiker is having the ability to explore your needs, find them and prioritize them.

## HEALING WATERS COUNSELING IN THE COMMUNITY

**AUGUST 6:** One St. Lucie Youth Conversation at the Boys & Girls Club in PSL (10:30-4:00 PM)

**AUGUST 22:** Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Radio Show 104.5 The Flame at 7:30 PM

**SEPTEMBER 16 & 18:** Empowered Life Conference at The Life Shift Church in PSL

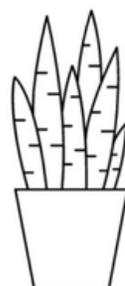
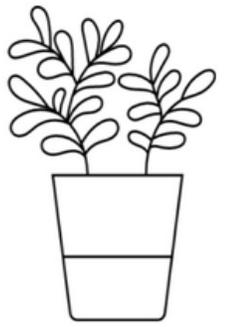
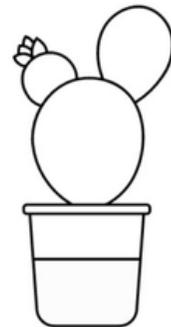
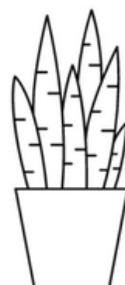
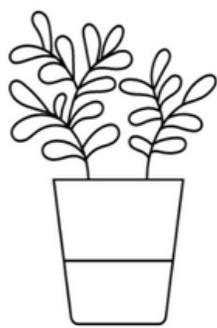
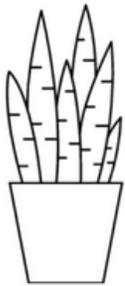
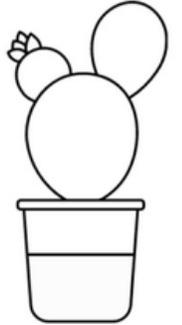
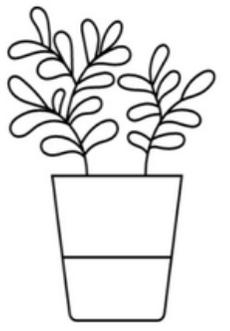
### Editor's Corner

by Editor in Chief, Betsy Fowler, MS, RMHCI

Mood: A conscious state of mind or predominant emotion (Merriam-Webster). Whether your child is having a good day or a gloomy day, mood tracking is an innovative way to keep up with their daily mood. Mood tracking can also help us identify triggers that affect the way we feel on a daily basis. Tracking our moods can help give us the freedom to transform a bad mood into a good one! In this edition, we have provided two **mood tracker sheets** to complete with your child. For the first tracker, just color the daily plant that corresponds with the color of their mood during that day. For example, if you are feeling happy on Day 1, color the first plant yellow. For the second mood tracker, carve out a corresponding face on each pumpkin as indicated on the key. I hope you enjoy it!



# Mood Tracker



Happy



Relaxed



Sad



Angry

# Mood Tracker

# August 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	2	3 Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual	4	5 Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual	6 Join us for the One St. Lucie Youth Con 10:30
7	8 Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	9	10 Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual	11	12 Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual	13
14	15 Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	16	17 Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual	18	19 Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual	20
21	22 Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	23	24 Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual	25	26 Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual	27
28	29 Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	30	31 Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual			

# September 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2 Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual	3
4	5 Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	6	7 Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual	8	9 Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual	10
11	12 Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	13	14 Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual	15	16 Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual Join us at the Empowered Life Conference	17
18 Join us at the Empowered Life Conference	19 Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	20	21 Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual	22	23 Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual	24
25	26 Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	27	28 Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual	29	30 Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual	

October 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT			
						1			
2	Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	3	4	Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual	5	6	7	Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual	8
9	Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	10	11	Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual	12	13	14	Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual	15
16	Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	17	18	Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual	19	20	21	Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual	22
23	Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	24	25	Stress Management Group 11 AM: Virtual Substance Use Group 6 Pm: Virtual	26	27	28	Grief Group 11 AM: Virtual	29
30	Stress Management Group 5 PM: Virtual	31							

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