

Your Wellness

Strategies for Mental Health, Career, and Family Success

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Recco Santee Richardson, Ph.D., LPC

Dr. Recco's Corner

With life comes trouble! Be it small troubles or big ones, it is only a matter of time before trouble knocks at our door. I wish we could pre-register for our troubles, or select when they come, but we can't.

As such, the next best thing we can do is be prepared for the day of trouble. Preparation is the key to success and for weathering the storms and troubles of life. It is preparation that helps us keep our perspective. It allows us to dig deeper and call upon the resolve that has carried us through before.



With all that is within me, now is the time to be prepared for everything that may come our way. With a little planning, foresight, and levels of anticipation, we can lessen the blow and impact of the troubles that come to sway our conviction and change our path. Speaking for myself, had I the financial crisis that hit our nation from 2008 to 2012 would not have blasted me so hard. It took me years to recover and move on.

This is not a doomsday cry or a Chicken Little shout. Rather, it is an encouragement to all that will hear, to prepare for what may come, to prepare for things not to work out like planned, and to prepare for things to fall apart. I'm not sure why we fail to prepare and set ourselves to be at our best when life and unfortunate situations befall us.

Surely, being prepared lessens the blow and builds character in us. We grow stronger by successfully enduring and lifting the weight of troubles. Yes, it can be done and has been done by so many people.

Are you prepared? I'm prepared. Are you ready for what will eventually come? I'm ready. Are you ready to grow and increase? I'm double ready.

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RSRC Program Services



Recco S. Richardson Consulting, Inc.

Who Are We

Recco S. Richardson Consulting Inc. (RSRC) is a multi-faceted human service agency that provides innovative and effective mental health services, psycho-educational classes, community programs, seminars/workshops, and research. The organization was founded in 2005 by Recco Santee Richardson, Ph.D., LPC.



**"We offer a variety
of life changing
programs."
Dr. Recco**

Our Services/Programs

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Santee Book Publishing



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"Here to help, Here to serve."

Therapist's Spotlight

Featuring: Jalen Toins, MS, LLPC

The Spotlight Therapist for the month of November is Jalen Toins. He is currently working part-time contractually here at Recco S. Richardson Consulting. He has a full-time with the State of Michigan as the technician for the Access and Crisis Line programs. Jalen plans to continue working for the State of Michigan, while working towards eventually owning his own counseling practice. He has a bright future ahead of him. He will get to his destination.

As Jalen has grown within the counseling field, he has found himself mostly working with teenage boys and young adults. Sometimes finding a male therapist is a challenge. Jalen has been one of those therapists that teenage boys need and search for. He can relate to them, show support, and encourage them during their journey in therapy.

1). What seems to be a central theme of your clients dating/family life and how to do help them?

Jalen primarily sees teenage boys. He said that there is not much of a central theme around dating or family life. He mentioned that usually the teens just play video games and avoid family time. Jalen thought about the women he has known in his life. He mentioned that with women, they tend to be leaders and have certain expectations. When they are in a relationship though, there seems to be a feeling of needing to change, even though they might have went 30 plus years being a certain way.

Jalen stated that we should not change who we are too much for the sake of dating a person. Jalen encourages women (and men) to identify if a decision to change is their desire or does it come from someone telling them they should be a certain way. At the end of the day, we all must listen to ourselves.

2). When in doubt, what should a person do? Why?

He offered that when in doubt, a person should do what they feel is right for themselves. We should look at your life. If something does not align with our values or benefit us, perhaps we should move away it. Jalen feels that it is important to listen to ourselves in the present moment and recognize what is working for us. Assessing what we value is important to do.

It is also important to weigh the pros and cons. In addition, talking about our dilemma helps too. We can ask for opinions. We all have doubts. However, we must do what is best for us.

3). What suggestions do you give clients who just want to disappear or escape life?

Jalen stated that there are times that everyone wants to disappear and escape from life. We all get into these thoughts, and they are tough to break. The same routine can be exhausting. Jalen says, to break the routine, do something different. For example, take a different route home, take the day off work, go on a vacation, plan a night out, or switch around things. Sometimes a change of pace or scenery can do wonders for our mental health.



Jalen Toins, M.S., LLPC

“Jalen is flourishing as a therapist. He has a keen way of helping clients reach their goals.”

Dr. Recco

4). How should a person deal with the current world problems and issues?

