

CHAT ROOM



LEONARD MCCULLOCH

Trauma process affects everyone

Since Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2001, our newspaper headlines have been telling us "Days of Mourning Are Here," "FBI Hunts Conspirators," "America's Darkest Day." TV replays of terrorist airplanes hitting the World Trade Center and Pentagon and the resulting destruction and death have been shown to us countless times.

Here in Michigan, a KinderCare center in Farmington Hills had workers receive instructions on signs to watch for in the children. It was recommended that they keep routines as normal as possible and that staff be available to talk to parents about how their children are reacting. One preschooler was very upset and stated, "My mom and dad did not vote for Mr. Bush, I don't know who's going to be in charge now." Another, when asked to go out to the playground with other little ones, said: "Why should I go and play nice? We are all going to get killed anyway."

In Lansing, a sixth grader told of how they studied about the Pentagon and how many floors it was and also about the World Trade buildings and what was in them. Then they started keeping track of survivors as news reports came in.

At Broe Rehabilitation Center here in Farmington Hills, men and women are in recovery from traumatic brain injuries and many also have experienced post traumatic stress disorders. Staff watched the television reports with them, encouraged discussion, and allowed them to write their thoughts and feelings regarding what was occurring. At noon on Friday, Sept. 14, patients and staff joined the nation through television for the program of prayer and remembrance.

Post traumatic stress

These are but a few vignettes of reaction to the horror of New York and Washington, D.C. From a psychological standpoint, this is the stuff that post traumatic stress disorders are made of and this is the business of the mourning process which so many of our citizens will be experiencing. The typical stages of reactions to tragedy could be seen throughout our state and nation - initial shock and disbelief, denial, anger, numbness, disillusionment, acceptance and turning to religion.

Post traumatic stress disorders occur when there has been exposure to a traumatic event either personally or vicariously. The trauma typically involves actual or threatened death or serious injury to self or others. It involves a reactions of helplessness and horror. In children, this reaction may be expressed instead by disorganized or agitated behavior. In the aftermath, individuals suffering from post traumatic stress disorder may have recurrent distressing recollections of the images, thoughts and perceptions. Recurring nightmares are common. Depression, anxiety, and anger may be accompanied by difficulties with sleep, feeling estranged from others, and a sense of further impending doom.

Mourning process

The process of mourning involves multiple tasks. Grief is seen as the raw emotional reaction to loss. It is the "ache of misery" from missing others or things that one had. In these tragedies, there has not only been great loss of life and property but there have also been and will continue to be shock waves worldwide of a loss of security, of being able to take for granted that the world is safe.

With the probability of war it will be difficult to escape being exposed to all that is going on given our technology of instant news coverage and unending instant replays. Tasks that we will all be faced with include processing news of devastation as it continues to come in, tolerating it, helping out each other as best we can, psychologically metabolizing what we are exposed to as best we can and going on.

Leonard McCulloch is affiliated with the American Psychotherapy Association and board certified in trauma, and a member of the American Red Cross Mental Health Disaster team. Call him at (248) 474-2763.

Show a benefit for Longacre House

The Glen Oaks County Club will be the site of the 32nd annual fashion show to benefit Longacre House of Farmington Hills on Thursday, Oct. 4.

Fashions from Clothes Encounters, the Dress Barn, the Gap, Merle Norman and Valentino will be featured. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. for boutique sales. Fashions will be presented at noon, along with a luncheon.

The menu features Michigan salad with cherries, chicken crepes, fresh vegetables, rolls, mini pastries and beverage.

A cash bar will also be available. Tickets cost \$32 (half the price is a tax deductible donation) and are available at the Longacre House, 24705 Farmington Road, north of 10 Mile. Call 477-8404.

The Longacre House is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide cultural, educational, and social opportunities for the community.

