

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

David C. Olsen, Ph.D., LCSW-R, LMFT, Executive Director
 Michael G. Quinn, LCSW-R, LMFT, Clinical Personnel Coordinator
 Jenness Clairmont, LCSW, LMFT, Public Relations Coordinator
 Keli Rugenstein, Ph.D, LCSW, LMFT, Covenant Church Coordinator
 Patricia Gillen, LCSW, LMFT, Project Coordinator
 Deborah Valiquette, Office Administrator
 Janean Sylvester, Administrative Assistant

STAFF PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

Paola Cummings, LMSW
 Christina Harrington-Stutzmann, MSW, LMFT, LMHC
 Joan M. Petramale, LCSW-R • Ross Westhuis, M.Div., LCSW-R

RESIDENTS

Andrew Chestnut, MBA MSW • Oona Edmands, LMSW
 Justin Reimenschneider, LMSW • Sarah Willis, MSW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Gorman, M.D., President • Laura Rogers, Vice President
 George Krauss, Treasurer • Inge-Lise Pangburn, Secretary
 Arnold Amell • Marc Badalucco • Betty Lou Bailey, PE
 Ray Colluciello • Rev. Scott DeBlock • Daniel C. Ertel, CPA
 Rev. Craig Hoffman • Mark Leggette • Judy Nocera
 Herman Wiegman

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.

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

Office Locations: Schenectady/Scotia, Albany, Rensselaer, Clifton Park, Jonesville, 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.

Clergy Coaching Now Available!

Clergy Coaching utilizes systems theory to address the full spectrum of leadership challenges faced by clergy as well as help clarify their unique leadership style. Clergy will use their entire context as a 'learning laboratory' -- from the denominational leadership and committee and board lead-

ers to the entire congregation. Coaching begins with a series of standardized assessment instruments and a report of those outcomes to help clarify personality styles, strengths and weaknesses of their leadership style. From there, coach and clergy work together to identify goals and

a plan for attaining those goals, identifying strengths and finding resources that will supplement weaknesses. Short-term issue-focused **Leadership Coaching** is also available. To schedule an appointment contact the office at (518) 374-3514.

Can You Afford Not to Forgive?

by David C. Olsen, Ph.D.
 Executive Director

Can I forgive after what they did to me? Should I forgive my partner for an affair? Should I forgive my child that keeps acting out? Should I forgive my mother who abused me?

These are common questions throughout life. Obviously, there are no simple answers.

Situations exist where it might feel impossible to forgive someone. Some offenses are easier to forgive than others. Because forgiveness is such an in-depth topic, this article will only tackle certain aspects of it.

Complex questions about forgiveness are sometimes answered too quickly, with a simplistic black and white response. Too often there is either pressure to forgive quickly, or a determination never to offer forgiveness. Both responses are reactive and may cause us to miss opportunities for growth.

Forgiveness offered too quickly is much like the "cheap grace" that the late German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer described. It often short-circuits genuine healing by covering over the pain. Although we feel that we have let the issue go, we may have avoided looking at the underlying dynamics that caused it to happen in the first place, and thus risk getting burned once again.

On the other hand, a determination not to forgive can keep you feeling like a perpetual victim. By going through life blaming those who have hurt you, you in effect give them your power to change, and thus avoid taking responsibility for improving your own life.

The Benefits of Forgiveness

Research indicates that there are many potential benefits of forgiveness, including reduced guilt, decreased depression, increased confidence and improved interpersonal relationships. Forgiveness may even improve physical health.

Yet, despite its potential benefits, forgiveness can be painful and difficult.

Can I Forgive?

Whether or not you can forgive depends in part on your capacity for what the late family therapist Murray Bowen called "differentiation" - your ability to non-reactively be who you are without caving to demands to be who someone else needs you to be.

Differentiation is the opposite of emotional reactivity. In terms of forgiveness, it means you wouldn't prematurely offer forgiveness in order to soothe yourself or another. Nor would you forever refuse forgiveness and permanently cut off from your offender.

From this perspective, forgiveness means growing in your ability to be a "solid" self so that others don't have power over your emotions. You can recognize ways you have been hurt, yet also take responsibility for your life and your personal growth. You mature and

become stronger through the process of forgiveness. The offender can then stop representing such an enormous issue in your life.

Release Desire for Revenge

Forgiving someone does not mean that what they did is okay. It also does not mean that you will never feel angry about the situation. Forgiving means releasing the desire for revenge and canceling the "interpersonal debt" caused by the original offense.

Obviously, this process is sometimes quite difficult and complicated. To err is human, but to forgive is to begin a profound process of personal and spiritual growth—where we learn to see the world not as black and white, we relinquish seeing ourselves as victims, and, in the end, we mature in our capacity to be a solid, differentiated self.

Originally printed in Samaritan Counseling Center Newsletter Spring 2001

**Extreme
Makeover
Edition**

SOLUTIONS

A quarterly publication of Samaritan Counseling Center of the Capital Region

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 1

www.samaritancounselingcenter.org

Spring/Summer 2007

Samaritan Center Plans Renovation

Extra Office Space Needed at Main Office in Scotia

Samaritan Counseling Center celebrated its twentieth anniversary last year. After two decades of service, we continue to grow in leaps and bounds. In 2006, we added a new site in Loudonville. This year, we have expanded our presence into two more schools and now have five Project PASS satellite offices!

These are exciting times! However, with growth comes growing pains.....

Samaritan's Clinical Staff presently includes ten psychotherapists. We also operate a comprehensive training program for interns and residents that allows us to provide services for uninsured and underinsured people in the community. Most of our therapy takes place in our Scotia headquarters. Currently, the Scotia office has eight counseling rooms, and they are in continual use. Be-

cause the demand for client services has steadily grown and our training program has expanded dramatically, additional space is desperately needed. Therefore, we are renovating the Scotia office to convert our existing garage and conference room into two counseling rooms. This will increase our capacity to see clients.

The Carlillian Foundation and **the Wright Family Foundation** have very generously offered matching grants totaling \$15,000 for the project. Because they are matching funds, they require a community effort -- *we'll need to raise a total of \$15,000 in donations in order to qualify for these grants.* We are calling on friends

of Samaritan Counseling Center to help us raise \$15,000 by the end of this year in order to give the Center a makeover!



The best thing about a matching grant is that everyone can participate. Any amount contributed goes to help us meet the challenge. Some can only afford \$5; others might be able to give \$5000. Whatever you can give, we invite you to be a part of this effort to renovate and transform our space! **Please send in your donation with the coupon below in the enclosed envelope.**

YOUR NAME & ADDRESS:

SAMARITAN COUNSELING CENTER
EXTREME MAKEOVER FUNDRAISER

12302

ANY AMOUNT HELPS!!!

\$100 \$300
 \$500 \$1000
 Other: _____
\$ _____

PAY TO THE
ORDER OF:

Samaritan Counseling Center

MEMO **Will be matched by Carlillian
& Wright Family Foundations**

(THIS IS NOT A CHECK)

CHECK ENCLOSED
 CHARGE MY MASTER CARD OR VISA

exp. _____ / _____