



HEALING

A JOURNAL OF WELL-BEING

from Dr. Marino E. Carbonell

Ed.D., LMHC, CAP, ICADC

www.marinocarbonell.com

Get Back to Being You

June 2010, Volume 2, Issue 1

Protective Strategy Opens An Area of Interest for Continuing Research in Young Adult Addiction Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery

by Marino E. Carbonell, Ed.D., LMHC, CAP, ICADC

Prevention programs often are designed to enhance protective factors and to reduce risk factors. Some protective factors are (a) strong and positive family bonds, (b) clear rules of content enforced within family, (c) success in school performance, (d) strong bond with institutions such as school, and (e) adoption of conventional norms about drug use. According to Hanson (2002), some risk factors are (a) chaotic home environments, (b) inappropriately shy or aggressive behavior in classroom, (c) failure in school performance, and (d) poor social coping skills. Hanson's risk-and-protective strategy has opened an area of interest for continuing research in young adult addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery.

Other Factors That Influence Young Adult Substance Abuse: Peer Pressure and Self-Esteem

Many studies stressed that the first experience with drugs usually occurs during adolescence. Huba, Bentler, and Wingard (as cited in Wolf et al.) proposed a model that attempted to explain how interactions among a wide range of sets of factors (personal and environmental) lead to drug use.

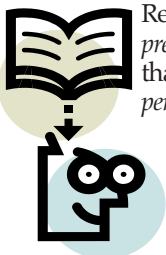
This model paved the way for studies that examined connections between different relevant variables and drug use in young adults. Another

theory is the information integration theory proposed by Anderson (as cited in Wolf et al., 1995), which assumes that the individual integrates information from different relevant sources in order to generate a valid response. Among young adults, the theory has been used to examine the development of moral judgment. In other words, individuals interpret reality as relevant to their own experiences (Wolf et al.).

Pressure from the reference group (or peer group) plays a central role in the choices made by any individual. Moreover, the term *adolescence* represents a stage in the development of the individual and was first suggested in 1762 by Rousseau to represent an experience of second birth (Wolf et al., 1995). Erikson (as cited in Wolf et al.) postulated that adolescence is characterized by challenge of identity formation. According to Victor et al. (as cited in Wolf et al.), this challenge for middle-class youth who have no history of pathology and who do not use drugs is associated with curiosity, risk taking, and search for new experiences. Curiosity is accepted as the most common motive for embarking on drug use. Zuckerman (as cited in Wolf et al.) also found that users perceive curiosity as a motive for their initiation into drug use. *

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10 Practices Supporting Talk Therapy

Therapy can be a vital part of healing. To get even more benefit from your therapy experience, consider adding one or all of these 10 practices to your life:

- 1. Physical self-care.** A healthy diet helps you clarify your thinking and be more present in therapy. Exercise helps relieve mild to moderate depression so that you can confront challenging issues.
- 2. Meditation.** Sitting with your thoughts can increase your capacity for insight and self-awareness.
- 3. Support groups.** Groups provide continuity between sessions and often help clarify your issues.
- 4. Bodywork.** Treatments such as massage and Reiki can bring to consciousness buried feelings and traumas stored in the body.
- 5. Artistic/creative pursuits.** These soul-nourishing activities promote healing by opening access to wiser places inside.
- 6. Dream tracking.** Dreams bring up unconscious or semiconscious material that you and your therapist can work with.
- 7. Affirmations/positive self-talk.** Such practices can boost your self-esteem and the confidence you'll need to confront issues.
- 8. Relevant reading.** Books and articles provide context for the work you're doing with your therapist.
- 9. Volunteering.** Helping others who are struggling can increase your compassion for and tolerance of your own struggles.
- 10. Time in nature.** Being in nature can bring a sense of peace and appreciation that promotes healing. *

A Letter From

Marino E. Carbonell
Ed.D., LMHC, CAP, ICADC



My expertise is in addiction therapy—specifically substance abuse, gambling, and other addictions. With over 15-years of experience, a founder and director of the South Miami Hospital adolescent addiction treatment program and now in private practice, my focus is helping adolescents and families deal with substance and alcohol abuse, parent/teen conflict resolution, stress, and anxiety. I also work with the adult population in dealing with all types of addiction disorders and treatment, family systems, and relationship dynamics.

