



Focusability

NORTHERN REGIONAL CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT



Spring by Danae Horn

Portland had a very long and cold winter this year. December brought the worst storm in 40 years, and by February, I was convinced it would never get warm again. I have had periods in my life that have felt strangely similar to this winter. Situations that seem to have no end. Finances that won't turn around. An illness that lingers. A heartache that will not let go. There comes a point where I usually end up shouting at the top of my lungs: *I am done!* I am done with winter, I am done with struggle, done with illness, done with heartache.

And nothing happens. Nothing changes. My plea goes unheard. We have another week of 40 degree weather and rain.

Then, I finally give in. I embrace my current circumstance as if it will never change. It will always be winter. It will never get warm. I should buy another sweater because there is no end in sight. I no longer resist the winter; I just let it be.

That is the point when I head out to work in the morning and spot the first daffodil smiling at me with its trumpeted mouth. A week later we have our first 70 degree sunny day. Spring has arrived. Winter has gone. Why is it that it takes getting to the point of complete surrender for a season, or life situation, to change? Why doesn't spring arrive the moment I beg for it to come? Why doesn't money rain from above? Why doesn't my illness clear up? Why doesn't my heartache fade the moment I request the change?

I believe the answer lies in our feelings. I have found that when I am struggling with a situation that I am desperate to change, my feeling, the majority of the time, is frustration. The instant that I accept things as they are, my emotions shift. All of a sudden I feel relaxed and at peace with the moment exactly as it is, winter and all. That peace creates a space where my new reality can emerge.

Holding onto feelings of frustration or desperation around changing something in life will only prolong it because feelings perpetuate themselves. Frustration creates more frustration. Desperation creates more desperation.

Feeling at peace with things exactly as they are creates circumstances that you are truly at peace with.

I know it sounds backwards. Feel good in this moment so that the next moment will change. However, it is true. The easiest manifestations I have created are when I have put forth a desire and then completely forgotten about it.

That forgetting is trust that your desire was heard and that it is on its way. No desperation, no frustration. It is coming and because you know that change is coming you are at peace with life exactly as it is.

Before you know it, spring will surround you.



Inside this issue:

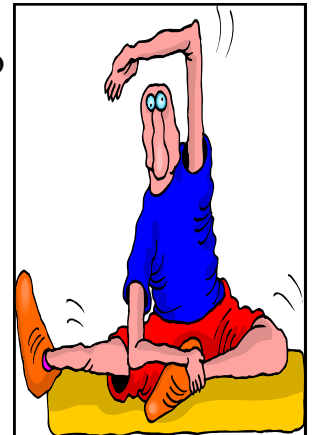
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Staying Calm When You Are Under Pressure

Staying calm when you are under pressure from work, dealing with a health issue, family life or a relationship can be difficult at times. Panic and anxiety can flourish and take over your life, resulting in burn out. Take some steps to stay calm under pressure and to escape the stress before it gets to you and affects your health and daily life.

Instructions

- **Breathe** in and out. When we tend to feel overwhelmed, we forget to breathe deep. Shallow breathing does not help us in situations and can only bring on and increase anxiety. Take 5 minutes to stop and breathe and regain your stability.
- **Take yourself away from the situation.** If you seem to be in overwhelming situations lately, it is best to walk away for awhile. In more serious cases of intense pressure, consider taking a vacation.
- **Stop what you are doing. Go do some form of exercise.** Make time for a swim, a stroll outside within nature or maybe an energetic run. Exercise can keep a sense of balance in our mind and body and help us stay calm in stressful situations.
- **Eat healthy.** Even when you feel that life is upside down, try to eat a balanced and healthy diet. Start your day off with a high energy meal to keep you strong in tough situations at work and daily life.
- **Keep positive things around you.** Keep positive affirmations around you to take a moment and escape the pressure. Put photos of family, of tropical islands or of motivating dreams around you. Stay positive and calm.



Save The Date!!

“Educating Children With Tourette’s Syndrome” April 7th 2011

- **Location:** Italian American Civic Association 192 Bellew Ave. S. Watertown, NY 13601
- **Time:** 9:00 to 3:00
- **Sponsored by:** Northern Regional Center for Independent Living
- **Cost:** \$25.00 Registration Fee (Limited Scholarships available upon request)
- **Lunch Included**

Preparing for Annual Reviews



Annual IEP/504 plan reviews are just around the corner. Here are some things to consider as you approach these reviews.

