

NEWS & VIEWS

JANUARY 2007

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A YEAR IN REVIEW... ...FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Over the last year we have run five different types of workshops – Dads Make a Difference, Anger Management, Family Maintenance Enforcement Program, Triple P Parenting, and Breath Workshops. Due to lack of funding or resources, we have not offered workshops on “Family/Divorce Court”, “Parental Alienation Awareness”, or “Divorce Survival Workshop” this year, though they are still on our radar screen..

We have also given workshops on “Dads Make a Difference” to child care providers and sponsored Gardner Wiseheart to come up again to provide workshops to the public health nurses in October.

We still have our Wednesday night support group on Separation and Divorce (1st & 3rd Wednesdays of the month), as well as the Youth Group for

GLBTQ youth. Regular evening meetings for Anger Management and Dads Make a Difference are also happening.

We didn't give any workshops on Parental Alienation Awareness this year, but we distributed the new video we produced to over 1000 organizations province wide. Please see the back cover of News & Views for details.

This fall we started offering a service to the public for Paternity Testing. See our website for details.

We have met with both local MLA's on a number of occasions as well the MLA from Port Alberni specific to a constituent of his who had concerns about Parental Alienation. I have also met with cabinet ministers Wally Oppal, the Attorney General, and Stan Hagen, who was Minister of Children and

Family Development. Ron Cantelon, our local Liberal MLA is arranging a meeting with the new Minister, Tom Christensen.

This past summer there was a Coroner's Inquiry into the deaths of two individuals related to domestic violence. We sent two representatives to testify at the inquest. The jury of four women and one man made a recommendation that the “Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre should receive permanent funding from the Province of BC”. We are currently sending out an information package to every MLA in the province asking if they have resources for men in their community. Coupled with a good look at our programs, we are hoping that this will help to create more sustainable funding. We shall see!

TJB

DAD'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE PROGRAM

Dads Make a Difference is at the forefront of our conversation in this dad's group. We share food, we talk about dad stuff and men stuff. It's not a lot of idle chit chat but what is shared, mentored and witnessed is meaningful and heartfelt. This month I have two things to share: A story and an insert from a great book.

One of the dads in our group wasn't allowed to see his little girl until the lawyer and court things were settled. She was only weeks old when he saw her last,



and each week we saw him the deep sadness in his eyes touched us. He missed his little girl. Every week he attended our dads group to

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Resource Library

We are compiling and indexing all our helpful articles at the Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre and placing them in our growing library.

If you feel that you have an article or resource that you'd like to contribute, please submit them to our front desk and they will forward them to James for addition to our library.

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DAD'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE PROGRAM continued

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receive encouragement, and amazingly to encourage us. He kept his spirits raised high so that depression and despair would not seep in creating bitterness and anger. I often heard him say, "I'm going to keep fighting for my little girl, so I can give her the best dad I can be." It took eight long weeks before he got to look into the eyes of his baby daughter, but it finally happened. The look of pure joy and happiness on the face of this young dad is a day I will never forget. I hope one day that I will have the opportunity to share with this little girl how wonderful her dad is. He never forgot how important she was to him or how important he was to her.

One of our "Dad Guides" shared this insert from a book called *Real Boys* by William Pollack, Ph.D. in the chapter called *Raising a Son*. At our *Dads Make a Difference Group* we feel this way about our children.

"As we have seen, certain ancient peoples "used" the hunter archetype to shape their sons into men they needed for their world. Others used the warrior archetype to form their sons into fierce fighters their society

needed to survive. We believe that in our wounded world, we can no longer afford to live by archetypes that embody the tenets of domination by the might of the spear or the sword.

Perhaps the archetype of the technological age must be the gardener – the one who follows the seasons: weathers frightful storms; uses the elements of fire, earth, air and water; cultivates; sows; weeds; prunes; stakes; and reaps.

As mothers and fathers we must be clear about our individual responsibilities as the gardeners for our sons. We must be in tune with the seasons of their lives. We must know how to aim the sun's ferocious light to help them find their inner guidance system of feeling, thinking, and self direction. We must learn the gentle art of cultivating their souls. We must be explicit and united concerning the ideals and values we sow in their imaginations. We must be free to water and nurture them well with love, and weed out our own frustrations and anger. We must be strong and kind, committed to staying connected with our sons, no matter what conditions their wild growth might create. We must prune and stake their fragile

growth carefully yet firmly, using appropriate fencing. We must be confident, in the face of their fiercest storms and most aggressive outbursts that deep roots are forming. By following the gardener archetype, we can watch our sons take root, flourish, and bloom into their own lives."

