

Your Wellness

Strategies for Mental Health, Career, and Family Success

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Recco Santee Richardson, Ph.D., LPC

Dr. Recco's Corner

We stand with yet another chance to proclaim and make things known to the people. My heart remains heavy and burdened for women and their overall well-being in America. If it were not for some “rotten egg” men, most women would be flourishing, and society would be at its strongest point.

Way too often, I hear story after story about how life was good for an aspiring woman until Mr. Wrong came into her life. He was once Mr. Right but for various reasons, he used his liberties and status in society to become a full-fledged thorn in the flesh for her and her purpose. This my friend needs to come to an end.

A good way for the foolery and games played by men at the expense of women is for men like me, to speak up and speak out. A real man cannot stand by passively and allow disgrace and treachery to be loosed on wholesome women. We as caring and informed men can enhance and change the trajectory of women throughout the world if we set ourselves to be the voice of authority.

As men, we should not perpetuate or tolerate the abuse that is spewed at women. We must do better. I'm sending out a hearkening, all hands-on deck, and battle cry for the men in every community to come forth and address the evilness of our brothers, uncles, buddies, nephews, and cousins that restricts women.

This day and this hour, I'm rolling up my sleeves and setting myself to confront my brethren. All in with full force is where I'm at with this subject. Are you with me? I'm convinced that this is what I'm to be doing right now. Are you convinced enough to help me? Are you convinced enough to help our mothers, sisters, wives, aunts, nieces, and daughters? Men, we need to do something and today is a good day to start.

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Healthy Communication Skills

Featuring: Hannah Rau, Master's Level Counseling Intern

Having healthy communication is the foundation for strong relationships, our emotional well-being, and for effective conflict resolution. Whether in personal, professional, or therapeutic settings, how we express ourselves and listen to others shapes trust and understanding in our interactions with other people. Developing healthy communication skills does not mean avoiding disagreement, rather, it means handling differences with clarity, intent, purpose, confidence, respect, and empathy.

Different Styles of Communication

Communication styles generally fall into three categories: passive, aggressive, and assertive. Below is a review of the categories.

Passive Communication: Features avoiding conflict and suppressing one's needs. Sometimes this may be done as people-pleasing behaviors. Common passive phrases include: "It's okay, don't worry about me," "I don't really mind either way," "Sorry to bother," and "Whatever you guys want is okay with me."



Aggressive Communication: This approach prioritizes one's own needs at the expense of others and can feel hostile. This style can also include putting the blame on other people, not taking accountability, or dismissing others when they are trying to communicate. Examples may include: "I'm sorry you feel that way," "I guess I'm the bad guy," and "I'm not listening to excuses."

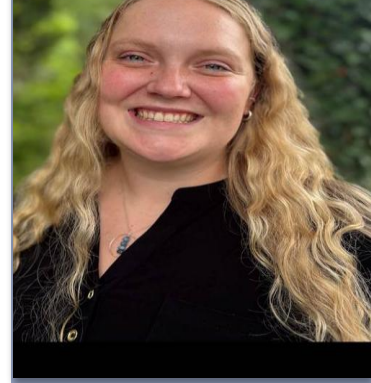
Assertive Communication: Assertive is the healthiest style in that it balances self-respect with respect for others. It involves clear, honest expression without blame. Assertive phrases include: "I feel concerned about this," "I need some support right now," and "Let's find a solution that works for both of us." Learning to recognize and shift toward assertive communication promotes healthier, more respectful interactions, liberation of the heart, a willingness to trust, and much more.

The Use of "I" Statements

"I" statements are a powerful tool for expressing feelings and needs without assigning blame to other people. Instead of accusing or criticizing, "I" statements focus on personal experience. A helpful structure is: "I feel ___ when ___ because ___." For example, "I feel frustrated when we're late because it affects my schedule." This approach reduces defensiveness and encourages open dialogue. Using "I" statements fosters accountability, emotional awareness, self-regulation, and mutual respect, especially during difficult conversations or conflicts.

How to Communicate Assertively

Assertive communication is the ability to express thoughts, feelings, and needs clearly and respectfully while also considering the rights and perspectives of others. It is a balanced approach that avoids the extremes of passivity and aggression. Communicating assertively begins with self-awareness, which includes learning to understand what we feel, what we need, and why it matters to us. This clarity makes it easier to speak honestly and confidently without blaming others or minimizing yourself. Communicating assertively means being willing to listen to others, make compromises that benefit everyone, and problem-solve when needed.



Hannah Rau
Master's Level Counseling Intern

"We all must
communicate better."
Dr. Recco

The counseling room may be one of the first spaces where clients feel safe enough to learn how to be assertive. Practicing communicating assertively in therapy allows clients to share concerns honestly while maintaining respect for themselves and others. This might include openly discussing emotions, setting boundaries, or expressing disagreement without fear of judgment. Over time, practicing assertiveness in therapy can empower clients to apply these skills outside of sessions, leading to healthier relationships, improved self-confidence, and more effective communication in daily life.



