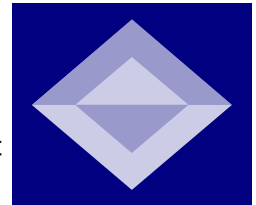


A communication periodical for our clients, staff & the community at large

# The Chronicle

A Paterson Counseling Center Newsletter



## Special points of interest:

- CARF is coming –get ready
- Halloween celebration a success
- Website has drop down menus added
- Recent outcomes analytics demonstrates importance of sustained treatment

## Winter Blues

In the past we have talked about depression and the symptoms that can provide clues to its onset. As the year end holidays approach we sometimes get into a winter funk that mimics symptoms of depression. Sensitivities can be further heightened by the festive mood that others seem to be experiencing.



Combine these feelings with decreased daytime light and cold weather and you have a perfect storm that really can lead to feelings of depression, sadness or isolation. Anyone experiencing these types of symptoms should seek out professional assistance and guidance from a mental health professional.

Talking about these feelings can go a long way towards helping you manage through them. The more you understand why they are happening the better off you will be in determining how deal with them in an appropriate manner.

## Technology Update

Counselors will be receiving new desktop laser printers. These printers will allow counselors to print out information that may be of a confidential nature directly from the convenience and privacy of their respective offices instead of a central network printer in the hallway or main office locations.



Such a move demonstrates PCC's commitment to protecting the privacy of our clients and ensuring that patient privacy remains a core focus for the organization.

In addition, several communications reminding staff of the need to be vigilant in protecting data and access to information via password best practices.

All staff should ensure that they commit passwords to memory and log off their machines at the end of the workday to ensure that PCs function in accordance with desired specifications.

## Inside this issue:

Winter Blues	1
Technology Update	1
Phobias Explored	2

Next Issue: Technology Update

## Phobias Explored

Phobias are persistent, irrational fears of certain objects or situations. Phobias occur in several forms; the fear associated with a phobia can focus on a particular object (specific phobia) or be a fear of embarrassment in a public setting (social phobia).

People who have phobias are often so overwhelmed by their anxiety that they avoid the feared objects or situations. Specific phobias involve a fear of an object or situation, such as small animals, snakes, closed-in spaces, or flying in an airplane.

Social phobia is the fear of being humiliated in a social setting, such as when meeting new people, giving a speech, or talking to the boss. Most people experience these fears with mild to moderate intensity, and the fear passes.

For people with social phobia, however, the fear is extremely intrusive and can disrupt normal life, interfering with work or social relationships in varying degrees of severity.

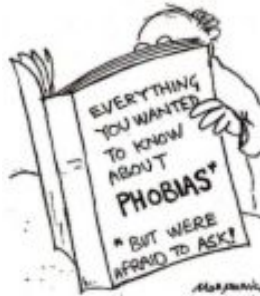
Fortunately, through research supported by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), effective treatments have been developed to help people with phobias.

### ***How Common Are Phobias?***

- Approximately 4 to 5% of the U.S. population has one or more clinically significant phobias in a given year.
- Specific phobias occur in people of all ages. The average age of onset for social phobia is between 15 and 20 years of age, although it can often begin in childhood.

### ***What Causes Phobias?***

Traumatic events often trigger the development of specific phobias, which are slightly more prevalent in women than men. Research shows that social phobia may have a hereditary component and occurs in women and men in equal proportions. However, men may seek treatment for social phobia more frequently than



## Phobias Explored (continued)

women.

### ***What Treatments Are Available for Phobias?***

*Social phobia* can be effectively treated with medications including, MAOIs, SSRIs, and high potency benzodiazepines. People with a specific form of social phobia called performance phobia have been helped by drugs called beta blockers.

There is no proven drug treatment for *specific phobias*, but certain medications may help reduce symptoms of anxiety before one faces a phobic situation.

A type of cognitive-behavioral therapy known as "exposure therapy" is also a very useful treatment for phobias. It involves helping patients become gradually more comfortable with situations that frighten them. Relaxation and breathing techniques are also helpful.

### ***Can People with Phobias Also Have Other Physical and Emotional Illnesses?***

People with phobias, particularly social phobia, may also have problems with substance abuse. Many people with social or a specific phobia become so anxious that they experience panic attacks, which are intense and unexpected bursts of terror accompanied by physical symptoms.

As more situational panic attacks occur, people with phobias may take extreme measures to avoid situations where they fear another attack might happen or where help would not be immediately available.

This avoidance, similar to that in many panic disorder patients, may eventually develop into agoraphobia, an inability to go beyond known and safe surroundings because of intense fear and anxiety. Appropriate diagnosis and treatment of other disorders are important to successful treatment of phobias.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms please make sure you reach out to one of our professionals who can help you better understand how to overcome the challenges associated with phobias.