

Xenia Newsletter

From the Therapist's Desk

October invites us to pause and take stock of the quiet harvests in our own lives. Just as the trees shed their leaves and farmers gather what's grown, we have the opportunity to gather the moments, relationships, and small wins that have sustained us this year. Gratitude doesn't always come from big milestones — sometimes it's found in the simple, grounding details of daily life: a steady breath, a kind word, or the comfort of knowing we're moving in the right direction.

In therapy, gratitude can be a bridge — a way to gently shift our focus from what's missing to what's meaningful. Even when life feels heavy or complicated, cultivating thankfulness can soften the edges of stress and make space for calm. This season is a reminder that healing often happens in layers, and that every moment of awareness, rest, or connection is part of the harvest.

At Xenia Counseling, we're celebrating this theme of gratitude in the work we do — through approaches like Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART), which helps clients release painful memories and reconnect with what brings them peace, and through the small, heartwarming moments shared with our therapy dogs, Maggie and Olive, who remind us daily of the simple joy of presence.

In this issue:

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Gratitude is the cognitive practice of positively reflecting on one's past, present, and future.

Studies have found that gratitude is linked to higher quality of life and healthier habits overall (Boggiss et al., 2020). Even more impressive, gratitude has been associated with better sleep, less fatigue, improved mood, stronger confidence in managing heart health, and lower levels of inflammation. People who regularly practice gratitude even tend to stick to their health goals more consistently — whether that's taking their meds, exercising, eating well, managing stress, or keeping their hearts happy (Boggiss et al., 2020).

That 3-pound organ in your head is constantly managing your breathing, heartbeat, memories, emotions, and a ton of other processes, all while reading this article. Life's chaos might try to pull your focus away from the good stuff, but your brain is still up there, tirelessly keeping you alive and always adapting. So the next time you want to improve your quality of life, try expressing gratitude in a way that feels right for you! A little gratitude goes a long way - neurologically and emotionally.

-Alex Hibbard, ACMHC-Intern

Our Therapy Dogs!

Our therapy dogs, Maggie and Olive, have a way of reminding us what presence and gratitude look like in real life.

Maggie loves to quietly check in with clients mid-session, while Olive offers soulful eye contact and sweet reassurance.



They model what it means to pause, breathe, and take comfort in connection — something we can all be grateful for.

Journal Reflection:

What in my life right now feels like a quiet harvest - something small but meaningful that I can pause to appreciate?



ART-Healing Requires Both Mind and BODY



Most of us try to "think" our way through pain or discomfort. We try to analyze what happened, what went wrong, or understand why we feel the way we do. This is called top-down processing and it is an important part of the healing process. But, it's only half of the journey.

Our bodies have their own memory and hold onto emotions, stress and trauma. When we ignore the physical side, our brain's may not receive the full message. What if your brain never receives your body's messages that you are safe? The body communicates with us through our emotions and sensations. This is called bottom-up processing, which means the body communicates to the brain to calm the nervous system and create new emotional patterns.

That is where Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART) comes in. ART helps connect the mind and the body. Using eye movements and guided imagery, the brain works to reprocess distressing memories while keeping the body grounded and safe. You don't even have to talk about what happened. Your brain and body will do the work for you, unconsciously.

If you're feeling anxious or overwhelmed try moving your eyes left to right without moving your head. Try to follow a steady rhythm like watching a ping pong match. Keep breathing and notice the signals your body is sending to you. This is called bilateral stimulation and it should help signal to your brain that you are safe.

-Summer Hibbard, ACMHC