It takes a conscious choice to be the best parent you can be in the best interest of your children. Our Dad's Group is all about learning how to do this.

There are two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children...one of these roots: the other, wings.

--- Hodding Carter, Jr.

AO

Are you a member of NMRC yet???

- \$10 Individual (1 Year)
- \$100 Corporate (1 Year)

WHY HOMELESSNESS MAY BE EASIER TO SOLVE THAN TO MANAGE

In the nineteen-eighties, when homelessness first surfaced as a national issue, the assumption was that the problem fit a normal distribution: that the vast majority of the homeless were in the same state of semi-permanent distress. It was an assumption that bred despair: if there were so many homeless, with so many problems, what could be done to help them? Then, fifteen years ago, a young Boston College graduate student named Dennis Culhane lived in a shelter in Philadelphia for seven weeks as part of the research for his dissertation. A few months later he went back, and was surprised to discover that he couldn't find any of

the people he had recently spent so much time with. "It made me realize that most of these people were getting on with their own lives," he said.

Culhane then put together a database—the first of its kind—to track who was coming in and out of the shelter system. What he discovered profoundly changed the way homelessness is understood. Homelessness doesn't have a normal distribution, it turned out. It has a power-law distribution. "We found that eighty per cent of the homeless were in and out really quickly," he said. "In Philadelphia, the most common length of time

that someone is homeless is one day. And the second most common length is two days. And they never come back. Anyone who ever has to stay in a shelter involuntarily knows that all you think about is how to make sure you never come back." JVG

For more information visit: http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/060213fa_fact

??SEPARATED??DIVORCED??
-Share your experiences-
 With the Psychology Dept. at Mal-U in conjunction with the Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre.
PARTICIPATE
 In research with separated and divorced men and women
divorce@mala.bc.ca
 or
 250.740.6187




HOW IS IT THAT MEN FIND THEMSELVES IN CRISIS?

By Valerie Pelissero, MSW. RSW

Focusing on mental health illness and specifically male depression that is unidentified, undiagnosed and ultimately untreated, can assist many men who now find themselves in crisis. There are gender differences with respect to depression. Generally, women are over-represented in diagnosis and treatment, while men are under-diagnosed and subsequently untreated.

Authors studying male depression believe that the reason for the low prevalence of Major Depressive Disorder diagnoses among men is that male depression is not identified and therefore is ultimately untreated for many men. Men generally believe they have to be strong, successful, in control, capable of handling problems without help and should not show emotions, except for anger. However, because of the developing crisis for men and their psychological well-being termed "the silent crisis", it is critical to examine depression from a masculine perspective.

Depression in men is serious, and if untreated, potentially fatal condition. For example, there are 4.2 male completions of suicide for each female completion and young white males (age 15 – 24) are five to eight times more likely to complete suicide than females. Older males (age 85 and over) are ten times more likely to commit suicide than elderly females. The correlation

between male suicide and depression provides considerable support for the hidden epidemic of depression in men.

Incorporating gender specific aspects into the assessment of male depression is vital to an accurate diagnosis because it can result in the identification of such symptomology with men. Defenses such as masking, submerging, camouflaging and externalizing behaviours contribute to the complexities of such assessments. However, there are masculine specific assessment criteria available. Using both traditional criteria for depressive disorder (DSM-IV-TR) and gender specific assessment tools, the accurate diagnosis of male depression can lead to and support appropriate treatment and interventions.

It is this perspective that can usefully guide mental health treatment toward becoming more effective in the detection of men suffering from depression. Developing more relevant, appropriate and efficacious treatment strategies will lead to a reduction in the burden of this illness for both the individual and society in general.

Valerie is a clinical social worker with Waterman & Associates. Her "passion" is working with men with depression. She volunteers at NMRC one afternoon a week on Wednesdays. If you would like to see Valerie, you may see her at NMRC (716.1551) or through her private practice at Waterman & Associates (754.8559).



Presents

The New Warrior Training Adventure

What it is: A weekend of adventure and transformation for men.

Where it is: Camp Pringle, Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island, B. C.

What it offers: A life changing experience that will accelerate your personal journey as a man of integrity.

The initiation of men will begin on March 9, 2007. Camp Pringle is about one hour from Victoria, BC, on Vancouver Island. Vancouver Island can be reached by one of several Ferries or via Airplane into the Victoria International Airport (YYJ) or Nanaimo's Cassidy Airport (YCD).

