March 2021

the morton center
Restoring self, preserving family.

Celebrating 36 Years

Morton Center Updates

Greetings!

Phew! What a month it's been.

It's been very busy, but good. And it certainly helps that spring is in the air and we can see the light at the end of the tunnel where COVID is concerned.

Our staff is in the office getting ready to welcome in-person clients again. We're not adding groups just yet, but individuals will begin coming in again in the next few weeks.

We've added air purifiers, deep cleaning, and disinfecting protocols, and hand sanitizing stations. We're also upgrading our internet so we can continue to offer individual telehealth appointments and online group sessions effectively and efficiently.

This is all made possible by our amazingly generous donors.

There's a buzz in the air as we all think about having our clients back. Our entire staff cares deeply about them and their recovery. None of us here see our role as simply "a job". It's a calling. We're lucky enough to have found something that is bigger than ourselves.

A lot of people are reevaluating their lives as the pandemic seems to be coming to an end. Some have been forced to because they've lost their jobs or a loved one. Many of us are coming to the realization that life as we know it can end at any time even if we've avoided deep losses.

It's causing us to think long and hard about our lives. What is it we're doing exactly?

Are we merely surviving? Are we loving deeply enough? Do we love what we do for a living? How much "stuff" do we really need?

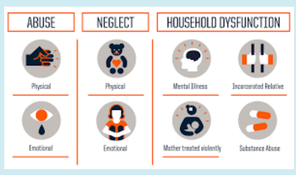
And some actually have the courage to do something about it. I hope I'm one of those.

I hope you are, too, if you feel the need to change something in your life as a result of the last 12 months.

Change is hard. I once heard someone say, "Real life change requires *real life change*."

I think I'll go get some good chocolate and ponder this over the weekend. Want to join me?

Priscilla McIntosh
Chief Executive Officer
The Morton Center, Inc.



Tips & Research

Linked: Adverse Childhood Experiences, Health + Addiction

by Adi Jaffe, Ph.D.
First published on PsychologyToday.com, March 11, 2019

Is addiction a biological disease that is driven by environmental factors, or not?

It will come as no surprise to you that childhood trauma, particularly unresolved trauma, can lead to mental health issues and addiction later in life. While less was known about the specific correlation in decades past, today we have a pretty good understanding of just how damaging adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can be on development and coping.

The first few years of life are full of many important developmental milestones in terms of brain pathways, attachment, coping mechanisms and in generally learning how to relate to others and to stress. Those who experience trauma in their early years often develop survival mechanisms that are less than helpful in adulthood. For some people, such interference early on can even drive them towards addiction.

This is an area of addiction that I like to talk about because people with an addiction are often judged at face-value by who they are right now, without any compassion or understanding of where they have come from or what has happened to them. Understanding these underlying issues, however, becomes KEY in unlocking the secrets of addiction recovery.

Click to read the complete article first published by *Psychology Today*.

Staff Spotlight

Katherine Phillips, LPATA, LCADC
Counselor

Katie Phillips received her Bachelor of Science in Art and Associated Studies from the University of Evansville in 2008. After relocating to Louisville in 2009, she later went on to receive her Master of Education in Counseling and Personnel Services with a concentration in Art Therapy from the University of Louisville.

Katie believes that creative art-making is an intrinsic activity that is ignored far too often; she hopes that through art therapy, others can learn to reconnect parts of themselves with which they have lost touch. In her free time, Katie enjoys ceramics, traveling, and spending time with friends and family.

The Clinician's Point of View

Alexander Geiman, LPATA, LCADC, ATR-BC
Clinical Manager

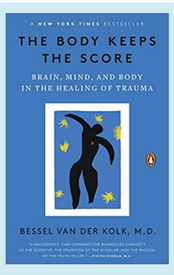
Trauma and Resilience

"As human beings we belong to an extremely resilient species. Since time immemorial we have rebounded from our relentless wars, countless disasters (both natural and man-made), and the violence and betrayal in our own lives."
—Bessel van der Kolk, M.D., The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma

When we hear the word trauma, we may cringe. We may also begin to think about our loved ones and consider that there is no way something of such grave caliber could ever have happened to someone we know, let alone ourselves. However, it is essential to have a discussion about trauma and the prevalence of traumatic experiences in our society.