1. Ideally, you have had frequent contact with the special education teacher throughout the school year. Review these documents as well as any other documents relating to your child. Have these documents organized in a binder with a system that works for you to find any document you need.
2. Talk with your child to see how they feel about the progress they made towards their goals and objectives. If you have any concerns, write them down and make a list of questions to bring with you.
3. If it is time for the triennial review (psychological testing) you want to make certain it is done in advance of the meeting.
4. At the IEP meeting, the special education teacher will review the Present Levels of Educational Performance (PLEP's). Look at the report cards and progress reports and compare them to what is being presented. They should match. For example, there should be no surprises about achievement of a goal/objective or limited progress towards that goal/objective. If there are discrepancies, ask about them and have an open discussion about it. Ask for documentation of how your child is progressing towards their goals. Both special education and general education teachers can give you input on how things are going.
5. Review the supports that are being offered your child. Are they working or do services need adjustment? Any of these supports need to be in writing. All things mentioned here are things the school district needs to provide the child.
6. Discuss programs that are available for your child. Remember that the district needs to consider the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) if considering placement outside of a regular education classroom. If you feel your child will be out of the classroom too often, express your concerns and talk openly about them. Educational Benefit will trump socialization when it comes to programming.
7. Make certain the final IEP document accurately reflects what was discussed at the meeting.

Whenever possible, both parents should attend together. Bring a friend, relative or advocate with you

Preparing to Meet with the Committee on Preschool Education (CPSE) or Committee on Special Education or CSE

At the CPSE or CSE meeting, your child's needs may be discussed in these four broad areas:

- **Management:** This is the area that describes your child's needs in the area of behavior.
- **Social:** This area describes how your child behaves with adults and other children.
- **Academic:** This area describes your child's progress or lack of progress in the areas of reading, writing, math, social studies, science and any other subject he or she is studying.
- **Physical:** This area describes physical supports your child may need in order to be successful in school. This includes anything from specialized equipment to special seating in the classroom.

To remember these four areas, think of them as MAPS of your child. Before going to a CPSE or CSE meeting, think about your concerns. You may have concerns in just one area, a few areas or all. For each area, answer these questions:

1. What concerns you? This could be a behavior, lack of a skill, poor grades in a subject or other concerns.
2. How does this make it difficult for your child to learn or participate in school? This question is very important. The CPSE and CSE work to help children with school problems so you must tell explain why your concern is a *school problem*.
3. What evidence supports your concern? Evidence could be teacher's comments, reports from your child, information from your child's evaluation or your child's report card.



Michael Winerip, New York Times Education Columnist, discusses his recent article on Campus Mental-Health Issues

This week, The Times published two important pieces about college students' emotional health.

One, by Tamar Lewin described a survey of incoming college freshmen who reported the anxious reverberations they continued to feel from a pressure-packed senior year of high school and from the unstable economy.

In an earlier piece, Michael Winerip argued that the best college mental health programs were sometimes created in the wake of high-profile tragedies — including several suicides at New York University in 2003-4.

What follows is an exchange with Mr. Winerip, in which I sought guidance from him on how students and parents might assess the mental health offerings at individual colleges. — Jacques Steinberg

Q. What are some key questions families should ask?

A. Alison Malmon, executive director of Active Minds, a nonprofit group that works to increase awareness of mental illness on campuses, suggests for starters asking how many mental health clinicians there are. The international standard is one clinician for every 1,000 to 1,500 students. Ask whether their clinicians are professionals or graduate students. Ask what kinds of services are provided. If the parent or student already knows the diagnosis— bipolar, for example — is there someone on staff who can treat or work with students who have that disorder? Ask also whether there are support groups for students with particular mental illnesses like eating disorders or anxiety.

Q. If they're interested in a particular college, which office on campus is typically best suited to answer students' or parents' questions about mental health issues?

A. The best suited would be the mental health clinic or student health services. Almost every campus has a C.A.P.S. — counseling and psychological services program.

Q. Should they be wary of putting such questions to the admissions office, given the stigma that — you suggest in the kicker to your column — may well surround mental illness at some colleges?

A. There is no reason to consult the admissions office since there are better sources of information. As for bias, Ms. Malmon says she hasn't seen that. She says that she knows of students who have written about their mental health challenges in their college essays and been admitted to that school.

