

YC

YOUTH CONNECTIONS

MAGAZINE

MARCH 2022 | www.achcmi.org

ALSO
*Fentanyl:
Not Just Another
Synthetic Drug*

POSITIVE COMMUNICATION WITH KIDS

- » Let's Talk About 'Sharenting'
- » Parents' Attitudes and Youth Use
- » The Central Nervous System:
Are You Ready?

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ALLIANCE
OF COALITIONS
for Healthy Communities



FREE

This is a FREE program for middle schools to help students with things like stress and anxiety.



WHAT IS RENEWED?

ReNEWed is a program that provides tools for dealing with stress, anxiety, and other difficult feelings. This is done through the practice of mindfulness, breathing exercises, and other healthy coping strategies.

This is a middle school-based program for grades 6th-8th.

[Session 1:]

Just Breathe!

[Session 2:]

Emotions and Mindful Coping

[Session 3:]

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships

[Session 4:]

Social Media Mindfulness



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for Healthy Communities

This program is supported in part by a grant from the American Rescue Plan Act and the United Way for Southeastern Michigan.

For information on bringing this to your school, contact Kendra Ruddy:



(248) 221-7101



kruddy@achcmi.org



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ABOUT THE ALLIANCE OF COALITIONS FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

The Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities (Alliance) formed as an extension of the successful Coalition of Healthy Communities (CHC) network. CHC was founded in 1993 by four local coalition groups seeking to strengthen their existing collaboration through the creation of an umbrella organization. In 2003, CHC members, with the support of Oakland County's Office of Substance Abuse Services, launched the Alliance to begin the next phase in Oakland Prevention.

Today, the Alliance has grown to include 20 community prevention coalitions serving over 55+ local communities, including recovery support and wellness interventions to increase supportive environments and decrease the stigma of addiction.

Working together, and in a collaborative environment, the Alliance strives to bring quality, evidence-based prevention, wellness, support, and recovery programs to all community members.

MISSION

Through substance abuse prevention, mental and physical wellness, and recovery support programs, the Alliance connects, strengthens, and mobilizes strategic partners to promote healthier communities.

VISION

Will be nationally recognized as a leader of best practices in collaboration on substance abuse prevention initiatives that create and sustain healthy communities.

CORE VALUES

As stewards of community trust, the Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities believes in: *Collaboration. Prevention. Results.*

FOLLOW US

Website: www.achcmi.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/allianceofcoalitions

Twitter: [@achcmichigan](https://twitter.com/achcmichigan)

Instagram: [allianceofcoalitions](https://www.instagram.com/allianceofcoalitions)

YouTube: [Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities](https://www.youtube.com/AllianceofCoalitionsforHealthyCommunities)

FROM THE Director



JULIE BRENNER

Together we can make a difference in Oakland County and SE Michigan. We are working tirelessly to support our mission, our network of prevention coalitions and many partners.

HIGHLIGHTS IN 2021:

- Partnership with **Oakland Schools** to implement the Michigan Model Substance Misuse Prevention lessons for K-6 grade classrooms in Oakland County Schools.
- New coalition in Brandon Township, **Brandon Prevention Coalition**, was added as the 22nd organization in our prevention network.
- One of 42 recipient organizations that share funding through the **Oakland Together Mental Health and Wellbeing Non-profit Grant Program**, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act which is administered by **United Way for Southeastern Michigan**, allowing the Alliance to expand our middle school program, **ReNEWed** to all Oakland County schools.
- Inaugural **CADCA Blue Ribbon Coalition** credential which recognizes the Alliance as a high performing coalition that does an exceptional job creating a foundation for our work.

Here are a few reminders of the work we do:

- **22 Prevention Coalition Network** that blankets Oakland County in strong substance misuse prevention and wellness initiatives to keep our youth and communities safe and healthy.
- We provide **free prevention and wellness programming** to all Oakland County elementary, middle and high schools through Keep Them Safe, Keep Them Healthy.
- **Recovery support** is greatly needed in our communities and through our Shatter the Stigma Family & Recovery Support Groups, SMART Recovery and Resolve, we are making a difference.
- **Free Narcan Save A Life harm reduction trainings** to all community members, local businesses and organizations. See all of our events on our calendar at www.achcmi.org/events.

Prevention, recovery support and wellness interventions do work so please help us strengthen our connections and collaborations and share this edition of Youth Connections with everyone you know. It can also be found online: www.achcmi.org/news.

We are devastated along with the community by the tragic event at Oxford High School. They are always in our thoughts and we are all #oxfordstrong.

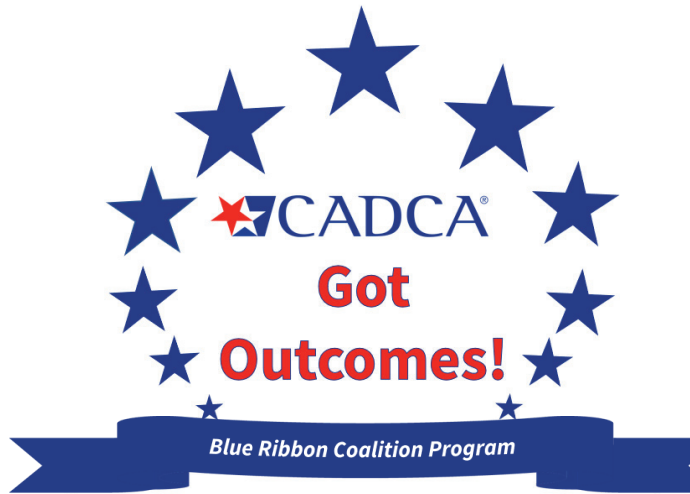
With that, we truly hope 2022 is safe, happy and healthy for you and yours.

