

Thrive update



Enhance Inspire
Inform healthy kids make smarter students

Volume 3 | Issue 4

JANUARY 2011

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>> 10 New Year's Resolutions for Healthier Families

The main reason we often don't realize our New Year's resolutions is that they are too ambitious. Here's a list of easy, manageable resolutions that you will not only be able to successfully implement, but that will also have positive impacts on your family.

1. **Try not to sweat the small stuff.** Too often we spend endless hours arguing with our children about minor issues, when we should really be focused on more important things.
2. **Be a better listener.** Parents spend a lot of time talking (i.e. lecturing) to their children and not enough time really listening to their children's thoughts and feelings.
3. **Verbalize feelings of pride.** As parents we often feel proud of our children, but we rarely think to actually tell them how we feel and underestimate how much they need to hear it.
4. **Reinforce effort, not results.** Focusing on the effort that your child puts into things, will help them to become more confident and competent.
5. **Let your child take ownership of their school work.** From fifth grade on, shift from control to advice, thereby teaching your child to be more responsible and less dependent.
6. **Spend 1:1 time with your child doing something fun.** Make an effort to spend at least one hour a month with each of your children, doing something you both enjoy.
7. **Model being physically active.** Exercise regularly and invite your child to participate as physical exercise benefits us both physically and emotionally.
8. **Say the "L word."** We often assume our children just know, but it's important to verbalize our feelings of love in a heartfelt way.
9. **Take better care of yourself.** Make sure that, in addition to taking care of family members, you are also remembering to do fun, relaxing things you enjoy to reduce your stress level.
10. **Remember how lucky you are.** While we all tend to take what we have for granted, consider how fortunate you and your family are and celebrate it often.

Each week this year, try to focus on just one of the above resolutions. Any improvement in one or more of these areas should be considered a major victory. Best wishes for a healthy, happy year for you and your family.

Dr. Jan Hittelman, a licensed psychologist, is Director of Boulder Psychological Services and Founder of the Boulder Counseling Cooperative. Questions or comments for this monthly column can be sent via email to: jan.hittelman@gmail.com, or by phone: 720-217-3270

>> YRBS Statistics

National research has shown a link between a student's emotional health and academic achievement. In California, researchers found that, over time, increasing levels of sadness or hopelessness were related to subsequent declines in reading, language, and math test scores.

Did you know that:

- 24 percent of BVSD high school students report feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more?
- 13 percent of BVSD high school students have seriously considered attempting suicide?
- 51.3 percent of BVSD high school students usually get help when they are feeling sad and hopeless?

Fortunately, 81 percent of BVSD high school students have someone to talk to when they are feeling sad or hopeless. (2009 Boulder Valley Youth Risk Behavior Survey)

Stress management, effective coping strategies, and awareness of available resources are all tools that can reduce the feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

>> Stress Management: Modeling a Healthier Way

“There cannot be a stressful crisis next week. My schedule is already full.” - Henry Kissinger

While winter brings with it some of our favorite holidays and significant changes in the seasons, it can also bring a lot of stress. Shopping, visiting relatives, work, and the economy can all put pressure on our lives. In reality, life brings **everyone** some stressful moments and obstacles. The 2010 Boulder County Healthy Youth Alliance survey found 66.7 percent of responding parents indicated stress was a key health issue for today's teens.

Unfortunately, substance use is often one way youth attempt to “manage” stress. The 2009 Boulder County Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) indicated that by 12th grade, 83 percent of the survey respondents from Boulder Valley School District had tried alcohol, 65 percent had smoked marijuana, 56 percent had smoked cigarettes, and 15 percent had used cocaine.

Modeling healthier ways to deal with stressful situations consistently can help our children manage their own stresses in healthier ways, too. Here are a few tips that may help:

1. Be aware.

When starting to feel stressed, ask yourself where the stress originates – relationships, work, money, and time management are some of the usual suspects. Make a plan that has specific solutions for the things that you can change.

