

# PRESSING ON...

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14



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## OVERcommitment

■ by Charlene Brouwer, MA, LAMFT

**S**ome people seem to thrive on it; others run from it. Some find it strangely comforting; others have experienced painful consequences because of it.

How about you? What is your experience with overcommitment?

Granted, sometimes life can be exceptionally busy due to circumstances outside of our control. We may experience seasons where our schedules are over-full. Then, when certain events or deadlines have passed, we return to a healthier pace of life. However, there can also be situations where we are chronically overcommitted. It becomes our mode of operation, a way of life.



It can be a healthy practice to routinely evaluate our obligations. **Are you stretched beyond your ability to fulfill your commitments in a healthy manner? Are you saying yes to your highest values, or to whatever comes along?** Living in a world of abundant opportunities, expectations, and challenges, it is no wonder that many of us find ourselves struggling with overcommitment.

**Why do we overcommit, stretch ourselves too thin, and add stress to our already stress-filled lives? Following are some possible reasons; which ones ring true for you?**

- **To feel significant and valuable:** I only feel worthwhile when I receive attention and praise for all that I do. I believe that the busier I am, the more important I am.
- **To suppress uncomfortable or painful feelings:** If I keep myself really busy, then I don't have time or space to feel my sadness, loneliness or other painful emotions.
- **To avoid or put off important work and relationships:** If I'm overextended with work and volunteer commitments, then I won't have to deal with the conflict in my

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marriage, my relationships with my teenagers, etc.

- **To receive approval from others:** If I say yes to the requests of others, then they will like me and think highly of me. If I say no, they won't accept me.
- **Because we lack a clear sense of purpose and priorities.** As author Patricia Sprinkle states, "If you don't decide how to spend your life, other people will decide for you."

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# 2013 | a great year for CCCC!

■ by Mel Jonkman, MDiv, Executive Director

*As we celebrate our 40th anniversary,  
we have many reasons to give thanks.*

**W**e continue to grow. We have experienced a **growth rate over 10% again this year.** We now have **28 licensed, Christian therapists on Staff** as well as **4 clinical interns.** This year we **opened two more offices** in partner churches: Edgewater Baptist Church and South Loop Community Church. **We are now in 10 communities in church offices as well as in Orland Park, Schererville and South Holland** in multi-office suites. By God's grace we are reaching more hurting people and they are finding healing and hope through the work of our therapists.

**Special thanks to Denise Hoekstra** for planning the event, and to several others including **the underwriters of the event:**

**Ed & Lois Damstra**  
**Colonial Chapel**  
**George & Mary Van Dahm**  
**Bill & Mary Jo Gallaher | State Farm Insurance**  
**KCS Services**

As we close out the year, we will be asking our friends and supporters to come along side us again. As we grow, we are also giving away more of our services.



our ministry and we would like to set up an endowment fund to provide more resources through the Stephen Fund.

**Please continue to pray for the Center and the work that we are doing, and if you are able, will you consider helping the hurting by contributing to our Stephen Fund?**

If you are being led to support CCCC, please contact me. YOU can make a difference to a family needing help.

God bless you today.



Mel Jonkman, MDiv, Executive Director  
P | 708.845.5500 x101  
E | [mjonkman@chicagochristiancounseling.org](mailto:mjonkman@chicagochristiancounseling.org)



*On October 12, Chicago Christian Counseling Center held a 40th Anniversary Comedy & Fundraiser Event in Trinity Christian College's Ozinga Chapel.*

**In October we invited friends and the broader community to join us as we celebrated 40 years of ministry.** Nationally known comedian Jeff Allen reminded us that every day events and situations can be very funny. It is often said that "laughter is the best medicine." If that's true, all of us left well medicated. It was a great night of entertainment and education.

**Annually we give away around 20% of the services we provide.** This is done by providing low cost options for our clients or by the Center directly subsidizing their therapy through the Stephen Fund. As we close out this great year of celebration, we are praying that God will touch the hearts of friends and supporters. We would love to pay off some debt to secure the future of

## Need Help Managing Anger?

### 5 Week Anger Management Classes

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Program approved & endorsed by NAMA  
Facilitated by Certified Anger Management Specialist

When: Saturdays, 9:30am - 11:00am  
Where: 15127 S 73rd Avenue, Suite G  
Orland Park, IL 60462  
Fee: \$250 (includes materials; discounts may apply)

Sponsored by Elite Youth & Family Services, Inc. in cooperation with Chicago Christian Counseling Center.

Call (708) 586-9608 for start of next class



# The Power of GRATITUDE

■ by Joy Bocanegra, MA, LCPC

*“Is your glass half empty or is your glass half full?”*

This is a familiar saying referring to our perspective on life.

