

# Family Focus Christian Counseling Newsletter 2023

**It's a New Year!** The beauty of starting a new year is that we get to look at the last year in retrospection, and in a spirit of authenticity look at what we loved, while bravely acknowledging what we want to change moving forward.

At FFCC we have had our share of changes and transitions. Some were wonderful, some were difficult; and yet, we trusted God through the process and continue to trust Him with the great opportunities that await us. In our first newsletter of 2023, you will hear from me and some of our counselors as we speak into our theme, *The Gift and Challenges of Change*. Our hope is to encourage you, our supporters, clients, and staff.

We appreciate each of you and are thankful for the amazing work God continues to bless us with to fulfill. Whether it be individuals, couples, or families, we are blessed to help them navigate, grow, and thrive during their personal changes and challenges as they explore and discover the gifts that change can bring.

*Rikah Thomas, Director of Operations*

## OUR VALUES

God  
Relationship  
Truth  
Awareness  
Tension  
Change  
Grace  
Holy Spirit  
Transformation  
Growth

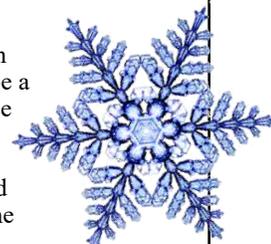
## CHANGE...It's a Challenge!

What do you think of when I say the word "change?" Do you notice yourself tense up with excitement and anticipation, or rather with dread and anxiety? Maybe a combination of the two? As a new year begins, the sense that change is in the air can evoke any and all of these feelings, all of which are a completely normal part of the human experience. Many of us have memories in which change led to something positive, such as a better job, a better living situation, or a more fulfilling relationship. With these experiences as the backdrop of our lives, we can enter into the unknown with a bit of excitement, anticipation, and hope. Others have had many negative experiences associated with change, and these negative lived experiences have taught us to expect the worst. Perhaps we endured and made it through, but without the support we needed, and now it is hard to feel safe and confident when transitions are upon us. Even positive change can feel threatening! What if it doesn't work out? What if I'm not able to meet the challenge? What if all

this good goes away? These are just some of the questions we can get stuck on when we are in a time of grappling with the unknown during a time of change.

As a human being, it is important to know that your body and brain's reaction to change and the unknown, whether it be a more hopeful and comfortable experience or a mild to more severe discomfort, are completely understandable. Your lived experience can be understood and related to in a new way that can help you become more comfortable within, which equips you to relate better with others and be more flexible during challenging times of transition and change. Our goal at Family Focus Christian Counseling is to meet you wherever you are, and to come alongside you in this challenging time.

-Sharon Meins, Registered Associate Professional Clinical Counselor



## OUR HOPE FOR THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

Through the generosity of our donors, FFCC was able to give over \$29,000 in scholarships to individuals, couples, and families in 2022. It is our desire to continue offering professional counseling services to the many people in need that are unable to afford the fees.

With that being said, we are dedicated to helping our local communities and beyond, but we need your help. In order to serve and assist even more indi-

viduals, couples, and families it is our goal to raise \$35,000 in scholarship funds for 2023. It is our hope to receive approximately \$3,000.00 per month, for a goal of giving 20-25 scholarships per month, between our eight therapists. We ask you to please prayerfully consider partnering with us by giving to our Desmond Scholarship Fund and join with our mission to serve those in need, especially in these times where we find many to be anxious and uncertain over

the future and the challenges and changes they are facing.

Ways to give include our website, [www.familyfocuscounseling.org](http://www.familyfocuscounseling.org) or mailing donations to:

Family Focus Christian Counseling  
500 Fesler Street, Suite 208  
El Cajon, CA 92020

Thank you for your consideration and support!



***I WILL TRUST***

When my hope is dimming, agony and pain thriving, and my heart is desiring my situation to be different, change is the gift I long for. When things are going well and I believe in my heart that the expectations I have are being fulfilled, why change it?

The challenges and gifts of change cause us to praise God or sometimes shake our head and roll our eyes out of the way we see it. Are we focusing on how we want things to be and if that fails all is lost or are we instead focusing on the one whom we can trust when we do not understand? Change is something that will come regardless of if we want it to or not. Years, seasons, and even loved ones, come and go. Trusting in the one who has it under His control is the challenge and the gift all in one. When we give up control, which can be challenging, and choose to trust God instead and live in the moment resting in Him, we not only have peace for today, but also find joy within the uncertainty that change can bring.

*Matthew 6:34 Jesus instructs us not to worry, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself, each day has its own trouble."*

Some may read this and see the future as filled with trouble. Others may read this and trust that Jesus tells us not to worry as God cares for us each day. I do not know what this year brings to us, but I know the one who does know and who tells us not to worry. This is the gift of change, that we can trust Him who cares for us today.

*-Jennifer Osborn, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist*

**MEET OUR THERAPISTS & STAFF**

We are thankful for a season where we continue to grow and welcome new therapists, in addition to wishing others well as they move on to other endeavors.

The quality of therapists, staff, and supervisors that continue to join our team are the good gifts of change at its perfect time!

**Rikah Thomas,**

Director of Operations

**Emily VanNortwick, M.A.**

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist #120571  
Clinical Supervisor

**Dr. Mallory Moon, Psy.D.**

Licensed Psychologist PSY31108  
Supervisor

**Jennifer Osborn, M.A.**

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist #117433

**Stephanie Velez, M.A.**

Registered Associate Marriage & Family Therapist #132055

**Keegan Starr, M.A.**

Registered Associate Professional Clinical Counselor APCC#7692

**Dr. Heidi Burney, Psy.D.**

Registered Psychologist Associate #94025400

**Sharon Meins, M.A.**

Registered Associate Professional Clinical Counselor APCC#10828

**Rachel Lee, M.A.**

Registered Associate Marriage & Family Therapist #131042



**Prayer & Gratitude**

We want to begin by showing our appreciation to Mark Triboulet for being a long-term part of our FFCC team over the many years. May he be blessed in his future endeavors!

Thank you to our many clients we have worked with this year and for the changes and growth we've been blessed to be part of. We continue to pray for the healing hearts and lives of our clients and their families as we work together, and pray for future funds to be able to continue giving scholarships to the many still in need. A special thank you to our clients, supporters, and church communities that continue to recommend us to your church, friends and family! We treasure and appreciate you! We also appreciate our Board of Directors for their service, wisdom, and support over the years!

**THANK YOU!**

***Blessings in 2023 to you and yours, from Family Focus Christian Counseling Team***

**Tips for Navigating Change in the Upcoming Year—Rikah Thomas**

1. Accept that life situations, relationships, and our familiar "normal" are all subject to changing throughout our life journey.
2. Consider that not all change is bad. Sometimes things must change to usher in the better things we desire and need to help us grow & thrive.
3. Change requires new perspectives, letting go of the old, and being open to different experiences. Creating a plan for forward movement helps.
4. Give yourself room to feel the tension and weirdness that a life, work, or relationship change may produce.
5. Find ways to celebrate the good things happening in the midst of changing circumstances.
6. Reach out for support from friends, family, counseling, support groups, or other healthy places to be encouraged and get the care and help you need to healthily and effectively move through the change.

