



SALEM Digest

Spring 2008

• Topics of interest to friends of Salem Christian Mental Health Association

WHICH HAT SHOULD I WEAR

Cathy Kalverda

How many hats can be worn simultaneously? The rational answer is: one. Wearing more than one hat will cause confusion. A brave observer may approach the wearer to ask what fashion statement is being attempted. The timid will probably walk the other way!



As a woman I understand the one hat concept, and have little trouble choosing which hat to wear. As a therapist, however, it can be challenging to wear only one hat at a time.

Of course, the hats being discussed are not the same. Physical hats can be well-crafted, attractive, and easily worn. However, identity hats are a little harder to wear, particularly one at a time. Identity hats may include therapist, minister, parent, sibling, friend, teacher, or child-care worker.

For instance, when wearing my therapist hat, I leave my other hats (mother, sister, friend) at home. Conversely, my therapist hat is not particularly welcome at home. I have been known to ask what “hat” a family member prefers me to wear during a discussion. At least they have a choice!

In reality, we are usually unaware of what “identity” or part of us is responding to a situation. The shift from one identity to another can happen smoothly. One identity may flow into another out of concern or a wish to change the tone of a conversation. The parent wearing a “friend” hat will quickly return to the parent role when there is a perceived need. However, it is often helpful, and occasionally very important, to be aware of which part of us is required. Indicators such as misunderstanding, hurt feelings or anger should cause us to reflect on our presentation and which identity we are wearing. What happens when we shift from being a parent to a friend of our children? Or when a teacher becomes a buddy to his or her students, or a therapist becomes a preacher towards her clients? When this happens confusion and frustration are likely results.

Everyone has experienced these outcomes at various times.

While shifting identities or hats can be problematic, there are some combinations that can work, provided such a shift is done in awareness. Some combinations are even complementary, such as mother and friend, husband and lover, preacher and pastoral worker, or sister and friend. A preacher who also provides pastoral care will thoughtfully and carefully determine when preaching will have the best impact, and when pastoral care is more appropriate. Each identity requires different skills, dialogue and presentation.

Some identity combinations are best left untried. A leader of teens, for instance, should avoid morphing into a buddy. A therapist is unwise to become a friend to clients, and a sister probably doesn’t appreciate her sibling becoming her “mother.”

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Director's Corner

Mark Vander Vennen,
MA, MEd, RSW

Dear friends,

Surely a defining feature of our time is the "professionalization of care." Over the last number of decades, for whatever reasons, we as a society have offloaded our responsibility to care for those who are most vulnerable to the "professionals." Some of that was positive: it was meant to stop misguided, even abusive practices. But the ultimate effect has been to create a professional social work and health sector that is now in deep trouble (unable to meet the demand), and communities that have become disempowered.

The truth is that neither sector can do it on its own. They need each other. Professional services need to assume their rightful place within community contexts, and communities need to rebuild their capacity to care for their own most vulnerable members. For professionals, that involves learning to embed themselves in communities. For communities, it involves both reaching out and reaching in.

Salem is about redefining the relationship between faith communities and professional services, so that mental health needs are met effectively over the long haul. Our *Vision/Mission* statement calls us, among other things, to "undertake best practice projects which model the development of an active, integrated relationship

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Editor
Judy Cook

Layout & Design
Marian den Boer

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RN 13056 6011 RR 0001

1 Young St.
Suite 512
Hamilton, ON
L8N 1T8
Telephone:
(905)528-0353
(866)347-0041
Fax:
(905)528-3562
Web:
salem.on.ca

Which Hat? *continued*

To focus on the leader/buddy combination: a leader is positioned to provide guidance and direction while a buddy's role is companion and friend, possibly on intimate terms. The leader's challenge is to maintain a level of respect for the position, in order to inspire a willingness to follow. This is almost impossible to achieve when the leader is attempting intimacy at the same time. This doesn't mean that, once the leadership role is over, intimacy can't be established, where a former follower becomes a friend. However, if the leadership role is expected to re-occur in the future, such intimacy is not recommended.

I suspect the leader/friend combination has created problems in places where staff and volunteers are encouraged to provide "relational leadership." Over-involvement and lack of clarity can ensue. Confusion

may stem from the interpretation of the word "relationship." A dictionary definition of the word denotes connection, association and involvement. These concepts do not necessarily suggest a "buddy" relationship. Parents, for example, are generally more effective with their teens if they have developed a relationship in earlier years. This permits movement from parent to mentor, as

the teen matures. However, by its nature the parental role precludes a casual, buddy-type relationship. Leaders and/or parents can develop a connection through involvement with those they are working or living with, without compromising their role.

The mother/sister combination can also be charged. A mother nurtures and protects, applying influence and control particularly when her children are young. A sister, on the other hand, shares parents and a mutual past, which potentially creates closeness, or competition and separation. Attempting to combine these roles can

generate hurt feelings and resentment over time. The exception would be when a sibling is unable to care for or protect herself and requires "parental" support from another sibling.

Is the word "boundaries" surfacing in the reader's mind?

This is entirely appropriate. Boundaries allow us to remain true to the relationship/role we are engaged in. Another key word is respect. We are being respectful to ourselves and others when we are clear as to what "hat" we are wearing. It is respectful to be clear about our boundaries. It is respectful to be clear about what others can expect from us, and what we can expect from ourselves.

It is in our own best

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interest to wear our many “hats” attentively. We need to notice when we are exchanging or adding a hat. This awareness allows us choice—choice regarding how we wish to be

perceived, and what impact we wish to achieve. What hats are in your closet? Are you ready to take some new fashion risks?

