



Resource Family Connection

News, Events and Information Benefiting
the Children of Waukesha County

March 2014



The Balance Beam: Caring for Yourself While Caring for Your Kids

By: Coalition for Children, Youth and Families

Valuing the importance of taking care of yourself is an essential component of successful parenting. Life, work and family commitments take a toll on all of us. We all have responsibilities that pull us in countless directions, making us feel stressed out, short-tempered, and, at times, overwhelmed.

Self-care becomes especially vital when you're an adoptive parent due to the early life experiences that your children may have faced. Finding the rhythm between all of the roles you play will result in a healthier family and a healthier you.

Self Care Essentials

The essential ingredients of self care include admitting it when you're overwhelmed, valuing the process of taking care of yourself and giving yourself time.

First, admit that you are overwhelmed. Some signs include:

- Feeling that every day seems too hard
- Lacking enjoyment in daily activities
- Feeling like a small request or new responsibilities is more than you can handle.

It's okay to say you're overwhelmed - it doesn't make you less of a parent. It's a sign of strength in knowing that your needs are important too. What's more, you're teaching your kids that it's good for them to take care of themselves when they're feeling stressed.

Self care also takes time - away from other activities and other people. Though family time is also important, we as parents need to be refreshed to give back to the well being of our families. You can only fulfill the needs of your family when your own emotional and spiritual cup is filled. So find a variety of activities that allow you in small and big ways "refill your cup."

Keeping Your Emotional Cup Filled to the Brim

Wisconsin foster and adoptive mother, Peg Cadd and her husband Rick have been providing care for kids for 30 years. Along the way, they have gained a great deal of insights regarding the importance of self-care.

"When parenting a traumatized child with attachment issues, it's easy to be sucked in by them," says Peg. "At times, it can feel like you are continuing to pour love and caring into a cup that cannot be filled."

Keeping your cup filled can be challenging but there is hope. Surrounding yourself with a support network of family and friends is helpful and then being willing to reach out to them when you're feeling out of balance.

Keys to Self Care

We all have our own preferred ways of caring for ourselves and making this a priority. The following are some tips that have worked for others and might help you find what will work best for you.

- Honor yourself by acknowledging that fostering and adopting is challenging. If it were easier, more families would be doing it.
- Keep your sense of humor. Laugh early and often!
- Ask for help when you need it, including talking to a counselor who specializes in foster and adoption issues. Seeking out support is a sign of strength.
- Take breaks. Respite care is a valuable resource. Build a support system of caregivers who can step in when you feel that you're at your breaking point.
- Join a support group - either in person or online - or network with our foster and/or adoptive families. Contact us at the Coalition to help you connect with others.



- Attend training and workshops. Knowledge is power and provides you with additional parenting resources.
- Keep it simple. Choose an activity that fits with your lifestyle and your family.
- Stop comparing yourself to other people. There is only one of you in all of the world and you have no comparison.
- Develop healthy habits such as eating well and exercising regularly.
- Sleep well, which may even require planning a respite overnight for your children or yourself. Or perhaps just making sure to fit some daily naps in each day.
- Let go of the guilt. Parenting is the most rewarding and the most difficult thing you will ever do. There is no reason to feel guilty for needing a break or taking time for yourself.

Parenting isn't an easy journey. We - and our families - all have our own journey, with our own wants and needs. We want to encourage you to take time for you so when life throws you loops, you are fully charged and ready to face them.

Contact us at info@coalitionforcyf.org or at 800-762-8063. We're here to offer ideas and sometimes just to listen.

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<http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org>

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Clothing Closet Corner

We need the following items for the Clothing Closet:

- Baby Gates
- High Chair
- Gift Cards for Teens



Thank you to Project Shoebox for their donation of approximately 100 shoeboxes to our clothing closet. These shoeboxes will be provided to children as they are entering into foster care and will provide them with some basic items that they need along with comforting items. Next time you are in the Clothing Closet, please check out the "wall of shoeboxes!" Each are colorfully decorated and label according to the child's age and gender. If you would like more information about Project Shoebox, please see their website (<http://www.projectshoebox.org/>) or find them on Facebook.

Yoga for Youth in Trauma Recovery

By: Casadi Marino

From: Focal Point: Youth, Young Adults, & Mental Health. Healthy Body Healthy Mind, Summer 2012

I am in recovery from bipolar disorder and substance abuse. I have a history of trauma and was homeless for periods during my transition age years. I have worked in the mental health field for eighteen years and am a National Yoga Alliance registered yoga teacher. Yoga was part of my recovery and is now part of my wellness plan. In this brief article, I will introduce the practice of yoga and review some of the available literature related to its use by youth who may be classified as at risk or have trauma histories. In addition, I will offer some guidance regarding pursuing a yoga practice.

