



Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation

The Institute for Family Violence Studies

Florida State University

SEPTEMBER EPRESS

QUESTIONS FROM DIRECTORS

I've been on to the website and seen the new training. Are you going to have in-person training, too?

Yes - we are happy to have a training in the community. Because it would only be a few hours, we would like to use a train-the-trainer style format. We are reaching out to programs to ask if there is enough interest in the state to justify such training. In the next phone conference, we will take a survey of those who attend to determine interest.

Can you recommend a phone conference service for our program to use when we want to have phone conference?

We use a state line. However, there are many services available. I am happy to ask during the next phone conference if anyone has any recommendations.

Do you know of any universal precautions training online?

The bad news is that we looked far and wide, and could not find any. The good news is that we have designed our own for you – so stay tuned. A brand new powerpoint will be on its way soon.

We have a new judge on family cases, and he does not seem interested at all in meeting our director or finding out about our services. What can I do before I start getting incomplete referrals?

Don't assume that just because a judge didn't come to your open house, he is not interested in your program. Instead, provide to him a written document that spells out the essentials about your program. Also, work to educate the judicial assistants – they may be willing to pass along the information to their bosses. Lastly, inquire as to whether the chief judge

would be willing to let you speak for a few minutes at a local judges meeting, or whether the chief would pass out your written materials at those meetings.

Addressing Dishonesty with Children

By Kimberly Newby

Introduction

Children lie for many different reasons and while lying may be wrong, it is normal. Some children may be lying to establish their identity, to get attention, to avoid hurting others feelings, or to avoid getting in trouble. Witnessing a child lie can cause a variety of emotions from anger and frustration to confusion and sadness. Addressing lying when it happens and communicating with children about it can help prevent it from happening again in the future. This E-press provides helpful tips on how to create honest communication with children. Visitation monitors can distribute this E-press to parents to offer guidance in building trusting relationships.



Tips for Addressing Dishonesty

1. Don't Freak Out

- Overreacting or punishing children without an explanation is unlikely to help the situation. Identify what you are seeing and what you are concerned about to help promote an honest and open line of communication.

2. Take Time to Listen

- Listen to the child's reasoning behind his or her lie to help make sense of it and/or aware of other issues present in his or her life.

3. Be Specific and Direct

- Concentrate on the lying and not the child. Be specific about the behavior and the consequences of that behavior. When discussing this, be clear and concise to keep your child focused on the issue at hand. Avoid lecturing children because it may cause children to become distracted or disinterested in what you are saying.

EXAMPLES

“If lying about chores continues, *this* will be the consequence.”

“We know that you lied about where you were last night, and there will be consequences for not telling the truth.”

Tips for Promoting Honest Communication

1. Encourage Honesty

- Teach children the value and importance of truth-telling. Consider telling a story about a time when you were dishonest and how it affected others. Sharing a personal experience with may help children open up and feel more comfortable sharing an experience with you.

2. Model Honesty

- Telling the truth or explaining why you decided to lie in certain situations is important in setting a good example.

3. Praise Honesty

- It is important to recognize that sometimes being honest is tough and that it takes courage to do so. Thank children for being honest to help them realize the true value and importance of honesty.



Resources:

<http://www.empoweringparents.com/How-to-Deal-with-Lying-in-Children-and-Teens.php>

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/15/03/liar-liar>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/miriam-mason-martineau/what-to-do-when-my-child-b_5355641.html

Increasing Happiness in Daily Life

By Cristina Batista

It is important for monitors and parents to learn practices that help them cope with daily stresses. One way to do this is by paying attention to moments of happiness, gratitude, and love. Although, finding these moments might take some practice. When adults are struggling with stress, frustration, or sadness, visitation monitors can offer suggestions to parents or colleagues listed in this article to promote peace and happiness.

Feel the Sensation of Happiness

The most important step for adults is to practice feeling the sensations that arise when they feel happiness or peace. They can imagine a moment of shared love with someone and pay attention to sensations that arise. This will help them recognize when those same emotions occur on smaller levels each day.

When Confronting Stress or Frustration

First, remind others that feelings of stress and frustration are natural feelings. Then, supervised visitation monitors can address ways that the parent or colleague can practice increasing his or her happiness daily. This is not to minimize the person's feelings, but to help him or her find other ways to handle those feelings. For some, happiness may come easy, with little thought or routine required. For others, simple reminders and practices are all it takes. Help others understand that they have control over their feelings of happiness and peace; they can choose to experience them every day.



