

# CBTS NEWSLETTER



JULY 2006

## HELPING TEENAGERS WITH STRESS

"Teenagers, like adults, may experience stress everyday and can benefit from learning stress management skills. Most teens experience more stress when they perceive a situation as dangerous, difficult, or painful and they do not have the resources to cope. Some sources of stress for teens might include:

- ◆ school demands and frustrations
- ◆ negative thoughts and feelings about themselves
- ◆ changes in their bodies
- ◆ problems with friends and/or peers in school
- ◆ unsafe living environment
- ◆ separation or divorce of parents
- ◆ chronic illness or severe problems in the family
- ◆ death of a loved one
- ◆ moving or changing schools
- ◆ taking on too many activities or having too high of expectations
- ◆ family financial problems

Some teens become overloaded with stress. When it happens, inadequately managed stress can lead to anxiety, withdrawal, aggression, physical illness, or poor coping skills such as drug and/or alcohol use.

When we perceive a situation as difficult or painful, changes occur in our minds and bodies to prepare us to respond to danger. This 'fight, flight, or freeze' response includes

faster heart and breathing rate, increased blood to muscles of arms and legs, cold or clammy hands and feet, upset stomach and/or a sense of dread.

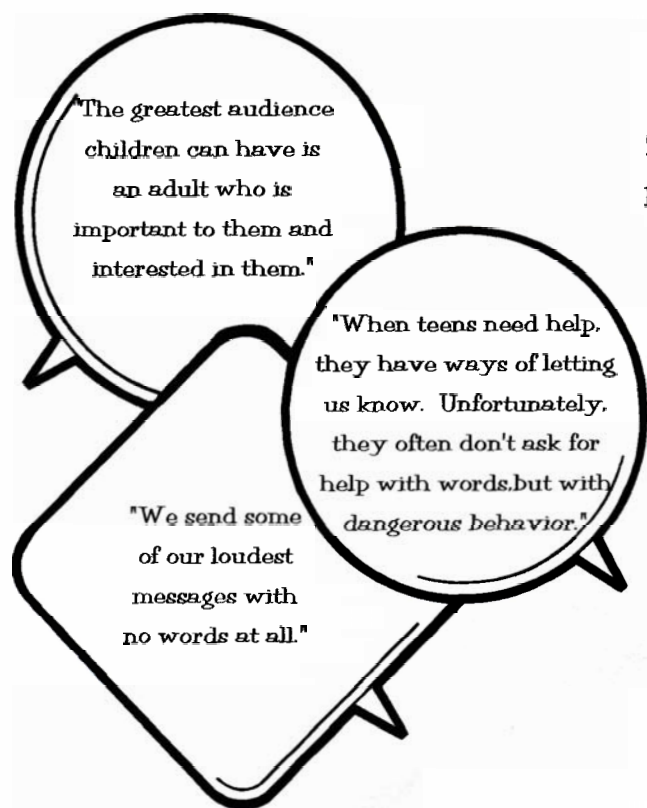
The same mechanism that turns on the stress response can turn it off. As soon as we decide that a situation is no longer dangerous, changes can occur in our minds and bodies to help us relax and clam down. This 'relaxation response' includes decreased heart and breathing rate and a sense of well being. Teens that develop a 'relaxation response' and other stress management skills feel less helpless and have more choices when responding to stress.

Parents can help their teen in these ways:

- ◆ Monitor if stress is affecting their teen's health, behavior, thoughts or feelings
- ◆ Listen carefully to teens and watch for overloading
- ◆ Learn and model stress management skills
- ◆ Support involvement in sports and other pro-social activities
- ◆ Exercise and eat regularly
- ◆ Avoid excess caffeine intake which can increase feelings of anxiety/agitation
- ◆ Avoid illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- ◆ Learn relaxation techniques
- ◆ Learn practical coping skills
- ◆ Decrease negative self talk
- ◆ Listen to music, talk to a friend, write

## STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY ATTACHMENTS

1. Respond to the arousal/relaxation cycle.
  - Allow and/or encourage expression of feelings.
  - Respond to the youth when he or she is hurt or injured
  - Help them cope with feelings about family visits, birth family, struggles, frustrations, etc.
  - Share excitement with them over achievements.



2. Initiate positive interactions which give children positive messages about themselves.

- Play games with them.
- Ask them to teach you one new thing they learned at school that day.
- Take a walk or bike ride with them.
- Give hugs or other comfortable forms of physical closeness.
- Compliment a strength or skill they have.
- Express affection verbally.
- Encourage their efforts.
- Encourage positive discussions of birth family relationships.

3. Create a sense of belonging

- Actions by proctor parents that say, "You are wanted and you belong."
- Display their photograph and include them in family portraits.
- Provide a space that is "all their own" and encourage them to personalize it.
- Include them in family trips and gatherings.
- Post refrigerator art.
- **Tell them they are wanted.**
- Encourage them to have pictures of their birth family and friends.

## OFF INTO THE REAL WORLD

'Sooner than you think, your teenager will walk out of your life and into the real world. It's pretty normal to feel that you are losing control as your teen gets older. That's the idea. You're not supposed to have that kind of control.

Parenting is all about raising a child who is thoughtful, capable, and loving, able to go out in the world and make it. Whatever you can give your teen to help them reach that point is what counts. The thank-you's and 'what a great parent you were' and 'oh, how I'll always love you!' are frosting on the cake of life.

As a parent you are cultivating relationships with your children in which there is room to negotiate. You're developing a friendship with your teen in which you can speak to your teen as a young adult: 'How can we help each other through these tough times?' How do we get you ready to live in that real world out there so that you've had enough practice and there are no big surprises when you get there?'

