



ELKANAH COUNSELLING

www.elkanahcounselling.com.au

Autumn 2014

1 Whitehorse Road
Balwyn VIC 3103

Phone: 9817 5654
Fax: 9817 5654

Reception staff:

Helen Waterworth
Robyn Everest

Reception Hours:

10.00 am – 4.00 pm
Monday – Friday

Consultation Hours:

8.00 am – 8.00 pm
Monday – Friday

8.00 am – 12.00 pm
Saturday

Consultations by appointment
only.

After hours: Elkanah does not
operate a locum service. If you
need crisis assistance Lifeline
can be contacted on 131114.

Now that we are in March, the year is well on its way. We have weathered heat waves (though some of our gardens didn't fare so well!), bushfires and other vicissitudes. Christmas and summer holidays are a fast fading memory. School and University are back. Easter will soon be here!

It is all too easy to be caught in the daily business of modern fast paced life and forget those changes we contemplated a short time ago. Research from the USA tells us that 45% of Americans usually make New Year's Eve resolutions but only 8% are successful in achieving them. There is no reason to believe that the statistics would very different for Australia. May, our newest psychologist, has an excellent article on successfully making positive changes.

Following on from May, Melanie gives us some strategies for improving the quality of our sleep. If there are problems such as sleep apnoea, restless leg syndrome or sleep walking obviously they need specialist medical intervention. That still leaves an awful lot of us who could do with a better night's sleep.

My article is about the masks that we all wear. Often the more distress that has happened to us, the more opaque and firmly in place our masks are. But we pay a price for this. By working together we can break down some of those walls and let the authentic you shine through.

Lyn Shand, Psychologist & Family Therapist

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------|
| 3 | Making Changes Doesn't Have To Be Hard! | May Wong |
| 4 | I Just Want a Good Night's Sleep! | Melanie Birch |
| 6 | On Being Yourself | Lyn Shand |



Our Psychologists



JOHN ANDERSEN

BA, DipPsych., MA., MSc,
Member VAFT

After completing graduate studies in the United States, John worked as a police counsellor with the Police in Los Angeles, followed by work as a marriage and family therapist in a Christian counselling centre. John specialises in relationship counselling including: marital, stepfamily/blended family issues, and working with adolescents within the context of their families.



MELANIE BIRCH

BA BBSoc. (Hons), CertPastPsych, AdvCertTrauma,
DipClinHyp MAPS,
Member, APS College of Counselling Psychologists

Melanie worked in the field of organisational development before training as a psychologist and trauma therapist. She has now practised in this area for 15 years. The principle focus of her work is the treatment of trauma, grief, anxiety, depression and PND. She works both with people who have long standing issues and those with more recent difficulties. Melanie is also a trained hypnotherapist.



ROBERT POSTLETHWAITE

BBSoc MPsych. MAPS
Member APS College of Clinical Psychologists

Rob's long term interest in chronic pain and illness has resulted in considerable experience in the treatment of depression, anxiety and anger problems that are some of the emotional consequences of these conditions. Rob's underlying philosophy is to focus on the here and now and address the current issues in a pragmatic and problem solving manner.



SYLVIA WERBA

BEd (Psych) MAPS
Member APS College of Counselling
Psychologists & CED Psychologists

Sylvia has been a registered psychologist for over 25 years, both within the school system as well as in private practice – working with children, adolescents, adults and families. Sylvia uses an eclectic approach to work through life's complications, review goals and formulate a more optimistic and positive approach to the future. Sylvia also has experience in Psychometric assessment to help students achieve at their potential in the best possible way – including those with special needs.