WAYS TO SLOW DOWN AND FIND PEACE

1. Sing out loud
2. Meditate and enjoy the silence
3. Prepare and slowly eat a healthy meal
4. Watch a favorite old movie
5. Watch a sunrise or sunset
6. Make a game out of grocery shopping
7. Donate extra clothing or clutter to a shelter
8. Listen to uplifting music
9. Take a long walk
10. Smile when doing everyday tasks – like washing laundry or grocery shopping

When Dealing with Routine or Monotony

If parents or colleagues begin to mention that they are having negative feelings towards the way their life is going because of routine or monotony, assure them that those feelings are very common. Help the individual understand that he or she has the ability to change their situation. Even with a small addition of change to their daily lives, individuals can start to feel more fulfilled and happy. This could be as simple as taking five minutes out of every day to listen to a favorite, uplifting song. Another positive daily addition is having a short conversation through text or phone to an encouraging friend or family member. Keeping a small list of favorite moments or accomplishments and reading the list often can add to positive and motivating feelings. Encourage others to try some different tips provided in this article and accompanying handout.



References and Resources

<http://www.developingthroughrelationship.com/blog/-finding-and-feeling-micromoments-of-love>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/meimei-fox/happiness-tips_b_2405608.html

<http://www.dumblittleman.com/2010/04/30-happiness-tips-program-your-life-for.html>

<http://elitedaily.com/life/culture/forms-of-simple-happiness/877909/>

<http://tinybuddha.com/blog/the-beginners-guide-to-simple-daily-happiness/>

Finding Peace Every Day

1. Start strong

First thing in the morning that will ensure your day is a success. Have a simple plan the night before of what you want to tackle first thing in the morning. Waking up earlier than usual and doing something before breakfast can contribute to your feelings of success. It may only take ten minutes or maybe an hour. This could mean writing in a journal, walking around or getting active outside with a workout. Know what this activity will be the night before and get straight to it when you wake. Spending this time in a meaningful way will encourage the rest of your day to be just as meaningful and successful.

2. Plan less and live slower

Don't rush through tasks. One of the quickest creators of stress and killers of happiness is rushing and believing you don't have enough time to slow down and enjoy time to yourself. One way to do this is to only plan to do one to three core things each day. Let the rest be a bonus. Plan for twice as much time as you think it will take and don't fill every second of your calendar with tasks. So try this: Drive slower, walk slower, work slower, chew slower. You can slow down and still get things done.

3. Spend time in gratitude thinking

Spend a few minutes thinking of all the bits of life that you are grateful for. The big and the small. What are you proud of? What's made you smile or laugh recently? Think of things that create an immediate smile. This can be as simple as thinking about who are you thankful to have in your life. What people, experiences and things make your life rich? You can do this anywhere—during a walk or a workout or while you're commuting to work. When we are in an emotional state of pure gratitude, it's impossible to feel negative emotions like stress, frustration, or unhappiness. The more things you can find to feel grateful for, the more often you'll find yourself happy or at peace.

4. Know what makes you happy

All of us have things or thoughts that immediately change our state. These are those that make us smile, get us inspired, and simply make us happy. Maybe that's a special song, a movie, a YouTube video, a certain workout, a book, or time with a friend. Keep track of these. Spend ten minutes making a list in your journal of these items or thoughts that make you happy, and add to it anytime you notice yourself feeling extremely happy. This can take place at the end of the day, when you can look back at everything that happened throughout the day and specifically pinpoint that happy moment or feeling. Keep this list handy if you're ever feeling down, and use the items on it when you need some cheering up. Even if it's as simple as watching your favorite scene from a movie you like or listening to the chorus of your favorite song, small acts that you practice every day to keep yourself cheerful will contribute to a more peaceful and happy lifestyle overall.

Helping Parents Stay Connected with Their Teenager's Education

By Cristina Batista



New research has found that parental involvement during the child's adolescent years is essential. Because of the multiple changes teenagers face, the family dynamics tend to change as well. One of the biggest changes occurs in communication between parental figures and school professionals, as this communication tends to decline between middle school and high school. Although remaining involved in an adolescent's education will simply look different than before, parents should know that it is possible to achieve.

