

CARE

Mental Wellness in Shanghai

A publication of Community Center Shanghai

ISSUE 2 • July 2012 to December 2012

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Angry All The Time

Introducing
Anger Management
Strategies

You Have Too Many Socks

Cross-Cultural Couples

PLUS!

Stress Eating • Trailing Spouse Toolkit • Change How You Think • Anxiety in Children

CARE MAGAZINE

Mental Wellness in Shanghai

A publication of the Community Center Shanghai.

Chief Editor: Rachel Middagh
Counseling Editor: Sarah Yang Mumma, LSW
Advertising Manager: Patrick Gittard
Distribution Manager: Kamini Parashar
Designer: Jonny Weston @ itcouldbelikethis.com

Editorial Contributors:

Peace Farideh Azad, MEd, MSW
 Carrie Jones, LCSW
 Leo Lazo, LCP-I
 Rachel Middagh
 Meredith Rodriguez
 Melinda Weber MA, LPC
 Jean Wu Maffe
 Sarah Yang Mumma, LSW

Contact CARE Magazine

General Inquiries: marketing@communitycenter.cn
 Editorial: editorcare@communitycenter.cn
 Advertising: promotions@communitycenter.cn

Index

Angry All the Time. Anger Management for Expats	04
Bid Adieu to Travel Burnout.	08
A Toolkit for Trailing Spouses.	10
You Have Too Many Socks. Clear Communication in Cross-Cultural Relationships	14
Change Your Mind. Cognitive Behavior Therapy	17
Big People, Little Fears. Helping Young Children Manage Anxiety	19
Dear Counselor. Answers to your questions about mental wellness	22
CCS Counselor Directory. Need help? Contact our counselors	23

Artist's Bio

Ameet is a Canadian artist with Indian origins. Her paintings are symbolic and have a rich earthen sensibility. She says, "My textures or patterns help me establish a link between my origins and my wanderings". She is influenced by folk art and the miniature painting style of the Indian subcontinent, and uses multiple mediums and techniques to produce her unique pieces. Ameet has followed her passion for art by teaching, as well as creating design work for business clients. She obtained her Bachelors in Fine Arts and Masters in Literature, and furthered her education by studying Graphic Design under the wing of a great Italian designer. She has received many awards and distinctions. She is currently based in Shanghai and devoted to art full time.

Cover painting: Room to Fly, 60cm x 50cm

This painting celebrates the desire of Man/Woman/child/young and old alike to fly and at the same time symbolizes the essential need for some personal space in one's life. Sand, oil and acrylic on canvas.

www.ameetart.com

The Editor's Letter

Big changes – like moving to Shanghai – can be wonderfully exhilarating and terribly stressful. It's a combination that can confuse and confound even the most unflappable individual. Man, woman or child, expats often find themselves struggling to adjust to the upheaval that relocation can bring.

In this issue of CARE Magazine, the Community Center Shanghai's counselors offer their expertise on how to best manage the transition to life in China. Peace Farideh Azad, a former CCS counselor, has a toolkit for trailing spouses experiencing isolation and loneliness. Even young children can struggle with anxiety in the wake of change. Melinda Weber offers tips for calming their fears. In our "Dear Counselor" section, Leo Lazo answers a question about a common response to stress: overeating.

Change can be frustrating, too. And, although anger is normal and healthy, many expats find themselves losing their temper more often

than usual, affecting both their work and relationships. Writer Jean Wu Maffe takes a comprehensive look at anger issues and how best to manage them.

Finally, moving to China can bring on the greatest change of all: a new spouse. Writer Meredith Rodriguez explores the complexities of communication between local and foreign spouses, and how cultural differences can be both challenging and enriching.

Change: it is part of life – especially expat life! So whether you're a veteran of living abroad or just newly arrived, allow CARE and CCS's counseling team to support you along the way.

Sincerely,

Rachel Middagh
Chief Editor

Sarah Yang Mumma
Counseling Editor



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Angry All the Time

Anger Management for Expats

Anger is normal. But what happens when you find your anger habitually spiraling into explosive episodes? Anger that rages uncontrolled will not only damage your relationships, but may eventually impact your physical and mental health too. For expats living in Shanghai, life may present new challenges that can aggravate or even spark anger management issues that were previously dormant or non-existent. Understanding anger and learning to identify your anger triggers are steps to managing out-of-control anger. **By Jean Wu Maffe**

Take
A Deep
Breath

You can choose how to respond

There are certain things in life that should make you angry. For example, if you've been mistreated or wronged or if you've witnessed injustice or violence, it's natural and healthy to feel angry. "There is no reason to panic or feel ashamed because you have anger," notes Carrie Jones, Director of Counseling at the Community Center Shanghai (CCS). "What matters is what you do with that anger."

Melinda Weber, a counselor at the CCS, explains that anger becomes destructive when you begin to harm yourself or others. "It's ok to be angry. But it's not ok to hurt others, hurt yourself or hurt property." You cannot always control every situation you are in or how it makes you feel, but you can control how you express yourself when you are angry. Even if someone is antagonizing you, you always have an option about how to respond.

Shanghai-specific anger

As Counselor Peace Farideh Azad points out, "sometimes, the way someone responds to anger comes from what he or she has learned

as a child." For example, someone who has seen their parents yell, hit or throw things might think that this is how anger is normally expressed. Another person might have grown up in a family where communication and expressing feelings was discouraged, and the only emotion acknowledged was anger. Understanding how your childhood experiences influence how you respond to anger can help you deal with current anger issues.

But sometimes anger problems stem from new stresses in our lives. Jones observes that there is "Shanghai-specific anger." The culture shock related to living in Shanghai can be the catalyst for anger issues. Because adjusting to life in a city where language, culture and day-to-day life are so different from home, it is not unusual for new residents to experience high levels of stress, making them more susceptible to anger.

In addition, expats are usually without the support systems that they are used to at home: family, friends, community, hobbies, etc. Without an outlet for processing feelings of frustration or discomfort,

feelings of anger may grow beyond levels previously experienced.

A mask to cover fear

Children can become very angry after moving to Shanghai. Jones says, "I see children all the time and they're furious. They had no choice in leaving their friends. Their anger reaches a crisis point, perhaps they are acting out at school or skipping school completely." Weber attributes anger in children in part to the fact that they may not have the developmental maturity to manage their emotions. Anger might be an automatic reaction to cover up feelings of insecurity, hurt, vulnerability, embarrassment or fear – all emotions that might arise when a child has to start at a new school in a new country.

