



# SOLUTIONS

A quarterly publication of Samaritan Counseling Center of the Capital Region

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[www.samaritancounselingcenter.org](http://www.samaritancounselingcenter.org)

Winter 2006

Save the Date:

## *Emotional Intelligence Implications for Couples and Family Therapy*

**Professional Conference**  
Sponsored by

Samaritan Counseling Center  
of the Capital Region

The Sage Colleges

New York Association for  
Marriage and Family Therapy

*Featuring Key Note Speaker*  
*Glenn J. Veenstra, Jr., PhD*

Clinical psychologist Glenn J. Veenstra, PhD, is an associate professor in the psychiatry and behavioral sciences department of the University of Kansas Medical Center in Wichita.

Date: Friday, May 4, 2007  
Time: 9 AM - 4:30 PM  
Place: Bush Memorial Center  
Congress Street at First Street  
Troy, NY

More details will be available in our Spring 2007 newsletter. Please call (518) 374-3514 to register in advance!

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## Give Yourself a Gift:

### *Holiday Challenges as Opportunities for Growth!*

**David C. Olsen, PhD**  
**Executive Director**

Ready or not! The holidays are here, replete with excitement and stress! The juggling of holiday plans, shopping and looking for parking places in overcrowded malls, anticipating more time with family, wrestling with finances and credit card expenses, and remembering holidays in the past can bring up a variety of feelings. From joy and exuberance to a sense of dread and a desire to simply survive, you may feel you're on a holiday rollercoaster! It can be helpful to develop some type of a plan to get you through this emotional period. If you are looking for ways to survive the holidays, and grow at the same time, here are three suggestions:

*Family gatherings mean old family roles, rules, and wounds are sure to resurface, and too often it is easy to become reactive.*

1. Use the holidays as an opportunity for **relational growth**. Holidays usually mean more time with family. This can be a blessing--or a curse--or both, depending on your family issues. There may be some people you can't wait to see and others that you dread. Family gatherings mean old family roles, rules, and wounds are sure to resurface, and too often it is easy to become reactive. In fact, if you are not careful, you will soon feel like you are fifteen again!

How can you use the holidays to grow beyond these habitual interactions? First, you must recognize them and then plan to change your role in that interaction. You can almost bet that one of your parents or siblings will say something to you that will push all of your buttons. You will want to respond reactively. Instead, why not try something different? Don't get hooked. Focus instead on being yourself,

and on building better relationships. Set some simple goals for yourself to avoid getting triggered by difficult family members. Part of self-care and growth this season might be talking to a therapist or trusted friend about how to change your role in at least one of your family relationships.

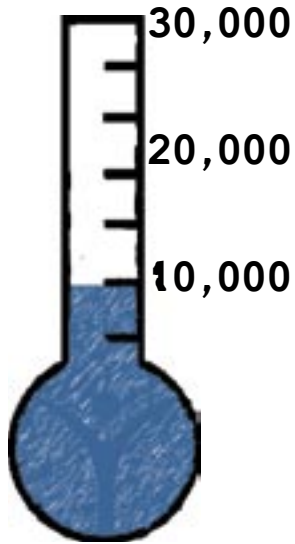
2. Use the holidays as an opportunity for **spiritual growth**. Holidays can mark the passing of time, and sometimes of loss and grief. They are based in spiritual traditions, but too often in the midst of all the busyness, shopping, and family, we do not allow enough time for silence, prayer, and reflection on that which provides meaning in our lives. Ironically, holidays are a time when we are least grounded, let alone connected to the "ground of all being." Try to stay spiritually awake this holiday season. Self-care might mean reconnecting more seriously with your place of worship, talking with a spiritual guide or director, or using therapy as place to explore the deeper meaning of life.

