



OCTOBER 2018

STEPPING STONES

— counselling group —

FALL NEWSLETTER



LETTER FROM THE CLINIC COORDINATOR

by *Deanne Leung*

As summer wraps up and we prepare for the Fall, I am taking moment to pause and share our gratitude. Our practice and team is a reflection of our relationship with our community. Thank you! We are proud to share with our community and families that we are expanding our services by opening a second Kelowna location in mid-November. Stepping Stones was invited and supported to join the growing co-location of child, youth and family services at 1815 Kirschner Road. Our neighbors will include the Foundry, the future Child Advocacy Center (CAC) of Kelowna and the Kelowna Foundation for Hope and Social Innovation. We are honored to join the collaboration and momentum happening within our child welfare and wellness community. With grateful hearts we thank our community, our families and the people we serve for choosing Stepping Stones Counselling Group. We look forward to sharing our existing and new services with you!



WE'RE EXPANDING!

We are expanding our services with a second Kelowna location at:

#150 - 1815 Kirschner Road
Kirschner Plaza
Kelowna BC

We look forward to welcoming you to our new space!



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AUTISM SERVICES

Our Autism Services are designed to meet the needs of individuals and families with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Our Autism Services include individual and family counselling, groups, therapies and activities. Contact us to discuss your family's needs.

Our social skills groups aim to help children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, developmental disabilities, or social deficits, to learn the important skills of verbal and non-verbal communication. These groups offer children and teens the opportunity to learn and practice these skills in a safe environment with their peers.

Teen Night (Ages: 14+)

Mondays 6:30-8:15 PM

Teen Nights offer a unique opportunity for your teen to build friendships, and belong to a group just for them. All activities are centered around: social learning, building confidence, independence, and communication skills. A variety of social skills and physical activities, outdoor education, and community outings will be offered. Typical activities chosen are game nights, laser tag, movies, challenge nights, etc.

To register, contact Erin at erin@steppingstonesokanagan.ca.

C.H.A.T. Challenge Anxiety Together Teen Workshop

(Ages: 14+)

We invite teens to learn practical and effective techniques to decrease their anxiety in a safe and supportive environment. Topics and activities will be delivered in a fun interactive approach created to engage and support your teen. Topics will include but are not limited to: Understanding Anxiety & the Stress Response System, Relaxation, Coping with Panic, Overcoming Negative Self-Talk, Changing Mistaken Beliefs, and Increasing Self-Esteem.

To register, contact Erin at erin@steppingstonesokanagan.ca

Girls Group (Ages:9-14)

This group provides the opportunity for girls to grow a healthier sense of self-esteem and a stronger sense of self! It's a ton of fun bundled into a positive, caring & safe environment where girls can develop friendships and connect with other peers while participating in fun recreational and social activities.

Boys Group (Ages 10-12)

This group offers a unique opportunity for your child to make friends, socialize, build confidence, and have fun. All activities are centered on friendship building skills, social learning, independence and communication skills. A variety of fun social activities and community outings will be offered.

Preteen Group (Ages 12-14)

This group offers a unique opportunity for your child to make friends, socialize, build confidence, and have fun. All activities are centered on friendship building skills, social learning, independence and communication skills. A variety of fun social activities and community outings will be offered.

To register for any of the above groups, contact Kathryn at kathryn@steppingstonesokanagan.ca





SOCIAL THINKING GROUPS

Mini ZONES Group (Ages: 4-6)

The focus of this group is to provide support with emotions before Kindergarten.

Social Communication Groups (Ages: 6-8, 9-12)

This group teaches children how to enter play, how to talk to peers, and how to handle social situations.

Social Thinkers Module One (Ages: 4-6)

The group covers thoughts and feelings, the group plan, body in the group, thinking with your eyes and whole body listening.

Social Thinkers Module Two (Ages: 6-8)

This group teaches concepts in module one during first two or three sessions. Additional concepts include hidden rules and expected/unexpected behaviors, making smart guesses, flexible and stuck thinking, size of the problem, and sharing an imagination.

Zones of Regulation (Ages: 8-10)

Self regulation theories and practice. Size of the problem practice, understanding the different zones (moods) and choosing tools to help when feeling anxious, frustrated or overwhelmed.