KERRYL BEISSEL

BSc (Hons – Psych), MAPS
Member, APS College of Counselling Psychologists

Kerryl has experience in counselling for a wide range of personal and relationship issues. Her areas of work include management and treatment of anxiety, stress and depression; and assistance in dealing with the effects of difficult or traumatic past experiences. Kerryl has expertise in assisting people through times of transition or crisis, whether it be in their personal lives, in their workplace or ministry



EDDY KLEYNHANS

MA., MAPS
Member APS College of Health Psychologists

Eddy has been a registered psychologist for 25 years. He has also been registered with the Dutch Psychological Society, Dutch being his second language. In Australia, he has been providing Employee Assistance Programs to organisations, often travelling interstate to consult with clients. He is an ex-president of EAPA. His expertise in private practice includes working with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds



LYN SHAND

BA DipEd GradDipPsych MAPS
Member VAFT & APS Colleges of Counselling
Psychologists and CED Psychologists

Lyn has much experience working with clients who suffer from stress, anxiety & depression. As a family therapist and psychologist, much of her evening work is with couples, family relationship issues and also separation as she is a trained mediator. She has considerable expertise and experience in working with women with P.M.S., postnatal depression and anxiety and problems at menopause, having written a book on this topic. Lyn is the owner of Elkanah.



MAY WONG

BSc/BE (Hons), PG Dip Psych (Hons), MA Psych
(Health), MAPS
Member APS College of Health Psychologists

May is a health psychologist who works with chronic health issues such as diabetes, cardiac & pulmonary issues, rehab following surgery, cancer and pain. May was born in Hong Kong and grew up in Australia. She is also a member of the Hong Kong Psychological Society and in addition to English speaks fluent Cantonese and some Mandarin. As a health psychologist May focuses on the relationship between mental and physical wellbeing.

Making Changes Doesn't Have To Be Hard!

May Wong

We change our habits more frequently than you might think. Admittedly, some things (like how you brush your teeth or how you dry yourself when you hop out of the shower) don't change a great deal. However, we change our shampoo and detergent when the one we're using gets too expensive, we change the route we take to get from our house to the supermarket when there are road works, we change the bus we take when we start working at a new place, etc. Why then, are some changes (like losing weight, exercising more and eating healthier) so hard to make?

We are all capable of making changes when it benefits us, especially when you reap the benefits right now. For example, we save money right now by changing our shampoo when it gets too expensive. But what do I get from not eating this chocolate right now? Frustration and a sense of longing. And maybe the promise of not gaining the weight of the chocolate. But what difference would 35g make to my 70kg bulk? So you end up eating the chocolate for 1 minute of enjoyment, and 24 hours (or more) of guilt. Was that worth it?

Are we doing it for the right reasons?

Motivation is one of the most important factors to making changes. If someone asked you to start writing with your non-dominant hand, you'd tell them where to go pretty quickly. However, if you injured your dominant hand, no one has to tell you to write with your other hand.

The difference is, in one scenario, if you want to write something down, the best option you have is with your non-dominant hand. Therefore, the reason you're making this change comes from within you. In the other scenario, you're just being told by someone else to make a change.

Compare this to things like losing weight, exercising more, and eating healthier. Is it because you genuinely want to do these things, or are you doing it because someone else (your doctor, your parents, your partner, your kids, your accountant, etc.) told you it was a good idea?

Motivation = importance + confidence

Motivation is made up of how important it is for you, and how confident you are about your ability to do it. For example, am I confident that I can spare 20 minutes to go for a walk every other day? Absolutely confident! How important is it for me to go for that walk? Certainly not as important as collapsing on my couch when I get home after a long day at work! So, how motivated am I about going for a walk every other day? Not very. Ultimately, am I going to start walking for 20 minutes every other day? Not likely.

Are we being realistic?

Another important factor to successfully making changes is setting realistic goals. For most people, maybe 20 minutes is not unrealistic. Clearly for me though, 20 minutes is too much to ask. So in order to succeed, I will have to set a more realistic target. Maybe 5 minutes. And when I can do 5 minutes consistently, I can step it up to 7. You may say, "what's the point of walking for 5 minutes? I won't even get warm!"

When in fact, I'll be spending 5 more minutes being active, which means 5 less minutes on my backside. We all have to start somewhere!

