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Volume I

A program with POSITIVE effects.

Funded by County of San Diego

# Positive Solutions Newsletter



**Union of Pan Asian Communities**

## EMPOWER SENIORS IN THEIR HOMES WITH PEARLS

July 2009, County of San Diego awarded UPAC with Mental Health Services Act, Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) funding to start Positive Solutions Program to serve **homebound seniors (60+)** with **minor depression**. After hiring and training its staffs, the Positive Solutions Program started serving clients in November 2009.

The Positive Solutions Program was designed to adapt PEARLS (Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding LiveS) to assist seniors to reduce their depression. PEARLS helps clients recognize symptoms of minor depression and teaches them how to manage their lives better by learning a method to solve problems that contribute to the way they are feeling. Clients will learn to increase pleasant, social and physical activities.

Based on the homebound seniors' needs, Positive Solutions was shaped and reshaped to fit these needs in San Diego

County. Short-term Psychoeducation and Short-term Care Management were incorporated in the program to serve more seniors who are in need. Psychoeducation helps clients recognize symptoms of minor depression, teaches them possible triggers/causes for depression, and coping strategies for minor depression. Care management services include assisting clients to get social benefits, linking them to appropriate resources, etc.

The Positive Solutions Program continues to emphasize utilizing PEARLS to empower seniors to be in charge of their daily life struggles. Research has shown PEARLS to be effective in assisting seniors to reduce symptoms of depression. Not only assisting homebound seniors to reduce their symptoms of depression, Positive Solutions also strives to prevent homebound seniors from becoming depressed. Our goal is to empower seniors to gain control over their daily life struggles and to make POSITIVE effects in their lives.

## CHANGES STARTED WHEN HE REACHED OUT FOR HELP

BY CP

I am a 64 year old, low-income senior with a Veteran's disability award. Pain, lack of things to do and the fact that I have no money left after paying my bills cause me to be in a constant state of depression since I moved here. I'd been lying in bed watching TV for months, only getting up to fix something to eat or check my mail.

In January, I saw a flyer in the laundry room that outlined the "Positive Solutions Program". It sounded like it might help me. I called and set up an appointment with a lady named Evelyn Parada, who came to my house to set up a program specifically for me.

Evelyn immediately helped me outline my problems and set up a positive plan to work toward getting me active again. During our first session, she introduced me to a form called the "PEARLS Worksheet". This form allows you to take a particular problem each week and outline goals and possible solutions, showing the advantages and disadvantages to each action. Then you choose a solution to work on and 5 attempts to achieving the solution. It also allows you to plan something pleasant, physical and social to do for the week.

The first week we outlined a plan to quit smoking. I was shocked at the progress I made reducing my smoking from 7 packs a week to three. This decreased my expenses from \$150.00 per month to about \$57.00. Some of my financial solutions were met as well.

## COPING WITH HER LOSSES

I have recently had a stroke. Though I have been improving physically, I am weak and discouraged about the slowness of my recovery.

Also, I am depressed by the deaths of my three close friends who have recently died. Sun has helped me a great deal by reminding me to think of the good times we've had and the contributions of their lives.

My husband's health has also improved and she has encouraged me to take short rides and to enjoy meals out at new restaurants.

I found myself looking forward to our weekly meetings and was getting out of the house about four days per week doing something toward a positive solution to problems that were keeping me depressed. I started riding my bike with a friend at least once per week and going to coffee shops with friends.

I was also introduced to resources I did not know about. Elder Law Center helped me with tenant landlord problems. I found an SSDI attorney to help with an appeal. I found free veterinary care for my cat. I got help repairing an expensive transmission job on my car. Worked out a plan to help reduce pain through an affordable Chiropractor and other treatments I was not doing.

Since our sessions have been reduced to once per month, I've been falling into some old patterns, but at least I have found tools to help me make life more meaningful. I wish this program was able to afford more weekly session, for a longer period of time.

I highly recommend the **Positive Solutions Program** for other elderly people who suffer from depression. I feel like after about three months I am at least 50% better off than before.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely, CP



BY ANONYMOUS

I now participate in group discussions at the local library and with the Aphasia Group at Tri-City. I am also able to take an interest in household tasks and plan meals and to keep track of appointments with medical visits.

I am also studying for a driver's license and take weekly exercise classes at Tri-City Hospital.

I truly feel that Sun has been a help for my improvement and that Positive Solutions Program has been an instrument for my change.

## PLEASURABLE ACTIVITIES WERE INTRODUCED TO HER LIFE AGAIN...

BY LTE

When I first learned about UPAC Positive Solutions Program, I lost no time in contacting them. I was impressed by the helpfulness of the staff. I said I was having a difficult time coping with the death of my husband, Bill, who passed away in March 2009, and they offered to send one of their counselors, Ms. Evelyn Parada, to interview me. Thus began our weekly sessions. Bill and I hadn't been married long, and I was haunted by many happy times we had together, and the void that his death created.