Superflex Curriculum (Ages 8-12)

Teaches children to understand their own reactions and to think of them in terms of unthinkable characters that they can defeat with specific supports and tools or as thinkables who make our social time with others more enjoyable.

To register for any of the above groups, contact Bonnie at bonnie@steppingstonesokanagan.ca

READY, SET... THINK SOCIALLY!

Many social communication groups are coming your way! Facilitated by Cheryl Scaife, experienced Autism Consultant and Social Skills animator.

What is "Social Thinking?"

How do we learn to behave in socially acceptable ways in different environments? What allows us to read body language and understand the feelings, thoughts and intents of others in each of the places where we learn, work or play so that we know how to respond? Why do those with Autism have difficulty learning these skills and how can we teach our students with Autism to interpret others' behavior and adapt their own so that they act in ways that are expected in different contexts? Michelle Garcia Winner, the founder of the philosophy called social thinking has spent years researching these very questions and developing interventions to support people with Autism. Winner states that we can't simply teach social skills to students with Autism and expect them to know where and when to use these very specific skills. We need to teach them to be better observers of others so that they can interpret others' behaviors and know how to react in individual situations. Garcia Winner describes these skills as being able to share space effectively or adapt to others across contexts.

Over the next several months social thinking groups will be offered through Stepping Stones Okanagan. Follow our Facebook page to stay informed about age and topics covered in each of the groups.



OTHER PROGRAMS

SMART BRAIN WISE HEART (Ages: 9-11)

Length: 5 weeks, 1.5 hour sessions

This psycho-educational program was developed to teach resilience-building and self-regulation skills to young people. It draws on children's brains and hearts to help them to make smarter decisions, gain greater self-control and improve social and emotional dimensions of life with greater ease. This group is limited to 5 children.

This group is for children who are:

- Able to focus attention for a minimum of 15 minutes at a time
- Struggling with anxiety and/or managing their emotions
- Having difficulty making good decisions

The Smart Brain Wise Heart program is based on years of research at HeartMath Institute. They have been validated and designated as "evidence-based" by the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

*Note that this program will be adapted and offered at a later date for older children and adolescents.

To register, contact Linda at

linda@steppingstonesokanagan.ca



YOGA

Sept 6, 13, 20

October 25, Nov 1, 8, 15

Join Mel Maure on a journey perfect for all level of yogi who desire a mellow well-guided class. This series of classes combines gentle postures, hands-on guidance, lots of options to assist you in finding your most settled and open self, and oh yes, a yummy meditation as icing on the relaxation layer cake!

FOR PARENTS

Functions of Behaviour! Why Does Your Child Act the Way They do?

This group for parents will explain how to stop and think WTF (What's The Function?). This will be an ongoing, once per month workshop. Childcare provided.

To register, please contact Bonnie at bonnie@steppingstonesokanagan.ca

C.H.A.T. – Challenge Anxiety Together Parent Workshop

September 12th & 13th

November 14th & 15th

700-830pm

Educating and empowering parents to support their children/teen's who are struggling with worry and anxiety.

Topics:

What is Anxiety and How Does it Affect our Children & Teens?

Empathy & Validation Tools for Worries & Fears.

Making Change – What Does Support Look Like?

*Open to all parent/guardians of children and adolescents.

To register contact Erin at

erin@steppingstonesokanagan.ca.



Children and Teen Art Groups Coming Soon!

Be creative, socialize, improve fine motor skills, enhance self esteem, develop problem-solving skills, and experience relaxation in these six-week therapeutic art programs.

For more info or to register, please contact Amy at amyv@steppingstonesokanagan.ca.