Jalen had a difficult time deciding what people should do to deal with the current world problems and issues. He eventually reported that there is not anything that we really can do. Rather, the goal can be to find what works for us and helps us cope with the world's problems.

We can distract ourselves by listening to music, enjoying family time, or cooking/baking. It helps to successfully ignore what is going on. Jalen added that attending mental health counseling sessions can help because it provides a safe space to express concerns.

“What is missing in our lives often comes back again, and again. It wants to be a part of our life.”
Dr. Recco

“We have to find ways to tune the cares of the world out.”
Dr. Recco

5). What seems to evade your clients the most and how do you help them secure it?

He quickly said that clients seem to not know what they want. Since teens are most of his caseload, Jalen stated that they are still learning about themselves and life. He said that his adults do not always know what they want either. If by chance they do know what they want, they do not always know how to go about securing it. He feels that counseling sessions provides a place to brainstorm what they want and need.

6). What seems to be the missing link in most people lives and how can counseling sessions help them?

Jalen offered that the missing link in most people's lives seems to be that they do not know themselves. He tries to get his client to discuss and see what makes them who they are and what their traits are. He said that attending counseling helps with this because it is mirrors people and allows them to talk.

7). Why is it important for individuals and clients to walk in their purpose?

Jalen offered a quote that is perfect for this question. He said, “when you recognize you are on the wrong train, the longer you stay on it, the more expensive it is to get off.” In essence, he feels that if you are walking without purpose, you are essentially on a train that you do not know where it is going. It can be nice to be on that train, and you can enjoy that train ride, but if you have a purpose, you will want to find the direct path.

Jalen stated that there might be detours, but if you know your purpose, you know what path will get you to your goals. If you stay on the train that is going opposite from your purpose, the longer it will take for you to get there.

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**"Our goal is to
guide clients to
better outcomes."
Dr. Recco**

Having A Holiday Season that Works Good for You

By Hannah Rau, Master's Level Counseling Intern

The holiday season, a time of joy, celebration, and togetherness, may also be a significant source of stress for many people. While the festivities may create an outward sense of cheer, underneath the surface, there can be a mix of anxiety, pressure, and emotional strain. Stress around the holidays can stem from several factors, including family dynamics, financial pressures, packed schedules, and the pressure to make everything perfect. Recognizing your sources of stress and using practical coping strategies can help make the holidays more manageable and enjoyable.



Less Family Stress

Family gatherings, while filled with opportunities for connection, can also be emotionally charged. For some, family gatherings may bring up unresolved conflicts or strained relationships. Navigating different personalities and expectations at family gatherings can be draining. It's helpful to enter these gatherings with realistic expectations.

No family is perfect and accepting that there may be tension allows us to focus more on the positives. Clear and respectful communication can go a long way. If a certain topic is likely to spark conflict, it might be best to steer conversations in a neutral direction. Setting boundaries around our time and energy is also an important way to protect our stress level and mental well-being.

Less Money Stress

Money is another major source of holiday stress. Between gifts, travel, food, and decorations, expenses can quickly add up. For those already on a tight budget, the added financial pressure can feel overwhelming. This is where budgeting becomes a powerful tool. Taking time before the holidays to plan your spending can help us avoid last-minute panic and post-holiday regrets. Decide what we can reasonably afford and prioritize what matters most to us and our loved ones. It may also help to manage expectations with others. If gift-giving is a tradition, consider suggesting a spending limit or a gift exchange format.

Less Time Constraints

Time management is another common challenge during the holidays. Between work responsibilities, family gatherings, shopping, and social obligations, it can feel like there aren't enough hours in the day. The key to managing time-related stress is prioritization. Not every invitation needs to be accepted, and not every event needs to be attended.

Take a moment to assess what truly adds value to our holiday season. Create a schedule that allows space for rest, and don't be afraid to say no when necessary. Doing fewer things with more presence and intention often result in a more fulfilling experience than trying to do everything and feeling burned out.



Hannah Rau, BS
Master's Level Intern

"Hannah is doing a great job. She is effective with her clients and others."
Dr. Recco

Take Care of Ourselves

One of the most overlooked but essential ways to reduce holiday stress is to prioritize taking care of ourselves. It's easy to neglect our basic needs when we're busy or trying to make others happy. Prioritizing sleep, nutrition, movement, and downtime is crucial for overall well-being. Carving out time to recharge, whether it's taking a walk, enjoying a quiet cup of tea, or spending a few minutes doing something we like, can help reset our stress levels.