Strategies for Visitation Monitors to Share with Parents

1. ***Linking education to future success.*** Supervised visitation monitors should encourage parents to talk to their adolescents about the future, especially in ways that link the education they are receiving now to the amount of success in the future. This could be as simple as linking grades received in high school to acceptance and scholarships to college in the future. Parents can use examples of people who are successful today and attribute much of that success to their education and hard work.
2. ***Support the teen's independence.*** Teenagers at this stage of development want to feel independent and responsible. One way to support this independence is to stress the responsibility that the adolescent now has over their own education. Parents have the right to enforce rules in the home, but at the same time should talk to their teenager about what education means to him or her. Parents should also encourage their adolescents to take pride in their ability to choose their elective classes and elective

education. Supervised visitation monitors should prompt parents to talk to their teenagers on the subject of the elective classes, and nurture those interests.

3. ***Provide structure at home.*** If parents are expressing worry over their teenager's performance in school, visitation monitors can talk to parents about what the structure and schedule looks like at home. For example, while still respecting the adolescent's independence, parents should set expectations of when homework and projects should be finished by each night, whether that is a specific time or before sitting down for dinner. If possible, parents can go over homework with their adolescent, or simply ask about what he or she learned through a homework assignment.



4. ***Increase quality of communication between school and home.*** Although it is not the school's main priority to maintain contact with parents in the same way they do with elementary and middle school children, parents should know that they can initiate the type of communication they desire. If a parent is expressing confusion or frustration regarding his or her adolescent's education, the visitation monitor can suggest parents to form a teacher-parent relationship, by emailing the teacher and expressing his or her concern. Additionally, parent involvement in school, when possible, can also show the adolescent that his or her parent is serious about education.

Parental Warmth

All of these strategies work best when practiced with parental warmth. This means that parents should approach their adolescents and these strategies with support, encouragement, gentleness, and peacefulness. Adolescence can be a time of change and confusion for children. It is important for parents to show their adolescent that they understand and empathize with their child's experience. Parents should listen to the interests of their child and support their extracurricular interests, as those interests can motivate a child to succeed in various areas of life, including education. Parental warmth fosters a stronger bond between child and parent, and in turn strengthens family closeness.



Why is this Important for Parents?

Adolescents whose parents stay connected to their educational experiences are more likely to do better academically, behaviorally, and emotionally. When parents use the strategies above, it can lead to lowered behavioral problems, increased GPA, and decreased likelihood of depressive symptoms throughout the child's high school experience.

Handout

Supervised visitation monitors can assist parents further by printing out and distributing the following handout: Parents Play Vital Role in Teenagers' Education. This handout provides the parent with concrete examples and strategies that can help him or her continue involvement in the educational experience of the adolescent. The handout offers tips for strategies that can be used in both home and school.

References

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/15/05/letting-go-staying-close>

<http://www.pacer.org/mpc/pdf/mpc-73.pdf>

PARENTS PLAY VITAL ROLE IN TEENAGERS' EDUCATION

How do you encourage your teenager to be successful at school? While being involved in your teen's education may be challenging, nearly everybody agrees that parent involvement in education is important

Unfortunately, research shows that parent involvement declines as children move into middle and high school. It's still important for you to be involved in your child's education during the teen years, but you may need to try different strategies to stay connected. Try the following suggestions at home and at your child's school to stay involved in your teen's learning.

AT HOME

Help your child dream for the future

Parents can help teens be specific about what needs to happen so they can have the adult life of their dreams. When teens feel like talking about it, ask for details of their dreams. Asking "which college" or "what kind of job seems most interesting" can help your teen form concrete goals, either about college, technical training, or career choices. At this point, giving them something to aim for is more important than the specific job or career choice.

Motivate your child with high expectations

The evidence is overwhelming: Parents' high expectations improve teens' success. In fact, high expectations are the most significant influences on high school seniors' achievement growth, credits completed, and whether the student will become a lifelong learner. When children experience high and realistic expectations, they understand and adopt the high value the family places on education. Regular encouragement and discussions about school and higher education also promote students' college or training aspirations and preparation.

Help with homework

Parents can help a teen with homework even if they don't remember chemistry, literature, or geometry. First, it's important to agree on a time and place for homework. Many teens enjoy doing homework with friends. This can

be a great way to make sure homework is completed, though it might take longer than it would by working alone. Parents can also help by asking questions, especially those that connect current work to prior knowledge. For example, ask: “What do you know about this already?” If possible, providing access to books, the Internet, calculators, and other resources is another way parents can help their teenager. Finally, remember that learning is a skill. If your teen doesn’t understand an assignment, help him or her think of specific questions to ask the teacher during the next class.