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FAMILY CRISIS EMERGENCY HOUSING SERVICES

In the spring of 2006, we received funding from The United Way—Nanaimo to start a fund that would house people on a temporary basis while they were in crisis.

This fund has been set up for men who are having to leave their homes due to a domestic situation. Also, the fund can be used by a man or woman who is a non-custodial

parent and is visiting from outside of Nanaimo and doesn't have the resources available to stay here for a visit with their children. A third opportunity for this fund is for GLBTQ Youth who need to stay somewhere because they have been evicted by their families during the "coming out" process.

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Are you a member of NMRC yet???

- \$10 Individual (1 Year)
- \$100 Corporate (1 Year)

CHRISTMAS AT NMRC

On December 20, 2006, we held our Annual Christmas celebration for staff, volunteers and members of the Board of Directors.

This year we held our get together

at Christos Restaurant. The food was delicious. The group was fun. We had a great time!

Many thanks to Angela who went that "extra mile" and took care of all

the bookings, and the special gifts of home-made wine. Below are some of the pictures that were taken.

JAL



SOME INFORMATION ABOUT PARENTAL ALIENATION

(Please note that the reading lists referred to are on our site at http://www.nanaimomen.com/pages/nmrc_pa_info.htm)

Parental Alienation, also referred to as Parental Alienation Syndrome or PAS, is a syndrome first identified in the mid to late eighties. Parental Alienation is a distinctive family response to divorce in which the child becomes aligned with one parent and preoccupied with unjustified and/or exaggerated denigration of the other, target parent. In severe cases, the child's once love-bonded relationship with the rejected/target parent is destroyed. Since first being identified by Dr. Richard Gardner much controversy has surrounded PAS, as to whether it is really an identifiable syndrome. Debate continues to rage as to its legitimacy as a real syndrome, but it is not our intention to enter into that debate. Whether it is identified as Parental Alienation Syndrome, or simply as parental alienation, or a multitude of other related psychiatric disorders, it is simply our intention to address the problem. Whether or not one chooses to use Gardner's terminology, the problems posed by these cases to families, professionals and the courts are very real. Reluctance to consider Parental Alienation by name, along with the diagnostic and interventions it entails, may however contribute to the perpetuation of the problem in a variety of ways.

Depending on the severity of the

(Continued from page 3)

This has been a great success. We are delighted to have the services of The Painted Turtle to help us with this services. If you or someone you know fits the above criteria, you must contact NMRC by phone or email and go through an in-take interview.

We have had several clients who have used this new service and by connecting them with other community resources, have started the transition to their new lives. Thank you to The United Way—Nanaimo!

JAL

alienation, a child may exhibit all or only some of the following behaviours. It is the cluster of these symptoms that prompted Gardner to consider them as a syndrome.

- 1) The child is aligned with the alienating parent in a campaign of denigration against the target parent, with the child making active contributions;
- 2) Rationalizations for deprecating the target parent are often weak, frivolous or absurd;
- 3) Animosity toward the rejected parent lacks the ambivalence normal to human relationships;
- 4) The child asserts that the decision to reject the target parent is his or her own, also referred to as the "independent thinker" phenomenon;
- 5) The child reflexively supports the parent with whom he or she is aligned;
- 6) The child expresses guiltless disregard for the feelings of the target or hated parent;
- 7) Borrowed scenarios are present, i.e., the child's statements reflect themes and terminology of the alienating parent;
- 8) Animosity is spread to the extended family and others associated with the hated parent.

Parental Alienation or a similar type of behavioural acting out by divorcing parents has become a pervasive aspect of divorce in our society. Clawar and Rivlin (Reading List #7) found that parental alienation was practiced to varying degrees by 80% of divorcing parents, with 20 percent engaging in such behaviours with their children at least once a day. According to Johnston (Reading List #8,9,39), 43% of children they examined were in strong alignments with an alienating parent and 29% in mild alignments. These figures approach Gardner's estimate that 90% of the children he has assessed in custody evaluations exhibit varying degrees of PAS.

Current research is just beginning to identify and catch up to the social

changes around our family structure that have taken place in the last number of decades. The major victims in all of this are our children. They are being placed at risk and deprived of two parents, not only by alienating parents, but also by a legal system which fails to understand the implication of Parental Alienation and is ill equipped to deal with it. Parental Alienation is destructive irrespective of the gender of the alienating parent and is considered to be a form of child abuse. Children are growing up without one parent and are being psychologically damaged in the process. These children are acting out their confusion, anger, and frustrations in many ways. For example, boys, in the teenage years, are often prone to violent, self destructive behaviours related to drugs, robbery, gang behaviour, and suicide. Girls, in the teenage years, are prone to similar kinds of self destructive behaviours, including drugs, gang behaviour, and sexual promiscuity.

