We have been
Waiting for!!

Remembering Olmstead
By: Paolo del Vecchio, M.S.W., Director, Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

This month, we remember the courage of Lois Curtis and Elaine Wilson as we observe the 15th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark civil rights decision in Olmstead v. L.C. After being diagnosed with mental illness and intellectual disabilities, Ms. Curtis and Ms. Wilson were voluntarily admitted to the psychiatric unit in Georgia Regional Hospital. They remained confined in the institution even after their treatment teams determined they were ready to move to a community-based program. They both wanted what we all want: to be part of a community that includes and values them, so they took their case to the Supreme Court.

On June 22, 1999, the Supreme Court agreed with Ms. Curtis and Ms. Wilson, ruling that unnecessary segregation of individuals in institutions is a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Under this ruling, the Court confirmed that states must provide services to individuals with disabilities, including psychiatric disabilities, in the most integrated setting appropriate for their needs. The Court ruled that segregating those individuals who can benefit from community settings “perpetuates unwarranted assumptions that persons so isolated are incapable or unworthy of participating in community life.”

In the letter and the spirit of the Olmstead decision, SAMHSA supports states’ efforts to build integrated communities through grants, technical assistance, and other resources. SAMHSA’s pilot Community Integration State Self-Assessment Tool gives states a foundation for measuring their progress in achieving community integration through housing, employment, and social inclusion.

SAMHSA also funds the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) programs across the country that work to protect the rights of the most vulnerable individuals with serious mental illnesses, especially those residing in public and private residential care and treatment facilities. PAIMI programs ensure that residents they serve are free from neglect and abuse, including inappropriate restraint and seclusion, and that they receive the appropriate mental health treatment and services they need to facilitate their recovery and become fully integrated in their communities.

Ms. Curtis and Ms. Wilson advocated that people with mental illness be part of the community and share in the social, economic, and spiritual choices and relationships that engage us all in our everyday lives. On this 15th anniversary, we celebrate not only the implications of the Olmstead decision, but also the wisdom, fortitude and strength that persons with mental illness or intellectual disabilities have and their incredible contributions to America.

As a trauma survivor growing up in various adolescent mental health systems, I was taught that my current coping skills (self-injury, suicidal behavior, illicit drug use) were unacceptable, but not given any ideas as to what to replace them with. No one seemed to want to know much about the early childhood traumas that were driving these behaviors. Instead, I collected an assortment of diagnoses. I was told that I would be forever dependent on mediated relationships with professionals, and an ever-changing combination of pills. The message was that my troubles were chemical in nature and largely beyond my control.

It took many years for me to overthrow that painful legacy, and come to learn that I could take responsibility for my own well-being. After escaping from the mental health system at 25, I attempted to “prove my worth” through overwork and nonstop activism to change the system. In my late twenties, I was headed for a heavy dose of burnout. I couldn’t get out of bed. I was wracked with physical pain and I was deeply depressed. I felt myself heading into a crisis. Overwork was no longer working.

For some reason, I picked up an audiobook by Thich Nhat Hahn called Creating True Peace. That was what got me on a path of mindfulness. I toned down my activist work, and threw myself into wellness instead – signing up for every retreat and every class. I was on a mission to heal myself, reading every book I could find about meditation and holistic health. I signed up for acupuncture, because thankfully I had insurance and it would cover it. I took my acupuncturist’s advice and changed my diet to be in accordance with my blood type. I was doing all my wellness practices. And I sometimes felt guilty and self-indulgent for needing so very much care just to function.

Then I had a baby, and soon thereafter became a single parent. I tried my best to keep up with my wellness practices, but they went out the window when I was faced with the demands of raising a baby all alone, as well as being on the verge of losing my house. Self-care became a luxury that I could in no way afford. I was exorted to “meditate for 5 minutes,” but even that felt out of my reach. I had no family nearby to help, and my friends were all themselves single parents just struggling to get through each day. Again, crisis loomed.

I instinctively knew that what I needed was not another self-care practice, but another person. I reached out to a friend, who also happens to be a gifted healer. She came right over to my house and asked me what I needed in that moment. It was such a relief, to have some practical help, someone in my corner. I fell into the comfort of her supportive presence. She helped me to tend to my immediate needs for sleep and help with childcare, and I was able to move past the crushing emotional distress into a place of being able to function again, parent my kid, and hang on to our home.

