

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



A Publication of Chicago Christian Counseling Center

Mar | Apr 2019



"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
(Ephesians 2:10, NIV)

We are God's handiwork and he makes no mistakes. We have been given gifts to do good works he prepared in advance for us to do. What amazing news! And yet, many of us struggle to know and walk in these truths. Thankfully, our God is faithful to redeem and sanctify us all the days of our lives. But is there anything we can do to help the next generation live these things out? Encouraging creativity is a great way to foster important skills in children that will prepare them for the good works God has for them.

In This Issue

Page 2

Coping When Your Loved One is in Active Addiction

Page 3

Eating Disorders: It's More than FOOD

How do I encourage creativity?

Creativity will look different for everyone. Whether it's acting, painting, listening to music, working on a craft, reading, cooking, writing, or simply using your imagination, creativity flourishes in a safe environment where you are free to take risks, make mistakes, and try new things. Parents can help their children by creating spaces where it is okay to make a mess. It's a helpful reminder that children often learn by overcoming obstacles, so it's important to reinforce their ability to try again—and again!—without feeling like they have done something wrong.

The goal is the process, not the outcome

Here's a helpful tip for fostering this idea: instead of complimenting a child when he or she has created something, saying "You are so smart" or "You are a brilliant artist," point out the things the child has done to get there.

"You used the yellow crayon and the orange crayon to create the sun in your picture." Or maybe, "You used a cape to become a superhero!"

These kinds of comments downplay an achievement-based sense of self-worth and instead reinforce a sense of confidence in their ability to use the gifts they've been given to create good things. This technique also helps

■ by Colleen Jackson, BFA, Clinical Intern

build resiliency, or the ability to recover quickly when experiencing obstacles or difficulty.

What are the long-term benefits?

Encouraging creativity promotes a healthy self-image and empowers children to engage in positive risk-taking, which is the idea that, through trying new things in a safe way, we learn important skills like problem-solving, we gain the ability to trust ourselves, and we build into the knowledge that we have what it takes to overcome challenges. What's more, creativity is often collaborative. It can be used to develop social skills, teach children to celebrate others, and increase emotional intelligence. Creativity is good for children of all ages. Let's look at how creativity can meet children's needs at different developmental stages.

Toddlers

Toddlers and preschool-age children are developing their views of themselves and the world around them. That is my favorite thing about this age group—as you affirm and encourage their ability to make choices and do things on their own, you are nurturing that healthy self-image and positive worldview. Even at this early stage, the toddler is learning about leadership, so collaborative creativity is important.

Cont'd on p 2 - Encouraging Creativity

COPING WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS IN ACTIVE ADDICTION

■ by Kathy Krentkowski, MA, LCPC, LMHC

The heart ache one feels when they have a loved one who is in active drug or alcohol addiction is unlike any other. The struggle for the person who is battling the drug or alcohol abuse is real, and so is the struggle for the one standing by watching the addiction destroy the life of the one they love.

What can you do when you are the one loving someone who is caught in the grips of drug and alcohol addiction? Here are some things to consider.

Bring your need to God.

God loves and cares for your loved more than you do. Prayer is a powerful tool that you can use to help your loved one fight their battle with addiction. Choose to yield everything to God and trust in his care and provision. Next time you pray for your loved one, imagine holding him or her in your own hands. Then ask Jesus to come near. Visualize giving your loved one over to Jesus. Watch as he takes them into his care. With your now empty arms, ask Jesus to give you something to hold onto, as he takes hold your loved one. Allow this exchange to take place as often as needed.

Tell yourself that your struggle matters too.

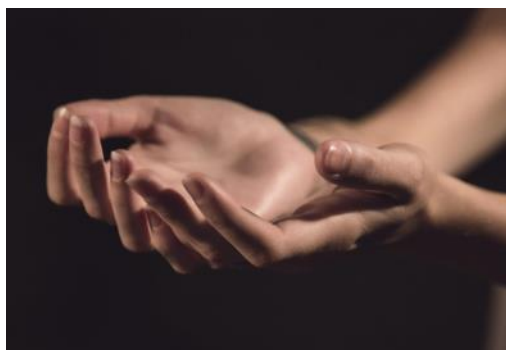
It is important to validate your struggle. Just as the one with the addiction is fighting a battle, so too is the one standing by. Let no one downplay your struggle, saying "you're not the one with the problem". The pain you

carry is not to be diminished in the slightest way.

