



# EFAP

## THREE TRAILS EFAP

SPRING 2015

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Lighter Side Quiz



EFAP International



Book Review

#### THREE TRAILS OFFICE HOURS:

- Monday 9:00am to 6:00pm
- Tuesday 9:00am to 7:00pm
- Wednesday 9:00am to 6:00pm
- Thursday 9:00am to 7:00pm
- Friday 8:00am to 1:00pm
- Saturday Closed
- Sunday Closed



## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

by Jamie Day

**M**y first experience with counseling was quite different than what I had imagined it would be. I pictured myself lying on a long couch with my back towards the counselor, providing him/her with a long narrative of my childhood. He/she would then analyze my past and inform me of how my experiences had manifested themselves into my current issues. I expected the counselor to present me with an immediate diagnosis passing on sage advice to help me change my life. To my surprise, my initial counseling session was not at all what I expected. There were chairs for each of us and the counselor didn't start by digging into my childhood. He asked me the purpose of my visit and I shared my concerns and troubles with him. He didn't provide any Freudian analytical

pieces nor offer any advice. Instead he challenged me to develop solutions on my own in order to make the changes I sought. Instead of placing me in the "obviously crazy" category, which I most assuredly thought he would, he normalized a great deal of my emotional reactions to events. I believe that my understanding of what a counseling session would entail was greatly influenced by the media and their portrayal of such. This may be a common occurrence with others who may be considering taking that first step into counseling. With that in mind, this article will focus on uncovering common misperceptions, noting what you can expect from counseling at Three Trails EFAP and what your counselor may expect from you, the client.

... continued, page 2 ...

## Great Expectations (cont. pg. 1)

One common misperception often associated with counseling is that only “crazy people” seek it out. Due to the stigma linked with mental health issues, counseling is often viewed as an avenue toward change that only extremely mentally ill people consider. In actuality, a large number of those who do attend counseling are stable, intelligent individuals with various levels of stressors that prompted them to begin counseling. In fact, seeking out a counselor can often be seen as more of a strength than a weakness.

Another misperception regards the counselor’s involvement and engagement in the therapy session. Some people believe that the counselor will just sit across from you and nod, remaining silent. Others perceive he/she will offer lots of advice and tell you all of the things you are doing wrong. All counselors bring a different level of personal engagement to the process. Some counselors are more client directed. What this means is that the counselor will focus on what the client brings to the session, allowing them to lead the conversation. Their engagement involves pointing out various observations to the client. Other counselors are more directive with their level of involvement. They will point out elements for the client to work on that have not necessarily been noted as a goal toward counseling. Counselors may work with clients on developing coping skills, making changes in behaviors and assigning homework; however, most counselors do not offer advice. The majority of counselors will collaborate with clients to develop their own solutions.

Perhaps another misperception is the belief that the counseling process will take forever. The length of time it takes for counseling to succeed often depends upon the client’s goals, their motivation towards change and the issues presented. The average length, according to the American Psychological Association, is from 7 to 15 sessions. In fact, Three Trails follows a wellness/preventive view. Our mission is to provide professional assistance early and in a timely manner so that problems do not worsen.

Now that we have covered some misperceptions, let’s examine what you can expect from counseling here at Three Trails. First and foremost our clients can be assured of receiving confidential service. This is something that you should expect and receive from any counselor you see. It is an ethical responsibility that all counselors should provide. There are exceptions to confidentiality. Counselors are mandated reporters, meaning they must report cases of suspected child or elder abuse (elder is defined as someone 65 or older). You will be given the counselor’s Professional Disclosure Statement prior to your first session.

You can expect that the counselor will respect your autonomy. This means that they will respect your capacity to make independent choices and act upon them on your own. \*Please note that if the client reports suicidal thoughts with a plan, then confidentiality may be broken in order to keep the client safe. The counselor may point out that specific choices are not in alignment with your ultimate goals, but in the end it is your choice as to what you take from the counseling experience and as to what changes you make.

To be treated with professional courtesy is another expectation. This means that you can expect to receive a phone call to reschedule your appointment if your counselor is sick or if there are other scheduling conflicts. You can expect to be seen in a timely manner for your scheduled appointment and you have the right to be treated with professional decorum in the session. Three Trails has a list of client’s rights available in the Professional Disclosure booklet.

You can expect your counselor to challenge you to make changes. Keep in mind that this may involve them speaking to behaviors they may see as contrary to meeting your goals. Your counselor should do this with affirming kindness. This part of counseling is important in order for you to understand how behavioral patterns may be holding you back from making effective changes.

Another expectation is for you to receive counseling without the counselor imposing their personal values or judgments on you. This form of therapy is known as “Client Centered” therapy and was developed by Carl Rogers. In order for the client to grow and make positive changes, they need a counseling environment that provides them with genuineness, empathy and non-judgmental regard. If you are interested in researching this approach, a good article may be found at: <http://www.simplypsychology.org/carl-rogers.html> that more fully discusses the Client Centered approach to counseling.

As the final piece of this article, let’s discuss what the counselors at Three Trails may expect from you as the client. Counseling involves your active participation and engagement in order to be successful. It’s helpful for you to attend your scheduled appointments and if a situation occurs that makes this impossible, please call us and cancel. This allows us to reschedule with you as well as offer the appointment time to another client. Along with this scheduling piece, the

... continued, page 3 ...



***Our Model is the only Employee Family Assistance Program to be officially recognized by the United Nations.***

***About Insight EFAP International***

We are a benefit program that helps employees, families and retirees get confidential and professional assistance in addressing personal concerns.

Few programs can match the comprehensiveness and dynamic scope of services offered by our non profit Employee and Family Assistance/Assessment and Resource Program (EFAP/ARS). The simplicity of the model's concept, along with its inherent flexibility, gives it tremendous potential to address the specific needs of our member organizations.

