



LIFELINES

Restoring Hope and Rebuilding Lives

The LifeLine Counseling Center Newsletter March 2008



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About Us



LifeLine Counseling Center is a faith-based nonprofit whose mission is to provide educational and counseling services with a focus on emotional and spiritual well-being. All LifeLine counselors are licensed professionals with advanced degrees and a minimum of ten years clinical experience. The homey offices at the Moses Gamble House offer a safe, comfortable place to explore feelings, examine life experiences and develop strategies for positive change.

Our counselors work with individuals, couples, children and families addressing a variety of issues.

The Perfect Parent

Dr. Joy Carroll, Psychologist



Parenting is not a perfect science. It's more of an ever-evolving, never-ending art form. While awaiting the arrival of my first child, I ravenously read every parenting book I could find, convinced that in doing so I could avoid the pitfalls of the terribly misguided parents around me. I realize now that this was akin to believing you could learn to drive a car by taking a correspondence course. Being well-read is important, but some things you can only learn by getting behind the wheel.

Parenting is a humbling experience full of paradoxical challenges—allowing children the freedom to find themselves without abandoning the path to responsible adulthood; not being afraid to love children equally, but differently; fiercely loving them when they don't like us or more importantly, in those moments we don't like them.

These challenges are made more difficult by two things. First, every child is different and what works with one is not always transferable to another. Secondly, children are in a constant state of developmental change, forcing us

to parent a moving target.

And no matter how hard we try, we make mistakes. In our quest to be good parents, we try not to detonate personal land mines from our own childhood experiences. But sometimes, even with the best of intentions, we do it anyway—even planting a few new ones along the way.

But we can work to repair the damage, make amends and teach our children the life skills necessary to deal with these and other hurts that come their way. It is healing and healthy for us to share with them what we would do differently if given the chance. The truth is that children grow stronger though the acknowledgement of our missteps. This helps them embrace their own mistakes and develop corrective strategies so they will ultimately become better parents than we are.

And at some point in the journey, we will no longer be the center of our children's universe. This is how it should be. Our most important work is to prepare our children for the real world—our job is done only when they no longer need us to show them the way.

The Love of a Step-Parent

Carla Winchester
Licensed Clinical Social Worker



In working professionally with blended families and being a stepmother myself, I have come to realize that love is the key to successful family life. It is important to think of children's needs first in blended family situations. Instead of worrying about the biological parents' past relationship, the step-parent should work to separate his or her feelings from those of the child.

There is no such thing as "too much" love. Children in blended families should be encouraged to have a healthy relationship with each parent or step-parent involved. Each can have different supportive roles. Both step-parents and biological parents can draw from their personal strengths and work for the good of the child. Everyone can be

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Getting Kids Ready For the Real World

Presented by LifeLine Counseling Center

Dr. Joy Carroll, Psychologist

Brenda Duarte, Licensed Professional Counselor

This 4 week series is a valuable resource for parents wanting to help children make good choices, improve self-esteem, understand appropriate boundaries and learn respectful and responsible behavior.

Topics include:

- The top ten parenting myths
- Parenting methods that teach children to make wise choices
- Effective encouragement for difficult children
- Managing meltdown or rage
- Dealing with disrespectful and dishonest behavior
- Strategies for addressing defiant and oppositional behavior

Class size is limited. To register, call (865) 981-7400 or email joycarroll@lifeline-counseling.org

Where: Alcoa First United Methodist Church, 617 Gilbert St. Alcoa, TN 37701

When: March 30, April 6, 13, 20 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$5 includes book and handouts

Open to the community Childcare Available

LifeLine Counselors Write Column For Maryville Daily Times



Dr. Joy Carroll



Brenda Duarte

Dr. Joy Carroll and Brenda Duarte, write a monthly column,

From the Heart, for the Women's Times section of the Maryville Daily Times. The column addresses mental health and relationship issues. Recent column topics were gender differences in communication, single parenting yesterday and today, and dealing with unhealthy family dynamics during the holidays.



