



# Connections

## Winter Newsletter 2011



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### A Letter from the Director:

Dear BBH Certified Gottman Educators,

Happy New Year! Welcome to the Winter 2011 Edition of our Bringing Baby Home Connections Newsletter! I hope you had an enjoyable holiday season and are having a great start to the New Year. We've got several exciting updates to share with you in this newsletter, so please continue reading to learn more about BBH news.

### Spring Certification Training:

The dates are set for our next Seattle-Based Certification Training! We will hold a BBH Certification Training this spring on Saturday March 26<sup>th</sup> through Monday March 28<sup>th</sup> at the Swedish Medical Center Cherry Hill Campus in Seattle.

Registration is currently open. As always, folks who are not able to visit Seattle for the training have the opportunity to request an on-site training, where BBH Training Specialists come to your location. Please see the website [www.bbhonline.org](http://www.bbhonline.org) or check in with Allison ([bbh.ct@bbhonline.org](mailto:bbh.ct@bbhonline.org)) for more details about upcoming Seattle-based and on-site training opportunities.

### Reward for Referrals!

Thank you all for sharing information about BBH training opportunities with those you know. Please continue to spread the word about our trainings and the valuable service that CGEs are able to provide to expectant couples and new parents in their communities and beyond. Since we know that many Certification Training attendees hear about our program from our loyal CGEs, we'd like to reward those of you who help us to get the word out about BBH. CGEs who refer a friend or colleague to BBH who registers to attend the Spring Certification Training are eligible to receive 10% off of your next full BBH product order! Please contact Allison ([bbh.ct@bbhonline.org](mailto:bbh.ct@bbhonline.org)) for more details about how to receive 10% off your next BBH product order by referring a friend to our Seattle training.

### Save the Date!

#### New BBH "Transition to Parenthood Research" Workshop on June 11, 2011:

As many of you know, the BBH curriculum and materials were first designed and evaluated from 1999 through 2005. As such, the research and information included in the BBH Training Manual and Couples Workbook does not include any new research findings that have come out over the last six years. In order to address this issue, BBH is in the process of reviewing research done between 2005 and 2011 on the transition to parenthood that we believe may be relevant to the work our CGEs do. We plan to review and summarize this information and make it available to our CGEs via a one-day educational workshop, to be held in Seattle, Washington (Swedish Medical Center First Hill Campus, Glaser Auditorium) on Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup>. Experts in our field—including former BBH Program Director, Carolyn Pirak, and current BBH Program Director, Renay Bradley—will be invited to share cutting-edge research with workshop attendees, as well as research-based conclusions that will help CGEs to better support the couples they work with. A new supplemental manual will also be created based on this work that will be made available to CGEs after the event. Details regarding workshop registration and the

supplemental manual will be available in the coming months. Workshop attendees may receive CEUs for attendance. We look forward to seeing you there and updating your knowledge of the transition to parenthood.

### **Save the Date! CGE Breakfast on June 12, 2011:**

BBH will hold a Breakfast for CGEs on the morning of Sunday June 12<sup>th</sup> in Seattle, Washington. Breakfast attendees will have the opportunity to enjoy breakfast while listening to discussions on the transition to parenthood and how best to support couples as they become new parents. CGEs will have the chance to network with other CGEs, meet BBH staff, and update their knowledge of this important transitional phase of family development. The Breakfast will take place on the morning after the BBH "Transition to Parenthood Research" Workshop. Details regarding breakfast registration will be available soon.

### **BBH CT Final Exam is now Online!**

Registrants at our next Certification Training will be the first cohort ever to take their final exam online. This will enable our Training Specialists to include two additional hours of teaching time to the Training, which they are very excited about.

### **Product and Service Updates!**

1. **"Beyond" BBH Series.** BBH Training Specialists Julia Laibson and Jennyfer Rayden are currently in the process of creating and evaluating a BBH-based series for parents with older infants and toddlers who are beyond the initial 'transition to parenthood' stage. The curriculum is based on some material currently available in the BBH Training Manuals and Couples Toolkits, but it has been refined so that it is specifically relevant to parents with older infants and toddlers (e.g., greater focus on emotion-coaching with older infants and toddlers). Julia and Jennyfer are currently holding one-day Beyond BBH Workshops at Swedish Medical Center on the following dates: February 12, April 23, and May 7, 2011. If you know of any parents with older infants/toddlers who would like to attend, please refer them to our website for further details: <http://www.bbhonline.org/parenting/Beyond-Bringing-Baby-Home.aspx>. We plan to use evaluations and feedback from these initial Beyond BBH sessions to further strengthen the curriculum and associated materials. We will then finalize the Beyond Training Manual and Beyond Couples Workbook and make them available to CGEs (hopefully by mid-way

