



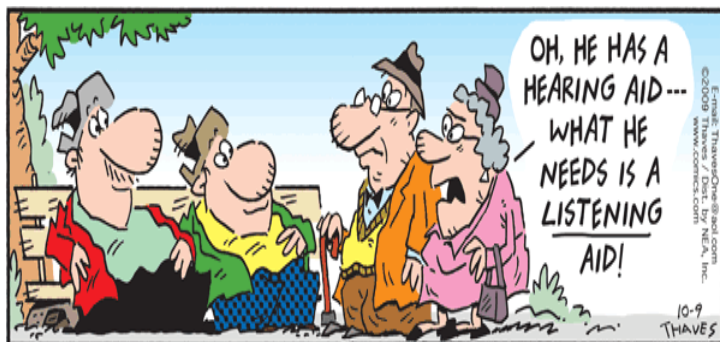
NOTES FROM ARS

There is a theory from Ancient Greek philosophy that suggests that change is the only constant. This seems to hold true time and time again in life. As a counsellor I find that change is the path to healing. For those ready to embrace change in their life, healing can occur more easily, but for others, change feels too frightening or too foreign, which makes healing seem unreachable. If one's thought process could shift to allow CHANGE to be viewed more as a CHANCE than a CHALLENGE, perhaps we would all experience more ease and more success on our personal paths toward healing. Let change be the chance you've been waiting for to break unhealthy patterns, start anew, and move closer toward the self and the life that you long for. And there is no time like the present. While January is the traditional "fresh start" time of resolutions and hope, many people find September far more inspiring as a time to make changes.

In keeping with this topic, we at the Upper Island ARS have made several changes we want to share with you. One of our counsellors, Heron Free, has left the agency and is focusing his time on writing his book. We are pleased to welcome Danielle Lambrecht to our team of counsellors. Danielle will be working in our Comox Valley office. Given these two changes, our Executive Director and counsellor, Garth Greatheart, will now be working out of the Campbell River and Port McNeill offices. We look forward to continuing to meet the needs of our member organizations, their employees and eligible family members at our 3 office locations.

All the best with whatever changes this fall has in store for you,

Kelsi Baine, MSc. CCC.



7 Domains of Healthy Change

The next time you are feeling down, tired, bored or depressed, try adopting a new way of thinking about your health and wellness that looks at these symptoms as red flags that something isn't right and change is needed.

When we get a runny nose, a cough, a sore throat, we are able to say; I must have a cold, so what do I need to do differently to feel better? Well, I need to get more rest, drink more fluids, keep distance from other sick people, take vitamin C and eat lots of nutritious foods.

It's the same with symptoms of depression; they are your body, mind, and soul's way of telling you that you need to pay more attention to how you are living, and make the healthy changes to help you feel well again.

We suggest looking at the following 7 domains of your life:

1. **Your Relationships:** Are you feeling close with your loved ones? Are you feeling distant and lonely? Is there a conflict that needs to be resolved? What can you do to address these issues so that you can experience more satisfaction and fulfillment from your relationships? We humans are highly social beings, so when we aren't feeling well, looking at improving our relationships is a great place to start.
2. **Sleep:** Are you allowing your body enough time to rest, repair, and rejuvenate each night? A great deal of important work and repair happens in your body every night when you are sleeping. If you don't sleep long enough, this repair process is interrupted, and you can't function to the best of your ability. What would you have to change about your routine in order to get to sleep earlier in the evening? Are you willing to make this a priority for the sake of your health, wellness, and happiness?
3. **Nutrition:** What we put in our bodies is the fuel we burn as it cycles through our system and provides us with energy. If you put bad gasoline in your car what happens? Systems get clogged and stop functioning properly, and pretty soon the car is in the shop for repair, at your expense. It's the same with our bodies; if we feed ourselves poorly there will be negative consequences at the expense of you and your family. What changes are you willing to make in your diet to create lasting improvements in your physical health, and therefore happiness?

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Your life does not get better by chance, it gets better by change.