With an increasing awareness of the economic and ethical implications involved when an employee is experiencing personal difficulties, many employers, employee groups and unions

have realized the benefit and effectiveness of our proactive, prevention based program which provides immediate access to confidential counseling services in a readily accessible and professional office setting, located away from the workplace.

***We Are Very Unique***

Available to all employees, their families and retirees, the EFAP/ARS Model has grown to encompass a clientele of nearly half a million people with 21 offices in Canada and the United States. What sets our model apart is our unique approach to embrace the workplace, the community and the family in bringing about a "change in culture", wherein everyone benefits from a wellness-centered approach to attain psychological and emotional well being. The EFAP/ARS Model of EFAP, when correctly developed and applied, becomes a very productive instrument for not only responding to

needs, but also for creating positive change in the society in which the workplace is an integral part. We recognize that personal difficulties and workplace issues will always be present, despite the combined efforts of those involved, however, we can make progress toward meaningful social responsibility which, after all, is really no more than the old-fashioned notion of helping each other. Respect for the individual is more than a statement ~ it is a working solution for most of our problems.

Visit us at [www.insightefap.org](http://www.insightefap.org)



## Great Expectations (cont. pg. 2)

responsibility to remember your appointment lies with you. Like anything in life, the more you put into the experience, the more you will get out of it.

Another level of engagement expected from you is the development of goals or things in your life you wish to work on or change. A part of the intake paperwork includes an area for you to express the goals you (or your child) wish to explore. It may sometimes be difficult to express these goals at the start of counseling. This is something that you and your counselor can develop with time. Having something to work towards will make counseling more productive for you.

Finally there is the expectation to communicate with your counselor on what you feel is working for you or not working in the counseling process. If you find you are in need of more direction from the counselor, let them know. It is also important to inform your counselor on what progress or regression you are experiencing. This allows them to make adjustments for the most effective therapeutic treatment. A majority of counselors understand that their clients may not discuss certain subjects until they feel that they have developed a trusting working relationship with the counselor. Keep in mind though, that the counseling process will benefit you the most when you express your needs honestly and communicate to your counselor when you notice positive or negative changes.

Hopefully this article has presented you with some insight into what you may expect from your counseling experience as well as what may be expected from you. Here at Three Trails, we encourage your feedback. We conduct an annual online survey and have been able to implement several suggestions from previous clients. You are always welcome to provide feedback to your counselor at any time.

## THE LIGHTER SIDE -

You are in a desert. You have with you the following five animals:  
A lion, a cow, a horse, a sheep, and a monkey.

To escape the desert you are going to have to get rid of one of your animals. Which one do you drop? (You can use whatever logic you like BUT - keep track of which animal is discarded when!) You have 4 animals left.

The desert is burning up! It goes on for miles. Sand is everywhere. You realize, to get out, you are going to have drop another animal.  
Which do you drop?

You have 3 animals left.  
Walk, walk, walk. Hot, hot, hot.  
Disaster! The Oasis that you were looking for is dried up!



You have no choice but to drop another animal.

You have 2 animals left.  
Ok, it's a long hot walk. You can see the edge of the desert way on the horizon. Unfortunately, you can only leave the desert with ONE animal.

Which one do you drop and which one do you keep?

Make sure you know which animal you dropped in what order.

FIND THE ANSWER ONLINE AT:  
[www.threetrailsefap.org/quiz.html](http://www.threetrailsefap.org/quiz.html)

## The Buddha & the Borderline

A book review by Charles McBride, MA, NCC, LPC

At Three Trails EFAP, we counsel a wide variety of clients with issues ranging from grief and loss to improving workplace communication. Our approach to service is wellness/preventive based and although there are no limits to the amount of sessions a client may attend, in general sessions are six months or less. Any clients that we believe may require more long-term therapy or whose needs fall outside of our counselor's expertise may be referred out to other professionals. But how can we know if the issue a client is bringing to us may need long-term treatment? One way is to learn about disorders that usually need something other than brief therapy.

Personality disorders are a group of disorders that present as maladaptive ways of dealing with life. One of the personality disorders most disruptive to a person's life is borderline personality disorder (BPD). Symptoms of BPD can include depression, post-traumatic stress, self-harm, chaotic relationships, romantic and otherwise, and substance abuse. One of the more recent treatments available for BPD is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). This is a form of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy that attempts to help clients accept their behavior, both past and present, and to understand that they have the power to change. It is this acceptance/change dichotomy that is at the heart of DBT. DBT uses some of the Buddhist philosophy in its techniques. Successful treatment takes at least 12 months.

In Kiera Van Gelder's memoir "The Buddha & the Borderline", she shares her story of 20 years of struggling with all the above mentioned symptoms and the misdiagnoses that followed, until she was correctly identified as having BPD and began DBT. If this sounds like a maudlin and dry recitation of pain and suffering, the reality is something else all together. Van Gelder has a strong voice that puts you right in the middle of all she is dealing with and the result is riveting. As important, she has a wonderful sense of humor and allows us to see the "I can't believe I did that" moments with warmth and sensitivity, but will make you laugh out loud as well.

I recommend this book highly, not only for those interested in a more in-depth look at personality disorders but also for those who may know someone struggling with this disorder, or a family member who is at his/her wit's end trying to help someone suffering from BPD. Unfortunately, Wyoming has no DBT treatment center (the closest is in Colorado), but this book gives an excellent portrayal of one woman's struggle to return to wholeness from a disorder that completely disrupted her life. You'll find this book in the Personal Growth section of our library. All library materials are available free for checkout to any of our clients or their family members.

