

The Genesis Therapy Center

SPRING 2021

Welcome New Staff

Grace Alleman, M.H.S., LPC

Grace is a Licensed Professional Counselor who earned her master's degree at Governors State University, specializing in Addictive Behaviors. Her experience includes working with various anxiety disorders, anger management, depression, panic attacks, relationship conflict, sexuality, and substance abuse recovery/co-occurring disorders.

Individuals of diverse ethnic, sexual orientation, and gender identification backgrounds are absolutely welcome. Her approach is rooted in meeting people where they are in the moment, and not asking them to feel, look, or act like something they are not.

Grace believes that genuine communication between people is not only about saying something but being heard. This means providing a warm and compassionate space to safely share thoughts free from judgement.

Grace uses an interactive client-centered style of therapy, along with practical reflective feedback to help clients build on their strengths.

Working together, she strives to challenge old beliefs, help voice needs, and examine problems that hold each individual back from experiencing more joy in their daily lives.

Tips for Effective Communication

Elizabeth Lewitke, LCSW

The Covid-19 Pandemic has certainly had a profound impact on the way we communicate with each other. Some people have discovered creative ways to strengthen communication and maintain a sense of closeness, despite 6-feet of social distancing. Others have engaged in behaviors that inhibit communication and create further distance. Below, I have revisited some do's and don'ts of effective communication with the hope that we continue to support ourselves and each other during this difficult time. Which of the following do you engage in regularly? Is there any particular area that you need more work in?

DO: Have intention for connection

DON'T: Aim to prove you're right, to hurt others, etc.

DO: Choose the time and place for discussions carefully

DON'T: Have important discussions at inappropriate times (ie. like running off to work)

DO: Lead with empathy

DON'T: Invalidate the feelings and experiences of others

DO: Listen actively

DON'T: Zone out, distract, or interrupt

DO: Use "I Statements" (ie. "I feel misunderstood")

DON'T: Use "You Statements" (ie. "You never understand me")

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DO: Remain honest/accurate

DON'T: Stretch the truth/lie

DO: Clarify misunderstandings (ie. "I am not angry with you. I am feeling overwhelmed.")

DON'T: Interpret the other person's feelings or experiences (ie. "Well, you look mad. What did I do wrong?")

DO: Take responsibility for your words and actions

DON'T: Blame others for your behavior

DO: Validate other's experiences (ie. "That does sound really difficult.")

DON'T: Dismiss or one-up them (ie. "If you think that is bad, come walk in my shoes for a day.")

DO: Make requests that are practical, specific, and positive (ie. "When I come out of my room in 20 minutes, may I please have a hug?")

DON'T: Be unreasonable, unclear, and negative (ie. "I can't handle this right now. I'll see you later and then we are going to discuss that.")

Tone, volume, and body language are additional factors that will make or break a conversation. How something is said is just as important as the words chosen to say. Please remember to reflect on your own communication habits regularly and adjust them as needed.

Mary Leonhardt, LSW Pandemic Stress on Teens and Adolescents

The pandemic has a negative impact on everyone. An individual who experiences higher levels of stress may feel afraid of the unknown, have a fear of their safety and health as well as their stability.

In October of 2020, a University of Chicago study found that there has been an increase in adolescents and teens coming in for treatment of anxiety and depression over the last 6 months.

Challenges of the pandemic may come in many forms such as school life, home life, social life, and emotional well-being. Adjusting to online learning when other family members may be working from home, being worried about the health of others, and not being able to see friends are just a few stressors that teens may face. Being socially isolated is difficult, especially for adolescents and teens because it is an important part of their social development and social skill building.

There are warning signs that your teen may be facing pandemic stress. Some of these include loss of motivation in school, changes in mood, appetite, and sleep. Some may also express feelings of sadness, irritability, or withdrawing.

Here's some tips to alleviate stress:

- Stick to a routine for online learning such as waking up early, eating breakfast, and taking a shower
- Do schoolwork in other rooms of the house besides the bedroom
- Use breaks wisely
- FaceTime or video chat friends/family for social interaction
- Socially distanced hangouts with friends/family
- Game nights and movie nights with family
- Get some fresh air by taking walks
- Engage in a new hobby

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