

# PRESSING ON...

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14



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## Life after Divorce



### Divorce can be a traumatic event.

*trauma = a deeply distressing or disturbing experience*

When someone experiences trauma, there is a recovery process required for healing. The dissolution of a marriage disturbs the physical, mental/emotional and spiritual life of a person. There is no specific formula to follow or prescription to take that will heal this type of trauma. You can, however, implement coping strategies to help you heal from divorce and live the life that follows.

1. **Grieve the loss.** When someone you love (or once cared about) dies, you go through a grieving process that involves a range of experiences, including denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. The sense of loss may return when unsuspected triggers bring back the pain. Unlike

the loss you experience when someone dies, with divorce, the person is "resurrected" every time you run into them or hear about the life they now lead without

you. As a result, you may re-experience all or part of the original grief. Prepare for this, and know it is normal.

2. **Be sure to H.A.L.T.** Don't get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired. Each of these components is like a wheel on a car. When one wheel is deflated, the car can run, but it is a bumpy ride. Keep driving on a flat tire and you will be in for some damage. When all four wheels are flat, you are geared up for a major breakdown. HALT from time to time and ask yourself how you are doing in these areas. If one area is "flat," head to the repair shop and get it restored.
3. **Be mindful of your thoughts and emotions.** Notice your emotions. Feelings are not good or bad, they just are. How you respond to the emotion is more or less effective in helping you live a meaningful life.

■ by Kathy Konrath, MA, LCPC, LMHC

Notice your thoughts. Are you caught up in the past or imagining the future? Catch yourself in these thoughts and return to the present moment. It is ok to feel, to remember, and to dream, but don't get lost there. We can only experience God in the present moment. Remember to come back to the present and focus on doing the next right thing.

4. **Be kind to yourself.** This is a good time to ask yourself what you really need. Is it a hug? A vacation? A hot meal? A laugh with a friend? Move towards self-care.

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# Listening Skills and the Virtue of Understanding



■ by Marilyn Ciaramitaro, MSW, LCSW

## Listening to understand. A skill worth learning.

Listening skills are highly valuable in regards to human/child development, relationships, self-esteem, family functioning, problem solving, learning and motivation. Some people (even children) seem to be naturally better at listening than others. However, this skill is greatly enhanced by good parent-teacher role-modeling. Listening skills are just one aspect of communication. Good overall communication skills are integral to high functioning human relationships. Communication skills include a listener (the receiver) and a speaker (the transmitter). Good interpersonal listening also requires attention and focus (contrasted to listening as background music for other purposes such as working out, relaxation, or listening to radio or tv for recreation/entertainment). To be a good receiver one must be in tune or attentive to the speaker. This requires focused energy and interest in what the speaker is saying.

Carl Rogers, the creator of client-centered therapy and author of numerous books

(*Client Centered Therapy, On Becoming A Person, Freedom to Learn, Becoming Partners, On Personal Power, etc.*) is considered the forerunner in the “improve your listening skills” movement which began in the 1960’s with the advent of Rogerian therapy. The essence of this type of counseling is “reflective” or “active” listening. These listening skills are easy to implement for parents, teachers, friends and counselors and are exercises where the receiver (listener) attends closely to whatever the speaker is saying. When the speaker pauses, the listener briefly reflects back to the speaker what s/he said (in a nutshell). The point is to get the speaker to feel understood and validated. The listener gives no opinions, judgments or evaluations of what the speaker said. The receiver’s (listener’s) objective is to get positive agreement from the speaker regarding the speaker feeling understood. The conversation becomes purposely one-sided with the goal of purely understanding the speaker and his/her point of view.

This formula for reflective/active listening is a primary building block for understanding

and helps the speaker develop a sense of peace (reducing frustration, agitation and angst) and engages him or her socially by soothing via the gift of understanding. Consequently, the speaker typically desires to remain engaged in relationship with the listener. Thus, reflective listening helps to deter social-emotional shut-downs (characterized by the speaker becoming mute, socially disengaging and withdrawing from the conversation due to misunderstanding or frustration). Without the use of reflective listening, the speaker is also more likely to escalate emotionally by over-striving to make his/her point and be understood. Emotional escalation can take the form of tirades or temper tantrums and can result in emotional and relationship brokenness and exasperation. Thus to avoid these pitfalls of misunderstanding it is well worth a parent, teacher, spouse or friend to master the art of reflective listening. This listening style leads, via the virtue of understanding, to other gifts of the Holy Spirit including joy and peace. These fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit lead to more effective problem solving, improved love of neighbor and an overall positive chain reaction that affects learning, motivation and relationship - all stemming from the virtue and gift of understanding through listening. ■



Marilyn Ciaramitaro, MSW, MA, LCSW

## CCCC using Gold Standard for Autism Testing



In addition to offering the most up-to-date IQ and Achievement tests, Chicago Christian Counseling Center now offers Autism testing using the ADOS – the gold standard in Autism diagnosis for children and adults.

