



EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION

MOVING LIVES FORWARD

CHILDREN HAVE NOT CHANGED - CHILDHOOD HAS

Childhood - those precious and all too swift days of innocence and playing. I think most of us have memories of those days that we cherish. Playing with friends or just simply being an inquisitive child exploring the world. What a sense of freedom to "just be."

"Just being" changes a lot when we become adults...we become too busy "doing" - often to the point of exhaustion. "Adulthood" can be more than we expected. As adults we believe that we have to be productive all the time. And yet the more we do, the more we push ourselves beyond what is really healthy. It reminds me of the saying, "We don't stop playing because we grow old. We grow old because we stop playing."

A long-term study done (1965-1992) of 500 looked at the quality of resilience. Two-thirds of this populations had negative life problems and one-third did not. The latter had more success in life. The qualities that they possess were:

1) Autonomy, 2) leaders, 3) optimistic and 4) creative (the last had been nurtured throughout their children.

Now, let's look at the reality that in today's world (COVID, terrorist threats, and constant bombardment of social media and talk resilience. Remember, children's' brains are like little suitcases and it's SO important what gets packed into them.

Psychologists differ in what resilience really is, but in general the APA agrees that it is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress, such as family and relationship problems, serious health, workplace or financial stressors. OF all these the one I want to focus on is family relationships. And I want to go back to childhood (don't we all?) for this is the beginning of why we are who we are in a large part.

In an APA report called "The Road to Resilience" is states, "Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have because it involves behaviors that can be learned and developed..."

Children learn about resilience in three basic ways:

1) Modeling 2) Observations and 3) Connections

The latter is basically about relationships. The single most common factor for children is that IF they have ONE stable committed relationship (connection/attachment) with a committed parent or caregiver.

Now the question is: How do we do this?

1) Connections - teach your children friendship skills,
2) Teach your children self-care (do this by modeling.) Show this by the way you take care of your eating, sleeping and playing i.e. BALANCE.

3) Nurture a positive attitude. Help your children learn to trust themselves so they can solve problems. This also helps them make good decisions.

4) Look for opportunities for self-discovery. Let them be creative; this gets stifled as we get older because we are too busy being productive.

Developing resilience (an ongoing process) becomes more important as our world becomes less severe. Some of us who have been "adulating" for decades had the privilege of growing up in secure environments. As you know "environment" is crucial for healthy development of children. So, whether environment you do have control over remember that when it feels secure to a child (whose basic needs are being met) it will nurture their ability to develop resiliency.

And remember, we never get too old to play. So go blow some bubbles - or swing with your children.

"Children's games are hardly games.
Children are never more serious than
when they play."
(Montaigne) Essays. 1580-88

MEET CENTENNIAL'S EARLY CHILDHOOD CONSULTATION TEAM



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LAUNCHING ZOOM SECURE TELEHEALTH SERVICES!

Our ECMH team is excited to announce that consultation services are now available using Zoom Secure Telehealth Services. These services are available to client families, schools, childcare centers and community partners with group and individual meetings available. All services will be provided using this private, secure video platform, and can be accessed using most electronic devices. For more information or to set up a consultation appointment, please contact our ECMH team or your local Centennial Mental Health Center office.



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