For some adults, anger might be a useful mask to help them achieve their goals. One person might use threats or shouting as a means of getting what she wants, perhaps fearing that she might otherwise fail to be in control. In the workplace, an "angry" person might pride himself on being tough and in charge, perhaps trying to avoid the embarrassment of having co-workers or subordinates disagree with him.

Know what makes you angry

Whatever the root causes of anger, there are ways to keep it from getting out of control. The first step is identifying your triggers. "In counseling, we use cognitive behavioral

therapy to look at the connection between thoughts and actions," explains Jones. "By teaching people to examine what makes them angry, they can change their negative thought patterns. We use the acronym ANTs (Automatic Negative Thoughts) as reminder to think about what thoughts might trigger your anger." Although you might think that other people are to blame for your anger because of their actions, anger problems actually have more to do with how you interpret things that happen.

Another tool is to identify the physical signs of anger. When we get angry, our bodies react, going into "fight or flight" mode: our hearts start pounding, jaws clench, and shoulders tense. By becoming aware of your own physical reaction to situations that make you angry, you can take steps to cool down before your anger gets out of control.

If there are certain people or situations that consistently make you angry, make an effort to avoid them if possible. For instance, you might find yourself getting angry every time you go to the market because shoppers behave differently in Shanghai than in your home country. Or perhaps every time you go out with certain friends, you find yourself getting into arguments. By identifying who or what makes you upset, you can attempt to change your interactions, or avoid those people or situations completely.

Knowing the Physical Signs of Anger

- Clenched hands or jaws
- Increased heart pounding
- Tensed face and shoulders
- Change in breathing pattern
- Headaches
- Stomach pain or discomfort
- Feeling flushed, the sensation of blood boiling
- Agitation, needing to pace or strike something
- Chest tightness.

Recognizing ANTs (Automatic Negative Thoughts)

- Blaming or finding fault whenever anything bad happens
- Assuming or jumping to conclusions about what other people think
- Having a rigid view about how things should be
- Letting minor irritations become disproportionately important
- Over-generalizing situations
- Once you are able to identify the ANTs that trigger your anger, you can work towards changing those thought patterns.



"Sometimes, it's impossible to avoid situations that you know make you mad," points out Azad. She cites the example of a client who came to her for anger management therapy. One situation that always sparked her client's outrage was using the crosswalk, where drivers in Shanghai regularly cut her off, endangering her life and the life of other pedestrians. Azad asked her client to examine her thoughts surrounding this situation, so that she could shift her perspective in a way that helped neutralize the anger that used to arise every time she encountered the crosswalk.

Calming down

Once you know the thought patterns and physical signs that accompany anger, as well as the people and situations that might trigger angry episodes in your life, you can apply strategies for keeping your temper in check.

When you feel yourself getting angry, take some deep breaths, suggests Weber. Long, deep breaths help to calm the mind. Try to fill your lungs completely, letting go of your rising tension. If you can, try to count to ten for each inhalation and each exhalation, repeating for several breaths. Counting will encourage you to breathe more deeply, as well as give you something to focus on instead of the situation making you angry.

If you still feel your anger rising, physically remove yourself from the situation making

By identifying who or what makes you upset, you can attempt to change your interactions, or avoid those people or situations completely

you angry. Weber suggests designating an "angry place" where you can allow yourself to punch pillows or wad up paper, allowing yourself to express your anger without hurting anyone or anything. Alternatively, you can do something physical, such as taking a walk or going to the gym. You can also engage your senses by listening to music or visualizing a safe, calm place like the mountains or the beach. The key, says Jones, is delaying your response to the situation making you angry, allowing yourself enough time to calm down.

Finally, take a moment to reflect on the situation making you angry. Sometimes, asking yourself how important the situation really is, or whether the situation is really worth getting angry over, will allow your rational mind to catch up with your emotions.

When to Seek Help

Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. Therapy is an effective way to identify the roots of your anger in a safe environment, as well a good opportunity to learn new skills to help you keep your cool.

Seek professional help if:

- Your anger has resulted in physical violence, harming yourself, other people or property.
- Your anger has caused you legal problems.
- Your temper causes trouble at work or at home.
- Your personal relationships have become strained because of your temper.
- You avoid new events and people because you are worried that you might lose your temper.
- Your anger is still out of control, despite applying anger management techniques mentioned in this article.

The Community Center Shanghai Counseling and Care Center offers weekday, weekend, daytime and evening appointments. Call 136-3631-7474, Monday to Friday, from 9am-5pm, or email counseling@communitycenter.cn to make an appointment.

Managing Someone Else's Anger

When someone you know has an anger problem, you might feel like you are constantly watching what you say or do in fear of setting him or her off. Remember that you are not to blame for how another person expresses his or her anger. There is no excuse for resorting to physical or verbal abuse. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. While you cannot control how another person expresses his or her anger, you can control how you respond to it.

- **Empathize** – Let them know that you understand the reasons for their anger. Do not criticize.
- **Do not engage** – Disengage by leaving the room, do not argue back, emotionally distance yourself.
- **Set boundaries** – Let them know what behavior you will and will not accept. Be clear about the consequences for behavior that exceed your boundaries.
- **Provide resources on anger management** – Choose a time when you are both calm enough to talk without being or getting angry.
- **Consider counseling** – If you are having a hard time standing up for yourself, consider seeking counseling yourself.

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Bid Adieu to Travel Burnout

By Rachel Middagh

Business travel can be tough. Isolation, exhaustion and work pressure can tax the mind. Jet lag, changes in food and drink, and lack of exercise can stress the body. Minimize burnout with these basic tips.

Drink water. Air travel is terribly drying. Drink copiously to ward off dehydration and its friends: headache, itchy eyes and skin, fatigue, and constipation. Start sipping the day before.

Eat healthy. At banquet dinners eat slowly and choose healthier foods from the spread. On your own, eat meals with plenty of vegetables and lean meats. Carry high-protein snacks - like unsalted nuts - for when jet-lag hunger strikes.

Reach out. Find a friend or mentor in your network who has had a similar travel schedule and talk. Sharing experiences and survival tips will help you feel less alone.

Stay in touch. Minimize feelings of isolation by including loved ones in your day. Send postcards, buy gifts, and use social networking tools to stay connected. During breaks, call or Skype.

Plan to exercise. Exercise eases jet lag, stress and constipation. Pack active wear and do something simple and effective, such as jogging, walking or swimming.

Sleep well. Jet lag, unfamiliar surroundings, and fear of missing the wake-up call can thwart a restful sleep. Traditional remedies like drinking warm milk, hot baths or relaxation exercises can be effective. Ask your doctor about sleep aids when all else fails.