2. Divert.

It's key to take your mind off of the stress. Even with a plan, it's easy to get stuck worrying. Find something--exercise, a book, a movie--that can take your mind off the stress and help you relax.

3. Talk.

Talking about what is stressing you can help reduce levels of stress. Sometimes we just need to hear things said out loud to get perspective. Friends and family can give great perspective.

4. Breathe!

Deep breathing can alleviate some of our physical responses to stress. Breathe in through your nose, hold it for five seconds, and breathe out slowly through your mouth. Try it five times in a row and see how you feel.

We learn how to handle stress from our parents, peers, and environment. Let's commit to showing each other ways that don't include addictive substances. To learn more about Boulder County Public Health's Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership, visit: www.BoulderCountyTobacco.org.

by Jennifer Kovarik and Tom Rafferty
Boulder County Public Health

>> Maintaining Good Mental Health is a Balancing Act

Preventing chronic stress is an attainable skill and it is an important one to teach to our children. Role modeling the practice of maintaining good mental health is the best way to help our children do the same.

By nurturing the essential components of Mental Health -- our Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, Social, and Spiritual selves -- we build optimal ability and backup reserves to manage stress. We have little control over what's going on outside ourselves. We have total control over our response to it.

We humans tend to fill our heads with worry about the future and regrets about the past. Planning, worrying and remembering rob us of the present moment. Another well-known robber is obsessive thinking. Most of us have engaged in replaying our personal 'top ten tunes' over and over. I've heard this described as "being locked in a phone booth with a lunatic." Our thinking patterns are just habits. We can delete them and upload new software that allows us to go in new directions. Here's a formula that may help move toward that change:

- Give up hope for a different past.
- Take three full deep breaths. Be in the moment.
- Review goals and state intentions clearly.
- Choose your behavior.
- If you fail to achieve the entire goal, identify the behavior or event that got in the way.
- Be careful of blaming others.
- We spin the wheels of frustration when we try to change others' behavior.
- Start over. Give up hope for a different past...

by Ann Kloos, LCSW, CACII
Member Boulder Psychological Services

There's a saying, "If we keep doing what we've always done we are only going to where we've already been." With practice, we can learn to respond to external stressors and events in a way that feeds back a sense of competency and positive self worth. Learning to catch ourselves responding in ineffective ways is the first step.

>> Accessing Mental Health Services

Make sure that the mental health provider you go to is licensed and experienced. You can check a psychotherapist's license status online at: www.dora.state.co.us/dora_pages/ProfessionVerification.htm.

Try to make sure that he/she has experience working successfully with similar-age clients. You can accomplish this by getting recommendations from friends, coworkers or community professionals (your pediatrician, school personnel-guidance counselors, school interventionists, etc.). In addition, don't be reluctant to first interview the therapist over the phone. Ask about their experience working with similar-age clients and how they would approach treating someone with the symptoms you are concerned about. Schedule an initial meeting to make sure it feels like a good fit.

Low-Cost Community Mental Health Resources:

- **Boulder Counseling Cooperative (BCC):** In partnership with local licensed psychotherapists, the BCC provides affordable psychotherapy services to middle and lower income level individuals and families. www.BoulderCounseling.org
- **Boulder County Prevention/Intervention Program:** Multi-agency partnership that provides prevention, intervention, and crisis intervention services to middle and high school students and their families in Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley school districts. www.bouldercounty.org/help/family/pages/interventionprogram.aspx
- **The Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties (MHCBBC):** In partnership with others, the MHCBBC improves quality of life and reduces the burden of illness by providing comprehensive, community-based mental health services for those with the greatest need. www.mhcbc.org
- **Second Wind Fund of Boulder County:** Provides counseling services to decrease the incidence of teen suicide by removing financial and social barriers to treatment for at-risk youth struggling with depression. www.secondwindfundofbouldercounty.org

>>Calendar of Classes & Events

JANUARY 2011

Monday, January 3, 2:00 p.m.

