



# Carmichael Connection

## December 2016

**HEAD OFFICE**  
2219D McGarrigle Road  
Nanaimo, BC V9S 4M4  
Tel: (250) 585-2889 Fax: (250) 585-2861

**CARMICHAEL ENTERPRISES RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS LTD**

IN THIS ISSUE

### 13 Steps to De-Stressing your Holiday

Submitted by: Carmela Taylor, Executive Administrator/Co-Owner

The holidays are upon us, including all the insanity that all too frequently passes for jolly good time at this time of year. We are bracing ourselves for the massive blitzkrieg of full-scale holiday marketing and all the stress that can go with it. Here are some ways to take care of ourselves during holiday stress from feature writer Belleruth Naparstek of Health Journeys. I say these are sound advice for our mind, body and spirit. Let us have a wonderful holiday season devoid of drama. – Carmela Taylor

- 1. Take Care of Your Body** ~ Try to do all those things you know are good for your physical wellbeing: get regular exercise; take it easy on the caffeine, sugar and alcohol; get enough sleep; eat healthy food — you know this stuff.
- 2. Track Your Physical Comfort** ~ Take time to check in and see how your body is feeling. Once you notice, you can make small corrections to relieve discomfort before it takes over.
- 3. Learn to Relax at Will** ~ Develop a regular practice to ground and relax you. If possible, start and end the day with guided imagery, yoga, meditation, relaxation, deep breathing, petting the cat in a rocking chair or listening to soothing music. Even five minutes, twice a day.
- 4. Take a Mini-break When You're Getting Crazy** ~ When you find yourself starting to lose it, or butting up against your own rigidity or circular thinking, take a quick break.
- 5. Dose Your Day with Humor** ~ Humor, by its nature, provides instant distance, balance and perspective, if even for a moment.
- 6. Be Realistic & Know Your Limits** ~ It's a wonderful thing to know what you can and cannot do. Wrestle your perfectionism to the ground and don't let idealized expectations press you into doing more than you can realistically manage. Say no. Set limits.

- 7. Manage Your Time** ~ A corollary is to try not to over-commit. If you do, make a list and prioritize. (Just getting these things out of your head and onto a piece of paper will reduce some stress.) If the list is out of control, assess what has to go, then cancel.
- 8. When Scheduling, Give Yourself Room To Breathe** ~ If you find yourself scheduling yourself with back-to-back meetings, consider the possibility that you're an adrenaline junkie, running from appointment to appointment, Leave time between.
- 9. Throw Something Out Every Day** ~ Useless clutter is another low level, subliminal stress-producer. And we all know how quickly a clean surface can attract overwhelming piles of stuff. If you commit to throwing out one or two things a day, it really helps.
- 10. Keep Asking Yourself If You'd Rather be Happy or Right** ~ A lot of stress is generated — for ourselves and others — by our need to be right, show we're right, prove we're right. And really, so what if we establish we're right? We cleanse our psychic pallet and de-gunk our day.
- 11. Don't Be Proud — Get Support When the Chips are Down** ~ Sometimes talking things out with someone you trust will allow you to safely acknowledge your feelings, let off some steam, get you away from circular thinking and rearrange your mislaid perspective
- 12. Practice Staying in the Moment** ~ By mindfully going about your day, putting your awareness into what you are doing at the moment, you will be using even mundane, everyday activities as the focus of meditation, and simple as it sounds, you will regain peace and balance.
- 13. Notice Little Moments of Beauty and Sweetness** ~ This sounds hokey but it works. Notice beauty around you and take a moment to breathe it in; same with a smile, a gracious act, a loving gesture.



### DIVERSITY TRAINING

#### Activity

Page 2



### Communication Therapy

#### Autism & Families

Page 3

STAFF SPOT LIGHTS



Birthdays ~ December 2016

Frank J	Rhianna
Mary	Derwin
Rana	Cassandra
Patrick	Steven K
Ron	Peter N.



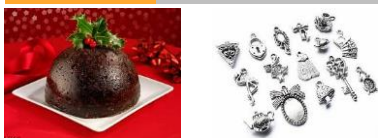
Welcome New Staff & Returns

Christine	Shalom
Donna	Leslie
Corrine	Maria
Peter N.	Alaina

RANDOM FAST FACTS



In the Ukraine, if you find a spider web in the house on Christmas morning, it is believed to be a harbinger of good luck! Based on a folklore story.



