

Journeys

The Official
Newsletter of
**Maria Droste
Counseling Center**

Issue #001



Moving Through Transitions

Transitions come in all shapes, sizes, and forms. Children moving away to college, changing jobs, getting married, or getting divorced are all common transitions. No matter the type, transitions are inevitable in life and are often difficult to get through. However, if we are open to the process, transitions can be a positive experience. Often, we spend so much time fighting change that we forget it can be a relief and can be exactly what we need at that point in our life.

The poet Mary Oliver wrote, "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" At every turn in life, we have the opportunity to make decisions about how we will live our "one wild and precious life." So much of our existence is about our transitions and how we choose to move through those transitions. Below are a few tips to help you successfully move through the transitions in your life.

Accept the Transition

Once you realize you are going to go through a transition, you must decide if you are going to embrace or fight the change. One of the reasons we fight against transitions is because they are unknown, and it takes courage to agree to do something with an unknown outcome. By deciding to accept the transition despite your fear, you will open yourself up to being able to move through the transition in a healthy way.

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Maria Droste
Counseling Center.

Colorado's Center for Mental Health

From The Executive Director



Most of us think of transitions as painful – and many times they are. They can be painful because often they are brought about by things that are outside of our control. A child grows up and goes off to college, leaving her parents to experience the loss of not having her in

their lives on a daily basis. Retirement represents a major transition for many and can be both exciting as well as frightening. Marriage, divorce, the birth of a child, and the death of a friend all require us to change our usual interaction in the world in some way.

Transitions also take a great deal of emotional energy. Have you ever changed jobs or residences and out of habit, you continue to drive to the old familiar location? It takes brainpower and emotional energy to stay attuned to the things you are accustomed to doing automatically.

As an organization, we are managing our own various transitions. In May, we celebrated the successes of our graduating intern therapists as they completed their commitments at Maria Droste and went on to other positions in the mental health care field. We welcomed a new class of intern therapists to Maria Droste in August. We've launched a beautiful new website and spent time refocusing on our mission and goals.

And through all of this, our work with clients is all about transitions. In the past few years, our call volume of clients seeking counseling services has dramatically increased. Many in our community are going through their own personal transitions. And as expected, often these transitions are painful. Those seeking counseling are looking for support, solutions, and emotional resources to manage a variety of transitions that are often overwhelming, stressful, or causing great emotional pain.

As therapists we are constantly helping individuals and families manage transitions in their lives. Sometimes this involves healing a painful experience of the past. Other times it means finding the courage to face new challenges. The greatest joy of this work, however, is being a witness to personal transformation that takes place as a result of hard work. If transformation is the outcome – then bring on the hard work of transitions.

Linda E. McKinzie,
Executive Director

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Back to School

Maria Droste Counseling Center recently welcomed 24 new and enthusiastic interns for the 2012-13 school year. Universities represented in this year's group include University of Colorado Denver, Regis University, University of Denver, Naropa University, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and Smith College. Interns recently completed an intensive three-day orientation to prepare them for their work as school counselors in the Children First Program and as therapists in the Options Program. During orientation, each intern met their clinical supervisor with whom they were carefully matched from The Therapist Group.

The interns themselves are back in school, completing their final studies in social work, counseling psychology, somatic and contemplative psychotherapy, and international disaster psychology. Each of them brings unique skills and talents to their internship experience which enriches the community of Maria Droste Counseling Center.

The Children First Program is also back to school in 16 Denver Public Schools and four Catholic Schools. Interns are busy meeting the school staff at their respective placements, preparing

their counseling rooms for play therapy, and many of them have already received referrals from parents and teachers and have begun meeting with students for counseling.

The Children First Program serves over 700 students each year, giving them the resources they need for healthy development and success in school. Many of these children are dealing with difficult issues that can seriously impact their ability to learn and succeed in school at a critical stage. Interns provide individual, family, and group counseling, classroom interventions, and referrals and resources as needed, giving the children they work with the resources to overcome their challenges and thrive.

It is a busy time at Maria Droste Counseling Center as the staff, interns, and practitioners begin another year of serving children, families, and the community.



Intern Orientation, 2012

Moving Through Transitions

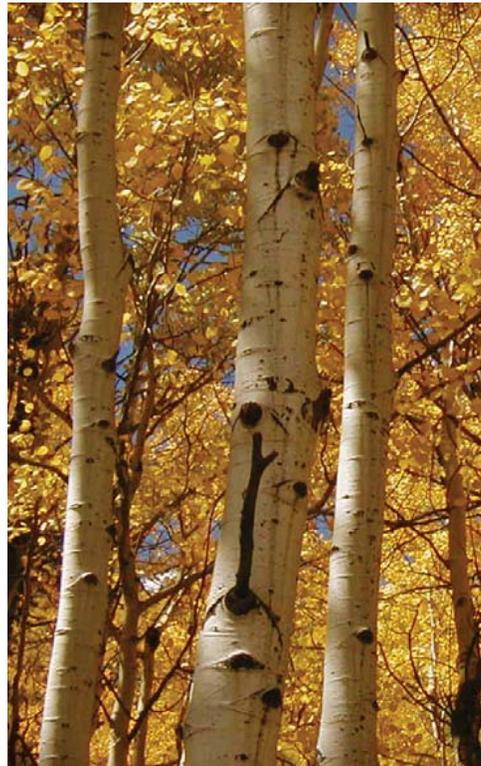
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Recognize Changes

Once you accept the transition, you must recognize the things that may change, the things that will be forced to change, and the things that will not change. Sometimes, by making a list of things that will and will not change, you will realize that some of the most important things in your life will still remain such as the love and support of your family and your core values. Realizing that not everything is going to change can make you feel more comfortable with the things that will change during the transition.

