

Attachment Based Interventions

Bruce O'Leary

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Protecting Adolescents From Harm.

Findings From the National Longitudinal Study
on Adolescent Health

Context

- The main threats to adolescents' health are the risk behaviors they choose.
- How their social context shapes their behaviors is poorly understood.

Objective.

To identify risk and protective factors at the family, school, and individual levels as they relate to 4 domains of adolescent health and morbidity:

- emotional health
- violence
- substance use
- sexuality.

Participants

A total of 12118 adolescents in grades 7 through 12 drawn from an initial national school survey of 90118 adolescents from 80 high schools plus their feeder middle schools.

Main Outcome Measures

Areas that were assessed:

- emotional distress
- suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- violence
- use of substances (cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana)
- types of sexual behaviors (age of sexual debut and pregnancy history).
- Independent variables included measures of family context, school context, and individual characteristics

Results

Parent-family connectedness and perceived school connectedness were protective against every health risk behavior measure except history of pregnancy.

REVISED AND UPDATED

"This is not simply a parenting book; it's a tragedy prevention resource.
Every adoptive parent should read it."

—FROM THE FOREWORD BY FOSTER CLINE, MD

PARENTING *the* HURT CHILD

HELPING ADOPTIVE FAMILIES HEAL AND GROW

GREGORY C. KECK, PhD | REGINA M. KUPECKY, LSW



Touch is Key

- Many Children were not held during infancy so they lack the touch that they needed
- Massage
- Applying lotion
- Smells are very important also

Eye Contact

- Eye contact is also critical and can be strengthened by verbal cues, touching the face, and refusing to respond without it.
- Younger children can be helped to increase their eye contact when parents get down to their level or bring them up to theirs.

Motion

- Motion is equally important. Crabby babies love to be held , walked , rocked , or driven around in the car. Rock your child (no matter how old), twirl him around the room, wrestle, dance, ask him to move with you following your lead, hold hands and walk in circles.
Simply move

- Babies get warm when they are fed, changed, and held— proving that warmth is a way to demonstrate love. Talk to your child when he is warm and cozy in bed, after a meal, or after a bath. At these times, he will be more

Rhythm

- When we talk to babies and toddlers, we tend to change our tone and speak in a different rhythm. We also use lots of rhymes, which children love. Think about it—how many nursery rhymes has your child missed in his lifetime? Make up for it by repeating rhymes and rhyming songs with him. Not only is this key to language development, it's also an activity that your child may enjoy at any



3-Minute Breathing Space

1. Notice your thoughts (non-judgmentally)
2. Notice your breath
3. Notice your physical presence

Mindful Parenting

- When we have a depth of self-understanding and a stable, caring connection with ourselves, we are more likely to be responsive and caring to the needs of our children in a way that more effectively supports the development of a secure attachment bond.
- Paying mindful attention to yourself and your own reactions can help you understand “how” you are doing and being in this present moment.

Mindfulness??

- Paying attention in a particular way;
 - On Purpose
 - In the present moment
 - Non-judgmentally

- **Jon Kabat-Zinn**, Ph.D. is internationally known for his work as a scientist, writer, and meditation teacher engaged in bringing mindfulness into the mainstream of medicine and society.
- He is Professor of Medicine emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, where he founded its world-renowned Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Clinic (in 1979)
- and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society (in 1995).
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Everyday Blessings: The Inner Work of Mindful Parenting.

1997 by Myla Kabat-Zinn and Jon Kabat-Zinn

Twelve exercises in Mindful parenting

Try to imagine the world from your child's point of view, purposefully letting go of your own. Do this every day for at least a few moments to remind you of who this child is and what he or she faces in the world.

Imagine how you appear and sound from your child's point of view, i.e., having you as a parent today, in this moment. How might this modify how you carry yourself in your body and in space, how you speak, and what you say? How do you want to relate to your child in this moment?

Practice seeing your children as perfect just the way they are. See if you can stay mindful of their sovereignty from moment to moment, and work at accepting them as they are when it is hardest for you to do so.

Be mindful of your expectations of your children and consider whether they are truly in your child's best interest. Also, be aware of how you communicate those expectations and how they affect your children

Practice altruism, putting the needs of your children above your own whenever possible. Then see if there isn't some common ground, where your true needs can also be met. You may be surprised at how much overlap is possible, especially if you are patient and strive for balance.

When you feel lost, or at a loss, remember to stand still and meditate on the whole by bringing your full attention to the situation, to your child, to yourself, to the family. In doing so, you may go beyond thinking, even good thinking, and perceive intuitively, with the whole of your being, what needs to be done. If that is not clear in any moment, maybe the best thing is to not do anything until it becomes clearer. Sometimes it is good to remain silent.

Try embodying silent presence. This will grow out of both formal and informal mindfulness practice over time if you attend to how you carry yourself and what you project in body, mind, and speech. Listen carefully.

Learn to live with tension without losing your own **balance**.

In *Zen and the Art of Archery*, Herrigel describes how he was taught to stand at the point of highest tension effortlessly without shooting the arrow. At the right moment, the arrow mysteriously shoots itself.

Practice moving into any moment, however difficult, without trying to change anything and without having to have a particular outcome occur. Simply bring your full awareness and presence to this moment. Practice seeing that whatever comes up is "workable" if you are willing to trust your intuition. Your child needs you to be a center of balance and trustworthiness, a reliable landmark by which he or she can take a bearing within his or her own landscape.

Arrow and target need each other. They will find each other best through wise attention and patience.

Apologize to your child when you have betrayed a trust in even a little way. Apologies are healing. An apology demonstrates that you have thought about a situation and have come to see it more clearly, or perhaps more from your child's point of view. But be mindful of being "sorry" too often. It loses its meaning if you are always saying it, making regret into a habit. Then it can become a way not to take responsibility for your actions.

Cooking in remorse on occasion is a good meditation. Don't shut off the stove until the meal is ready.

Every child is special, and every child has special needs. Each sees in an entirely unique way. Hold an image of each child in your heart. Drink in their being, wishing them well.

There are important times when we need to be clear and strong and unequivocal with children. Let this come as much as possible out of awareness, generosity, and discernment, rather than out of fear, self-righteousness, or the desire to control. Mindful parenting does not mean being overindulgent, neglectful, or weak; nor does it mean being rigid, domineering, and controlling.

The greatest gift you can give your child is your self. This means that part of your work as a parent is to keep growing in self-knowledge and awareness. This ongoing work can be furthered by making a time for quiet contemplation in whatever ways feel comfortable to us. We only have right now. Let us use it to its best advantage, for our children's sake, and for our own.

3-Minute Breathing Space revisited

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2. Notice your breath
3. Notice your physical presence