Understand what your part is in this struggle.

It's important to know that you did not cause the addiction, and so, you cannot fix it. Guilt is the byproduct of believing that you are the reason your loved one is using or that you could do something to make them stop. Remember that you are not the one choosing to use and are therefore not responsible for the outcome of the choices another person makes. The only one who can stop the behavior is the one behaving. Your loved ones' identification and admission of their problem is the first step of their recovery. Leave the convincing of this to the Holy Spirit (see John 16:8).

Ask them if they want to get help.



When Jesus came upon a man who had been sick for 38 years, he asked the man a direct question: "Do you want to get well?" (John 5:6). Jesus did not assume he wanted to get well because he was lying by the pool of healing. He went straight to the man, looked him in the eye and asked if he wanted to get well. Some people in active addiction have been struggling for a long time. The hard truth is that for some people, the desire to continue using is greater than the desire to get well. Asking the other person if they want help puts the ball in their court. You cannot help someone who does not want to get help.

Set realistic, safe and honoring boundaries.

Addiction often manifests in a "co-dependent" relationship, not only between the drug and drug user, but also between you and your loved one in active addiction. Consequences of this unhealthy relationship include taking responsibility for the other person, hanging onto the relationship to avoid painful feelings of fear and abandonment, difficulty talking about feelings and the inability to set personal boundaries.

Setting boundaries allows you to gain perspective which will help you separate and heal from the bondage of this unhealthy way of relating. It's important to know and be very clear about what you will and will not do to help your loved one. For instance, you

Cont'd on p 4 - Coping

Cont'd from p 1 - Encouraging Creativity



Elementary-age children

Elementary-age kids are beginning to build their skill base and are looking to the world around them for validation. They want to know if they are competent or not. This is the time to praise the process. It's also the time to create an environment where it's okay to make mistakes and encourage kids to try again.

Middle school and high school children

These capable young people are ready for increased responsibility and independence in their creativity. At this stage, adolescents are dreaming about who they want to be in the world. Extracurricular activities in areas your child is interested in can develop confidence, leadership skills, and mastery over the unique gifts they've been given.

Creativity is a wonderful, God-given gift that can help develop children into healthy disciples of Christ who use their gifts to glorify God and further his kingdom. Let's encourage the next generation to boldly sing along with the psalmist: "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." (Psalm 139) ■



Colleen Jackson is a Clinical Intern and sees clients in our South Holland, IL & Schererville, IN locations.



Eating Disorders: It's More than FOOD

■ by Marissa DeGroot, MSW, LSW

What does your relationship with food look like?

Food is an inevitable part of the world that we live in. Food is a basic human need given by God, dating back to biblical times with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Food has also become the center of many social gatherings, work parties, and other events in the world around us. It is ingrained in every aspect of society. For approximately 20 million women and 10 million men¹, their relationship and behaviors with food are unhealthy. This unhealthy relationship with food is seen with those who suffer with an eating disorder.

What is an eating disorder?

According to the National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA), "Eating disorders are serious but treatable mental and physical illnesses that can affect people of every age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic group"¹.

There are a variety of eating disorders affecting millions across the world. According to the DSM-V, a manual mental health professionals use to determine a diagnosis, there are several types of eating disorders, including Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Binge Eating, PICA, and Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake, each with a variety of different behaviors. Many individuals do not fall neatly into one disorder and may display behaviors of multiple disorders.

Eating Disorder behaviors could include overeating, dieting behaviors, restricting food intake, restriction of fluids, compensatory behaviors to prevent weight gain such as excessive exercise, purging, and abuse of laxatives or diuretics².

It is also important not to take one's outward appearance to decipher if someone has an eating disorder. Many individuals who have eating disorders may appear healthy on the outside yet this does not indicate that there is not an issue. The behaviors indicated above only begin to describe eating disorder behaviors and it is important to note that eating disorders also involve other physical, emotional, and mental indicators.

What lies beneath an unhealthy relationship with food?

While eating disorders revolve around a person's relationship with food, for most, an eating disorder is not just about the food. In reality, if eating disorders were simply about food, it would make treatment and recovery more straightforward. Eating disorders often serve as a way to numb feelings and emotions to harm, to control things, and to manage emotional distress. An eating disorder often indicates other underlying issues that need to be addressed that are manifested through issues with food.

