

Anniversary celebrations continue!

Throughout 2017 we have been celebrating **30 years** of serving Upper Vancouver Island.

We began by renovating our offices! After 30 years we were ready to experience a more modern, serene, and beautiful space for us and all our clients to be comforted by. We are all enjoying this transformation.

Then, we sought to fully renovate our website to ensure that it too was current, and reflected the adaptations that we have made over the years to become the organization we are today. Please check out our new site at www.uics.ca. We'd love to hear your feedback on our new look and our new logo!

In other changes, Tara Hope, MA, RCC, joined our exceptional counselling team in July and is bringing so much energy and passion for wellness to our group. Tara is counselling in the Comox Valley and Campbell River offices. She offers a wealth of knowledge and experience to our counselling practice and we are thrilled to have her on board.

In my first year as executive director, I aspired to ready our organization for more exciting changes yet to come. We renovated our offices, we rebranded our online presence, and we reenergized our team. Looking ahead to 2018, we are well situated to provide an elevated service to members of our EFAP, and to foster new partnerships with other community organizations and businesses toward improved mental health and wellness for people, families, workplaces, and communities.

We look forward to continuing to offer communities on the upper island a compassionate and comprehensive service that is accessible and reliable. We care about you, your family, and your workplace, because we too live and work in our communities. For this reason, outcomes matter to us. So, what outcomes would you like to see in your life? What would have to change to allow that to happen? Give us a call and we'll talk about it.

Enjoy a safe and warm holiday season, and all the best in health and wellness for 2018.

Kelsi Baine

Executive Director / Counsellor

How to Simplify Your Life: Part 3 of 4 – Simplifying Your Relationships

1) Identify bad friendships, and work to fix them or end them. - Do not waste time keeping up with friends who bring you down, waste your time, or bore you. Start by cutting out the relationships that do not uplift you. Or at the very least stop investing so much energy. Make the effort to spend time with people you like. The key is to invest your time and energy in people that bring you joy.

2) Learn to tell people "no." - One way that our lives get complicated is being "agreeable." Being a doormat won't help you to simplify your life, it'll just get you a face full of other peoples' boot prints. Don't let yourself be tread on. Stand up and learn to say "no."

3) Spend more time alone. - Maintaining relationships, romantic and otherwise, gets complicated. When you're focused on other peoples' quirks and habits, you're focused less on yourself and what your needs are. You're complicating your life for others instead of simplifying it for yourself. It's not selfish to want to spend time alone, working on you.

4) Spend less time on social networking.- Clutter doesn't have to be physical. The psychic clutter of status updates, Tweets, and Instagram posts can do a lot to drag you down and complicate your life. Don't worry about liking everybody's newest posts or keeping a constant check on your different feeds. It'll be there when you've got a free second, and you probably won't even miss it. If you're feeling ambitious, consider ditching social media entirely. Make face-to-face interactions your priority.

Adapted from wikiHow: <http://www.wikihow.com/Simplify-Your-Life>



Couples' Corner



Ten Ways to Simplify Your Relationship

With busy lifestyles, it can be hard for couples to take a step back and simplify their lives together. Once a couple is able to slow down and tune into each other, they can find heightened pleasure and less stress. Following are ten ways you can do this with your partner.

1) Try to be uncomplicated yourself

If you can't make sense of something yourself, try writing it down and figure it out before presenting it to your partner. If you can't understand your feelings, your partner has little chance of doing the same. Try to get a good understanding of yourself before looking outwardly and this can positively impact your relationship.

2) Find your own groove

Ignore what tradition dictates or what other couples tell you. Find what's right for you both. If you pay attention to outside forces, it can complicate things between you and your partner. You are all that matters when it comes to your relationship - no one else.

3) Work through your problems together

Placing or escaping blame will only hinder reconciliation. Own up when you're in the wrong and be accommodating when your partner has done something that's had a negative outcome on you both. It's happened, it's done, now move on and find a better way to deal with it next time. Grudges will grind you and your relationship down.

4) Avoid being materialistic

At the end of the day, what you have in your home is just stuff – and mostly luxuries rather than necessities. What's really important is that you have the basics and each other, not a new couch or bigger car. Inject your energy into what's really precious.

5) Avoid jealousy

Trust in your partner. People will come and go who could pose a threat to your relationship, but even if their intentions are destructive, that doesn't mean that your partner will succumb to them. Let them deal with telling them and have faith that they love you.

6) Be honest with each other

If you don't want to do something, tell them. If you feel uncomfortable with what they've said, let them know. If they know where they stand with you, there is no confusion. Sometimes it might not be what they want to hear, but at least you are being transparent, and vice versa.