ALLIANCE OF COALITIONS FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
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ALLIANCE
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The Alliance is honored to receive:



Recognizing high performing coalitions that do an exceptional job creating a foundation for their work by updating and utilizing their coalition products.



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MICHIGAN

21
TO BUY

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123 ANY STREET
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THINK BEFORE YOU BUY ALCOHOL
FOR YOUR UNDERAGE FRIENDS

IT COULD COST YOU \$1000 IN FINES AND/OR UP TO 90 DAYS IN JAIL.

Take a moment and...

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LOCK IT UP.

KEEP IT STORED
SECURELY AWAY FROM
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**Thank you to our
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FOUNDATION**

A Children's Foundation Initiative

jamiedanielsfoundation.org



CONFESSIONS FROM THE KITCHEN TABLE

For years, I worked my tail off to make sure my children had perfect birthday parties. I scoured the internet for the perfect theme. I scheduled months in advance to get the in-vogue birthday party venue. I spent hundreds of dollars getting matching napkins and party favors bags. I ordered the specialty cake shaped like a cowboy boot, or a mermaid, or whatever. I stuffed huge balloon bouquets into my backseat, blocking my view and causing several near accidents, but it paid off. Each and every birthday bash was totally Pinterest worthy. My parties...umm... I mean, my kids' parties were the G.O.A.T.

One chilly Saturday in February, it all changed. All of us partygoers were huddled outside under the open garage door staring up at the Darth Vader Pinata. It was way too cold to be out there, but it was a birthday party and you HAVE to do a pinata! It's just what you do!

Every kid had taken their turn to don the blindfold and swing the bat. Darth Vader was torn to shreds and was on his last raspy breath. The kids crowded in, anxious to pounce as soon as the candy fell. The birthday boy sidled up to take the last hit.

I saw it all happen in slow motion... the wind up, the swing, the bat arching up through the air and towards the target, but not before it swung right at my toddler's head! With a sickening swish it grazed the fine blond baby hair atop her head. I grasped for my daughter and pulled her away from the crowd, as the garage echoed with the dull smack of whiffle bat on cardboard, the light pitter patter of raining of candy, and the triumphant cheers of the older boys. Breathless, I looked my daughter over just to make sure that the bat had missed her after all.

I kissed her and hugged her. She fought and cried to get to the candy. Meanwhile, her brother, one of the older boys, had scrambled for the candy, but to no avail. The others had collected it all in a flash. I had a racing heart, two crying kids, and we didn't even end up with any candy.

After that incident, I began looking more closely at some of our deeply held birthday traditions and the unintentional, but often inevitable, reproductions. Are the candy, candles, pinatas, and party favors worth it?

Not to me. Not anymore.

Now, when my kids' birthdays roll around, I aim to keep it simple and I do NOT worry about it being perfect. We save a ton of money AND our sanity.

So here are some of my creative strategies to make it meaningful, while keeping birthdays easy:

Skip the Pinata: For obvious reasons we don't do these anymore. If pinatas are on the must-do list, pull-string pinatas are a safer alternative.

Everyone is In: It's heartbreaking if someone is left out, so we invite everyone in the class. If there is a kid who can't celebrate in a large group, or does not celebrate birthdays, we aim to schedule a separate outing, meet up, or playdate.

Keep it Short and Sweet: The invite reads "Come to the ice cream shop between 2:00-2:30. Ice cream is on us."

Skip the Gifts: We will indicate "No Gifts, Please" to avoid toys that my kids don't need and I don't want.

Go for a Good Cause: Sometimes we ask kids to bring a dog toy for the local shelter, or canned food for the food bank, in lieu of gifts.

Cut Down on Waste: Instead of junky party favors that don't last the week, give out books.

Skip the Candles: Open flames? Spitting on the cake then blow them out? Hard pass on both. No one notices (or cares) when we don't do the candle thing.

Easy and Free Venues: A park or a fast food play area are free, unintimidating places to gather.

Break(fast) Tradition: To avoid interrupting naptime, I once threw a birthday breakfast with doughnuts instead of cake. The kids still remember it as a favorite!

Skip the Party: Take a family outing or invite one best friend to do something extra special.

Keep in mind, the day is to honor the child, not the tradition. ■

YOU CAN SUBMIT YOUR STORY TO: jbrenner@achcmi.org

For many of us the kitchen table represents the typical family experience. We have laughed while having family game night. We have cried over our children's choices. We have blown out the candles on many cakes. We have argued our way out of doing the dishes. We have struggled through those "three more bites." We have learned hard lessons and celebrated many deserved successes. One thing is for sure though—if our kitchen tables could talk, there would be plenty of stories! So often it is in relating to others' stories that we realize there isn't always one answer, or even a right answer. Parenting is hard work! If you have a story of lessons learned, we invite you to share it with our readers. Sometimes, knowing we aren't the only ones struggling to find the answer is all the help we need.



POSITIVE COMMUNIC

By LEN LANTZ, MD

with



COMMUNICATION with kids

ABOVE ALL, KEEP COMMUNICATION WITH KIDS SIMPLE

If there is one habit I've seen backfire most often for parents, it is trying to do too much in a single conversation with their child. I'm not blaming parents. It seems like all parents are faced with more to do and less time to do it, so they multitask. Parents may combine routine communication with a compliment and then follow that up with feedback about a problem—all in less than 60 seconds. Kids of all ages get overwhelmed with this and might erupt in tears, leaving their parents wondering what went wrong.

