ABOUND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES // ISSUE 2 // VOLUME 1

REFRESH

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Dear readers,

Last month, we launched our inaugural REFRESH Newsletter and our new website, celebrated our 9th birthday, and held our first giveaway on social media. We received such positive feedback from many of you, and I want to thank you for your kind words and encouragement.

This month, we our excited to introduce our Monthly Playlist with songs handpicked to bring you joy or hope or encouragement. We are also introducing our Expert Spotlight where you will hear from other professionals and experts on a variety of mental-health related topics. In next month's issue, we will introduce our Ask Angela segment where you can ask me questions about specific mental health issues, parenting issues, relationships and more. So submit your anonymous questions via email to angela@aboundpsych.com. An answer will be sent to you via email and may be posted in our upcoming issue (anonymously, of course).

Maybe you have a family member or friend who might also benefit from the information in our newsletter - feel free to share it with them!

Sincerely,

Angela Etchison

ABOUND
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

REFRESH

BY ANGELA ETCHISON, MS, LPE-I

RE-FRESH
/rə'freSH/
an act or function of updating; give new strength or energy to; revive or reinvigorate

Happy New Year!!!

Wait. What? Yep, you read that right. It is said that in the early Roman calendar, March (or Martius) was the first month of the calendar year until 450 BC when January and February were moved from the last to the first and second months of the year. As March brings forth the first day of spring with the vernal equinox (when the Sun crosses the equator line, heading north in the sky), it symbolizes the start of new beginnings, rebirth, and rejuvenation.

It's a welcomed transitional time of year when the cold and long darkness of winter begins to fade and frequent rainfalls refresh the Earth. The sunlight shines brighter and longer, the air starts to lose its winter chill, animals emerge from hibernation, and plants and flowers blossom. Everything enters a state of renewal. This directly speaks to our mentality as seasons not only affect the weather, growth, and agriculture around us but also our mood and psyche.

While spring is a time for us to celebrate and embark on new journeys, it's also a time for love, hope, and growth! After all that we've endured in 2020 and continue to face in 2021, a mental pruning or spring cleaning just might be the best thing you could do for yourself this season.

I'm talking about ridding yourself of all the accumulated negativity you've taken in from your family, peers, or society, letting go of past hurts and resentment, eliminating negative self-talk, and minimize worrying. Each time you cut off the negativity, you stop that negative growth and encourage new growth in another direction.

Here are some simple ways to spring clean or prune your psyche:

DISCONNECT. With a culture overstimulated by media, it's no wonder we can't focus, sleep, or function at our best emotionally. We NEED to set aside time every day to do something that doesn't involve looking at a screen so that our thoughts can slow down and be more spontaneous and creative. Get lost in a story. Start meditating. Doodle. Try something new. Cook or bake. Get outside and observe nature. Bring plants into your home and start a garden. Dance.

UNFOLLOW PEOPLE WHO BRING YOU DOWN. Check your social media feeds and stop following anyone whose content is negative or doesn't make you feel good.

STOP. Negative thoughts will come, whether it's worrying about the future or dwelling on past mistakes. And when they do come, visualize a stop sign and say to yourself, "Not today" or "Not going there."

SILENCE THE INNER CRITIC. The inner critic is that voice in our heads that is always putting you down. Rather than focusing on your mistakes or where you are lacking, forgive yourself and acknowledge that you're a work in progress. Spend 10-15 minutes before you go to bed writing down all the negative things you've said to yourself that day.

Then write down as many positives that contradict the negative statements. Instead of "I'm a failure," try, "I'm still learning and growing" or "I did my best." Each time you do this, your inner critic becomes weaker.

PRACTICE AFFIRMATION. We are what we think. Affirmations strengthen us by helping us believe in the potential. Much like exercise, affirmations raise the level of feel-good hormones and push our brains to form new clusters of "positive thought" neurons while breaking patterns of negative thoughts, negative talk, and negative behavior. Start each day with 3-5 believable affirmations. (Think Stuart Smalley from Saturday Night Live. Seriously. It's good stuff.)