Understand and Allow Grief

Transitions always involve grief, even if the change is exciting and positive, because you are shifting from one place in life to another. It is



important to give yourself time to grieve the things you will lose and miss, let go of the old and familiar, and make way for the new.

Find Support

It is important to reach out to others who can help you view the transition as a positive experience. Make sure you are seeking support from supportive environments because sometimes your closest friends and family may not want you to change. It is also important to find support within yourself by having compassion with yourself during this transition process and forgiving yourself for mistakes you've made or bumps you've experienced along the way.

Remember to Breathe

Many times, during stressful situations, we feel the stress in our bodies which can inhibit all of our problem solving and thinking skills. When we remember to slow down and breathe, we experience grounding and can get back to dealing with the transition one moment at time.

These steps are not necessarily simple and are certainly not easy to accomplish. When we work through transitions in our lives, there are always bumps along the way. The important thing is to come back to these steps and continue to find support for the journey. All of us are faced with transitions, and the goal is to make them positive experiences.

Each of us has the power to determine what we will do with our "one wild and precious life," so what will you do with yours?

Brad's Story

Brad, 61, had to wait eight years and 28 days for a kidney transplant. There were 83,500 people ahead of him on the list. While waiting, he legally died twice, was terribly traumatized, in total despair, and frequently wished for death. His medical problems were due in part to previous drug and alcohol use. As a result of hospital bills, he went from having a high paying job and a very nice home to losing his house and being hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt from medical bills. Many of his dialysis friends died while waiting for a transplant.

Brad agreed to counseling in order to stay on the kidney transplant wait list, but he initially resented it. Four months after he began counseling, a stranger named Clint died, and his kidney was a perfect match. Brad's transplant was a textbook case of total success, and gave him "a foothold to start the journey back into life."

That was nearly two years ago, and Brad has never stopped thanking Clint, but the journey has still been difficult. For the 10 years Brad was so ill, his struggle to survive and 16 hours a day on dialysis had left him no time to think about or focus on anything else. After the transplant, he felt much better but was overwhelmed by the thought of all those years he'd lost from his life, and he had little sense of direction.



In the past several months, Brad has described himself as having a new "zest for life," and his values have substantially shifted. "All I had for a long time was darkness, no future... Counseling gave me something to reference, a vision for the future." He explains that his therapist was positive and helped him look at higher values instead of material goods. He has goals, has started to resume his education, is involved socially, and cares more about other people's wellbeing.

Brad has been completely sober for 7 1/2 years, and along with counseling, AA has helped give him more appreciation of people. He volunteers on two patient advisory boards for dialysis programs and participates in patient-to-patient mentoring. He hopes that someone who reads this article

will become an organ donor because as he experienced, it saves lives.

"My future looks bright to me now. I do simple things like housekeeping because I know there's a tomorrow. For my foreseeable future, the sun is shining on me."

"All I had for a long time was darkness, no future... [but now] the sun is shining on me."

Our New Look

Change is all around at Maria Droste Counseling Center. Last year we unveiled our new agency logo, and in July we launched a new website which has more resources and updates about mental health. We have a new easy-to-search Therapist Group Directory as well as an online screening tool for depression and other mood disorders. We also have an agency blog where members of The Therapist Group post about mental health issues. Visit MariaDroste.org to check it out.



Making it Easy to Access Services

The most important aspect of counseling is the relationship between client and therapist. For that reason, being matched with the right therapist is vital to one's counseling process. A unique feature of our new website is the How to Get Help page. We provide two ways for someone to find a good client therapist match.

Scan the Therapist Directory on our website. Each therapist in our directory has an independent style and approach to counseling. This directory introduces the members of The Therapist Group and their specialty areas. Contact information is provided so therapists can be contacted directly for more information and to schedule appointments.

Contact our intake department at 303-867-4600. Our intake counselors are warm, knowledgeable, and welcoming. They know the specialty areas of each of our therapists and can help potential clients find the right therapist.



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At Maria Droste Counseling Center, we recognize the intimate connection between mental and physical health. That's why we created Team Mind Body and Sole, which participated in the Sports Authority Rock 'n' Roll Denver Marathon and 1/2 Marathon September 22.

Members of Team Mind Body and Sole covered over 350 miles through the bike course, marathon, half marathon, and relay, and they raised over \$11,600 for Maria Droste Counseling Center.

Our team has been a wonderful means of highlighting the need to live well and be proactive about our health, and we want to thank all of our wonderful team members, volunteers, and donors for their support!

Golf Classic

The David L. Swenson Charity Golf Classic benefiting Maria Droste Counseling Center was held at the Lone Tree Golf Club on September 10. The event included a 4-person scramble, dinner, a silent auction, and an awards reception.

We want to thank our board members, especially David Swenson, for planning this fundraiser as well as all of our generous sponsors and participants!



Maria Droste
Counseling Center[™]
Colorado's Center for Mental Health

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Your Investment in a Good Kid's Future

Our Children First program helps children who are experiencing emotional, social, or behavioral problems so they can increase self-esteem and improve communication and problem solving skills. At-risk children at participating schools are referred to the program by teachers, parents, or school principals.

Our committed, graduate-level program counselors then work one-on-one with the children through weekly counseling activities that include social skills development, play therapy, problem resolution, mentoring, and other types of support, such as structured family involvement. The program is provided at 20 local elementary schools where mental health services might otherwise be unavailable.

For just \$1 a day, you can purchase a **Children First Share**, providing counseling services for one child in need for the entire school year. Twelve easy, monthly installments of just \$30 will cover your entire share for the year. To donate or learn more, call Cassi Ricks at 303-867-4609.