

TRI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF



# INCA NDES CENT

MCI (P) 041/08/2018 | **Apr 2019**

## INTRODUCTION OF NEW GM

We are pleased to introduce EMCC's new General Manager.

Dr Jeannie Chiu officially started her term as General Manager of EMCC (Eagles Mediation & Counselling Centre) in January 2019.

Dr Chiu holds a Masters in Counselling from Monash University and a Doctor of Ministry from Asbury Theological Seminary. Along with over 25 years of experience in pastoral care within Christian ministries and voluntary welfare organisations, Dr Chiu was also the Executive Director for Prison Fellowship Singapore where she led initiatives to support the rehabilitation of inmates, conduct systemic work with their families and reintegrate incarcerated individuals into society.

An advocate of good relationships, Dr Chiu gives talks and conducts trainings on topics regarding family, parenting and leadership.

In the following letter, Dr Chiu shares her strong belief in EMCC's motto, *There is Hope*, and the importance of Mediation and Counselling as vehicles to inspire this hope.



# THE SHAPE OF HOPE

Even a person diagnosed with cancer needs HOPE to carry on a full life. My brother had a rare lung disease and sadly recently passed away. As he struggled to breathe in a hospital far away, I hoped that he would get onto the lung transplant list. He did. Even though he ran out of time, I knew that made all the difference to him as he tried to live each day with his beloved family in the hope that there is still tomorrow.

Everyone needs hope.

Despite all human efforts, life will present us with many problems. Some are caused by us, others are cruelly thrust upon us and often without warning. Challenges are easier to overcome if we have significant others who are our confidantes and/or we have a rock solid religious faith that can carry us through hard times. What if our source of comfort, our spouse, our children, our immediate or extended family is the reason for our struggles and pain? As one experienced counsellor once said, many of us with a religious faith often downplay the role of emotions in our lives. We sweep it under the carpet. As much as we take care of our physical, financial (provision), mental health and for some with religious faith, our spiritual health, we must not forget that a large part of who we are is mental-emotional - an integrated being.

Here at EMCC, we are believers of HOPE. We deeply believe in the need for restoration and healing of relationships, to make the best of even failed relationships - broken marriages, extra-marital affairs, divorce, parent-child stresses, all manner of difficult relationships inside and outside of the home. We believe that by working on our relationships, we become better functioning persons. That's why we believe in MEDIATION and COUNSELLING.

It's never too late to deal with strained relationships and hurt. We work with parties in conflict, within homes and between consenting parties. We strongly believe that through conflict management and mediation, we can prevent matters from becoming worse. We also believe that whichever stage of emotional pain you find yourself in, it's never too late to approach a professional counsellor for guidance. Instead of slipping into depression and suicidal ideation, instead of walking the post-divorce

route alone without proper help and negotiations, instead of suffering long term in matters that you have borne from childhood and may now have brought into your marital relationships, instead of being completely lost and hearing too many conflicting advice from caring individuals, you may want to seek professional help.

Not only are our mediators and counsellors highly trained and skilled in their craft, they have a caring heart too. You do not have to walk the uncertain road ahead alone or without proper guidance.

At EMCC, we strive to help in the marriage journey, the family journey, and soon to come, the singles journey, in mending broken lives, broken relationships and rebuilding communities so that life can go on with much hope. We also bring about more preventive helps by way of training and education, data collection and research and advocacy. We hope to destigmatise mediation and counselling such that we - particularly Asians - will not be afraid to come forward to look for help at the early stages when problems first arise. Moving forward, EMCC will bring in the best of training programmes from further afield and put in checks for our professions so that we can provide quality and compassionate services to our clients.

Ponder for a moment, do you know of someone who might benefit from mediation and counselling today?

With Easter just around the corner, we are reminded that it is never too late to embrace hope and wanting to start anew. In this edition of INCANDESCENT, we tackle issues on how to break free from addictions and toxic communication behaviours that jeopardise our relationships.

