

To the Brazoria County Counseling Association membership:

Springtime greetings to all!

As the chill of winter gives way to the promise of springtime and new growth, we look forward to how we, too, may grow professionally. Annually, we anticipate our BCCA spring meeting where we can reconnect with colleagues and learn more about new and changing trends in counseling. We also take advantage of the opportunity to refresh our knowledge of the ethics which govern our profession.

This year we've had a change in meeting format, and I'd like to provide a little background information for you. Several years ago one of our members saw a gaping need for crisis services to the citizens of Brazoria County. At that time she announced at the spring meeting that she would like her colleagues to know about the mental health initiative she was planning. The issue at hand focused on providing more and better assistance for persons in mental crisis, but evolved into the need to support survivors of suicide--more specifically, the families and friends of persons who have completed suicide. A task force was formed which consists of counselors, mental health professionals, law enforcement, medical personnel, local government officials, and private citizens. Since then, much information has been gathered, culled, and brought to the attention of those who indeed find it very useful. Last fall in Alvin, our BCCA leadership seized the opportunity for professional growth as we teamed with the Mental Health Professionals Association of Brazoria County to present "Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention: A Toolbox of Resources." It was quite well received as the participants numbered nearly 150. Evaluation forms distributed at the end of the meeting showed an interest in future related topics.

Building on that success, our spring meeting will follow up with a symposium highlighting suicide assessment and treatment, suicide prevention and best practices in postvention. The event has been planned by the members of the mental health task force with BCCA support. It will be held at Brazosport College's Center for Business and Industry Training on April 15, 2010. Speakers include professionals with statewide and local experience. Check the flyer regarding symposium registration time and place, speakers, and lunch arrangements. Though it is open to the public, BCCA members who attend have the opportunity to gather as many as 6 CEUs; however, counseling ethics CEUs will be offered on May 7 by Rebecca Rucker of IntraCare at a place to be determined. The BCCA business meeting will take place from 8:30 to 9 am when the scholarship winner and Counselor of the Year will be announced. Forms are available from the BCCA website, www.bccacounselor.org.

It is my sincere hope that your attendance at this spring's conference held in conjunction with the mental health task force will be most beneficial to you and that the information gathered there will serve to enhance your growth as a counseling professional.

Sincerely,
Genie Packard
BCCA President