

# Heartland Counseling Center



## Relationship Newsletter



*A caring heart for adults at every stage in life.*

### Welcome!

Welcome to the first edition of Heartland Counseling Center's Relationship Newsletter. We're excited to roll out this newsletter and hope that you find the information provided beneficial.

In every edition you will find the following information:

- ♥ Spice Up Date Night: this page will have creative ideas to make Date Night a more memorable experience for you and your partner
- ♥ Couples Corner: this page will have an article on a couples-related topic. This month features an article on 4 Communication Skills to improve your relationship
- ♥ Singles Section: this page will have an article on a singles-related topic. This month, check out our article on Staying Safe in the Internet Dating World
- ♥ Heartland Counseling Center Happenings: this page will have information regarding events and other exciting news from Heartland Counseling Center

### Winter 2013-2014

#### *Inside this Issue*

4 Communication Skills to Boost Your Relationship . . . 4

Making a Good Impression and Using Your Discretion . . . 5

#### *In Every Issue*

Spice Up Date Night... 2  
Heartland CC Happenings... 3

#### *Location*

2909 Independence Street  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63703  
(573) 803-1402

[www.HeartlandCounselingCenter.com](http://www.HeartlandCounselingCenter.com)



# Spice Up Date Night

Movie Night is a great stand-by for an inexpensive date. You and your partner can relax in the comfort of home and still enjoy some quality time together. But after a while movie night can feel like you're stuck in a rut. Why not get creative to spice up movie night? Instead of watching the latest blockbuster film, create themes for your movie night. Try these ideas for something new:

The Worst Movie Ever

The Best Soundtrack Movie

The Best Heist Movie

The Horror Movie with the Worst Special Effects

The Most Ridiculous-Never-Gonna-Happen Sci-Fi Movie Ever

The Most Underestimated Movie (you know the ones you thought should win the awards, but didn't. . .)

While watching, keep the remote handy and hit the pause button so that you and your partner can laugh about the horrible special-effects, rewind to sing along to your favorite songs, or even debate on what makes a scene particularly good or bad.

Share your creative Movie Night Ideas on our Facebook page so that others can Spice Up Movie Night too!



# Heartland Counseling Center Happenings

## Baby Bumps to Baby Blues

Heartland Counseling Center is now  
offering a Group for New Moms!

Group meets Tuesdays from 11am-12pm

Beginning January 21<sup>st</sup>!

Participants will be able to:

- Have regular support of other new moms
- Learn strategies to deal with the challenges of being a new mom
- Connect with other new moms in the area

Topics of conversation will include:

- Baby (and mom) sleep patterns and what to expect
- Baby and mom wellness
- Staying at home vs working outside the home
- Daycare
- Finding balance
- Maintaining mom's sense of self in new role
- Parenting strategies
- And much more!

*Cost is just \$10 a session*

*Must Pre-register for your first session!*

*Call 573-803-1402 Today!*



## Relationship Workshops

Heartland Counseling Center is working on designing a series of Relationship Workshops. If you have any suggestions on topics you would like to see from us, send Stephanie an email at [info@heartlandcounselingcenter.com](mailto:info@heartlandcounselingcenter.com)



Melissa Vogelsang!

Melissa's one year  
anniversary with our Center  
is March 1<sup>st</sup>!

# Couples Corner

## 4 Communication Skills to Boost Your Relationship



What is the key to a happy, stable, and long-term relationship? Some say it is the ability to stick to our promises, our vows. Others say it is the willingness and ability to forgive one another. One partner might say that a good relationship is based on trust while the other says it is based on honesty. As it turns out, all of these factors are very important elements, for without these things there would be no safety in the relationship. One simple way to maintain safety in the relationship is to communicate openly.

How many times have you and your partner argued only to discover that each of you are arguing about two different things? Or, your partner says one thing and you interpret it as another? For the purpose of this article, the example we will use is when one partner is worried that the other partner is being unfaithful.

### **Communication Skill 1: Mirroring**

Reflect your partner's statement and then ask for clarification. This skill typically sounds like this, "If I'm hearing you correctly you said \_\_\_ (fill in the blank). Did I get that?" or "Is there more?" For example, "If I'm hearing you correctly you said you are working late and won't be home until midnight. Did I get that?"

