



Cameray Newsletter

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Children and Family Break-up

Although separation and divorce can be the most painful events a family may ever experience, they may come as a welcome relief after a period of tension and conflict in a troubled marriage. However, the period of adjustment is a painful one too. As a parent, you must deal not only with your own confusion and pain but also the confusion and pain of your children. You will also worry about what the break-up will mean for their futures, how they will cope, and if they will still love you.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

Research shows that children's success in adjusting to separation and divorce depends very much on the success of their parents' adjustment. If you are coping well, they will cope well too. Your biggest tasks are to show that you have good coping skills and to encourage your children to keep on communicating with you. It will help if you remember that your children have feelings similar to yours—sadness at “losing” the family, anger, guilt, fear of the unknown, and confusion and frustration about decisions and events that they cannot control. Children cope in a variety of ways and will ask a variety of questions. Very young children will want to know, “What will happen to me, and who will look after me now?” Older children may ask, “Who caused this? What about my future? Where will we live? Is there enough money for all of us?” How you answer these questions and back up the answers with actions will be very important to your children.

WHAT YOU CAN SAY

As their parent, you can say a number of things to your children to help them through this difficult time. These things need to be said to both very young children and to teenagers to help them get past

feelings of guilt, insecurity and the fear of being abandoned.

- The separation is not their fault. Children of all ages often blame themselves for their parents' separation. They feel that perhaps they caused the break-up of the family because they were “not good enough”. You must let them know that this is strictly an adult problem. Assure them that they had nothing to do with the separation and that they could not prevent it from happening. They will need to hear this from you many times and in many forms before their sense of guilt will go away.
- You will always be their parents. Your children need to know that they are not losing the love and care of either parent. They need to know that neither of you is divorcing your children. Reassure them that, although you and your spouse are no longer together, they will always belong to both of you.
- You will continue to look after them. Talk openly about your children's new living arrangements. If you are the one living apart, make sure they understand that you will still spend time with them, that they will still be part of your life, and that you will still be a part of theirs.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

It will be important to do certain specific and practical things to help your children adjust to the break-up of the family. These are things you can do, both as the custodial parent and the non-custodial parent.

- Encourage and support your children's relationship with your ex-spouse as well as yourself. Separation and divorce often cause intense, negative emotions between parents. You and your ex-spouse should remem-

ber that, although you are no longer married, you will still be linked together for many years as parents. You, therefore, still need to cooperate with each other to meet your children's needs.

- Share needed information with your children. Talk openly about custody arrangements, visiting times and other schedules. Respect your children's right to know about decisions made on their behalf.
- Keep your children's routines in place. Do your best to maintain their regular schedules, especially in the time immediately after the separation.
- Keep your promises, be reliable. Your children will need to know they can rely on you. If you have promised to take them on a picnic next Saturday, make sure you do not let other things get in the way. A promise to “pick you up from football practice Wednesday night” should be treated very seriously.
- Let your children grieve the loss. Recognize that your children will experience all the emotions that you have, and they will talk to their friends as you will have talked to yours. Allow time for them to talk to you about how they feel, and listen without interrupting.

Most children are able to cope with the separation and divorce of their parents and make good adjustments to their new family structure. However, if you are concerned that your children are having difficulty adjusting, do not hesitate to get professional help for them.

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Fathers Group



Cameray Child and Family Services is committed to supporting families. One way we do this is by offering, free of charge, an opportunity for parents to come together to discuss common questions about parenting.

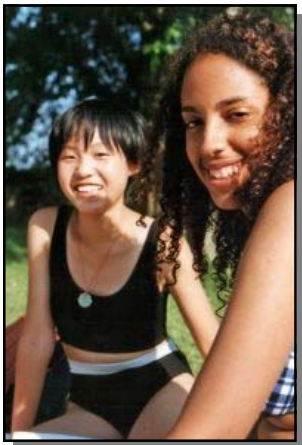
Our Fathers Group is one such opportunity. In this 8 week program, fathers with children new-

born to six years of age come together weekly for one and a half hours to meet, share experiences and anecdotes and discuss topics of interest to them. In addition, several theories are introduced (Attachment theory, Adlerian theory, Restitution and Resiliency), which the fathers can integrate into their child rearing. The fathers also examine relationship

health and identify ways and means of supporting their partner. Cameray will be running another Fathers Group in the new year. You may call our office at 604-436-9449 in January for information on a start date. We hope to see you there!

The Fathers Group is funded by United Way and Success By Six.

Youth and Substance Use



Most teens experiment with tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs before they graduate from high school. Fortunately, the vast majority of drug use (with the possible exception of nicotine) does not lead to addiction, and most teens will not be significantly damaged by their experimental use. However, some will fall into abusive patterns or put themselves and others in danger.

