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Cameray Newsletter

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The Night Before Christmas for Moms

It was the night before Christmas, when all thru the abode,
Only one creature was stirring, and she was cleaning the commode.
The children were finally sleeping, all snug in their beds,
While visions of Nintendo and Barbie flipped through their heads.

The dad was snoring in front of the TV,
With a half-constructed bicycle on his knee.
So only the mom heard the reindeer hooves clatter,
Which made her sigh, "Now what's the matter?"

With toilet bowl brush still clutched in her hand,
She descended the stairs, and saw the old man.
He was covered with ashes and soot, and fell with a shrug,
"Oh great," muttered the mom, "Now I have to clean the rug."

"Ho-ho-ho!" cried Santa, "I'm glad you're awake. Your gift was especially difficult to make."
"Thanks, Santa, but all I want is some time alone."
"Exactly!", he chuckled, "I've made you a clone."

"A clone?" she asked, "What good is that? Run along, Santa, I've no time for chit-chat."
The mother's twin;
Same hair, same eyes, same double chin.

"She'll cook, she'll dust, she'll mop every mess.
You'll relax, take it easy, watch The Young & the Restless."

"Fantastic!" the mom cheered. "My dream come true! I'll shop. I'll read. I'll sleep a whole night through!"

From the room above, the youngest began to fret.

"Mommy?! I scared...and wet."

The clone replied, "I'm coming, sweetheart."

"Hey," the mom smiled, "She knows her part."

The clone changed the small one, and hummed a tune,
As she bundled the child, in a blanket cocoon.

"You the best mommy ever. I really love you."

The clone smiled and sighed, "I love you too."

The mom frowned and said, "Sorry Santa, no deal. That's my child's love she's trying to steal."

Smiling wisely Santa said, "To me it is clear. Only one loving mother is needed here."

The mom kissed her child, and tucked her into bed.

"Thank you Santa, for clearing my head. I sometimes forget, it won't be very long, when they'll be too old for my cradle song."

The clock on the mantle began to chime. Santa whispered to the clone, "It works every time."

With the clone by his side Santa said, "Goodnight. Merry Christmas, Mom, you'll be all right."

Author Unknown, A Search for the Meaning of Christmas, Holiday Literature & Poetry website

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Anxiety is the most common form of mental disorder, affecting 12% of the population in any given year.

Helping Anxious Children

In most cases, the tendency to be anxious stays with a person throughout their life. So we need to help anxious children develop coping skills to manage their own anxiety eventually. This starts with parents helping them by going through the following steps:

Assessment: Have a child's general health checked by the doctor. Untreated allergies, anaemia, ear infections or other problems make it harder for anxious children to cope.

Look after the basics: No one copes well when they are tired or hungry. Anxious children often forget to eat, don't feel hungry and don't get enough sleep. Establish bedtime routines and offer frequent, nutritious snacks. Anxious children rarely eat a large full meal.

Establish routines: Routines reduce anxiety. But anxiety tends to disrupt routines. So you need to work hard to build regular patterns so life is more predictable. Have the child help plan the routine. Making an attractive activity schedule for the fridge gives a sense of control and order. This is not the kind of child who copes well

with a spontaneous family style. Help the child adjust to changes by gradually introducing them and preparing them in advance.

Bedtime routines are especially important: Start at least an hour before the planned bedtime, build in a story, a chat time, a warm bath and/or a snack. The ritual helps the child gradually relax.

It is important that parents not get into the habit of sleeping with the child as this becomes a habit which is hard to break. A good routine can take several weeks to establish, but everyone will feel better once it is in place.

Plan time for homework: This needs to be a regular part of the schedule, as anxious children tend to procrastinate. Because anxious children become overwhelmed, breaking the job up into small chunks, setting a specific time to work, and rewarding themselves for each bit done are tools they need to learn.

Tools to cope with worrying: "Locking up" worries in an imaginary box or setting a scheduled "worry" time are some tools to control the

amount of energy worry takes up. Other ideas are to mentally "pull the plug" on the worry, or "caging the worry dragon". Fortunately, most anxious children have a talent for "creative worrying" which can be harnessed for creative problem-solving instead.