Ms. Parada was very patient, but focused. We discussed the things that weighed on me, and the possible solutions. I was feeling so alone after Bill died, so the immediate task was to explore ways for me to get involved in activities that gave me pleasure. Evelyn helped me work around my issues, and thanks to her, after several sessions, I can now function again. I still have occasional periods of tremendous grief, and I know I might need Evelyn's expertise again, but it is reassuring to know that I can bank on UPAC's expertise and willingness to help me through the humps.

### COPING WITH DEPRESSION

Coping with depression could be challenging. It is often difficult to take actions when people are depressed. Focusing on small goals, such as getting your mail everyday or calling your friends/family, would be something to start with and slowly build from there. Take things day by day and reward yourself for each accomplishment. Remember, don't let depression rule your life. It's time for you to take in charge of your own life.

You are invited to share your personal successful coping skills for depression. You may email it to [ewu@upacsd.com](mailto:ewu@upacsd.com) or mail it to 525 14th St., Ste. 200, San Diego, CA 92101. *Thank you.*



### CHOICES OF MY OWN

This is a testimonial on behalf of Sun Choi who has donated her time and effort to me unselfishly and happily. She is like a breath of "fresh air"!! Always with a smile and cordial greeting. She has helped me to start a fund toward refurbishing my teeth which are badly in need of a dentist. I have no dental insurance but as it was I had no prospects for dental care whatsoever. She showed me ways to start a savings account for this. I may have to go to Tijuana to a dentist to accomplish this but as it was I had NO prospects at

### SIMPLE TIPS TO PREVENT DEPRESSION

Depression can be alleviated or prevented with good health habits.

- Proper diet
- Exercise
- Taking time out for fun and relaxation
- Not overworking
- Saving time to do things you enjoy

WebMD Medical Reference  
<http://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/understanding-depression-prevention>

***You too can make a positive change in your life***

BY JM

all. This is not all. She has brought up other things too. Every session we start on other (lesser) problems and discuss ways of solving the problems. We label these as "Positive Solutions" such as daily exercise and weight loss or other things of MY choosing.

She has improved my outlook greatly. The one thing we can't seem to accomplish is my friends which are non-existent. But I am very grateful to have known her!!



## Positive Solutions Program

**Central: 525 14th St., Ste. 200  
San Diego, CA 92101  
Tel: (619) 238-1783  
Fax: (619) 238-1837**

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San Marcos, CA 92078  
Tel: (760) 736-8373  
Fax: (760) 736-8815**

**[www.upacsd.com](http://www.upacsd.com)**

### POSITIVE SOLUTIONS TEAM

Positive Solutions Program is made up by 12 fabulous team members:

**Aiko Wright**, who keeps our office tidy, so we can have a clean and comfortable environment to work.



**Josie Villasenor** is our administrative assistant, who organizes and puts everything together for us, so we can work efficiently.



**Evelyn Parada**, MSW, is our first hired clinician, based in the downtown office. In her graduate study, her emphasis was Gerontology. She is energetic and passionate about serving seniors. Being around her recharges our energy.



**Rhoda Carino**, MA, is our part-time downtown clinician. She is working on her Psy.D. degree to become a psychologist. She has experience working at both inpatient and outpatient mental health settings. Her patience and genuineness are good assets for the team.



**Sun Choi**, MSW, is our north county clinician. Her experiences working with seniors at an adult day health care center gives her more insight into issues seniors are facing in their daily lives.



**Maddy Robel** is our case manager. Her experience working at skilled nursing and convalescent facilities allowed her to understand a lot about seniors' needs. She is very resourceful and has tremendous experience in resource brokering.



**Hung Manh Tran** is our Vietnamese Senior Community Worker, based in downtown office. He was one of the UPAC pioneers. He worked with UPAC 22 years ago to outreach to Vietnamese Communities. After many years working at DMV, his heart calls him back to work with UPAC and outreach to seniors in Vietnamese Communities.



**Luz Lane** is our Spanish Senior Community Worker. She is based in the north county office. She was trained in Promotoras. Her heart goes out to seniors who are in need.



**Pei-Chen Emily Wu**, Psy.D., is our program manager. As a licensed psychologist, she has been practicing in geriatric psychology. With her clinical experiences and passion in serving people who are in need, she facilitates in developing Positive Solutions to serve the underserved homebound seniors.



**Dixie Galapon**, Ph.D., is the UPAC mental health director. Her leadership in facilitating the development of Positive Solutions made it possible for the program to outreach to many homebound seniors through partnership with community partners.

We are pleased to announce that we will have two intern-therapists coming on board in July, 2010,

**Talafulu Sagale** and **Tiffany Campbell**.

With all team members' efforts and qualities, Positive Solutions is able to serve many homebound seniors in San Diego County, and will continue to help many other homebound seniors who are struggling with depression. Our goal is to make **POSITIVE effects** in seniors' lives.