Have you ever considered how our outlook makes a difference in our overall satisfaction?

**W**e long for a problem free life and spend a lot of energy trying to figure out how to attain just that. The trouble is that no one is exempt from problems. John 16:33 says, “I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.” Jesus said we can expect trouble so expecting otherwise is not a realistic expectation. Gratitude, choosing to be thankful, can make life more manageable. Unrealistic expectations undermine gratitude and thereby sabotage our happiness. We want to be happy, right?

Now I'm not advocating ignoring problems or pretending you don't have them. Taking steps to make positive changes are important however, we need to accept what we are powerless over and focus on what is good. As the serenity prayer says, “God

grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Practicing an attitude of gratitude is actively looking for what is good. It's treasure hunting in the rubble of our brokenness. It's asking yourself what you have to be thankful for. It is everything from a loving friend or family member to the ability to think, to the cup you drink your coffee from. It's the beautiful colors of autumn leaves, brilliant sunshine that lights the sky and a gentle breeze across your face. Connecting to what you have to be thankful for can bring you comfort, help you relax, and fill you with gladness. Being thankful can balance the scale, lighten your load and allow you to move forward joyfully. The more you intentionally look for what you can be thankful for the more positive your outlook

will become. With practice you begin to see good more automatically. Here are some things you can do to cultivate gratitude:

- Keep a gratitude journal, pausing at the beginning or end of each day to name three or more things you are thankful for.
- Express appreciation and thanks to others, even for the little things.
- Write handwritten notes thanking those who are special in your life.
- Create visual reminders; place notes on your mirror, refrigerator or elsewhere to remind you to be thankful.
- Express thanks out loud. When we say something out loud it has more power. Speak about your thanks to yourself, others and in prayer.
- Create a Gratitude Book. Collect quotes, prayers, inspiring stories and pictures to remind you of all you are thankful for.

## New staff...



**Caitlin Dickinson, MA, LAMFT**  
**Licensed Associate Marriage & Family Therapist**  
Office hours in Chicago & Lombard, IL locations  
Child, Adolescent & Adult | Individual, Couple & Family Therapy

Caitlin enjoys working with couples, families, adults and adolescents. She specializes in working with a variety of issues including depression, anxiety, loss, parenting and relationship issues. Caitlin has experience working with individuals from diverse backgrounds and all walks of life. She believes in a comprehensive therapeutic approach integrating faith-based counsel to promote healthy living that includes physical, spiritual and emotional well-being. Caitlin is also PREPARE-ENRICH certified to provide premarital and couples counseling. Caitlin's professional interests include bipolar disorder, eating disorders, grief and loss and emotionally focused couples therapy.

Caitlin earned her BS in Psychology from Florida State University in Tallahassee, FL and her MA in Marriage and Family Counseling from the Adler School of Professional Psychology in Chicago, IL.

As you think more positively, your mood will improve and you can enjoy more of life. You may just find your glass filled to the brim. ■



*Joy Bocanegra is a  
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor.  
She enjoys working with individuals, couples  
and families in our Orland Park location.*





**Toll Free: 800.361.6880**

Email: [info@chicagochristiancounseling.org](mailto:info@chicagochristiancounseling.org)

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## Our Mission Statement

Promoting health and wholeness through professional counseling,  
consultation and education from a Christian perspective.

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**What are some possible solutions to the challenge of overcommitment?**

- **Make decisions prayerfully.** Psalm 90:12 is a great prayer for discernment: "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." It has been said that we may need to say no to the good in order to say yes to the best for our lives.
- **Give yourself grace.** Become a kind and gentle observer of yourself and learn from seasons of overcommitment. Discover your unique sweet spot. What is too little, what is too much, and what is just right - for you?
- **Don't judge others.** We are all uniquely created by God. What feels

like overcommitment to you may be just right for others. What seems like under-commitment to you may feel overwhelming to someone else.

**We do this all imperfectly, and that's okay.** Be honest about your own challenges in choosing how to spend your time.

As you pursue your unique level of commitment in life, remember the words of Anne Wilson Schaeff, **"Every human being has limits, and I am a human being."**



Charlene Brouwer is a  
Licensed Associate Marriage & Family Therapist.  
She enjoys working with individuals, couples and families  
in our Evergreen Park & Orland Park locations.

**Additional Resources on the topic of Overcommitment:**

*Meditations for Women Who Do Too Much -*  
by Anne Wilson Schaeff

*Women Who Do Too Much: How to Stop Doing it All and Start Enjoying your Life -* by Patricia Sprinkle

*Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives -* by Richard A. Swenson, MD