We have come a long way from the times in which traumatic experiences were specifically categorized in terms of war-related experiences, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Trauma can be better understood as an incredibly difficult experience, which can be interpreted as intolerable events for short or prolonged periods of time. Adjusting the understanding of what defines trauma opens the door to reflect on various common experiences through a different lens. For example, simply hearing about someone else's traumatic experiences may traumatize the listener if they are not trained to manage their response; this is known as vicarious trauma. Traumatic experiences can affect individuals in a variety of ways. Someone who has experienced a traumatic event often experiences social, psychological, spiritual, and physiological responses that have a lasting impact on how someone understands the world.

While it may seem easier to consider the negative impact of traumatic events, it is also important to acknowledge the experience of a traumatic event and bouncing back, otherwise known as resilience. Resilience – the act of persevering after hardship – is an integral element of the healing process. Bouncing back after facing adversity may not always happen in the way that we would expect; however, knowing that we are capable of surviving hardships and able to continue on with daily life is evidence of the resilient nature humans innately possess. Experiencing trauma does not create weakness in a person, rather it provides an opportunity to discover and hone our own strengths in the face of adversity.



Reading List

The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma

by Bessel van der Kolk, M.D.

#1 New York Times bestseller

"Essential reading for anyone interested in understanding and treating traumatic stress and the scope of its impact on society."
Alexander McFarlane, Director of the Centre for Traumatic Stress Studies

A pioneering researcher transforms our understanding of trauma and offers a bold new paradigm for healing in this *New York Times* bestseller

Trauma is a fact of life. Veterans and their families deal with the painful aftermath of combat; one in five Americans has been molested; one in four grew up with alcoholics; one in three couples have engaged in physical violence. Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, one of the world's foremost experts on trauma, has spent over three decades working with survivors. In *The Body Keeps the Score*, he uses recent scientific advances to show how trauma literally reshapes both body and brain, compromising sufferers' capacities for pleasure, engagement, self-control, and trust. He explores innovative treatments—from neurofeedback and meditation to sports, drama, and yoga—that offer new paths to recovery by activating the brain's natural neuroplasticity. Based on Dr. van der Kolk's own research and that of other leading specialists, *The Body Keeps the Score* exposes the tremendous power of our relationships both to hurt and to heal—and offers new hope for reclaiming lives.

Click here to purchase on Amazon.

Video Spotlight:

What Trauma Taught Me About Resilience

by Charles Hunt - November 18, 2016, Presented at TEDxCharlotte
Posted on YouTube.com

That resilience is one of the most important traits to have, is critical to their happiness and success, & can be learned.

Adept at leveraging transparency to inspire and get results, this former College Recruiting, Talent Management, Diversity, and Supply Chain leader left the corporate world to fulfill his vision of building unbreakable spirits and cultivating resiliency for those who, like him, have The Audacity to Succeed. He helps students & young professionals build resilience, believe in bigger and greater for themselves, and create the educational, financial, and professional plans to get there.

As the founder of The Audacity Firm, LLC, his firm provides professional & personal development programs, coaching, and events to equip clients with financial literacy/education, workforce readiness, professional development, and career planning tips, tools, and strategies to LIVE, DO, and BE BETTER.

This talk was given at a TEDx event using the TED conference format but independently organized by a local community. Learn more at http://ted.com/tedx

Spring Programming News: Concerned Persons Program

Upcoming Topics:
4/6 - Recovery, Hope & Healing
4/13- How to Talk to Loved Ones About Substance Use
4/20 - Grief & Recovery
4/27 - Boundaries
5/4 - Communication Challenges & Conflict Resolution

CONCERNED PERSONS PROGRAM

The Morton Center believes that one's probability of success in recovery is greatly increased by family participation in the recovery process. We also recognize that families often benefit from therapy focused on the needs and behaviors of its non-substance abusing members. This special program is for adults who have been affected by another person's substance use. These classes provides the educational component of our adult outpatient services.

No registration. No cost. Currently provided by telehealth.
Tuesdays, 5:30 – 6:30.
tmcinfo@themortoncenter.org

About The Morton Center

The Morton Center is a full-service addiction recovery facility offering professional counseling and therapy, as well as prevention and educational services, for individuals and families struggling with substance abuse issues. Since 1984, our customized, holistic approach has helped to reengage individuals and their families with lives of meaning and purpose often lost in addiction.

Contact us:
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