Dr. Melinda Hammond and Dr. Eric Lester are able to provide testing services at our Orland Park, IL and Schererville, IN locations. Dr. Hammond and Dr. Lester continue to provide ADHD, mental health, career and learning disability testing as well.

**To find out if testing is right for you or your child, and whether it is covered by your insurance, give us a call at 708-845-5500.**

# New Staff



**Amanda Page**  
Billing Assistant  
Orland Park, IL location

With the growth we've experienced in the past couple years, we've needed to expand our office staff. We are happy to announce the recent hire of Amanda Page to our Billing Department, which now includes one full time and two part-time staff.



**Alicia Rosario, MS, LMHC**  
Licensed Mental Health Counselor  
Scherverville, IN location

Alicia has experience in a variety of settings including community mental health, school, and home based therapy. She enjoys working with clients to address issues of anxiety, depression, parenting issues, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, self-harming tendencies, adoption and foster care issues, anger management, and helping children with adjustment issues.

Alicia received her MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and both her MA and BA in Elementary Education from Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, IN.

# Got ADHD ? Walk it out !

■ by Melinda Hammond, PsyD, LCPC



**A**ttention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) seems to be all-too-common among children and teens. While therapy and medication are still the best treatment options we have, a new way to address attention and behavioral problems is gathering steam.

Study after study has shown that daily exercise can help combat the effects of ADHD and even some behavior problems. Regular exercise can even improve mood. Even better, some schools have found that the kids who exercise regularly (at least 4-5 times a week for at least 20 minutes) have higher reading and math scores than those who do not exercise.

Want to try it? You or your child should:

- **Plan to exercise before you have to work.** For kids, this may mean before school. Some districts offer “zero hour” P.E. – this can be a great option! Ideally, exercise should take place 1-2 hours before a student’s worst subject, or an adult’s most difficult part of the day.
- **Raise your heartrate.** You’re looking for at least 20 minutes of raised heartrate (155-200 beats per minute). Depending on your level of fitness, this can be a brisk walk or run.
- **Have FUN.** If running or walking isn’t your thing, try dancing, swimming, biking or rollerblading. If you don’t like it, it will be hard to make it into a habit.
- **Go outside.** Obviously, this is hard in the winter, but getting some sunlight can help re-focus your body’s sleep cycle, raise levels of vitamin D, and improve your mood. If you can’t be outside, consider a “happy light.”
- **Make it a habit.** It takes at least 2 weeks of exercise to start seeing results, so don’t give up!



*Dr. Hammond is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and sees clients in our New Lenox and Orland Park locations.*

Exercise alone may not replace treatment or medication, but it can be a great addition! In fact, the whole family can get involved, even those without ADHD. So get out and exercise! ■





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**Illinois Offices:**

- Chicago (4 neighborhood locations)
  - Edgewater
  - Galewood
  - North Park
  - South Loop
- Evergreen Park
- Hinsdale
- Lombard
- New Lenox (2 locations)
- Orland Park
- Plainfield
- Shorewood
- South Holland
- Tinley Park

**Indiana Office:**

Schererville

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Text CCCC to 22828 to join our email list or  
Send your email address to [info@chicagochristiancounseling.org](mailto:info@chicagochristiancounseling.org).

## Our Mission Statement

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling, consultation and education from a Christian perspective.

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### *Life after Divorce*

5. **As you move toward self-care, let go of "should."** When someone "shoulds" you (i.e., "You should be over this already!"), you rarely feel motivated to move forward. "Should" reminds you that you did not meet a certain standard, which produces a sense of failure. Instead, accept where you are as exactly where you need to be in this moment. Find what you could do, and do it to the best of your ability. The Serenity Prayer says, "God (One who is outside of my SELF), grant me serenity (peace), to accept (surrender...take a deep breath), the things I cannot change (other people, what has happened in the past), the courage (action in the face of fear) to change the things I can (myself, my actions, my thoughts), and the wisdom (God) to know the difference."
6. **Find your resolve.** David cried out to God in the book of Psalms. David felt every emotion, let it all out, and held nothing back. And at the end of his cry, David found his resolve ("...I will yet praise Him." Psalm 43:5). You can also find your resolve. It will not look like David's, your friends' or anyone else's. It will be your own personal resolve. Some things I know to be true as you work towards your resolve are these:
  - a. God has a plan for your life and it is a good plan (Jeremiah 29:11).
  - b. God promises to work ALL THINGS together for the GOOD of those who love God and are called according to HIS purpose (not our own – Romans 8:28).
  - c. God started a good work (Isaiah 43:19).
  - d. And He will finish what He started (Philippians 1:6).



*Kathy Konrath, MA, is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (IL) and Licensed Mental Health Counselor (IN). She sees clients in our Evergreen Park, IL and Schererville, IN locations.*