

Inside Diversion

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Gestalt Therapy Helps Kids Increase Awareness

By Stephanie Wolff, M.A.

When I asked a 13-year-old female client, “What are you aware of?” she crunched her eyebrows and said she had no idea what I was talking about.

Here was my opportunity for a Gestalt experiment.

I had her grab a pillow, get comfortable and devote the next 20 minutes to answering just that single question: “What are you aware of?”

Hesitant, she began with, “I’m aware of the painting on the wall, of the clock, of the computer, the window, the light... ummmmmm, [some giggling], I don’t know... ummmmm, I’m aware of your water glass, of the art supplies.”

I asked again, “What are you aware of?”

After about ten minutes, her awareness started to shift.

“I’m aware of your shoes, your hair, your blue shirt, your hands on the pillow, of the picture on your desk, of your eyes.”

Gently, I asked again, “What are you aware of?”

“I’m aware that I have no

idea what I’m aware of, that I feel silly, that I think my dad’s mad at me, that I feel sad because he does so much for me. I’m aware of my shoes and jeans, that this is the longest 20 minutes. I’m aware that I want to be done, that I feel a little sad.”

The client’s awareness shifted from her outer world to her relationship with me and finally to herself. By slowing down and staying with the present moment, she was able to identify feelings of which she’d been unaware and broaden her connection to her environment. She surprised herself by being able to sustain this “weird experiment” for the length she did and learned that she actually could answer my question.

This is Gestalt.

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Elbert County Holds Unique Challenges, Opportunities

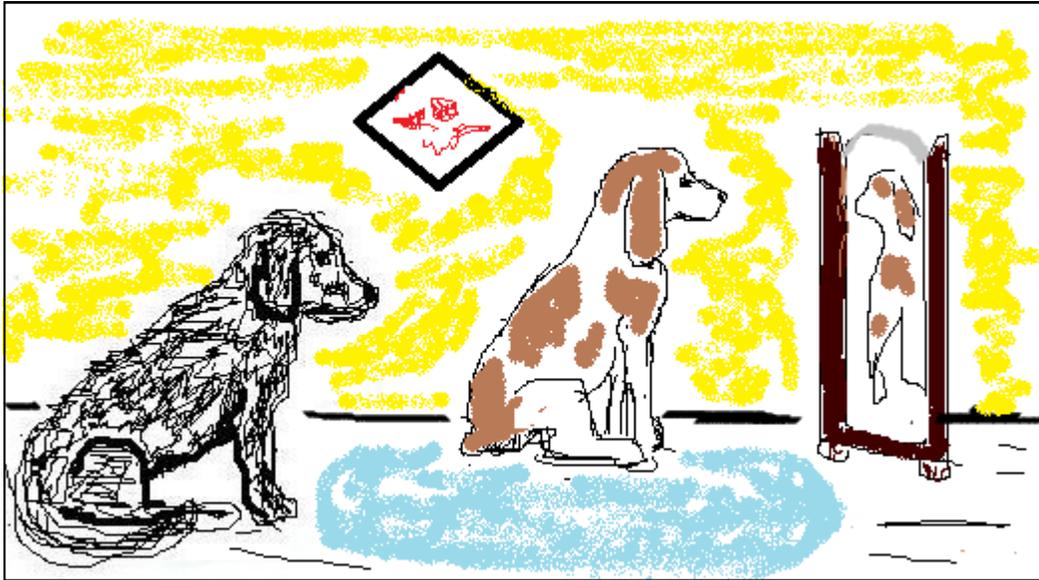
By Brian Sugioka, Senior Deputy District Attorney

25 miles down CO 86, southeast of Parker’s dense, suburban developments, past the large land plots, pastures, fields of grain and

horses, cows, goats and llamas of western Elbert County, lies Kiowa, the county seat of Elbert County. Its main street has no traffic lights, and the restaurants and bars sport hitching posts. The sight of horses sandwiched between

SUVs in parking lots is commonplace, and if RUI (Riding Under the Influence) were a crime in Colorado, the District Attorney’s Office here likely would see its share of such cases.

(cont. on p. 7)



**The
Wisdom of
Winston**

*By Ruth Darling-
Goldberg, M.A., LPC*

“Every once in a while you have to examine yourself and make changes...or maybe just make goofy faces.”

“If people did not sometimes do silly things, nothing intelligent would ever get done.”

-Ludwig Wittgenstein

“Laughter is an instant vacation”

-Milton Berle

Client Knows How to Heal Herself (cont. from p. 1)

“Gestalt therapy is an exploration rather than a direct modification of behavior.”