### **Communication Skill 2: Validating**

It is important to remember that validating is not the same as agreeing. It is simply saying that you are trying to understand things from your partner's perspective. Validating sounds like this, "I can understand that. That makes sense to me because..." For example, "I can understand that. It makes sense to me because you've been working on a big project at work and I know you have a deadline."

### **Communication Skill 3: Empathizing**

It's important to remember that empathizing is not the same as sympathizing. Empathy is simply being in the emotional moment with your partner *without* feeling sorry for him or her. Empathize with your partner by saying, "That must make you feel \_\_\_ (choose a feeling and not a thought)." For example, "That must make you feel annoyed to have to work so late after an already long day at work."

### **Communication Skill 4: Listening**

Listen for your partner's response. If you listen closely you can hear the emotional content of each other's messages. Repeat this process, taking turns, until each partner has had the chance to voice their concerns. Some surprising information may come forward, but so will new possibilities to create a stronger relationship based on open communication, trust, and security.

# Singles Section

## Making a Good Impression and Using Your Discretion

Internet dating---dating made simple! While you're searching for them, they're searching for you, and your dating website is screening and checking for compatibility. However, your dating website can only do so much; the rest is up to you! Here are some tips to ensure your physical and emotional safety:



- Your profile:
  - Keep it brief
  - Stay truthful. Yes, that means you need to:
    - Give your real age or state an age range like "mid-30s"
    - Use a clear and current picture you like; minimize amount of pictures you utilize---this is not Facebook!
  - Show your personality rather than write it
  - Include a vague description of what you are looking for; it will give you more options and make you appear open-minded
  - Avoid overly personal information-- save it for the relationship!
- Increase your awareness of potential scammers-- not everyone is who they say they are. Be skeptical of:
  - Individuals who claim to be American professions constantly traveling abroad
  - Do not use proper or grammatically correct English
  - Poor spelling
  - Claims to be in love with you almost immediately
  - Limits detailed information about their lives
  - Utilizes false photos or plagiarizes great works to woo you
  - Wants to use webcams or have you send pictures
  - Asks you for personal information pertaining to your credit, social security number, license, etc
  - Sends you gifts you find inappropriate
  - Asks for financial assistance
- Prior to arranging a date in person, investigate!
  - Google them
  - Utilize Casenet
  - Check out their Facebook page, if applicable
- Be a part of the decision to meet in person. Have an opinion.
  - Choose a public place, preferably somewhere you are comfortable and accessible to your friends and/or family
  - Construct a timeframe that includes: your arrival, a call or "accidental" run in with a friend or family member to check in on the date progress, and the conclusion of the date
  - Dress appropriately but conservatively

- Are red flags popping up? Is your gut telling you something is wrong? Or you aren't feeling the date, and your "accidental" run in or call is unable to bail you out with an emergency or tag along. And you simply cannot wait until your preset conclusion. Here's what you can do:
  - Friendzone them
    - Do not make physical contact, for touching someone is essential in establishing a romantic connection
    - Do not ask questions about their daily routines, for it signifies you want to be a part of their schedule
    - Use phrases like "we'd make good *friends*", indicating you do not want to be romantically involved with them
    - Cut the date short
    - Be noncommittal about contacting them again
  - Play sick; excuse yourself to the restroom wait about ten minutes and return to your date, stating you think it was best if you went home
- Everything is going well; you are really digging this person then be sure to:
  - Speak confidently
  - Be genuine
  - Establish and maintain eye contact with your date; scanning the room makes you appear bored, nervous, or having a short attention span
  - Discuss yours and your dates passions
  - Choose your moments and words carefully
    - Do not dominate the conversation
    - Keep conversations on light topics
    - Do not over-share
    - Do not talk about your ex
  - Be complimentary about one's character
  - Have fun and laugh
  - Take it slow
  - Most importantly, BE YOURSELF; don't be someone you aren't or someone you think they want you to be; you can't build a relationship on an illusion.