



Foster Care Forum

Waukesha County
Health & Human Services
May 2010



Foster Care - Training - Caregiver Stress

By: PSG (Professional Services Group) CIP (Community Impact Programs) Website

<http://www.psgcip.com/FosterCare/Training/CaregiverStress.php>

(Hold down the CTRL Key and select the Hyperlink to take you to the website.)

To receive one training credit, please read the article below and answer the questions on the website listed above.

What is Caregiver Stress?

Caregiver stress is the emotional strain of care-giving. Recent studies show that care-giving takes a toll on physical and emotional health. Caregivers are more likely to suffer from depression than their peers. Limited research suggest that caregivers are more likely to have health problems like diabetes and heart disease than non-caregivers.

Caring for another person takes a lot of time, effort and work. Plus, most caregivers juggle care-giving with full-time jobs and parenting. In the process, caregivers often put their own needs aside. Caregivers often report that it is difficult to look after their own health in terms of exercise, nutrition and doctor's visits. As a result, caregivers often end up feeling angry, anxious, isolated and sad.

Caregivers for people with Alzheimer's disease or other kinds of dementia are especially vulnerable to burnout. Research shows that most dementia caregivers suffer from depression and stress. Also, studies show that the more hours spent on care-giving, the greater the risk of anxiety and depression. Women caregivers are particularly prone to feeling stress and being overwhelmed. Studies show that female caregivers have more emotional and physical health problems, employment related problems, and financial strain than male caregivers.

It is important to note that caring for another person can also create positive emotional change. Aside from feeling stress, many caregivers say their role has had many positive effects on their lives. For example, caregivers report that their role makes them feel useful and gives them a sense of purpose. They say care-giving has made them feel they are making a difference in somebody's life. It can be helpful to discuss how care-giving has provided benefits to both the caregiver and the care recipient. This focus on the positive aspects of the experience can help give perspective and needed hope when the stress increases.

Stress response narrows your ability to think clearly and function effectively. It can disable you physically and emotionally. The goal of stress management is to bring your nervous system back into balance giving you a sense of calmness and control in your life. There is no one way a person can relieve stress, and the way we cope with extra demands varies from person to person. Every individual has a unique response to stress, so experiment with a variety of approaches to manage and reduces stress to learn what works best for you.

Ways to Change Your Lifestyle Habits to Manage Stress

Get enough sleep. Adequate sleep fuels your mind, as well as your body. Feeling tired will increase your stress because it may cause you to think irrationally.

Connect with others. Develop a support system and share your feelings. Perhaps a friend, family member, teacher, clergy person, or counselor can help you see your situation in a different light. Talking with someone else can help you clear your mind of confusion so that you can focus on problem solving.

Exercise regularly. Find at least 30 minutes, three times a week to do something physical. Moving around and being physically active helps

dissipate excess energy. Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress.

Eat a balanced, nutritious diet. Be mindful of what you put in your body. Healthy eating fuels your mind, as well as your body. Take time to eat breakfast in the morning. Eating regular meals throughout the day will help give you the energy to think clearly.

Reduce caffeine and sugar. Avoid consuming too much caffeine and sugar. In excessive amounts, the temporary "highs" they provide often end in fatigue later. You'll feel more relaxed, less jittery or nervous, and you'll sleep better. In addition, you'll have more energy, less heartburn and fewer muscle aches.

Don't self-medicate with alcohol or drugs. While consuming alcohol or drugs may appear to alleviate stress, it is only temporary. When sober, the problems and stress will be there. Don't mask the issue at hand; deal with it head on and with a clear mind.

Do something for yourself everyday. Take time out from the hustle and bustle of life for leisure time. Too much work is actually inefficient and can lead to burnout. Recognize when you are most stressed and allow yourself reasonable breaks. When things feel especially difficult, take a walk or change the scenery. Most importantly, have fun. Do things that make you happy.

How to Change Your Thinking and Emotional Responses to Handle Stress Better

Have realistic expectations. Know your limits. Whether personally or professionally, be realistic about how much you can do. Set limits for yourself and learn to say "no" to more work and commitments.

Reframe problems. See problems as opportunities. As a result of positive thinking, you will be able to handle whatever is causing your stress. Refute negative thoughts and try to see the glass as half full. It's easy to fall into the rut of seeing only the negative when you are stressed.

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Pre-Placement Training for Prospective Foster Parents

Monday, May 3, 2010 6-9 PM
Monday, May 10, 2010 6-9 PM

Monday, June 7, 2010 6-9 PM
Monday, June 14, 2010 6-9 PM

All Classes are held in the Brookfield Room G137 in the Human Services Center located at 500 Riverview Avenue.