In order to address the dangers effectively, we need to stop perpetuating some of the myths, provide honest information, and support youth in making responsible decisions. We also need to understand why youth use drugs and what factors might predispose them to, or protect them from, problem use.

Why Teens Take Drugs

Teenagers take drugs for many different reasons. For some people, alcohol and other drug use is a common and acceptable part of everyday life, even though it has certain risks. Adolescence is a time when teens are curious and willing to take risks. They might start taking a drug simply as an experiment, to defy authority or provoke adults, to imitate adults, relieve boredom, or overcome shyness. They might take a drug to lose weight or appear cool.

Most problem drug use by teens does not result from accidental or experimental exposure to drugs. Teens who use drugs regularly do so for the same reasons adults do. Problem substance use is usually part of a much larger problem, like not fitting in at school, problems at home, not meeting expectations, personal stress, or trauma. Substance use may seem to help deal with these stresses or provide escape from dealing with them. Then the young person may come to feel that they need the substance to relax or get through the situation.

Preventing Problem Substance Use

One of the most important things we can do to prevent problem substance use by teens is to provide honest, evidence based information. Scare

tactics do not work and are often counterproductive. Confronted with misinformation, teenagers will completely ignore our warnings and be exposed to real danger. On the other hand, studies indicate that students who quit using drugs often did so because of concerns about health and their own negative experiences. Effective prevention programs respect teens' ability to understand, analyze, and evaluate their options.

Problem substance use is strongly associated with adverse childhood experiences such as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, growing up with a parent who was chronically depressed, mentally ill, suicidal, in prison, addicted, or absent (experientially lost to the child), or in a context where the mother was treated violently. Other determinants of health such as employment, income, and social supports influence healthy development. Effective prevention strategies should address these determinants of health. Ensuring that children grow up in healthy environments is probably the most effective way of preventing problem substance use.

Connectedness and resilience are key protective factors. Connectedness refers to a sense of belonging, having strong and meaningful relationships with family, peers, and mentors. Resilience refers to the quality that makes a person capable of dealing with problems and responding well to a range of life events. Just one caring adult can make a huge difference. Even when a child is facing adverse experiences, having one person who cares can assist that child to overcome the challenges. The importance of involved, supportive parents cannot be over emphasized. Studies show that teens do regard their parents as the most trusted, but under utilized, source of information.

When Problems Emerge

Some teens will develop unhealthy relationships with substances. This is a fact that we can't change, but what

we can change is how such situations are handled. If you notice that a child or teenager is presenting with several risk factors, or appears to be engaged in problem use, you can do something to help. The most important things are not to ignore such situations, and to inform yourself as best you can.

Here are some tips for what to do if you suspect your child is engaged in unhealthy substance use:

- Try not to panic or over-react – it's natural to be concerned, but yelling or becoming angry will not help;
- Don't feel guilty – you are not to blame, and it's more constructive to focus on improving the current situation;
- Inform yourself, and know the facts about the substances and their effects;
- Try to find out the extent of the substance use – was it experimental, or is it likely to continue or worsen?
- Pick a good time to talk to the child, and be honest with them. Express your fears and uncertainties, show that you care, and don't lecture or be judgemental. This will make it easier for them to come to you if they are having problems, or need advice.

It is important to be honest, and admit when you don't have the answers. This will build trust. The issues are very complex and there are many conflicting messages around. If you inform yourself as best you can and communicate honestly, your kids will come to trust you and will be more likely to come to you when they have questions.

If it seems that the child or teen is experiencing problems with substance use beyond experimentation, it may be beneficial to seek further help. The Alcohol and Drug Referral Service provides information and referrals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Their number in the Lower Mainland call 604-660-9382.

BC Partners for Mental Health & Addictions Information, HereToHelp.bc.ca

Ensure your kids know they can come to you for advice if they need it, with no harsh judgements.

Corner

Recipe

Creamy Louisiana Marinade

Moe Cheramie, owner of Old New Orleans Seafood Market in McLean, Virginia, was the inspiration for this subtle marinade that combines traditional southern seasonings with velvety and smooth mayonnaise. The mayonnaise seals the moisture in food to leave it juicy and tender after grilling.

Ingredients

1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 teaspoon Creole or grainy mustard
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
2 green onions, green and white part minced
1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire

sauce

1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary or 1/4 teaspoon dried rosemary

1 teaspoon minced fresh basil or 1/4 teaspoon dried basil

1 teaspoon minced fresh oregano or 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano

1/2 teaspoon paprika

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/4 teaspoon cayenne

1/4 teaspoon salt

In a medium-sized bowl whisk the mayonnaise, mustard, lemon juice, green onions, Worcester-

shire sauce, rosemary, basil, oregano, paprika, pepper, cayenne and salt together. Taste and adjust seasonings. Make marinade 1 day ahead to blend flavors.