Introduction to Yoga

Yoga is a mind-body practice believed to have originated thousands of years ago in India. The term "yoga" translates from Sanskrit as "to unite." Its practices include both physical and mental techniques for calming the nervous system; developing self-awareness and grounding; and building flexibility, balance, and strength.¹ Yoga classes invite individuals to check in with their bodies and feelings, notice any sensations or experiences, direct attention, and return

again and again to the breath which is always present. Movements in yoga may be coordinated with the breath and emphasis is placed on full awareness of moment-to-moment experience.

By attending to immediate experience, one may become aware of sensations, thoughts, and emotions that are present. In a yoga class, participants are invited to "direct attention," or simply observe experience without judging or trying to change what is in the moment. A yoga instructor might begin a session by saying something resembling the following:

Place your awareness at the belly and begin to notice your breath... Notice the rise with each inhale and the fall with each exhale... Do not try to change your breathing... Just attend to the breath... Continue to breathe... The breath coming in, the breath going out... As you breathe, sensations, thoughts, or emotions may arise... Simply allow the sensation, thought, or emotion... Do not focus on it, do not push it away... Simply notice it without judgment and return to your breathing... Keep breathing... The breath coming in, and the breath going out... As you continue to breathe, you may notice another thought or feeling... You might say to yourself, "That is a thought," or "That is a feeling," and return to your breathing... Breathing slowly, breathing deeply... The breath always present... Whatever arises, arises...

Breathe in and breathe out... Return your attention again and again to the breath.

Literature Review

Studies that evaluate the benefits of yoga for youth are limited. One systematic review of the clinical literature on yoga and youth concluded that, while controlled studies appeared to provide evidence of yoga benefits for mental health and behavioral issues, methodological issues prevented strong conclusions.² Another review of the literature concluded that the development of self-regulation abilities is a key component of the effectiveness of yoga for youth. Yoga practice helps youth develop skills to regulate and calm their bodies and emotions.³ Two notable studies found statistically significant effects of yoga on participants' perceptions of well-being, positive self-regard, and emotional regulation skills compared to those in control groups. Improvements in such perceptions and skills may reduce the risks of developing symptoms of depression and anxiety. Both studies were pilots of school-based yoga programs being evaluated as prevention strategies.^{4,5}

Yoga for Treating Trauma

The practice of yoga for treating trauma issues is based on the premise that trauma affects the body, mind, and spirit and that all must be engaged in the healing process. Yoga is a technique for addressing trauma holistically and for developing a compassionate relationship with the body.⁶

The Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute in Massachusetts has adapted a form of yoga for traumatized youth in residential treatment and has facilitated groups in three programs since 2003. A central adaptation consists of instruction to participants that they do not have to do any postures that they do not want to do. The teachers believe that an important aspect of trauma recovery is the exercise of choice to reclaim ownership of one's experience.⁷

Street Yoga is a Portland, Oregon-based organization whose volunteer teachers lead yoga classes for youth who are homeless, at-risk, or in shelters. Street Yoga has additional sites in Seattle, New York, and San Diego. Instructors, who must go through a special training, are told that most of the individuals served have a history of trauma and

have trauma memories or effects stored in their bodies. The philosophy behind Street Yoga is that people need to be at home in their bodies in order to live well and that through a yoga practice, youth can create quiet, safe places to experience their bodies, minds, and feelings.⁸ Their approach emphasizes building strength and assertiveness with a sense of safety as the first priority. Safety is created by a slow and mindful practice of yoga that allows practitioners to become

aware of their physiological experiences and regain a sense of control over their bodies. Participants are urged to exercise choice and regard directions provided in class as suggestions that they may choose to decline. In one outcome study of a class for female youth who had survived sexual trauma, 85% of participants reported that yoga had led them to feel more energetic, happier, more focused, and less nervous and tense; 85% also agreed with statements that yoga helped them learn to feel safe in their bodies.⁹

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), consists of 69 sites in which researchers and clinicians work on trauma-specific Evidence Based Treatments (EBTs) and promising practices. The NCTSN has identified core components of complex trauma intervention that include restoring a sense of safety, enhancing self-regulation, and developing ability to direct one's attention.¹⁰ A focus group of NCTSN clinicians spoke to the need to engage in pretreatment work or stabilization of youth with trauma histories before administering EBTs. Most pretreatment strategies named by these clinicians involved building self-regulation skills through such practices as yoga.¹¹

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Training and Events



Licensing Reminder

Ten hours of ongoing training is needed ANNUALLY for any foster parent that is not in their initial period of licensure. This is not the calendar year but rather your licensing period. For example, if your license was issued July 15, 2012. You will need to have these 10 hours submitted by July 15, 2013. Eight of these hours need to be face-to-face training. Two of these hours can be worksheets or online training.

