

The Importance of Healing, More Than Moving On

by Dawn Wiggins, Ed.S.

Immediately following a community disaster, there is a camaraderie and bonding that feels good. All the normal walls of disconnection, judgment and social hierarchy come down for the greater purpose of survival and recovery. As things begin to resume normalcy, the walls go back up, separation kicks in and post-traumatic stress symptoms increase.

It is no surprise Irma left a path of visible and saddening devastation in our area. After all, we still see signs of her every day! Because we're resilient and stubborn, we keep moving forward despite our challenges.

But what about the chaos Irma triggered that isn't visible to the naked eye? The feelings of fear, anger and sadness that our community is

suffering from are very real. Do you know where to find recovery tools for the mind?

Each of us knows someone who is having a hard time emotionally after the hurricane. And, that person might be you.

Anxiety and panic, sadness, frustration, grief, exhaustion/poor sleep, and increased drug and alcohol use - these are very real symptoms of post-trauma suffering.

Earlier this month, I joined 14 other therapists from Key Largo to Key West who were trained in EMDR - a trauma recovery method. This training taught local clinicians to help Monroe County residents recover from the devastation of hurricane Irma.

Local therapists, county agencies, the Marathon Fire Department and a humanitar-

ian aid program came together to make this happen.

For some, the emotional and psychological effects of Irma left invisible scars that are hard to heal without treatment. We will continue to face the threat of another storm. Imagine what it will feel like to track the first named storm in the upcoming season. Quietly lurking symptoms will be even more present. We need your help as a community in spreading the message that trauma recovery therapy (EMDR) is part of the solution for returning to normalcy.

If you know someone who needs help... if you want to volunteer your time to the cause... if you want to continue the conversation about healing our community... contact me.



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Conch Characters



Jill and Sterling Kennedy at the VFW, toasting the new year.



A baker's dozen Key Largo Pussy Cats celebrate the anniversary of the Women's March in January.



Miguel Gonzalez from Monster and the Brian Howe band enjoys some music at Gilbert's.



Well behaved and leashed furry friends are welcomed at Gilbert's Tiki Bar.



Don Boley at the KL Conch House's booth at the Food & Wine Festival at the Islander.



Some of the Gilberts party staff wait to serve a private party on the beach.

The Mangrove Galley by Sandi Mieszczenksi

Sandi's recipes are featured here monthly.
For previous issues go to <http://www.theconchtelegraph.com>.



Valentine's Day is on a Wednesday this year and whether you go out to eat or prepare a meal at home, a homemade dessert is always a treat. Chocolate always comes to mind and this year I wanted to try something different, a dish made with white chocolate. The below recipe is a nice cool finish to a delicious meal. Try it and I think that you will enjoy it.

WHITE CHOCOLATE SOUFFLE WITH STRAWBERRIES

- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 cup fresh pureed strawberries (just place strawberries in a blender or food processor and puree until they turn into a liquid)
- 1 cup white chopped chocolate (using a bar of chocolate works best or you can use white chocolate chips)
- 3 eggs separated
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- Fresh sliced strawberries for a garnish

In a saucepan, combine the sugar, gelatin, water, and the pureed strawberries. Heat, stirring constantly until the mixture just comes to a boil. Add the white chocolate and stir until the chocolate is melted. Remove from the heat.

Place the three egg yolks in a bowl and lightly mix together. Stir in the hot mixture and then return to the pan. Cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat and allow to cool for about 45 minutes stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl beat the 3 egg whites until stiff. Fold them into the cooled mixture. Whip the cream until stiff then blend in the vanilla extract and fold into the mixture. Pour into a 1-quart casserole dish or you can make individual servings by pouring into 8 separate bowls. Place in the refrigerator and chill at least 3 hours. Serve with the sliced fresh strawberries on the top. The dessert goes well with coffee, tea, or a glass of white wine. Enjoy and happy Valentine's Day!

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