Avoid alcohol. If you have to drink, avoid drinks that are heavy in sugar, or those high in yeast by-products like wine and beer. Drink extra water to offset dehydration.

Bring your routine. When possible, follow it as you would at home, such as exercising before bed, or calling your spouse mid-morning.

Have a haven. Bring objects of retreat such as music, books, and photos, or meditative items such as prayer beads or sacred writings. Keep a journal or draw in a sketchbook to creatively relieve stress.



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NOV 14, 2012:	Health - Body, Mind and Soul
JAN 23, 2013:	Hobbies - Tapestry of creations
MAR 13, 2013:	Parenting - the rollercoaster ride
APR 17, 2013:	Marriage - the spices of life
MAY 8, 2013:	Celebrate - eat, drink and share
Time:	11:30AM - 1:30PM
Location:	Community Centre Shanghai, Pudong
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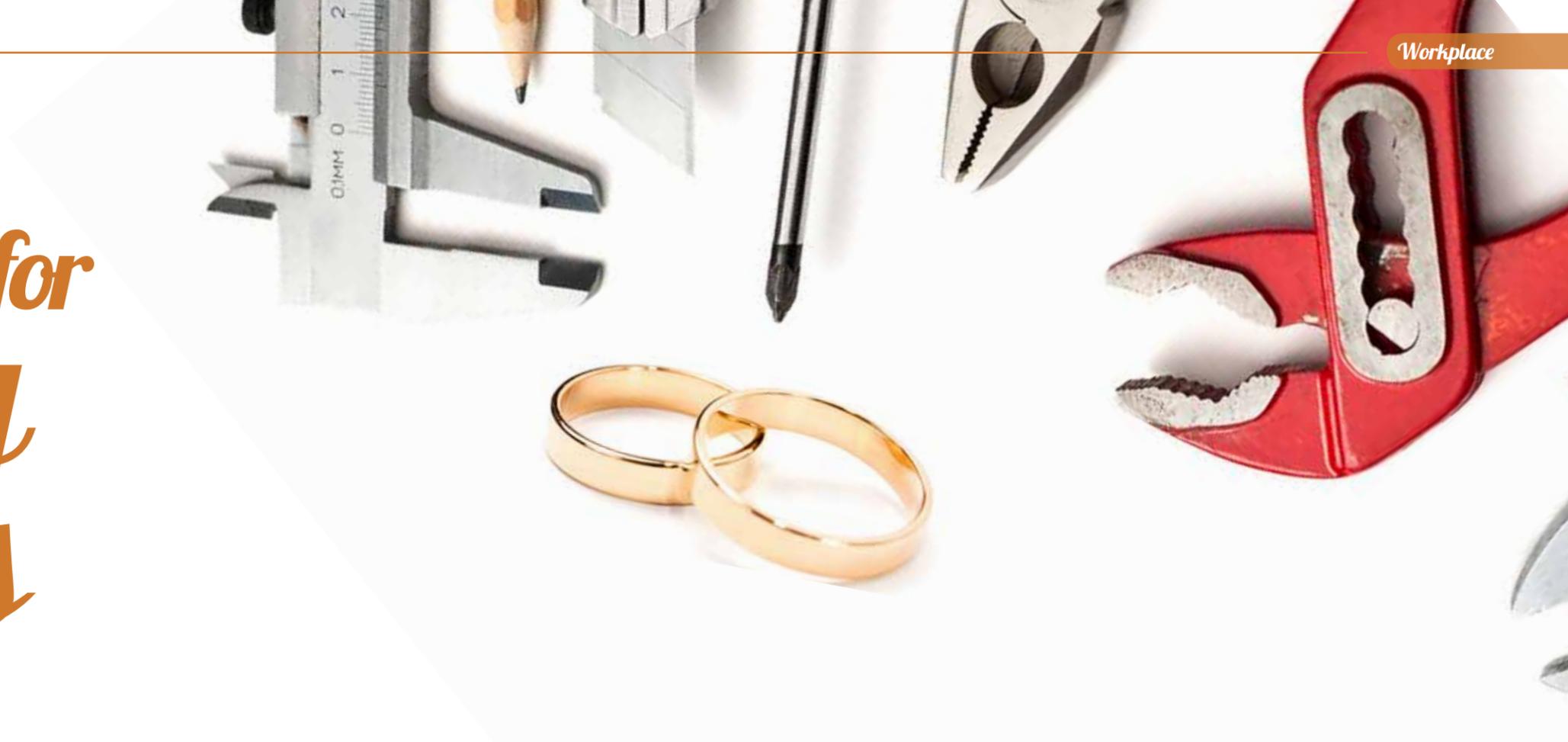
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A Toolkit for Trailing Spouses



Moving far from family, friends and a familiar way of life can be very challenging. These things give us a sense of security and belonging. If you are a supporting spouse, you likely left your job in the move as well. Work offers us a great sense of value and importance. The combination of these two losses can cause many people to feel like they have lost everything, including their identity. **By Peace Farideh Azad, MEd, MSW, with Rachel Middagh.**

Experiencing this sense of loss and confusion is normal. But coping with these feelings and thriving in their wake sometimes requires a plan. Resetting expectations, understanding how thoughts and activities affect your mood, and having an "inspiring" action plan are all valuable tools to help you survive your new role as a trailing spouse.

Accept and understand

A fulfilling job provides so much more than income. Being part of a work community, developing expertise and proficiency, and contributing to a larger goal can create feelings of greater self-respect and self-worth. Work is an important part of how we identify ourselves.

Many of my clients are stay-at-home mothers in Shanghai. They often tell me how much they miss their career and the stimulation it provided them. This does not mean they don't enjoy raising their children and supporting their spouses. Rather, if you studied or worked many years in your field of interest, accept and understand that it is natural that, if you enjoyed and loved what you did, you would miss it.

Responsible for yourself

When supporting spouses first arrive in Shanghai, it is sometimes with a sense of elation. No work and the opportunity to have

household help and childcare can offer a welcome break to people who were run off their feet back home. For most though, this elation soon fades, as they are left alone with little to do and too much time on their hands. Unfortunately some spouses can end up feeling lonely, bored and directionless.

One client, after arriving in Shanghai, grew increasingly lonely and unhappy as her husband threw himself into his new position. She told me that the only time she felt happy was when her husband would come home and they could spend time together. During our sessions we discussed how she could seek activities that would lessen her sense of abandonment and isolation. She gradually improved after joining a volunteer organization, finding community and meaningful work. Most importantly, she came to understand that her spouse could not meet all her emotional needs, and that she was responsible for creating a satisfying life in his absence.