James E Rohn

4. **Exercise:** It's no surprise that exercise is one of the best things you can do for your health and wellness, yet so many people don't. Perhaps it's time for you to broaden your ideas about what exercise is, and find something that you can enjoy. If you aren't into team sports or a gym membership, that's fine. There are plenty of other ways you can exercise either on your own or with friends or family or pets. Are you finding excuses when it comes to exercise? The weather? Your favorite TV show? The vacuuming? What are you willing to change about your lifestyle in order to prioritize exercise and feel better?
5. **New Experiences:** Sometimes just doing the same thing day after day, week after week, can be enough to bring on symptoms of depression. It's time to switch it up! Try something new and different. Change your routine. Learn something new. Meet new people. Have things to look forward to that excite you. You don't need an expensive vacation to meet this domain of change. You just need adequate motivation. Are you ready to do something new and different with your life?
6. **Pay Attention:** Are you going through life on auto pilot? Do you sometimes not notice that you missed lunch, stayed up till 1 am, forgot to do something important, or that you are feeling scared, angry, or anxious? Imagine the pleasure of living in awareness of what you are doing, saying, thinking, and feeling. To pay attention to what others are saying to you, and listen in a whole new way. To be focused on today – and not tomorrow. To notice when you are hungry, and eat. To notice when you are scared, and talk about it. To notice when you are bored, and go do something fun and novel. The art of paying close attention can bring great benefits to your health and wellness. Are you willing to put this into practice?
7. **Humor:** What role does humor and laughter play in your life? Are you always smiling and laughing, or do people around you seem shocked on the rare occasions that you burst out with a big belly laugh? Do you take everything too seriously? What would you have to change about your lifestyle and the way you think about the world to allow you to have more humor and laughter in your life? Are you willing to make these changes for the benefit of your health and wellness.

As you can see, there is a lot that you can do to create healthy change in your life, and manage symptoms of depression and other problems. The question is, are you ready to step back, assess the above 7 domains in your life, and find the motivation to make the changes that you need? We are here to help you with this process.

By Kelsi Baine, MSc, CCC
ARS Counsellor



Couple's Corner

Many people struggle with issues related to their spouse and want advice on how to "fix" them. But they can't change or "fix" their spouse, they can only change or fix their response to their situation.

Here is a technique that may help: Listen and Learn. Before jumping in with a great "fix it" idea on what they can do to solve their problem, be sure to listen to what their view is first.

You'll notice this improvement has two steps, listen and LEARN. That doesn't mean listen to get your counter argument ready, it means listen to learn or understand what your spouse is feeling.

People are much more willing to compromise and problem solve if they feel you are trying to understand their view point and really care about their feelings.

Take the 5-minute Stress Test

Find your stress level by completing this test.

DO YOU FREQUENTLY:	YES	NO
Neglect your diet?	0	0
Try to do everything yourself?	0	0
Blow up easily?	0	0
Seek unrealistic goals?	0	0
Fail to see the humour in situations others find funny?	0	0
Act rude?	0	0
Make a 'big deal' of everything?	0	0
Look to other people to make things happen?	0	0
Have difficulty making decisions	0	0
Complain you are disorganized?	0	0
Avoid people whose ideas are different from your own?	0	0
Keep everything inside?	0	0
Neglect exercise?	0	0
Have few supportive relationships?	0	0
Use sleeping pills and tranquilizers without a doctor's approval?	0	0
Get too little rest?	0	0
Get angry when you are kept waiting?	0	0
Ignore stress symptoms?	0	0
Put things off until later?	0	0
Think there is only one right way to do something?	0	0
Fail to build relaxation time into your day?	0	0
Gossip?	0	0
Race through the day?	0	0
Spend a lot of time complaining about the past?	0	0
Fail to get a break from noise and crowds?	0	0

What your YES score means:

- 0-5: There are few hassles in your life. Make sure you are not trying to avoid problems.
- 6-10: You've got your life in fairly good control. Work on choices and habits that could still be causing some unnecessary stress.
- 11-15: You're approaching the danger zone. Think carefully about choices you've made and take relaxation breaks every day.
- 16-25: Emergency! You must stop now, re-think how you are living, change your attitudes and pay careful attention to diet, exercise and relaxation.

Source: Canadian Mental Health Association www.cmha.ca

Welcome to New Members

We extend a warm welcome to employees and family members of Tye Chevrolet Buick GMC Ltd and North Island Consumers Coop.