Importance of Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication cues often speak louder than our words do. Body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, posture, and eye contact can all influence how messages are received. Crossing our arms, avoiding eye contact, or using a harsh tone can signal defensiveness or disinterest, even if the words coming out are calm.

Relaxed facial expressions and a steady tone convey openness and respect. Being mindful of our nonverbal cues helps ensure that verbal and nonverbal cues convey the same message to reduce confusion and increase emotional clarity within conversations.

Handling Misunderstandings with Respect

Misunderstandings are a part of life, but how they are handled makes a significant difference. Addressing issues calmly, being gentle, remaining open minded, seeking clarification when needed, and assuming positive intent can prevent escalation. Respectful phrases such as “I may have misunderstood,” or “Can you help me understand your perspective?” promote collaboration rather than conflict. Taking responsibility when needed, apologizing sincerely, and focusing on solutions rather than blaming supports repair and growth.

Handling misunderstandings with respect strengthens relationships and builds long-term communication skills. Healthy communication is a learnable skill that improves with practice, self-awareness, team work, personal perseverance, and patience. By applying these strategies consistently, we can create more meaningful, respectful, and emotionally supportive connections.

**“Better and good communication can be learned.”
Dr. Recco**

Welcome

To Our Team of Mental Health Therapists!



Jianda Leslie Hu, BA
Master's Level Counseling
Intern



Chaunjon'a Verdun-Jennings, BA
Master's Level Counseling
Intern



Hannah Rsu, BA
Master's Level Counseling
Intern



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"We're excited about
our new therapists."
Dr. Recco

Therapist's Spotlight

Featuring: Samantha Cole, MS, LPC

Samantha Cole, MS, LPC is the Spotlight Therapist for the month of April. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor here at Recco S. Richardson Consulting, Inc (RSRC). Samantha works here full-time and has taken on the role of Program Director. She also has her own counseling agency within the RSRC facility. She has been transitioning her RSRC clientele to her own clinic (A Hand Above).

Samantha is constantly trying to grow and that is noticeable with all the changes she has made since becoming fully licensed a couple years ago. When she is not seeing clients, she helps ensure that everything runs smoothly. Her clientele ranges from young children to adults, with a focus on primarily seeing children and teens.

1). What do you trust most about yourself? Why?

Samantha reported that she trusts her intuition. There have been instances when something did not feel "right" to her. She went on to say that relying on her intuition can be difficult for her and her clients. The reason it can be difficult is because as we grow, we want the validation of others. However, there are times we must go against the grain and make decisions independently.

2). Which emotion do you and your client tend to have a difficult time expressing? Why?

The emotion Samantha finds that her clients struggle with the most is love. One of the activities she often does is have her clients express the things that they love, the people they love, and the love they have for themselves. The first two tasks are completed well. She stated that when we get to the love they have for themselves, many of her clients struggle. Samantha stated that they utilize this activity to work on building confidence and acceptance of themselves!

3). What is the key to helping your clients achieve their goals? Why?

According to Samantha, there are several factors that go into her client's achieving their goals. Making sure the goal is a SMART goal is the first step. All goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-oriented (SMART). The next step is action. We must act and implement the coping skills learned in the counseling sessions. Samantha offered that it is important for her and her clients to reflect on their counseling sessions discussions. This ensures that change occurs. After all, not to sound cliché, nothing changes if nothing changes.

4). Which steps do you encourage people to take when a decision has to be made?

Samantha reported that she is a visual person, and she has found that a lot of her clients are as well. As a result there are times a Venn diagram activity is used and is helpful when a client has to make a decision.



Samantha Cole
MS, LPC

"Samantha is stellar
and accomplished."
Dr. Recco

Samantha also uses basic pros and cons list when aiding her clients. Samantha believes that there are times clients need to discuss what is holding them back and delaying their decision.

5). When did you realize how strong you are?

In general, it is not easy to realize how strong we are. Something that made Samantha realize how strong she is was being able to set boundaries with individuals. Individual who were harmful to her mental health. Samantha went on to say that boundaries are always talked about in the mental health field. As therapist, we have to know how to set boundaries for ourselves? It does take a strong person to set boundaries.

6). What in life seems to be avoiding you and your clients? Why?

Samantha stated that avoiding conflict is something she struggled with in the past. This is also an obstacle for many of her clients. She stated at times it is “easier” to not rock the boat, so to speak. However, we are not solving anything by avoiding the problem! If there is a conflict and no one speaks about it, will anything change? Nothing is going to change by avoiding conflict. It is all about being able to properly communicate with people.

