

EXPRESSIONS

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Managing Anger—Theirs and Yours

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Warm family relationships can help protect children from acting violently, abusing alcohol and other drugs, or engaging in other high-risk behaviors. But family members—even in the most loving families—get angry at one another from time to time. When families communicate well and work cooperatively, anger can be resolved without a problem. Handled poorly, however, anger gets in the way of good communication between parent and child. Anger without control can sometimes be dangerous and may even become violent.

Many adults are not good at managing anger, and expressing this emotion in a healthy way. Some adults see anger as an emotion that should be suppressed, because it leads to trouble. Some grew up in families in which anger generally led to explosive behavior and even violence. Others were taught that it is not “nice” to be angry. It’s important that parents know how to manage anger successfully in family life, at work, and in the community. That same knowledge needs to be shared with children, so that they learn this important skill.

With the many changes that occur during adolescence, it’s not unusual for teenagers to feel anger and resentment toward parents. Sometimes anger is their way of asserting independence. This can wear thin on parents, who may fight back with their own anger, creating a vicious circle of escalating resentment.

The best solution to out-of-control anger—whether from a parent or from a teen—is to step back, and identify more positive, healthy ways to deal with strong feelings. We do this when we can calm down and respond in a disciplined and thoughtful way. By maintaining composure, parents can be good role models and open the door to constructive communication with their children.

But how do you keep calm when you feel pushed to the limit? Here are some suggestions:

Pick your battles. Sometimes the issue is not worth the anger, or worth arguing about.

Go for a walk.

Take a deep breath; count to ten. Think about the issue before a single word comes out of your mouth.

Use “self-talk” to calm down. That is, say something soothing to yourself such as: “I need to relax and stay calm. I can’t afford to blow up.”

Reframe the issue. For example, when your son says something rude to you, it may be less a matter of him disrespecting you than a sign that he has a problem with his anger. “Framing” it this way, you focus on the fact that he needs your help in overcoming this problem.

Use humor. Humor can sometimes be a good way to calm anger, but be sure not to use sarcasm, which can be hurtful.

When anger becomes a chronic problem for someone in the family, the underlying issue may be larger than you or your teen can manage. If you even think your family is at this point, or if you even think you or any member of your family has a serious problem with anger management, it’s time to seek help from a mental health professional.

www.samhsa.gov

A Recovering Substance Abuse Group to Begin in Naperville

Jeff Lucas, LCPC, CADC, CGP will be starting a therapy group for recovering substance abusers at Isenberg & Associates at the beginning of November 2009. The group will meet on Thursday evenings from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The group will be limited to 5 to 8 members. Jeff has worked in the substance abuse/chemical dependence field for more than 20 years. As a nationally Certified Group Psychotherapist, Jeff has years of specialized training and experience in conducting group therapy. Research shows that group therapy is an especially good treatment modality for helping individuals overcome the isolation, shame, and other psychological aspects associated with substance abuse/addictions, thereby promoting a successful recovery. For more information or to make a referral, you may contact Jeff at Isenberg & Associates at 630-355-8410.



Jeff will be continuing his work in substance abuse by participating in Operation Snowball this fall to help in community efforts statewide to prevent substance abuse in teens.

Healthy Marriage Tip: *Did you know that what happens in the first 4 minutes you are together after being apart during the day sets the tone for the rest of the evening? Prepare yourself with an attitude adjustment and delay complaints until later before meeting your partner after a long day at work.*

Happenings: New Offices and Websites

*At the end of 2008, Isenberg & Associates joined Dunham Counseling Center as our second location. Dunham Counseling Center and Isenberg & Associates now serve both St. Charles and Naperville and their surrounding communities. Together, we have 8 experienced therapists. This summer, we also launched a new website for Isenberg & Associates that is filled with information about our staff, types of therapy and helpful articles on common issues for which people seek counseling. **Please visit our new site for our Naperville location at www.Isenbergs.com. For further information about our St. Charles location, you can visit www.dunhamcounseling.com.***

At Dunham Counseling Center and Isenberg & Associates, our goal is to help people handle the immediate concern while learning to understand the underlying issues that may be adding to life's complexities. We specialize in helping teens, young adults, individuals, couples and families work through difficult times and gain more insight to handle stressful life circumstances.

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