



Foster Care Forum

Waukesha County
Health & Human Services
January 2012



Stress Management for Parents By: The Child Development Institute

Parenting can be very stressful. Whether you are a stay at home parent or a working parent, a single parent or a married parent, mother or father, parent of one child or several children; remaining cool, calm and full of energy can help get you through the day. Below are some simple stress management tips and relaxation exercises that have proved useful to adults whether or not they are a parent. By taking a moment to consider which stress management tools will work for you and then putting them into practice immediately will help to provide the stress management approach you are looking for and the stress relief you deserve.

Take Time To Learn To Relax

How do we get so tense?

When we are worried, anxious, hurried or harried our body begins to feel tense. Actually, this is a natural reaction. Our body is preparing us for flight or fight. Our body has been given the signal to prepare to respond to a threat. If a real physical danger were present, we would be able to protect ourselves by attack or retreat. When the emergency was over, an "all clear signal" would be given and our body would relax and return to its normal state.

In our modern existence, our mind is often bothered by many things. We call this stress. Constant mental stress keeps our body in constant tension which itself becomes a form of stress. We can handle stress by learning to cope with giving the "all clear signal." As we become better at giving the signal we are able to trigger the relaxation response so our body will return to its normal state.

Chronic tension affects each of us differently. Depending on the person it can cause sleep disturbance, increased or decrease appetite, headaches, stomach aches, poor concentration or irritability. Some diseases may be caused by or made worse by chronic tension. Also, our immune system can be weakened. Thus, making us more susceptible to colds and other infections.

Child Development Institute's section titled 52 Proven Ways to Reduce Stress gives some tips on coping. This section will help you learn Three Proven Ways to Relax. They are: (1) Progressive Relaxation, (2) Deep Breathing, and (3) Pleasant Images.

Use of positive mental images can be useful. Many parents have benefited from listening to a relaxation CD or MP3.

Progressive Relaxation

We will start with your feet and lower legs. Tighten those muscles just as hard as you can. Feel the tension. Then gradually release the tension. Let your feet and lower leg muscles relax just a little bit at a time. Repeat this with your upper leg and hip muscles. Again, experience first the tension and then the gradual relaxation as you slowly release all the tension.

Next, tense the muscles in your hands and lower arms. Make a fist. Tighten them as tight as you can. Then gradually let them relax. With each muscle group, the relaxation feels good. As you relax one group at a time your whole being will begin to feel relaxed, calm and peaceful. Repeat the tension and then gradual relaxation with your upper arms and shoulders. Remember to tense and hold before relaxing.

Next, tighten your stomach muscles. Hold the tension and then gradually release. Then, move to your chest muscles. Take a deep breath. Hold it while tensing your chest muscles. Gradually let out your breath

while gradually letting go of the tension in your chest muscles.

As you have not progressively relaxed most of your major muscle groups, you may feel a tingly sensation. You will find that your breathing has become slower and deeper. You are now relaxed.

Try to practice on a daily basis. When you have followed the above for about 10 to 15 sessions, try it without tensing the muscles. See if you can just relax one muscle group at a time while breathing slowly and deeply.

Deep Breathing

When we are tense, our breathing is often shallow and rapid. In fact, most of us do not breathe properly, tense or not. Improper breathing robs us of oxygen which purifies our body as well as helps our body produce energy. Fortunately, learning to breathe properly is not difficult. Find a comfortable place to lie down. Place your hands on your abdomen just below your ribs. Begin breathing slowly and deeply. If you are breathing properly, you will feel the expansion in the abdominal area before your rib cage expands. Spend 5 to 10 minutes several times a day practicing your deep breathing. You will notice that as you become more proficient, your breathing will improve during your normal activities.

How to take a mental vacation

When we think about things that are upsetting, our body tenses up. This is because the lower centers of our brain, which regulate body functions, does not distinguish between real images and those which are imagined. If you think about being in an uncomfortable situation, your body will begin to respond as if you were in that situation. Since you have probably had lots of experience thinking about things that cause tension, you actually have all the skills necessary to do just the opposite. Imagine something that makes you feel good.