Self-care also includes giving ourselves emotional space to acknowledge and process our emotions. The holidays can bring up sadness, grief, or loneliness, especially for those of us who have experienced loss or are far from loved ones. Allowing those emotions to be present, rather than suppressing them, can be an important step toward healing and balance.

*The holiday season is a wonderful time to create new memories,
hope for betterment, let go of hinderances, and embrace
all that is possible in life.
Dr. Recco*

Expectations Vs. Reality

Another helpful approach is to set realistic expectations. The pressure to create the “perfect” holiday, complete with flawless meals, thoughtful gifts, and festive decor, can be exhausting. Social media and cultural norms can often reinforce these ideals, but they don't reflect the reality of most people's lives. Instead of aiming for perfection, we can focus on the meaning. What do we want to remember about this season? What traditions bring us joy? What can we let go of? Permitting ourselves to not do it all and not to do it perfectly can relieve a lot of stress.

Ultimately, the holiday season doesn't need to be about doing more, spending more, or being more. It can be a time to reconnect with what matters most in life. By approaching this time of year with intention, self-compassion, and practical strategies, we can navigate stress while enjoying the moments that matter.



**"It is best to first
meet our own
expectations."
Dr. Recco**

Jazz and Jambalaya 2025 Event Sunshine Committee Event



Brenda, Amber, Ciara, Dr. Recco, Rene, Pam, Monica,
and Samantha



Jazz and Jambalaya table decorations



Dr. Rani, Dr. Recco, Rene, and Randi



Pam Nealy

Ciara, Jennifer, and Amber



Monica and Linda

"We had a marvelous
time at the Jazz and
Jambalaya event."
Dr. Recco

Supporting Children Through The Holidays

By Amber Crandon, BS, Master's Level Intern

The holidays can be a fun, but very overwhelming time of year for children. As a result, we must be supportive of all children especially neurodivergent children. Specifically, children on the autism spectrum, those who are ADHD, and those who are just extremely sensitive to their environment may need additional guidance during the holidays.

The holidays can feel not only overstimulating for children but emotionally challenging which can lead to various behavioral outbursts and behaviors, such as the below charted.

Emotional meltdowns	Being hyper	Poor boundaries
Limited coping	Increased impulsivity	Streaks of anxiety
Sensory overloads	Regressive behaviors	Being demanding
Increased irritability	Sensory struggles	Ignoring directives
Aggressive behaviors	Disrupted sleep	Incomplete tasks
Feeling alone	Low tolerance	Deep dread
Easily annoyed	On-going agitation	Being unreasonable
Excessive anger	Poor self-management	Testing the limits

The fore-mentioned is extremely common during the holidays, and usually reflects stressors in the environment, rather than “bad behavior.” The last few months of the year features an increase in noise, lights, social demands, travel, and unpredictable schedules. The stated can be very overwhelming for adults and children who are still developing and/or are neurodivergent.

The disruption in schedule can be especially damaging since children thrive best when they have a set schedule and routine to follow. This is especially true for neurodivergent children as structured settings helps to create a sense of safety that allows them to stay regulated, manage transitions, handle demands, avoid becoming anxious, and recover more quickly from stress. As parents and caregivers, it is important to understand the child’s needs, including any sensory sensitivities, signs of social fatigue, and their need for clear expectations.



Amber Crandon, BS
Master's Level Intern

“Children’s emotions
should be protected.”
Dr. Recco

During the holiday season it is important to try and implement a few strategies to help reduce stressors that impact children. The first thing to do is create a flexible but predictable holiday routine that can help children to feel more stable during a generally unpredictable time. It may also help to create visual schedules, such as a calendar on the fridge, so that they know what to expect and will feel less anxious.

When discussing the upcoming schedule with your child it can also be helpful to prepare them for what they may expect to encounter during the events, what they will see or do, and how to respond. Again, predictability can do a lot to soothe a child's anxiety and stress about a situation.

Sometimes, even with advance preparation the day of the event may come, children may still be too overwhelmed to handle various holiday plans. In these situations, it is important to provide them with sensory-friendly environments in which they can cool down and begin to regulate their emotions better. It may also be beneficial to offer them choices to give them a better sense of control. For example, instead of saying "It is time to leave," you may say "Do you want to bring the tablet or your drawing supplies for the car ride?" This helps them to feel like they have more power over the situation and helps to make the transition smoother.

