

Dr. Larry S. Fong

Eileen Ailon

Dr. Jim Canniff

Dr. Valorte Selland

Hanita Dagan

Judy Bachmann

April Byers

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I PREFER CUTTING TO FEELING NOTHING



A story lived by many but told by one brave soul, cutting is a problem that unfortunately exists for many people. In this article a person only referred to as A. Ginn, tells her story of self-mutilation for the reward of pain.

“It makes emotional memory when feeling is gone. I should tell you how I stopped cutting myself but I would sooner feel pain than nothing at all.” (A. Ginn, 2005, The Globe and Mail.)

Self-injurious behaviour (SIB) obviously is very complex in nature. These individuals use items such as razors, lighters and pins to satisfy their need for pain. The scars and wounds left afterward give them emotional control and/or relief from anxiety.

For this young woman there is no story book ending, she still struggles with her need to cut. “I ignore rationality and move like a sleepwalker. And in my unconsciousness, the wounds make reality of lost time.” (A. Ginn, 2005, The Globe and Mail.)

If you, or someone you know is coping with SIB, please contact a psychologist at this office.

SEATTLE CONFERENCE

Dr. Fong, Eileen Ailon and Judy Bachmann recently attended a specialized conference on Custody Assessments and Parenting Coordination in Seattle, at the annual conference for the Association for Conflict Resolution. Dr. Fong presented twice. There was a great Canadian contingent present to include many Judges from the Canadian courts. For more information on the most recent research in the field of custody assessments, contact this office.

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FONG AILON CANNIFF

Suite 115, 205 Riverfront Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T2P 5K4

www.worldpsych.ca

Phone: (403) 266-2017 Fax: (403) 266-4998



PARENTING TODAY - PART I

How to Maintain Communication

Even though teens need to separate from their parents during adolescence, they also need to know that the safety net of home and family is always there for them. If the lines of communication are shut down, they are not yet capable of surviving emotionally; they need support and input. Let's take a look at a few guidelines for keeping the lines of communication open between parents and teenagers.

1. **PAY ATTENTION** to the small things along with the significant things. If you are generally a good listener, your teen will be more likely to talk to you.
2. When your teen talks to you, pay attention. Don't be doing something else.
3. If you can't pay attention right at the moment, explain why. Ask if you can talk about the issue later, at a specific time.
4. **ASK QUESTIONS** for clarification, but watch out for coming across as critical. If your teen sees your questions as disapproval, stop asking them.
5. Expect your teen to change his mind frequently. Avoid commenting on the inconsistencies.
6. Express interest and encouragement in your teen's activities.
7. **ACCEPT** your teen's opinions, even if you don't agree with them.

Preventing High-Risk Behavior

All parents fear their teens becoming involved in high-risk behaviors such as drinking, smoking, and sexual activity. There are some very specific things you can do to minimize your teen's need to act out. Here are some tips for preventing high-risk behavior:



1. Be a part of your teen's life. If possible, be present when she is likely to be home.
2. Encourage your teen to talk to you openly at any time.
3. When your teen tells you things, watch your **REACTION**. Avoid reactions that will cause him to think twice about being candid with you in the future.
4. **BE SPECIFIC** about what kind of behavior you expect and what is unacceptable.
5. Keep harmful substances out of the house. This includes cigarettes, drugs, and alcohol. When teens have access to these items, they are more likely to use them.
6. Expect good things from your teen. Teens who know their parents expect the best have greater emotional well-being.
7. **ENCOURAGE** your teen to become involved in school activities. Those who are involved at school engage in fewer high-risk behaviors.



FEWER WEDDINGS, BUT MARRIAGE STILL VALUED

“Fewer young Canadians are getting married than in the past.”

“About 88% of all females born in 1948 were legally married by the time they turned 30 in 1978. But, among women born in 1970, only 55% were legally married by the time they turned 30 in 2000.”

“In 1981, about 65% of both men and women could be expected to legally marry at least once by the time they reached the age of 50.” Currently, the numbers are down to 51% of women and 48% of men. “More couples are now choosing common-law relationships.”

Source: *Profiling Canada's Families III, VIF (2004)*

“More couples are now choosing common-law relationships.”

Despite these trends, most adult Canadians (80%) still feel marriage is important. This figure does vary with age, but not in the way you might expect. Surprisingly, the least enthusiastic group is middle-aged (35 to 54); only 75% agree that marriage is important. Among those aged 18 to 34, 78% agree. And 87% of Canadians aged 55 and over believe marriage is important.

Source: *Reginald Bibby, The Future Families Project: A Survey of Canadian Hopes and Dreams, VIF (2004)*



JOIN OUR FIRM!

Fong Ailon Canniff is looking for a *new associate* to join the firm.

When we say new associate what we really mean is a new family member. Fong Ailon Canniff prides itself with people that work together like a team and toward common goals.

If you know of someone who is looking to begin or continue a private practice in psychology, please pass on our phone number...

STAMPEDE BREAKFAST

Heads up...our 13th Annual Stampede Breakfast is coming soon. Thursday July 7th!

SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS?

Do you have any suggestions for future articles, or just a comment regarding this newsletter? We welcome your feedback. Please contact Val Schuster at 266-2017 or at vschuster@worldpsych.ca.