To prepare for your mental vacation, relax your muscles and take a few deep breaths. Then close your eyes and imagine you are someplace you enjoy. It could be the beach or the mountains or enjoying a favorite activity. Try to fully experience this imagined event. See the sights.

www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/parenting/stress.shtml

Prospective Foster Parents need to do Part 1 of the training on the following website:

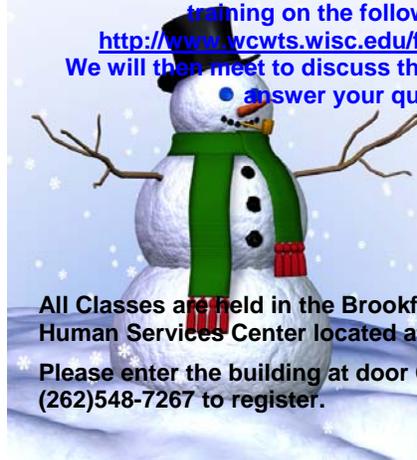
<http://www.wcws.wisc.edu/foster-parent-training>

We will then meet to discuss the learning points and to answer your questions.

Thursday,
February 9, 2012
6-8 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

Since last month, there have been many changes on our executive management team at our Health & Human Services Department. First, we've hired a new Deputy Director, Antwayne Robertson. Antwayne has worked with our Department for many years, most recently as the manager of the Intake and Shared Services Division. As a result, of his promotion, I have been reassigned to his division and I'm the new Intake and Shared Services Division Manager effective November 19th, 2011. We are also in the process of recruiting and hiring a replacement for my position (Children & Family Services Division Manager) in the near future. Once a decision is made, we'll let you know. In addition, we've hired Joan Sternweis as the Clinical Services Manager and are in the process of hiring an Administrative Services Manager. Since we knew that the "baby boomers" were on the verge of retiring the management team created a succession plan and that will be helpful in filling these positions.

Since this is my last "Jesse's Corner" article I would like to express my appreciation to all of our foster parents and their families. I can't put into words how I feel about your willingness to care for children placed in foster care. The impact you've had on our children and families will live on forever, from one generation to another. Maybe we won't hear about it or see it, but it will happen. Many of our birth families have benefited from your willingness to provide "shared parenting" and support to them. I believe having competent and caring foster parents is a key in breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect and I'm confident our foster children will be better people and parents! As a result, you have created a safer and better Waukesha community.

I would also like to thank our staff, especially our foster care coordinator and licensors, Shari Rather, Libby Sinclair, Janis Mantel-Ramos and their supervisors Lisa Roberts and Mary Alice Grosser. They piloted many foster care initiatives such as PACE, Foster Parent Support (St. Aemilians), Annual Foster Care Recognition and Foster Parent Annual Meeting and offered many more training to support all of our foster parents. They have invested a lot of time and energy in making Waukesha County's foster care program one of the best in the State!

The staff that have put this monthly Foster Parent Newsletter together for the past 7 years, thank you as well.

As far as the future goes, I anticipate we will continue to have a Foster Care Newsletter that will continue to provide you with updates on our foster care program. I plan to mentor and support my replacement and I'm sure they will quickly understand and value and importance of each and every one of you to our foster care program. I look forward to seeing you at the annual foster care events and wish you a Happy New Year!

Best Wishes for the New Year,

Jesse



Training Offered By Waukesha County

Parent Café
January 19, 2012
5:30 PM
Center for Excellence
N4W22000 Bluemound Road
Waukesha
To register for childcare, RSVP or for questions call, 262-548-8080.



Parent Café Host Training
January 31 & February 2, 2012 (both dates are required to attend)
5:30 - 8:30 PM
Center for Excellence
N4W22000 Bluemound Road
Waukesha
To confirm your attendance or need of child care, please call 262-548-7267.

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.