Quick Tips for Parents Helping Children Through Divorce

Brenda-Lee Duarte, Licensed Professional Counselor

- * *Maintain a familiar routine and spend time regularly with your children.*
- * *Keep the commitments and promises you make.*
- * *Avoid using children for emotional support or as a sounding board for adult topics.*
- * *Limit your children's exposure to arguments and conflict between you and your ex-partner, particularly name-calling or abusive behavior.*
- * *Avoid pressuring your children to take sides.*
- * *Don't ask children to be "messengers" between you and your ex-partner; communicate directly with him or her about visitation, support and other issues.*
- * *Let children appropriately express their feelings and acknowledge these feelings in a non-judgmental way even if you disagree.*

The Love of a Step-Parent

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viewed as someone special.

It is important for biological parents to understand that nurturing love from a step-parent is always beneficial for the child. No matter what the reasons for the biological parents' separation, children in the blended family need the opportunity to develop a loving relationship with the step-parent.

Children long for their parents to be able to be together for special occasions and to be able to get along. If a parent finds it difficult to heal from the wounds of divorce without being angry with another parent, counseling may be helpful. Family therapy can offer an opportunity for all to express feelings about how a "new" family is going to work.

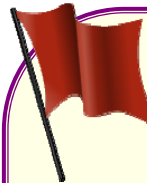
When parents are able to work through their own issues and believe that children can never receive too much love, then the needs of the children will be considered before personal needs. And when children know that all the parents accept each other as a vital part of their lives, they can prosper in a blended family.



Timeout Guidelines For Young Children

- ◆ *No matter how out of control the child is, act calm, cool and collected.*
- ◆ *If timeout is an appropriate response to the behavior, use timeout each and every time the behavior occurs.*
- ◆ *Set a kitchen timer for the designated time the child is to be in timeout. Only allow the child to exit timeout when the bell sounds.*
- ◆ *If the child leaves timeout before the timer sounds, talks, screams, or is inappropriate, return him to timeout and reset the timer.*
- ◆ *If the child refuses to go to timeout, physically place him in timeout. If using a timeout chair, stand or sit beside the child to make sure he remains in the chair.*
- ◆ *After timeout is over, ask the child to tell you why he was in timeout. If the child refuses to tell or says he forgot, remind him why the timeout occurred and give small additional timeouts until the child is able to verbalize (if age appropriate) the reason.*

The most important thing that parents can teach their children is how to get along without them.—Frank A. Clark



Sex Abuse Flags Every Parent Should Know

Tracie Walker, Licensed Clinical Social Worker

One in every five children is sexually abused before the age of 18 years.* Sexual abuse can happen to children from all walks of life, regardless of race, gender, financial status or age. Most often, the abuser is someone both the family and child knows, loves and trusts.

The symptoms listed below are closely associated with sexual abuse. Some symptoms can be indicative of other issues as well.

Symptoms of Concern

- Attempting to expose another's private areas
- Detailed sexual conversations with friends
- Sexual knowledge beyond what is expected for the child's age
- Having fully clothed dolls simulate foreplay (kissing, petting, etc.)
- Foreplay with other children with clothing on
- Preoccupation with masturbation

Symptoms of Greater Concern

- Detailed sexual conversations with other children who are significantly older or younger
- Touching the private areas of others, adults or children
- Forcing someone to expose his or her private areas
- Having dolls act out intercourse
- Playing with peers with clothing on as if acting out intercourse
- Compulsive masturbation (i.e. unable to stop, interrupting what they are doing to masturbate, masturbating in public)

Symptoms of Greatest Concern

- Inserting an object into the private areas of dolls, animals or other children
- Forcing a child to touch their private areas or requesting/insisting that an adult do the same
- Playing with peers with clothing off as if having intercourse
- Any injury to private areas not explained by accidental causes

*U.S. Dept. of Justice statistics. If you suspect that your child or any child is being sexually abused, state law mandates that you make a report. The 24 hour Tennessee State reporting number is 1-877-237-0004