Treatment and Recovery

Recovery from an eating disorder is possible with proper help and support. Early detection and treatment are vital. Treatment and recovery involves the whole person - physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Individual and group therapy, dietary needs and assessment, medical assessment, psychiatric monitoring, and our faith in God are critical components in one's recovery process.

As believers, allowing God to play a part in the recovery process helps those struggling with an eating disorder to surrender to something that is bigger than themselves and bigger than their disorder. Eating disorders are so often about power and control. When we begin to trust God and turn the power and control of an eating disorder over to Him, recovery begins to look much different. God can help heal the underlying issues that have contributed to the eating disorder in the first place. Remember, eating disorders involve much more than one's relationship with food. Letting God into the recovery process allows individuals to experience healing and the sense of wholeness that their eating disorder has taken from them.

Does my loved one have an eating disorder?

Are you wondering if your friend or loved one may have an eating disorder? NEDA identifies seven main signs¹ that loved ones could look for.

- Weight concerns
- Altering exercise regimen
- Not eating what others are eating
- Not eating what is prepared for them
- Odd behaviors before or after meals
- Appearing more depressed, anxious, or irritable
- Loss of energy

Family and friends play a key role in someone seeking the help they need. Educating yourself about eating disorders and expressing your thoughts about your loved one in a concerning and supportive manner is an important part of the process. You can educate yourself by learning information about eating disorders from the National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA) and the resources they offer. Encouraging your loved one to seek help from a professional such as a Christian therapist or dietician who specializes in eating disorders is a critical way that you can support your loved one. It is also helpful for loved ones to seek therapy during this time to navigate their own feelings and concerns in a healthy way. ■



Marissa DeGroot is a Licensed Social Worker and sees clients in our Orland Park and Tinley Park, IL locations.

¹"What Are Eating Disorders?" National Eating Disorders Association, 7 Aug. 2018, www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/what-are-eating-disorders.

²American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.





Phone: 708.845.5500

Email: info@chicagochristiancounseling.org

Illinois Offices:

- Chicago (3 neighborhood locations)
 - Edgewater
 - Grand Crossing
 - South Loop
- Evergreen Park
- Lombard
- New Lenox (2 locations)
- Orland Park
- Plainfield
- River Forest
- Shorewood
- South Holland
- Tinley Park

Indiana Office:

- Schererville

Visit us or donate online at
www.chicagochristiancounseling.org

Don't miss helpful info & therapist recommendations on mental health topics on our Facebook Page!
facebook.com/ChicagoChristianCounseling  Find us on Facebook

All past newsletters/articles can be viewed on our website.
<http://www.chicagochristiancounseling.org/newsletters.html>



Text CCCC to 22828 to join our email list or
Send your email address to info@chicagochristiancounseling.org.

Our Mission Statement

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

Cont'd from p 2 - Coping

may need to tell the other person that you are willing to talk if they are struggling to resist their urge to use, but that you will not talk with them if they are intoxicated. You may need to create a separate bank account to protect your resources and limit access your loved one has to funds that would ultimately be used for the addiction. Without clear and maintainable boundaries, you run the risk of continuing to enable the other person's behavior. Choosing to stop enabling may be hard, but it is possible and will ultimately help you and your loved one grow towards healing and recovery.

Get support for yourself.

You are not alone in your struggle. There are others who share in this struggle, some whom are finding emotional freedom as a result of changes they have had to make. Access that support. There are several support groups that you can attend to find hope. Al-Anon and Nar-Anon groups exist specifically for the friends and family members of someone



struggling with alcohol or drug addiction. These meetings are free and can be found by searching the organizations' website for local meetings. You may also choose to attend an "open" meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous where you can get similar support and learn what it looks like when people choose recovery over the addiction. It may help to seek your own counseling with a professional therapist who can help address the impact the other person's addiction has had on your life.

We have a God who is relentless in his pursuit of us. He is waiting for the prodigal to return home. Let this truth give you hope. In the end, keep in mind the basics of all recovery:

1. I can't heal this problem. I can't fix their addiction. Efforts to do so drive me to insanity.
2. God can.
3. I choose to let God. ■



Kathy Krentkowski is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, and sees clients in our Evergreen Park, IL & Schererville, IN locations.