In many households, part of the fun of eating Christmas pudding is finding a trinket that predicts your fortune for the coming year. For instance, finding a coin means you will become wealthy. A ring means you will get married; while a button predicts bachelorhood.

OOPS!

If we have missed anyone off the Staff Spotlights please contact the office so we may correct in the next issue.

THANK YOU!



DIVERSITY TRAINING IN THEWORKPLACE

Submitted by: Cathy Bontogon, Residential Coordinator

Diversity Activity

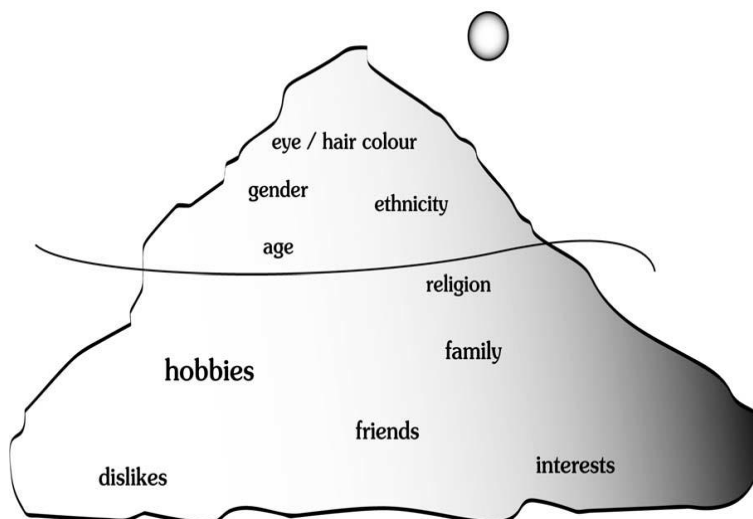
Are there circumstances where someone might place a certain characteristic, such as religion, as a visible trait, and some circumstances where someone might place that same characteristic as a non-visible trait? What are some other examples of when that sort of difference might occur?

There are some characteristics that are considered 'visible', such as your physical capability, gender or ethnicity that may be used to discriminate against you because of the system within which our society operates.

There are also some characteristics that are not visible, such as your sexual orientation that may be used to discriminate against you because all it takes is someone to think or perceive that you may be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered to make you a victim of discrimination.

Many ships have sunk in history because the crews have misjudged the sizes of icebergs they have hit; all they could ever see was the tip of it (the visible things). They failed to recognize that below the surface of the water, the iceberg represented something much larger.

Think of some examples of where your characteristics might go:



## Autism severity reduced with parent-led communication therapy

Excerpts from: CBC News <http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/autism-communication-parents-1.3821170>

Parents of autistic children who were guided by therapists in how to communicate better with their children and practised the approach daily saw a reduction in the severity of autism symptoms, say U.K. researchers.

In the parent-mediated social communication therapy or PACT trial, parents of children aged two to four at the severe end of the autism spectrum worked with a therapist who helped the parents tune into their child's subtle communication, such as hand gestures or moving a toy. As part of the experiment, a therapist would monitor interactions between the parent and child, watching and waiting for the child to communicate, and then help to reinforce the communication, such as with a smile.

"This isn't a cure," the study's lead author, Prof. Jonathan Green of the University of Manchester and Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, said in an interview. "The autism doesn't disappear, but it becomes substantially less severe during this period and that's sustained. That makes a real difference to the kids' lives." For the randomized trial published in Wednesday's issue of the medical journal **The Lancet**, researchers studied 152 preschoolers who received 12 months of therapy sessions from their parents followed by 20 to 30 minutes per day of planned communication and play or treatment as usual.

The latest study is a follow-up analysis of the children about six years after the treatment ended, when the children were about 10.5 years old on average. Devin Walters was not very verbal when he was first identified as being on the autism spectrum, his mother recalls. (CBC) Autism severity was measured using an international standard measure that combines social communication and restricted and repetitive behaviour symptoms into an overall score.

Communication between each child and a parent was videotaped and then evaluated as part of the study. The researchers say their results are the first to show long-term improvement in symptoms after a randomized controlled trial of early intervention in autism spectrum disorder, which affects about one per cent of children and young people.

Teachers who weren't aware which group the children were in also assessed them. Overall, the proportion of children with symptoms of high severity decreased by about 17 per cent in the treatment group compared with usual treatment, Green said. An effective early treatment that changes the long-term course of the disorder could benefit individuals, families and society, but it's been hard to demonstrate until now.

