



The Northwest Catholic Counseling Center

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Number 1

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Facing Our Fear

"But I'm afraid."

Working in mental health, I hear that regularly. But over the last year, it's something I hear much more frequently, sometimes even daily.

Fear is a basic human survival tool. A perceived threat triggers the emotion, signaling our bodies to respond to the danger with a fight or flight response. It is an essential reaction to keep us safe. But when we live in constant fear, our bodies and minds don't function properly. When the fear pathways ramp-up, the brain short-circuits the rational processing paths, slowing functions not needed for survival (like the digestive system) and sharply focusing our attention on the threat, whether real or perceived. The brain stores lots of details about what we're facing, and classifies it all as negative. Even after the threat is long gone, our bodies and minds retain the feelings and cues from the fear. Similar sights, sounds, or details in the future can bring back the memory or push us into fear again, sometimes without us even realizing why.

It's important that we understand how fear affects us, because we've all been living with fear for many months now. It could be the fear of someone getting sick, losing a job, helping our kids succeed, or the myriad of new anxieties and worries the COVID-19 pandemic has brought us. Constant anxiety and ongoing fear sometimes push us to react in ways different than we would in ordinary times. Maybe we lash out, hoard things, have trouble getting out of bed, or cry at the drop of a hat.

The most recent fear our therapists have been discussing is the COVID-19 vaccination. Like anything in our lives where we don't know all the answers, the vaccination can feel scary. That's why, as mental health professionals, our staff looked at the science, looked at our fears, and got vaccinated against COVID-19. We are committed to keeping our staff, families, clients, and community safe, and we know the best way to do that is by being vaccinated. One staff member says, "Getting vaccinated this weekend was such a relief – to know I'm protecting myself from this awful virus but also protecting my family. My husband is a cancer survivor, and my elderly mom is part of my 'bubble.'" Another staff member shared the importance of protecting their clients: "I believe protecting myself and my clients is very important, and that the vaccine is what is needed to get back to normal. I encourage all to get this vaccine, as soon as you are able to get it!"

Fear is a normal part of life, but we do have a choice about letting it control us and our actions. As the Chinese proverb says, "That the birds of worry and care fly above your head, this you cannot change. But that they build nests in your hair, this you can prevent."

-Erin Peters, Executive Director

Online resources: takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/facing-fear-anxiety
healthtalk.unhealthcare.org/nervous-about-covid-19-vaccination-read-this
cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html



Providing Help . . .
Creating Hope

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OFFICE HOURS

9:00am – 5:00pm

*Evening and Saturday
appointments available*

nwcounseling.org

Meet Our New Staff!

Dinorah Alvarenga

Dinorah is NCC's Office Assistant, and is bilingual in English and Spanish. Along with administrative tasks, she will help connect clients and partners with our Levantar Program.



Liz Durkin, LCSW

Liz is a licensed clinical social worker who has spent the last 13 years in community mental health, working predominantly with adolescents and adults suffering from anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder. She utilizes Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) skills, and mindfulness in working with clients.



Farewell to Marilyn Powers!

Marilyn has been a vital member of our administration team for 13 years. She has shown commitment, dedication, and expertise. Last fall she decided to take on a new adventure: retirement! We will miss her warmth, compassion, amazing baking skills, and we wish her the best!



Circle of Strength 2021

Save the Date!

Circle of Strength – Virtual Event
September 25, 2021



2 Have & 2 Hold: NCC's Marriage Preparation Program

NCC's marriage preparation program has been helping couples build a solid foundation for thirty years. Experienced therapists help couples start important conversations and teach them vital communication skills to use throughout their marriage. With a focus on human attachment and neuroscience, **2 Have & 2 Hold Marriage Preparation is designed to reach any engaged couple regardless of faith background.**

This year has brought many changes to NCC – including a new coordinator for the program! Shirley Price, LPC, who has coordinated 2 Have & 2 Hold for the last 26 years, is taking a step back and passing the torch to our registered intern, Marchelle Carl, MA. Marchelle has been connected to NCC since 1999 in various roles, including as a graduate intern for the 2019-2020 school year. Having completed her Master's of Mental Health degree, we are excited for her to work with couples in our Marriage Preparation Program, particularly as the program moves to a virtual format.