Uncontrolled Child
Tuesdays, January 3 - 17
5:30 - 7:30 PM

Wednesday Workshops - Getting Physical & Fighting Depression
Wednesday, January 18
5:30 - 7:00 PM

Learning to Trust As told to Janeen Mullins

When I got out of care, romance and all kinds of relationships seemed so scary! In care, I never stayed in one place long enough to trust anybody, so when I went out into the world I gave the people who were trying to get to know me a hard time. I was sacred of having relationships with people who would be gone the next day.

I put people through little tests to see if they could be trusted. I wouldn't call them back to see if they would call me. Or I would tell them a little about my foster care and group home background to see if they saw me as an individual. A few people were fixated on my past, but most accepted me for me.

I wouldn't share my emotions with my boyfriend and wouldn't tell him I loved him. He'd just say, "You'll love me one day!":

He had a lot of walls to break down. For one date, I stood him up on purpose just to see if he would call me the next day...and he did! We just made plans to go out again.

When I realized that most people accepted me, I opened up. I have a really good support system of friends, and my relationships with my siblings are very strong. I've been with my boyfriend for 12 years now. He wants to get married. I'm working on getting comfortable with that.

The other issues I had was working too much. My whole life was work because I didn't know how to relax. All I heard in care was, "Did you save your money?" and "Being on your own is expensive." No one every told me how to balance my life and it took me awhile to learn that working wasn't more important than love and connections.

I took my first vacation at the age of 25. I went with one of my sisters to Jamaica and it was beautiful and relaxing. Since then, I've been to the Bahamas, Mexico, Hawaii and Canada. I'm making up for lost time!

-Tiffany Johnson, age 29, Vallejo, CA

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Stress Management For Parents Continued from Page 1

Tune in to the sense of well-being. At first, you should allow 10 to 15 minutes for this exercise. As you become more adept you will find that you can feel like you have been on a long vacation or just come back from a good time in just a few moments.

Some other ways to feel relaxed

Listening to music is very relaxing. Reading can be rewarding for many. Enjoying a hobby can make life more fun. Research has shown that exercising several times a week (even just a walk) can reduce stress and tension. Research has also found that regular church attendance and daily prayer result in lower blood pressure and better coping.

Avoid too much caffeine or alcohol. Both of these are thought to be relaxing but they can actually make things worse. Avoid watching the news before going to bed. Try to take one day at a time. Look for the good things that happen each day and be thankful. Reach out and touch someone. Giving IS better than receiving. Be forgiving. Don't hold grudges. No one is perfect. We all make mistakes. As you learn to forgive others, use a little on yourself. Tomorrow is another day.

Remember the AA serenity prayer:

*Grant me the courage to change the things I can change.
The ability to accept the things I cannot change.
And the wisdom to know the difference.*