Today, the “balance” that we are all supposed to achieve still eludes me. I believe we can and should all find a unique mix of tools to care for ourselves, but I can’t, in good conscience, retreat into a “wellness bubble.” I can’t meditate or chant away the stories of oppression in mental health systems that people email to me every day. I have come to realize that the best form of self-care for me is to engage, not to retreat. I fit in meditation where I can, and wellness practices where I can. But I don’t feel at all guilty any more for consistently falling short in my personal wellness or taking less than stellar care of myself. “The importance of prioritizing reciprocal care becomes even clearer when we understand that our stresses and traumas are a common plight and not individual pathologies. As human animals, we are living in environments that...”

Continued on page 2
From Self Care to Collective Caring

There is no scarcity of opportunity to make a living at what you love; there's only scarcity of resolve to make it happen.—Wayne Dyer

The poverty of our century is unlike that of any other. It is not, as poverty was before, the result of natural scarcity, but of a set of priorities imposed upon the rest of the world by the rich.
—John Berger
Obsessed With Less
by Rosie Fould

Recently, I’d planned a day of fun with my young son. However, I also had a deadline to meet. I thought I could juggle the two, but of course, it didn’t work out. After some half-hearted playground trips, too much TV, and a rushed bedtime story—along with plenty of tantrums—I slumped at the kitchen table just sending yet more emails, rebuking myself for the fact that, once again, I hadn’t phoned my elderly grandfather or paid all my bills.

Ordinarily, I’d be the first to kick myself for mismanaging time, but the day before, I had read a book that made me realize I wasn’t just a harried mother nor negligent by nature. I was operating under the “scarcity mind-set”. In scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much, social scientist Eldar Shafir and Sendhil Mullainathan explain that whenever we perceive a lack of something—be it food, money, or, in my case, time—we become so absorbed by it that our thinking is altered. The impact is far greater than simple worry or stress. “Scarcity captures the mind,” they write. “The mind orients automatically, powerfully, toward unfilled needs.” Shafir and Mullainathan found that in all kinds of circumstances, the psychological effect of scarcity was remarkably similar: a kind of tunnel vision that can help us focus on the immediate need (I meet my deadline) but that can also have negative long-term consequences, both in terms of ignoring other important areas of our lives and not making good decisions for the future.

“Think of driving on a stormy night,” Shafir said. “You’re focusing on the road ahead of you, and you are driving carefully and well. But at the same time, you become largely oblivious to the periphery: You are less likely to notice billboards or what your passengers are saying. And you may even neglect closely related concerns, such as a car approaching from the intersection on the right.”

In other words, the scarcity mind-set can make anyone prone to the adage “Lose the forest for the trees”. Shafir hopes his work will help seemingly different groups of people find common ground. “The poor often seem exotic, strange, and ill-behaved to those who are not financially disadvantaged”, he says. “If we can show that the same psychology is at work for people poor in money and those poor in time, it provides an empathy bridge.”

Here are Shafir and Mullainathan’s insight into the surprising ways the scarcity mind-set affects our lives—and ways to outsmart it.

Why Dieting Makes You Feel Dumb
Its day 3 of your diet, and you are fixated

Continued on page 4

ASKING FOR MONEY TO ATTEND CONFERENCES

Individuals seeking funding to attend conferences are often successful at getting money for expenses from the following types of organizations:

- State and local Mental Health Associations
- State and local Offices of Mental Health (OMH)
- State and local Community Support Programs (CSP)
- State and local mental health boards
- State and local NAMI chapters
- Service organizations
- Religious organizations
- Peer-run organizations
- Charitable foundations
- Community mental health agencies
- Managed care organizations

We also recommend asking your employer for funds through work-related training programs. You might also do your own fundraising with a car wash, bake sale, etc.

Here are some suggestions on how to approach these organizations and agencies for scholarship money:

1. Determine your financial needs as accurately as possible. Each conference will have different costs. Conference registration brochures will usually include most of this information.

2. Make your initial approach by either making a phone call or writing a letter.
   - If you know someone in the organization that you are approaching, contact that person.
   - If you do not know anyone at the organization you are approaching, call to find out the name of the most appropriate person to ask for financial assistance with conference fees and then contact that person.
   - Be sure to discuss your goals and motivations for attending the conference.
   - Follow up on your initial contact. It is unlikely that just a letter or a telephone call will get you the money you need to attend the conference. Try to schedule a meeting with the person you contacted.
   - Write a letter to thank the person for his or her time and summarize the points covered in the meeting. This will document what you agreed upon.