Q. In your column, you mention the National Alliance on Mental Illness, as well as the Jed Foundation and Active Minds. How might prospective students and their families best use those organizations' resources to learn about the mental-health offerings of individual colleges?

A. While none of these organizations keeps a list of best colleges, there are several ways to get a sense of the quality of a particular college. Active Minds has groups on 306 campuses listed on its Web site. If there's a chapter on a campus, that's a good sign. You can also consult their members. The National Alliance on Mental Illness has chapters all over the country, and while they don't focus specifically on colleges, members are knowledgeable about services in their area and may be able to provide insight.

Q. You note the six suicides at N.Y.U. from 2003 to 2004, as well as the "rash of suicides" at M.I.T. in the 1990s. In your opinion, is it fair for families to consider such statistics, however anecdotal, in taking the full measure of a particular college?

A. No. Those are the tragedies that got news media attention. Unfortunately there are suicides on any campus. As the column points out, often it is a college that gets the publicity that is motivated to create high-quality services.

Meet our New Staff!!

My name is Karen Turck and I have lived in Lewis County all my life. While my son and husband have passed, I have two daughters that live in Lowville that have families of their own. I have 5 grandchildren. I was a stay-at-home mom for many years and had my own Yarn Store in Croghan for a couple of those years. I re-entered the work force as a Senior Support Specialist for the senior training and employment program. I enjoy baking cakes, knitting and trap-shooting. I am happy to be a part of the NRCIL team working in Lewis County to help people with their unique needs.



Join Us For Systems Advocacy Meetings!!

NRCIL wants you to know that “we can’t do it without you, we can’t do it for you, but we can do it with you”.

It is important that as we do our work advocating for people with disabilities, that the voices of the very people we advocate for are at the table identifying issues, writing letters, on the phone making calls and in Albany telling their personal stories.

Please join us as we address local, state and national issues on the 2nd and 4th Monday of every month from 12:00 to 1:30.



Walk For Autism *“We Walk for One....We Walk for All”*



Saturday, April 30th, 2011 @ 11:00
At the Boonville VFW

Join us to kick off National Autism Awareness Month and take steps to support local programs and services.

*For more information please visit www.kelbermancenter.org
Or call (315)797-6241 ext. 373 or (315) 724-6907 ext. 2276 or 2308*



Become a Love & Logic Parent *Learn new parenting tips that really help.*

March 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.
NRCIL Lowville
632 N. State Street Lowville
Call 376-8696 to register

March 10th, 17th, 24th, & 31st
1:30 to 3:30 pm.
NRCIL Watertown
210 Court St. Suite 107 Watertown
Call 785-8703 to register

NYS BREASTFEEDING LAWS

- ◆ **Breastfeeding Bill of Rights:** A mother has rights before she delivers, in the hospital, and when she leaves the hospital. Ask your local hospital about your rights or for more information visit: www.nyhealth.gov/publications/2028/
- ◆ **Right to breastfeed:** A mother may breastfeed her baby in any location, public or private, where the mother is otherwise authorized to be.
- ◆ **Working and Breastfeeding:** Employers are required to provide unpaid time, and to make a reasonable effort to provide private space, for women to express milk or nurse their children for a period of up to three years following the birth of a child.

BREASTFEEDING PROGRAMS

WIC Breast Pump Program offers breastfeeding support, breast pumps, and collection kits for those women who are breastfeeding their babies, qualify for the WIC programs, and meet specific guidelines.

WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program offers one to one support prenatally through postpartum. For information on the **Support Group** in Jefferson County call: 782-9222

Cornell Cooperative Extension Nutrition Programs provide breastfeeding information and support by home visit or phone.

Tri-County Breastfeeding Coalition



BREASTFEEDING MOMS GROUPS

Jefferson County

Breastfeeding Moms Group
Fridays, 10AM-12PM

Cornell Cooperative Extension
203 N. Hamilton Street, Watertown
Contact: Keitha at 785-4050

Fort Drum

North Country Mothers Group
Every Wednesday 10AM-11:30AM
Adirondack Community Center
Contact: Brenda Hewitt at 315-772-6404

Lewis County

Breastfeeding Moms Group
1st Friday of every month. 10AM-12PM
WIC office, Lewis County General Hospital's
Children's Services Building, Lowville
Contact: Angel at 376-6427

St. Lawrence County

Breastfeeding Moms Group
Last Monday of every month, 11AM-1PM
New Hope Church, Potsdam
Contact: Emily at 804-1724

Breastfeeding Moms Group
1st Tuesday of every month, 10AM-11:30AM
New Testament Church, Andrew St., Massena
Contact: Snow at 764-1711

Helping Hands for People in Need

Resources available to strengthen your household and make ends meet.