Blending talk therapy with conventional and alternative approaches, I draw on a variety of styles and techniques to incorporate what will be most helpful for each client. I offer individual, family, and/or group therapy and work with each client to help them build on their strengths to identify and achieve life goals.

I am a Licensed Psychotherapist, National Certified Counselor (NCC) and Board Certified in Professional Counseling with a doctorate in Child and Youth Studies from Nova Southeastern University's Fischler Graduate School of Education and Human Services and a master's in Mental Health Counseling; a specialist in the field of addictions, I am certified in Addictions Counseling from the University of Miami and am a Certified Addictions Professional (CAP) since 1994. I am a Lifetime Member and Fellow of the American Psychotherapy Association and a member of the American Counseling Association.

Are You Living Your Own Life?

Fulfillment in life is related to how well you are living in alignment with what's truly important to you. Do your decisions emerge from the essence of who you are—not from who you think you should be? Take this quiz to see how well you are living a life that is of your own making.



True False

- 1. I have spent time thinking about what's important to me, and I can articulate those things.
- 2. While I have been influenced by my parents, teachers, society and other outside forces, I have not simply adopted their values and beliefs. My own values and beliefs come from deep inside, and I express them in all areas of my life.
- 3. I am not easily swayed by the opinions of others. I know my own mind.
- 4. In order to remain open and flexible, I am willing to re-examine my opinions and beliefs to determine whether something is still true for me. I am interested in other points of view.
- 5. My spouse/partner is a good match for me. We share in a way that pleases me and have an ideal amount of separate space. We don't have to agree on everything.
- 6. I chose my occupation, or choose to remain in it, because it most closely utilizes my skills, strengths and passions.
- 7. I also choose my friends. I don't go along with a friendship that doesn't feel right just because that person pursued me.
- 8. Any spirituality I practice feeds my soul.
- 9. I have aspirations. I spend time thinking about them and taking action toward those that are most important to me.
- 10. Anyone looking at my life from the outside would see the things that I value.
- 11. When I'm sick, or a family member is sick, I listen to the appropriate health care provider. If something about the advice doesn't feel right, I get a second opinion.
- 12. On the rare occasion when I let someone break a boundary or persuade me to do something I don't want to do, as soon as I'm aware of it, I take steps to stop and correct the situation.
- 13. Living life on my own terms doesn't mean I never compromise. It means that I choose when to compromise.
- 14. Following the path that others laid out for me might have brought me more money or acclaim; however, I have no regrets because I chose every step along the way.

If you answered false more often than true, you may wish to clarify what is truly important to you and then find ways to bring your life into greater alignment with those values. Please don't hesitate to call if you'd like support in doing this. *

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

How Your Body Image Could Be Harming You

Do you ever have thoughts like these?

1. My life would be better if I looked better.
2. I will never look as good as _____.
3. My _____ is/are so ugly.
4. I am so fat.
5. That scale/size can't be right.
6. I look disgusting; no one could ever love me.

If you do, you're not alone. Numerous studies and surveys show that up to 80 percent of American women are dissatisfied with their appearance. Women aren't the only ones with poor body images; recent studies indicate that men are becoming increasingly bothered as well.

Body image is not just a problem of being unhappy with what we see in the mirror, but also that our perception of what we see is skewed. For example, a University of Colorado study showed that the same women who overestimate the size of their waists by 25 per cent were still able to correctly estimate the width of a box.

We also have unrealistic expectations of what we should be seeing in the mirror, thanks to the mass media's portrayal of "ideal" body types and other physical features.



A Three-Legged Stool

So, body image is really a three-legged stool that wobbles (and sometimes knocks you right over) when you:

1. Feel dissatisfied or unhappy about how you look
2. Have a skewed perception of how you actually look
3. Have unrealistic expectations of how you should look

As you can imagine, the more wobbly your stool, the more deeply these body image issues are going to permeate your life. Poor body image can lead to eating disorders, depression, substance abuse and other serious problems.

Even when it doesn't seem to be having an impact on your day-to-day life, if you take a closer look, you may find that your body image is an underlying cause of issues in virtually every area of your life.

Personal relationships. When you're preoccupied with body image, you may sacrifice quality time with friends and loved ones. For instance, you refuse to go

to the beach or pool because you don't want to be seen in a bathing suit.

Romantic relationships. When you're feeling bad about the way you look, you might create distance between you and your mate (e.g., you say no to intimacy) or a potential mate (e.g., you don't talk to new people).