Dealing with setbacks

How many times do we set a goal, achieve it many times, then neglect it for one measly day, and then pack it all in? Making changes is easy. Maintaining it is the hard part. Anyone can eat salad for a meal once in a while, but you need more to make it a part of your life. The key is to keep working at it until it sticks. And if it doesn't, find something else that might. Just because you didn't go for your walk today, doesn't mean all your hard work has been undone. It just means you didn't go for your walk today, and you can go for a walk again tomorrow.

The one thing that is going to keep you motivated, is the one thing that got you started in the first place, be it family, health, wealth, or just self satisfaction. It helps to keep your eyes on the prize, by reminding yourself frequently, and patting yourself on the back. Only you know how hard you've been working!

© 2014

I Just Want a Good Night's Sleep!

Melanie Birch

Lack of quality sleep seems to be part and parcel of life these days. Regular good quality sleep seems to be a memory from the distant past. Before we look at some strategies, let's just have a look at how we spend our days.

We are the only living entity on the planet that ignores our biological clock so flagrantly and consistently. Notice that animals awake during the day go to sleep when the sun goes down. Animals that are nocturnal go to sleep when the sun comes up. We have decided that they no longer need to sleep the way nature intended. We stay awake for hours after the sun has gone down. And then we wake ourselves up each morning with an alarm of some sort.

During the day we pep ourselves up with stimulants such as coffee, sit in offices for long periods of time under artificial lights, drive or catch public transport to and from home, sit in front of flickering bright lights (televisions, laptops, tablets, smart phones etc), and then take ourselves off to bed and expect to fall asleep. Contrast this with the rhythms of tribal groups without electricity. All things being equal, I would guess we can all pick who sleeps better.

The price we pay for poor quality sleep is higher than it first seems. It's not just about foggy thinking, slow reactions, being snappy, clumsier, more forgetful etc. Regular poor quality

sleep can raise your risk for health problems such as Type II diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. And the evidence is mounting that lack of sleep increases hunger and appetite (through some hormone changes) which in turn makes it more likely that you may gain weight or increase your difficulty in losing weight. As psychologists we know that poor sleep affects mental health and that mental health problems can have a big effect on how well we sleep.

And if you think that you're doing just fine on minimal sleep, think again. We might think that we've adapted to less sleep but if we were to do tests that rely on mental alertness and high performance we would not do as well as expected. So, what can we do?

Like May says, making changes doesn't have to be hard. Your sleep pattern wasn't always like this. Think about when it changed and why. Then think about whether any of the following might be useful (Hint: they all are!).

- A lot of our patterns are habits. Start with a new habit. Set a regular bedtime so your body gets accustomed to when it should be getting sleepy. Don't let staying up to watch the end of a movie, sending an email, or doing that "really important thing" get in the way.
- Set a getting up time and don't snooze through it. Even if you are still tired, get up. It will increase the chances that you are ready to go to bed at the assigned time that night. If nothing else, the memory of how tired you were that morning will spur your efforts to go to bed on time.
- Think about how many sources of light there are in your bedroom – the clock radio, the charger light for your phone, standby lights for electronic items for instance. All add to the overall amount of residual light after you switch off the bedside lamp – as do street lights, security lights, the porch light. The darker you can make the room, the better.
- Caffeine. Well it is an addictive drug. I commented recently that I didn't know how Melbourne used to function before coffee. The reply was "a lot more slowly!" And I suspect, with a better night's sleep. I'm not asking you to go cold turkey. Try and keep total caffeine to 2-3 cups a day and none after about mid afternoon. It takes 5-6 hours to leave your system.
- Go for a walk. Regularly. Morning exercise is good for improving stress and mood. Do it outside and the natural light helps reset the sleep/wake cycle. While vigorous exercise in the late afternoon means your body temperature begins falling a few hours later and this is a natural trigger the body has for going to sleep.