Coat food with marinade, cover and refrigerate for 3 hours or overnight.

Use with: fish, seafood, poultry, veal, vegetables. Great for fillets, steaks, boneless kabob chunks or chops.

Yields: 3/4 cup

Marinates: 1 1/2 pounds.



Kids and Mental Illness - What Every Parent Should Know

When our kids have a physical illness or injury we seek professional help and get any medical attention they might need.

When our kids have symptoms of a mental illness they need us to respond in the same way.

Listen to your instincts if you are worried about your child. Collect as much information as you can. You are probably in the best position to know if your child's behaviour requires further attention. Arrange to meet with a well-trained and trusted professional. Help that works is available.

It can be confusing trying to tell the difference between symptoms of mental illness vs. normal problems that all kids experience from time to time. As parents we can use observable behaviours to help us decide what action we need to take.

Some Concerning Behaviours

- decrease in enjoyment and time spent with friends or family
- significant fall in school work and performance
- strong resistance to attending school or absenteeism
- problems with memory,

attention or concentration

- big changes in energy levels, eating or sleeping patterns
- lots of physical symptoms (stomach aches, headaches, etc.)
- feelings of hopelessness, sadness, anxiety or crying a lot
- frequent aggression, disobedience or lashing out verbally
- excessive neglect of personal appearance or basic hygiene
- substance use
- dangerous or illegal thrill seeking behaviours
- acting overly suspicious of others
- seeing or hearing things that others don't see or hear

What can parents do?

1. Circle the behaviours from the list that concern you (especially those lasting a few weeks or more).
2. Speak to your child regarding your main concerns (no more than 3 and keep it brief) and listen to their response (for an uninterrupted 3 minutes if you can).
3. Let your child know you will help work out difficult problems

together.

4. Arrange to meet with a trusted and trained professional about your concerns and how to access help (you don't have to do this alone).

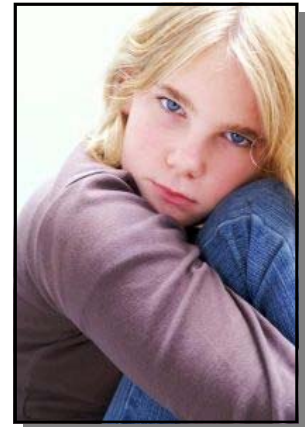
Useful Resources

Trained Professionals: Physicians, mental health teams, school counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists, registered clinical counsellors, faith community leaders or any professional with quality training and expertise in child and youth mental health issues.

BC Partners Mental Health Information Line: Provides automated information 24 hours a day and referrals to agencies in your community during business hours. Just call 1-800-661-2121 or 604-669-7600.

BC Nurse Line: Provides health information 24 hours a day. Just call toll free 1-866-215-4700 or 604-215-4700. For deaf/hearing impaired help call 1-866-889-4700. Help is also available at www.bchealthguide.org

BC Partners for Mental Health & Addictions Information, HereToHelp.bc.ca



Mental illness, like physical illness, can happen to anyone. 1 in 7 kids in BC have at least one mental illness (over 140,000 children and teens.)



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MISSION STATEMENT:

Cameray Child & Family Services is a community-based agency committed to the strengthening of individuals and families through a spectrum of services including counselling, education, outreach, and advocacy.

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

FUNDED BY:

*Ministry of Child & Family Development
Fraser Health
Ministry of Community, Aboriginal,  and Women's Society
Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General
United Way - Success By Six*

WITH DONATIONS FROM:

*BC Gas Warm Hearts Fund
CKNW Orphans Fund
J. B. Orr
Stan Milacek
Calkins & Burke
Coast Capital Foundation
Telus*

Art on the Horizon



Approximately 40 pieces of art were generously donated by a variety of artists for this special event.

On September 21, 2006 Cameray Child and Family Services hosted "Art on the Horizon" and it was a resounding success. It was a sparkling evening of fun, fabulous food, wonderful art and much laughter at Burnaby's Horizon's Restaurant. Bill and Lillian Vander Zalm attended, with Bill putting in a wonderful few hours as our energetic auctioneer.

The money raised during the evening will help support our programming in the following year, and we would like to thank all of you who supported us by attending the event, donating art and silent auction items, or volunteering during the evening. A special warm thank you to Bill and Lillian Vander Zalm! We could not have done it without you all.

Please join us next year at "Art on the Horizon".



Bill Vander Zalm entertaining the crowd with the live auction.



The Fundraising Committee and Volunteers who made this event possible.