

THE JJC CONNECTOR

The Clark County Juvenile Justice Center Newsletter – Fall 2010, Volume 1, Issue 3

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The JJC Connector Newsletter
Clark County Juvenile Court
PO Box 5000
Vancouver, WA 98666-5000
360-397-2201

Log onto the JJC Connector:
<http://www.clark.wa.gov/juvenile/index.html>

Reducing challenging behavior is accomplished by helping challenging children and their adult caretakers learn to resolve disagreements and disputes in a collaborative, mutually satisfactory manner.

~~ Dr. Ross Greene

Collaborative Problem Solving Group at Legacy Emanuel in Portland

In the first issue of the “JJC Connector” we listed the website for Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS), a technique based on the work of Dr. Ross Greene, author of The Explosive Child, and Lost at School.

It turns out there’s a free weekly Collaborative Problem Solving group at Legacy Emanuel Children’s Hospital’s Child and Adolescent Treatment Program (CATP). The group is facilitated by Kevin Ashworth, a mental health therapist on staff.

The CATP staff uses a no-fault approach when working with parents and children. They’re not there to lay blame. They’re there to help parents and kids resolve their problems.

Some of the kids have trouble empathizing with others. They can’t see things from other people’s perspective. Some of the kids in the program think their parents put them there to punish them because their parents are mad at them for acting up. The CATP staff tries to help them understand that putting their child in a psychiatric hospital may have been the hardest thing the parents have ever had to do.

Kids who go into meltdown mode – screaming, swearing, kicking, hitting, spitting – lack the flexibility of thinking that allows them to think of other ways to react to difficult situations.

Imagine having a car that won’t start. The youth thinks the car must be out of gas so he puts some gas in

it. The car still doesn’t start, so he puts more even more gas in it. This youth is unable to develop the capacity to explore other solutions to his problems. If he can’t come up with more than one solution, he ends up using the same one over and over again.

Adults can alleviate some of the tension in their relationship with their kids by changing the way they communicate with them. Put very simplistically, there are three ways to tell your child to do something:

A: Do what I say right now!

B: Let’s talk about this and see how we can both get our needs met.

C: If I talk about this problem, things will just get worse.

The first way of communicating exacerbates the problem. Plan C doesn’t resolve the problem. Plan B ultimately helps the parent and child reach some kind of agreement.

Kevin encourages parents to try to figure out and understand the unresolved problems that led to the child’s behaviors, rather than reacting to the behaviors themselves. It takes a lot of practice to learn how to communicate in a way that help parents and kids understand each other. That’s why Kevin is facilitating the group, to help families learn how to do just that.

The group is held every Monday from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. in the first floor conference room at 3001 N. Gantenbein Avenue in Portland. There’s no charge, registration is not required, and you don’t have to have a child in the CATP to attend. Call (503) 413-4844 for more information.

[See CPS resources on page 6.]

The Impact of Complex Trauma on Children's Growth, Development and Learning



On October 4th NAMI Clark County hosted the annual Jean M. Lough conference at the Water Resource Center. This year's speakers were David Benedictus, RN and Corrine Anderson-Ketchmark, MSW. They spoke about the effects of complex trauma on the brain and how that affects people throughout the lifespan.

Complex trauma is defined as the experience of stressful events, such as abuse or neglect or witnessing domestic violence, over time vs. a single traumatic event.

Experiencing complex trauma actually changes the wiring of the brain. There's a biological basis for the way people who have grown up in traumatic environments react to situations in their lives.

Children who don't grow up in safe, nurturing environments have to expend their energy on meeting their basic survival needs instead of learning skills and behaviors. We can't assume that children know how to meet the expectations of adults. We need to be able to break down those expectations and teach specific skills, like communication or conflict resolution skills, or emotional self-regulation, on a level at which children can learn them.

As parents, teachers or probation staff, this requires us to rethink how we respond to children who don't behave the way they're expected to behave. We need to be able to help them regulate their emotions, and gain skills and competencies they

may have missed when they were growing up.

Discipline has to be more than just consequences, like suspensions or detention. Kids who misbehave *need* to be held accountable, but it needs to be done in a constructive way that helps them learn how to behave more appropriately. In the process, we need to convey the message, "You made a mistake and we still care about you."