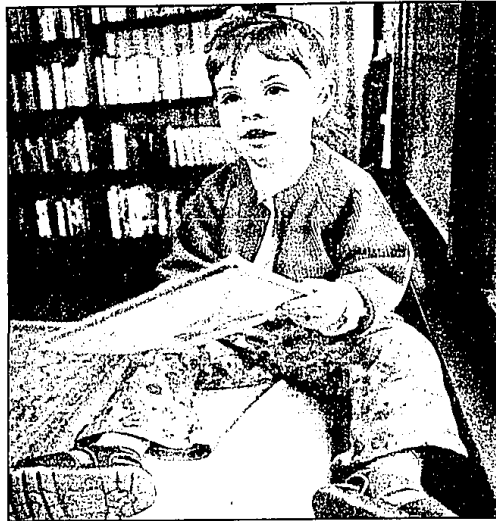
Originally a six-room house built in 1869 by Palmer Sherman, it was the only brick house in the area and a landmark for travelers.

In 1915, the house was sold to

Lumen Goode-nough, a Detroit lawyer, who used it as his summer home. He redesigned and expanded the house into a 20-room Georgian country house. It was the first house in the area to have electricity and a phone.

In 1969, the Goode-nough family donated the house and five acres to be used as a non-profit community center. Income is derived from programs, classes, special events, rentals and an annual fund drive.

Stroll: Priscilla Brouillette, left, models a Dress Barn outfit. Below, the historic Longacre House of Farmington Hills.



STAFF PHOTOS BY DEYAN MITCHELL

In library: Above, Miranda Chahine, 2, in fashions by Gap. Below, Terry Diechert dressed by Valentina and Pat Thoresen in Clothes Encounters fall ensemble in the Longacre House dining room.



Sensory Secrets

Therapist shares theory on learning-touch bond

BY MARY RODRIQUE
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Occupational therapist Catherine Schneider has spent over three decades formulating the theories that support the foundation of her book *Sensory Secrets How to jump start learning in children*.

"It was 21 years in the making," said the Farmington Hills therapist. "I'm not an author, I'm a therapist. I put my ideas down on scraps of paper, on napkins in restaurants."

Conducting workshops for teachers across the country, Schneider found that many of them asked her if she had a book.

"I always said, 'Yes, I'm writing a book. It's in my head.' Two years ago, when kids began hurting each other - like Columbine - actually writing the book became a mission."

Touch and learning

From three decades of observation and working with children in therapy, she has made the connection between lack of human touch and learning deficits. While teachers may have been the intended audience initially, the non-technical writing style would make it a valuable learning tool, especially for new parents.

"It's for everybody," she said.

In *Sensory Secrets*, published Aug. 31, 2001 by Concerned Communications of Arkansas, Schneider examines how kids learn through sensory motor processing. What seems to be simple - that all learning has its basis in sensory development - is actually rooted in complex neurology. Schneider believes that children need movement and stimulation of the sensory systems in order to facilitate learning and that the opportunity for these seem to be diminishing as society becomes more technology based.

Couch potatoes

For instance, she points out, where kids a generation ago played tag and other physically active games every day, today's children are far more sedentary, spending too much time at computer screens and playing handheld video games. Today, babies spend hours each day being toted from place to place in plastic carriers, and propped up in those carriers for hours each day, missing out on human touch.

When children have deficits in the early movement foundation, it can cause problems later in the classroom. "Movement is why we pick the hobbies we do, the choices we make," Schneider said.

Schneider, a graduate of Wayne State University, began her career in 1970 with jobs at Henry Ford Hospital and then the Plymouth State Home.

Three years later, with the introduction of government mandated special education programs, she went to work in schools, including Birmingham Public Schools where she worked 13 years.

In short, easy to read chapters, Schneider walks the reader through various scenarios - problems stemming not only from too little touch but from too much stimulation. Perhaps most helpful, she offers a skills inventory as a tool for readers to investigate the holes in development for any person. And she suggests homework activities for parents to interact with their kids.

Sensory Secrets is available for \$15.95 plus shipping.

Concerned Communications, P.O. Box 1000, Siloam Springs, AR 72761. Call (800) 447-4332 for more information.



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILLY BRIDGEMAN

Author: Catherine Schneider spent years researching her book, *Sensory Secrets* (left).