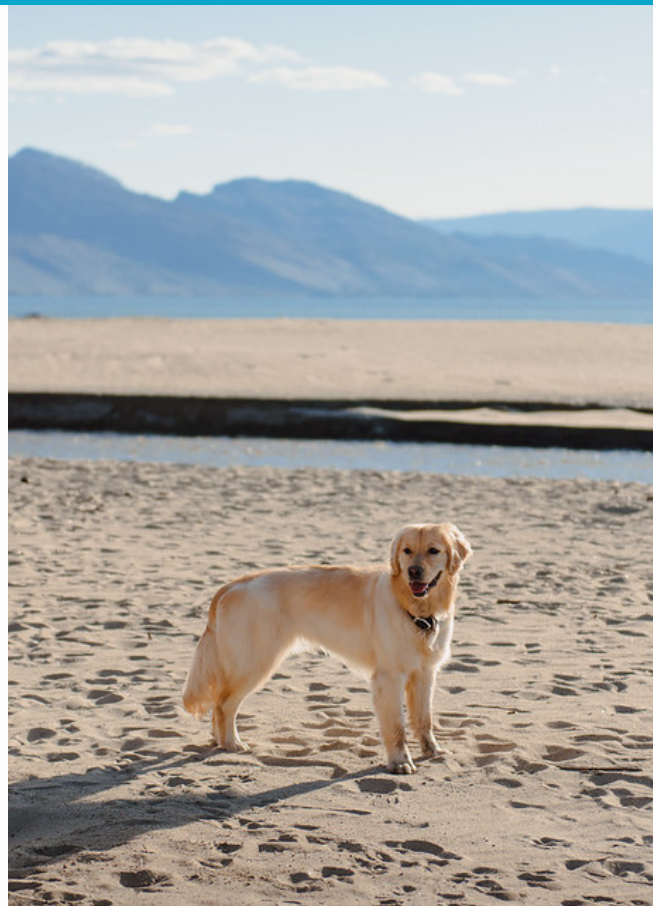
ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY

Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT): AAT is a goal oriented therapeutic intervention directed by a trained therapist who utilizes animals as part of their therapeutic process. Benefits of AAT: Animals are a source of calming, non-judgmental support and can help with physical, emotional, mental, and/or social development. For children with autism, AAT may be an effective way to engage in otherwise challenging therapy tasks. We offer both equine (horse) and canine (dog) assisted therapy. These programs provide children with autism the opportunity to participate in an activity that is meaningful to them. They are primarily conducted outdoors and are activity focused to encourage physical engagement in a motivating, nature-based setting.

Goals include improving whole body listening, verbal communication, self-regulation and sensory processing, social skills development, emotional regulation, empathy, security and independence.

These programs can be offered in small groups as well as individually for one-on-one sessions. Equine-Assisted Therapy is a form of therapy that makes use of horses to help promote emotional growth. Canine-Assisted Therapy is a form of therapy that provides comfort and motivation through the assistance of a therapy dog. These programs offer a unique combination of experiential learning modalities that include: storytelling, game playing, nature walks, farm activities and hands-on animal therapy (e.g., horse care and grooming, horsemanship, and ground work).

For more information or to register please contact Kathryn at kathryn@steppingstonesokanagan.ca



NEW TEAM MEMBERS

We are excited to welcome the following new members to the Stepping Stones team:

Cheryl Scaife - Cheryl holds a bachelors degree in child and youth care from the University of Victoria and a master of Inclusive Education from McGill University. She has worked for the past seven years as an autism consultant with the Lester B. Pearson school board in Montreal. She had specialized in running social skills groups based on Social Thinking curriculum developed by Michelle Garcia Winner.

Fiona Walker -Fiona has worked within various mental health and counselling services settings with individuals and families for over 18 years, both in the United Kingdom and Canada. Fiona's qualifications include a Master's of Science (MSc) in Marriage and Family Therapy/Counselling, a Bachelor of Science (BSPN) in Psychiatric Nursing, and a Bachelor of Science (Hons Degree) in Mental Health Studies. Fiona is Level 1 TEAM CBT Certified, and has completed additional training in Motivational Interviewing, Interpersonal Therapy for Adolescents and CBT for Anxiety.

Jason Sloove - Jason is a registered clinical counsellor (RCC) with a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) and a Master of Science Marital and Family Therapy. He specializes in working with youth, adults, couples and family therapy. Psychotherapeutic modalities include: Emotion-focused Therapy, Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, Narrative Therapy, Solution-focused Therapy, Positive Psychology and Process Experiential Therapy.