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Mindful Healing in Wilton - Helping clients combat stress

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An anxious mother preparing for her four-year-old son's fourth open heart surgery. A temporary paraplegic facing her third round of chemotherapy. A skeptical man in his mid-50s dreading his upcoming hip replacement surgery. This is a sampling of the clients who seek Linda Lubin's help in preparing for a serious surgery or life-altering change.

Ms. Lubin, a Ridgefield resident, opened Mindful Healing last fall at 525 Danbury Road in Wilton's White Fences complex, where she helps clients develop stress-reducing techniques to cope with challenges.

A former "at-home mom" with a home healing practice, Ms. Lubin relocated her office to Wilton when her youngest daughter became a high school senior.

"I started thinking about what I wanted to do in this next stage of my life," said Ms. Lubin, who has degrees in psychology and public policy. "I came back to my first love."

Wellness goals

At Mindful Healing, Ms. Lubin counsels, coaches and educates clients so that they may have the confidence and knowledge to achieve their wellness goals. She said that she takes a practical approach to combating the chronic stress that plays a "huge factor in most people's lives."

"You can learn what to do within the context of the life you're living and change the way you react to things that normally cause you to become stressed," said Ms. Lubin.

Patients facing procedures from "tonsillectomies to major lifethreatening surgeries," as well as "uncomfortable medical procedures" such as biopsies and colonoscopies, can develop an emotional awareness that will permit them a sense of control over the situation, said Ms. Lubin.

Techniques include visualization, hypnosis, breathing skills, and affirmations, statements that "speak to where you want to be at that moment," according to Ms. Lubin. Experiments with sound and music can target certain brain waves, she said.

The relaxation techniques she teaches "help to keep anxiety at bay and by doing that, [clients] can get through surgery much easier," she said. "It substantially reduces the amount of pain and recovery time."

Gold standard

Ms. Lubin became certified to coach the "Prepare for Surgery, Heal Faster" program that is "considered the gold standard" at teaching hospitals at Harvard and Tufts. The program is especially suited for patients of chemotherapy and radiation, Ms. Lubin said.

A patient who underwent two rounds of intense chemotherapy that left her legs paralyzed was "absolutely dreading" the third round, said Ms. Lubin.

"The nurse told her, 'Honey, it only gets worse,' and we had to erase that toxic message," she said.

"Not to be Pollyanna-ish about it - chemo is a tough process to go through - but my focusing on the healing aspects of chemo and viewing it as an opportunity to heal gives a patient a chance to change the outcome in terms of how severe the side effects would be," she said.

The Stress-Free Healthy Eating program is the "most popular program for clients looking for life changes" said Ms. Lubin. The 10-week program, with weekly one-hour sessions, focuses on healthy eating habits and a client's relationship to food.

"I explain to them how they eat is how they live," said Ms. Lubin. "Once you change that, other changes naturally occur."

Ms. Lubin said that she had a client who came to her "completely frustrated and self-conscious" over her attempts at weight loss before shedding 15 pounds in 10 weeks through the program.

"She has become so much more engaged, enjoying life more than she has in a long time. She isn't inhaling food anymore," Ms. Lubin said. "My approach takes time, and she has stuck with it."

Ms. Lubin will be writing a regular column about wellness coaching for Wrap magazine, a supplement for this newspaper and the seven others in the Hersam Acorn Newspapers group.

Her own experience searching for office space last year suggests that her visualization techniques work.

She said that she envisioned a light-filled, two-room white cottage with a tree-lined path winding up to the door, and that is exactly what she found at White Fences when she began her real estate hunt.

Ms. Lubin can be reached at 470-5317 or via www.mindfulhealing.org.