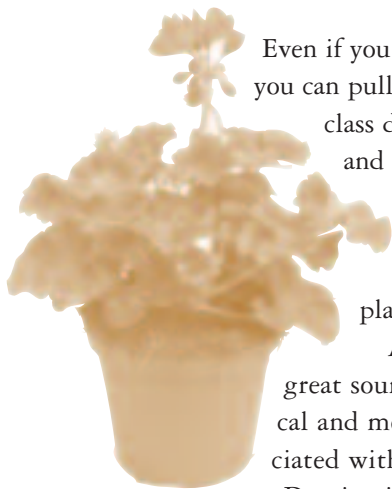


Getting Down and Dirty: Why Gardening Feels So Good



Even if you can't race through traffic snarls, or lash out at your boss, you can pull those weeds from your garden. If running to an exercise class doesn't sound great at 6 a.m., you can still lift bags of soil and push a wheelbarrow around. If life in a cubicle isn't your idea of decor, you can still show off your personality in the flowers and shrubs in your yard. And what about all that control most of us desire? Well, think about those little plant and veggie lives that are in your hands.

And health experts couldn't be happier. Gardening is a great source of exercise and nutrition. The benefits are both physical and mental; because there is such a wide range of activities associated with gardening.

Dominating Mother Nature is tough work. Creating a flowerbed, planting trees, designing a walking path, and digging holes can burn between 250 and 500 calories an hour, depending on your level of activity.

Besides the physical activity, gardening is good for your mental health. For many, it offers a level of serenity. It's often a soothing activity that gets us out with nature and gives us a break from the daily rigor we all go through. We listen to the birds, or to music or chat with neighbors. We relax and breathe. Some studies show it helps our concentration and reduces our depression.

Gardening can provide that simple aesthetic joy and satisfy our instinct to nurture and provide support. Our reward is in the fragrance and beauty. Oftentimes, it's also the ripe and delicious homegrown fruits and vegetables. It's direct access to healthy food. What could be better?



Mission Statement

As women of today we want to improve the lives of women of tomorrow by increasing awareness and knowledge of mental health issues. We wish to remove the stigma of mental illness by educating the public. It is also our goal to empower women through increased awareness of mental health issues and encourage a holistic approach to mental health care which acknowledges everyone's physical, mental, and spiritual needs.

To Become A Member

For information and to receive a membership brochure, please call Linda Jones at 858-514-5153, or visit our website at www.vistahill.org.

Just Between Friends is published twice a year by the Friends of Vista Hill Foundation, 8787 Complex Drive, Suite 200, San Diego, CA 92123

The Vista Hill Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit system dedicated to providing excellence in behavioral health care for the people of San Diego County.



Membership BENEFITS

All memberships are renewable on a yearly basis. Enjoy WC programs at a reduced rate and support Vista Hill. Join today!

\$50 Ruby Level

- 20% discount on tickets to Women's Council on Mental health programs and Q&A forums featuring nationally-recognized experts, authors and celebrities
- Subscription to bi-annual newsletter
- A distinctive and elegant goldtone membership pin

\$250 Sapphire Level

- Preferred seating at all programs
- Invitation to sponsor receptions with guest speakers
- All Ruby Level benefits

\$500 Emerald Level

- Emerald Member listing in Women's Council event programs
- Invitation to sponsor receptions with guest speakers
- 2 complimentary VIP tickets to programs
- Prominent VIP seating at all programs
- All Ruby Level benefits

\$1,000 Diamond Level

- Diamond Member listing in Women's Council event programs
- Invitation to you and your guests to sponsor receptions with guest speakers
- 4 complimentary VIP tickets to programs, with complimentary valet parking
- Prominent VIP seating at all programs
- All Ruby Level benefits

Coping With A Family Member's Mental Illness

If coming to terms with your sibling's or spouse's or parent's mental illness is stressful and difficult for you, you are not alone. In any family, a psychiatric disorder changes everyone's life in many basic ways. Strange, unpredictable behaviors in a loved one can be devastating, and your anxiety can be high as you struggle with each episode of the illness and worry about the future.

Over time, family members often find that they do gain the knowledge and skills to cope with mental illness effectively. Somehow, they find they have strengths they never knew they had, and they can manage situations they never even anticipated.

The following are useful and important tips to remember that will help you do the best for yourself and your family member:

- Mental disorders affect the whole family, not just the person who is ill.
- Separate the person from the disorder. Strange behavior may be a symptom of the disorder. Don't take it personally.
- No one is to blame for the illness.
- Symptoms may change over time while the underlying disorder remains.
- Despite your best efforts, your loved one's symptoms may get worse, or they may improve.
- You may have to revise your expectations and renegotiate your emotional relationship with the ill person.
- Don't be afraid to ask your sibling or parent if he or she is thinking about hurting him- or herself. Suicide is real.

- Acknowledge the remarkable courage your sibling or parents may show when dealing with a mental disorder.
- Mental health professionals have varied degrees of competence. You should request the diagnosis and its explanation from the highest-level professional available.