7) Take breaks away

It doesn't have to be a weekend in a luxury spa, but little breaks outside of your home will benefit you both. A change of surroundings and something to plan for are positives within a romantic pairing. It could be a picnic at the park, a walk in your local woods or an inexpensive camping trip.

8) Forget role expectations

Don't avoid doing something because it's traditionally done by one partner or another; help each other where you can with whatever needs to be done. Throw the 'traditional' rule book out of the window and just be mindful and considerate of each other at all times.

9) Say what you mean and mean what you say

Don't say something in the heat of the moment that is going to hurt your partner's feelings. Wait until you are calm and have collected your thoughts before discussing something you disagree over. Similarly, don't play guessing games and make your partner figure out what's wrong with you. It's a game no person wants to play.

10) Spend time together- and apart

The simple truth is couples function better when they have time with each other and time with friends and family as well as time alone. Give each other the opportunity to miss time spent together and you will cherish it more.

Adapted from:

<http://relationships.femalefirst.co.uk/relationships/how-to-simplify-your-relationship-964779.html>

***Never criticize, ridicule, or laugh at your partner's choices.
After all... you're one of them.***

- Charles J. Orlando

UICS has a new look!

As part of the 30th Anniversary Upper Island Counselling decided to freshen up the look and feel of UICS's brand and website. While we are so proud of our history, we wanted to start our 31st year by welcoming in a new era, complete with a new feel. This is our first newsletter using the new logo and colours!

To see more, please visit our website at

www.uics.ca.

Let us know what you think. It would be great to hear from you!



Making an appointment

Accessing our services is a simple three step process:

1. **Recognize a concern:** You or your family member identifies a personal concern, or are seeking information on wellness or prevention.
2. **Remember** that Upper Island Counselling is here to help you.
3. **Reach out.** Call to make an appointment with one of our counsellors.

Call UICS directly to schedule an appointment at 250-287-2266 or toll free at 1-866-789-2266

Appointments are available Monday to Friday, with some late afternoon and early evening appointments offered.

There is no cost to employees or families of member organizations.

Congratulations to Upper Island Counselling on providing 30 years of exceptional services to our communities!

Thirty years ago a group of representatives from the major industries and services in Campbell River came together to create and establish the first Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) for workers in the local logging, pulp & paper, sawmills, hospital, municipal, mining & school district companies and services. Then called Campbell River Assessment and Referral Service, it is now known as Upper Island Counselling.

In January 1987 I was the Employee Relations Manager at Eve River Division of MacMillan Bloedel and was appointed to the founding Board of Directors of Campbell River Assessment & Referral Service. At this time there was considerable labour/management turmoil but the cooperation and vision of the union and management directors was a remarkable experience. All directors were given the task of meeting with outside companies and unions to educate them about the program, what the benefits were, and to seek their participation.

In each participating organization we canvassed for volunteers from management and the crew to serve as EFAP representatives in offices and on the shop floor. We were very fortunate to select an excellent cross-section of people, some of whom are EFAP representatives today. I have fond memories of attending Director's meetings with my union and management friends. When I transferred to Menzies Bay in 1989 I experienced an unusual situation. When I was hauling supervisor, my friend Jim Work was a truck driver and Camp Chairman for the IWA Local 1-363. During the day I was Jim's supervisor but at night at the EFAP Board of Director's meetings, I reported to him, as Jim was Chairman of the Board. We had plenty of laughs about that but the real value was the improvement in trust between union and management through this common goal of improving the lives of all of us.

My wife, Coleen, was involved in School District No. 72 EFAP program and also served as an EFAP representative. On behalf of both of us, thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this incredible organization and our sincere best wishes for 30 more years.

Rob & Coleen McKinnell
Campbell River BC



Happy Holidays from the Staff at UICS

Stress, depression and the holidays: Tips for coping

The holiday season often brings unwelcome guests — stress and depression. And it's no wonder. The holidays present a dizzying array of demands — parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few. But with some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would.

Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

1. **Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.
2. **Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.
3. **Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones.
4. **Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion.
5. **Stick to a budget.** Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts. Try these alternatives:
 - Donate to a charity in someone's name.
 - Give homemade gifts.
 - Start a family gift exchange.
6. **Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients. And make sure to line up help for party prep and cleanup.
7. **Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.
8. **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Try these suggestions:
 - Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks.
 - Get plenty of sleep.
 - Incorporate regular physical activity into each day.
9. **Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm. Some options may include:
 - Taking a walk at night and stargazing.
 - Listening to soothing music.
 - Getting a massage.
 - Reading a book.
10. **Seek professional help if you need it.** Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.