Please enter the building at door 6. Call Shari Rather at (262)548-7267 to register.



Jesse's Corner

Jesus Mireles
Manager of the Children and
Family Division

May is FOSTER CARE MONTH! We thank all of you for your willingness to foster in Waukesha County. Your family's commitment to providing a loving and safe home for our most vulnerable children is truly appreciated. With that stated, we will have our Foster Parent Annual Meeting and Potluck on May 5th at Elmbrook Church at 777 S Barker Road in Brookfield starting at 5:30 and ending at 8:30. We will be covering such topics as; the new levels of care, training requirements, sibling placements, foster parent and foster children's involvement in court, foster parent appreciation event, support for foster parents when there have been abuse of neglect allegations and transition plans for foster children moving toward independent living.

I look forward to seeing you on May 5th!

Some of you may know that there are several other programs in the Children & Family Division that may work in collaboration with our child welfare staff. These programs are for children with special needs to keep them safely at home. They include: Birth to Three (B-3); Family Support Program (FSP) and the Children's Long Term Support Waiver Program (CLTS).

I will briefly provide an overview of each program:

We have a contract with Lutheran Social Services (LSS) to administer the Waukesha County B-3 Program. I oversee the B-3 program and meet regularly with the management team at LSS. The program is for children from birth to age 3 that have at least a 25% delay in their development. LSS staff provide core services including screening, evaluation, assessment, individual service plan (IFSP), service coordination, transition planning and family centered intervention, education and support. We use a primary service provider model and work in partnership with the parent or caregiver. Our child welfare staff are required to make a referral to B-3 if a child, under the age of 3, has a substantiated finding of child abuse or neglect. We have an internal process in our child welfare areas to identify these children and ensure a referral is made to B-3. The most recent data I reviewed indicated that B-3 staff screened about 40 CPS referrals (child protective services) of which 12 were found eligible for B-3 services. All of these cases are opened in child protective services and some may be in foster care. If this occurs, our child welfare staff will work collaboratively with the B-3 service coordinator.

Our Family Support Program (FSP) is funded by the State of Wisconsin. FSP funding is for children with special needs and their parent or caregiver, to prevent out of home placement and child abuse. In order to be eligible for FSP funding, the child must meet the "institutional level of care" requirement (as determined by a functional screen). The funding is limited. A family may receive between \$1,000 - \$3,000 in a year in which they come up for funding. That money can be used to purchase disability-related goods or services for their special needs child. FSP staff sends out an annual questionnaire to all the families enrolled in FSP. The intent of this questionnaire is to identify their child's current needs. Answers that parents provide on the questionnaire are used to determine which children will get funding in a given year and how much funding they will receive. Unfortunately we don't have enough funds to service everyone so some families are put on a waiting list. Historically we serviced slightly over 100 families and most recently served about 150 families (due to changes in the program).

The Children's Long Term Support Waiver Program (CLTS) is funded by Medicaid through the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services. We contract with Lutheran Social Services (LSS) and the program is administered by the *Children with Special Needs Unit* supervisor. Similar to FSP, the child has to meet the "institutional level of care" as determined by the functional screen. There are many different waiver funding slots including fully funded, crisis slots, locally-matched slots, etc. If eligible, funding can be used to provide goods and services to the child and family, depending on the needs of the child. The services that are funding through the waiver can only be used to meet the need of the child so staff work very hard to ensure that happens. Again, the primary focus of this program is to provide services to children and their families to prevent out of home placement. Don Daniels is the supervisor of the FSP and CLTS programs.

In addition to these programs we have a contract with United Cerebral Palsy of Southeastern Wisconsin (UCP) to provide respite services for children with special needs and their families. Anyone interested in getting more information about UCP respite can contact UCP at (414) 329-4500.

This is a brief overview of the programs and services in our Children and Family Division. I believe our job is to maximize the funding we receive and provide services to as many eligible families as possible. With our funding challenges, it's even more critical that we continue to find ways of enhancing our coordination and collaboration between all our stakeholders. If you have any questions about the program or services noted above please feel free to contact Shari Rather and she will direct you as needed.

Thanks,

Jesse

Training

Parents Place Programs
262-549-5575
www.ppacinc.org

Prices for some classes may apply. Call 262-549-5575 to register. Free pre-registered childcare is available while attending most classes. Space is limited.

Kids Managing Anger (Parent and child class)

Mondays, May 10 - 24

5:30 - 7 p.m.

Parents learn to deal with their children's anger and frustrations while children learn the tools to curb their anger as well. Parents will meet with a facilitator while the children are in their sessions.

Calming the Explosive Volcano

Mondays, June 7 - 28

6 - 7:30 p.m.

