

Winter 2017

Are You Seeking a Better World?



Our recent presidential election demonstrated that there is a wide range of opinions among the citizens of this country on what directions we should go and what will make the United States great. "We the people" have different and conflicting values on most topics including gender equality, race, climate, the environment, the economy, human rights, health care, faith, politics....you name it and we as a country have many people on both extremes of any issue.

Families and work teams are feeling the stress of conflicted ideas and values among their members. How do we find our way to harmony, respect, peace, and understanding in a time of such diverse ideas and viewpoints? The answer lies in the only place we have the power to change and that place is within each one of us.

If you want to be understood, be more understanding. If you are concerned about how people will be treated, reach out with daily acts of kindness to touch people who are different from you. If you want more love in your world, be more loving. If you want more of anything in your life, be grateful for what you already have. Times like these, challenge us to be better human beings and to take action over the only area we can-our lives.

I recently learned a practice that I have found to be helpful. It can be described as "hitting the pause button on your reactions." When an event occurs that frightens you or causes distress, pause your reactions and feelings and put them off for three days. Waiting three days to react has often given me time for the issue to resolve itself or for me to gain new understanding and perspective. This practice reaffirms for me the control I have over my feelings and reactions. When the third day arrives, I often see that my initial reaction was either an overreaction or not even necessary. This method has helped me find peace more quickly within myself and saved me from hours of uncomfortable angst that later turns out to be unwarranted.

It is a profound spiritual truth that what we see in the world is no more and no less a reflection of what is unseen inside ourselves.

Have a wonderful New Year.

Dr. Gretchen M. Stein
President and CEO of Sand Creek

Welcome Our New Team Members!



Erica JW Kanewischer, Ph.D., LMFT

Erica comes to Sand Creek with ten years of experience as a Couple and Family Therapist and educator in Family Science and Marriage and Family Therapy. She is developing and integrating new programs and technology into our services in addition to joining the Sand Creek leadership team. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. She continues to teach in the Family Studies Program at St. Olaf College and has designed and taught more than eight different college and university courses and published research around parenting and trauma as well as divorce decision making. She is a compassionate and hopeful clinician as well as an energizing and creative presenter. On the weekend Erica can be found playing outside with her family and baking banana chocolate chip bread.

Andrew W. Birmingham, D. Min., LADC, CEAP, SAP

Andrew is a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor, a Certified Employee Assistance Professional and a Substance Abuse Professional who has been working in the field of Chemical Dependency treatment and recovery for over 30 years and the EAP field for over 13 years. He has worked in both inpatient and outpatient treatment facilities, working with both adults and adolescents. He has a strong working knowledge of the symptomatology of addiction, sexual dependency, eating disorders, and gambling. Just as important, he has an amazing ability to put a person at ease, allowing them to open up and talk frankly about their concerns.



Natalie Jacobson, BAS, Psychology

Natalie started working at Sand Creek as a college intern. It was a life changing experience for her so she came back for a second summer! She continued with her college degree at the University of Minnesota - Duluth. In May of 2016, Natalie graduated with her BAS in psychology and a minor in photography. After spending the last four years in Duluth, she decided she needed a change so she moved back home to the Twin Cities where she began working full-time with Sand Creek in August 2016. Outside of work, Natalie enjoys taking senior and wedding photos. Some of her other hobbies include painting abstract art and spending time with friends and family.

LOVE ALL, SERVE ALL

By: Gretchen M. Stein

For the past 23 years, these words have been displayed in red letters on a bumper sticker that sits on my credenza. Both literally and figuratively, the motto “Love All, Serve All” has backed up the vision, direction, and leadership of Sand Creek.

With the divisive and hurtful words spoken during the past presidential campaign, I feel it is important to let you all know that Sand Creek is deeply dedicated to serving all people. Our services are designed so everyone who reaches out to us for assistance feels respected, listened to, comfortable, and cared for with loving kindness. Sand Creek's professional staff are trained to offer compassionate, non-judgmental and sensitive services to help you address problems in your life.

We have proudly developed a network of professional counselors across the country that mirror the diversity of the people we serve. Daily we meet the unique needs of people from a wide spectrum of cultures, orientations, ideas, belief systems, and political viewpoints.

You are welcome here. Sand Creek is honored to serve you and find a good match among our counselors and consultants for your needs and the needs of your family or workplace.

Interview with Dr. Bill

Sand Creek's Erica Kanewischer, PhD, LMFT connected with her colleague, Professor Bill Doherty, after he appeared in an article, "How to Reconcile with Family and Friends after the Election," was featured in the Wall Street Journal. Professor Doherty spoke in that article regarding how couples can come back together after supporting different candidates. His discussion for the Sand Paper with Erica focused on coming together as a country and in our personal relationships post-election.