This month we are featuring three great articles and worksheets that will count for ongoing training. They are "[Impact of Trauma on Foster Children](#)" and "[Words of Wisdom Foster Parents Share](#)". Please contact your foster care coordinator if you are interested. She will then send you the article along with the worksheet. Other ongoing training opportunities are listed monthly in this newsletter.

Training Offered By Waukesha County

Parent Café

Parent Café's are an educational opportunity for parents to come together and deal with the stressors, worries and challenges of parenting in a supportive environment.

April 1, 2014, June 3, 2014, August 5, 2014, October 7, 2014, and December 2, 2014

5:30 to 8:00 PM

Center for Excellence, N4W22000 Bluemound Road, Waukesha
To register for childcare, RSVP or for questions call, 262-548-8080.

Waukesha County Foster Parent Orientation

Waukesha Department of Health and Human Services invites you to attend a foster parent orientation meeting. These meetings are open to anyone who is interested in learning about our foster care program. **If you are currently in the process of becoming a licensed foster parent, you are required to attend an orientation session prior to approval of your foster care license.**

We encourage you to complete the online foster parent pre-placement training prior to attending this information session. The training can be found online at <http://wcpds.wisc.edu/foster-parent-training/>. Please save the certificates after you have completed each module. These are required to become licensed.

When:

March 3, 2014, April 7, 2014, May 5, 2014, June 2, 2014, July 7, 2014, August 4, 2014, October 6, 2014, November 3, 2014, and December 1, 2014

All orientation sessions occur from 6:00- 8:00 PM

Where: Human Services Center, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI 53188

To register for an orientation session, contact your foster care coordinator.

Foundation Training - Level 2 Only

A new session of Foster Parent Foundation Training started in February in Waukesha County. If you need to complete this training, please sign up as soon as possible. To register for the training, please go to <https://pdsonline.csod.com/client/pdsonline/default.aspx>. If you have not signed up for training in PDS Online before, please go to <http://wcpds.wisc.edu/pdsonline/fosterparents.aspx> for instructions. If you have difficulty signing up, contact your foster care coordinator.

All of the Spring Session trainings will be held on Tuesdays from 5:30 pm-8:30 pm at the Health and Human Services Center (514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI 53188). Here are the dates of the trainings:

- ◆ March 4, 2014 Module 2, Cultural Dynamics in Placement
- ◆ March 11, 2014 Module 3, Maintaining Family Connectedness
- ◆ March 18, 2014 Module 4a, Child Abuse & Neglect Part 1
- ◆ March 25, 2014 Module 4b, Child Abuse & Neglect Part 2

- ◆ April 1, 2014 Module 5, Impact of Maltreatment on Child Development
- ◆ April 8, 2014 Module 6, Attachment
- ◆ April 15, 2014 Module 7, Separation & Placement
- ◆ April 22, 2014 Module 8, Guidance & Positive Discipline
- ◆ April 29, 2014 Module 9, Effects of Fostering the Family

Please note alternate sessions are available:

- Madison Series 1: Saturday, 3/8, 3/22, 4/5
- West Bend Series 1: Saturday 3/15, 3/29, 4/12, 5/26, 5/10

Relative Caregivers Support/Education Group

Third Tuesday of each month.

March 18, 2014

6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Parents Place, 1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI
262-549-5575

Free childcare available. Please call Parents Place to reserve your spot.

Waukesha County Relative Resource Families
Please RSVP to Janis (262-896-8069) or Libby (262-548-7277)

Shared Parenting

Saturday, March 22, 2014

9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Human Services Center, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI

This training is highly recommended for all foster parents.

This six hour training will explore the relationship development of birth families and foster families. Information will be shared about prioritizing and maintaining healthy boundaries and creating opportunities to support family connections. Participants will identify and develop strategies to address the resistance and fears that create barriers to this relationship. This will be a highly interactive training, with workers and foster parents using creative approaches to strengthen shared parenting practices among members of the child welfare team.