This course will teach you how to deal more effectively with angry, explosive and defiant children. You will learn what the "magic wand" of parenting is, and three specific skills for using it to calm the explosions and tantrums.

Love and Logic®

Tuesdays, June 15 - July 6

6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Love and Logic is a philosophy founded by Jim Fay and Foster W. Cline, M.D., and provides simple and practical techniques to help participants have less stress and more fun while raising responsible kids. This curriculum provides immediate results with techniques like: setting limits with enforceable statements, sharing control through lots of small choices and many more.

A Support & Educational Program for Parents with Children Facing Multiple Challenges

This class is on-going and meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month from 6 - 7:30 p.m.

This is a support and education program for parents who have children experiencing the following:

- Attention deficits
- Anger management problems
- Sensory integration issues
- Poor social skills & self-esteem issues

Parents will gain support, share experiences, learn about new resources and listen to experts on several topics.

The child's class will meet separate from parents and offer education focused on each child's developmental stage. Through art and play activities, they will build self-esteem, social and organization skills.

Parenting Between Two Homes

Meets every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month from 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Divorce can leave parents frustrated and children torn between two homes. This group will offer suggestions on how to put a halt to this damaging process, so you can maintain your balance and integrity.

Playgroup

Tuesdays or Wednesdays

9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

A free on-going group for parents, grandparents, primary caregivers and children.

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Maintain a sense of humor. This includes the ability to laugh at yourself. Watch a funny movie or do something goofy. The act of laughing helps your body fight stress in a number of ways.

Express your feelings instead of keeping them inside. In order to live a less stressful life, learn to calm your emotions. A good cry during periods of stress, or sharing your concerns with someone you trust can be a healthy way of bringing relief to your anxiety.

Don't try to control events or other people. Many circumstances in life are beyond your control, particularly the behavior of others. Consider that we live in an imperfect world. Learn to accept what is, for now, until the times comes when perhaps you can change things.

Ask yourself "is this my problem?" If it isn't, leave it alone. If it is, can you resolve it now? Once the problem is settled, leave it alone. Don't agonize over the decision, and try to accept situations you cannot change.

How to Meet the Challenges of Stressful Situations

Manage time. One of the greatest sources of stress is over-commitment or poor time management. Plan ahead. Make a reasonable schedule for yourself and include time for stress reduction as a regular part of your schedule. When you try to do everything at once, it can seem overwhelming. Make a list of the tasks you have to do, then complete them one at a time, crossing them off as they are done. Doing this will give you a sense of accomplishment.

Give priority to the most important tasks and do those first. If a particularly unpleasant task faces you, tackle it early in the day and get it over with. You will experience less anxiety the rest of the day as a result. Most importantly, do not overwork yourself. Resist temptation to schedule things back-to-back. All too often, we underestimate how long things will take.

Schedule time for both work and fun. Too much working is actually inefficient and can lead to burnout.

Delete tasks, prioritize, and plan your time. Aim to work in short, intensive periods, which allow you to rest in-between. Break big projects into smaller, more manageable tasks so you don't feel overwhelmed.

Common Techniques for Stress Relief

Diaphragmatic breathing (abdominal breathing). Stress often causes breathing to be shallow, which nearly always causes more stress, because less oxygen gets into the bloodstream and increases muscle tension. When you are becoming stressed, take a minute to slow down and breathe deeply. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Inhale enough air, so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count slowly as you exhale.

Progressive muscle relaxation. Relaxation exercises help reduce anxiety and stress. To do this, sit in a relaxed position, close your eyes and starting with your head and neck, tense the neck muscles, then relax them. Work your way down the different parts of your body to your toes, tensing and relaxing as you go.

Meditation. Quiet the mind and engage in exercises that help you focus on your breathing, an object, or your body sensations. The goal is to relax the mind, body and spirit.

Yoga. Practicing yoga allows you to build up a natural response to stress and bring a relaxed state more into your daily life.

Tai Chi. Tai Chi focuses on the breath and the mind's attention in the present moment.

Massage. A massage provides deep relaxation and improves physiological processes. As the muscles relax, so does your entire body, as well as your mind.

More Tips to Reduce Stress

Take a mental vacation. Take a moment to close your eyes and imagine a place where you feel relaxed and comfortable. Notice all the details of your chosen place, including pleasant sounds and smells. Or change your mental "channel" by reading a good book or playing relaxing music to create a sense of peace and tranquility.

Take a warm bath or shower. Wash away the stress and give yourself some time by yourself to reflect and quiet the mind. Soaking in the bathtub can make you feel like you are a world away from your reality.