To keep our staff and clients safe, all of our 2021 marriage preparation workshops will be virtual over Zoom. Marchelle converted the workshop to three 2-hour sessions over the course of two days, allowing for couples to take screen breaks and let the information sink in. Couples are given handouts to use throughout the presentation, and the lectures are broken up with breakout rooms where couples can connect with others experiencing similar issues.



2021 Marriage Preparation Workshops

May 7 & 8: Friday 6pm-8pm; Saturday 9am-11am & 1pm-3pm
June 18 & 19: Friday 6pm-8pm; Saturday 9am-11am & 1pm-3pm
November 12 & 13: Friday 6pm-8pm; Saturday 9am-11am & 1pm-3pm
All times Pacific Time Zone



2 Have & 2 Hold now has its own social media handles! Follow us on Twitter and Instagram @2Have2HoldPDX for program updates and relationship tips!

Client Story: Mark and Stephanie

Mark and Stephanie tied the knot right before COVID hit. Being thrown into both a marriage and a pandemic was not going well. Stephanie had a lot of big feelings to work through, and Mark struggled to support her. As quarantine wore on, small disagreements inadvertently turned into shouting matches. Recognizing they needed better communication tools, they reached out to NCC for video therapy. In session, their therapist encouraged them to talk about how they experienced conflict growing up. After building an understanding of each other's history, Mark and Stephanie used new tools to help them navigate their relationship. They recently told their therapist that getting counseling has made all the difference in helping them handle their relationship through the pandemic.

Growing Hope

A Free Virtual Fundraising Event

Join us for a live virtual event filled with inspirational stories, updates about NCC's client services, and opportunities for you to support mental health in our community!

**Tuesday, May 4
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

Check for updates at
[nwcounseling.org/
growing-hope-virtual](http://nwcounseling.org/growing-hope-virtual)



Prioritize Your Self-Care

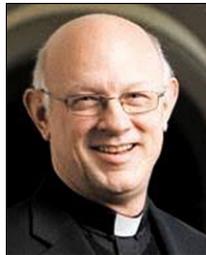
Many throw the term “self-care” around – but what does that really mean? Stress, both physical and emotional, manifests itself in the body through headaches, low energy, digestive issues, muscle tenseness, and trouble sleeping. Self-care incorporates techniques that help you work through your stress. Our staff recently brainstormed ways we all maintain our own self-care – see if any spark an interest for you!

- Get your daily dose of exercise by going for walks, hikes, or bike rides, even if it’s raining or snowing. Stay indoors and move your body in other ways: lift weights, find yoga videos online, try basic breathing and meditation exercises.
- Leave work at work by setting boundaries for yourself to prevent burnout. Simulate a commute by taking a 10-20 minute walk before and after work, or take short, frequent breaks to shift your mindset and boost your productivity.
- Focus on creativity by making time for coding, playing musical instruments, coloring, doing puzzles or word games, crafting, cooking – any activity that you can lose yourself in and use a different part of your brain.
- Socialize with your people in creative ways, like playing virtual games on House Party or Jackbox, going on a socially distant (and masked) walk with a friend, or calling that person who can just listen.
- Go to therapy! Having a safe space to work through anxiety, depression, trauma and stress helps you live a healthier, more fulfilling life. Even NCC counselors do their own therapy to stay healthy.



Read the full article with even more self-care tips on our website at: nwcounseling.org/prioritize-your-self-care

Board Member News



Welcome to our new board members!

Each member of our Board of Directors is passionate about NCC and its mission. Our board members help guide the mission and direction of NCC and serve three-year terms. We are excited to welcome **Carla Gonzales** and **Fr. Rick Paperini** to the board! Carla is involved in many community organizations, and brings event planning experience to the board. Fr. Rick was part of the coalition of parishes who started NCC, and was on NCC’s first board of directors. Welcome!

**Interested in
board
membership?**

Are you interested in helping make sure anyone in need of mental health care gets it? Consider joining the NCC Board of Directors or a committee! NCC is looking for individuals who care about the Center and its clients. Whether you are interested in the near or distant future, contact Erin Peters at erin@nwcounseling.org for more information!

