



CARING AND KINSHIP CONNECTION

AUGUST 2010

Our Next Meeting:

**Saturday, August 14, 10:00 – noon
831 East Washington Avenue, Madison
Our guest will speak on Attachment Disorder**



Guidelines for *Relative Raising Their Relatives Children Meetings*

Many months ago – maybe years – Rose gave us a series of guidelines that we read before each meeting. Last month several of our members requested that I print them in our next newsletter. The following are the nine guidelines that we use to start off every meeting:

Confidentiality is **MUST** for all group members to feel safe. Each person will have a time to talk, but please do not talk when someone else is speaking.

- We aim for better coping skills.
- We find strength in sharing experiences.
- We won't judge anyone's pain as less than our own.
- We forgive ourselves and reject guilt.
- We embrace humor as healthy.
- We accept that we cannot resolve all problems.
- We will never give up hope.

We share many private moments and thoughts with each other during our monthly meetings and even when we speak to each other over the phone or in email messages. It's vitally important that we respect each other's confidential moments. And it's even more important to think twice before we pass on information that was not meant to be relayed to that "third party".



Speaking of Rose. . .

I received the following email from Rose before the last meeting, and I read it to our members. I'd like also to share her loving words with the readers of our newsletter who were not able to attend the group session in July. Rose wrote:

"I want to thank you and the group for such a great experience over the past seven years. You grandparents are so dedicated to your grandchildren! I never have heard any of you complain about the big job you have taken on for the safety of your grandchildren.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to work with all you and letting me hear your frustrations and dedication that you all have had. I also appreciate the manner that you all support each other and the sharing you have done that has helped other grandparents.

Right now I am needing to get healthy and work through the death of my son.

Keep up the great work you all are doing.

Thank you, and Ethel - keep up your great endeavor."

Rose

What a beautiful note. We all certainly hope that you recover soon and return to us – in whatever capacity you wish. Good luck, Rose.



Poison Ivy, Oak & Sumac

This is the time of the year when we have to watch ourselves and our kids closely to prevent that miserable rash and pain that comes from poison ivy, oak and sumac. I did some research and the following is what I discovered:

What is it? Poison ivy, oak and sumac belong to a family of plants that produce one of the most common allergic reactions in the United States. Experts estimate that up to 70% of the population is allergic to urushiol (you-roo-shee-ol), the oil found in the sap of these plants. The reaction occurs when urushiol attaches itself to the skin after a person's direct or indirect exposure to the oil. Symptoms like rashes, oozing blisters, itching and swelling are the body's way of telling you that you have having an allergic reaction.

What do the plants look like?

- Poison Ivy is the most common and is characterized by three or five serrated-edge pointed leaflets. These leaves assume bright colors in the fall, turning yellow to red.
- Poison Oak has three oak-like leaves and produces whitish flowers from August to November that dry but may remain on the plant for many months. Poison Oak grows in peat bogs and swamps as a shrub or a small tree.
- Poison Sumac has 7-13 staggered leaflets with one on the tip of the plant.

What are some treatment options? Over the counter remedies like calamine lotion or hydrocortisone may alleviate the itch. Your physician also may prescribe steroids for more severe cases to reduce inflammation and stop itching. However side effects of excessive use may include thinning of the skin, acne and discoloration. Oral steroids may carry health risks, especially for young children. Medical experts caution against the use of topical creams containing anesthetics (benzocaine) because these agents are known sensitizers that can actually worsen the rash through the body's allergic response to these drugs

What to do if you've been exposed to any of the three?

- Cleanse Immediately: Clean the area with warm soap and water, paying special attention to the palms of your hands.
- Decontaminate: Remove and wash all clothing, shoes and shoelaces that may have come in contact with the oil.
- Relieve: If the signs or symptoms appear, use Zanrfel, the only product clinically shown to remove the oil from the skin after breakout and relieve itching.
- Don't scratch! Scratching may cause infection because it allows bacteria from dirt on the hands to enter the skin. Excessive scratching may also cause scarring.
- See your family physician. Be sure to make an appointment as soon as possible.

A few Myths and Facts:

- Poison Ivy, poison oak and sumac rash is not contagious.
- The only way to contact the poison is by direct contact.
- Scratching the poison blisters will not spread the rash.
- Dead poison ivy, oak and sumac plants are still contagious even after they die.
- You may become less allergic to the poison as the years go by.

A simple guideline: Pay attention to the plants you pass when walking in the woods or near swampland.



Let's Make Our Own Spirit Kit and Share Its Ingredients

Have you ever heard of a Spirit Kit? We'll give you the ingredients to fill it. It's up to you to make and share it with your friends and relatives.

Spirit Kit Items:

- A soft fuzzy cotton ball to rub when you need to remember the gentleness of the human heart.
- A rubber band to remind you that you are flexible and can stretch to fit just about any demand or challenge.
- A band-aid to remind you that, even though there may be times when you feel hurt for what you are trying to do, you will heal and be even stronger.
- Two tissues, one for you and one for a colleague when you have faced a tough time together and need some mutual support.

- A safety pin to remind you that you are bright and sharp and utterly indispensable.
- Five pennies to remind you of the song by Danny Kaye (remember him?) called “Five Little Pennies.” If you know the song, you will remember that one penny was to dream on, one was to wish on, one was for dancing, one was to love on. The song ends with these words, “There are just five little pennies, but with these five pennies you’ll be a millionaire.” How very true!
- A balloon to celebrate your accomplishments.
- And last but not least, Hershey’s Hugs and Kisses – for when you need them.

Go to it, guys!