Gestalt therapy is an exploration rather than a direct modification of behavior. The Gestalt therapist does not have an agenda and does not intend to “fix” the client. In fact, the opposite is true. A Gestalt therapist believes that the client knows how to heal herself and helps to support the client’s process while maintaining contact. Growth occurs from being in genuine contact with others.

Gestalt therapy is the study of one’s experience while being in a relationship and



uses active experimentation to reach unaware aspects of

the self. Experiments also help bring personal awareness into the present moment, which further develops choices that cultivate change. Awareness extends beyond the personal and includes the clients’ entire environment, and a sense for how they make and break contact with themselves and others.

Who's Who in Diversion

Stephanie Wolff, M.A.

Master's in Counseling with a concentration in Art Therapy, Naropa University.

Bachelor's in Contemplative Psychology with concentration in Health and Healing, Naropa University.

Certificate in Basic and Digital Photography from Rocky Mountain School of Photography.

Q: What attracted you to the field of psychotherapy?

A: After completing photography school, I found a job working with a wedding photographer. A few months into this job, I realized that taking pictures was not enough for me. I did not feel completely fulfilled and knew that I needed to find a career that would allow me to help others in some way. Within a few weeks of this awareness, I discovered the field of Art Therapy. This concentration of therapy was a perfect fit for me: I am able to help others while maintaining my artist identity.

Q: What brought you to Diversion?

A: While working on my Master's degree, I was fortunate to do my year-and-a-half internship with Diversion. After my first day here, I knew that I had the

best internship site and knew this was the place I wanted to work.

Q: What life experiences have contributed to your success in Diversion?

A: My education at Naropa University pushed me to learn more about myself. We were required to do our own therapy with the intention to explore our own selves before helping others, which I feel is invaluable as a therapist. I have also held



many volunteer positions: from working with people with Alzheimer's Disease

to doing equine therapy with children with disabilities. These experiences opened my heart and eyes to others' experiences.

Q: What are your areas of expertise and interest in general? In Diversion?

A: Beyond art therapy, my greatest interest is in the field of Gestalt Therapy. Gestalt therapy focuses on building and maintaining relationship and deepening personal awareness by doing "therapeutic experiments." Experiments look different for every client,

which makes this work engaging and challenging to figure out what would work best to help each client deepen their awareness and process. In the spring of 2013 I will graduate from the Gestalt Institute of the Rockies and become a certified Gestalt therapist.

Q: What do you think is most important in life?

A: Relationships and taking a breath.

Q: Hometown
A: Bartlett, Illinois

Q: What do you like to do with your free time?

A: During my free time I like to rock climb, hike with my dog, ride my red cruiser into town, and be with the people I love.

Q: What is the best piece of advice/wisdom you've received?

A: The best nugget of wisdom I have received was from a teacher at a meditation retreat. The wisdom was that "the one thing that is guaranteed in life is that everything changes."

Q: What is something most people don't know about you?

A: I wear leg warmers when I climb at the indoor rock gym and I never go bowling without wearing glow sticks.

"The wisdom was that 'the one thing that is guaranteed in life is that everything changes.'"

Stephanie came to Diversion in September 2011 and works in the Centennial office.

Parent Ponderings *by Sue Seiler, M.A., LPC, NCC*

Welcome to Parent Ponderings. This column is for you, the parent of an adolescent. It will offer you food for thought, challenge your views, validate your feelings, and, perhaps, cause some discomfort from time to time. Parenting a teen is a journey and an adventure – embrace the process and enjoy the ride. Your teen will help you to grow!

The Impact of Narcissism on the Family System

In healthy family systems, parents demonstrate an overriding sense of self-responsibility by ensuring their needs are met by themselves, their partners and other appropriate adults. At the same time, they accept responsibility for meeting the needs of their children and teaching them to have responsibility for themselves.

When one or both parents have unhealthy narcissistic traits or full-blown Narcissistic Personality Disorder, the responsibility for meeting family needs shifts to the children. Narcissistic parents cannot meet their own needs in a healthy way, let alone attend to the needs of their children. As the children develop the inappropriate role of caretakers for the adults and the overall family system, they become overburdened and unable to engage in healthy developmental tasks such as identity development and differenti-

ation.