One of the ironies of parenting is that the best way to influence teens to become irresponsible and fail at life is to become highly involved in making sure they do make it. This is because the implied message in that involvement is, 'I don't think you're going to succeed, so I'd better get in here.' And the teen lives up to that.

Overly involved parents who intrude on their children's lives from kindergarten through twelfth grade will almost always raise learning resistant children. To help your teen,

and give yourself a break in the process, follow these four steps to responsible offspring:

Step 1: Give your teen a responsibility

Step 2: Trust that your teen will carry it out, and at the same time hope and pray that they blow it. Because that's how they learn the most from it. If they blow it today, there's a learning experience at the end of it. Of course, hoping they'll blow it doesn't mean you'll be sending messages that they're worthless and can't think for themselves. It's just that the cost of making a mistake is cheaper today than they will ever have to pay to learn that lesson in the real world.

Step 3: When they do blow it, stand back and allow consequences to occur while expressing empathy.

Step 4: This is the most important one: Turn right around and give them that same responsibility all over again, because that sends the powerful implied message, 'You're so smart that you can learn. People do learn from their mistakes and you're no different. I'm sure you'll learn from yours too.' That beats the parent who criticizes by communicating, 'You blew it! Now I have to do it!'



## CPR/FIRST AID TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Sprague City Library (1100 E. 2131 S.)

Saturday, July 8 10:15 a.m.

Tuesday, August 8 5:30 p.m.

Anderson/Foothill Library (1135 S. 2100 E.)

Wednesday, July 17 5:30 p.m.

Riverton Library (1830 W. 12860 S.)

Monday, July 17 5:30 p.m.

Sandy Library (10075 So. Buttercup Dr. 1350 E.)

Wednesday, July 5 5:30 p.m.

The first 1.5 hours is CPR training, the second 1.5 hours is First Aid.

For more information contact Save-A-Heart at 582-7114.

*Just A Reminder* 

- ◆ Reading the monthly newsletter and writing a brief paragraph on what you read/learned qualifies for 1/2 - 1 hour of training credit.
- ◆ If you are married, one spouse needs to complete the entire 32 hours/year of training and the other spouse must complete 24 hours.
- ◆ Outside applicable training (conferences, courses, books, etc.) can count toward your yearly hours.
- ◆ In order to maintain your proctor license you must complete your training hours.



## PROCTOR PARENT REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MEDICAL CARE OF CHILDREN

- ◆ Keep proctor youth with their primary care provider.
- ◆ Take the youth to the doctor, dentist and mental health provider as required.
- ◆ Return the Health Visit Report to the program specialist or healthcare nurse within 3 days of every health visit.
- ◆ Make sure you call for an appointment on referrals and follow-up appointments within one week. If the first appointment is booked out 60 days or more, schedule it, but then call the Fostering Healthy Children Program and they will try to get an appointment sooner. Their phone number is 584-8295.
- ◆ Make sure the youth receives medications that are prescribed by the medical provider. DO NOT take the youth off medications because you don't feel they need it anymore.
- ◆ Return the appointment post card with the information within one week of receipt.

*\*If you are ever asked to sign a medical form for payment responsibility DO NOT sign your own name. Sign form with State of Utah Medicaid Operations.*



## HALLMARKS OF A HAPPY FAMILY

by Edward M. Eveld

"Families want to thrive, not just survive. They want to be happy. Asking too much? Psychologists who study happiness don't think so. Neither do Lisa and Mike Nickel of Leawood, Kansas, and that's why they and their three children have a conversation every day they call 'highlights and lowlights.' Each person gets to tell about an up moment and a down moment from the day. It moves the conversation beyond the how-was-your-day-oh-fine routine. Without knowing it, the Nickels are onto one of the findings in a new research project about happy families: Happy families are big on conversation and storytelling.

A research team headed by Barbara Kerr, counseling psychology professor at the University of Kansas, delved into the goings-on inside families. 'I was interested in finding out what happens in strong families,' Kerr said. Kerr's team studied groups of young and 'mature' families and discovered a significant set of similarities.

Here are a few of the 'happy family' indicators:

- ◆ It's not money. No economic or social class, no ethnicity or religious tradition has a corner on family happiness. The happy families in the study did have a religious affiliation or professed a strong 'philosophy of life.'
- ◆ Storytelling and traditions. Storytelling is central in happy families, as are traditions and ceremonies. Making time to be together, often at mealtime, is a priority. 'It's about having a time to tell your story, your funny or sad thing that happened that day,' Kerr said.
- ◆ Rules. Happy families have only a few rules, stated broadly. 'Unhappy families have a rule for everything,' Kerr said. 'They try to contain bad behavior with rules.'
- ◆ Kids and risks. Children are allowed to take some risks, especially in pursuits away from the family. Happy families provide 'prospect and refuge,' Kerr said.
- ◆ Conflict resolution. All families have conflict, but happy families have predictable ways to deal with it. Family members know that disputes will not threaten the family.
- ◆ Gathering space. Some part of the house, often the kitchen, is the accepted gathering place. And homes of happy families are gathering places for the neighborhood. 'These were homes where other people felt comfortable,' Kerr said."





CBTS BARBECUE

Wednesday, August 16, 2006

6:30 p.m.

Place: to be announced

This is for all CBTS staff, proctors and their entire families. Please sign up to bring either a salad, appetizer or dessert.

#### PROCTORS NEEDED

If you have a potential proctor referral, please let either Lori or Josh know. Once they have completed all of their training requirements and have been with us three months you will receive a \$100.00 bonus check.

#### CBTS STAFF LIST

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