Know what makes you happy

There are other practical things we can do to improve our feelings of wellbeing while in Shanghai. One technique that is helpful is to know what makes you happy. Make a list of things that inspire you, such as cycling, crafting, dancing or being close to nature. Then, make a point of including these things in your week. Slowly increase the number of

positive activities in your routine to build a happy and emotionally healthy life in Shanghai. For best results, join a group of people who also share your passion, or start one yourself.

It is also important to take note of the things that make you sad. For example, if it depresses you to go back to bed after your spouse and children leave for the day, stop doing it and replace it with an activity you enjoy. It could be as simple as playing uplifting music and dancing. I had one client who loved Barbara Streisand! A few times a week, when she felt painfully alone, she played Streisand DVDs and sang along. She told me it always worked to help her feel better. If certain times of day are especially difficult, schedule a visit with friends or other activities to avoid feeling down.

Make it work

Although careers and jobs are often shuffled to the backburner while in Shanghai, some trailing spouses are simply not comfortable taking a sabbatical while living abroad. Some of my clients respond very favorably to using this time in Shanghai to pursue further training and education.

There are many institutions that have comprehensive remote study programs, and online classes abound. Some forward-thinking companies also offer their employees online training options. Ask your employer what skills would make you a more valuable employee upon repatriation to best maximize your time away.

Shanghai also offers a unique opportunity for reinvention. Many trailing spouses find that, in the absence of their job and professional community, they have a newfound sense of freedom to do whatever they want. Treasured hobbies and neglected pastimes can be turned into a job with time, effort, and above all, networking. Seek out like-minded people, ask lots of questions, and get your name out there to find your new niche.

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Cruel to be Kind

How to Help Your Addicted Family Member

is a compulsion. Addicts have lost all power of choice in whether they drink or use drugs. The reward circuit in their brain essentially becomes hijacked, putting the forebrain's reasoning faculties into neutral. In other words, when it comes to getting high their brain is all GO and no STOP. They literally have impaired reasoning to quite a chronic degree and are quite unable to rationalize as non-addicts would, whether a risk is worth taking or not. This is why addicts often need to be intervened in their active addiction.

So one practical thing a family can do for their loved one is to perform an intervention. An intervention involves the help of a professional counsellor to guide the family into confronting the addicted member of their family. This goes in several stages.

Firstly, the family gathers and decides on how to proceed. Is there a particular service they would like their loved one to attend and what will the consequences be if the addict fails to comply? Will the family cut funding or support in order for the addict to come to 'rock bottom'? A counselor can be a helpful guide in this process, and researching reputable residential treatment centres at this juncture is an essential step.

Secondly, family members need to decide what they want to say. This is often done in the form of an open letter that is read out loud to the addicted person during the intervention. It will state clearly how they personally have suffered due to the individual's addictive behaviour. It will be read in as loving and compassionate a way as possible whilst holding nothing back. The purpose is to make the family member feel the full effect of their actions.

The addicted family member will be called to a meeting place, such as the counselor's office or the family home. Here they will be read the letters and immediately offered the choice of treatment or consequences from the family. This may seem tough but it is a case of 'being cruel to be kind'. Setting boundaries is difficult, but it is part of the self-care that parents, partners and children of addicts need to engage in if they are going to survive the process and be in a sound state of mind.

The third thing family members must consider when they are struggling to manage an addicted family member is to get help for yourself and learn where you're part of the problem!

Families may be unaware that they are often part of the problem. Enabling an addict is an easy thing for a family to do, especially parents. Alastair Mordey, Programme Director of the Cabin Chiang Mai states, "It's amazing how many families are unwittingly funding their children's drug habits. When we start to work with addicted young people it's incredible to find out the huge allowances some of these young people have access to. At the point where a parent becomes aware that their son or daughter has a drug issue which is serious, it really is incumbent on them to cut those funds and pay directly for everything. Even the bus fare will be used to buy drugs. Addicts cannot be trusted to spend cash money on anything other than drug related activities, and they will have an amazing array of tricks up their sleeve to provide reasons for where the money has gone. If you suspect anything the safest thing is to stop the cash until you get to the bottom of it."

Some relatives may find this especially difficult. For them, the problem lies with the addict, but the reality is that they now have to make tough decisions that are crucial to the recovery of the addict. Family members should attend 12 step programmes such as Al-Anon (families of addicts) to get support and understanding from other parents, spouses and children who've been there. They will guide the family member on how to set boundaries and stop enabling their addicted family members.

CONTACT

+66 (0) 804 468 850
contact@thecabinchiangmai.com

Article contributed by Alastair Mordey, (BA Hons, RDrAP, ADAP)

Alastair is the Programme Director at The Cabin Chiang Mai. He is a certified and accredited addiction counsellor with over 10 years' experience working in treatment services.

The Cabin Chiang Mai is Asia's most respected Drug and Alcohol treatment centre. Established in 2009, The Cabin has treated over 300 men and women from around the world with a programme completion rate of 96% and has a recovery rate which is amongst the highest in the world.



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Addiction has often been referred to as a family illness in the sense that it affects the whole family. Very few people suffering addiction do so in isolation. Usually there are worried parents, partners and children brought into the downward spiral through the social, legal, emotional and physical consequences of their loved ones' drug or alcohol use. Behavioural addictions such as gambling and gaming are also on the rise, particularly in Asia, and these all have very similar devastating effects on addicts and their primary relationships.

But how do we help someone who is addicted? The answer to this question is multi-dimensional and as anyone who has been through the process of seeking help for an addict in the family will tell you, no easy task.

Perhaps the first point for any relative to understand would be the basic facts of addiction itself. According to the American Society of Addiction Medicine, "Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry." More than twenty years of neurobiological research underlay this official definition.