52 Proven Stress Reducers

1. Get up fifteen minutes earlier in the morning. The inevitable morning mishaps will be less stressful.
2. Prepare for the morning the evening before. Set the breakfast table, make lunches, put out the clothes you plan to wear, etc.
3. Don't rely on your memory. Write down appointment times, when to pick up the laundry, when library books are due, etc. ("The palest ink is better than the most retentive memory." - Old Chinese Proverb)
4. Doing nothing which, after being done, leads you to tell a lie.
5. Make duplicate of all keys. Bury a house key in a secret spot in the garden and carry a duplicate car key in your wallet, apart from your key ring.
6. Practice preventive maintenance. Your car, appliances, home and relationships will be less likely to break down/fall apart "at the worst possible moment."
7. Be prepared to wait. A paperback can make a wait in a post office line almost pleasant.
8. Procrastination is stressful whatever you want to do tomorrow, do today; whatever you want to do today; do it now.
9. Plan ahead. Don't let the gas tank get below one-quarter full. Keep a well-stocked emergency shelf of home staples. Don't wait until you're down to your last bus token or postage stamp to buy more, etc.
10. Don't put up with something that doesn't work right. If your alarm clock, wallet, shoe laces, windshield wipers, whatever are a constant aggravation, get them fixed or get new ones.
11. Allow 15 minutes of extra time to get to appointments. Plan to arrive at an airport one hour before domestic departures.
12. Eliminate (or restrict) the amount of caffeine in your diet.
13. Always set up contingency plans, "just in case." ("If for some reason either of us is delayed, here's what we'll do." Or, "If we get split up in the shopping center, here's where we'll meet.")
14. Relax your standards. The world will not end if the grass doesn't get mowed this weekend.
15. Pollyanna-Power! For every one thing that goes wrong, there are probably 10 or 50 or 100 blessings. Count'em!
16. Ask questions. Taking a few moments to repeat back directions, what someone expects of you, etc., can save hours. (The old "the hurrieder I go, the behinder I get," idea.)
17. Say "No!" Saying "no" to extra projects, social activities, and invitations you know you don't have the time or energy for takes practice, self-respect, and a belief that everyone, everyday, needs quiet time to relax and be alone.
18. Unplug your phone. Want to take a long bath, meditate, sleep, or read without interruption? Drum up the courage to temporarily disconnect. (The possibility of there being a terrible emergency in the next hour or so is almost nil.) Or use an answering machine.
19. Turn needs into preferences. Our basic physical needs translate into food, water, and keeping warm. Everything else is a preference. Don't get attached to preferences.
20. Simplify, simplify, simplify...
21. Make friends with non-worriers. Nothing can get you into the habit of worrying faster than associating with chronic worrywarts.
22. Get up and stretch periodically if your job requires that you sit for extended periods.
23. Wear earplugs. If you need to find quiet at home, pop in some earplugs.
24. Get enough sleep. If necessary, use an alarm clock to remind you to go to bed.
25. Create order out of chaos. Organize your home and workspace so that you always know exactly where things are. Put things away where they belong and you won't have to go through the stress of losing things.
26. When feeling stressed, most people tend to breathe in short, shallow breaths. When you breathe like this, stale air is not expelled, oxidation of the tissues is incomplete and muscle tension frequently results. Check your breathing throughout the day and before, during and after high pressure situations. If you find your stomach muscles are knotted and your breathing is shallow, relax all your muscles and take several deep breaths. Note how, when you're relaxed, both your abdomen and chest expand when you breathe.
27. Writing your thoughts and feelings down (in a journal, or a paper to be thrown away) can help you clarify things and can give you a renewed perspective.
28. Try following yoga technique whenever you feel the need to relax. In hale deeply through your nose to the count of eight. Then with lips puckered, exhale very slowly through your mouth to the count of 15 or for as long as you can. Concentrate on the long sighing sound and feel the tension dissolve. Repeat 10 times.
29. Inoculate yourself against a feared event. For example, before speaking in public, take time to go over every part of the experience in your mind. Imagine what you'll wear, what the audience will look like, how you will present your talk, what the questions will be and how you will answer them, etc. Visualize the experience the way you would have it be. You'll likely find that when the time comes to make the actual presentation, it will be "old hat" and much of your anxiety will have fled.
30. When the stress of having to get a job done gets in the way of getting the job done, diversion (a voluntary change in activity and/or environment) may be just what you need.
31. Talk it out. Discussing your problems with a trusted friend can help clear your mind of confusion so you can concentrate on problem solving.
32. One of the most obvious ways to avoid unnecessary stress is to select an environment (work, home, leisure) which is in line with your personal needs and desires. If you hate desk jobs, don't accept a job which requires that you sit at a desk all day. If you hate to talk politics, don't associate with people who love to talk politics, etc.
33. Learn to live one day at a time.
34. Every day, do something you really enjoy.
35. Add an ounce of love to everything you do.
36. Take a hot bath or shower (or a cool one in the summertime) to relieve tension.
37. Do something for somebody else. Make a meal for someone who is in need.
38. Focus on understanding rather than on being understood; on loving rather than on being loved.
39. Do something that will improve your appearance. Looking better can help you feel better.
40. Schedule a realistic day. Avoid the tendency to schedule back-to-back appointments. Allow time between appointments for a breathing spell.
41. Become more flexible. Some things are worth not doing perfectly and some issues are well to compromise upon.
42. Eliminate destructive self-talk; "I'm too old to...", "I'm too fat to..." etc.
43. Use your weekend time for a change of pace. If your work week is slow and patterned, make sure there is action and time for spontaneity built into your weekends. If your work week is fast-paced and full of people and deadlines, seek peace and solitude during your days off. Feel as if you are not accomplishing anything at work? Tackle a job on the weekend which you can finish to your satisfaction.
44. "Worry about the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves." That's another way of saying: take care of today's as best you can and the tomorrows will take care of themselves.
45. Do one thing at a time. When you are with someone, be with that person and with no one or anything else. When you are busy with a project, concentrate on doing that project and forget about everything else you have to do.
46. Allow yourself time everyday for privacy, quiet, and introspection.
47. If an especially unpleasant task faces you, do it early in the day and get it over with. Then, the rest of your day will be free of anxiety.
48. Learn to delegate responsibility to capable others.
49. Don't forget to take a lunch break. Try to get away from your desk or work area in body and mind, even if its just for 15 or 20 minutes.
50. Forget about counting to 10. Count to 1,000 before doing something or saying anything that could make matters worse.
51. Have a forgiving view of events and people. Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world.
52. Have an optimistic view of the world. Believe that most people are doing the best they can.