We want to wish our Christian readers a most Blessed Easter. May the Risen Lord be your true Counsellor and Prince of Peace.



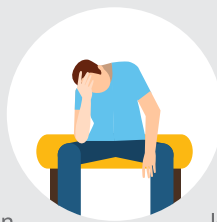
Dr Jeannie Chiu  
General Manager, EMCC

# BREAKING ADDICTIONS

by Billy Chan

## What are ADDICTIONS?

The word addiction comes from the Latin verb “addicere” which basically means to give or bind a person to one thing or another. An addiction is a psychological/ biological dysfunction which causes an addicted person to feel a sense of compulsion to commit and continue the use of substance or behaviour, despite adverse consequences.



## Why are ADDICTIONS a bad thing?

Addiction is a maladaptive pattern of behaviour which leads to significant impairment or distress. It affects the person's social, occupational, or recreational activities. There is a sense of losing control or impaired control over a behaviour associated with adverse consequences. It basically interferes with normal living and becomes unmanageable.

Addictions are linked to dopamine which is a neurotransmitter in the brain that regulates our emotion and motivation. When we do something good (e.g. exercise or eat something delicious), dopamine is released in the brain causing us to feel pleasure which then motivates us to want to repeat the activity again. In the case of addiction, for example drug addiction, with each drug use large amounts of dopamine are released into the brain leading to a greater motivation to keep the drug habit going. The brain gets primed to continuously take drugs without really being conscious of it. Over time, this will affect the production of dopamine and damage our prefrontal cortex which is the part of the brain responsible for helping us make rational decisions. That is why someone addicted to drugs finds it hard to stop despite knowing the negative consequences.

**“ An addiction is a psychological/ biological dysfunction which causes an addicted person to feel a sense of compulsion to commit and continue the use of substance or behaviour, despite adverse consequences. ”**

## People with an ADDICTION will:

- be unable to stay away from the substance or stop an addictive behaviour (because of the perceived rewards)
- have an inability to exercise self-control and display it
- have an increased desire for the substance or behaviour over time
- avoid acknowledging how their behaviour may be causing problems
- lack emotional responses
- experience uncomfortable withdraw symptoms when the addictive behaviour is discontinued



There are a few types of addictions. They include addiction to substances like drugs and alcohol, or to behaviours such as eating, gambling, engaging in social media, sex or whatever their individual demons are.

## What can you do?

To begin the road to recovery, these are some initial steps to take to start the process.



### About The Author:

Billy Chan is a counsellor with EMCC. He has been part of our EMCC family since 2014. He has developed a special interest in anger management and couple-related work. He firmly believes that people manage themselves better if there is an opportunity to be listened to and understood.



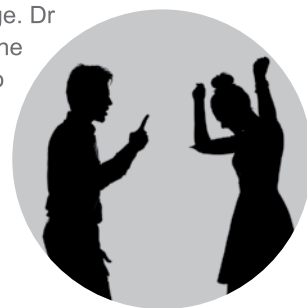


# The Four Horsemen of **APOCALYPSE** for Relationships

Strong and lasting relationships are built upon good communication which fosters trust, understanding and fondness for one another. However, when communication starts to break down, it can lead to cracks in one's relationships. At EMCC, we see cases whereby couples come in for marital counselling and through their sessions realise that a contributing factor to the strain in their relationship is unhealthy communication behaviours. In this article, we explore some of these behaviours, which we may unconsciously engage in.

Through Dr John Gottman's research, he has come up with some predictors that determine if there is a high chance of a couple getting a divorce if they do not do something to restore their marriage. Dr Gottman named these predictors "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse". Just like how the four horsemen were depicted in the Bible to have brought about chaos and destruction to Earth, Dr Gottman's Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse describe communication styles that can lead to the downfall of a relationship.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are Criticism, Contempt, Defensiveness and Stonewalling. These predictors are not limited to just marital relationships and can also be seen in other forms of relationships such as friendships or familial relationships.



