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COUNSELING AGENCY



Health Matters

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Gateway to a Healthier You

MARCH 2012



Therapist of the Month:

Jonni Carter, Assistant Director

Jonni Carter is the assistant director and therapist. Jonni has worked as a therapist for over six years and her focus is working with children and families. Jonni does school based therapy and also sees clients in the Enid, Hennessey and Medford offices.

Jonni is a strong community volunteer volunteering for Growing Hope Network, United Way Committees, Systems of Care, Domestic Violence Task Force and her church to name a few. Jonni enjoys spending time with her husband, Eric and two daughters.



How Does Screen Time Effect your Child?

Managing Media with your Children • Speaker: Andy Wilkins

March 5, 2012 • 5:30pm • Gaslight Theatre: 221 N. Independence St., Enid

Media's growing influence • Managing content • Managing quantity
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Cultivating A Healthy Marriage

When it comes to marriage there is a lot of advice out there. Maybe this is because troubled marriages are so common. No relationship can escape an occasional bump in the road, and many relationships crumble all together. So how does a marriage stand the test of time? Why is it that some people make it look so easy and others give up on their relationship? Here are a few of my favorite tips for nurturing the bond.

1. Many experts agree that marriage requires an ongoing awareness and effort with communication. Specifically, a partner will be less defensive if “I” statements are used, as opposed to statements beginning with “you”. Another important element in communication is to validate your spouse by re-phrasing his point in effort to say “here’s what I think you are saying, is this right?” This technique is coupled with the notion that we don’t always have to agree with our spouse, just understand what they believe to be true.
2. Research consistently shows that touching more creates a stronger bond by releasing oxytocin. Hold hands, rub shoulders, hug, kiss, give high-fives or even fist-bumps or bottom pats. When you give a quick hug or kiss, try to lengthen it to at least 5 or 10 seconds for more effective results!
3. Don’t use the “D” word. Be of the mind set that divorce is not an option. Of course some situations can be deal breakers, such as addiction, adultery, or abuse. But when the problem is less severe, use your energy to look for solutions.
4. A healthy marriage is one that has a mix of individual, family, and couple time. The amount of each may be different for each couple, but the mix is necessary to keep a functional marriage in balance.
5. Respect is a key ingredient for marriage. This means not undermining your partner in front of anyone, not using demeaning tones or verbal abuse, keeping an open mind and accepting that you don’t always agree. When there is trouble, don’t go outside the marriage, instead, discuss it with your spouse. Be kind, support each other, compliment each other, and accept each other for who they are.

Sharon Semrad, MCPLPC



Why do Children LIE ?

Many parents experience the common behavior problem of their child lying. Getting to the root of the problem is usually the first step to stopping the behavior. Children lie for a number of different reasons, and in many cases it is a normal part of development. Most children lie at one time or another. It can be frustrating for parents to know how to deal with their children when they lie. How lying is handled often depends on the age of the child, the situation, and the established family rules. Most parents ask themselves, “Should lying have a punishment?”, or “How should I handle it?”.

Children that are preschool age don’t usually understand why lying is wrong and dishonest. When children lie at a young age, parent’s need to educate and teach them and use these opportunities as a learning experience for the child. Explain to the child why lying is wrong. Children will lie and not realize they are lying, for instance if they make up a story that isn’t true or exaggerate something that is true. Children have vivid imaginations at this age and need to be taught the difference between reality and fantasy. Children will also lie to get something they want. As a parent, try not to overreact and teach them that is it wrong to lie and important to tell the truth.

Older children that are in school (ages 6 and up) understand the concept of lying and that it is wrong. At this age parents should discipline their children when they lie. Children at this age usually lie to avoid punishment, get something they want, boost their self esteem, impress peers, or because they hear their parents or other adults lie. An easy way to tell if your child is lying is they might become anxious; they are inconsistent in what they are saying, or what they are saying sounds rehearsed.

What can parents do when their children lie? Explain to them why telling the truth is so important. By telling the truth it lets other people know that you can be trusted. If you lie there could be negative consequences. If parents have an open honest relationship with their child, they will less likely lie to them. Children learn by watching their parents so being a good role model is important. Make sure there are specific rules for lying and discuss them with your child before they get in trouble so they are aware of the rules. Being consistent with the rules and consequences and make sure it’s not rewarding for the child. Also praise your child for honesty so they know you recognize they are being truthful.

Some children have underlying problems that cause them to persistently lie. In these instances, parents should seek professional help and call ATS Counseling-Focus Institute.

April West, MCP, LPC Candidate