January 2012 Foster Parent Spotlight

Lori and Fred Kendrick



Lori and Fred Kendrick are both from Milwaukee. For the past 11 years, they have called Menomonee Falls home. They were high school sweethearts, However, they went their separate ways after high school and

Lori got married to someone else that marriage ended in 2005' Lori and Fred crossed paths again. They have now been married for 6 years. Fred works for FedEx and has been working there for the past 4 years, while for the past year Lori has been working at the JC Penney Salon. Lori had previously owned her own salon.

They have one child and they use each other mainly for support. They enjoy being silly with each their child. They wanted to become foster parents because they wanted to offer kids love and stability and they both had the idea to pursue foster parenting. They currently have their second placement. Lori describes her experience being a foster parent as rocky at first but is getting smoother. She and her husband have a set of twins who have special needs and it was hard learning all of the needs the girls had.

The most rewarding part of being a foster parent is seeing her special needs children meet and exceed their goals. The most challenging aspect is just figuring out their needs and how to meet them. While they haven't attended any trainings through Waukesha recently, they have gone to Shared Parenting in the past. Their advice for foster parents, "Push in, instead of push-

ing out." Lori said another foster parent told her this and the phrase really helped her in foster parenting.

Special Thanks to:

- **GE Healthcare Systems**
- **Milwaukee Bucks**
- **Queen of Apostles Catholic Church (St. Vincent De Paul Committee)**
- **Menomonee Falls Garden Club**

**for the generous holiday gifts
we received for the
foster children of Waukesha County.**

Contact Numbers:

Waukesha H & HS
262-548-7212

Children's Mental Health Outreach
262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911
Family Emergency: 211

Foster Parent Mentor
Jen Barcus..... 262-542-2926
David Mersfelder 262-542-2926
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

November 2011 Placements

Regular Foster Care:
46 Children

Treatment Foster Care:
14 Children

Group Homes:
4 Children

Residential Care Facilities:
10 Children

Relative Placements:
43 Children

Level 2 Foster Homes:
109 Homes

Level 1 Foster Homes:
29 Homes

Total Homes Assisting Other
Counties
20 Homes

For Allegations of Abuse and
Neglect Support, please call:

FASPP
Norma Schoenberg
920-922-9627

Social Workers:

Jennifer Adler 262-548-7265

Bob Alioto 262-548-7262

Suzanne Arnold 262-548-7348

Kate Flansburg 262-896-6857

Laura Jahnke 262-548-7359

Maria Maurer 262-548-7345

Susan Peck 262-896-8574

Madeline Prange 262-548-7394

Janis 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

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.