Taking Care of Yourself

- You have a right to ensure your personal safety.
- If you feel extreme resentment, you are giving too much.
- It is not OK for you to be neglected. You have emotional needs and wants, too.
- Don't shoulder the whole responsibility.
- You are not a paid professional. Your role is to be a spouse, sibling, or parent—not a caseworker.
- The needs of the ill person do not necessarily always come first.
- If you can't care for yourself, you can't care for someone else.
- It is important to have boundaries and to set clear limits.
- Just because a person has limited capabilities doesn't mean that you expect nothing from him or her.
- It is natural to experience many and confusing emotions such as grief, guilt, fear, anger, sadness, hurt, or confusion. You, not the ill person, are responsible for your own feelings.
- Inability to talk about your feelings may leave you stuck or "frozen."
- You are not alone. Sharing your thoughts and feelings in a support group may be helpful and enlightening.

Saturday, October 14, 2006—Join us for our 17th Annual Gala, Under The Tuscan Sun, at the Hyatt Regency La Jolla at Aventine. All Women's Council participants are welcome. Call 858-514-5153 today.

Are Your Kids Off to College?

What They Need to Know

Q: *College is so much harder than I expected it to be. I feel stressed out all the time.*

A: Although stress is a normal part of life, it can sometimes become overwhelming and even dangerous. It can cause physical, emotional and behavioral problems which can affect your health, your relationships, and your grades. Excessive amounts of stress can cause symptoms like insomnia, backaches, or headaches.

Consider exercising and avoiding caffeine and alcohol. Sharing your feelings with friends and family is also a good way to cope with everyday stress. However, if you think that you may be under excessive or ongoing stress, it's important to talk to a mental health professional.

If you begin feeling depressed but your college doesn't have a psychiatrist on staff, talk to your family doctor or the physician at the Health Center. He or she will probably do a physical exam to check whether any other medical illnesses may be contributing to your symptoms. If the doctor recommends a psychiatric consultation or treatment, ask for the names of two or three psychiatrists. Request a copy of your med-

ical records for the psychiatrist to review. You can also seek advice from clergy, friends and family members.

Q: *Every Friday and Saturday night the guys in my fraternity have at least five beers—does that count as binge drinking?*

A: It's interesting to note that young adults aged 18 to 22 who attend college drink more than those who don't attend college. Unfortunately, this is a time when many students start to abuse alcohol. Binge drinking is usually defined for young men as consuming five or more drinks in a row and four or more in a row for young women. By the end of college, almost half of all students have had at least one episode of binge drinking.

A potentially fatal physical reaction to an alcohol overdose—alcohol poisoning—is the most serious consequence of binge drinking. When excessive amounts of alcohol are consumed, the brain is deprived of oxygen. The struggle to deal with an overdose of alcohol in combination with the lack of oxygen will eventually cause the brain to shut down the voluntary functions that regulate breathing and heart rate.

Symptoms of alcohol poisoning include:

- Vomiting
- Loss of consciousness
- Cold, clammy, pale, or bluish skin
- Slow or irregular breathing (less than 8 breaths a minute or 10 or more seconds between breaths).

Q: *What if when I move into my dorm, there are a few girls who make themselves sick after eating? How will I know if they're bulimic?*

A: You may not know when someone is bulimic because they usually hide their binges. Since most of the time they don't become drastically thin, their behaviors may go unnoticed. But, they binge frequently. They may eat a really huge amount of food in a short period of time and they may eat very fast. After a binge, stomach pains and the fear of gaining weight can cause them to purge by throwing up or using a laxative.

In early stages of an eating disorder, people often deny that they have a problem. But with proper medical care, they can return to better emotional and physical health.

Recommended Reading

Finding My Balance— A Memoir with Yoga

by Mariel Hemingway
(don't miss Ms. Hemingway
at our March 8, 2007
Women's Council Luncheon)

Detour: My Bi-Polar Road Trip in 4-D

by Lizzie Simon

Smashed

by Koren Zailckas

Extraordinary Women: Fantasies Revealed

by Ilene Leventhal,
Francine Levinson,
Clay Blackmore (photographer)



Save the Date!



Shatter the Silence . . . This is Not My Fault

Mariel Hemingway speaks
about suicide and more.

She is granddaughter of Nobel prize-winning famed novelist, Ernest Hemingway, and still only in her 40s, Mariel Hemingway has survived four suicides within her own family. Fighting what she calls the "Hemingway curse," Mariel has suffered from depression and her own suicidal thoughts. A successful model, actress, author and mother, she speaks candidly about the genetic tendencies toward mental illness and a childhood plagued with pain and heartbreak. Today, her message is clear; there is a way out, there is help, and as a survivor, it is not her fault.

Join Vista Hill as we kick off our 50th Anniversary year with this Women's Council on Mental Health Spring Luncheon program on Thursday, March 8, 2007 at the Manchester Grand Hyatt. Mariel Hemingway will speak from noon to 1:30. Save the date now. Watch for more information about table sales, seating, etc. Questions – call Linda Jones at 858-514-5153.



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