EXERCISE GRATITUDE. Gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. It helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, face adversity, and build stronger relationships. You can even apply it to the past, the present, and the future. Write down 3-5 things you are grateful for - that is, the goodness in your life. Read this every day.

RECONNECT. Get our of your comfort zone and have a conversation with your neighbor, a parent at your kid's school, a new person a work, or anyone with whom you might interact. Build a better social network by getting involved in community organizations, religious groups, and social groups with shared interests. Connecting with others not only strengthens our immunity and well-being, it's also one of the best things to do for fighting feelings of loneliness.

THIS MONTHS FOCUS

BY ASHLEY QUINN

Life is constantly full of challenges. Things that can be unexpected can also be expected at the same time. Life's challenges can come in many different shapes and sizes. From small things that we can easily overcome by ourselves to things we need a little help with overcoming.

Some examples of challenges can be a loss, failure, and/or frequent setbacks. Challenges, while most times difficult, can also be used to one's advantage as an opportunity in your life for personal growth and self-improvement.

A post on The Environmentor blog had many great points on several different ways to help overcome life's challenges:

Feel Your Feelings. Realize that it is okay to feel pain, let yourself be sad, angry or any other emotion. Feeling your emotions is as healthy as it is important.

Bottling these feelings up will do you harm in the long term and prevent you from being able to process the obstacles in your life and formulate plans to get past them. If you feel like crying, shed a tear. If you feel like screaming, let it out.

Make a Plan. You can feel those emotions but you can't live with them forever, and you can't let them run your life. In order to overcome life's struggles, you'll need to make a plan. Figure out what it is that you need to do in order to succeed at overcoming the challenges you're facing.

Reach out. Something I always say to my audiences is that asking for help isn't failing, but failing to ask for help when you need it is. Don't be afraid to reach out for support, you'll find people who are willing to be there.

Accept Support. Asking for help can be hard, and accepting it even harder. Let people in

Be Proud. Be proud of all that you've lived through. You've made it this far in life, and that in itself is an accomplishment!

Know You're Not Alone. So often in life we focus on our own challenges, but remember there is a whole world out there and everyone goes through something. You aren't as alone as you may feel.

No Shame. Don't be ashamed of what you've been through or what you're dealing with

Source: The Environmentor | 10 Ways To Overcome Life's Challenges (https://blog.tentree.com/10-ways-to-overcome-lifes-challenges/)

WOMEN WHO HAVE OVERCOME OBSTACLES

BY ANGELA ETCHISON, MS, LPE-I

Every year in March is set aside to honor women's contributions in American history and is designated Women's History Month by Presidential proclamation! This month we want to take a moment to recognize just a few of those incredible women who overcame overwhelming obstacles and broke through barriers.

Susan B. Anthony

Susan Brownell Anthony, perhaps the most widely known suffragist of her time, was born and raised in a Quaker family with deep roots in activism and social justice.

From an early age, Susan believed that everyone was equal under God. This conviction guided her throughout her life, inspiring her to become an advocate for women's suffrage, women's property rights, and the abolition of slavery. Susan, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, co-founded the American Equal Rights Association, became editors of the Association's newspaper, The Revolution, which helped spread the ideas of equality and rights for women, and formed the National Woman Suffrage Association. In 1872, Susan was arrested for trying to vote; she was tried and fined for her crime. Still, she continued to travel the country giving speeches, gathering signatures on petitions, and lobbying Congress every year for women until 1906 when she died. Fourteen years later, women would be given the right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment, also known as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment.

Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell

Elizabeth Blackwell moved to America when she was 11 years old because her father wanted to help abolish slavery and for financial reasons. Even after his death, she continued campaigning for women's rights and supported the anti-slavery movement. Elizabeth turned to medicine after teaching for some time and after witnessing a dying woman's suffering. While she was accepted into medical school as a joke, Elizabeth graduated two years later becoming the first woman to receive a medical degree from an American medical school. Dr. Blackwell continued to face obstacles even after completing medical school. But in 1853, with the help of friends, she opened her own dispensary. Her sister, Dr. Emily Blackwell, joined her in 1856 and, together with Dr. Marie Zakrzewska, they opened the New York Infirmary for Women and Children in 1857. They also opened a medical college for women in 1867 providing training and experience for women doctors and medical care for the poor.

Marian Wright Edelman

Marian Wright Edelman was born in 1939 in Bennettsville, SC. Her father died when she was only 14 years old. But, before he passed away he told her, "Don't let anything get in the way of your education." She didn't. She attended Spelman College in Atlanta, studied abroad on scholarships, and graduated from Yale Law School. She later became the first African American woman to be admitted into the Mississippi bar. She was a leader with the NAACP Legal Defense & Education Fund, and helped to coordinate the Poor People's Campaign after Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination. In the 1970s, she founded the Children's Defense Fund, the nation's strongest advocacy group for children. She later secured the 1990 Act for Better Child Care, which many consider to be the first federal government acknowledgment that children matter. Marian has received many awards including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and she continues her advocacy for children living in poverty today.

Helen Keller

Helen Keller was like any other child until 19 months old when a serious illness left her deaf, blind, and mute. She was a wild child with no formal education until age seven. Yet, Helen was so intelligent that she developed a system for communicating with her family by feeling their facial expressions. Her mother sent for a special teacher, Anne Sullivan, who was formerly blind herself. With a lot of work, Anne was able to communicate with Helen. Helen would go on to become the first person with deafblindness to graduate from college, publish 14 books, and travel around the world. Because of her work, braille became the standard system around the world in 1932. She was a major 20th century humanitarian, educator and writer advocating for the blind and for women's suffrage and co-founding the American Civil Liberties Union.

Annie Dodge Wauneka

Annie Dodge Wauneka was the first Native American to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Born in 1910 to one of the wealthiest men of the Navajo Tribe, she was taught Navajo history and culture as well as general education.

Annie became a public health advocate after witnessing a tragedy within her tribe during an influenza outbreak and having to quickly learn nursing skills. Annie observed firsthand the poverty and disease that plagued the Navajo while traveling with her father. She studied and earned a degree in public health from the University of Arizona before becoming the second woman elected on the Navajo Tribal Council. Annie's career resulted in a wide range of accomplishments in education, agriculture, Indian rights, and the empowerment of women.

Especially significant was her lifelong interest in health care. Serving on the advisory boards of the U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Public Health Service, she not only helped to improve the lives of Navajo and other Native American people, but she also contributed to American community health and medicine and changed federal agency level healthcare.

When you think about women who have overcome incredible obstacles, who do you think of?

EXPERT SPOTLIGHT

BY CHANTAL CARTER, LCSW, LADAC, CEDS

Chantal Carter is a Licensed Certified Social Worker in Arkansas, Missouri, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, and Tennessee. She is also a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselor and became the first Certified Eating Disorder Specialist in Arkansas in 2016. She is the founder of NWA Therapy in Fayetteville, AR and consults on all the patients with eating disorders there. In her free time she likes spending time with friends, being active in nature, and time with her dogs & husband.

I can't help but reflect on the importance of developing a healthy relationship with food and honoring your body. Diet culture with its emphasis on body weigh, shape, and size is so pervasive in our communities that it can be hard to escape. Today I'll be sharing with you some of my recommendations to heal your relationship with food and to work cooperatively with your body.

DON'T DIET If you are choosing to eliminate any specific foods or food groups from your plate that you enjoy and are not allergic to, you are on a diet. There should be room for all foods on your plate. I encourage you to explore how you can incorporate balance, moderation, and variety with your meals. Your body does need nourishment from vital vitamins and nutrients, AND your taste buds should also enjoy your meals! No food is inherently bad for you. Food is meant to be pleasurable and enjoyable. Getting pleasure from food is actually part of how we are biologically wired for survival.