Knowing this may help families to understand, and to some extent come to terms with, the extremely confusing and hurtful behaviours that their loved ones put them through. Addiction is not a choice - it

MEDICAL CLINICS

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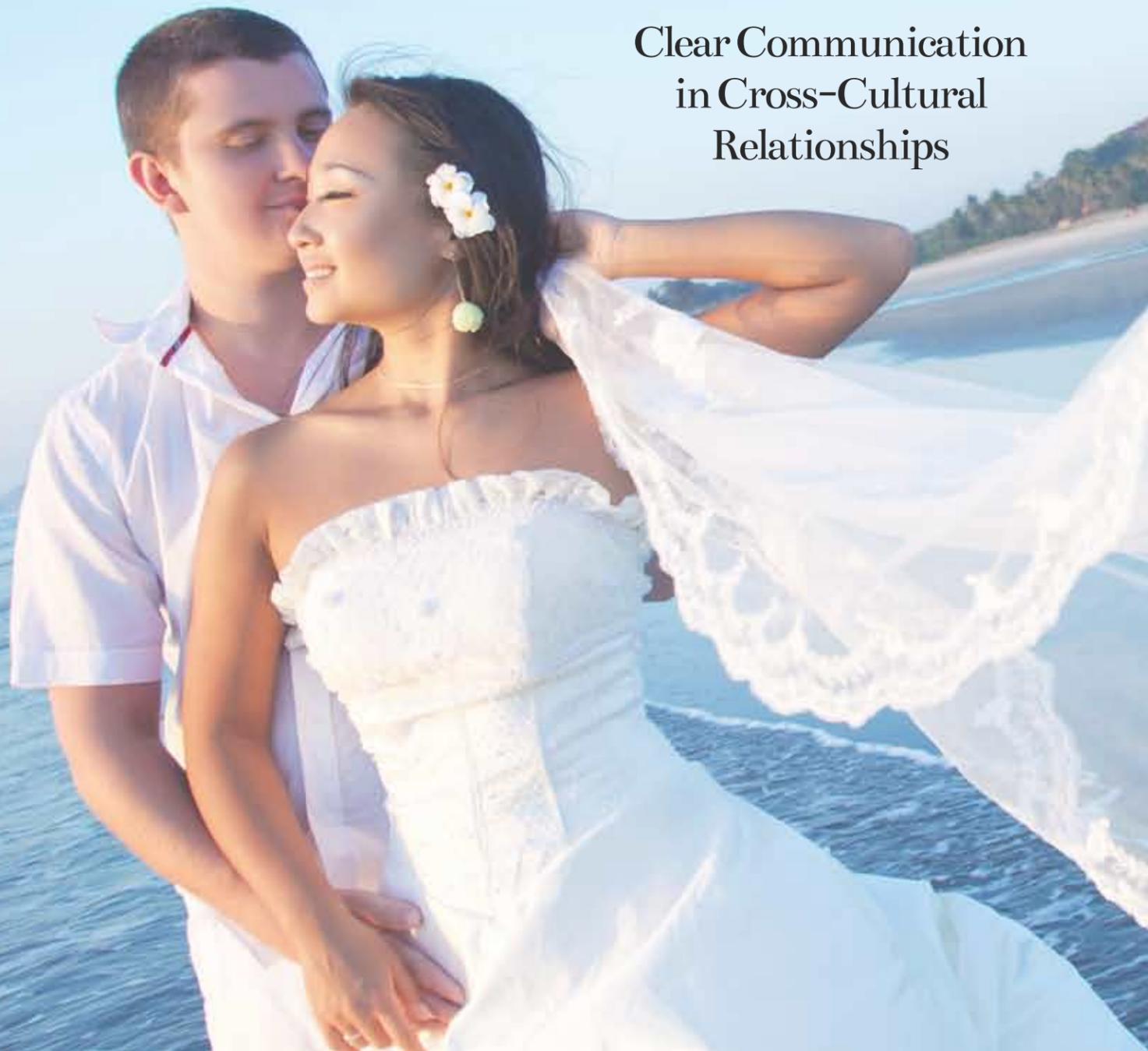
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You Have Too *too many* socks!

Clear Communication in Cross-Cultural Relationships



Marriage brings constant discussion, negotiation and compromise. Decisions must be made on where to live, how to raise children, how to spend money and how to deal with extended family. Some of these big choices can be easier to make when couples have shared values and expectations. For foreigners who fall in love and marry a Chinese national while in Shanghai, everything from table manners to raising children is subject to different cultural assumptions. Cross-cultural couples may find they need to be especially empathetic and skilled at communication. It can be both enriching and challenging on a regular basis. **By Meredith Rodriguez**

Not so foreign

Janelle (Chen Chen) has been married to R.J. Dickie, an American, for almost a year. Before marrying they faced resistance from family and friends. Janelle remembers her friends assuring her that her marriage would fail in a few short years. A work colleague admonished R.J. to “never to marry a Chinese girl!”. It left them feeling isolated and without support – something valuable to cross-cultural couples as they navigate the unique challenges of their union.

Most couples struggle with miscommunication from time to time. For those who share similar cultural assumptions working through these personal differences may be easier. Cross-cultural unions are usually underlain by different assumptions, which can increase miscommunication and make resolving conflicts more sensitive. “The notion of self and culture are extremely interdependent,” explains Azin Nasser, a counselor with the Community Center Shanghai (CCS). “Who a person is and how they think, how they make meaning, their attitudes and behavior are really a function of their culture.” Without the right approach, addressing even minor misunderstandings can be misinterpreted.

But while cultural differences sometimes make it harder to resolve conflicts, the conflicts themselves are not so different. “Usually it’s the same conflicts that mono-cultural couples have,” explains Luis Murillo, another CCS counselor. “It’s problems that have to do with communication, problems expressing respect, expressing love. It’s confusion about expectations.”

The big issues

CCS counselor Sharon Lui says dealing with cultural differences is a day-to-day exercise, but big issues – namely expectations for the couple’s plans together as a couple and a family – must be addressed at the outset.

One source of conflict among local-foreign couples in Shanghai is location. Many foreigners come to Shanghai for a limited time period. Local spouses may have to consider leaving China, while foreign

spouses may have to delay their return home, possibly for several years. “The definition of having a family – where, when and in what form – can become a very foundational conflict area, even if there is a compromise on the cultural issues,” Lui says.

When children arrive

“Kids can become a real trigger point,” says Lui. “Most of the time people will be very stubborn or insist on what they think is best for their children.” Different parenting styles are not just influenced by culture, but also other factors including upbringing, religion, and personality. All couples need to navigate the tricky terrain of compromise when it comes to raising children. To prepare for any potential pitfalls, spouses need to fully understand each other’s cultural beliefs and then decide what is important to them as a couple.

It might be a difficult process for a Chinese spouse, who may feel like she cannot exclude her parents from the discussion, as grandparents traditionally help with childcare in China. Although western families gratefully accept help from grandparents, grandma doesn’t usually move in, or have a major say in how children should be raised. “Sometimes it felt like we had three parents in the home,” recalls Scott, when his mother-in-law helped take care of their son. Attitudes can also be a source of friction. Western spouses may have difficulty accepting their spouse’s protectiveness, especially with small children. Scott, who grew up the middle child in a military family, half-jokes that he was treated terribly as a child. “In Chinese culture, the kid has a prince-princess syndrome,” he says.