To find out more about Nutrition Programs, School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, WIC, Tax Credits, Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), Medicaid, Child Health Plus (CHPlus), Family Health Plus (FHPlus), Job Placement Programs, Food Stamp & Employment Program, One-Stop Career Centers, Public Housing, Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8), Domestic Violence, Social Security Disability Insurance & Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Child Support Enforcement, Child Care, Refugee & Immigrant Assistance, and Veterans' Benefits. Go to: myBenefits.ny.gov or go to www.otda.ny.gov



Family Support Services

Northern Regional Center
for Independent Living (NRCIL)



Groups and Classes:

- ★ Autism Spectrum Disorder Support Group
-2nd and 4th Monday of every month from 5:30 to 7:30 PM @ NRCIL
- ★ CHALLENGES: A Parenting Support group for all childhood and teen issues
-1st and 3rd Thursday of every month from 5 to 6:30 PM @NRCIL
- ★ Families Together in the North Country-Advocating for and Supporting families in the North Country
-First Thursday of every month @ 12 noon
- ★ Fort Drum Parent Support Group
-2nd Tuesday of every month at ACS on Fort Drum from 11:30 AM to 1 PM
- ★ Love and Logic Parenting Class
-Call Cathie for times and dates
- ★ Positive Parenting with a Plan
-Call Cathie for times and dates
- ★ Youth Advocacy Leadership & Empowerment
-Coming Soon! Call Kristy for more information

FREE childcare during all meetings if you call us and request it at least 24 hours in advance (315-785-8703)



Trainings and Workshops:

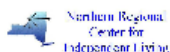
- Advocacy Skills
- Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)
- Education Collaboration
- Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- ...and much more



Come meet other families who understand what you are going through.
Build friendships to last a lifetime!

Northern Regional Center for Independent Living (NRCIL)
210 Court Street, Suite 107
Watertown, NY 13601

For more information please call us at 315-785-8703



LOOK WHAT'S NEW~

Beginning this month, CAPC will be @ NRCIL on the last Thursday of each month from 1:00 to 4:00 to facilitate Food Stamp enrollment. Feel free to stop by or call Jamie at CAPC at 782-4900 ext. 227 for additional information.

"Access for All"

March 23rd

April 27th



We will be meeting the 4th Wednesday of every month from 3:00 to 4:00 @ NRCIL in Watertown.

Please join us!



Upcoming Event !!! "Cabin Fever Rummage & Craft Sale"



Fundraiser for Families Together in the North Country
March 19th 10:00 to 4:00

Liberty Building 210 Court Street, Watertown, NY

Tables for vendors or individuals will be available for \$25.00 each. This is a great way for you to sell your crafts or unwanted items and make a little money! We are looking for families that would like to assist with the planning of this event.

For more information, please contact Family Support Services at 785-8703



Drop in Peer Center at NRCIL in Lowville

Join us for refreshments and chat!
Hear what others have to say.
We all have a journey to share.

Every Wednesday
10:00 to 12:00
NRCIL

7632 N. State Street
Lowville, NY
(315) 376-8696

New Grocery Delivery Service Available On Line By Sue Morrow

Are you having a difficult time getting to the grocery store in this winter weather? Shopping on line might be a possible solution. The Meijer Corp. has just announced the ability to “grocery shop” from the comfort, convenience, and safety of your own home. This service is now available in all fifty states. The Grand Rapids, Michigan, based retailer, with 12 local superstores, has launched a grocery delivery service on line available in all 50 states and Canada. Order any of 5,000 items from your home computer at www.meijerdoorstepgrocer.com.

Then, tack on shipping fees of \$7.95 and up, and items will typically arrive on your doorstep within two to four days. The site offers non-perishable national and Meijer brand items as well as baby supplies, pet food, cleaning supplies, laundry products and health and beauty items. About 3,000 items are individual-sized and the rest are multi-pack or bulk items. The grocer will offer a 10% discount on orders totaling \$100 or more, but only for a limited time. Customers can enter the promo code "grocery" at time of checkout to get this valuable savings. Eat well, and stay warm!