So there you have it. Set a going to bed time and a getting up time. Stick to them, even on the weekend. Make the bedroom room as dark (and as quiet) as you can. And get outside for a little exercise. If you try these for a few weeks and there's no improvement, see your GP or friendly psychologist for a review and some individualised strategies. © 2014

On Being Yourself

Lyn Shand

People often put on a pretense of who they are, in order to impress others or to avoid conflict or to pretend that they are very confident and secure. I recently came across a beautiful piece of writing. Its origin is a little cloudy, but as far as I can deduce the author is Charles C Finn, writing in 1966. It is as it is very relevant for us all:-

“Don’t be fooled by me. Don’t be fooled by the face I wear. For I wear a mask often. I wear a thousand masks, masks that I am afraid to take off and none of them are the real me. Pretending is an art that comes second nature with me, and don’t be fooled, for God’s sake, don’t be fooled! I give the impression that I am secure, that all is sunny and unruffled with me, within as well as without, that confidence is my name and coolness is my game, that the water is calm and that I am in command, and that I need no-one.

But don’t believe me please. My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is my mask. Beneath dwells the real me, in confusion, in fear, in aloneness. But I hide this; I don’t want anyone to know it. I panic at the thought of my weakness and I fear of being exposed. That’s why I frantically create a mask to hide behind, a nonchalant, sophisticated façade, to help me pretend, to shield me from the glance that knows. But such a glance is precisely my salvation; my only salvation. And I know it. That is if it is followed by acceptance; if it is followed by love. It is the only thing that will liberate me from my false self, from my own self-built prison walls, from the barriers I so painstakingly erect. It’s the only thing that will assure me of what I can’t assure myself, that I’m really worth something. But I don’t tell you this. I don’t dare. I’m afraid to. I’m afraid that your glance may not be followed by acceptance and love. I’m afraid that you’ll think less of me. So I play my game with a facade of assurance without, and a trembling child within. And so begins the parade of masks. And my life becomes a front.

I idly chatter to you in the suave tones of surface talk. I tell you everything that is really nothing, and nothing of what’s everything, crying within me. So when I’m going through my routine, don’t be fooled by what I’m saying. Please listen carefully and try to hear what I am NOT saying, what I’d like to be able to say, what for survival I really need to say, but I can’t say. I dislike all the hiding. Honestly, I dislike this superficial game I’m playingI’d really like to be genuine, spontaneous and the real me. But you’ve got to help. You’ve got to hold out your hand, even when that’s the last thing that I seem to want or need.

Only you can wipe away from my eyes the blank stare of the breathing dead. Only you can call me to being really alive. Each time you are kind and gentle and encouraging, each time you try to understand because you really care, my heart begins to grow wings, very small wings at first, very feeble wings but wings You alone can break down the walls behind which I tremble and hide. You alone can release me from my shadow world of panic and uncertainty”.

Hopefully psychologists and counsellors can help to do this.

ELKANAH NEWSLETTER

Feedback & Change of Details

We appreciate any information and feedback that can help us in providing our newsletter and other services to you. Please complete the following if:

- You wish to advise us of a change in your mailing details
- You have feedback or suggestions for the newsletter
- You would like copies of our brochure

Please complete your details as currently listed

NAME:

POSITION/DEPARTMENT:

ORGANISATION:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

TELEPHONE:

New contact details:

NAME:

POSITION/DEPARTMENT:

ORGANISATION:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

TELEPHONE:

Are the above changes for: Address Change Replacement Contact Additional Contact

If you wish to be taken off the Elkanah newsletter mailing list please tick

BROCHURE REQUESTS - Number required:

Each newsletter contains articles written by members of our team of psychologists. Let us know of any of topics that you would particularly like to know more about, anonymously if you wish. Most of our psychologists are also available to present talks and seminars. Please contact reception on 9817 5654 for enquiries.

Comments:

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: ELKANAH COUNSELLING, 1 WHITEHORSE ROAD BALWYN 3103