



NOTES FROM ARS

It is the time of year when many of us reflect back on the year past and anticipate what may be coming in the New Year. It is a time to remember that just like the seasons change, our life changes. We can choose to be open to any new opportunities that change can bring and to be willing to face our fears and do it anyway. Some people know that they need change in their lives but continue to live a life that is no longer satisfying to them. People stay in relationships that aren't good for them. People keep jobs that they are not happy with. I am not saying to leave your relationship or your job today. What I am saying is to be open to the possibility that you could get what you want. If you are going through some sort of change right now, take some time to get curious about how you can make a change for the better. Remember our professional counsellors are here to assist you with this process if needed.

For us at the ARS, our past-year reflections include changes in staff: Kelsi's return from maternity leave, saying goodbye to Azima, and welcoming Heron to our team. We made a major upgrade to our website that was exciting for us and will hopefully prove helpful to you. Several companies joined our membership through the year and we were kept busy assisting many new and returning clients. We look forward to continuing growth to our membership and to assisting employees and their families in the coming year. Toward that end, we will be offering some educational life-skills programs. Two programs are mentioned further in this newsletter and on our website. Watch for notices about more programs throughout the year.

This is the time of the year we send warm wishes of health and happiness to you and yours, for the holiday season, and for 2011.

Garth Greateheart, MSW RSW
Executive Director

Have you checked out our new website yet?

www.upperislandars.com

Beating the Winter Blahs

While many people enjoy winter for the snow skiing, warm fires or hot cocoa, just as many people find winter a hard season to get through. The chill, the cold and flu season, the rain or slush to drive through get a lot of people down. During the winter season, many people notice changes in their mood, their ability to concentrate, and their energy levels. This phenomenon is known as "the winter blues" or "the winter blahs."

One of the toughest things about winter is being cooped up indoors. Open your blinds on sunny days—whether in your home or in your office. The sun will brighten your spirits. Even if it is cold, make sure to go outside; just a short walk around the neighborhood will release feelings of isolation that may plague the winter months.

Staying active through the cold months is hard. Keep in touch with friends and make efforts to see them. Feeling productive is also a key to beating those blue feelings. Take the time to do some pre-spring cleaning. Organize your storage space, get rid of useless items. The winter months are the best times to get activities done that fall by the wayside in warmer months.

The most important thing anyone can do to beat feelings of fatigue or mild depression during the winter months is to stay healthy and take care of yourself. It's important to concentrate on health (not weight loss) during the winter months. Eat a balanced diet, maintain an exercise regime and get adequate sleep. Your body and your mind will thank you by being more active, alert, and less likely to feel those blahs!

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Winter Blahs - continued

We all feel stress during the weeks before and after the holidays. The secret is to recognize our tension and then adopt some simple practices to reduce it. Incorporate these stress reducers into your daily life - not only during this hectic time of year.

- Eliminate the word "should" from your vocabulary.
- Learn from past experiences but also learn to let these things go. Don't berate yourself for past mistakes. Look to the future, instead.
- Accept that all humans make mistakes; we are all fallible. You are no different.
- Make an effort to stop fighting with loved ones. It takes two to argue or create a conflict.
- Learn proper breathing. Breathe deeply and regularly to take in the maximum amount of oxygen and expel carbon dioxide.
- Sigh. Ahhhhh, it's true. Just as it's important to breathe deeply and calmly, it's important to let stress leave your body with audible sighs. This is one of nature's small tricks.
- Laugh often! Full belly laughs are good tension relievers.
- Learn to visualize and make positive affirmations. Take a few moments to visualize how you want life to be; make confident "I" statements and keep your language upbeat.
- Employ palming. Cover your closed eyes with your palm, visualize the color black. Slowly open your eyes and feel yourself relax. Try it; it works!

Adapted articles from Associated Content.com
and Family Time



Office Hours for Holiday Season

ARS offices will be closed the week starting Dec. 27th, re-opening Monday, January 3, 2011. Crisis services are available through the Crisis Nurse attached to local hospitals emergency departments.

Couple's Corner



Top 10 Communications Do's

1. Listen: eye contact, reflection, interest, questions.
2. "I" statements: to express your feelings or experience.
3. Empathy: try to understand the other person's position, situations or beliefs.
4. Ask kindly for what you want. Don't expect to get it.
5. Learn to say no. Learn to accept when other's say no.
6. Be careful with touching. Think about whether it is appropriate or appreciated.
7. Learn that conversation requires a back and forth – share, listen, share, listen.
8. Be honest – always.
9. Learn to be comfortable with disagreeing. Learn to compromise and negotiate.
10. Learn to argue without put downs, criticism, attack, or defense.

-compiled by Kelsi Baine, MSC CCC,
UIARS Counsellor

Welcome to New Members

We extend a warm welcome to employees and family members of Klauss Posselt Logging Ltd.

Hearty laughter is a good way to jog internally without having to go outdoors.

Norman Cousins

NEW – Life enrichment programs offered by the ARS



Couples Clinic:

Have you ever noticed that we put more care and effort into the maintenance and prevention of automobile breakdown than relationship breakdown? Do you and your partner seem to be always arguing about something? Or, perhaps, you never argue but feel distant, lonely, more like roommates. Here is an opportunity to change that.

Our newly developed Couples Clinic will help you and your partner understand one another more intimately, meet each other's needs, learn new skills for communication, connection, and conflict resolution, hear from other couples experiencing similar issues, get that elephant out of the room, and enhance your love, respect, and appreciation for one another, all while having a good time.

You won't want to miss this opportunity to repair and strengthen your relationship!

Start date: January 24, 2011

The Art of Balance – Mindful Living/Meditation:

This six week course is designed to help you slow down, learn how to relax and achieve your best life.

The course includes the development of a daily mindfulness / relaxation practice, as well as instruction on various wellness topics to help you rebalance and invigorate your life.

- Mindfulness Meditation/Relaxation (as a regular practice)
- Slowing Down the Mind / Worrying Less
- Setting Better Personal Boundaries
- Life Activation Planning
- Wellness and a Healthy Happy You
- Stress Management

At the end of the program participants should expect to experience an increased sense of wellbeing, have less personal stress and a clearer vision of how to live their ideal life.

Start date: TBA (early 2011)

See website for more details or call the ARS office.