3. Finally, use the holidays as a time for **personal growth**. Reflect back on the last year. What were the highlights? What do you feel good about? What would you like to see more of in the New Year? Begin to think about what you have learned in the last year, and where you want to be going. A self-care strategy might be to do a life review with someone you trust, or use therapy not so much to solve a problem but to explore the themes and patterns of your life, as a way to have more perspective on your overall direction and where the next chapter of your life might take you. 🌟

# Silent Samaritan Campaign at 1/3 of Goal

## Your holiday donation can help us raise \$30,000

We would like to thank everyone for your wonderful generosity thus far. With your donations, we have raised \$10,000 since our annual Silent Samaritan fund drive began last month. We are still shy of our overall goal however, so please continue to get the word out.



Remember that donations are tax deductible and support these four Samaritan Counseling Center Programs:

### Project PASS

(Partnerships Assisting Student Success)

This is an innovative, community-based family therapy program serving at-risk students who are in danger of failing school. Samaritan Center therapists work systemically with the student, family members, friends,

teachers and school administrators to address the academic and behavioral issues concerning the students. After much success with Project PASS in Draper Middle School, Mont Pleasant Middle School and Bradt Elementary School, the program will expand to Averill Park High School in Rensselaer County in January.

### Project Recovery

Project Recovery works with women and men with symptoms of post-traumatic stress resulting from sexual trauma, domestic violence, military service, and alcoholism. People with histories of post-traumatic stress face a daunting recovery that can include symptoms of depression, insomnia, eating disorders, suicidal feelings and relationship difficulties. These symptoms impact an individual's daily functioning: in particular, their capacity to parent and to work. The family is also impacted. Project Recovery utilizes long-term treatment to improve the client's level of functioning and quality of life.

### The Relationship Institute

The reality in today's society is that 50% of all marriages end in divorce. Building a healthy marriage in the midst of multiple pressures is difficult. Couples need all possible support in order to create long-lasting, healthy marriages. This project helps couples

build stronger marriages and families through marital therapy and a variety of community workshops.

### Clergy Institute

The burnout rate of clergy is staggering. The Clergy Institute provides therapy, support groups, workshops and church consultations to help support the needs of clergy, the clergy family, and the congregation.

To continue providing therapy services and expanding these programs, we need to raise \$30,000. We hope that you will partner with us as a Silent Samaritan and make a contribution. No amount is too small; think of it as a gift that continues to benefit the community generation upon generation.

- Send in a payment by check in the enclosed envelope or make your donation online via secure server at [www.samaritancounselingcenter.org](http://www.samaritancounselingcenter.org).
- Look into matching fund donations from your workplace or business. Many corporations, including GE, offer to match their employees' charitable donations.
- Join an advisory board. We are particularly looking to partner with businesses that can help us create a sustainable financial base in the Capital Region.

## Clergy E-News

The Clergy Institute, as part of a regional consortium, will be starting an E-Newsletter for clergy looking for targeted coaching on leadership development and congregational issues. If you would like to receive this newsletter please email [office@samaritancounselingcenter.org](mailto:office@samaritancounselingcenter.org).

## William Gundry Broughton Awards Grant to Expand Project Recovery

Project Recovery was developed more than ten years ago as a counseling program for adult women who have suffered sexual trauma. With the continued support of United Way of Schenectady County and a \$5000 grant from the William Gundry Broughton Charitable Private Foundation, Project Recovery will be expanded to serve men and women with symptoms of post-traumatic stress resulting from sexual trauma, domestic violence, military service, and alcoholism.

Relationship Institute Workshops:

## *Building Emotionally Intelligent Relationships* A Three-Part Series

### **Raise Your Emotional IQ!**

David Olsen, PhD  
February 13, 2007 7:00 PM

How emotionally intelligent are you? New research suggests healthy marriages are high in emotional intelligence. These workshops will describe the characteristics of emotional intelligence and help you build it into your relationship.

### **Know Your Type!**

Andy Chestnut LMSW MBA  
March 13, 2007 7:00 PM

This workshop will show couples how to use the Meyers-Briggs Inventory to recognize their unique relational style, communicate this effectively to their partner, and build an emotionally intelligent partnership.