Punishment imposed out of anger only serves to reinforce these kids' already low sense of self-worth, and thus perpetuates the negative behavior. Holding kids accountable with *empathy* is crucial for healthy development.

Reframing the situation, seeing behaviors from the child's perspective, helps us figure out possible reasons for the behavior and respond with more compassion.

For example, if a child screams every time he doesn't get his way, we could view the child as being spoiled and self-centered, or we could consider that the child doesn't know how to express his feelings in a more appropriate way. When we reframe the situation that way, we can then teach him the words to express himself more constructively.

Reactions to trauma vary widely among children. What's traumatic to one child may not be traumatic to another. Their responses depend on the temperament, resiliency, or their interpretation of the situation. An outgoing child will seek help from other adults, but a shy child may just shut down, and adults may not be aware that this child is struggling.

Sometimes children can look like they're in a calm state, but they actually aren't. Silence can be a way for the child to keep from being noticed by adults, thus protecting him from possible abuse.

The good news is that while trauma undermines healthy brain development, good experiences enhance it. Studies have shown that negative experiences are 5 times more powerful than positive experiences, so a person needs to experience 5 positive events to make up for 1 negative event.

The brain is like Velcro for negative experiences and like Teflon for positive experiences.

Having at least one caring adult in their lives is the biggest mediating factor. Mentoring programs or Lunch Buddy programs can help kids develop healthy relationships, which gives them a chance to process their experiences with someone who can offer guidance on how to handle situations differently.

Aerobic exercise helps to reduce stress. Brain Gym exercises help to rewire the brain. Teaching kids social skills or emotion regulation techniques are other helpful interventions. Children need a range of strategies to help them cope with the variety of situations they encounter in their environment.

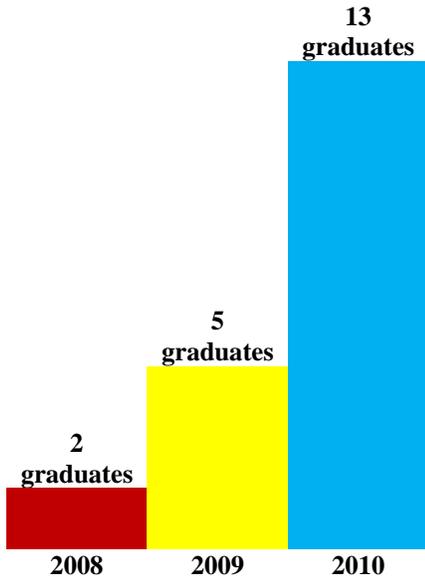
David recommended a video by the WSU Health Education Center in Pullman, that's available online: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1vbSSQJOHw>. WSU worked with staff in the Spokane County schools and transformed the way schools dealt with students.

Another free resource is a manual published by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Education (OSPI) called [The Heart of Learning: Compassion, Resiliency and Academic Success](#). It's a guide for teaching staff and administrators to incorporate compassionate practice in their schools.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/compassionateschools/heartoflearning.aspx>

Juvenile Recovery Court nearly triples graduates for 2010!

by Denise McCullough



Juvenile Recovery Court (JRC) launched in May 2007. The intensive program is a minimum of nine months. However, completing the program generally takes longer. This year has been exciting as the JRC team proudly watched 13 youth make significant changes in their lives and successfully complete the program.

What attributes to the rise of JRC graduates? More team components for one! With the addition of a family counselor and a resource coordinator, their added support has helped youth and families with daily challenges. The family counselor provides bi-weekly parent support groups and meets individually with families of a regular basis. The resource coordinator helps youth obtain employment, has various tasks regarding school issues, and organizes pro-social activities in the community.

Also, the JRC team has taken more time in gathering information on each referral received from either the youth's attorney or probation counselor for review. The more facts we learn early on, the

better the youth may do while in the program. Parent involvement has increased as more parents are attending probation appointments and court with their youth.

To date, there have been 20 JRC graduates, 4 females and 16 males! The year is not over quite yet, however! There are 2 more youth on track to graduate in November. If you have not experienced a JRC graduation, it is highly recommend-ed. All graduates are required to write a paper describing their experience in the program as well as a culminating project that reflects the youth's journey and goals, past, present, and future. To inquire about upcoming graduation dates, please ask Karen Lucas or Denise McCullough.