How to Advocate for Children

So, what are we? We’re grandparents, aunts, uncles, foster parents, siblings, and on and on. But during all your busy life, did you ever consider yourself an advocate for those children that you so dearly love? I was at the Rainbow Project office the other day and picked up a sheet titled, “*51 Ways to Advocate for Children.*” While we do just that every day, I’ll bet you never thought of yourself as having the title “Advocate for Children”. The following are only a smattering of the items that were listed to help prevent child abuse. If you want to see the entire list you can pick up a green sheet at the front desk.

- Read the newspaper
- Listen to Public Radio
- Look at websites that provide information on children’s issues.
- Find out what the other side really thinks.
- Vote
- Wear a button or a blue ribbon.
- Learn about the legislative process – testify when necessary.
- Include a message about caring for children in your holiday cards.
- Encourage bookstores and libraries to carry materials on children’s issues.
- Get to know your elected officials.
- Find a service project you and your family can do together.
- Compile success stories and tell your legislators about them.
- Attend a public meeting.
- Provide people in positions of power with fact sheets.
- Learn the signs of abuse and work to prevent it

How to Help Prevent Child Abuse in a Public Place

- Start a conversation with the adult to direct attention away from the child.
- Divert the child’s attention (if the child is misbehaving) by talking to the child.
- Look for an opportunity to praise the parent or child.
- If the child is in danger, offer assistance.
- Avoid negative remarks or looks.



Vitamins from A-K

I recently saw an article in the Wisconsin State Journal that I thought might interest the readers of our newsletter. It was written by Dr. Peter Gott, a daily contributor on things medical to our paper and, I suspect, several others. Dr. Gott explains in very simple terms what vitamins are all about. My family was always “big” on vitamins in pill form or liquid. For example, my parents insisted that we take cod liver oil as children. Every morning we were forced to line up while my mother stood ready with her tablespoon and glasses of orange juice. It was like being punished for something you didn’t know you did, but were told it was “good for you.” We marched toward the “poison”, held our respective breaths while mom put the spoon full of it in, and swallowed - lunging for the orange juice to take away the awful taste. In the dentist’s chair recently I was recounting the horrible experience to my dental technician who asked what the cod liver oil did for us, and I’ll be darned if I could tell her. All I remember was the bad, I’m not sure I ever knew the good. Now here’s Dr. Gott to help us all out. (Unfortunately, he doesn’t mention cod liver oil so I’ll have to Google it at another time.)

“There are 13 vitamins that your body needs, all essential for maintaining good health. These are broken down into two categories, water soluble and fat soluble. The water soluble vitamins include the B complex, which is comprised of eight vitamins, B1,2,3,5,6,12, biotin folic acid and C. The fat soluble vitamins are A,D,E and K.

B1 (thiamin) works with the nervous system and helps the body use carbohydrates for energy. B2 (riboflavin) helps the body process protein, carbohydrates and fats. It works to support good vision, healthy skin and the production of red blood cells. B3 (niacin) assists the body in processing proteins and fats. It also helps the skin, digestive tract and nervous system to remain healthy. B5 (pantothenic acid) helps the body process nutrients and synthesizes hormones and cholesterol. B6 (pyridoxine) helps in the formation of red blood cells and maintains brain function. B12 (cyanocobalamin) maintains red blood cells, is important for metabolism and the maintenance of the central nervous system, and helps make DNA. Biotin helps metabolize fats and carbohydrates. Folic acid prevents birth defects, makes DNA and red blood cells. C (ascorbic acid) is an antioxidant necessary for the growth and repair of tissues. A (retinal) is necessary for good vision, bone and tooth development. D (calciferol) helps teeth and bones stay healthy. E (tocopherol) acts as an antioxidant that helps the body utilize vitamin K and works to form red blood cells. K helps with the formation of bone and aids blood clotting.”

You can get the entire article on your computer by typing [AskDr.Gott\(MD\).com](http://AskDr.Gott(MD).com) or by writing to him c/o United Media, 200 Madison Avenue, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10016.

I may go the rest of my life never knowing what good I got from that poison, cod liver oil. If any of you have an answer please get in touch.

Mark the Dates

- August 14 Guest: Speaker on Attachment Disorder
- September 10 Rainbow Project Fund Raiser & Salsa Contest,
Grandparent Member of our group to receive
an award. Marriott-Madison West - Information
to come
- September 11 Guest Speaker - DeAnna Witt, Permanency Consultant,
Department of Children & Families - Topic: State
Sponsored Adoption
- October 9 Guest Speaker - Attorney Carol Gapen
Lunch served by Downtown Rotary Club for relatives
and children (remember the wonderful lunch last year!)
- November 13 Guest Speaker - Dr. F. Stein speaking on how to reduce
Stress (he gave us an amazing session last year)
- December 11 Holiday Party for Children and Adults

Sounds like a great five months, doesn't it?



And Now For Another "Elgin and Carol Treasure": *Angels - Explained by Children:*

Gregory, age 5 - I only know the names of two angels, Hark and Harold.

Olive, age 9 - Everybody's got it all wrong. Angels don't wear halos anymore. I forget why, but scientists are working on it.

Henry, age 8 - My guardian angel helps me with math, but he's not much good for science.

Jack, age 6 - Angels don't eat, but they drink milk from Holy Cows!!

Daniel, age 9 - Angels talk all the way while they're flying you up to heaven. The main subject is where you went wrong before you got dead.

Reagan, age 10 - When an angel gets mad, he takes a deep breath and counts to ten. . .and when he lets out his breath again, somewhere there's a tornado.

Jared, age 8 - Angels live in cloud houses made by God and his son, who's a very good carpenter.

More on angels in next month's newsletter. Stay tuned.

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE AUGUST MEETING:

**August 14, 2010
The Rainbow Project
831 East Washington Avenue, Madison
10:00 – noon**

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT:

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Ethel Dunn, Editor