KNOW WHAT HAT YOU ARE WEARING WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CHILD

One of the easiest ways to avoid pitfalls in communicating with kids is not to multitask. That means not yelling at them from another room or trying to communicate with them while you are doing three other things. While this recommendation might be challenging to implement, if you find that you are dealing with frequent meltdowns from your child during routine communication, it is the best place to start.

It's best to only wear one hat at a time, right? If you wore two hats at the same time, it would probably be uncomfortable and look silly. The same is true when you are communicating with your child. When you want to communicate with your child, be clear with yourself about what hat you are wearing and try not to do too much at once. Decide whether you are wearing the:

- **Routine communication hat**
- **Parental feedback hat** (dealing with a recurring problem)
- **Parental praise hat** (giving an effective compliment)
- **Disciplinarian hat** (see Len's articles at *The Psychiatry Resource*, psychiatryresource.com, "How to Help Your Child Learn from Their Mistake" and "Creatively Stopping Your Kids' Disrespectful Behavior")

If you have a lot to communicate with your child, remember to wear just one hat at a time and give them a little break between your ideas and concerns so that what you share with them really sinks in.

ROUTINE COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE SHORT AND MATTER-OF-FACT

Why do we talk to kids? One of the common reasons parents talk with their kids is to check in with them to see how they are doing. The majority of this communication involves questions about how the child is feeling, what they have been up to, and whether or not they are taking care of their responsibilities.

This type of communication is important. In fact, most parents are constantly and

continued on page 9

New Program!

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To empower girls with information and skills to make healthy life choices.
5 weeks long ~ 6-8th grade female students ~ 1 hour afterschool

HEY, PARENTS!

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TalkSooner.org

unconsciously studying their kids. A lot of this type of communication is driven by the parent's love and responsibility for their child. They have an obligation to make sure their child is okay.

Another common way that parents communicate with kids is through instructions to start positive behavior or stop negative behavior.

- "Sam, please pick up your shoes and put them by the front door."
- "Sarah, dinner is in one hour. I need you to get started on your homework."
- "Timmy, put the chips back in the pantry. We are sitting down to dinner in five minutes."

PITFALLS IN ROUTINE COMMUNICATION

Parents often already have effective communication skills that they utilize at work and with other adults. They can be clear, succinct, and respectful while avoiding displaying intense emotions. I see parents struggle in communicating with their kids when they do not use these same skills. Parents often run into difficulties when their seemingly routine questions or instructions are tinged with something that triggers a negative response in their kids. Common examples include:

Giving verbal multi-step instructions

- *Why it's a problem:* It's common for kids to feel overwhelmed by multi-step instructions and say, "I got it," when they don't and just want to escape from the situation.
- *The solution:* Have your child write down all your instructions so they don't miss something.

Having an angry or exasperated expression

- *Why it's a problem:* Having an angry or exasperated expression on your face when you communicate with your kids is likely to trigger them emotionally and disrupt their listening.
- *The solution:* Control your emotions before you communicate with your kids. Please keep in mind that if your kids routinely push your buttons until you lose emotional control, they lose respect for you, which is something no parent wants.

Yelling from the other room or intimidating

- *Why it's a problem:* If you yell from another room, you have no way of knowing if your message was truly received. Hearing your child yell back, "Okay!" often does not mean the message was received. Alternately, physically

FOR FURTHER READING, CHECK OUT:

ARTICLES

"The Creative Parenting Mindset – Having Fun Raising Your Kids"
by Len Lantz

"Is Yelling at a Child the Equivalent of Spanking Their Brain?"
by Len Lantz

"Changing Your Force Point by Eliminating Bad Habits in Parenting"
by Len Lantz

BOOKS

Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child: The Heart of Parenting
by Dr. Gottman

Between Parent and Child
by Dr. Ginott

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk
by Faber and Mazlish

See Len Lantz's book reviews here:
psychiatryresource.com/bookreviews

intimidating kids can trigger negative emotional responses and interfere with their listening.

- *The solution:* Ensure that your child hears and understands you by finding them or asking them to come to you. If you find that you are physically intimidating a child to get their attention and response, then you likely need the help of a skilled family therapist.

Having a negative tone of voice

- *Why it's a problem:* If you use a negative tone of voice, it probably does not matter what you are saying, because all your child will hear is your disapproval.
- *The solution:* It's helpful to understand your goal for communicating with children. What are you trying to say in the first place? Once you are clear about your goal, talk to your child in a calm and relaxed manner.

Using sarcasm

- *Why it's a problem:* I realize that many people use sarcasm as their way of trying to lighten the mood or show that they have a humorous side, but sarcasm literally means "to tear flesh," and your kids might not think you are as funny as you think you are. They might interpret

your sarcasm as mocking or criticism.

- *The solution:* Avoid sarcasm with your kids. You will both be happier because of it.

Implying in your word selection that your child is bad, lazy, or stupid

- *Why it's a problem:* In general, kids experience this through repetitive why questions ("Why can't you _____?") or through their parent's use of absolutist phrases such as "you always" or "you never" tied to the child's behavior. Using absolutist phrases may limit your child's readiness for positive change.
- *The solution:* Avoid negative absolutist phrases and repetitive why questions.

