



TO YOUR HEALTH

Carleton-Willard Village Out-Patient Clinic * 100 Old Billerica Rd., Bedford, MA 01730



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MORE BAD NEWS by Barbara Chenoweth, NP

Even as we begin to comprehend and understand the tragedy of the Marathon bombings last month in Boston, we are bombarded with new tragedies. There is hardly a day without a reminder of violence in our country. If one tried to get away from it, it would be nearly impossible. Every newspaper, TV show, and website broadcasts the latest details of personal trauma, war and natural disasters.

As an individual, a city, or a country, we may be suffering from “secondary traumatic stress.” Although we may not have directly experienced the bombings or the recent tornado, we watch secondhand. We take in the grief of people who lost a family member or friend, a home, or their health. In Boston, many know someone who was directly affected by the bombings. A nurse who cared for bombing victims later finds that she must take care of the perpetrator of the bombings. How do we make sense of the complexities of this kind of loss and destruction?

As a city, as individuals, we have been traumatized. Some more than others; the closer we were to the events, the more serious the trauma. But even those who watched from a distance experience the effects of traumatic stress. Shortly after the bombings, a reporter described Boston as a city with a cloud of depression hanging over it. It’s not uncommon for people to feel overwhelmed with physical and emotional exhaustion. As traumatic events pile up, people can become numb and detached from their emotions. Some become irritable and disassociate from current

events. Others cannot stop re-living and re-experiencing the event. Poor sleep and feeling “on edge” characterize more subtle reactions that may not be recognized as symptoms of traumatic stress.

Coping with all of this bad news is extremely challenging, especially when traumatic events follow closely, one after another. As much as we’d like to turn it all off, avoiding the realities of tragedy is not the best coping strategy. Figuring out how to experience difficult emotions without being overwhelmed by them is another challenge. But this is what we must try to do.

If we are to stay engaged in our world, then allowing ourselves to see, to feel and to understand tragic events is very important. It may mean that we limit the amount of television we watch, or instead of watching events, listening to the radio or reading the newspaper may be a better substitute. It is certainly easy to become consumed with the media. Putting limitations on how much we allow ourselves to be exposed to is a sane way to cope.

Talking with friends and family about tragic events, and expressing emotions that are associated with the event, can have a cathartic effect. Once outwardly expressed, feelings become less powerful and overwhelming. It is through those conversations that we give and gain support.

Sometimes taking a simple, symbolic action can help to heal the wounds of tragedy. Some light a candle in the evening for those who have died or were injured. Many people in Boston have journeyed to



the downtown site of the bombings, bringing flowers or offering their presence in remembrance of those who were lost or injured. Others find comfort in religious practices at their churches or in the quiet of personal meditation.

Through such ways, we can acknowledge the sadness of these events. We can try to do our part to remain involved in the crucial issues that we all face. And if we believe that despite all of the bad news, there is still hope that people can become more compassionate instead of more violent, we can find opportunities in our everyday life to make this happen. For this reason alone, it is important that we do not become numb and distant from the devastating events that are happening.

In our own lives as we live beside our friends and families, each day presents the chance to reach out to each other with caring and compassion. It's the small things that make a difference.

THE PEACE OF WILD THINGS
by Wendell Berry

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's
lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty in the water, and the
great heron feeds.
I come into the place of wild things
who do not tax their lives with fore
thought of grief.
I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting for their light.
For a time I rest in the grace
of the world, and I am free.



**RESULTS OF SURVEY ON RESIDENT
SATISFACTION WITH SATURDAY CLINIC**

Thanks to everyone who completed the Survey on *RESIDENT SATISFACTION WITH SATURDAY CLINIC*! Eighty-four residents (50%) returned the Survey. Of those who completed the Survey, 39% had used the Saturday Clinic. Everyone who responded to the Survey knew about the Saturday Clinic. Of those who had used the Clinic, 70% said the quality of the services they received was excellent, and 30% said the quality was very good. Seventy-nine percent said their appointments were scheduled in a timely way; 21% had no appointment and walked in. When asked if their needs were met by a responsive, friendly and courteous staff, 67% rated their experience as excellent; 30% said very good; and 3% said fair. Another question asked if the person was satisfied with the amount of time they received for an appointment with the NP. Seventy-six percent rated the time as excellent, and 24% said the amount of time was very good.

The questionnaire ended by soliciting suggestions for ways to publicize the Saturday Clinic, as well as ways to improve it. As a result of these suggestions, the Clinic has been announced more frequently in BITS, a sign is posted every week in the Message Center that gives the name of the NP who will be working, and Welcome Teas have been given for each NP. Bio info for each NP has been written in our *To Your Health Newsletter* and extra copies are available in the Clinic. As always, we welcome any comments and suggestions for ways to improve the Clinic's services. Just stop by or write us a note...it's always appreciated!