Finally, the JRC youth participated in a pro-social activity at Bi Zi Farms on October 12, 2010. There were 26 youth present and 10 staff attended to help supervise and have fun! The activities included the multi-acre corn maze (not easy!), a hay ride, and the huge pumpkin patch where we were all able to take a pumpkin home with us. Bi Zi farms said, "The group was one of the best behaved they've seen this year." The next upcoming pro-social activity for JRC will be the annual Christmas event in mid-December.

Detention Music Program



Brent MacDonald started the music program in detention in 2006. It started out with Brent asking the kids if they had any

hobbies and talking about his hobbies, playing guitar and mountain biking. Many of the kids didn't have a hobby or any way to use their time constructively. When Brent found kids who were interested in learning how to play music, it progressed to bringing instruments into detention and teaching the kids how to play them. Not only did the kids enjoy learning to play the instruments; the process opened the door to talking about other subjects. Brent found that the kids were a lot more open to conversation while they were playing.

Eventually Brent started working with Probation Counselors to set up a program in which kids could earn instruments by staying out of trouble. The Probation Counselors set individualized parameters for earning an instrument based on what the youth needed to accomplish. They wrote a contract, which the youth and parent signed. It might include staying out of detention for a certain period of time, making it to all of their scheduled appointments, attending school every day, whatever area the youth needed to improve.

Since the formal music program began a year ago, 5 youth have signed contracts. Only one youth fulfilled his contract and earned a guitar. Brent had a ceremony for the young man, which his mother, the detention staff, and his probation team attended. The ceremony is designed to give the youth a sense of accomplishment and pride for having worked hard to earn an instrument. Some kids, especially those who visit detention frequently, seldom have an accomplishment to celebrate.

The program ultimately saves the public money in the long run when a youth succeeds in reducing the number of times he or she is in detention, and reducing the severity

of crimes. It also offers another opportunity for probation and detention staff to work together to motivate the kids.



The Table

These are ingredients many families shy away from because of the mysteriousness of their preparation. This recipe may give some ideas on how to use these often overlooked but delicious ingredients. It is the sweetness of the tomatoes and the fennel that balances the savory, starchy beans.

Olive Oil Roasted Tomatoes and Fennel with White Beans

2 large fennel bulbs with fronds attached
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons coarse kosher salt, divided
2 pints grape tomatoes or cherry tomatoes
4 large fresh oregano sprigs
3 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 15-ounce cans cannellini (white kidney beans), drained

Preheat oven to 425°F. Chop enough fennel fronds to measure 1/2 cup. Trim fennel bulbs and cut in half vertically. Cut each bulb half into 1/2-inch-wide wedges, leaving some more attached to each wedge.

Heat oil in large ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat until very hot, about 3 minutes. Add fennel wedges in single layer; sprinkle with 1 teaspoon coarse salt. Cook until fennel begins to brown and soften, turning occasionally, 10 to 12 minutes. Add tomatoes, oregano, garlic, and crushed red pepper; sprinkle with 1 teaspoon coarse salt

and 1 teaspoon pepper. Fold together gently.

Transfer skillet to oven. Bake fennel and tomatoes until soft, stirring occasionally, about 15 minutes. Mix in beans and 6 tablespoons chopped fennel fronds. Bake 5 minutes longer to heat through. Transfer mixture to large shallow bowl. Sprinkle with remaining chopped fronds. Serve warm or at room temperature. Makes 6 servings



<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/clipart/caterpillar/lang.html>

Book Review:

No: Why Kids – of All Ages – Need to Hear It and Ways Parents Can Say It

by David Walsh, PhD (Free Press, 2007)

Any parent knows from experience that the word “No” generates more resistance in a child – from the age of two on up – than any other word in the English language. It’s amazing how that tiny two-letter word can incite kids to wage a battle of wills against their parents, and, let’s face it, sometimes weary parents wear out before their kids do. We love our children and we want them to be happy, but we need to set limits with them, too.

We live in a culture of Yes, he explained. Nowadays, popular culture “brainwashes us into thinking that we all deserve whatever we want whenever we want it... As we all become infected with this inability to delay or deny [gratification], we parents find it more difficult to teach our children that they’re better off without something they want.”