Negative labeling or name-calling

- *Why it's a problem:* This is one step worse than implying that a child is lazy, bad, or stupid. It is actually calling kids those things. Sometimes parents will defend themselves by saying, "I didn't call you stupid, I just said your behavior and choices were stupid." This too is harmful.
- *The solution:* Avoid the use of negative labeling or name calling (both might fall under the categories of verbal and emotional abuse).

Bad timing

- *Why it's a problem:* Many parents want to communicate something to their children immediately and feel that kids should stop whatever they are doing and leap into action.
- *The solution:* Find a good time or tell your child you will need to communicate with them at a specific time if they are in the middle of an activity. If you must interrupt a child to communicate something, give them a moment or two to pause their activity and give you their attention and eye contact so that you know that they are hearing the message.

YOU CAN TAKE STEPS TO ENHANCE POSITIVE COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR CHILD

There are many strategies for positive communication with kids. Imagine no longer feeling like you are walking on eggshells when talking to your children. Following some of the approaches above and avoiding the pitfalls will prime both you and your kids for positive interactions with each other. Having less conflict builds momentum for positive change and enhances relationships. As you improve your communication skills with your child, they will listen better, be more responsive, and be less likely to react negatively each time you need to talk to them. ■

Check out who's standing out in our community.

IS THERE SOMEONE YOU'D LIKE TO NOMINATE?

Please visit <http://achcmi.org/student-nomination-form/> and tell us why this individual has stood out in your crowd.

FACES IN THE CROWD



Abby Maisel

Abby Maisel, a Lake Orion High School senior, created an image of a dragon (Lake Orion Mascot) cradling a wild cat (Oxford Mascot) to show support to our neighboring community of Oxford. This beautiful piece of art encapsulates how children feel about their crosstown rivals at Oxford High School in the wake of the tragedy of violence on November 30, 2021. Bravo Abby! #oxfordstrong

Rosalie, Claire, & Ella Vachon

Lakes Area Community Coalition would like to recognize three sisters, Rosalie (7th grade at Clifford Smart Middle School), Claire (10th grade at WL Northern), and Ella (12th grade at WL Northern) Vachon, three outstanding leaders in their Youth Action Board. These girls are positive student leaders in our group, bringing new members and participating in all activities. They are also great ambassadors for YAB and LACC in their schools, serving as strong peer models of leadership and healthy lifestyles. In addition, the Vachon sisters are kind, smart, talented, and funny! We are lucky to have them at LACC.

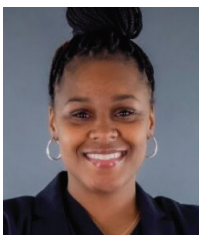


Haylee Butka

Haylee Butka joins the Alliance team as the Prevention Program Coordinator focused on reducing youth use of marijuana, vaping, and tobacco. She joins us as a recent graduate from Central Michigan University (#fireupchips) with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health Education with a minor in Substance Use Disorders. In her spare time, she coaches the Farmington High School Junior Varsity Girls Basketball Team. She can be reached at hbutka@achcmi.org

Angela DelPup

Angela DelPup is the Alliance's new Chair of the Board of Directors. She is a life-long resident of Oakland County. She obtained her undergraduate degree in elementary education from Oakland University and her MBA from the University of Phoenix. She is currently the Director of Foundation Development, Community Health and Education, Diabetes and Nutrition Counseling, Volunteer Services, and Senior Services. She has been instrumental in reinvigorating the Rochester Auburn Hills Community Coalition as the President of that organization. Angela's love of community, prevention, and wellness continues to be the focus of her career.



Keoshia Banks

Keoshia Banks, MPH, CHES joins us as the Prevention Program Manager and will be working directly with our Urban Coalition Network, act as the Oakland County Designated Youth Tobacco Use Representative, and manage our school-based prevention initiatives! Prior to this, her passion for public health culminated in the development of wellness programs for teen girls who were clinically diagnosed with depression and a community resource initiative for clinic patients. She can be reached at kbanks@achcmi.org



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MENTAL HEALTH AND SELF IMAGE

Social media can trigger feelings of inadequacy, create competitiveness when comparing self to unrealistic images, and increase cyberbullying.

Pay attention to what your child is looking at and connect with them.



40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

40 Developmental Assets are essential qualities of life that help young people thrive, do well in school, and avoid risky behavior.

Youth Connections utilizes the 40 Developmental Assets Framework to guide the work we do in promoting positive youth development. The 40 Assets model was developed by the Minneapolis-based Search Institute based on extensive research. Just as we are coached to diversify our financial assets so that all our eggs are not in one basket, the strength that the 40 Assets model can build in our youth comes through diversity. In a nutshell, the more of the 40 Assets youth possess, the more likely they are to exhibit positive behaviors and attitudes (such as good health and school success) and the less likely they are to exhibit risky behaviors (such as drug use and promiscuity). It's that simple: if we want to empower and protect our children, building the 40 Assets in our youth is a great way to start.

Look over the list of Assets on the following page and think about what Assets may be lacking in our community and what Assets you can help build in our young people. Do what you can do with the knowledge that even through helping build one asset in one child, you are increasing the chances that child will grow up safe and successful. Through our combined efforts, we will continue to be a place where Great Kids Make Great Communities.

Turn the page to learn more!



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EXTERNAL ASSETS

SUPPORT

1. **Family support:** Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive family communication:** Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s).
3. **Other adult relationships:** Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. **Caring neighborhood:** Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. **Caring school climate:** School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. **Parent involvement in school:** Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

EMPOWERMENT

7. **Community values youth:** Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. **Youth as resources:** Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. **Service to others:** Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. **Safety:** Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.

