



Youth and Family Counseling Service

Spring 2022 Newsletter

SERVING
FAMILIES AND
INDIVIDUALS
IN NEED FOR
100 YEARS.

A NEWSLETTER FROM YOUTH AND FAMILY
CONNECTIONS

THE SILENT ILLNESS

“I don’t know what’s wrong with me.” I’m not sleeping. I feel anxious and depressed and it’s not getting better.” These were the first words of a young man calling the office for an appointment. After a little redirection and some initial supportive words, we were able to quickly schedule an appointment.

Jared was doing “what young guys do” – working hard and playing hard. At 32-years-old he had a successful career and started to move up in his company. He was financially stable and thought he should be happy. He wasn’t.

Jared shared he had purchased his own home last year after a significant promotion in the financial business. Jared’s long-time girlfriend moved in with him, life was going as he planned. “I shouldn’t be depressed” he thought. Assessing Jared further including family history, his own mental and emotional history, and alcohol or substance use, more was revealed. Jared’s father was an alcoholic in recovery for 10 years, his mother is diagnosed with a mood disorder. Jared was physically healthy but noticed a recent change in his mood that he was unable “to shake.” Jared shared alcohol made him more depressed. He stopped drinking and never used drugs. Nothing was wrong with his life. “Things were going great.” He was happy and in a good relationship, life was good...until it wasn’t.

Jared reported significant mood changes, an inability to concentrate and focus. Describing his moods as irritable or angry at times. Jared was given information and educated about depression. Together we identified his symptoms and triggers.

Depression effects many people and it doesn’t discriminate. Often described as the silent illness, people may secretly struggle and never seek out treatment. Jared was in enough pain to ask for help. Symptoms can be minimized or ignored but they don’t go away without treatment and professional help.

Jared’s irritability, disruptive sleep and feelings of unhappiness are typical symptoms of depression. Genetics may play a role and his family history could be a contributing factor. We created a treatment plan that includes identifying and using coping skills and changing negative and distorted thinking. Exercise on a regular basis and herbal teas to help with sleep.

To volunteer, make a donation or sponsor a YFCS program, contact us:

908-233-2042 | www.yfcsnj.org | 233 Prospect St, | Westfield, NJ 07090

For 100 years, Youth & Family Counseling Service (YFCS) has promoted the mental health and well-being of youth, families and the larger community in Union County through the provision of high quality affordable counseling services.



Fentanyl Overdoses on the Rise

You may not know this but if you know and love anyone aged 18-45 you should. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) the number one killer of Americans in this age group is now fentanyl overdoses. Nearly 79,000 Americans died of fentanyl overdoses from 2020-2021. In all age groups these fentanyl fatalities have doubled in the last 2 years. Mr. James Rauh, founder of Families Against Fentanyl, a non-profit organization, describes this as a national emergency. How would he know?

His son was poisoned and died in 2015. Before this tragedy, Mr. Rauh didn't know anything about it either. His son purchased fentanyl through the mail. That's one way to get it. Another is the snapchat app, used by many, including children, many children.

What is fentanyl? Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid, similar to morphine but 50-100 times more powerful, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

A recent article in JAMA Pediatrics (1/31/22) states "unintentional drug overdoses have become a grave and sustained public health burden in the U.S."

It is not someone else's problem. What can you do to protect your loved ones? Would you know how to intervene, who to call?

Since 2015 more than 10,000 have died as a result of fentanyl poisoning in NJ per the CDC.

It is staggering to realize that more Americans died from fentanyl overdoses than suicide, car accidents, cancer, and COVID-19.

Follow us on Facebook and check our website (YFCSNJ.ORG) for information, resources, and upcoming events. Get the facts, find support, educate yourself before it is too late. This is here. It is real and we need to know the truth.

COVID Inspired Zoom Fatigue

Leann, a school social worker, contacted the Agency complaining of insomnia, headaches, forgetfulness, and irritability. Emotionally, Leann shares feeling isolated and lonely. Employed throughout the pandemic, Leann's schedule was mostly Zoom meetings from her home. At 27 years old, physically healthy, and otherwise happy, Leann was becoming concerned as her symptoms persisted. After ruling out anything medical with her doctor, she considered counseling.

The therapist and Leann began to explore possible causes that included examining her daily activities. Leann tracked her daily hours for a week to learn her social media, work schedule and other tasks were consuming most of her time and she was interacting with others exclusively through Zoom for the last year and a half.



Experts believe that there are more than 300 million daily participants of Zoom. According to Dr. Jenna Lee and a recent article in *Psychiatric Times*. Dr. Lee explains the core component of fatigue is a rewards-costs tradeoff that happens unconsciously, concluding there is a lack of perceived reward relative to videoconferences. Additionally, there are neurological causes that include multi-attendees promoting strain on our eye contact as a video gaze is directed to the camera. Many communication cues are different than what naturally occurs, taxing our brains. In addition, the backdrop to all of this is the pandemic and the effects of anxiety and fear for many. Reportedly, physical activity has decreased for many since the lockdowns and other restrictions.

Leann was an eager participant in her sessions and began to understand what was causing her symptoms. Together a plan was developed to increase physical activity, live social interactions, while decreasing screen time. Some recommended interventions included joining a gym to both exercise and interact socially. Incorporating breaks regularly from screen time: take a walk, breathe, close your eyes. Create a schedule allowing for these breaks. Leann is working on improving her behaviors to reduce her screen time and began to experience some relief.

For most, Zoom meetings and computer contact has increased, however, for some, it has become the only method of communicating. Certain professions, including school employees have been particularly effected.

Leann is improving, fortunately, so is the pandemic – though changing us forever, we still can manage our health and improve our lives. That's what Leann is doing!

Youth and Family Counseling

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Duke says:
Happy
Spring!

Youth and Family Counseling Service

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Address Correction Requested

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