### Powerful for parents

The six years of follow-up is exciting, said psychologist Dr. Jessica Brian of Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital in Toronto, who was not involved in the study. She's investigating a similar model to help children with autism to develop their communication skills. It was assumed that helping young children make small gains would build over time and assist their development. These findings offer evidence that's indeed the case, Brian said. "There's nothing more powerful for a parent than seeing their child make the gains and feeling that they contributed to that in some way," Brian said.

Therapists can give parents a 'tool box' to foster their child's development in natural ways, says autism researcher Dr. Jessica Brian. (CBC)

Another advantage is it didn't involve a lot of therapy time, which is costly to the health-care system, she said.

"We're not really teaching parents to be therapists per se. We're just almost giving them a tool box for fostering their child's development in natural ways." The researchers did not find any group difference in language scores, such as grammar, at follow-up. Overall mental health problems such as anxiety also didn't change.

The follow-up data from the U.K. team raises the "intriguing possibility that a 12-month, relatively low-intensity intervention has the potential to produce long-term improvements in autism symptoms," education Prof. Jeff Sigafoos of Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand said in a journal commentary published with the study.

### Parents encouraged

The findings are empowering, said Sue Walters of Aurora, Ont., who has two sons on the autism spectrum. She and her husband attended classes to help their eldest, Devin, to communicate better. "It resonated with me," Walters said of the study's results. "Parents of autistic children know that starting very early and being able to get that serious groundwork, the really rudimentary stuff, is what's going to make a change for our kids." Future research could help identify the key components of the treatment and its underlying mechanism, Sigafoos said. Emerging evidence favouring PACT and similar programs suggests some major, yet undetermined, developmental mechanism might be involved, he said. The study was funded by the Medical Research Council

### UP COMING EVENTS



3 December  
**International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

take action disability-inclusion  
women with disabilities understand disability Mobilize action  
promote dignity plan events mainstream disability  
organize forums ensure equality  
develop social policies employment inclusive education  
children with disabilities advocate human rights  
social integration empowerment  
accessible healthcare  
data collection awareness-raising  
end stigma and stereotyping

Be Informed! Get Involved!  
www.un.org/disabilities  
enable@un.org

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS

December 3, 2016



### CARF Canada

Webinars ~ CARF is committed to providing the highest quality education and training opportunities in a format that promotes ease of access and participation. Our web-based trainings offer you the following:

1. Training in the comfort of your own office or home.
  2. No travel-related costs.
  3. An engaging and interactive format.
- Multiple participants in the training for one connection price.

Please join us for an informative and enjoyable online learning experience!

All presentations and materials are provided in English

<http://www.carf.org/Events/Webinars/>



Christmas Day

Sunday

December 25, 2016



## Carmichael Enterprises Annual Staff Party

Saturday, December 10, 2016

Time: 6:00 p.m. to Midnight

Cocktails: 6:00 p.m.      Cash Bar

Dinner: 7:00 p.m.

**COSTIN HALL**  
7232 Lantzville Road, Lantzville, BC

After dinner there will be presentations, prize draws for staff members and plenty of dancing!

## LEGO therapy introduced to Abbotsford children with Autism

Excerpts from: [Catherine Urquhart](#) Reporter @ Global News

<http://globalnews.ca/news/3033258/lego-therapy-introduced-to-abbotsford-children-with-autism/>

A new therapy is being introduced to Fraser Valley children who are on the autism spectrum. It's called LEGO therapy.

Every week, half a dozen kids gather in Abbotsford for the play therapy. Behavior Consultant Kelly MacGregor manages the group and says the much-loved plastic building blocks are used for "teaching skills like taking turns, sharing, conversation skills, that kind of thing."

LEGO therapy for autism is becoming popular around the world, from Iceland to the United States and England.

MacGregor says kids love it and their progress is being monitored, noting "we'll collect data on things like on topic comments, things like greeting peers, greeting adults."

The LEGO therapy is also helping kids improve their manual dexterity, creativity and to build friendships.

This popular toy, now also making life better for children on the autism spectrum.



## Carmichael Connection

Serving Nanaimo to Campbell River

Randi's Place ~ Wellington Place ~ Oceanside Place ~ Creekside Place ~ Shamrock Home ~ Hammond Place ~ Uplands Home ~ Harbourview Place ~ Matt & Dan's Home ~ Buckley Bay Home ~ Bronte's Home ~ Outreach Home ~ Sherbourne Home ~ Nim Nim House ~