Here is Dr. Kanewischer's interview with Professor Doherty.

Erica: Let me begin by introducing Dr. Bill Doherty to the Sand Paper readers. Dr. Doherty is a Professor in the Couple and Family Therapy Program at the University of Minnesota, well known researcher, therapist, speaker, author and past president of the National Council on Family Relationships. Bill is also a community organizer with an interest in bringing people together and supporting community health. The Sand Paper reached out to Bill to get his expert advice on how communities and relationships that have experienced conflict and tension can reconnect and thrive. Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us Bill.



Interview with Dr. Bill Doherty Continued...

Bill: I am happy to help with this. I am pivoting now to what we do after the election to be able to move on. Elections are won and lost, but they are only a small part of democracies. Democracy is mostly about how we come together and make decisions about our common lives. It's about collective agency, about acting as "We the People," in all our differences. It's the only way we can have healthy communities and effective governance.

Erica: What would you suggest an individual can do when trying to overcome/adapt to a significant change or transition?

Bill: If the change or transition is here to stay, then the first step is to accept that it's real. In other words, make a place for the new reality in your life, whether it's a chronic illness, a job loss, or a divorce you didn't want. The second step is to put the change or transition in its place, that is, to not let it dominate every aspect of your life and your relationships. In sum, make a place for the change, and put the change in its place.

Erica: What are steps people can take when reconciling after conflict in order to preserve a relationship?

Bill: Two keys are: a) seek to understand what painful emotions may have been behind actions that were hurtful to you – for example, if some got angry, were they hurt, afraid, frustrated?; and b) look for some role you played in a conflict, something you can acknowledge and express regret for; this usually softens the other person and encourages him/her to express regret too.

Abraham Lincoln presided over a country that was far more divided than the one we live in today. Yet, he saw the promise of America, a community of citizens committed to self-governance. We'd do well to heed his words today:

"We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."



DEAR SANDY,

My boyfriend and I have a mutual friend, we'll call her Samantha. We all hang out together when I visit my boyfriend in college. The problem is that that Samantha monopolizes our time when I'm visiting. She calls, or texts or comes down the hallway of the apartment he lives in and knocks on the door with some issue or 'drama' that ends up taking time away from spending quality time with my boyfriend. Sometimes, she'll even stay long into the night, crying and fretting about her latest circumstance as we try and appease her and offer friendly guidance. It's started to impact my relationship with my boyfriend and we both feel guilty if we don't drop whatever we're doing and go to Samantha's aid, because then she just gets worse. Do you have any suggestions?

Signed,

Frustrated

DEAR FRUSTRATED

Reading your letter made me think of a time when I was living on my own for the very first time. An elderly woman befriended me and eventually was knocking at my door every day, sometimes only minutes after I'd gotten home from work! Eventually, this too became problematic as most times she would end up visiting for longer than I felt was enjoyable or necessary.

I remember sharing my plight with my mother and she replied, "Not telling someone what you are feeling in a difficult situation is only disrespecting them, and hurting you."

My sense is that your friend Samantha probably feels safe with you and your boyfriend, and therefore comes to you because 1) You make time for her, 2) You show empathy and, 3) You haven't said that her actions have become disruptive to your relationship with your boyfriend.

It is important to have civil conversations when we feel conflict with others. Oftentimes the other person doesn't even realize they're acting in a way that might be making us uncomfortable. My suggestion would be to invite Samantha to coffee or lunch and discuss with her that you value her friendship, but would also like to have some quality time with your boyfriend too, without interruption. She might initially feel hurt by your request, but if you explain yourself honestly and are kind in your reasoning, she will most likely understand. Samantha needs to know that you have boundaries, while also respecting her friendship in the process.

Happy New Year!

Sandy



SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO DEAR SANDY BY EMAILING US
AT INFO@SANDCREEKEAP.COM.



WORKPLACE WELLNESS

www.sandcreekeap.com

888-243-5744

About Sand Creek Workplace Wellness

Sand Creek is a women-owned small business specializing in providing exceptional workplace wellness services to support the human spirit at work. We embrace our core values of service, hope, trust, compassion, and wisdom in each interaction, there by upholding our mission of providing helpful solutions to improve productivity and shining a light in the darkest of moments.

Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is designed to offer face-to-face counseling and consulting to those that voluntarily reach out to us. We are not simply a phone counseling service or online tool type EAP. Thousands of professional counselors form a worldwide Sand Creek network available to deliver personal care and support to you in your community. Our services are administered nationally, but delivered locally.

Sand Creek supports the relationship between individual health and overall organizational health. Our Organization Assistance Program (OAP) service extends the reach into the organization and provides work teams with a systemic approach to improve the health and well-being of an organization.