Taking risks: Anxious children need to try some experiments like making phone calls, talking to a new friend, and encouraging themselves through positive "self-talk" instead of imagining the worst.

Physical exercise: This is helpful not only in relieving stress, but also in triggering a physical "relaxation response." Anxious children often feel "tired all the time" because they are always exhausting themselves with worry. Exercise will improve energy and reduce worry. Try to find something fun to do together rather than making this a chore.

Heretohelp.bc.ca

Adapted from "Anxiety Disorder in Young People" prepared by BC Children's Hospital's Mood and Anxiety Clinic and the Anxiety Disorders Association of BC.

Reprinted from Visions: BC's Mental Health and Addictions Journal, 2002, Vol. 1, No. 14. p. 17



Not everyone can afford to give expensive gifts for Christmas...take a look at these money-saving

Money saving tips for the Holiday Season

Every year, Canadian parents get in over their heads during the spending frenzy that this religious holiday has become. Credit counsellors say January, February, and March are their busiest months, as families struggling to absorb Christmas debt stream through their offices. Here's how to make sure the friendly folks at Visa and Mastercard don't have your chestnuts roasting on an open fire come the new year:

- Have your kids make a wish list and explain clearly that Santa isn't likely to bring everything.
- Choose one or two items that meet your approval and fit

your budget. When relatives ask for ideas, suggest some of the items you didn't purchase.

- For big-ticket items strike a deal with parents whose kids have outgrown their toys. You can put a few more dollars in their pockets for Christmas and save a bundle yourself.
- Be creative and make your own toys. Make a dress-up box filled with old clothes, shoes, hats, jewellery, etc... Toys for babies are especially easy to create. There are many books you can take out at the public library that will show you step-by-step how to

make them.

- For children, 95 percent of the pleasure of the holidays is opening presents. To draw it out, wrap small inexpensive items separately—coloring books, crayons, books, etc., even stocking stuffers work well.
- Also, keep in mind that there's nothing wrong with buying gently-used toys and clothes. Christmas bazaars are a great place to pick up used items. After all, they will be new to your child!

Article partially taken from: Jingle Bell, Jingle Bell, Jingle Bell Shock by Camilla Cornell, Today's Parent.Com

Recipe Corner

GINGERBREAD

By: Evelyn Raab

This is our family favourite. We've used this recipe to make people, animals, castles and tree houses. Your kids, no doubt, will have their own ideas. Go ahead - be silly. It's that time of year.

The cookies:

1 egg
 ½ cup (125 ml) molasses
 1 cup (250 ml) sugar
 ½ cup (125 ml) solid vegetable shortening, melted (not butter or margarine)
 1½ tsp. (7 ml) baking soda
 2½ cups (625 ml) flour
 ¼ tsp. (1 ml) ground ginger
 1 tsp. (5 ml) cinnamon

The icing:

1½ cups (375 ml) icing sugar
 1 egg white
 ½ tsp. (2 ml) lemon juice

In a large bowl, mix together the egg, molasses, sugar, melted shortening and baking soda. Beat well. In another bowl, stir together the flour and spices. Add the flour mixture gradually to the egg mixture, blending well. Chill the dough for several hours or overnight. Cut the dough into about 4 pieces, and squash each portion into a nice compact ball, flouring it well. Roll out each piece on a well-floured surface to about 1/8 in. (3 mm) thickness. Try placing a chopstick on either side of the hunk of dough to use as a thickness guide for your rolling pin - it'll help you (or your child) keep the dough evenly rolled out. Now it's time to cut out your people. If you don't have gingerbread-people cookie cutters, make cardboard patterns and cut around them with a sharp knife. Carefully transfer the cookies to lightly greased cookie sheets and bake at 350° F (180° C) for 5 to 7 minutes - until very lightly browned

around the edges. Be careful not to let them burn. Let them cool for a minute or two before moving them to a rack to cool completely.