30th Anniversary & Ribbon Cutting Celebration for the new Teen Parent Program Facility

Arapahoe Campus, 6600 East Arapahoe Road, Boulder

Open Enrollment Open House 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Monday, January 10, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Pathways to Parenting Success Series – PEN Event “You Twit Face”

Presenter: Jennifer Korb, President, Internet Safety Foundation

www.internetsafetycolorado.org

BVSD Ed Center Board Room - 6500 E Arapahoe, Boulder

Live from the BVSD Board Room!

Join local experts as they discuss important parenting topics and answer your questions live, during the broadcast. Join the live audience in the BVSD Board Room, watch it on Comcast Cable Channel 22, or stream from your computer at <http://bvsd.org/BV22/Pages/PathwaystoParentingSeries.aspx>. This forum focuses on how parents can embrace the world of technology.

Tuesday, January 11, 6:00-7:15 p.m.

BVSD’S Elementary College Nights

Emerald Elementary, 755 W. Elmhurst Place, Broomfield

Sponsored by BVSD Student Success, PEN, BVSD Counselors and BVSD Language, Culture and Equity. These presentations are for parents of elementary school children, aimed at low income families that have seen few, if any, relatives go on to college. Hosted in collaboration with state college savings program CollegelInvest, these presentations will give parents practical and strategic information, letting them know that there is real hope that their elementary student can eventually attend college, especially if they start planning now. *Children, younger siblings and all family members are welcome, childcare is provided. Snacks provide. \$250 worth of prize drawings for savings accounts from CollegelInvest. Presentation will be in both Spanish and English.*

Thursday, January 13, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

BVSD and ACL Present - On the Road: Transition to Adulthood (for students with disabilities)

This month’s topic is “Adult Services.”

BVSD Education Center, 6500 East Arapahoe, Boulder

Do you know where you are in preparing to hit the road of adulthood? Do you know what you need to bring? Do you know where you want to go? These monthly workshops throughout the year will help answer those questions for your child or teen and give you the tools, information and strategies to think through and plan for a meaningful future that includes work, relationships and independent living. For more information, contact Anna Stewart at 720-561-5918.

THRIVEupdate for BVSD Parents

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experts and parents

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Look for us on the web!
www.bvsd.com

>>Calendar of Classes and Events

JANUARY 2011

Friday, January 14

8th Annual American Indian Youth Leadership Conference

BVSD's Department of Language, Culture and Equity sponsors five youth leadership conferences each year which provide students with opportunities to learn leadership skills, gain pride and network with other students who share heritage, culture, history, and experiences. Following is the schedule for this year's Youth Leadership Conferences:

Jan. 14 – American Indian (Coordinator: Patriza "Ime" Salazar)

Jan. 24 – Latino (Coordinator: Bill de la Cruz)

Feb. 1 – Safe Schools (Coordinator: Cynthia Hildner)

Feb. 7 – Asian American (Coordinator: Karen Shimamoto)

Feb. 17 – African American (Coordinator: Debra Frazier)

For more information, please contact BVSD's Department of Language, Culture and Equity at 720-561-5073.

Monday, January 17

Martin Luther King, Jr., Day

No School in Boulder Valley School District / District Offices Also Closed

Monday, January 24, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Adoption: Unique Parenting Challenges-A Pathways to Parenting Success Series Workshop

Meadows Branch Library, 4800 Baseline Road, Boulder

An opportunity to explore the unique questions and challenges adoptive parents face. Facilitated by Linda Cain, MSED, and Karen Wilding, LCSW. This event is free and open to the public.

Monday, January 24

Latino Youth Leadership Conference

For more information, please contact BVSD's Department of Language, Culture and Equity at 720-561-5073.

Wednesday, January 26, 7:00 p.m.

Gifted and ... Understanding and Supporting the Needs of Twice Exceptional Learners

Presenter: Marlo Payne Thurman

Arapahoe Ridge High School, 6600 Arapahoe Road, Boulder

Get an introduction to the concepts of twice-exceptionality and learn more about the issues that are most pressing for this population. Marlo will also explain needs and provide strategies for children and adolescents who are gifted but who also struggle with learning disabilities, social difficulties, emotional or mental health issues, and/or cognitive-behavioral challenges. Parents and educators alike will gain new insights and take away useful tools for meeting the needs of the twice-exceptional. For more information about the presenters and BVGT, see www.bvgt.org.