It is also important to be aware of and utilize different coping tools for kids, such as breathing techniques, movement breaks, fidget tools, and grounding exercises. These concepts provide children with concrete activities, accessible strategies to regulate their emotions, ways to manage sensory, and maintain a sense of control during busy or unpredictable holiday environments.

In the end, it is important that adults are calm when facing children who are overwhelmed by the holidays. While we may be feeling frazzled as well, displaying that to a child is not going to help calm them down at all. We must learn to adjust our expectations and communicate openly about changes. The holidays are supposed to be a joyful time where many happy memories are created. Thus, it is important to prioritize things and children's well-being over perfection.



**"We have to consider
children at all times."
Dr. Recco**

A Closer Look at How to Change

By Recco Santee Richardson, Ph.D., LPC

In life, there are several common yet critical words that we must embrace and understand. Change, and the need to do so, is one of those words. Today, I stand in the gap and in proxy for those of us who need a good old-fashioned change in life. The message and process of change are basic in nature but powerful in the results that they can produce.

The following are change concepts that tend to be topics during my mental health counseling sessions with clients. The list is not exhaustive. Rather, it's a good starting point for those of us who desire to break cycles and secure permanent change in our lives.

1). The Messenger & Message: In my 60 years of living and 30-plus years as a professional counselor, I have learned that our need for personal change is often announced by someone else. Specifically, our family members, previous love interests, boss, co-workers, friends, children, and other trusted individuals are typically those who bring to our attention areas of growth and change needed in our lives. The truths that they speak about our inadequate character traits, wayward ways, poor decisions, and self-centered desires will remain a theme and a struggle until we change.



"Our personal change
is necessary."

Dr. Recco

It does us no good to ignore the messengers, and surely getting angry with them is not the solution. Like so many of us, I too must suck it up, accept their criticism, trust their intentions, humble myself, and embrace the words that are delivered to me. Messages that point to the need for me to make meaningful changes in small and major areas.

2). The Expected Pain & Discomfort: I think it is fair to say that change is not comfortable. No one is overexcited about going through the process of change. As a result, it behooves us to expect levels of pain, discomfort, fear, antagonism, doubt, and worry when we step out and decide to change. Our emotions, physical body, soul, and sense of self often feel betrayed and vulnerable when the change process starts.

Knowing the stated can be viewed as proof and validation that we indeed need to change in a particular area, and the process is working for our good. With the pain and discomfort should come levels of renewal, wisdom, peace of mind, and hope that keeps and soothes our frailness. Oh my, I just said a mouthful.

3). Focus On the Benefits: It is tempting to focus on the negative and painful aspects of our need to change and the inner workings of it. We must move away from this perspective and focus more on the benefits of our identified areas of change. With no doubt, there are benefits and blessings associated with our securing change in our attitude, diet, financial habits, and relationships. A few benefits and rewards are no longer being judged by others in that area, having a sense of personal accomplishment that builds our confidence level, access to higher-quality living ideas, and feeling covered and protected.

Personally, I can say that during my 34 years of marriage and work career of nearly 40 years, what helped me accept tough feedback from my wife, relatives, supervisors, clients, and community officials was the eventual ability to focus on the bigger picture and how their input could benefit me in the future. Many times, I had to get out of my feelings. I had to get into and focus on my plans and goals

4). Change, Protective Factor: When we walk in newness of life or change, ideas of now being protected come to the forefront. Protective factors are commonly found in the research when discussing human development and community strengths. Well, when we successfully change in an area, it protects us from the harm and dangers associated with our former ways of living. If nothing else, we need to protect ourselves from ourselves and from those things found



in our bloodline and former lifestyle that are detrimental by nature. In a sense, change as a protective factor insulates and preserves us. It is almost as if a calcification or undergirding takes place that now protects us from environmental harms, generational tendencies, and the endless haunting of traumatic experiences.

I would go as far as to say that when the right change is made, at the right time by us, something in the

atmosphere and universe changes for our good, right along with us. It's a sort of human-physio-spiritual concept that titters with and is intertwined with eternal truths, destiny, purpose, good fortune, opportunity, and luck. When we finally change our ways and views in specific areas, we stop robbing ourselves in those areas. Why, because we no longer are standing in the way of positive things, unlimited success, open windows, breaths of fresh air, winds of wholesomeness, and happiness entering our lives and helping us. There is one reason and only one reason why we are not happier with an aspect of our lives. That reason is that we have not sufficiently changed in that area yet. If we change, it can be expected that joy, happiness, and warmth of heart will arrive and fill us up repeatedly.