### **Emotionally Intelligent Conflict**

David Olsen, PhD  
April 17, 2007 7:00 PM

What is Emotionally Intelligent Conflict? Conflict is a part of all relationships and can be destructive or can lead to greater intimacy. Relationships high in emotional intelligence use conflict to build intimacy. This workshop will focus on building skills to increase healthy conflict.

#### **Cost:**

- One or two: \$40 per couple per workshop
- All three: \$100 per couple

#### **Location:**

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church  
4 North Crest Drive, Clifton Park

Please call (518) 374-3514 to register. Space is limited.

# Do you feel like your kids are running the show?

## **Positive Parenting**

*Creative Solutions for Common Behavior Problems*

**Wednesday Nights, 7 - 8:30 PM beginning January 17, 2007**

This 12-week program presented by  
**Patty Gillen, LCSW, EMDR II** and **Keli Rugenstein PhD, LCSW, LMFT**  
will teach parents how to identify and redirect their children's behavior.

Please call (518) 374-3514 to register. Space is limited.  
Cost is \$400 per family (less than \$35 per week, includes all materials).  
\$125 is due at registration to confirm your spot. Balance is due at first class.

For Parents with Children of all ages.

## CONSULTATION CORNER

### Rules for Surviving Family Gatherings

Dreading those holiday family gatherings? These six "rules" may help you stay less reactive.

**Rule #1:** Remember the only person you can change is yourself! If you have any fantasies of changing different family members, you are only setting yourself up for disappointment.

**Rule #2:** While you cannot change other people, you can change your role in interactions and thereby change the relationship. You can probably predict how your "favorite" interaction will go with that difficult family member who always manages to push your buttons. If you can predict the interaction, you can change it by taking a different role in the dance. Sometimes simply saying, "That's an interesting thought," when you are tempted to get angry, will diffuse an argument. This is especially true about discussions of politics, religion and family history.

**Rule #3:** Be aware of triangles that come into play in family gatherings, and find ways to stay out of them. Triangles are an artificial way to establish intimacy by saying, "Let's talk about the latest thing your sister pulled." By suggesting that the person who initiated the

conversation talk directly to that sister, a triangle is avoided, allowing for more direct communication.

**Rule #4:** Spend time listening and observing to learn the rules and roles of the family. Families have rules about conflict, intimacy, gender roles, etc. By knowing the rules and roles, it is easier to change within the family.

**Rule #5:** Be aware of the power of unresolved hurts that you bring home. Unless we recognize these hurts, and mourn the fact that they will probably never be healed by our family, we set ourselves up for more hurt.

**Rule #6:** The most important rule is to stay clear about your goal! The goal is not to cut off from difficult family, or to become enmeshed with them, but rather to find a way to be ourselves in a balanced way with every family member, and building one-to-one relationships. This is what the late family therapist Murray Bowen called differentiation. It is only when we have differentiated and cultivated the ability to be ourselves, without demanding that others change, that we can build healthy relationships.



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Winter 2006:  
Give Yourself a Gift!

Samaritan Counseling Center  
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## Address Change? Duplicate Mailings?

*If your address has changed or if you receive more than one copy of our newsletter, please alert our office at (518) 374-3514 so that we can streamline our database. Thank you!*

**Solutions** is published by Samaritan Counseling Center of the Capital Region, 220 North Ballston Ave., Scotia, NY 12302, (518) 374-3514, fax: (518) 374-9193, online at [www.samaritancounselingcenter.org](http://www.samaritancounselingcenter.org).

**Samaritan Services:** Individual, Couples, Family & Group Therapy, Educational Workshops, Professional/Organizational Consultation.

**Office Locations:** Schenectady/Scotia, Albany, Rensselaer, Clifton Park, Jonesville, Ballston Spa, Wilton. Please call the Scotia office at (518) 374-3514 to schedule an appointment. Financial statements for Samaritan Counseling Center of the Capital Region are available upon request through the New York State Attorney General's office.