

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

Rank from 1 to 12 with 1 being most important and 12 the least.

- A. We speak often about anxiety and assume that we all have it.
- B. We note the changes that life brings: remembering major events in the lives of others: birthdays, retirements, surgeries, recoveries, anniversaries, graduations.
- C. When we gather, we make room to remember those who need care and prayer.
- D. We resist criticizing others—but set firm, clear and loving boundaries.
- E. We resist idealizing or blaming, but rather look to engage.
- F. We remember that there are usually at least three solutions to every problem.
- G. We remember the rule that every time we critique, we say five positive things about each other.
- H. We believe that good will and the truth can be linked.
- I. When there is a problem, we start by seeking information.
- J. We laugh together.
- K. We believe that we are weird, unique or unusual.
- L. We tell our children and grandchildren that we are proud of them.

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Building a Healthy Family System

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Assumptions

- As long as we have our wits, we are never done parenting.

Assumptions

- Anxiety is the single most challenging emotion for every family.

Assumptions

- As the leaders go, so goes the family.

Assumptions

- Our brains do not fully mature until our mid twenties. After that, the brain can establish new neural pathways.

Assumptions

- Our children and grandchildren remember what we say and how we behave.

Assumptions

- Firm, clear and loving boundaries are essential to healthy families.

Assumptions

- Families, such as they are, are one of God's ways of passing a blessing from one generation to the next.

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

- We speak often about anxiety, assume that we all have it and are coping with it.
- That is why Jesus' words, "Have no anxiety for tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself" are so important.

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

- We address the changes that life brings: remembering major events in the lives of others: birthdays, retirements, surgeries, recoveries, anniversaries, graduations. We know that these events are not just to be celebrated, but almost always bring anxiety.
- These events are opportunities to connect.

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

- When we gather, formally, we always start with remembering those among us who need care and prayer.
- This is a reminder that the world is not only about us.

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

- We resist criticizing others—but do establish firm, clear and loving boundaries.

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

- We resist idealizing or blaming, but rather look to engage.

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

- When solving problems we remember that there are usually at least three solutions to every problem.

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

- We remember the rule that every time we critique, we say five positive things about each other.

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

- We believe that good will and the truth can be linked.

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

- When there is a problem, we start by seeking information.

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

- We laugh together.

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

- We believe that it is likely that all of us are weird, unique or unusual.

Life Together in Our Healthy Families

- We need to find ways to tell our children that we are proud of them.

Challenges

Disconnectedness (From The Atlantic, September 2017: Jean Twenge, Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?)

- Three out of four American teens own a smart phone making them the most connected generation of adolescents in history.
- Rates of teen suicide and depression have skyrocketed since 2011.

Challenges

Disconnectedness

- 12th graders in 2015 went out less often than 8th graders in 2009.
- They are less likely to drink, get into auto accidents than teens of earlier generations.

Challenges

Disconnectedness

- In 2015, 56% of high-school seniors went out on dates.
- Boomer and Gen Xers dated at a rate of 85% as seniors.

Challenges

Disconnectedness

- The average teen now has had sex for the first time by spring of grade 11.
- High school freshmen have reduced sexual activity by 40 percent since 1991.
- The teen birth rate, as of 2016, is down 67% from 1991.

Challenges

Disconnectedness

- One quarter of today's high school students graduate without a driver's license.
- 55% of teens work for pay as compared to 77% in the 1970s.

Challenges

Disconnectedness

"The number of teens who get together with their friends nearly every day has dropped by more than 40% between 2000 and 2015."

Atlantic Magazine, September 2017

Challenges

Disconnectedness

"Teens who spend more time than average on screen activities are more likely to be unhappy, and those who spend more time than average on non-screen activities are more likely to be happy." (Average screen time: 2 ½ hours daily.)

Mentoring the Future Study, National Institute on Drug Abuse, reported in Atlantic Magazine, September 2017

Challenges

Disconnectedness

- They keep up with their friends frequently, but chiefly through texting and Snapchat.
- Eighth graders who spend more than 10 hours on devices a week report higher levels of unhappiness.

Challenges

Disconnectedness

- Teens who monitor the activities of other teens on Snapchat and Instagram, but who have not been included, are more likely to report depression and loneliness. *Especially girls whose depressive symptoms increased by 50% from 2010 to 2015. (Boys by 21%)*

Challenges

Anxiety: (Peter Steinke)

- Decreases our capacity to learn
- Replaces curiosity with a demand for certainty
- Stiffens our position over against another's

Challenges

Anxiety:

- Interrupts concentration
- Floods the nervous system so that we cannot hear what is said without distortion or cannot respond with clarity

Challenges

Anxiety:

- Simplifies ways of thinking (yes/no; either/or)
- Prompts a desire for a quick fix
- Arouses feelings of helplessness or self-doubt

Challenges

Anxiety:

- Leads to an array of defensive behaviors
- Diminishes flexibility in response to life's challenges
- Creates imaginative gridlock (not being able to think of alternative, options, or new perspectives)

Challenges

Depression (NIMH)

- Often feels very angry or very worried
- Can't sleep or eat
- Is unable to enjoy pleasurable activities

Challenges

Depression (NIMH)

- Isolates her/himself and avoids social interactions
- Feels grief for a long time after a loss or death
- Uses alcohol or drugs

Challenges

Depression (NIMH)

- Exercises, diets and/or binge-eats obsessively
- Hurts other people or destroys property
- Has low or no energy

Challenges

Depression (NIMH)

- Harms her/himself, such as cutting or burning her/his skin
- Thinks his or her mind is controlled or out of control
- Hears voices

Challenges

Depression (NIMH)

- Smokes
- Feels like he or she can't control own emotions
- Has thoughts of suicide

Learning's for Young People

- Today's child does not live in the same world we grew up in.
- While they may be smart and technologically ahead of us, children need help with the following:

Learning's for Young People

- Understanding the nuances of relationships.
- Learning that there are real world consequences for the expression of their thoughts, beliefs and struggles.
- Engaging in face-to-face time with others instead of FaceTime, Instagram or Snapchat.
- Addressing emotional stress and strain effectively: anxiety and depression.

Learning's for Young People

- Learning that talking things through with others will help their critical thinking.
- They are an important cog in the Universe, but not the center.

Learning's for Leaders

Parents, Grandparents and leaders of the faith community would do well to exercise:

- Self-care of our emotional, physical, social, political and religious life.
- The establishment of self-imposed limits that model self-control.
- An open mindedness along with a curiosity about life and relationships.

Learning's for Leaders

- An ability to engage in critical thinking without sacrificing love and support.
- The practice of setting firm, clear and loving boundaries for our youth in areas of social media, relationships and life balance.
- The encouragement of independence and taking the risks involved in getting a job, driving and dating.

Learning's for Leaders

- Leadership in pacing the lives of our kids in such a way that people are remembered and that religious and family events are honored.
- A discipline of fearless moral inventory that enables us to own our own weirdness and uniqueness.
- The presence of God in our lives that reminds us that we are not our own and that our kids are gifts of God.

Building a Healthy Family System

- **Thanks!!!!**
-That's All Folks!!