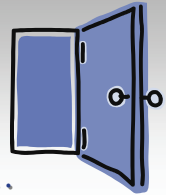


RACS Prevention Newsletter

a publication of Rockbridge Area Community Services

opening new doors to the schools and community...



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Stay Focused - In Spite of ADHD

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) refers to a range of behavior problems associated with poor attention span including restlessness, inattentiveness, impulsiveness and hyperactivity. While some children diagnosed with ADHD continue to demonstrate the symptoms into adulthood, there are also ADHD cases wherein the onset occurs in adulthood. ADHD can cause problems in all facets of life for those who suffer from it. Whether at work, at school, or in relationships, the inability to focus, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness can have significant negative impacts. Although medications have been used to help those with ADHD cope with their disorder, pills don't teach skills. That is why it is important to learn and develop skills for coping with ADHD. When applied daily, these techniques can make life easier.

It is helpful to select or arrange a workspace that may provide fewer distractions from the surrounding environment. Some people with ADHD prefer sitting near or facing a wall, or sitting with their back to the doorway. Being in a comfortable state enables a person to direct more of their attention to the task at hand.

Taking occasional breaks can help. People with ADHD often get bored easily, which may cause their minds to wander if left doing the same thing for a long time. A brief change in activity can help them to unwind and refresh their mind. Exercise or engaging in physical activity for at least fifteen minutes a day also been found to be beneficial. Exercise has been proven to help increase focus while decreasing excess energy. Through the release of endorphins, exercise can also help combat depression and provide a general sense of well-being. Physical exercise can also lead to improved sleeping patterns. Adequate rest will leave a person more alert and focused the next day.

Relying on friends and loved ones who truly understand the condition of the person with ADHD will help enable that person to better accept him or herself. Often adults suffering from ADHD feel a sense of isolation, so it's important to create an understanding and sympathetic network of people with which to associate. A consult with a doctor can also help as doctors are often able to recommend a counseling facility that offers group or one-on-one support.

One of the most effective coping skills that anyone with ADD or ADHD can learn to do is write lists! Here are some tips:

- Each night or morning (whichever works best), make a to-do list, ranking each item by level of priority. Understand that it is not necessary to accomplish everything on the list in one day, but be sure to complete the first task before moving on to the second one and so forth.
- With larger tasks, it may help to break a single task down into multiple sub-tasks or steps. This will make the overall task seem less overwhelming.
- Setting deadlines to keep from procrastinating or becoming distracted by other tasks can help, but make sure that the deadlines are adhered to, or else they won't have any effect. Calendars can help; put specific tasks on specific days and times – then stick to them as closely as possible.

These things are easier said than done, but the more these coping skills are used, the more focused one is likely to become!

Adapted from:

www.ehow.com, articles by Keith Ecker & Koan

Submitted by: LauraJane Wilson,

Coalition Facilitator & Parenting Educator



NO name-calling week

January 25-29, 2010

No Name-Calling Week is an annual week of educational activities aimed at ending name-calling of all kinds and providing schools with the tools and inspiration to launch an on-going dialogue about ways to eliminate bullying in their communities. This is a good time for us to reflect on the recent Rachel's Legacy presentations that were held in our local middle and high schools. Name-calling is one of the most common forms of bullying.

There are many easy ways to share the **No Name-Calling Week** message with your children. Here are a few ideas,

which require little planning and classroom time, that you can tell your children to suggest at school.

1. Hold a No Name-Calling Week poster contest. Use an art class to create anti-bullying posters, or plan an after-school poster-making session. Decorate the hallways with the images and slogans that promote **No Name-Calling Week** and address issues of bullying.

2. Use your morning announcements. Remind your school of the significance of the week by advertising NNCW and sharing essays or poetry during morning announcements.

3. Develop a classroom anti-slur policy.

Work with students to outline rules and expectations about classroom language, and display your anti-slur policy prominently.

4. Write a newspaper article. Encourage a journalism enthusiast to cover **No Name-Calling Week** in your school publications and local newspapers.

5. Wear No Name-Calling Week stickers, buttons or shirts. Students can show their dedication to ending verbal bullying by creating and wearing or displaying **No Name-Calling Week** stickers, buttons or T-shirts. Students will enjoy seeing each other's creative creations!

Adapted from: www.nonamecallingweek.org

Submitted by: LauraJane Wilson,

Coalition Facilitator & Parenting Educator

PEP Talk

Birth Defects Prevention

Every mother hopes that her baby will develop in a healthy way before and after it is born, but many women do not know specific ways that they can prevent birth defects. Although we do not know all of the causes of birth defects, there are some guidelines that expectant mothers can follow to keep their babies as safe as possible before they are born.

Women who are pregnant or could become pregnant should be sure to have

enough folic acid in their bodies. Most women need around 400 micrograms of folic acid each day. This can be taken as a pill or through eating foods with folic acid, such as orange juice, green leafy vegetables, beans, peanuts, broccoli, asparagus, and peas. Folic acid especially helps in preventing major birth defects in the baby's brain and spine.

Mothers-to-be must also be very careful to avoid poisonous substances, such as harsh cleaning supplies, rodent poisons and insecticides, and other chemicals. These substances can be very harmful to a baby's healthy development before it is born.

In addition to these steps, expectant mothers should not smoke or consume any alcohol at all, because cigarette smoking and alcohol can cause very severe birth defects. Expectant mothers should only consume small amounts of caffeine as well. It is also very important that expectant mothers eat a healthy diet with lots of fruits and vegetables, drink lots of water, visit their doctor regularly during their pregnancy, wash their hands frequently to avoid infections that can harm the baby, and get plenty of rest. Your baby will be healthier for it!

Adapted from: www.cdc.gov

Submitted by: Katie Blackburn, Prevention Intern



ask dr. mom...

Dear Dr. Mom-

I am a single Mom with two children. My daughter is in the fourth grade and my son is in the seventh grade at the middle school. I have been divorced for a little over two years now, and have started thinking about dating again. What is the best way to handle this with my kids?

- Dateless Mom

Dear Dateless-

Like most post-divorce adjustments, dating is complicated when you have children involved. Don't despair though - just take it slowly. Explain to your kids that you will begin dating soon. Even for a middle-schooler, you should explain what you mean by "dating" and why it is important for you. It is not necessary to introduce your kids to your dating partners on a first date; rather wait until there is some likelihood of a longer-term relationship. Reassure them it is normal and natural for you to want grown-up companionship, maybe even a significant other in time. There's no need for guilt or apologies - approach the reality of dating

with confidence and communicate, as much as is age appropriate, where you'll be going, what you'll be doing and who you'll be with. And be prepared for kids to react negatively, at least at first. They may feel somewhat threatened that another person might take you away from them. Reassure them, over and over, that you won't be abandoning them for a new relationship. Sometimes it helps to explain that love for other grownups and love for our kids come from different parts of our heart. Adding more of one, does not take away anything from the other.

— Dr. Mom

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Did You Know...

January

... is Birth Defects Prevention Month... School Board Recognition Month... Special Education Month... Fit Lifestyle Month... and Mentoring Month... the 17th—23rd is Healthy Weight Week... and the 25th—29th is No Name-Calling Week... the 1st is New Year's Day... the 19th is Martin Luther King Day... and the 21st is National Hugging Day!