Stop comparing and start accepting. Your body will not look like anyone else's body. Even if you eat the exact same things and engage in the exact same movement, you are a unique and amazing creature. Your metabolism, basal metabolic rate, body composition, and other variables are unique to you and will impact how your body responds to nourishment and activity. I know it can be really hard but your satisfaction and appreciation of your body will improve exponentially when you quit comparing your body to other bodies. Instead focus on practicing gratitude and speaking gently to and about the body you actually have.

It's the only one you are going to get so you may as well work towards accepting it. Notice how your strong legs allow you the ability to move easily through space. Notice how your arms allow you to embrace and comfort those you love. Notice how your body allows you to go on adventures and explore nature.

Choose enjoyable movement over exercise. Ask yourself this: if you knew the activity you did would have no impact on your body's weight, shape, or size, would you still do it? If the answer is no, you don't really like the activity and you are just exercising. You are connected to what you hope the outcome of the activity will be. If you love running because it allows you to zone out, be present, or work through some frustration, go for a run! It's helping promote your emotional well being. However if you are running to compensate for what you ate, what you are going to eat, or because you are trying to be a smaller version of yourself, this is just exercise and an attempt to force change in your body. We are meant to be physical moving creatures, but you don't have to engage in activity you don't enjoy. There's pilates, yoga, running, trampoline parks, climbing, swimming, hiking, kayaking, dancing, and countless other activities. Moving your body has amazing benefits when you focus on the emotional component of it. Did you know that 20-30 minutes of moderate physical activity has been shown to boost your endorphin levels for up to 24 hours? That's right! Going roller skating with a friend while you talk and laugh can improve your mood for up to one day. Be intentional about incorporating enjoyable movement into your weekly routine.

You actually don't have a target weight. I feel the need to say that again because I know that diet culture will challenge this fiercely. You do not have a target weight. You cannot look at a chart or graph and identify how much you're supposed to weigh just because you know your height. So many things can impact what the scale says when you step on it such as the size of your skeletal structure, the density of your bones, your muscle composition, and how much water your body is retaining in that moment among other things. People spend so much time focused on what some chart says they are supposed to weigh without wondering if that's actually reasonable or sustainable for them based on their lifestyle and daily activities. Consider a rock climber. They have very strong hands and upper bodies because those muscles develop over time through their use. Muscles are dense and heavy, so the scale might tell a rock climber that they weigh more than they're supposed to. Their body is impacted and developed by their activity. Contrast that to someone whose primary activity is pilates or walking, and you will see a very different body. One is not better than the other. Bodies just adjust to the physical activity they are routinely engaged in. Your ideal body weight is where your body settles when you are not engaging in disordered eating behaviors and are routinely engaging in enjoyable movement.

Speak to and about yourself the way you would to a friend. One thing I see come up time and time again in working with people on body image and body acceptance is that they say horrible things to and about themselves and their bodies.They would never speak to or about a friend in the same way they refer to themselves.

I saw a video where two friends wrote down some of the critical things they say to themselves, exchanged comments, and then had to read their friend's self-critical comments aloud to them. They struggled to do it. They coudn't fathom speaking so unkindly to their friend, and yet were so quick to do so to themselves. Be gentle and kind to yourself. You are as deserving of kindness and compassion you extend to those you love. Speak to yourself as you would speak to a friend.

I hope these tips provided you some good information and encouragement. Body acceptance, cultivating a healthy relationship with food, and cultivating a cooperative relationship with your body can be challenging in a society drowning in diet culture messaging. However the benefit of this work is so rewarding.