5). Fear of Staying the Same: Like so many other people, when I think about all the things I long to do and the necessary changes needed on my part, it is easy for me to become full of fear. I mean, let's face it, a lot of things can go wrong. I could fall flat on my face. I could be laughed at and made a public spectacle and a fool. However, it is best for me and others to fear staying the same, more so than fearing other ideas. To have success in life and the procurement of our dreams, a healthy and daily dose of fear staying the same is needed. I, for one, do not want to be stuck in the same boat next year that I'm in now. We should fear not changing. Fear not moving forward. Fear not abounding towards life's pleasantries and songs of ease. There is a better way of living and existence that we all have access to. It will never be experienced if we do not fear staying the same and continue to exist as we are.

6). Love Yourself Enough to Change: Change and the need to do so come down to one basic idea. We must love ourselves enough to want to change. There comes a time in our lives when the rubber meets the road and we have to say within ourselves, "I deserve better." We must have conversations with ourselves that discuss, "I love myself too much to remain as I am." When we look in the mirror, it's okay to say to ourselves, "I want to be the best version of myself that I can be." Regardless of the area of our being that we need to change, love for ourselves can motivate us to change. In essence, we decide to change because we love ourselves too much to stay the same. Period.

Steps Regarding How to Change

It is possible that some readers of this article are not privy to the steps that can be taken to change. Within the field of health and human services, the stages of change cycle is a common discussion and training topic.

**"Change can
protect us."
Dr. Recco**

Below is a review of the stages and how they would apply to a person who desires to change from living paycheck to paycheck.

Stage #1 Pre-Contemplation: In this stage, there is no interest by a person in working towards change. It is perceived that doing something different is not necessary. For example, the person living paycheck to paycheck sees no need to change anything. They are not happy or angry about having limited income options. They embrace ideas associated with things that will somehow change and get better without them doing something different. They are okay with nothing changing in their finances.

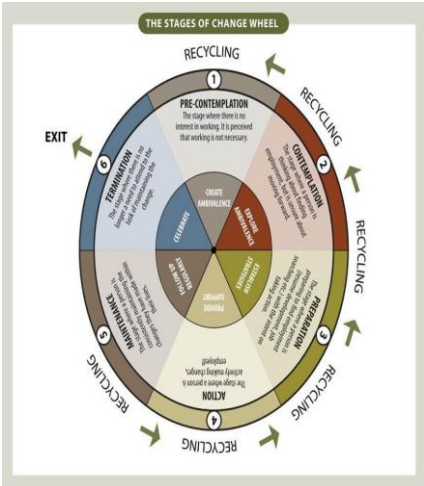
Stage #2 Contemplation: Here we find that a person is thinking about making a change but is unsure how to go about doing it. In our example, the person is thinking about doing something different regarding their finances. They are not sure who to talk to or what to do about their inadequate money flow. They have some causal interest in learning more about what to do.

Stage #3 Preparation: A critical stage, the person is preparing to change. They start planning to do things related to change. In our example the person starts doing small but important things to improve their monthly income level. They might update their resume, subscribe to various job search platforms, think about starting a side financial hustle, and develop an outline for a monthly budget. They do the stated while still living paycheck to paycheck. Nothing has changed in their income level; however, something has changed in their views regarding money.

Stage #4 Action: In this stage, a person actively implements changes in their life. They start looking for a new job and efforts are made to pay off high-interest credit cards. They start their own small business, cut back on going out to eat, sell items in their home (and use the proceeds to pay off debt). This is an important stage of change and can be seen as a reflection of how serious the person is about improving their income.

Stage #5 Maintenance: In this stage a person consistently maintains change in their life. They see the positive results of their desire to change. In our example the person pays off some of their bills, thus they now have a couple of hundred dollars a month of extra income. They feel better about their income potential. They are no longer living paycheck to paycheck and can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Stage #6 Termination: Here we find that person no longer needs to attend to maintaining their change. In our example, this person has sufficiently changed their spending habits. They now have less debt and have more discretionary income each month. Their credit score has improved, and their system for managing money has worked well. They can now move on from this change area and select another area like losing weight or removing toxic people from their lives.



**"It's smart to embrace the stages of change."
Dr. Recco**

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for you and
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Dr. Recco**