Cathy Kalverda's background is in social work and some of her experience include Corrections, Family Services, Children's Aid, Distress lines and Chaplaincy. She has been in Private Practice for the last seven years and has an office in Brampton as well as working one day a week at Toronto District Christian High School. She completed her MDiv at Tyndale Seminary with a focus on counselling and is an associate member of AAMFT. Cathy can be reached at 416-823-7483



Don't miss Salem's Annual General Meeting



SALEM

Monday, May 26, 7:30 - 9 pm
Crosspoint Christian Reformed Church
444 Steeles Avenue West, Brampton, ON, L6Y 0J3

Featuring:

Clayton Rowe, National Manager,
Canadian Programs, World Vision,
on **The Role of Hope in Childhood Resiliency**

Margaret Pypker and **Judy Pitcher**,
on Salem's **Congregational Assistance Plan**
at Rehoboth Church, Bowmanville

along with an update on the
Kerncliffe Heights residential project

Dessert and refreshments following

Become a Salem member!
Download our membership form at www.salem.on.ca.

Building the Bonds of Attachment

A one day conference for those who live and work with children experiencing trauma, loss and attachment difficulties

Wednesday November 12, 2008

Carmen's Banquet Centre

1520 Stone Church East
Hamilton, ON

This seminar will present an overview of the crucial role of a secure attachment on a child's neurological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural development.

Dr. DANIEL HUGHES

Attachment Expert,
will discuss

Latest research
Innovative treatment

Specific strategies of parenting and psychotherapy that will facilitate the development of a secure attachment.

Dr. Daniel Hughes presents in a deeply engaging manner that is congruent with how he conducts therapy. His presentations provide an integrated understanding of his model of psychotherapy and parenting.

For further information or to receive a brochure, call Salem at 905-528-0353 or 1-866-347-0041.

Conference co-sponsored by



SALEM
Christian Mental
Health Association



Hamilton
Public Health Services
Child and Adolescent Services

Director's Corner

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between faith communities and the professional mental health sector.”

WrapAround

Each of Salem’s projects works at rejigging that relationship.

Take *WrapAround*. Wrap-Around is a life-planning process for people who face many profound challenges, including mental health issues, at the same time. It puts the person or family in charge. It builds on what people can do, not what they can’t do. It creates community for people who are alone. It offers hope for a better life for people whose life circumstances seem to be destroying all hope.

WrapAround is something like the past practice of “barn-raising,” but with a new twist. When a neighbour’s barn burned, someone organized members of the community to rally around, and each then made a contribution in his or her own area of strength, ability and time. Today fewer barns burn, but people’s lives can undergo life-shattering, persistent challenges. In such situations, WrapAround is the practice of “people-raising.”

Salem is working with communities to “people-raise.” With the support of a grant from World Vision Canada, Salem is a partner in an exciting new project by the Hamilton Executive Directors Aboriginal Coalition, in which Aboriginal community members use the WrapAround process to support Aboriginal people living in downtown Hamilton. Through the grant, we have also been able to hire Elske De Visch Eybergen—an experienced WrapAround facilitator, coach and trainer—to support West Hamilton WrapAround, working with church members to support single mothers living in poverty in downtown Hamilton. Salem actively supports the new Durham

WrapAround and Northumberland WrapAround programs, through the activities of both June Zwier and myself. I serve as the co-director of the WrapAround Training and Technical Support of the WrapAround Association of Ontario (WAO), and Salem is a founding Board member of Wrap Canada.

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In these ways, WrapAround is about reaching out. But it is also about reaching in: at the WAO we are developing exciting new ways of supporting individual churches to do WrapAround with especially challenging situations in their church. Look for more about this soon!

Other Services

Salem’s other services are also deliberately positioned to build a new relationship between faith communities and the professional mental health sector. With Salem’s *Restorative Practices* in the community, in schools and in churches, community members and leaders participate in circle reconciliation processes in ways that have profound mental health impacts. With the *Congregational Assistance Plan*, where churches purchase for each of their members the possibility of local Christian counselling, decision-making about mental health services resides with the local congregation. With *Building the Bonds of Attachment*, foster, adoptive and biological parents become an

integral part of the professional clinical team, in the effort to build healthy attachments with attachment-disordered children (see box elsewhere in this *Digest*).

These services complement and mutual reinforce both each other and Salem’s dynamic counselling and RE-create programs.

Reaching Out, Reaching In

Jesus calls us to follow him. I believe that means following Jesus to where he has gone and continues to go, namely to the margins of society—to the disenfranchised, the stigmatized, the isolated. Following him therefore means reaching out to those who are hurting. But it also means reaching in—going to those areas within ourselves that we often try to repress because of deep pain, sorrow or trauma. Both forms of reaching involve grappling with difficult things that we prefer not to face. But as we move, we realize that reaching out and reaching in are surprisingly connected. And we have the promise of Jesus’ abiding presence, his profound and effective blessing.

In some small way, Salem seeks to help give all of us as individuals—myself included—and church communities some tools needed for that journey. Then professional services assume their rightful place as supports for community processes.

Please support Salem’s Board and Staff in this ongoing quest. Come to Salem’s Annual Meeting on May 26 to learn more (see box elsewhere in this *Digest*). I would love to hear from anyone interested in Salem’s purpose and initiatives (markvv@salem.on.ca).

Above all, thank you for all you do to reach out and reach in in the name of Christ.