Normal in another culture

While there are predictable sources of friction, most differences in a cross-cultural relationship can’t be addressed in the beginning, simply because it is difficult to foresee what will be a source of conflict in the future. From small habits like how to fold a towel, to larger decisions like how to parent, couples often can’t imagine that someone else would see it differently. “From their own understanding, it is such a common sense thing,” Lui says. Some couples have come to Lui struggling with the most basic

issues born from cultural differences. One local spouse, who was raised in a small apartment, interpreted her Western spouse's liberal use of living space and multiple pairs of socks as a sign of self-indulgence. Her spouse was flummoxed by her interpretations.

Lui has noticed that in Chinese culture, where there is no habit of saying, "I feel," a spouse is more likely to turn marital frustrations into personal attacks. Instead of saying, "I feel upset when you don't tidy up the kitchen after you use it," the message might sound more like an attack on character. "A Chinese spouse [might] say that you are always messy, always carefree, and not tidy enough." Such tactics rarely solve the problem. "Daily habits could turn into a big fight," warns Lui.

She encourages couples to be more assertive and take ownership of their feelings, even negative ones. "My approach is to help them to gain enough understanding and space to entertain the thought that things can be different from a partner's point of view," Lui says, "to just try to be able to absorb the idea that there are things that sound abnormal that could possibly be completely normal to another culture."

Decoding each other's messages

In a relationship where each has a different native tongue, messages are easily misunderstood, not just because of obvious language limitations, but because they are being decoded by each side through their respective culture and therefore, a different web of meanings. "If those misunderstandings have to do with something crucial to the relationship like love or respect, then it's something that needs to be disentangled," Murillo says. Language differences can be a common source of misunderstanding and hurt feelings, says Lui. "I need you to clean up after yourself," for example, might sound clear-cut in English, but in Chinese can sound very demeaning. Communication style is another issue. Westerners value

Individuals sometimes find greater satisfaction of their needs in another culture

directness, while Chinese generally prefer to drop subtle hints or avoid confrontation altogether.

Shirley struggled with her spouse's prying questions at first. Now, Scott gives Shirley more time to process, and she has learned to be more direct. "Through this, I changed," Shirley says. "I think it's very good. I think it's helpful to our relationship."

A richer palette of colors

While cross-cultural relationships can be a lot of work, they can also offer great rewards. Shirley Wilson appreciates feeling valued and protected by her husband, who is much more confrontational towards rude and disrespectful people. Scott Wilson has learned to appreciate living more frugally, for instance not leaving the air conditioner on all summer. Janelle Dickie feels marrying into American culture has given her a sense of freedom. The expectations in her adolescence were so high, she said, to get into a good university, to get a good job and then to succeed in specific ways. Her husband's

upbringing in a small town in Kansas was totally different. When she visited, she was surprised at how laid-back and relaxing it was.

Murillo agrees that individuals sometimes find greater satisfaction of their needs in another culture. A woman from a patriarchal society might find more freedom and affirmation marrying into a less patriarchal one. Someone from an individualistic culture could find a greater sense of belonging and emotional warmth in a collectivist culture. "It forces you to confront maybe the emptiness of your own previous culture and prejudices of your previous culture," Murillo said. "You are now painting with a much richer palette of colors."



Change Your Mind

By
Carrie
Jones,
LCSW

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a blend of two effective forms of psychotherapy: cognitive and behavioral therapy. According to CBT, our thoughts influence our feelings and behaviors, and that it is the interpretation of a situation, rather than the situation itself, that drives our response. So by changing the way we think about something, we can feel and act better even if the situation around us does not change.

Recognizing that people's perceptions are often distorted and dysfunctional when they are distressed, CBT therapists help clients identify negative thought patterns and replace these with healthier ones. As a result, their distress usually decreases and they are able to function better.

Therapists will also help clients recognize and eliminate any distorted core beliefs – basic understandings of themselves, their worlds, and other people. Often, individuals aren't aware of their thought patterns or core beliefs, so CBT therapists frequently use a gentle questioning process to help clients become aware of and evaluate their automatic thoughts and beliefs and shift their thinking so it more closely resembles reality.

CBT therapists often assign homework to complete between sessions. These are tasks designed to test certain thoughts and beliefs. CBT clinicians also spend a significant amount of time teaching clients coping skills and problem solving techniques. The goal is to enable and

empower the individual to become his or her own therapist, equipped with a tool kit of strategies that can be used out in the real world.

Research has shown that CBT is an effective treatment for anxiety and depression, two of the most common issues for Shanghai expats. CBT also helps in addressing a variety of other issues including relationship difficulties, eating disorders, substance abuse, and personality disorders. Medical disorders with a psychological component, such as irritable bowel syndrome, fibromyalgia, chronic or acute pain, and sleep disorders can also benefit from CBT therapy. While CBT traditionally is used for adults, a few adaptations also allow it to be used with children and teens. For example, in my practice, I teach children to "stomp out ANTs" (automatic negative thoughts).

CBT is goal-directed and tends to achieve positive results more quickly than many other forms of psychotherapy, which is especially helpful given the busy, fast-paced life of most expats here. The number of sessions depends on the individual and the issue, but frequently, problems are able to be resolved with somewhere between 6-12 one-hour sessions. CBT is practical and present focused, with an emphasis on the here and now and moving forward, rather than dwelling on the past.

To learn more and see how CBT can be used to address specific issues, go to www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/consumers.cfm for a variety of free online CBT workbooks.

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Dying To Be Thin: Anorexia Nervosa



Anorexia nervosa (commonly known as anorexia) is an eating disorder which is common in Western countries, affecting about 1 in 200 adolescent and young women. It is also found amongst men, although it is less common. Numbers in Asian countries have also been on the rise. People with anorexia have an extreme preoccupation with ideal body weight and shape, and associated weight loss/control measures.

The onset of anorexia is often during the teenage years and, unfortunately, the mortality rate is high at 10-15%. People with anorexia impose low weight thresholds on themselves and often feel that they are overweight. This may result in extreme weight loss behaviors such as doing excessive amounts of exercise, avoiding food that they think will make them fat, vomiting after meals, taking laxatives or diuretic "water pills" to keep their weight down and taking appetite suppressants. If you find that your child has become very preoccupied with their weight and has any of the extreme weight loss behaviors mentioned above, this might be an indication that they are developing anorexia.