7). When do you feel free to be yourself? Why?

Samantha quickly said, “Always!” She then quoted Dr. Seuss, “Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don’t matter, and those that matter don’t mind.”

8). What are your clients tired of apologizing for? Why?

With confidence, Samantha stated that many of her clients often apologize for being themselves and they are tired of having to do so. Samantha went on to say that creating a safe environment during therapy allows for her clients to exist and take up the space they deserve to do so! The goal is for them to be able to take up space and know they are deserving of it outside of the office as well.

*No one should have to apologize for being themselves, but it happens often.”
Samantha Cole*

“Most people are stronger than they think and believe.”

Dr. Recco

What Men Need to Know About Women

By: Recco Santee Richardson, Ph.D., LPC

Years ago, Dr. James Dobson wrote a tremendous book titled “What wives wish their husbands knew about women. “At the time that I read the book, I was 25 years old and single. I desired to be married and was in search of knowledge and guidance regarding marriage and family living. It was his words and wisdom that helped me prepare better for marriage. After 35 years of marriage to the same woman, the words found in his book continue to be one of several foundations that I stand on.

As it would be, I’m now taking time to share with those that will listen. There are critical relationship, family and manhood/womanhood truths that seem to regularly become the topic of my private practice counseling sessions. I’m not a feminist ally, thrill seeker, angry writer, or any other label. If anything, I’m a social scientist seeking to help men, women, families, and society move forward. Here we go! Please buckle your seat belt.



1). Know Her: To my surprise, most men do not really know much about the key women in their lives. After knowing her name, birth date and likes, there is a major gap in knowing. As men, we must take the time to know what she is all about. Our job and goal should be to know what tends to make or break her day.

The quality husband/boyfriend knows her purpose and the desires of her heart. Not only that, but he sets himself to aid and assist her in whatever manner and way needed.

2). Bear Her Pains: In this world, we all will have great tribulations, let downs, failures, private fears, and pains. However, for some reason, the pains experienced by women tend to be more detrimental to their well-being than the pains experienced by men.

I have thought about this for years and can only conclude that the current male dominated workplace, government policies, religious belief, and social expectations, place many women in the pathway of pain and at a disadvantage from the cradle to the grave. I could be wrong about the stated. But I do not think so.

I may not be politically correct with this but I’m surely on to something. True manhood and husbandry require us to help carry the burdens, pains, disappointments, fears, doubts, anger, and uncertainty that women face daily. I would say that 80 percent of well-meaning men fail to help the women they love resolve their pains, carry their cross or experience victory in key areas.

Some males fail to do so because we do not believe her, somehow blame her for her current dilemma and struggles, refuse to put forth the emotional effort to help her, and the list goes on. Shame on such men. Shame, shame, shame. Men, we can and should do better.

“There are things men just don’t know about women.”

Dr. Recco

3). Support Her Relationships: Of all the things concerning women that men have trouble understanding and supporting, is her relationships. For women, the relationship with their birth father, birth mother, biological children and other women can be the tipping point of despair for clueless men. I could say so many things about this but will button it up nicely by saying as few words as possible. Men, if the relationship is important to her, the best thing we can do is get on board or at a minimum support it as much as we can. It is not our job as men to change, approve, question, get involved with or manage the relationships of the women that we say we love. Many times, what we as men call love is flat out a need to control her. Men of all ages and ethnic groups can have jealous ridden motives towards women that are rooted in our own insecurities and unresolved intense childhood issues and trauma.



4). Help & Protect Her Dreams: Everyone has a dream and goals. This includes the women that we know and have some sort of commitment to. So many times, as men and society, we expect our women to bury or put on hold their personal dreams so that they can help us reach our goals. This never has really worked out for most women. Sometimes I want to shout to all men, “This is the 21st century Jack, so get with the new move and ways of life that requires respect and reckoning for women to be liberated and in charge of their own life and dreams.”

The successful husband or boyfriend has learned to help and not hinder They have come to a place of knowing and doing what is right by women and their supporting cast. Personally, I have found it to be much easier and less stressful, to work in conjunction with my wife and daughters, female co-workers, and other women regarding their dreams and how to navigate them. I try not to live in a fantasy world or la-la land that puts my needs and views above that of women.

There is no doubt in my mind that many men that women love and cherish, will struggle forever to come into the light. They just do not have it within them or do not want to do better. For this reason, there are several things’ women should and can do to keep on moving in life with or without the support of love relationship with a man. At .99 confidence level, I encourage women to keep moving in life via self-care, personal empowerment, liberation, being passionate, and fearless living.

“Leave her, her friends, and her relationships alone.”
Dr. Recco

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"We can make a
difference."
Dr. Recco