To register: Contact Madeline Prange at (262) 548-7267 or by email mprange@waukeshacounty.gov

Trauma Informed Parenting

Every Thursday beginning April 3, 2014 and ending on May 8, 2014

5:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Human Services Center, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI

To register: Contact Madeline Prange at (262) 548-7267 or by email mprange@waukeshacounty.gov

Annual Potluck Meeting

May 15, 2014

5:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Center for Excellence, N4W22000 Bluemound Road, Waukesha

Training

Parents Place Programs

262-549-5575 www.ppacinc.org

- **Parent/Teen Relations: Understanding Your Teen's Anger**
Tuesdays, March 11 & 18 from 5:30 - 7:00 PM
- **Kids Managing Anger**
Mondays, March 3 - 24 from 5:30 - 7:00 PM
- **The Nurturing Program**
Tuesdays, March 4 - 25 from 5:30 - 7:00 PM

American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org/take-a-class>

- **Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED**
March 13, 2014 from 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM
- **Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED Review**
March 20, 2014 from 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Yoga for Youth in Trauma Recovery Continued from Page 2

The Science of Yoga

Three recent studies have explored the neurochemistry of yoga practice. One assigned individuals to one of three experimental conditions: yoga, dance, or a control group of no intervention. The researchers then measured changes in salivary cortisol levels (high levels of the hormone cortisol are associated with stress and anxiety). Only in the yoga intervention were participants found to have significantly decreased cortisol levels.¹² In a study that compared individuals who participated in yoga for eight weeks to a control group, anatomical magnetic resonance (MR) images showed increases in brain gray matter in the hippocampus and cerebellum, brain regions involved in memory and emotional regulation. Depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder are among the mental health conditions that are associated with decreased density or volume of the hippocampus. While the cerebellum is best known for functions related to coordination and motor control, it plays a significant role in the regulation of emotion as well.¹³ Another study found that, compared to a control group, yoga participants experienced a statistically significant increase in brain GABA levels after each one hour session of yoga (lower GABA levels are associated with mood and anxiety disorders).¹⁴ These studies are providing objective documentation of what yoga practitioners have been reporting for centuries: yoga leads to beneficial changes. The science appears to be catching up to the wisdom in the yoga communities.

Advice in Pursuing a Yoga Practice

Yoga practice can be challenging, and full benefits require a disciplined practice. It took me years to develop a regular practice, which continues to take effort to maintain. When I have been away from my practice for too long, I actually find myself craving yoga. This craving speaks to a need that I should meet and is vastly different than past cravings that were destructive. I no longer identify with the difficulties in my past. Yoga has enabled me to respect myself and make better decisions. If you take on a yoga practice, you may find that you struggle at times in certain poses and with emotions that may be stored in your body. When this happens, I advise you to think of someone you highly respect. You might choose a family member, teacher, or community or spiritual leader. Ask yourself what you would say to such a person and then say it to yourself. You might say, "I think so well of you for all that you are, what you have done, and what you will do. You are an inspiration and a guide. You are a lovely person. Don't change, just continue. Breathe here. Breathe again. Namaste.*"

*Namaste is a Sanskrit term that translates as, "The light within me bows to the light within you."

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Author

Casadi Marino is a PhD student in the Portland State University School of Social Work and a Graduate Research Assistant with the Regional Research Institute.



Contact Numbers:

Waukesha County
Health & Human Services
262-548-7212

Eve Altizer, Supervisor
262-548-7272

Rebecca Hollister, Supervisor
262-548-7271

Kathy Mullooly, Supervisor
262-896-6832

Madeline Prange, Foster Care Coord.
262-548-7267

Libby Sinclair, Relative Licensing
262-548-7277

Social Workers:

Jennifer Adler..... 262-548-7265

Suzanne Arnold..... 262-548-7348

Samantha Comaris ... 262-548-7394

Megan Fishler 262-896-8570

Laura Jahnke..... 262-548-7359

Becca Kuester..... 262-896-6857

Stacy Kurkiewicz..... 262-548-7262

Jessica Larsen..... 262-548-7346

Maria Maurer 262-548-7345

Jessica McDonald 262-548-7639

Susan Peck..... 262-896-8574

Janis Ramos..... 262-896-8069

Michael Reed..... 262-548-7347

Greg Rewolinski 262-548-7270

Elizabeth Russo 262-548-7349

Kim Sampson..... 262-548-7273

Linda Senger 262-548-7698

Kinship Workers:

Linda Finn..... 262-548-7254

Deb Fosberg..... 262-548-7256

Children's Mental Health Outreach
262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911
Family Emergency: 211

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

If an Allegation of Abuse or
Neglect has been made against
you, please call:

FASPP
Norma Schoenberg
920-922-9627

January 2014 Placements

Level 2 Placement: 33 Children	Juvenile Corrections: 2 Children	Group Homes: 3 Children	Residential Care Facilities: 6 Children
Level 1 Placements: 32 Children	Level 2 Foster Homes: 92 Homes	Level 1 Foster Homes: 33 Homes	Total Children in OHC: 88 Children