Let's Build Homes People Can Get Into!

You would think that with the emphasis our culture places on preparing ahead, building homes with the homeowner's future well – being in mind would be a major priority. Believe it or not, the majority of new homes are being built with serious impediments – like steps and narrow doorways – which could keep an aging homeowner who develops a disability from living in their own home.

Statistics show that people are far more likely to develop a mobility disability as they get older. Houses need to be built with the foresight to address this trend. “Visitability is a movement to change home construction practices” so that nearly “all new homes offer a few specific features” that make the home much easier for people to: live in, age in, and visit.

Visitable features include:

- At least one zero-step entrance.

- 32 inch clear passage at doorways (usually 34 inches door minimum).

- At least a half bath (preferably a full bath) on main floor.

These are not costly to include at the beginning of construction – estimates are from zero to \$100.00 for homes built on a concrete slab.

It is foolish and outrageous that most new homes continue to be constructed with unnecessary barriers, especially in light of how simple it is to build basic access in to new homes and how devastating it can be to leave access out. “These easily avoided barriers cause daily drudgery; unsafe living conditions; social isolation and forced institutionalization.”

Without question, many people would be spared great grief and financial hardship if more homes were built “visitable”.

Wise builders are building visitable homes before laws are passed, because of the numerous marketing benefits of visitability.

Would you please refer any builders or lawmakers you meet to the following resources?

www.concretechange.org or call 1+(404)378-7455

www.ap.buffalo.edu/idea/visitability or call 1+(716)829-3485 ext.329 or TTY: 1+(716)829-3758

American Association of Retired People (AARP) call 1+(888)our-aarp or see www.aarp.org/research/housing-mobility

Mark Curtis at Northern Regional Center for Independent Living (NRCIL) at (315)785-8703.

Smart builders are catching on!

[Quotes – Courtesy of Concrete Change]

Written by Mark Curtis, Americans with Disabilities Act Advocate at NRCIL

Support Groups

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Support Group

Thursdays @ NRCIL
2:30 to 3:30

- Peer Support
- Topic Groups
- Confidential
- Speakers



PEERS TOGETHER A Mental Health Self-Help Group

Every Wednesday @ NRCIL
2:30-3:30

- Confidential
- Foster Friendships
- Develop Coping Skills
- Share Experiences
- Information & Resources
- Vent & Discuss Issues
- Self-Advocacy Skills



Do You Have Multiple Mental
Health Diagnosis?
Do You Have Both A Mental Health
& A Physical Disability?

Please JOIN US!!

**NRCIL's New Support Group
For Co-occurring Disabilities.**

Tuesday's @ NRCIL
4:00 to 5:00

- **CONFIDENTIAL**
- **SHARE COMMON EXPERIENCES**
- **INFORMATION & RESOURCES**
- **SELF-ADVOCACY SKILLS**
- **WEEKLY TOPICS**

Any questions or concern contact Kim or Sue
(315) 785-8703 TTY (315) 785-8704
Toll free 1-800-585-8703



EMPLOYMENT GROUP FOR JOB-SEEKERS

**Open to all. Includes seasoned workers
and those who are new to the
workforce. No experience necessary.
Training will be provided. Must be
willing to share experiences and ideas.**

Wednesdays
10:00 to 11:00 @ NRCIL

LGBTQ SUPPORT GROUP Wednesdays 5:00 to 6:00

- Affirming
- Peer Support
- Confidential
- Share Common Experiences
- Community Supports



For info call (315) 785-8703
Ask for Pat or Kathy B.

Northern Regional Center
For Independent Living

210 Court Street, Suite 107
Watertown, NY 13601

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WATERTOWN, NY
13601**



*Making the difference since
1987!*

- OR CURRENT BOXHOLDER

Join NRCIL today and support our work in the community!

Membership levels:

- Contributing Member \$5
- Family Member \$25
- Patron Member \$50
- Sustaining Member \$100
- Business Member \$250
- Silver Member \$500
- Gold Member \$1000

Members attending the Annual Meeting in April, vote to elect the new Board of Directors.

Membership also includes FREE Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) consultations.

If you would like to become a NRCIL member please fill out this form and circle the membership level you are interested in and return it to NRCIL.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____