- through this year!). This will enable CGEs to offer this one-day version of the BBH curriculum to parents with older infants/toddlers!
2. **BBH MP3 Files Now Available.** BBH has transformed the audio from our current *BBH Couples Workshop 4-disk DVD Set* into MP3s so that CGEs can more readily listen to this information on iPods, iPads, and other MP3 players! Enjoy listening to John and Julie Gottman facilitate a BBH Couples Workshop in its entirety. CGEs will now be able to listen to this material while in the car, at the gym, or even on the bus or train! Reinforce key concepts and easily prepare for your next BBH Workshop by listening to this audio set while you are on the go! Check out the CGE product order form for details on how to obtain your MP3s today: <http://www.bbhonline.org/certified-gottman-educator/Order-BBH-Products.aspx>
  3. **The Couples Toolkit is being translated into Spanish.** CGE Dr. Daniel Kusnir is still working hard to translate our BBH Couples Toolkit materials into Spanish. He has now fully translated the text and is in the process of finalizing some translation-related issues before we send it off for final editing and formatting. We expect to have the translation finalized within the next few months and will begin to offer this new product at that time. We will keep you posted on this process!

### **New CGEs Hold Their First BBH Workshop!**

Check out this article on page 8, written by our very own BBH Assistant Program Coordinator, Allison E. White, who shares her experience with running her first BBH workshop. Allison shares the ups and downs of her experience and hopes that other CGEs may be able to benefit from what she learned.

### **Getting to Know CGEs:**

Starting this new year, we will feature a BBH CGE in each Connections Newsletter (you could be next!). This quarter, Louise Harris was selected and asked to share details about how she brings BBH concepts into her life and work. (See page 6). Thanks, Louise, for sharing your story and for the many helpful tips including in your feature!

### **Reminder...**

Certified Gottman Educators who have been trained to facilitate the BBH Workshop and use the content with their own clients need to be re-certified annually in order to maintain their CGE status. If you have not sent in your re-

certification fee, please do so today! Remember, maintaining your CGE status allows you to use the BBH CGE title, order BBH products and services, and list your name and workshop locations/dates/details on our website.

### Teaching Corner!

Do you have tips to offer families and other CGEs? Then send them our way! Please email the BBH Program with your stories and tips for how to effectively teach the BBH Program material to families, as well as suggestions for how families can raise emotionally intelligent children in loving environments.

Please stay in touch with BBH via our website, [www.bbhonline.org](http://www.bbhonline.org). Please also be sure to find BBH on Facebook and Twitter! Thanks very much for your continued support of the Relationship Research Institute's Bringing Baby Home Program.

Best regards,

Renay Bradley and the BBH Team

## Louise Harris, CGE Feature



When did you become a BBH Certified Gottman Educator?

I became certified in the fall of 2005.

What do you do?

I work as a licensed therapist in a branch of Wellspring Family Services called New Parent Services. We are responding to a need to provide clinical support in the adjustment to parenthood. We work individually, with couples, with dyads (parent and baby), or groups like Reflective Parenting Workshop, Listening Mothers, Fathers' First Steps and of course Bringing Baby Home.

How do you use your certification/knowledge gained from BBH in your work?

I attended a Gottman-based training in 1999 that focused on working with couples in therapy. Their research findings about Diffuse Physiological Arousal (DPA) have especially informed my work. When I attended the BBH certification training, it was a continuation of this approach. So knowing how to help couples identify when they get "flooded" in their interactions and helping them learn self soothing has proved invaluable. What BBH brings is the parenting piece. New parents get flooded with a crying baby. If we can teach them how to take a break and self-soothe, they can become more confident and responsive parents.

How do you use your certification/knowledge gained from BBH in your every day life?

I am an ever learning grandmother of four children under the age of seven. I can share my experience with their parents and a large network of young families who casually ask for my input.

Do you have any memorable teaching experiences with your couples that stand out to you?

We have given this workshop to a diverse group of expecting parents. Many are away from their homelands and feel isolated and unsupported at such a pivotal time of their lives. Our groups have problem solved together many of the "what ifs" and become vital networks for one another. More than once I have seen couples come to day one not knowing anyone else in the group and leave after day two talking for an hour in the parking lot.

What is something that you learned through teaching the workshops that you wished you knew beforehand?

It is helpful to check in with couples early in the first day to make sure the workshop is what they expected. Some may sign up for it expecting to learn about diapering and swaddling.

Do you have any special activity/creative method for teaching a certain BBH chapter or topic?

Because we work directly with postpartum mood disorders, we are able to give expert time and attention to that part of the program. We have emphasized that the partner can be a reliable observer and seek help if the new mother is experiencing mental health symptoms. We provide attendees with a variety of additional referrals like doulas. For some couples, Bringing Baby Home is their first of many classes they will take in preparation. Being so grounded in the world of a new parent is very helpful to our couples.

Additional Comments?

As a follow up to the section "The Importance of Touch" some of us are getting additional training in how to teach parents infant massage.