Focus your teen’s time

Helping your child use time wisely is important for a variety of reasons. Parental monitoring can help your child avoid risky behaviors and build life skills that will be important after high school. As a parent, you can encourage extracurricular activities, which can be an important factor in college admissions. Limit the use of television, video games, and computers to help your child focus on school work. As children age, parents shift from managing their child’s schedule to providing advice and supervision. This role is just as important!

Encourage reading for pleasure

Students need to read to learn, and parents can encourage leisure reading at home to build reading skills. Even reluctant readers can increase their vocabulary and comprehension, grammar, and spelling skills if they find something enjoyable to read.

How can parents help? First, talk with teens about what interests them, says Alicia Anderson, Teen Services librarian at Hennepin County Library. Choose materials based on their interests and widen your ideas about reading materials. Magazines, non-fiction, or how-to books might interest your teen more than a novel. Also consider other alternatives. Graphic novels (which are similar to comic books, but longer), short stories, or novels in prose or journal format can be read quickly and can give a reluctant reader a sense of accomplishment. If your son or daughter is interested only in sports magazines, make sure he or she has a good supply.

Visit the library and encourage your teen to ask the librarians for help. They can help find materials your teen will enjoy. Anderson also suggests that parents let teens choose their own books and respect their choices.

AT SCHOOL

Connect with others

Knowing others in the school community is an important way to support children as they grow through their teens. You may have questions or problems, and another parent or staff member who knows the system can help. Try to keep in touch with a teacher, counselor, active parent, or other member of the school staff a few times a year. It would be helpful to meet the parents of your child's friends. This is a great way to learn how your teen is interacting with other youth, as well as to share ideas with other adults in your child's life. Some families have created groups to share phone numbers and names with each other.

Communicate with school

Communication may bring challenges during the teen years. Adolescents may be distracted and some teens may be reluctant to bring home notices if they don't want parents to participate in a conference or event. Some teens may not communicate because they fear parents' reactions. Despite some of these challenges, your child looks to you to provide guidance with school matters. The good news is your involvement makes a positive difference.

If challenges arise, focus on what your teen can do to overcome them and provide possible solutions. This will increase the likelihood of good communication. Parents can also help teens remember to communicate by regularly asking about messages from school. Parents can also access the school's website to directly access information about events as well as student information such as grades and assignments.

Support teachers

Make a point to have positive, face-to-face contact with teachers early in the year to demonstrate support for their role. Even though middle and high school students have many teachers each day, it's important to show your support. Doing so will make it easier for you to work with a teacher if questions occur later in the year.

Plan classes

One critical way for parents to be connected is discussing education and choosing challenging classes with their teen. Though students may have

several advisors helping them make course selections, parents should be engaged as well. Parents will want to make sure their teen meets all graduation requirements, and they may also want to encourage their teen to meet course requirements for college admission.

There are opportunities for students to earn college credit while still in high school. Ask your teen's school counselor about options and encourage your teen to participate. Sometimes the motivation of taking college classes and the challenge of more difficult material can encourage a teen to perform well.

Make sure your teen takes standardized tests

Beginning in elementary school, students may take several standardized tests through Florida Standards Assessments (FSA). The FSAs measure student success with the including assessments in English language arts (grades 3-11). Also, students must do well on the End-of-Course Assessments which are computer-based tests designed to measure student achievement of the specified standards for middle and high-school level courses in science (Biology 1), social studies (Civics and U.S. History), and mathematics (Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2) to graduate. It's also important that older students tests such as the ACT (formerly known as American College Testing) and SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test). Scores on these tests are used in the college admissions process and many students take them in 11th grade. Other tests can help families make decisions about future education, like the pre-tests to the SAT - Preliminary SAT®/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) taken in 10th grade or earlier. High scores can qualify students for special programs.

Participate in decision-making at school

Being involved at the school building can be just as important in middle and high school as it was in elementary school. Parents may join parent teacher organizations, site councils, or advisory committees just as they did when their children were younger. In middle and high school, parents may also be able to join booster clubs and event committees or become an activity coordinator. Showing support for your teen, the school, and education can be a great way to encourage not only your child, but others as well.

The Clearinghouse is building a new Training Manual, and you can provide feedback and comments on it!

1. Go online monthly and click on this link:
<http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/clearinghouse/>
2. Click on New Training Manual in Progress
3. Read the Material, and offer your comments and suggestions on the draft.
4. Call or email us if you have additional questions!