

S P R I N G 2 0 1 6

healthfocus

clinical psychology services



Welcome to Spring 2016!

Hello Everyone,

We've been looking forward to warmer and more outdoors friendly weather, but the start to this Spring has been cold and wet indeed.

There's a few updates in this Newsletter, including an information piece by Ms Lisa Irving on "Overthinking and Rumination" that people, especially students may find useful at this time of year with exams approaching.

-- Yong, Rachel and Jane.

Latest News...

Yong is back!

Yong returns part-time from maternity leave.

... See page 2

Healthfocus now multi-lingual...

We now offer clinical psychology counselling services in Mandarin Chinese and Czech.

... See page 2

In this edition...

Update on Yong's Maternity Leave 2

Multi-lingual Services 2

Overthinking and Rumination 3



Shop 6
Pioneer Village Complex
7 Albany Highway
Mount Richon WA 6112

ph: (08) 9399 1911
fax: (08) 9399 5669

www.healthfocuspsychology.com.au
health_focus@optusnet.com.au

Update on Yong's Maternity Leave

Yong took maternity leave in April 2016 for the birth of her new daughter, Caris, who was born on May 23 2016.

Yong is back (very) part time...

Baby Caris is now four months old and both Yong and baby are doing well. Caris is looking forward to warmer weather and more outdoor activities.

Yong has made an early return to work and is available on Tuesday evenings, primarily in response to an increase in requests for Chinese-speaking services (see information below).

Welcome back Yong!

Multi-lingual Services

In response to a recent increase in enquiries about non-English speaking services, Healthfocus is now pleased to be able to offer Clinical Psychology Counselling and Relationship Counselling in Mandarin Chinese and Czech languages.

Dr Yong Lee is bilingual in English and Chinese and has spoken Chinese since her childhood, studying both Chinese and English throughout her school years.

Dr Zdenka Bartova is bilingual in English and Czech and is a native speaker of Czech having studied and spoken the language while growing up.



Overthinking or ruminating - *What is it and how do you stop it?*



Lisa Irving, Clinical Psychologist

Many people describe themselves as “over thinkers”. Overthinking or ruminating is where one’s thoughts cycle over and over, becoming quite painful and all consuming. These thoughts often interfere with focusing on what the individual is supposed to be doing during the day and can interrupt one’s sleep during the night.

Intense emotions are like petrol to a fire for overthinking. The pain of all all-consuming thoughts begins with intense fear, worry or anger from which rumination develops a “life of its own”. People often complain that they can’t stop these thoughts, or that they have “lost control” over them.

Overthinking starts with thinking.... To begin with, people often believe that they are thinking to solve problems. While this may be how it begins, they often don’t reach a decisive solution, and the brain keeps processing instead of solving.

So.... if we map it out, there is some event (perhaps unpredicted but stressful), and like when a tiger is pacing around your cave, the brain goes into hyper-problem solving and intense feeling (How do we leave the cave without being eaten by the tiger? How do we find food instead of become food?), but loses strategic planning and action (every scenario played out in the mind focuses on the possibility of being eaten, instead of solving the problem). The thoughts continue with a feedback cycle focused on the problem, which doesn’t end with a solution, perpetuating intense feelings and overthinking.

So how to stop it?

STAY CALM, COMBAT SELF TALK, BRIEF PROBLEM SOLVING, DECISIVE ACTION, SAFETY

Our biology stems from our “caveman” days, when our survival depended on being alert to danger and doing something about it. If we failed to do something about it, it could mean we were injured or killed. Action meant everything.

Here are two examples. The first example is a “caveman” situation with a view to stopping “overthinking”.

1. Calm down – easier said, I know! (do things that help you feel safe or calm your feelings so that you can think clearly).
2. Answer whatever self-talk is coming your way instead of believing it. (Examples of self talk may include, “You are going to be eaten by a tiger”).
3. Reality test – is it really true? “No, I can think of ways of preventing this...”
4. Solve problems in short decisive pieces focused on preventing you from becoming tiger food. (I will use fire to scare the tiger away).
5. Do something actionable with your problem solving (use the fire to deter the tiger).
6. Or do something that shows you that the world (your world) is okay. Lean on the support of your family and friends to know that they have your back, and will help you during a time of need.

And here’s a common everyday example ... Studying for an exam.

Anxiety kicks in and you find yourself picturing failure in every which way, with every piece of shame and humiliation that your imagination can summon up. You become stifled with procrastination and the longer you wait, the more compelling your imagined failure becomes.

1. Calm down – easier said, I know! (relax, go for a walk, meditate, do things that help you feel confident about your ability to study and learn). Break the pattern of thinking.
2. You have a thought that “What if I study for my exams and I fail”. Answer it – “I won’t allow that to be the case because I am capable of doing this”.
3. Reality test – recall all the times that you have studied, learned and passed your exams.
4. Problem solve for how you will get the information into your brain so that you can use it. Examples of problem solving may include: Break up your study day to allow fun and pleasurable activities in between actual study. Show yourself that you are learning something useful for the exam. Remind yourself that you passed your previous exam/s. Ask your friends and family to test you as you go. Ask them to make you accountable in short regular intervals to show that you have studied: You could say to them, I am going to study algebra now, and when I come back in half an hour can you ask me these three questions to see if I can explain how to do this.
5. Picture yourself doing well, having achieved well in your exam to motivate you to do the work you would like to do. Match this with actual periods of studying.
6. Know that the calmer that you are the clearer your mind will think, and the clearer you think the easier it will be to learn.

Now see if you can apply this to an example of where you were overthinking..... ☺