Dr. Walsh wrote about how we’re raising kids in a “culture of disrespect.” Nowadays a teacher who reminds a child not to run in the hall is likely to be met with a string of profanities, in addition to the student blatantly disregarding the reminder. He cites studies that show that “children today really are ruder than previous generations.” (Twenge, 2006.)

We live in a culture that uses violence and aggression as a form of entertainment. When children spend hours a day watching violent TV shows or playing violent video games, their brains become accustomed to a level of stimulation that is unnatural to most kids, unless they’ve grown up in a war zone or a household in which domestic violence is the norm. Such children are more prone to violent reactions to displeasure than those who do not grow up with such influences.

“If we want our children to enjoy pleasure but not be blindly controlled by it, we need to teach them No. If we want our child to respond to threats in an assertive, active way, but not turn into someone who seeks confrontation because of the adrenaline rush it gives him, we need to teach him No.”

In Chapter 3, Dr. Walsh wrote that children’s brains are hard wired to learn certain skills at certain times. If they miss opportunities to learn important skills, like talking, walking or reading, it’s much harder to learn them later on. Human brains are especially receptive during growth spurts. Neural pathways are formed at phenomenal rates during these periods.

He offered an interesting analogy: “When you push your hand into freshly poured cement, you leave a permanent imprint, but if you push

your hand against hardened, cured cement, you might wipe away some dust, but that's about it. The brain of an adult *is* wired, whereas the brain of a child is *being* wired. The young brain is under construction from before birth all the way into the early twenties."



"Experience plays a major role in the wiring of the brain." In addition to the behaviors that are learned, there are certain instinctive drives that are 'hardwired' into the brain from birth:

- the fight or flight response
- the impulse to seek pleasure and avoid pain
- the urge to seek approval and avoid disapproval
- the longing for social connection
- empathy
- guilt

Children need help to master these strong, instinctive tendencies in order to grow into competent, responsible, caring adults. It's the parents' role to teach them how to do this. We can utilize our children's longing for social connection, approval, empathy and guilt to influence how they overcome their urge to seek pleasure, fight or flee.

Chapter 10 is about kids whose brains are wired differently, kids who have Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Asperger Syndrome, Sensory Processing Disorder, Bipolar Disorder or Anxiety. These kids don't delib-

erately try to sabotage our efforts to teach them self-discipline. They would manage their emotions if they could.

"Special needs children do not always learn from their mistakes... They don't choose to be rigid, angry, or defiant any more than a child chooses to be nearsighted. That doesn't mean... that they don't need to learn No. It just means that their special brains demand some special strategies."

"Kids with brains that make self-regulation difficult or impossible cannot control themselves once they get past a point of no return. I call this point 'the cliff.' Once they go over the cliff they are incapable of managing the free fall. The goal, therefore, is to prevent them from going over the cliff in the first place."

Dr. Walsh recommends explaining the cliff analogy to the child at a time when parent and child are both calm. He encourages parents to help the child identify what triggers the angry out-bursts. "For one child it might be getting ready for school, for another it might be doing homework... [or] battling over video games." The next step is to identify the early warning signs that the child is getting upset. Parents can work with their child to think of ways to steer the child away from the point of no return when they begin to realize the child is headed in that direction. "Instead of saying, 'You have to do your homework now,' say, 'Let's have a glass of milk or some fruit before we get out the home-work...' Try to understand your child's perspective... For example, you might say, 'I know you want to play on the computer now and are frustrated with me. I get upset when I can't do something I want to do, too. Can I help you get organized for your homework so

you can finish with enough time left to get back to the computer?'" If she falls off the cliff anyway, stay calm. Don't escalate. Establish eye contact and gentle touch. Repeat reassuring words like, 'It's okay, honey, we can get through this. It's okay, we can calm down together.'"

No is a highly readable book with a wealth of suggestions for teaching children the importance of No. Saying no, and doing it *effectively*, is the best thing we can do for our children.

This book is available at the Ft. Vancouver Regional Library District. You can check out or reserve a copy at your local library branch, or online at <http://66.96.75.5/>. The call number is **649.7 WALSH**.