Children whose role is to meet the needs of the adults – and other children – in their families learn to assess and react. They become reflections of the parent’s expectations, attempting to anticipate, identify and respond to the parent’s needs. These needs often are unclear, inconsistent and unpredictable. As a result, without the benefit of adult



perspectives, skills and developmental tools, the children often fail to meet the parent’s needs adequately, leaving them feeling never good enough. At the same time, the children learn that their needs can’t or won’t be met by their parents. With so much of their attention diverted to attempts to tend to and please the parents (and without a healthy parent as a role model), they cannot respond to their own needs.

Children from narcissistic families also learn to not

trust, or to unlearn trust. Even infants whose needs were met initially, allowing for a level of trust, often lose that trust as the parent system fails to accommodate the more complex needs that emerge as the children grow. This struggle to trust greatly impacts the children’s ability to attract and engage in the kind of deep, emotionally intimate and connected relationships that would support self-responsibility later in life. They never have known the emotional and physical safety necessary for close, loving relationships. This, in turn, increases the risk that these children of narcissistic parents will themselves become narcissistic parents unless they find the support they need to develop trust and build healthy relationships.

In the next issue of *Inside Diversion*, I will be expanding on this systemic view of the narcissistic family by looking at additional characteristics of narcissistic family systems.

Sue Seiler, Licensed Professional Counselor, worked in the Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program for five years and is currently in private practice. She can be reached at 303-726-8261.

“Children from narcissistic families also learn to not trust or to unlearn trust.”



Dear Sigmund... *by Ruth Darling-Goldberg, MA, LPC*

*Dear Sigmund,
My daughter's counselor has recommended that she participate in something called EMDR to address the trauma of her rape. What is trauma and what is EMDR?
Interested.*

Dear Interested,
Trauma occurs when an individual experiences or witnesses a threat to his/her life or wellbeing, resulting in intense fear.

Traumatic events, both large and small, can disrupt the normal processing of information by the brain. The traumatic information is frozen in time and stored in a way that is less available to a person's consciousness and normal memory. This can result in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

According to the Mayo Clinic, PTSD "symptoms can be grouped into three general types: intrusive memories, avoidance and numbing, and increased anxiety or emotional arousal." These symptoms generally occur within months of the event, but can appear

years after the trauma. These responses can be triggered by current events, even without an individual's knowledge. The repetition of these responses eventually creates a pattern of reacting to the world through a "trauma lens." This can create difficulties in relationships, work environments and enjoyment of life.

The bilateral stimulation (moving from one side of the body to the other) of



EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) appears to affect information processing in the brain, similarly to REM sleep. The effect is an "unfreezing" of the traumatic moment and a release of the intense emotions that accompany it. An individual then can begin to create new responses to the

environment based on current, less-distorted information.

Intensive training is required before a therapist can implement this technique. Levels I and II consist of 20 hours each, with 10 hours of group consultation between the two. To gain certified status, a therapist must complete 50 EMDR sessions with 25 different clients, receive further individual and group consultation from experienced consultants, and complete 12 credits of post-basic training.

Most of the therapists in Juvenile Diversion have completed Levels I and II and include this tool among their treatment techniques. Ruth Darling-Goldberg, an Approved Consultant in EMDR, provides ongoing group consultation to the team.

Send your questions to Ruth Darling-Goldberg at rgoldberg@da18.state.co.us

This column is only a brief look at issues and not meant to be a substitute for in-depth therapy.

"Traumatic events, both large and small, can disrupt the normal processing of information by the brain."

***A SHIP IS SAFE WHEN IT IS IN THE HARBOR,
BUT THAT ISN'T WHAT SHIPS ARE FOR.***

-- GRACE LOWE

New Recovery Network Helps Victims, First Responders

As Diversion Counselors help our clients, we often come across valuable resources for our clients, their families and the community in general. The TRN is one such resource.

Denver Metropolitan Trauma Recovery Network

by Jay Fellers, LCSW

Q: What is the purpose of the TRN?

The mission of the Denver Metropolitan Trauma Recovery Network is to build the capacity for effective treatment of traumatic stress for victims, first responders, and their families that may result from a disaster affecting the Denver metropolitan area. Research indicates that providing brief intervention after such an event may help prevent the possible development of Acute Stress, PTSD, other mental health issues, and/or other emotional and physical symptoms that can commonly result from trauma.

Q: How did the TRN begin?

The EMDR Humanitarian Assistance Program (EMDR-HAP) is an international volunteer network of mental health professionals who have been trained in the EMDR methodology, and provide this same training to clinicians that could not otherwise access it. EMDR

-HAP began advocating for Trauma Recovery Networks (TRNs) in every metropolitan area in this country. Local volunteers develop and coordinate TRNs in their local communities in preparation for local and regional disaster response. They provide direct clinical services to survivors and first-responders.