According to Statistics Canada there were 69,088 divorces in Canada in 1998. In the 1996 census the average persons per family was 3.1 people. This would equate to 1.1 children per family. This would indicate that approximately 75,000 children were affected by divorce in 1998, not including children of common law marriages. If Parental Alienation was in effect in only 20% of these divorces, 15,000 children are affected annually. If we used even higher percentages, as some studies suggest that some degree of Parental Alienation is active in 80-90% of divorce cases, then we are speaking of over 60,000 children annually. That is 600,000 children each decade and that's just in Canada. According to Statistics Canada, in 1998, approximately one third of divorce cases involved child custody orders. These orders concerned 37,851 children. Child custody orders are an indication of high conflict divorce. We believe that we can safely draw the conclusion that thousands of children in Canada are affected by Parental Alienation annually. TJB

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We're on the Web!

www.nanaimomen.com

CALMING THE ANGER

Calming the Anger is all about *processing anger* in a healthy way so that you do not hurt yourself or others. And *processing anger* is all about self expression in the moment.

I arrived early that Friday evening to set up for the one evening and two full day work shop *Calming the Anger*. I met the facilitator before; a great man who knew a lot about helping people through their anger. I admired and respected him deeply and tonight I would also meet his wife who would be working with him this weekend. I was excited yet a little apprehensive about being in a room with so many angry and acting out people. But I was up for the challenge and was encouraged by past successes.

Thirteen people showed up that first night, ready to learn what they didn't know about anger and why it somehow affected their lives so profoundly. As the evening and the days that followed unfolded, breakthroughs and understandings occurred in many, yet none so profoundly as the angriest of them all.

His name was Trevor, and his face wore years of pain. The lines on his forehead and around his lips were deep for such a young man. My heart ached as I remembered my own son and hoped that he would never feel this much turmoil.

On the last day I had an opportunity to share one-on-one time with Trevor. I learned things about him that I knew were the cause of such aggressive

anger and was glad to also learn what a kind and beautiful person he was. His determination and will to figure out why anger controlled him was admirable. Trevor consciously searched deep inside himself and looked for the wounded places of his past that he connected to his present situations. It was a gift to watch as he eagerly worked fitting the concepts into reality.

What I saw next was a miracle. His hard etched face became soft and caring. Who he really was began to shine through. The angry aggressive young man was no longer in the room. The greatest words I ever heard was, "So it's not out there or

them, it's me, it's all inside my own thinking and my thoughts. It's my feelings and my stuff, oh, that's creepy. I get it now!" We hugged and I thanked him for being so amazing.

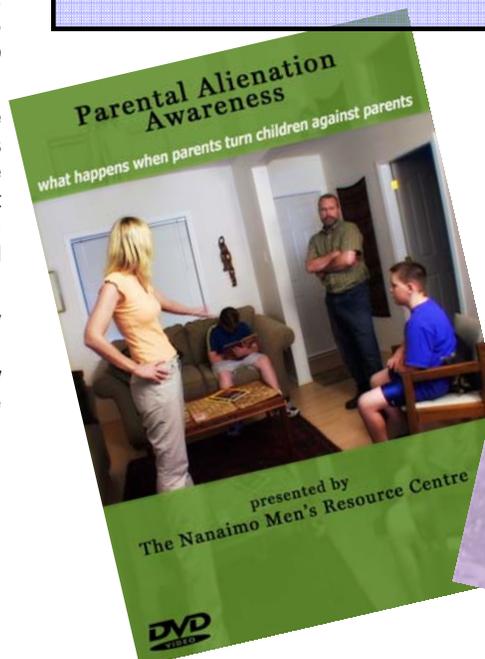
Transformation of a human being is the greatest gift we give each other.

AO

CALMING YOUR ANGER: Assertiveness, Boundaries, and Conflict Resolution

No Shame, no Blame,
Just Skills to Manage Conflict

Parental Alienation Awareness Video NOW AVAILABLE!!! DVD or VHS \$24.95



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With the Psychology Dept. at Mal-U in conjunction with the Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre.

PARTICIPATE

In research with separated and divorced men and women
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or
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NMRC RESOURCE CENTRE

DVD
VIDEO

DVD
VIDEO