

Avoiding Holiday Conflict

By: Fred Overton, RNC

Even the best of families can have a tough time around the holidays. Here are some helpful hints to use when you have family members that just cannot seem to make it to the New Year without a spat!

- * Hold celebrations in neutral territory
- * When sharing the burden of cooking, make expectations clear
- * For family members with ongoing conflicts, address them and declare a holiday truce
- * Do not place financial stresses on those who cannot afford them
- * Plan activities and entertainment
- * Develop an itinerary to give overwhelmed family members more flexibility . . . Dinner at 1:00 PM, Presents at 2:00 PM, Games at 3:00 PM Dessert at 4:00 PM
- * Avoid conversational topics which trigger disagreements
- * Leave alcohol off the menu
- * If conflict does arrive; separate those involved from the rest of the family, allow cool down time, discuss the negative effect the conflict has had on the rest of the family
- * Do not allow the disagreement of family members to ruin your holiday

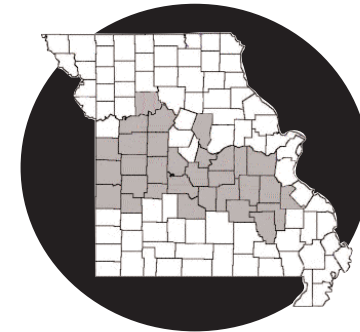


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Reflections on . . . *Mending Fences*

By: Dee Kempker, BA, CASAC

Some church members remarked that some people had things on their minds but it is more a sense of a firmly held line on things. There are also people who



PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION

a new tool in therapy

By:
Deborah R. McKee, Ph.D.

Are you dealing with a young child that is feeling out of control? Do you know someone that struggles to parent a child that is noncompliant, hyperactive, or aggressive? If so, there is now hope for the youngest group of mental health consumers. A treatment designed for children aged 3-8 years old who have trouble with inattention, aggression, hyperactivity, listening, or other parent/child relationship problems is now available at Pathways Community Behavioral Healthcare, Inc..

Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is an evidence-based treatment for children ages 3-8 years old with a variety of behavior

children. The children enjoy the increased positive attention for good behavior. Once parents have mastered the skills taught in the first phase, the treatment moves on to phase two. The second phase of PCIT is designed to increase the child's compliance with their parents' requests. Parents improve their ability to give age appropriate and effective commands, while the child is taught that they are expected to do what the parent has asked. The therapist is able to support the parent and child in practicing the new skills to ensure appropriate understanding and mastery of the skills.

How affective is PCIT? The existing research indicates that children treated with PCIT start with behav-

aviors will improve at home as well as in other settings (e.g., school, church, daycare). The children that complete PCIT are also likely to display improved verbal skills. The positive effects have been shown to last at two year follow-up assessments. Parents report high levels of satisfaction with the treatment and some parents demonstrate a reduction in their own mild depression levels. The research has demonstrated that brothers and sisters of the treated children also display improved behaviors, even if they are not involved in the treatment program. The research on PCIT clearly demonstrates that the program is effective with the most out of control children and families.

Hope has arrived in the form of PCIT. PCIT is now

Modern Day Applications of the Golden Rule

By: Fred Overton RN, C

We all know the saying, "Do unto others as you would wish others to do unto you," and it is easy to find examples of people using it each and everyday. Utilizing common courtesy, giving directions to someone who appears lost, helping to provide for those who have suffered great adversity, like the victims of Katrina and Rita, are all examples of the "ethic of reciprocity." A common time to let the golden rule go is when we feel that we have been treated unfairly or slighted. Although it is difficult to take the feelings of others into consideration when they don't seem to give a darn about yours, it is a great opportunity to put the good ol' golden rule to work.

Everyone has seen a waiter or waitress berated for bringing the wrong order to the table or a steak that was over or undercooked. Put yourself in the shoes of that person. On a busy day this individual may be serving hundreds of meals. Should an occasional mistake be that big of a surprise, not to mention the fact that the server has little if anything to do with preparing the meals? The next time this happens to you, smile, point out the error in a friendly manner and notice how the server bends over backwards to ensure that your meal is just right!

Remember when you first started your job? Regardless of what your occupation or profession is there were certainly things you didn't know, not to mention a certain amount of anxiety associated with the unfamiliar surroundings, people and/or task. Who do you feel better about, the coworker who was disgusted because you didn't know what you were doing or the one who took the time to teach, demonstrate and provide encouragement? It is not uncommon to feel overburdened when asked to help train someone, but remember what it is like to be on the other side.

Have you ever brought a complaint or concern forward at some organization you do business with? Ever hear a myriad of excuses in response; "I'm new," "The computer is down," "We're short-handed," "We're really busy," or "Nobody ever showed me how to do that?" While any and all of these excuses may be valid, you don't want excuses, you want someone to take responsibility and address your

Helping Your Child Through a Divorce



By: Donita Smith, MSW, LCSW

Our society has many ingrained social expectations for children and families. It is expected for children to form strong attachments to both parents and that the family unit will be strong, with both parents living together in the home. Divorce involves the collapse of these expectations. Statistics show that approximately one out of every two marriages today end in divorce.

Divorce is traumatic and disruptive to everyone in the family. Often times people say that children are resilient and they will “be okay” during the divorce process, but in reality, how parents behave and support their children through the divorce process will impact the ability of the children to work through the divorce in a healthy manner.

too preoccupied with their own issues and that do not notice what is going on with their child. Unfortunately, sometimes children will sense the parents need for them to be well-adjusted to the divorce, and, therefore, will actually pretend to be okay with the situation. Sometimes children will hide their distress for months, or even years.

The age at onset of the divorce can also be a factor when dealing with the child’s reactions. Children react differently to divorce at different ages, and parents should respond accordingly.

During the stage of infancy (birth to 18 months) the child is developing trust. Bonds need to be formed between the parent

child; maintain a routine; provide the child with his or her favorite toys or security items; rely on friends and family for help and make sure you are getting rest so you are alert when the infant is awake.

The toddler (18-months to 3-years) is starting to

How parents behave and support their children through the divorce process will impact the ability of the children to work through the divorce in a healthy manner.

develop their own personality. They are recognizing their independence by exploring their environment. Their

ing is becoming more complex. They believe they are in control of their environment. Many times the Preschooler will feel responsible for the divorce and do not want to see their parents separate. They may become uncertain about the future, have nightmares, and if angry, hold it

inside. What can parents do to help? If parents handle the divorce in an open manner and reassure the child with affection, the child will adjust more positively. It is important to commit to do things with the preschooler.

Reading books, encouraging them to talk and ensuring their safety helps with their adjustment.

In the elementary

parent. The child may try to get the parents back together. What can parents do to help? Sharing emotions, and trying to get the child to open up is important. Talking about things of mutual interest other than problems, spending quality time together; and encouraging a family atmosphere is helpful to warrant emotional stability.

Early and late adolescence (ages 11 to 18) is when the child is starting to move away from the security of the home. They usually are aware of what is going on with their parents and become very critical about the situation. Separation of the parents can emotionally hurt the adolescent. They may feel alone and their behavior may be unpredictable. What can parents do to help? Parents should still be there to provide their children with guidance. Communication should be as