Workplace success. Confidence is attractive in the workplace as well. Even though your physical appearance has nothing to do with your job performance, your level of self-esteem does.

Self-care, health and wellness. If you're not feeling good about yourself, you may not be motivated to take good care of yourself.

Finances. How much money do you spend on the pursuit of a better body? Could that money be better spent?

Spiritual. When you're focused only on your appearance, you have little time, money or energy to cultivate a spiritual life, help others or contribute to the greater good.

Home. You may reflect your poor self-image in your outer environment by letting clutter build up or neglecting house repairs or cleaning.

5 Ways to Love Yourself Again

1. Spend time every day on your self-care, hobbies, friendships and spiritual interests. These will fill you up in ways that a "perfect 10" body never will.
2. While looking at yourself in the mirror, affirm your appreciation for all of your positive qualities, skills and traits.
3. Groom and dress yourself lovingly every day. Choose clothing that fits well, in colors and styles that you like.
4. Aim for a body size that is healthy for your height and shape. Speak to a doctor or dietician so that you have a realistic goal.
5. Focus on creating a healthy body and let your weight take care of itself. Try limiting the frequency that you step on the scale.

By acknowledging the impact of body image on the rest of your life, you can refocus your lens and keep a healthy view of what you see. *

How to Be Assertive Without Alienating Your Partner

Asking for what you want—and setting boundaries around what you don't want—is a key life skill. But sometimes in our enthusiasm to practice this skill, we over-do our own assertiveness and end up with a partner who shuts down, gets angry or feels resentful. Here are four tips for developing your assertiveness in a way that will actually strengthen, deepen and enrich your relationship—thus avoiding the “alienation trap.”

Get Clear

Being assertive starts with knowing what you are—and aren't—willing to be, do, or have. For many of us, coming to this knowledge is a real task unto itself. Here, it may be useful to ask: “In an ideal world, what would I like to happen?” Focusing on an ideal outcome opens our minds, prevents us from falling into passivity or “victim-thinking,” and helps us get really clear on what we want and don't want.

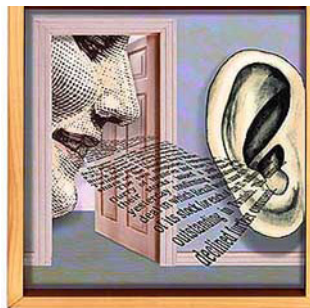
Set Boundaries

Once you know what outcome you need (or want), share it with your

partner. Pay attention to the way stating your boundary feels in your body. With practice, you can actually sense when you're hitting the “sweet spot.” It can feel really pleasurable, even exhilarating, to express your needs or desires out loud. Phrases like “such and such doesn't work for me” are simple ways of being assertive while maintaining connection with your partner.

Make a Regular Habit of Stating Your Needs and Desires

You can build your assertiveness the same way you build any muscle: exercise. Practice speaking up about your needs, big or small, on a daily basis. When you speak up about things that are less controversial—such as where to go to dinner, requesting help unloading the dishwasher or what TV program to watch—both you and your partner get used to your assertiveness. It becomes easier for you to practice



and for your partner to hear. Also, when bigger issues come along, you and your partner will have a healthy process in place for dealing with differences in needs, and you'll have greater confidence in the resilience of your partnership.

Give as Much as You Get

Assertiveness is a two-way street. If you want your boundaries to be respected, you must return the courtesy to your partner. If she doesn't want you to use the bathroom when she's in the shower, don't. If he asks you to give him a half an hour after work before you talk and connect, respect that. When it comes to following through on a partner's reasonable request, actions really do speak louder than words.

If your partner isn't respecting your boundaries even though you've set them clearly, it may be time for professional help for you and/or your relationship. ✱

Marino E. Carbonell is a licensed psychotherapist specializing in the field of addiction treatment for the adolescent and adult population. He maintains a private practice in Miami, Florida. Dr. Carbonell has vast community involvement and has served as consultant to several private schools in South Florida. He travels locally to public and private schools lecturing about the symptoms and consequences of substance and alcohol abuse to students and parents. He is a member of the advisory board of directors of Informed Families and recently received the Special Speakers Recognition Award. Additionally, he has written extensively about the subject of addiction and cognitive moral development in young adults.

www.marinoarbonell.com

Miami, Florida 33155
7344 SW 48 Street, Suite 104
MARINO E. CARBONELL, Ed.D., LMHC, CAP, ICADC