Mental Health Mondays Free Talks at Clark College



On Mondays from noon to 1:00 p.m. Clark College hosts free talks for the public presented by guest speakers from the mental health community. The talks are given in the PUB Lounge, Room 161, in Gaiser Hall, which is near the front entrance on Ft. Vancouver Way.

The schedule for November is:
 Nov. 1 – Group Therapy in Daily Life, by Nan Narboe, MSW
 Nov. 8 – War Related PTSD: A Community Response, by Belle Landau
 Nov. 15 – Voices in Exile by Jody Shulnik
 Nov. 22 – Positive Psychology by Stephanie Spak, LMHC
 Nov. 29 – Mood Disorders by Sheila Choppala, ARNP

Flyers for these events can be found in Gaiser Hall near the Student Union information booth.

Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Training



On Sept. 23rd staff from the Juvenile Justice Center, the YWCA and the Vancouver Police Department participated in a training on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) in Clark County. Until recently, law enforcement and others who work with at-risk youth were unaware of the extent of the problem in our community. Now that our consciousness of the issue has been raised, the Juvenile Justice Center, in collaboration with law enforcement, YWCA advocates, and staff from Shared Hope International, is participating in developing and implementing a protocol to address the needs of the girls who get caught up in sex trafficking. *Intervene* is the name of the protocol that is being designed to assist young people who are victims of DMST.

The goal is to be able to identify youth who are involved in DMST, and connect them with people who can help them get out of these highly dangerous and traumatic situations.

[Note: Although there are male victims of DMST, the vast majority of the victims are female, so feminine pronouns are used in this article.]

Once a victim is identified, she will be connected with specially trained advocates available to help her through the process. Help can come in the form of medical care, legal protection, safe housing if

needed, and emotional support. Everything is voluntary. Nothing is forced on the victims. Similar to victims of domestic violence, it sometimes takes multiple attempts to offer assistance before the victim is willing or able to accept help.

Warning signs that a girl might be involved in Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking include having a lot of cash that they can't explain, having a cell phone that the parents didn't get for them, new clothes, having their nails done, being unable to account for their whereabouts for periods of time, etc.

The staff offered advice for parents who suspect that their daughter is involved in DMST: pay attention to who your child hangs out with, where they go and what they do; educate yourself on the issue; call 9-1-1 and ask to speak to an officer that specializes in DMST.

For more information about DMST, log onto www.Sharedhope.org.

Helpful Website for Families

Conquer College with LD/ADD: Interactive Websites for Use in High School and College is a creative, fun-filled e-book designed for students with learning disabilities, though the information is useful to everyone. It lists hundreds of websites that link students, parents and teachers to information on a wide range of topics, such as English, Math, Science, Journalism, Astronomy, Automotive, and a whole lot more. There are sites about non-school subjects, too. In the Math section there's a feature on Money that includes a website called Reality Check, where kids can find out how much it actually costs to live on their own. [Thanks to Cat Naish from Options for recommending this site.] <http://www.conquercollegewithld.com/pdf/ebookofwebsites.pdf>

Washington Law Help: Helping Low-Income People Find Solutions to Civil Legal Problems offers information on a wide range of legal issues in a variety of different languages. The Youth Law and Education link offers information on topics such as access to public education, special education, student loans, emancipation, foster care and juvenile offenders.

<http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/WA/>

More information on Collaborative Problem Solving:

Websites:

Center for Collaborative Problem Solving

<http://www.ccps.info/>

Lives in the Balance

<http://www.livesinthebalance.org/>

Books and DVD's available at the Vancouver Library:

The Explosive Child : A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated,

Chronically Inflexible Children

by Greene, Ross W.

649.153 GREENE 2005 2005

Treating Explosive Kids : The Collaborative Problem-Solving Approach

by Greene, Ross W.

649.153 GREENE 2006

Lost at School: Why Our Kids with Behavioral Challenges are Falling Through the Cracks and How We Can Help Them

by Greene, Ross W.

371.93 GREENE 2008

"Parenting the Explosive Child"

[videorecording]

by Greene, Ross W.

DVD 649.1 PARENTI 2004

"Calming the Tempest: Helping the Explosive Child"

[videorecording]

by Greene, Ross W.

DVD 649.64 CALMING 2004