In addition to the psychological stress associated with the pressure of keeping the weight down, these weight loss behaviors are also physically harmful and may lead to permanent damage. The most common physical problems include:

- Dental caries (tooth decay)
- Dry skin and hair
- Hair loss
- Anemia
- Hormonal imbalance resulting in reduced or cessation of menstrual periods, which in turn lead to reduced fertility or infertility

- Heart problems due to poor electrical conduction or loss of heart muscle mass, resulting in low heart rate and blood pressure or an irregular heart beat
- Renal stones
- Loss of sensation in the hands and feet or other nervous system problems
- Osteopenia/osteoporosis (loss of bone density)

Unsurprisingly, many people with anorexia also suffer from depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). In some cases, external stress, such as moving to a new environment, family problems or relationship problems, will worsen the symptoms. Anorexia nervosa is a complex disorder which is often distressing to the individual as well as their family members.

Early diagnosis and treatment is crucial in the treatment of anorexia nervosa due to the psychological and physical damage that the disorder involves. Treatment will commonly include personal or family therapy, antidepressants and dietary advice, alongside any treatment required for physical problems.

References:
<http://rpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealth/infomation/mentalhealthproblems/eatingdisorders.aspx>



Little People, Big Fears

Helping Young Children Manage Anxiety

Living in a foreign country can be a thrilling adventure for children. New homes, new schools, new friends from diverse backgrounds, and new languages are all exciting stuff! However, the exhilaration of broadening worldviews and exotic travel can make children anxious. Big changes can be particularly overwhelming for them, as they often do not have any control over what happens in their lives. **By Melinda Weber, MA, LPC**

Some of the sources of anxiety for children ages six through nine stem from family systems, environmental issues, and expectations about the future. Here are some concerns that have been voiced to me by numerous young people who have lived in Shanghai:

- Worry about being left alone at home with an ayi.
- Anxiety about the cleanliness of a new country and fear about contracting a disease that they have not been exposed to before living in Shanghai.
- Concern about the safety of a parent if the adult is traveling alone.
- Fear that the parent's job contract in Shanghai might be extended longer than the child was expecting.

To help children manage their anxiety, let children express their fears in an environment that is free from judgment. Do not downplay their worries. Let children know that you hear them and that you, as a family, will work as a team to help them overcome their anxieties. Address each concern with the same sincerity, knowing that their fears are quite real – even if most of their worries are not likely

to happen. Assure your children that you are responsible for keeping them safe and that you take it very seriously. Point out the steps that you have taken in order to ensure their wellbeing.

The following are also good ways to help build a sense of security and calm for your child:

Have a routine at home. Children thrive on knowing what to expect from day to day and on feeling some control over their environments. Keep a routine of positive activities that your children can look forward to on a regular basis. Let your children know if there will be a change so they can try to anticipate and adjust on their own. Make sure that they feel comfortable with the ayi in the home by including her in daily activities. Give your children time to adjust to the ayi before you leave them alone with her.

Practice relaxing. Relaxing the body often has a way of easing the mind. Look into different progressive muscle relaxation programs that can be downloaded for free from the internet. Intentional deep breathing while listening to serene music

for a few minutes at the end of the day can also calm the mind. Children can also benefit from these exercises.

No scary stuff. If your children are sensitive to scary images, do not let them watch the news or any films that contain violence or other frightening material. If they are anxious, such images will only serve to heighten their fears.

Share your experiences. As an adult, your young ones look up to you as their role model. If you have faced fears in the past, or you are struggling with current anxiety, get help and let your children know how if you have overcome some of your own fears.

Find solace in faith. If faith plays a big role in your family, pray with them, read your holy writings, and meet with other people who share your beliefs.

Remember that you are the expert when it comes to your own children. If you feel that your young ones need a little bit of extra support, make an appointment with a counselor. There are many methods designed especially to help children cope with the anxiety that might arise from a big change like moving to Shanghai.

Seek professional help if your child:

- Seems to be so anxious that he is unable to complete his daily tasks.
- Has extreme weight loss or weight gain in a short amount of time.
- Has problems going to sleep consistently for longer than a few weeks.
- Is unable to redirect his thoughts, even with your guidance.
- Has a dramatic decrease in grades at school.
- Loses interest in most activities that he used to enjoy.
- Seems agitated or angry most of the time.
- Is unable to control his behavior at home or at school.

Helpful Resources

"Stress and Your Child", **Dr. Bettie B. Youngs**
 "Your Anxious Child: How Parents and Teachers Can Relieve Anxiety in Children", **John S. Dacey and Lisa B. Fiore**
 "Think Good- Feel Good: A Cognitive Behavior Therapy Workbook for Children and Young People", **Paul Stallard**



Need a Mental Uplift?

Community Center Shanghai is an English speaking, non-profit organization focused on helping expatriates understand and enjoy their experience of living in Shanghai. CCS then offers opportunities to give back to those less fortunate in their new home.

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Take a class with CCS if you're interested in cooking, Chinese, or even photography! A great way to build friendships in Shanghai.

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Have a charitable heart by being part of CCS charity initiatives: Giving Tree and River of Hearts. Volunteer today and impact tomorrow.

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Want to meet exciting people from all over the world? Join our annual events such as Golf, ACE, Fun Run, Bazaar, and the CCS Gala!

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Feeling lonely? Depressed? Stressed? Or just need someone to talk to? CCS counselors are available to walk with you down this tough road in life.

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Dear Counselor

Do you have a burning question that needs professional feedback? Submit questions to dearcounselor@communitycenter.cn.

Selected questions will be answered by a member of the Community Center Shanghai Counseling Team. Therapist Leo Lazo responds in this issue. The Dear Counselor e-mail account is confidential and CARE Magazine will not publish identifying information. The column is not intended to replace in-person counseling and should not be used in place of severe or life-threatening concerns.

Dear Emotional Eater,

It is not uncommon to turn to food in difficult times. From your description, it seems you have been able to keep your eating pattern under control in your home country, but the added stress of moving to Shanghai has made it unmanageable. Many people face this problem. It is important that you develop a network of friends during this transitional time. Go to a coffee morning, join a conversation group, or take a class. For example, you may consider joining one of the dance or yoga classes that are offered throughout the city. It provides a great way of meeting people, lowering stress and getting a good workout. Having a regular activity will also help you ease into expat life. It is also important to acknowledge that your long-term stress – in addition to the stress of culture shock – has not been dealt with appropriately and has led to an escalation of eating. While eating helps temporarily, it could develop into more serious issues. I would advise that you see a professional counselor who can guide you in identifying the stressors in your life and provide more appropriate and lasting methods in reducing them.