3. Start immediately. Because time is a factor, set a deadline for yourself. Tactfully let potential funding sources know that you need their decision as soon as possible so that you can make your arrangements. The longer you wait to make hotel and flight reservations, the more expensive they will become. You also run the risk of not being able to make reservations at all, if you wait too long.

4. Be persistent.

Good luck! Good luck!

Lies continued from page 2

How often do they lie. We're in a somewhat bizarre situation of trusting prolific liars' answers about their own lying. However, Serota and his colleague Tim Levine reassure us that past research has generally found self-reported lying to be fairly accurate. When more objective or third-party measures of lying are deployed, these usually correlate well with people's self-reported lying rates. The current survey was anonymous, which would have helped.

The finding that lying frequency is distributed unevenly in the population has serious implications for deception research, most of which assumes that lying propensity is a "normally distributed" trait more like height or weight. "These data provide a strong case that the people who tell a lot of lies are not only different," said Serota and Levine, "they are a population that needs to be studied independently of everyday liars in order to better understand the motivation and production of lies." I wonder if future research might find that "prolific liars" are the same people who score highly on the Dark Triad of personality traits - psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism?


Conferences in 2014

Texas Catalyst for Empowerment Leadership Symposium August 8-10 www.myTCE.org

Bexar County Consumer/Family Conference FREE August 14, 15 & 16


NARPA (National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy) – in Seattle, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, SeaTac Airport, Sept. 3-6, 2014. For more information go to http://www.narpa.org

20th Annual Zarrow Mental Health Symposium September 18-29, 2014, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. For more information go to http://mhat.org/get-involved/events-and-conferences/zarrow/


Confere 2
You Don't Save Enough

In the short term, if you're strapped for cash, you probably manage a dollar pretty well. People in poverty have been shown to be better at assessing something's worth and more astute about bargains. Long-term decision making suffers under scarcity inspired tunnel vision, however. "You may be less likely to attend to the financial repercussions of taking a payday loan, or you may plan less carefully for the next month, because you need the money for immediate concerns", says Shafir. Even fear of financial scarcity can affect the ability to reason: In one study, after a group of students read about a hypothetical situation where they had to pay a big bill, they did significantly worse on IQ test. "A trickle of scarcity, and they look less intelligent", says the authors.

Why The Lonely Can Read Your Face

People who report feeling lonely are often better at interpreting emotions in photographs than those with active social lives. "You might have thought they'd do worse after all, their loneliness might imply social ineptitude", Shafid and Mullainathan write. But scarcity doesn't mean you lack skill. In fact, this superior performance makes sense when you consider that the lonely focus on their own form of scarcity--making social contacts.

Why You are Most Productive On a Deadline

Scarcity does have an upside, and it explains why successful people often get things done at the last minute. "When scarcity captures the mind, we become more attentive and efficient," write Shafir and Mullainathan. With the mind riveted on the task at hand, we are less prone to careless errors and more open to flashes of inspiration. This is called the focus dividend. But we need to be careful with the personal concerns that makes for a balanced life-- like my play date with my son--don't fall by the wayside during those great leaps of progress.

More Ways to get More From Less

First understand how scarcity changes our thinking. Then employ these strategies to reap the benefits—and avoid the pitfalls.

• **Set up fail-safes.** When scarcity forces us to tunnel our vision on a single thing, we don't see other important tasks. So create backups: Set up an e-calendar to alert you to important dates, for instance, and hire a trainer or enlist a friend who will make sure you don't neglect exercise.

• **Eliminate the Need for constant vigilance.** If you're dieting and thinking about food all the time, it's hard to endlessly say no to junk food in your home. Throw it all out in one go so you won't have to make the right (i.e., harder) choice again and again. Likewise, it requires concentration to remember to pay all your bills, but it's simple and free to sign up for automatic recurring payments.

• **MAKE DEADLINES YOUR FRIEND.** Set strict deadlines for important tasks to increase productivity and even make yourself more inspired. We tend to be lenient with ourselves when our deadlines are self-imposed, so it helps to have someone else enforce them.

SOURCE: Readers Digest April 2014 Read more: http://www.rd.com/health/wellness/scarcity-decisions/2/#ixzz36c4QUPaa

The earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it.

Chief Joesph