BOUNDARIES & EXPECTATIONS

11. **Family boundaries:** Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. **School boundaries:** School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. **Neighborhood boundaries:** Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. **Adult role models:** Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. **Positive peer influence:** Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. **High expectations:** Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

17. **Creative activities:** Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. **Youth programs:** Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. **Religious community:** Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. **Time at home:** Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.



Lakes Area youth meeting to help their community



Holly Youth surrounded by fun with neighbors and friends



Youth in Birmingham Bloomfield working together and making healthy choices together

INTERNAL ASSETS

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

- 21. **Achievement motivation:** Young person is motivated to do well in school.
- 22. **School engagement:** Young person is actively engaged in learning.
- 23. **Homework:** Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
- 24. **Bonding to school:** Young person cares about her or his school.
- 25. **Reading for pleasure:** Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

POSITIVE VALUES

- 26. **Caring:** Young person places high value on helping other people.
- 27. **Equality and social justice:** Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
- 28. **Integrity:** Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
- 29. **Honesty:** Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
- 30. **Responsibility:** Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
- 31. **Restraint:** Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

- 32. **Planning and decision making:** Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
- 33. **Interpersonal competence:** Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
- 34. **Cultural competence:** Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- 35. **Resistance skills:** Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- 36. **Peaceful conflict resolution:** Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

POSITIVE IDENTITY

- 37. **Personal power:** Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
- 38. **Self-esteem:** Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
- 39. **Sense of purpose:** Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
- 40. **Positive view of personal future:** Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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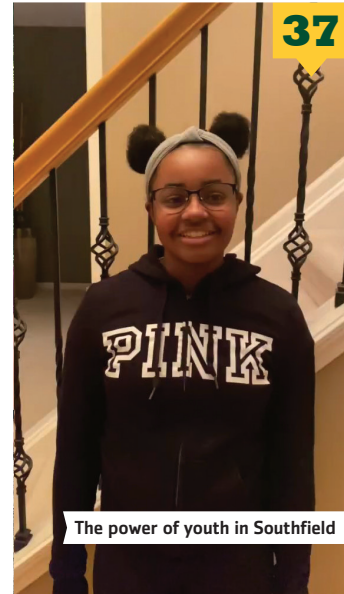
Lake Orion youth caring about their school by getting involved

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Huron Valley youth active in coalition mission

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The power of youth in Southfield

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Oxford Strong: so much caring and missing friends we lost



let's talk about 'SHARENTING'

By DR. TIM ELMORE

It all started when April, Christine's youngest daughter, was five years old. Christine knew April would be their family's last baby and wanted to document each milestone and comical moment of her childhood. By the time she was ten, April was avoiding photo ops, shying away from the camera. By 13, when she had a phone of her own, April witnessed on social media just how much mom had posted on both Facebook and Instagram. She felt violated.

Eventually, as a teen, April requested her mom stop sharing photos of her. It was embarrassing and drew sarcasm from her friends. Christine, of course, was surprised. "But this is what everyone does, isn't it, sweetheart?" she asked. "You post pictures, too. Why wouldn't you want your mother to do the same?"

This is a scenario that happens millions of times every year.

'SHARENTING' IS PARENTS SHARING TOO MUCH ON SOCIAL MEDIA

What happens when the heartfelt ambitions of parenthood meet the ubiquitous opportunities of social media? That's the subject of *Sharenthood: Why We Should Think Before We Talk About Our Kids Online*, a new book by Leah Plunkett.

Plunkett argues that 'sharenting' happens any time an adult in charge of a child's well-being, such as a parent or a teacher, transmits private details about a child via digital channels. The problem, of course, is that even though we may be the parent or guardian, kids are human. They're vulnerable, and they know that a picture posted is now 'out there' for anyone to see at any time in the future. The debate over 'sharenting' remains: is it a *right* or is it a *request* we make of our kids?

Don't think this is a big deal? Check out this statistic: "Studies estimate that by 2030, nearly two-thirds of identity-fraud cases affecting today's children will have resulted from 'sharenting.'"

When moms and dads post information, they're often not thinking long term. They're simply thinking about the responses they'll get online. But short-term thinking almost always costs someone in the form of unintended consequences.

Neighbors of mine tell me their kids (both teens and young adults) have all but vetoed any sharing of facts or photos that include them without consent. Managing what we 'sharent' is the adult version of being good digital citizens.

THE POTENTIAL PRICE TAG

Indulge me to offer some costs to 'sharenting' that we may not have considered:

1. *Stalkers may pick up details on your children, and manipulate them later.*
2. *Your kids may develop an unintentional distrust in your judgement as a parent.*
3. *It can lead to identity fraud and the distribution of information among strangers.*
4. *It may cause your teenager to withhold information from you.*
5. *Sharenting exposes children to the larger digital world without their consent, robbing them of a kind of agency.*

According to Plunkett, "The underlying problem with sharenting is the same with many adult-world surveillance and privacy issues: the bargain we have made in exchange for these services is that we surrender our data and choose not to imagine the worst-case scenarios. Not only that, it removes your child's choice to never be on social media."

More and more students are choosing this route. They see the downside.

In my opinion, too many of us are posting our life instead of living our life. Too much time and energy is spent on spinning our story on social media sites to appear happy, wealthy, or beautiful, and it costs our loved ones' reputation.

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES WE CAN FOLLOW

Step into their shoes. Consider how you've felt when someone posted a picture with you in it and you hated the way you looked or the way it fueled a wrong narrative. Did you want to take it down? Ditto.