FEBRUARY 2011

Tuesday, February 1

Safe Schools Youth Leadership Conference

For more information, please contact BVSD's Department of Language, Culture and Equity at 720-561-5073.

Monday, February 7, 6:30 p.m.

The Admission Game

An Interactive Presentation of the College Admission Process (for students AND parents)

Featuring Peter Van Buskirk -- author, motivational speaker, and former dean of admission
Broomfield High School. #1 Eagle Way, Broomfield

Learn what will happen to your application behind closed doors!

- Become a member of an admission committee
- Review four candidates' credentials
- Debate their strengths and weaknesses
- Vote to determine who gets in

This presentation is sponsored by the BVSD School Counselors. www.bvgsd.org/counseling

FEBRUARY 2011

Monday, February 7, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Pathways to Parenting Success Series –

HOPE Event: Successfully Navigating Depression and Suicide

HOPE Coalition presents “Lifting the Veil: A Journey of Hope and Empowerment”

BVSD Ed Center Board Room - 6500 E Arapahoe, Boulder

Live from the BVSD Board Room!

Join local experts as they discuss important parenting topics and answer your questions live, during the broadcast. Join the live audience in the BVSD Board Room, watch it on Comcast Cable Channel 22, or stream from your computer at <http://bvsd.org/BV22/Pages/PathwaystoParentingSeries.aspx>.

Monday, February 7

Asian American Youth Leadership Conference

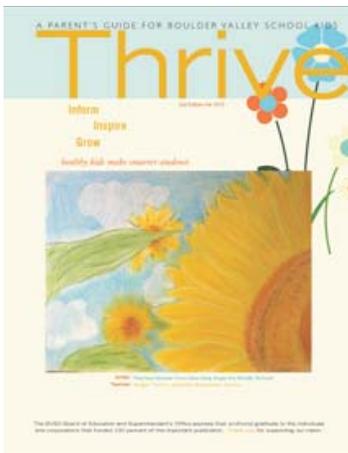
For more information, please contact BVSD's Department of Language, Culture and Equity at 720-561-5073.

Foothills Parenting Classes

Classes offered include “Becoming a Love & Logic Parent®,” “REAL Parenting®” (a parent and teen workshop, taught simultaneously), “Siblings Without Rivalry™,” and “Love and Logic Early Childhood Parenting Made Fun!®” Get more information and the current class schedule at <http://www.foothillsparentingclasses.com/>.

Community Connections: A Student Resource Guide

BVSD's Community Connections: A Student Resource Guide can be found at www.bvsd.org/guide. The guide is filled with enriching activities and services that support the health and wellbeing of children and youth. Categories include athletics, health & support services, camps & classes, tutoring and the arts. Paper copies can be found at schools or you can request a copy in English or Spanish from Marla Riley at 720-561-5250 or marla.riley@bvsd.org.



Watch for the new THRIVE Handbook!

BVSD schools will receive them the first week of January. Elementary schools plan to send them home with students. Secondary schools will have copies available in the school offices for parents to pick up. If you need assistance getting a copy of this excellent resource for parents, please contact THRIVE Coordinator Mikey Raudenbush at raudenbushn@gmail.com or 303-877-4689.

(Note that this new issue of the THRIVE Handbook was funded entirely by donations from individuals and corporations in the community. Thank you!)

If you have an item that might be of interest to parents in BVSD, we welcome you to submit it for consideration to be included in the Thrive Update Calendar of Classes and Events.

Here are our submission guidelines:

- Calendar items must relate to the mission of Thrive Update:
To empower families through scientifically valid knowledge to support healthy youth development.
- Calendar items are due by the 1st of each month for the following month's issue.
- Calendar items must follow this format: topic/title, speaker (if applicable), day of week, date, time, location (with address), short description, cost (if any), and contact info.