In a medium bowl, with an electric mixer, beat together all the icing ingredients until light and fluffy. The more you beat, the better the icing, so don't worry about overdoing it. You can divide the icing into several bowls and tint it different colours if you want.

Now the fun begins! Using a pastry bag filled with icing, decorate your creations in whatever weird and wonderful way you like. What I really mean is, whatever weird and wonderful way your child likes. At this point, we adults are superfluous - except, unfortunately, for the cleaning up. Place your finished creations on a tray until the icing hardens, then store in a cookie jar or plastic bag.

Today's Parent.Com



Children Who Witness Abuse Program

Cameray Centre, together with Burnaby Family Life, are excited to offer a new program for Children Who Witness Abuse. This program is for children and youth between the ages of 3 and 18. The program is voluntary and free of charge for Burnaby residents. Currently there is no waiting list.

The Children Who Witness Abuse counsellor is Jodi Murphy, a certified art therapist. Jodi will be based out of Burnaby Family Life's Metro-town location. She will be providing both individual and group sessions according to the need of the child. The sessions may include art therapy, play therapy, psycho-education, and counseling. As time permits, she

will also provide prevention presentations in Burnaby Schools. Counselling services will be provided to the children individually or in groups depending on individual requirements. Six 8-week groups will run per year. Individual sessions will run for up to 26 sessions.

The goals for these children are to:

- Identify emotions and learn non-violent ways of resolving conflict and expressing their emotions
- Communicate openly
- Acknowledge loss and separation issues
- Increase confidence and self-esteem
- Reduce isolation by providing the opportunity to en-

gage with other peers facing similar issues and connect in a meaningful manner

- Provide a safe place to express themselves and ultimately heal

Parents will receive support and information that will help them better understand and cope with the issues facing their children. Please call 604-436-9449 for information and referrals.

This program is sponsored by the Ministry Of Community, Aboriginal, and Women's Services.

Jodi Murphy

Fact: *Children and youth who witness abuse are more likely to abuse others in their adult relationships if intervention does not take place.*



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MISSION STATEMENT:

Cameray Centre is a community-based agency committed to the strengthening of individuals and families through support, counselling, education, outreach, and advocacy.

We are a non-profit agency serving Burnaby and New Westminster residents since 1972.

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United Way - Success



By Six

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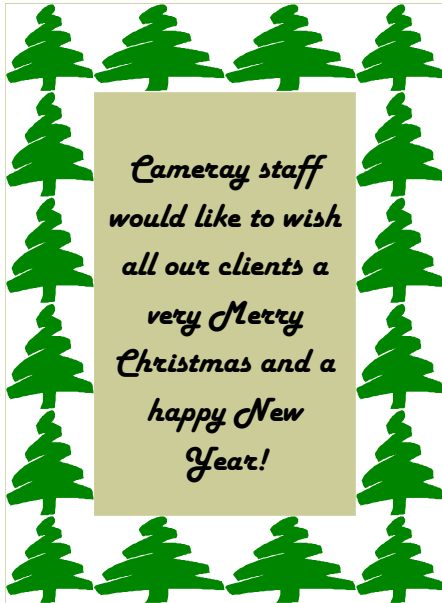
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*Cameray staff
would like to wish
all our clients a
very Merry
Christmas and a
happy New
Year!*

Funder Highlight Fraser Health Authority

We are pleased to announce that Fraser Health Authority has provided funding for six months in order to run two Community Kitchens per month in New Westminster.

Eight families participate in the kitchens each time. During the Community Kitchens, all participants are involved in the making of meals. As well, parents are provided with an opportunity to interact with each other to strengthen their support systems.

The Community Kitchens have proved to be very successful and we appreciate the support from Fraser Health Authority.



Cameray staff receiving a grant from the Fraser Health Authority.

Correction: The article entitled, "Cameray On-Line—A New Look", which was printed in the August 2005 newsletter was written by Marlas Silvestrone who generously volunteered her time to create our new website. Thanks Marlas!