Dear Counselor,

My 9-year old son has started bedwetting again. We moved to Shanghai at the beginning of the year, and it was a bit hard on him. He tells me he misses his grandmother in Canada, who helped raise him. He says he hates everyone in Shanghai and hates me for bringing him here. I'm a single mom and coming to Shanghai has been a great career opportunity for me, but I feel really guilty. I'm not sure what to do, or how to help him to stop bedwetting.

From Changing Sheets Again

Dear Changing Sheets,

I can sympathize – my son wet his bed too! It is a very common occurrence in children.

Understanding the causes will help determine the proper treatment. The most common cause is immature bladder muscles, which are not developed enough to hold urine through the night. Most children outgrow this around age 6. A second cause may be life changes. Changes in family situation like moving, divorce or separation, or anything that significantly affects the family will create stress. Another cause is emotional turmoil. The move to Shanghai has obviously had a big impact on your son. Moving abroad is a huge life change, and culture shock could certainly add to the emotional turmoil of missing his grandmother. These stressors may have manifested themselves in the relapse of bedwetting. To help your son, assure him that you will not tease or scold him for wetting the bed. Minimize the chances of bedwetting by limiting the amount of liquid he drinks at night. Also, make him go to the toilet before going to bed whether he needs to or not. If you stay up later, wake him up to use the toilet before you go to bed. To address the underlying emotional causes of bedwetting, listen to his concerns without judgment. Alleviate his distress of missing his grandmother by keeping in regular touch with her; a weekly Skype date or daily phone call are good options. Although uncommon, there can be an underlying medical condition that can cause bedwetting.

Talk to your son's pediatrician. I would also recommend that you see a counselor to help both of you work through the changes you are experiencing with the move to Shanghai.

Dear Counselor,

I know that I am an emotional eater. Since my high school days I have turned to food for comfort during stressful times. We moved to Shanghai this spring, and pretty much since the moment we touched down I have been eating everything in sight to help deal with the stress of coming to China. I have gained 20 pounds, and I am miserable. I feel so big and fat compared to Chinese people, I am embarrassed to go out in public.

Help. Yours, Emotional Eater

COUNSELOR DIRECTORY

Community Center Shanghai counselors come from around the world, encompass a broad range of expertise and experience, and offer services in eight languages. Unless otherwise noted, all counselors are fluent in English. Counselors are available seven days a week, daytime and evening. There are counseling offices in Pudong, Hongqiao, and Huangpu.

Contact the CCS Counselors

If you are struggling with anxiety, depression, infidelity, addiction or any other mental or emotional issue, please contact Carrie Jones, Counseling Director, at counseling@communitycenter.cn or 136 3631 7474. She will match you to a counselor best suited to your needs.

Counseling Locations

Care Center, Pudong
Lane 333 Biyun Road
Building 8, Unit B 101 A
Tel: 136 3631 7474 (Carrie Jones)

Hongqiao Center
Lane 3215 Hongmei Road
Sheng Lun Lan Building, Unit 201, 5B
Tel: 021-6406-4276

BMF China, Huangpu
588 Yan An East Road near Zhejiang Lu
East Ocean Center, East Tower, Room 24F
Tel: 021-6322-1515x220

Carrie Jones, LCSW

Specializes in children and teens. Also works with adults on issues including anxiety/stress, depression, transition, grief and loss, self-harm, eating disorders, addictions, and parenting concerns.
Location: Care Center, Pudong
Time: Weekdays and evenings.

Sarah Yang Mumma, LSW

Specializes in treating adults for depression, dysthymia, anxiety/stress, relationship problems, cross-cultural concerns and low self-esteem. Conversational Mandarin.
Location: Care Center, Pudong
Time: Tuesdays/Thursdays, daytime.

Melinda Weber, MA, LPC

Specializes in working with children struggling with issues such as grief, dealing with parent's divorce, anger management, behavior management, depression and anxiety. She also welcomes family and couple's counseling.
Location: Care Center, Pudong
Time: Monday – Thursday, early afternoon to early evening.

Sharon S. Lui, MAMFT

Specializes in marital and pre-marital therapy, relationship issues, cross-cultural marital therapy, anxiety, and chemical dependency. Also fluent in Cantonese and Mandarin.
Location: Hongqiao and Huangpu
Time: Monday – Friday, morning, afternoon and evening. Saturday morning.

Marisol Gallardo

Specializes in child-parenting problems, marital issues, divorce, and assembled families. Families, couples and individual adults welcome. Also fluent in Spanish.
Location: Care Center, Pudong and Huangpu
Please contact her for availability

Brandi Renee Dillon, MA, LPC

Specializes in treating individuals that suffer from depression, anxiety, substance abuse/dependency, cultural adjustment and transition, suicide and other mental health related conditions.
Location: Hongqiao
Times: Monday – Friday, 8 am to 5 pm

Aiching Liu, LPC

Specializes in cross-cultural relationships, parent-child relationships, marriage conflict resolution, expat adjustment, emotional management, personal growth, career planning, children and teenagers coping skills, EAP. Individuals, couples, families and corporate clients welcome. Also fluent in Mandarin.
Location: Care Center, Pudong
Time: Monday – Saturday, morning, afternoon and evening.

Azin Nasser, M.A, Ph.D Candidate

Specializes in marriage counseling, positive psychology, personal growth and EAP services.
Location: Hongqiao
Times: Monday - Saturday, morning, afternoon and evening.

Sophie de Fauconval, MSCP

Specializes in treating children and teenagers for anxiety, depression, ADHD, school difficulties, conflicts, opposition. Also welcomes adults. Also fluent in French, understands Dutch and Spanish.
Location: Hongqiao
Time: Monday – Wednesday, morning, afternoon and evening.

Leo Lazo, LCP-I

Specializes in treating children and adolescents for depression, anxiety, family and relational issues, adjustment issues, grief and loss. Is also available to see adults and couples. Also fluent in Spanish.
Location: Hongqiao
Time: Tuesday -Friday evenings, Saturday all day, and Sunday after 3:00pm.

Andrea Smollan, MACP

Specializes in treating adults for a variety of daily difficulties and mental health conditions such as, but not limited to, grief, trauma, depression, anxiety, poor self-esteem, eating difficulties, substance dependence, and stress. Also specializes in working with children and adolescents, and welcomes couples.
Location: Hongqiao
Times: Monday – Saturday.



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