

## FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT FOR LAUGHTER THERAPY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

*Participants in laughter therapy workshops stay in touch with each other through a private Internet website called the CLL Forum, and through a listserv (communications exchange). A one-year membership in both is included with tuition, and is renewable. This unique support is a key to mastery and the successful implementation of the method.*

Participants receive important coaching, advice, the latest news and innovations, inspiration and encouragement from me, from members of our Professional Advisory Committee, and from each other.

They share reports of their experiences with therapeutic laughter programs. We call these 'mirth reports' because the emotional state of mirth is key to the therapeutic value of the method. Their sharing is voluntary and generous; the information is useful and exciting; it is evidence of the breadth of application and significance of this new therapeutic modality. Here are examples of how CLLs help their clients, patients, and each other.

Steve Wilson

### 8/2/2010—A PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Hi and Hahahahaha,

I recently introduced Laughter to about 30 Men who were in a Prostate Cancer Support Group. Luckily, one man in this group has been coming to my monthly public group, the "Hayward Hysterical Society" that I have offered for the past five years.



Previously at his support group he had mentioned that he was often teased for his upbeat attitude. They would ask him, "How do you keep from getting depressed and cranky and out of sorts?" He would answer, "That's because I go to Laugh Class!" He shared this at our monthly public group and I asked him for the contact info for his support group. I contacted "the Powers That Be," and we came up with a date/time for me to come and laugh with them.

Considering that they were a group of older, half-way grumpy men, they were pretty receptive. I asked the man that was used to laughing with me to introduce me as the one who teaches "his" laugh class, and all of the sudden, a BIG change came over the group! They wanted what he had been having: Laughter.

I modified the exercises and did them with a gentleman's perspectives (tool belt, cars, baseball, yard work), and at the end I brought out my "Big Box of Silly Hats" and we were all wearing silly hats and doing the "chicken dance." Yes, a sight to behold! Hahahahahaha!

With their permission, I took a picture to send to "the Powers That Be" the next day so they could see the transformation. And they did! I got wonderful feedback, further bookings, and more than 30 men who actually "felt" the "BEST MEDICINE...Laughter"!

By the way, I first met the man who has been laughing in my group for 5 years through a Mended Hearts Support Group, folks who have had open heart surgery, etc. He says, "If I had known about this laughter stuff years earlier, maybe I wouldn't have had to be in that Support Group in the first place!"

Word-of-mouth has really been what has opened the doors for many of my presentations!  
With many giggles, LaughingLydia in N. California

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8/3/2010—A CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

This program was part of a celebration of the end of the children's summer reading program.

I was concerned about keeping the children's attention for 45 minutes so I came up with an unusual idea.

I called my friend, Linda, who has a helper dog and asked if she would be interested in talking to children in a library before I do a laughter class with them. Once I got her OK, I called the librarian. She had to call her boss. We got a "Yes". For those of you who don't know me, I will tell you that I am uncomfortable around dogs. Benjamin was loaded in the car and muzzled for my benefit. He slept/laid still the entire 90 minute trip. When we arrived at the library, the librarian insisted on taking him for a walk to do you know what. How's that for being a proper hostess? She also had a bowl of water for him.



I greeted everyone with happy face stickers. Then I blew bubbles as we waited for late arrivers. After the librarian did the introductions, Ralphy, the paper bag dog puppet appeared and talked to the children. He talked about his favorite food - peanut butter, and asked if everyone would sing his favorite song - The Peanut Butter Song. I taught them the 2 lines and we sang and did the movements. Linda talked about service dogs and had Benjamin do some tricks for the kids.

To save time, we did not allow questions. Instead, I told the children that if they had any questions they could ask Linda at the end of the program. That worked well.

I read a funny book called "Bark, George." I did a brief statement on the benefits of laughter, "Laughter is fun and makes us feel good." Then I told them it is important to laugh with each other, not at each other and we were here to have fun. As we did warm-up breathing, I told them about the diaphragm, a mini anatomy lesson. During the vocal warm-up I had them do the laughter syllables loud, soft, fast, and slow. They liked that.

Because the room was packed with children sitting on the carpet and adults around the periphery of the room, I had to change my plans for laughter exercises. We were too packed to roam around doing automobile laughter or the Hawaiian greeting. We milked cows. Then we did the hand washing exercise after I talked a little about germs and laughter. We rode the roller coaster and then ate funny fries with silly sauce. We ended up doing the car laughter sitting down, pretending we were driving. I explained "Our Happy Program" (Good-Hearted Living™ for kids). We ended with 3 affirmations and applause for being a great audience. Every child got the GHL coloring page to take home. For the adults, I had these hand-outs: GHL, 15 benefits of laughter, 100 funniest movies, how laughter benefits children.

The children were well behaved. They loved Linda and Benjamin. The puppet worked out well. It was my first time using a puppet. Two days before the program, I was paging through a magazine and saw a dog puppet made from a paper bag. I decided to make one. They listened and reacted as I read the story and there was good participation with the laughter exercises.

The librarian wants us to come back again. Linda and I had as much fun as the kids had. It was a wonderful day. Besides paying me, the librarian gave Linda \$25.00 with a note that said she should treat Benjamin to something special.

Nancy, The Laughter Lady, from sunny South Carolina

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8/3/2010—A DEMENTIA PATIENT

Hi all,

I do not send e-mail much, I have been working with the elderly @ the nursing home since October 2006. I have a group that meets once a week and this lady very seldom smiles or laughs but today a funny thing happened.



The lady, who is diagnosed with dementia, walked up to me in the hall and started laughing and repeating our laughter therapy chant, “Ho, ho, ha, ha, aha,” over and over, maybe 9 times. I stood with her and started repeating and laughing with her. I said, “Ho, ho, ha, ha, ha,” the ‘correct’ way, aware that she was saying, “Ho, ho, ha, ha, aha.” We did this for about 5 minutes just standing there in the hall. Other patients joined us in the hall and pretty soon we were all making the moves and enjoying ourselves.

Then she stopped abruptly and asked me why I did not ask her about the *aha!* Soooooo, I did and she said, “*It makes me feel good to laugh and I thought aha was the best word to say.*”

A CLL (Certified Laughter Leader) never knows what effect they might be having, especially when it looks like a patient isn’t listening or paying attention, but, today I cried a tear or two knowing she made a difference in my life as well. She brought me a cookie for the Full-Belly Laughter Project\*. Bless her Heart.

Laffin-N-Luv'in, K.Q.McB, CLL LaffinWerx, Montana's First Laughter Club

\*FULL-BELLY LAUGHTER is a project that promotes the increased inclination to laughter by ending hunger. It is described in detail at <http://www.laughterfoundation.org/pdfs/fullbelly.pdf>

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### LAUGHTER THERAPY OVERVIEW

Systematic exposure to *true mirthful laughter* in a supportive environment, under the guidance of a qualified leader/therapist, coupled with *attitudinal healing*, fosters satisfying perspectives, promotes health, and furthers the accomplishment of other therapeutic goals.

### WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

There are 15 learning outcomes for the curriculum, and three overall objectives. Participants will be better able to:

1. Use information from modern *Gelotology* research (laughter science), *Positive Psychology* findings, and knowledge of ancient practices, in clinical, consulting, educational, or volunteer work.
2. Help their clients use *life energies* to choose and modify their life and work directions.
3. Identify factors that improve health and increase happiness & life satisfaction for their clients.