Ask yourself: Do you really need to post that pic? Think long term and realize that you can take all the photos you want, but you don't have to post them. Just keep them on your phone or in a digital file for later.

Play the long game. Consider the unintended consequences of posting. Will it alienate your children or students? Could you lose more than you gain? The further out you can see, the better the decision you'll make today for your kids.

Think impulse control. Allow the idea of posting your kid's photo to move from your limbic system (where you feel) to your cortex (where you think). Consider all the potential consequences of the post and manage your impulses.

Have you heard of "DaddyOFive," a popular YouTube channel from 2015 to 2017, run by a couple named Michael and Heather Martin? They drew hundreds of thousands of viewers by posting videos of their parenting mishaps and their children's foibles as they grew up. It all seemed innocent, until they were arrested on charges that it was damaging their kids.

A psychologist in the trial found that two of the children, who were nine and eleven at the time, had experienced "observable, identifiable, and substantial impairments of their mental or psychological ability to function." Michael and Heather are serving five years of probation and the channel was deleted. The Martins' attorney assured the court that the couple would become more "careful" with their children and social media.

Here is my question. Why don't we care more about *developing* our kids than *documenting* them? ■

About The Author: Tim Elmore is an international speaker and best-selling author of more than 30 books, including *Generation iY: The Secrets to Connecting With Teens & Young Adults in the Digital Age*, *Artificial Maturity: Helping Kids Meet the Challenges of Becoming Authentic Adults*, the *Habitudes®* series, and *12 Huge Mistakes Parents Can Avoid*. He is founder and president of *Growing Leaders*, an organization equipping today's young people to become the leaders of tomorrow. Sign up to receive Tim's blog at www.growingleaders.com/blog and get more information on *Growing Leaders* at www.GrowingLeaders.com and [@GrowingLeaders](https://twitter.com/GrowingLeaders) @TimElmore.

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parents' attitudes AND YOUTH USE

By STAFF

This article is a continuation of our series addressing risk and protective factors. Risk factors increase the likelihood of youth getting involved in risky behaviors, like drug or alcohol use. Protective factors wrap a youth in protection and lessen their chances of getting involved in risky activities.

Does a parent's attitude towards drugs and alcohol make that much of a difference? Research says it most definitely does.

A study funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse states, "Children's risk of marijuana and alcohol use and attitudes toward marijuana were influenced by their parents' marijuana use pattern over time." In addition, "Children whose parents used marijuana primarily during adolescence/early adulthood and those whose parents continued to use marijuana from adolescence through adulthood were at highest risk." We know that kids will copy what they see their parents doing.

Poorly defined and poorly communicated rules and expectations surrounding youth use increase the risk that kids will use. Youth will tend to live up, or down, to expectations set for them. To give them the best chance of reaching their full potential and staying safe and healthy is to have them avoid any substances. The most effective way to have this work in the parents' favor is to:

1. Set the expectation.

"I expect you to not drink alcohol or do drugs until you're at least 21."

2. Give the consequences.

"If you do decide to drink or do drugs, this is the consequence."

3. Follow through.

Is this always easy? No, especially if the consequence is taking their car away, and mom or dad ends up being a taxi service again, but it's most definitely worth it. Just ask any parent who has a child that suffers with addiction. One parent in Colorado even moved to another state to try and keep her son away from the drug and influences that started his addiction. Unfortunately, to date, that did not work, and she has not spoken or seen him in over a year. So as hard as it is to implement the expectation/consequence/follow through, it's infinitely harder than

Youth who start drinking before the age of 15 are four to five times more likely to have negative consequences from alcohol as an adult. Adolescents who regularly use marijuana can permanently lose up to eight IQ points and, if they start before the age of 16, one in four will become addicted.

the alternative. It is also a lot less expensive. In-patient treatment costs thousands of dollars, and beds are becoming increasingly harder to find because of so many youth in treatment, with marijuana the number one drug of youth entering treatment.

Lax or favorable attitudes toward youth use also increase the risk that kids will use. Oftentimes parents think it's safer for kids to drink at home, with excuses like "I take their keys so they can't drive," "I did it growing up, and I turned out just fine," or "They're going to do it anyway, so they may as well be at home." To be clear, it is never safe for underage youth to drink alcohol or take drugs. There is so much research

now on the effects of substances on the developing brain. For example, youth who start drinking before the age of 15 are four to five times more likely to have negative consequences from alcohol as an adult. Adolescents who regularly use marijuana can permanently lose up to eight IQ points and, if they start before the age of 16, one in four will become addicted. In addition, teen parties have the risk of sexual assault, assault, overdose, not to mention legal ramifications. Lastly, the vast majority of parents say they don't want other adults giving their children drugs or alcohol.

Some adults may feel they're being the 'cool parent' by hosting the parties and providing the alcohol or drugs. In an article by Marc Fisher, "Are You a Toxic Parent?," he reported in his interviews with youth that what really set them off was bad behavior of parents who drink with kids, who supply alcohol, and who seem oblivious to their children's problems. One boy said, "I have less respect for those parents. They think they're the cool parents, but they're not responsible." Kids really do want parents who act like parents, even if they complain about it at the time.

In addition to making sure there are expectations, consequences and follow through, parents really do have the capability of changing their kids' perceptions around drugs and alcohol, and it starts with modeling the behavior they want to see in their kids. It doesn't require parents to be teetotalers, but it does take a concerted effort to be role models and mindful of what the consistent behavior kids are witnessing. If it's normal for kids to see mom and dad drinking, smoking weed, or doing drugs, they'll grow up thinking that's what everyone does. Just like parental attitudes towards religion, politics, recreation, the neighbors, even brands of food can determine a child's attitude or behavior, a parent's stance toward youth use and their own use will influence a child's choice to use drugs or alcohol. ■



Q&A

What is SAD, and what can I do to avoid it?