Take care of you!
Chantal Carter, LCSW, LADAC, CEDS

**If you are struggling with disordered eating, please get help from a professional licensed therapist that is trained to treat eating disorders. This treatment concern requires specialized training and expertise. Do not be shy to ask questions like how have they been trained to work with eating disorders, are they a certified specialist in eating disorders, how do they maintain their training, and how long they have worked with eating disorder patients. Finding the right provider with the skill set to help you is vital to your recovery.*

THE INVISIBILITY OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

BY ANGELA ETCHISON, MS, LPE-I

In 1987, President Reagan recognized March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in hopes to increase "public awareness of the needs and the potential of Americans with developmental disabilities" and to provide the "encouragement and opportunities they need to lead productive lives and to achieve their full potential."

Have you ever seen a seemingly normal person park in a handicapped spot with a permit tag? Or noticed a student getting extended time for tests or assignments and wondering if they really had a disability? Or seen someone ignore another person or respond strangely or more emotionally reactive than expected?

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), there are over 61 million adults in the United States living with a disability. That's nearly 1 in 4 adults (26%). And nearly 1 in 6 children in the U.S. (18%) aged 3 through 17 also have a developmental disability or a developmental delay. While some disabilities are quite obvious, there are numerous disabilities that are hidden or invisible, particularly developmental disabilities. A developmental disability is a disability that may affect physical, cognitive, learning, language, or behavioral development.

This means there may be a delay in normal development (how a person grows and functions) or an impairment in functioning (unable to function or have limited functioning). These conditions begin during the developmental period, impact everyday functioning, and last throughout a person's lifetime. These conditions include:

- autism spectrum disorders
- cerebral palsy
- attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
- learning or intellectual disabilities
- hearing loss
- vision impairment
- other neurological impairment or developmental delays

A person with a developmental disability may also have a mental illness. Each, however, must be treated in special ways.

How can we help?

End the stigma. People often judge others by what they see and often determine what a person can or cannot do by how they look. Since many individuals with developmental disabilities look able-bodied or "healthy," they are often criticized by friends, family, coworkers, and the general public. Increase awareness. Encourage conversations about disabilities and use positive language. While children and adults with developmental disabilities do require unique care, they have the same basic needs as anyone else: physical (food, water, warmth, rest), safety and security, love and a sense of belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization (setting/reaching goals). Get to know the individual and better understand what is important to them to assist them in living a life that they desire most - a quality life.

MONTHLY PLAYLIST

Music.
It makes the world go round.

We're trying something new this month by creating our first monthly playlist! Each month we are creating a playlist full of songs that surround our focus for this month.

Since this month we are focusing on overcoming life's challenges, we created a playlist of songs that we believe give off that focus as well!

Be sure to follow our playlists and look out for our playlist for next month!

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6oqDSBfdneDH5M5Yl1FdJr?si=-L5gdmeUSau_c30W8ycWoA

SOCIAL MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

If you haven't already, take a look at our new and improved social media pages!

@aboundpsychservices

AboundPsychologicalServices

DATES TO REMEMBER

March is the month of:
National Women's History
National Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities Awareness

March 2nd:
World Teen Mental Wellness Day
March 8th:
International Woman's Day
March 17th:
St. Patrick's Day
March 20th:
Start of Spring & International Day of Happiness
March 21st:
World Down Syndrome Day

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.”
~ Helen Keller

OFFICE UPDATES

ONLINE PAYMENTS

We are pleased to announce that you can now make online payments to your bill through our website! Just click on our payment buttons located on the home page as well as the services page if you would like to make an online payment.

UPDATED FORMS & POLICIES

All clients will need to log into the Therapy Portal, if you haven't already, to access our updated forms and policies as well as update their file with any new or changed contact information.

SICK POLICY

If you are sick with ANY flu- or cold- or virus-like symptoms, or have had symptoms within 24 hours please reschedule your appointment.

You will NOT be charged for cancellations due to illness.

Your part in preventing the spread of germs:

- Please wait in your car when you arrive for your appointment. We will text you when your therapist is ready for you.
- Wear your mask until we can be safely seated 6 feet apart.
- Wash your hands upon entering building.

Thanks for your continued trust in us!

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