## A New CGE Hosts Her First Workshop

By: Allison E. White, CGE

Almost nine months after attending the Bringing Baby Home (BBH) Certificate Training in February of 2010, it was time for me to give birth to my own workshop. Luckily for me, working as a Research Assistant at the Relationship Research Institute (RRI) and later on as the Assistant BBH Program Coordinator, I have been immersed and impregnated with Dr. Gottman's work on a daily basis. Although I knew this would serve as an advantage as I began to prepare for the workshop, I was surprised by how much material there seemed to be and how much time it took me to prepare and ultimately feel confident to run the workshop. That being said, I also felt incredibly grateful that I was able to teach my first workshop with my highly competent, intelligent, and dependable colleague, Diana Bharucha, CGE. Having a co-facilitator definitely made things easier all around...but there was still a lot to do before we were ready to teach!

Firstly, neither Diana nor I had a specific location that was available for us to use to hold our first BBH workshop, so we had to do some research to identify options that were available to us. Many CGEs told us to explore various community centers in the Seattle area. Many of the local community centers had hourly rates that simply shocked us, and we started to wonder how holding workshops at these centers would ever be cost effective. We looked into libraries, non-profit agencies, and even discussed whether it would be reasonable to hold a small workshop in a Starbucks conference room (which, in some cases, are available for free so long as you buy some coffee!). After much searching, we found a small space in a central area that was reasonably priced and had availability on our preferred dates.

After we sighed in relief at securing this location, we had our next beast to battle—marketing. Marketing is something that neither of us had any experience with, so we brainstormed about places where expectant couples might go and tried to target those locations. We made fliers and posted them at maternity shops, daycare centers, gyms, prenatal yoga salons, and anywhere else we thought pregnant women or new parents might go. We also listed our workshop on the BBH website and placed an announcement on Craigslist.org. In hindsight, I wish that we had spent more time marketing since we only ended up with four registered couples. Although we were delighted that anyone signed up, four couples would not

make this a cost effective endeavor for us. Furthermore, the four couples that did attend heard about our workshop through the BBH website (I wish we'd known this was going to happen before we went traipsing around town posting fliers everywhere!).

Finally, we had studied the curriculum for a month, secured a workshop location, registered four participants, processed payments, gathered materials, and purchased refreshments—we were ready for our workshop! On the first day of the workshop, the stress started to set in as each participant's face appeared in the modest sized room that we secured. Diana and I shared the same anxieties as new CGEs. Our biggest fear was not whether or not we would present the workshop content well (although that was a small fear), but rather how our participants would receive us as we tried to share this valuable information with them. Being fairly young recent college grads...neither of us married yet...and neither of us parents or pregnant yet...we feared that, even though we have had lots of exposure, training, and first hand experience with the Bringing Baby Home Program, they may not accept us and might think that we could not relate or understand what they were going through. Despite our fears and apprehensions, Diana and I reaffirmed with one another that we did have something valuable to share with them and plunged into the workshop. Luckily, it didn't take long to

capture our audience's attention and dispel our own fears, because the program content really spoke for itself, and spoke deeply to our couples.

When Diana and I were in the planning phase, we tried to determine the best method for our couples to introduce themselves to each other. "I know! Let's have them introduce their *partners!*", I remember Diana cunningly suggesting. We decided to not only instruct them to tell the group the names of their partners, but also how they met, what first attracted them to their partners, and traits of their partners that they wanted to see in their babies. This activity brought the group together instantly, and we were impressed by the amount of affection and admiration that each couple shared for one another.



After a seemingly quick two days, Diana and I decided to end our workshop with the infamous "fishbowl" exercise (otherwise known as the "Honoring Mothers and Fathers Exercise" found in Chapter 14 of the Instructors Manual). This exercise seemed to be the most profound and powerful way to end our workshop.

Although these couples were strangers two days before, the workshop seemed to draw close connections between them all as they spoke intimately about their experiences with their mothers/fathers, and their hopes and fears for this challenging transition to parenthood. At the end of the workshop, the couples exchanged contact information with one another, and shared their genuine thanks with Diana and myself. Our couples seemed to leave the workshop feeling empowered rather than fearful, which was incredibly satisfying to see. Diana and I were very thankful to have had the chance to touch these couples' lives...We were also thankful that we had taken the next day off of work to recover from our weekend!

Through this experience of hosting my first Bringing Baby Home Workshop, I discovered many things that seemingly contributed to the workshop's success (e.g., co-facilitating with a competent CGE; finding a cheap location to hold the workshop), as well as many things that I wish I had known beforehand that may have made things even better (e.g., the best ways to recruit couples and market the workshop). Things that seemed to have really made a difference for our workshop couples included the refreshments and pillows that we brought (the women LOVED the extra comfort, especially those who were in their third trimester). I also appreciated having access to many of the BBH products for

preparing and presenting the workshop, including the BBH PowerPoint presentation, the "What's Baby Saying?" DVD, and the 4-Disk Couples Workshop DVD set; each of these definitely enhanced the quality of the workshop. The couples especially loved the footage of the babies!

In the end, I will certainly use what I've learned from this first workshop as I continue to hold more and work with couples as they navigate the transition to parenthood. I hope that other CGEs may also benefit from what I've learned and can use these "lessons" to help strengthen their own workshops.