As we move into the winter months, do you find yourself or your kids sleeping more throughout the day or struggling more with falling asleep? Do you notice that you might have an increase in symptoms of depression that you might not have the rest of the year? You might be one of the 20% of people who live in the Northern United States that suffer from some form of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

The term Seasonal Affective Disorder was first coined in 1986 by Norman Rosenthal, MD to give a formal name to the 'winter blues.' SAD is a type of depression in which people experience feelings of sadness and low energy, especially around the winter months when days are the shortest. Other symptoms might include hopelessness, irritability, low energy, loss of interest or pleasure, appetite changes, and sleep disturbances. The primary difference between Major Depression and SAD is that SAD is marked by seasonal mood fluctuations. Symptoms usually occur beginning in October/November and end in March/April. SAD is more often diagnosed in women than men, also in younger adults.

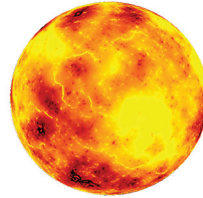
SAD is also thought to be associated with melatonin and serotonin. Melatonin is linked to sleeping. Many people who struggle with sleep take melatonin as a way to help with this. However, for those who might suffer from SAD, an increase in melatonin that naturally occurs during the darker or shorter days may increase lethargy or fatigue. Serotonin is associated with mood. Serotonin is thought to naturally increase with increased exposure to sunlight. Since there is less sunlight in the winter months, a decrease in serotonin could account for the increase in a depressed mood.

The most common treatment and one of the first lines of defense for fall-onset for someone with SAD is light therapy. In light therapy, you are exposed to a bright light which mimics natural outdoor light. This appears to change the brain chemicals in the brain linked to mood. It generally starts working in a few days with few side effects. Research on light therapy is limited but does appear to be effective for most people with SAD symptoms. If you believe you or someone you know might suffer from SAD, consult a doctor or mental health professional.

HAVE A QUESTION?
email: jbrenner@achcmi.org

We cannot guarantee all questions will be published; however, we will do our best to respond to all questions submitted.

BY THE NUMBERS



150

The number of years it would take to drive a car to the sun.

4.2 million

The average number of times an eye blinks in a year.



33

The percentage of dog owners who have talked to their pet on the phone.

6000

The weight in grams of an elephant's brain



350

The number of bones we're born with; we die with 206.

7.6 million

The number of Christmas trees sold each year.



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the central nervous system: **ARE YOU READY?**

By JOHN GREIG UNDERWOOD, Human Performance Project

Without any question, the brain and central nervous system (CNS) play the most significant role in all peak mental or physical performance. Unfortunately the CNS is either ready or it is not...

The ability to perform at one's best in the classroom, on stage, in the big game, or at work depends on CNS readiness. This means that the brain and nervous system are fueled, rested, and ready. Every physical movement comes from brain CNS impulses. For an athlete, dancer, or musician, the CNS controls every part of performance potential, including function of skills, exact movements, the firing sequences of muscles, reflexes and reaction, and many connected physiological functions, including the heart, lungs, and muscles. Thinking skills also require CNS readiness for processing, focus, and learning.

The most significant factor for the brain and CNS to function at top level is that it is rested. This has been documented throughout decades of studies on reflexes, reaction, and many other variables which measure CNS readiness. Recent studies centering on sleep and rest as a factor in optimal mental or physical performance have proved conclusively that sleep is clearly a predictor of performance in anything one does.

During the 16 hours a day we are up and awake, the brain's reserves are used up and energy levels are spent. Late day fatigue reduces mental and physical performance. Speed of mental tasks for speed and accuracy decline from 1:00 PM onward throughout the day.

The social-emotional-psychological impact of high level performance fatigue is well documented. The stress and stressors of performing at one's best weaken and affect CNS reserves. These factors result in decreased performance potential and are greatly increased as a result of loss of quality sleep.

When the CNS is fatigued, we not only lose our ability to think but to perform physically, as well. Most people have experienced pulling an "all-nighter," which leaves one feeling quite dysfunctional for at least the next 24 hours. Confusion, inability to focus, memory glitches, concentration lapses, decreased motivation, moodiness,

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irritability, and emotional instability are some of the classic signs that develop. At the same time, physical exhaustion, fatigue, increased perception of effort, decreased speed, power, and skills ability are often symptoms of lack of sleep. It is clear that the brain and CNS deficits are major factors in these functions failing. When the brain is rested, it performs...when it is fatigued, it cannot.

Fatigue is a state when energy loss exceeds energy availability. Sleep loss clearly increases this. It seems very likely that the muscle processes are also greatly involved. An individual who loses sleep and has no requirements for physical activity/stress faces much less trauma than an athlete who must train or compete despite the fact that they are fatigued.

Cheri Mah's recent research at Stanford University with elite athletes in numerous sports has connected for the first time the fact that these energy drains may be the result of not enough sleep. Performance

potential can clearly be predicted by sleep. It is clear that the brain builds up energy reserves or shortages over one to three days. To expect top performance by only getting a good night sleep the night before a big event would be risking a huge investment in time, effort and energy that may not pay out in performance. Rest in the last 24 hours prior to a major performance cannot in most cases guarantee top-level performance. For a very important performance on a Saturday CNS readiness would need to start on Wednesday night.