Q: Who makes up the TRN?



The TRN is comprised of licensed psychologists, social workers, and professional counselors who are trained in EMDR. Most are certified EMDR clinicians, and/or EMDR consultants.

Q: What techniques are employed by TRN clinicians?

The TRN utilizes the Recent Events Protocol (R-TEP) that provides five (5) pro bono sessions to survivors or first responders of a local disaster. This protocol was developed by Elan Shapiro & Brurit Laub from Israel.

The R-TEP protocol limits the processing to just the trauma experienced in the disaster, and can be more accurately conceptualized as EMD or EMDr. If additional treatment is needed or requested, the TRN clinician will provide referrals to the client for other therapy providers. We do not duplicate or compete with systems in the community that already provide early responses. Rather, we aim to work collaboratively, offering compatible mental health services.

Q: How do these techniques compare to other techniques re: efficacy?

Ongoing research is continuing on the effectiveness of the R-TEP protocol. Initial studies seem to indicate it is an effective tool. For instance, following the bombings in Istanbul, Turkey, the R-TEP protocol was used on 23 of the 32 adult survivors/first-responders; scores on the Impact of Events Scale and FOA's PTSD Symptom Checklist decreased dramatically, and this positive effect was maintained at both the three-month and six-month follow up.

Jay Fellers is a private clinician in the community who coordinates the TRN. He can be reached at 303-947-4071.

“The TRN is comprised of licensed psychologists, social workers, & professional counselors who are trained in EMDR.”

Upcoming Hands On Activities

November

Medicine Horse Trips: Boys-11/3/12 Girls- 11/10/12

Flag Football Game (counselors vs clients): 11/10/12

December

Art Day: 12/1/12

Indoor Rock Climbing: 12/15/12

Winter 2013

The Snow Series

-Intro to Snowshoeing

-Intro to Cross Country Skiing

-10th Mountain Division Hut Overnight

Snow Trip

Path of Freedom: Mindfulness Training

Small Community Means Helpful Info as Well as Rumors (cont. from p.1)

With approximately 23,000 residents and a mixture of wealthy suburban communities of large homes to the west, and old Colorado small towns, ranches and farms to the east, Elbert County sees its fair share of juvenile crime.

For the most part, these offenses reflect those seen throughout Colorado, from traffic violations to possession of alcohol or marijuana to property crimes to sexual misconduct.

Holding offenders accountable in a county as large and with a population as widely dispersed but simultaneously close-knit as that of Elbert County, however, carries some unique challenges and opportunities.

Most members of the Elbert County Sheriff's Department grew up here and have strong ties to the people they serve. Advantages of these close relationships include a built-in "intelligence network" of

fairly quick identification of the "usual suspects"- that minority of people responsible for the majority of crimes. On the other hand, drawbacks include difficulty keeping investigations confidential and separating rumors from verified, first-person information that will be useful in court.

Rumors, particularly those tied to juvenile sexting and sexual harassment in schools, can produce distorted information, incorrect understanding of the allegations and damaged reputations for both offenders and victims.

In a small community, helpful information often is readily available about a juvenile offender's circumstances, including his background, family members or trouble at school. This allows for a thorough and relatively quick assessment

of the juvenile's needs.

At the same time, adequate resources to meet those needs and help young people succeed can be sparse in the rural areas of Elbert County. To access the services of the District Attorney's Office's Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program, county residents must travel to Castle Rock or Centennial, easily a three-hour round trip for some. Parents often are not only willing but eager to make that sacrifice to take advantage of resources for their kids.

Working with these parents, juveniles, law enforcement, schools and others to enhance our understanding of

both the advantages and the challenges of juvenile prosecution in rural communities is essential to successfully serving citizens in Elbert County and beyond.



“In a small community, helpful information often is readily available about a juvenile offender’s circumstances...”

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Juvenile Diversion Counseling Program

Mission Statement:

In an atmosphere of professionalism and excellence, we provide counseling and support to juvenile offenders and their families. We create opportunities for change with an emphasis on accountability and personal growth.



Upper row: Kate Gomes, Patrick Metts, Kate Lange, Julie Sugioka, Joy Parrish, Myriam Reynolds, Ruth Darling-Goldberg, Kim Snow.
Lower row: Caitlin Arce, Stasia Hall, Stephanie Wolff, "Maddie", Kim Johnson, Vicki Capps, Leigh Harden. Absent from picture:
Nathan Railla.