Circle of Strength: Virtually Together

The Northwest Catholic Counseling Center (NCC) celebrated World Mental Health Day on October 10 with its 19th Annual Circle of Strength Women's Brunch. Normally, a group of women would gather in-person for a morning filled with community, fellowship, inspiration and generosity. For the safety of the guests, the event turned virtual this year on the Zoom platform, instead. Though in a different format, our community was as committed and as generous as ever.

Over \$58,000 was raised for the mental health care of women and children in our community!



Executive Director Erin Peters performed as emcee of the virtual event, welcoming participants from all over the country. Table hostesses Joyce Campbell and Barbara Bridge led the group in song to Jesse Manibusan's "Hold On To Love," a beautiful testament to NCC's spirit of "cultivating healing through kindness." NCC's founders, Srs. Barbara Kennedy, Sarah Deeby, and Lisa Sheridan, made a special appearance all the way from Omaha, Nebraska – reminding all it is with the commitment and dedication of supporters that NCC can continue to provide hope and healing to all people regardless of faith or finances.

Statistics are powerful, but behind statistics are stories of real people. People like Amy, our client speaker, who is a survivor of childhood abuse – physical, emotional, and sexual. Because she had suppressed her emotions for so long, she didn't know how to process emotions or reactions, and those pent up feelings manifested in souring relationships with family, friends, and coworkers. When she learned about NCC's sliding scale fee, which calculated a price she could afford, she called immediately. After two years of therapy, Amy shared: "I am amazed at who I have been able to become. I'm no longer crippled by my anxiety, I no longer live in fear of constantly being triggered."



View a recording of the event on our website at nwcounseling.org/circle-of-strength-virtual

Ways to Help Right Now

- Masks aren't going away any time soon. Any mask or face covering you can make or purchase for us would go to great use. We're particularly looking for face masks with windows to help therapists read facial cues during in-person appointments. We have patterns for you!
- Teletherapy isn't going away either. We're looking for laptops or tablets (manufactured 2012 or later) to help our staff do therapy remotely.
- Want to support local businesses **and** NCC? Buy a gift card and donate it to NCC! We use gift cards as raffle prizes that raise even more money for mental health.

Email donate@nwcounseling.org if you have questions or can help procure these items!

Social Media

Find us on social media for mental health tips, event information, and client stories! Or visit our website for short, timely articles of interest written by NCC staff.



The Northwest Catholic Counseling Center
LevantarPDX



@nccorg
@2Have2HoldPDX



@ncc1986
@2Have2HoldPDX



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Special Support *Thank you to the following partners for recent grants:*

Bernice Heffernan Family Foundation • Bustos-Lopez Family Fund
Dwyer Charitable Trust • Frank and Margaret Bitar Foundation
Health Share of Oregon • Herbert A. Templeton Foundation • Jackson Foundation
Juan Young Trust • Oregon Community Foundation • OCF Joseph E. Weston Public Foundation

These generous funders help subsidize the quality mental health care we provide to those affected by COVID and clients seeking culturally-appropriate therapy in Spanish.

On behalf of each of our clients, thank you for making our work possible!

The Northwest
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Upcoming Workshops

Most of our workshops will be virtual through 2021.
Get more information and sign up online at nwcounseling.org/services, or call 503-253-0964.

Expanding Emotional Intelligence – Virtual Workshop

Thursday, March 25 • 4 pm – 6 pm

Cómo Practicar el Cuidado Personal en Tiempos Difíciles – Taller Virtual

Jueves, 29 de abril • 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Trauma Echoes – Virtual Workshop

Wednesday, May 12 • 6 pm – 8 pm

Personal Freedom thru the 4 Agreements – Virtual Workshop

Saturday, June 12 • 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

Mindfulness Mandala Workshop – *In-person attendance dependent on COVID-19 conditions*

Saturday, July 10 • 11 am – 1 pm

All times Pacific Time Zone • Zona Horaria del Pacífico

Fall workshop topics include: Breaking Up with Codependency, Parenting a Child with a Mental Health Diagnosis, Building a Grief Practice, Stages of Change, and Understanding Depression.