## The **FOUR HORSEMEN**

### *Criticism*

Criticism is the first Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Criticism goes beyond a complaint or giving constructive feedback to the other party when they do something that you do not like. Criticism targets the core of a person's character rather than a specific situation or action.

For example, a mother is annoyed that her son does not place his laundry in the laundry basket but throws it on the floor instead. Criticism would be calling her son "inconsiderate", "lazy" and "annoying". By using these words, the mother is attacking her son's character.

Instead, the mother could focus on expressing her feelings of displeasure of the act of not putting the laundry in the basket and how she would appreciate it if her son could pick up after himself. The latter approach will reduce the chances of the conversation evolving into an argument.

If you let criticism become a habit, it will surface with greater frequency and intensity in your relationships, thus paving the way to the next horseman: Contempt.

## Contempt

Contempt is much more damaging than criticism as you are conveying to the other party that you do not respect them and feel superior to them. Contempt is communicated through sarcasm, ridicule and name calling, or through non-verbal behaviours such as eye-rolling, scoffing or sneering.

Couples holding unspoken negative thoughts and ignoring positive attributes of their partners have a higher tendency of communicating contemptuously towards one another. According to The Gottman Institute, contempt is the single greatest predictor of divorce. To combat contempt, it is important to cultivate the habit of expressing affection, gratitude, appreciation and respect on a regular basis. This creates a strong and positive perspective of your partner which can reduce inclinations towards contemptuous responses.

## Defensiveness

Defensiveness is the third horseman, which is a common response to criticism. When someone complains or criticizes us, it is natural to want to defend ourselves if we feel wrongly accused. This could come in the form of blaming the other person or making excuses and victimising yourself. Becoming defensive in hopes that the other party will just drop the topic and move on is seldom a successful strategy. By being defensive, it conveys to the other party that you do not care about their concerns nor want to claim responsibility for your mistake. Therefore, instead of defending yourself, identify one area you can take responsibility for. For example:

**PERSON A:** "Did you forget to pick up dinner on your way home?"

**PERSON B (DEFENSIVE RESPONSE):** "You know how busy I am lately. Why didn't you remind me, or just do it instead?"

**PERSON B (NON-DEFENSIVE RESPONSE):** "Sorry, I was busy and it slipped my mind. In case I forget again in the future, could you please remind me?"

“Conflicts are opportunities for growth in a relationship when we know how to manage them.”

Through the non-defensive response, you express to the other party that you take their concerns seriously and that you are interested to support one another better in the future.

## Stonewalling

Finally, we have the last horseman: Stonewalling. This is usually the response to contempt. Like the name suggests, you are creating a wall to block out the person you are conversing with instead of tackling the problem head on. Some behaviours of stonewalling are tuning out, walking out of the room or playing with your mobile device.

Stonewalling can easily become a habit and is hard to stop. This is because stonewalling is the result of feeling physiologically flooded. In this state, we are physiologically overwhelmed. Our heart rate increases, stress hormones are released, and our fight-or-flight instincts kick in. We are then incapable of thinking nor discussing things rationally. Thus, we shut down and start stonewalling, making conflict resolution hard to achieve. When this happens, ask for a timeout from the conversation to cool down. Set a time to continue the discussion after you have calmed down.



Conflicts are opportunities for growth in a relationship when we know how to manage them. Attending relationship workshops, such as EMCC's Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work (7PP), educates us on factors like Dr Gottman's Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse that jeopardise our relationships and equips us with the knowledge and tools to know how to rectify them and ultimately form stronger and healthier relationships with those around us. However, if you identify having these communication behaviours in your relationships and feel that they have been so deeply rooted in your relationship that you may not be able to rectify them on your own, consider seeking professional help. A counsellor will be able to guide you and your partner on how to overcome this obstacle.

---

EMCC is The Gottman Institute's exclusive institutional partner in Singapore. EMCC provides Gottman related workshops such as Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work and Bringing Baby Home. Visit [www.emcc.org.sg](http://www.emcc.org.sg) to find out more about these workshops.

## YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Your donation will support the work in helping individuals, couples and families in crisis through the services of mediation and counselling.

If you would like to make a one-time or monthly donation, kindly fill up the form below and mail it back to us

## 1. CHEQUE

Please make your crossed cheque payable to "EMCC". Indicate your full name, NRIC and contact details at the back of the cheque (for tax-deductible receipt), and mail it to our address.

## 2. ONLINE

Please go to <http://www.giving.sg/EMCC> and follow the instructions there.

## DONATION FORM

Title: Dr / Mr / Mrs / Mdm/ Ms \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

NRIC/FIN/UEN No: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact(O): \_\_\_\_\_ (H): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ (H/P): \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would like to donate based on the following arrangement: (Please tick to select an option)

☐ One-Time ☐ Monthly ☐ 6-Monthly ☐ Annually

## CREDIT CARD AUTHORISATION

I would like to donate: (Please tick only 1 option)

☐ S\$50 ☐ S\$100 ☐ S\$200 ☐ S\$500 ☐ S\$\_\_\_\_\_ (Please fill in the amount)

## BY CREDIT CARD

Credit Card type: ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card Issuing Bank: \_\_\_\_\_

Name as on Credit Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card No: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please note that for each successful deduction, a partial bank processing fee of \$0.80 will be charged to your account.)

## DONOR SIGNATURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I understand that by signing this Direct Debit Authorisation, I have read and understood the Terms and Conditions governing this authorisation as reflected overleaf. I also agree that my particulars can be used by EMCC (Eagles Mediation & Counselling Centre) and its appointed partners for the purpose of administration of this donation.

Donor's signature as in bank record \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# INCENTIVES



There is hope.

Charity No: UEN S97SS0164E

**BUSINESS REPLY SERVICE  
PERMIT NO. 08522**



EMCC (Eagles Mediation & Counselling Centre)  
177 River Valley Road  
#05-19 (Level M5) Liang Court  
Singapore 179030

Postage will  
be paid by  
addressee.  
For posting in  
Singapore  
only.

Please fold along dotted area and seal securely before posting

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

### DEAR DONOR,

Your commitment and support of EMCC through a regular donation will assist us in our mission to provide care and hope to the many individuals and families struggling to overcome difficulties and pain.

### DEDUCTION FREQUENCY

The first deduction will be made within 3 working days for credit cards and a month for GIRO upon signing of this Authorisation Form. Subsequently, your account will be debited in accordance with the frequency that you have chosen overleaf (Monthly/Half-yearly/Annually). On the 15th of every month, we will deduct your authorised donation. For unsuccessful transactions there will be a retry on the 28th of every month.

### TAX-DEDUCTIBLE RECEIPT

You will receive your tax-deductible receipt at the beginning of every calendar year from us for all donations received in the previous calendar year. Monthly receipts will not be provided for your deductions. Please refer to your credit card statements from your issuing bank for confirmation of deductions made.

### CASH DONATIONS

Those who wish to make a cash donation can contact EMCC at Tel 6788 8220 or email [reachus@emcc.org.sg](mailto:reachus@emcc.org.sg) for details.

### CONFIDENTIALITY

We will keep all information (i) name, gender, nationality, date of birth; (ii) email address, postal address, telephone numbers; (iii) credit card number and expiry

date in this Direct Debit Donor Programme confidential. This Programme adheres to a very strict policy regarding donor privacy. We will use this information in order to: (i) administer your accounts with us; (ii) process donations made by you, orders or applications submitted by you; (iii) send you information and calling you in regards about our events, programmes, fund raising, products and services; (iv) verify your identity; (v) carry out donor profile analysis; and (vi) contact the winners of our competitions (if any) and to help us plan other fund raising and/or promotional activity. No information, in whole or in part, in its paper or electronic format, will be disclosed, used, modified or reproduced for any other person or organization, except in connection with these purposes stated.

Once again, thank you for your time and generosity in supporting EMCC.