

Counsellor's Corner

Creating Beauty From Ashes:

Forgiveness, Trauma, and the Healing Process

"Provide for those who grieve to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor." Isaiah 61:3

Have you been working on picking up the broken pieces of your life after past trauma and hurt? Do you feel like you have come so far and even forgave but the anger, pain, and utter brokenness keep resurfacing?

We may have been told "you need to forgive if you want to move forward". Does that mean what happened doesn't matter? Isn't that justifying what they did? Do I have to reconcile with that person? These are common questions when talking about forgiveness. Forgiveness does not excuse behavior, dismiss the pain and trauma, or free the person forgiven from natural consequences for their actions. Reconciliation should only happen when to do so is healthy and safe for both parties. What forgiveness does is help us to see the humanity and flaws of the person who hurt us so that we can relinquish some of the hurt, pain, and anger that the person has caused. Forgiveness allows freedom from the weight of the actions against us so that we can begin the healing journey.

Forgiveness is just one step in the healing journey. Often times we have felt we have gone through the process of healing and forgiveness but then out of no where all the hurt comes flooding back in. This is especially true when the event or actions we have forgiven are traumatic for us. Those flooding emotions are triggered by what is called Visceral Memories. Our bodies hold memories of events whether good or bad that can be triggered through our senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, or physical touch). When we have traumatic experiences the anger, fear, hurt, and pain can be triggered by visceral memory. This does not mean that you have not forgave or that the healing you experienced wasn't real. The healing is a process in which you can think of each trigger as an opportunity to peel another layer of the hurt and pain away in order to continue to move towards full healing.

So how do you know they are triggers and what do you do with them? Some signs can be irrational responses to a situation, and/or thoughts and feelings of the trauma springing up. We first need to acknowledge and accept that they may be triggers and offer ourselves grace and self-compassion. Acknowledge that you are being triggered and accept that it is normal for you to have these moments as you journey through the process. What you do next determines whether you stay bogged down in your hurt or whether you continue forward on your healing journey.

Once we recognize we are triggered we need to take time to reflect on our emotions so to better understand them and then process with rational thought (e.g. Am I safe now? Does this define me? What have I already done to build my resiliency to get this far? What are the truths? Remember I have forgiven. Pray for the one who hurt you and for yourself, etc...). Each time we change our thoughts we begin to change our emotional responses and their impact. The bible states "be transformed by the renewing of your mind". Our brains are mouldable so instead of letting our trauma dictate how we feel and act, why not allow ourselves to take the reigns back and renew them with God's help.

When I think about trauma, forgiveness and the healing process it reminds me of a Mosaic. A Mosaic is a beautiful piece of art that is created from broken pieces of pottery and glass. Our lives can be much the same. We can either muck through the broken pieces hurting ourselves more and adding to them. Or, we can begin picking up the pieces one at a time to build a beautiful mosaic with our lives. The Bible states in Isaiah 61:3 "provide for those who grieve to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor."



Jodi Laundry
Registered Social Worker

Helping people find hope, healing and peace in life

Summer 2021



Message from Executive Director

Dear friends,

Spring and early summer 2021 have been a busy time at Shalom Counselling Centre. With Covid numbers on the decline and the ease of restrictions, we have welcomed our counselling staff and clients back to the office for in-person sessions as well as on-line or phone sessions for those clients who prefer. While things are busy around the office, staff have taken time to rest and relax on vacation, returning to the office refreshed.

We are thankful for the support you have shown for our fundraising endeavors. Both the book sale that was held in July and the on-line silent auction that was held at the end of June were successful and brought in some much-needed financial support for the work of Shalom. We are looking forward to hosting another used book sale near the end of August. Please watch our website and social media for further information. As well, we plan to host a pre-Christmas on-line silent auction in December with some excellent gift-appropriate items to bid on! Further information will appear on the website, Instagram, and Facebook.

Many people face emotional and relational challenges at one point or another in their lifetime. Shalom has seen an increase in the number of new client intakes over the past months. Fees for service are assessed on a sliding scale based on household income. The subsidized portion of the fee is made up through grants, corporate sponsorships, and donations. I again invite you to partner with Shalom in achieving our goal of making professional Christian counselling available to all.

I would also invite your prayers for the staff of Shalom Counselling Centre as we seek to be a light in the community and for the board of directors as decisions are made that impact the future of Shalom. The building we presently occupy no longer has sufficient space to meet our needs. We praise God for the growth He has provided! Please pray that the board would have clear direction moving forward and that necessary resources would be available to proceed.

Thank you for journeying with us,

Ruby Stones



I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Psalm 16:8

Cosmos Bottle Depot has chosen Shalom Counselling Centre as their charity of the month for August 2021

If you would like to donate your bottles, proceeds will go to Shalom Counselling Centre. You will find blue bins at Clearview Market Square (by the gas station), the corner of 40th & Ross Street (by Napa), or Cosmos Bottle Depot at 7428—49 Avenue. **Thank you for your support!**

Shalom Counselling Centre of Alberta is a non-profit registered charity incorporated under the Alberta Societies Act, Charitable Organization #317905. Donations are used for the purpose of subsidizing counselling for Central Alberta families. Shalom hopes to raise \$375,000 using 7% of Shalom's overall budget for the cost of fundraising.

Shalom will, to the best of our ability, ensure that contributions are used in accordance with donor's intentions. However, gifts received that are designated to particular projects or programs are received only with the understanding that if the project or program is oversubscribed to or does not take place, the funds will be applied to other purposes at the discretion of the Board of Directors. In respect for your privacy, your contact information is not passed along to any other organization.

Funded by individuals, businesses and churches of Central Alberta and



Follow us on:



To everyone who participated our Online Silent Auction. With your help \$1,812 was raised! And thank you to everyone who supported our June Book Sale! This sale raised a further \$2,135!



A large part of Shalom's ongoing ability to support individuals, couples & families in Central Alberta is due to the support of our community. THANK YOU to our volunteers, prayer partners, churches, businesses, and individuals. We couldn't do it without you!