Use aromatherapy. Originating in ancient China, aromatherapy is based on the healing properties of plants; from which concentrated aromatic oils are extracted. The vapors of these "essential oils" are then inhaled and carried through the bloodstream, which controls the release of hormones and emotions.

Care for a pet. Petting an animal can help reduce stress and lower blood pressure.

Keep a journal. One strategy that many people have found effective in coping with stress is keeping a journal, sometimes referred to as a "stress diary". Writing thoughts down is a good way to put things in perspective. Putting your worries into words may help you see that you don't have that much to worry about, or it may help you get organized and manage your stress, rather than let it manage you. A good way to do the diary is to list what things are bothering you or that need to be done, describe how you plan to cope with each item and evaluate how you respond now to the things bothering you. Are your responses realistic.

Professional Help for Stress Management

There's a fine line between feeling stressed out while still being able to function effectively, and the debilitating phenomenon we think of as burnout or breakdown. The difference is between handing your stress on your own, and being unable to figure out what to do because the pressures of life have become so overwhelming. It is time to seek professional advice if you:

- Feel the stress affecting your health.
- Feel that it will never end.
- Feel so desperate that you think about quitting your job, running away, taking a drug over-dose, or injuring yourself.
- Feel depressed, sad, tearful or that life is not worth living.
- Lose your appetite and find it difficult to sleep.
- Are managing your stress by eating, sleeping, drinking alcoholic beverages, smoking, or using recreational drugs.
- Have worries, feelings, and thoughts that are difficult to talk about.
- Hear voices telling you what to do.

*Taken from: The North Dakota Caregiver Project NDSU Extension Service, North Dakota State University
Home Instead Senior Care A Practical Guide to Caring for Caregivers, American Academy of Family Physicians.*



We have Brewer Tickets for the May 25th game against the Houston Astros.

7:10 PM start

Please call Shari to reserve your seats at 262-548-7267.



Please join us for our First
Parent Café

An evening for parents to have their own conversations about things that keep their families healthy and strong

We Welcome You

When: May 11, 2010

Time: 5:30—8:30 PM

Where: Head Start/ Center For Excellence
N4W22000 Bluemound Road
Waukesha WI 53186

RSVP: 262-548-8080

***Childcare will be provided.** Please let us know if you will need it.

Thank you

We look forward to seeing you!

Waukesha County

Foster Parent Annual
Potluck Meeting
May 5, 2010
5:30 to 8:30 pm

Elmbrook Church

777 Barker Road,
Brookfield



Come and hear what is
happening across the state in
foster parenting...

Some of the topics to be covered include:

- Levels of Care
- Training Requirements
- Sibling Placements
- Foster Parent Appreciation Event
- Division Changes
- WAFAPA Allegation Support
- Independent Living Requirements
- Court involvement for foster parents and children



The Dance of Discipline for Foster Parents

Waukesha County

When: June 8 Part One
June 10 Part Two

Where: Waukesha County Human Services
Brookfield Room

Time: 6:00 to 9:00 pm

To register call: 262-548-7267

Contact Numbers:

Waukesha Health & Human Services
262-548-7212

Children's Mental Health Outreach
262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911
Family Emergency: 211

Foster Parent Mentor

Nikki Mertens
262-246-6180

Lisa Roberts, Supervisor
262-548-7271

Mary Alice Grosser, Supervisor
Relative Licensing
262-548-7272

Shari Rather, Foster Care
Coordinator
262-548-7267

Libby Sinclair
Relative Licensing
262-548-7277

FASPP (Support for Allegations of
Abuse and Neglect)
Norma Schoenberg
920-922-9627

March 2010 Placements

Regular Foster Care:
55 Children

Treatment Foster Care:
14 Children

Group Homes:
2 Children

Residential Care Facilities:
9 Children

Relative Placements:
61 Children

Total Homes Assisting Other
Counties
19 Homes

Social Workers:

Bob Alioto 262-548-7262

Suzanne Arnold 262-548-7348

Angie Briggs 262-548-7275

Margaret Johnson 262-548-7265

Maria Maurer 262-548-7345

Susan Peck 262-548-7348

Janice Ramos 262-896-8069

Michael Reed 262-548-7347

Cindie Remshek 262-548-7639

Greg Rewolinski 262-548-7270

Elizabeth Russo 262-548-7349

Kim Sampson 262-548-7273

Mark Sasso 262-548-7346

Linda Senger 262-548-7698

Deanna Stevlingson 262-896-8570

Rick Wimmer 262-548-7359

We Need You!

For more information
about becoming a foster
parent in Waukesha
County, please contact
Shari Rather at:

srather@waukeshacounty.gov

262-548-7267

Or visit our website at
www.waukeshacounty.gov
And follow the links to
foster care.