Using substances impairs many of the pieces that allow the CNS to reload and repair and build up energy reserves. Depressants like alcohol and marijuana depress nearly every physiological system and delay the build up of reserves. Stimulants cause disturbances and prevent the deep sleep (REM) when most of these reserves accumulate.

Quite simply, performance is at the mercy of CNS energy reserves. Sleep is the single largest factor in energy reserves or deficits. Drugs impair all CNS performance functions.

HOW TO ENSURE ONE HAS A RESTED BRAIN AND CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM:

- Make sleep a critical part of a regular performance routine.
- Extend nightly sleep for several nights to reduce sleep debt before performing.
- Maintain low sleep debt by getting enough nightly sleep (minimum of eight hours and as much as nine or more hours during high stress or growth).
- Keep a regular sleep-wake schedule, going to bed and waking up at the same times every day.
- Take brief naps (30 minutes or less) to obtain additional sleep during the day, especially if drowsy.
- Don't use alcohol or marijuana prior to sleep.
- Don't use stimulants to try to overcome the deficits of sleep debt.

Whether performing in sport, academics, or the arts, optimal performance is awesome. Nothing else is even close. ■

Brain Break!

A way to give your brain a break, boost blood flow and oxygen to the brain, and help to better retain information.



A small reset in the day helps enhance your energy and positively impact your emotional state. Brains can only process so much at once, so brain breaks allow children and adults to reset. In addition to giving your brain a break, these activities allow for creativity and social skills development.

Using your Senses:

- Close your eyes and listen. How many things do you hear? Pick one sound. Do you know what's making that sound? Now focus on another sound.
- Before you eat your next snack, hold it in your hand. Look at its shape. How does it feel? How does it smell? Take a bite and let it sit in your mouth to really taste its flavor.
- Take a deep breath through your nose. Pretend you smell a flower. Inhale and exhale. With each breath, think of a new scent. It could be your favorite meal, your pet, or soap.
- Look around the room and focus on an object. What color is it? What shape is it? What do you notice about it that you did not notice before?
- Using your fingertips, touch an object. Is it warm or cold? Is it soft or rough? Move your fingers around and focus on how the object feels.
- Close your eyes and pretend you're on a boat. What do you see? What do you hear? Take a deep breath. What do you smell? What do you feel?



Short brain breaks have real benefits. They reduce stress, anxiety, and frustration. They help kids focus and be productive. Brain breaks also help kids learn to self-regulate and be more aware of when they're losing track of what they're doing.

FENTANYL:

not just another synthetic drug

By HOLLY MOOK, LAC, MSW Intern



Cautions! Fifty to a hundred times more potent than an average pain killer, fentanyl is a synthetic pain killer known as an opioid. Like morphine, fentanyl is a prescription drug that may be prescribed for pain. Fentanyl can also be manmade and used illegally and is often laced with other street drugs. There are lots of street names for manmade fentanyl. The United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has identified some such as Dance Fever, Goodfellas, Great Bear, and Tango & Cash. It is often made as a powder that is then formed into pills that may look very similar to prescription pills or diluted as a solution that may be carried in containers that look like droppers or spray bottles. In August of 2021 in Georgia, a drug unit seized candy that looked like bears that was wrapped in a candy wrapper that was infused with fentanyl.

Fentanyl is a concern for communities and is being trafficked. In September of 2021, the DEA issued a public safety alert because of a sharp increase in fake prescription pills containing fentanyl and meth. They warned that international and domestic criminal drug

networks are flooding the U.S. with lethal counterfeit pills. They have been seized in every U.S. state.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (2021) states that synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, are now the most common drugs involved in drug overdose death in the United States. A deadly dose of fentanyl is small enough to fit on the tip of a pencil.

Action! Be aware of the dangers associated with fentanyl and avoid any direct contact with the drug. Talk with your children, friends, and family about the dangers and what to look for. Fentanyl use can look like relaxation, drowsiness, confusion, unconsciousness, and even extreme happiness. It can cause nausea, urinary retention, and constipation. It is important to look for pupillary constriction and respiratory depression. If you have concerns that someone is using fentanyl, connect them to and encourage appropriate professional help. If you are concerned that someone is under the influence of fentanyl, call 911 as they may need lifesaving measure performed immediately. ■

Oakland County TEEN MENTAL HEALTH



In the spring of 2021, Oakland County 7th, 9th, and 11th grade students participated in a survey asking about their mental health, COVID-19, and drugs and alcohol. Over 5,000 students participated. This report looks at the mental health findings from the survey.

34%

of Oakland County teens reported their **MENTAL HEALTH WAS NOT GOOD MOST OR ALL OF THE TIME** during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

1 out of 3

Oakland County teens reported they **felt nervous, anxious or scared most or all of the time** in the past 30 days.



40%

Oakland County teens stated they **felt more irritated or easily annoyed than usual** most of the time or all of the time in the past 30 days.



2 out of 3

Oakland County teens agreed their **schoolwork was more difficult** during the COVID-19 pandemic than before it started.*

*Reported at the end of 2020-2021 school year



21%

of Oakland County teens reported **they would go to no one or did not know who they would go to** if they found themselves needing help related to **stress, anxiety, or depression**.



17%

Oakland County teens reported that they **seriously considered attempting suicide** in the past 12 months.



VAPING IS

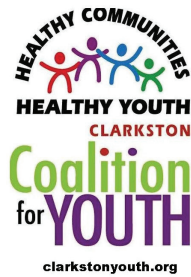
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