

Thrive update



Enhance Inspire
Inform healthy kids make smarter students

Volume 5 | Issue 5

FEBRUARY 2013

insideTHRIVE

- 2 Have the Conversation!
- 3 Potential Impact on Families of Legalizing Marijuana
- CU Athletics Youth Opportunities
- 4 LGBT Issues for Parents
- Lifelong Learning for Kids
- 5 Helping to Prevent Development of an Eating Disorder in Your Child
- 6 YMCA Free After-School Programs for Teens
- Rotary Youth Leadership Awards
- 7 Calendar of Classes & Events

>> Becoming Happier as a Family

Families are contending with remarkable daily stressors. Often both parents are working, driving their kids to various practices and lessons, and trying to manage day-to-day financial and household responsibilities. Families are struggling to connect in enjoyable ways with each other and often get stuck in a rut of snappy, hostile bickering.

Here are some thoughts and tips on how to get along better. Families are very much like a homeostatic system. Parents and kids unknowingly get stuck in playing roles that feed a habitual way of interacting and reacting. If one family member changes for the better, even a little, the whole family is influenced positively toward doing things differently.

Tips for making small changes that work:

- **Practice noticing your reaction, being mindful in the moment, and decide if that is how you want to respond.** You can ask yourself, "Is this how I usually react? Will this reaction give me the outcome that I want?" Sometimes it is helpful to hold your thought for a moment and think about what you want to say that will be most effective.
- **Notice your impulse to jump into a sibling argument and instead, allow the kids to work it out.** Often kids will get along better if you let them work out their own relationship. They learn better problem solving skills.
- **Have a family meal together nightly with meaningful conversation.** In my family, we start the meal by each offering a thorn and a rose from our day.
- **Check your texts, emails and messages less frequently.** Be mindful of how technology might interfere with connecting. Take a family break from phones, computers and videos. Work on a family project together, play a game or spend time together doing something without interruption.

Decide that you want to get along better with your family and take specific steps that will put this into action. If you notice stressful spots during the day (often transitions), experiment with new behaviors. If parents can find ways to relax and have more fun, the kids are likely to follow your lead!

by Elizabeth Olson, Psy.D., L.C.S.W.

Look for us on the web!
www.bvbsd.org

Have the Conversation!

Why? In the wake of the Sandy Hook and Jessica Ridgeway tragedies, along with other local crises that have rocked the emotional foundations of all parents, many of us are searching for ways to talk to our children about violence, death and personal safety. These topics are difficult and painful to discuss as adults, but when considering how to begin (and even if we should begin) to talk about them with our children, we are often perplexed and scared. We don't want to over-burden our innocent children and traumatize them with discussions that we may feel are more mature than they are. However, such conversations can help children as they grapple with concepts for which they may be developmentally unprepared. As parents, it is our job to have these conversations with our children, because we know them best and can help them to deal with the difficult emotions that can evolve from such tragic situations.

According to the National Association of School Psychologists, we should consider the following recommendations when having the conversation with our children about death and acts of violence against children:

- Most importantly, make sure to emphasize repeatedly that you love your child and will protect him/her to the best of your ability.
- If adults talk about the loss, it gives children the opening to talk about their reactions to it.
- Listen patiently and allow the children to repeat themselves if necessary. Some children will need repetition to process completely.
- Process the loss in developmentally appropriate ways. Some younger children may need guidance on what death means.
- Talk honestly and refrain from using euphemisms for death (i.e., "she is sleeping and won't wake up").
- Correct any rumors or false perceptions that children might have about death. These can lead to misconceptions of death or unnecessary fears.
- Children will benefit by having multiple means of expression. Allow them to draw, write, and/or play to express their emotions. In some cases, creating a memorial or other artifact, even if it is not shared, may help children to grieve and express themselves.

by Andy Tucker
BVSD Coordinator of Counseling,
Student Engagement, and Post-Secondary Readiness

For information on how children of different ages may express grief, please see the following articles:

www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/deathgrief.pdf

www.childgrief.org/howtohelp.htm

For more information on how to have this difficult conversation, please see the following references:

www.cc.nih.gov/cc/patient_education/pepubs/childeath.pdf

www.hospicenet.org/html/talking.html

>> The Potential Impact on Families of Legalizing Marijuana

Over the years, I have met with many families who struggle around the issue of substance use, typically involving marijuana and alcohol. The conflict usually goes something like this: Parents do not want their children experimenting with any drugs and their children want to debate about the (in their minds harmless) effects of marijuana use, that “everyone” drinks at parties, and that it’s “normal” for teens to engage in these behaviors (often adding that mom and dad did the same thing when they were younger). I suspect that with the recent legalization of marijuana in Colorado, these discussions will become even more challenging. Here are some suggestions to help parents navigate these issues:

- Have frequent, ongoing discussions and encourage a respectful exchange of ideas. Try to have your child do most of the talking, be respectful and minimize lecturing. A key discussion point being: What are the benefits of substance use, and what other ways can you achieve that without use?
- Remind your children that even with the new law, you must be over 21 to drink alcohol or consume marijuana in Colorado. More importantly, discuss the reasons behind these restrictions, which include: proven negative effects on young brain development, the increased risk of addiction when substance use begins at an early age, and that the areas of the brain that impact judgment and impulse control are not fully developed until you are in your 20s. Finally, as parents you are legally responsible for their misbehavior until the age of 18.
- If you did experiment with drugs and/or alcohol when you were younger, it’s OK to be honest but it’s critical to include a lesson (e.g. I realize now how it negatively affected me and wish I had a discussion like this with my parents at the time).
- Whether it is marijuana and/or alcohol, discuss how some youth who experiment continue to meet their responsibilities, but many do not (and your child likely knows of folks like these). Because it is impossible to predict who will develop major problems, best to avoid it altogether.
- Reinforce honesty. Consider a rule that if your child tells you that they used a substance, the consequences will be less harsh than if they lie about it and/or you find out on your own.

For additional information on youth and substance use, join us this month at the following free community events:

TV Presentation

Marijuana and Adolescence

Monday, February 25, 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Watch on Channel 22, stream live at BVSD.org, or join us in the BVSD Board Room (Ed Center, 6500 East Arapahoe, Boulder)

Community Presentation

Adolescent Substance Abuse: What Parents Need to Know

Thursday, February 28, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Louisville Public Library (951 Spruce Street, Louisville)

by **Dr. Jan Hittelman**
Licensed Psychologist

>> Youth Opportunities from CU Athletics

On Friday, February 8, the CU Women’s Basketball team takes on Oregon State for their breast cancer awareness game. The game tips off at 7:00 p.m., and those who wear pink to the game can purchase \$3 tickets at the door! Early arriving fans will receive a FREE pink Women’s Basketball t-shirt. Come cheer on your Colorado Buffaloes, wear pink and help support breast cancer awareness! For more information, please visit CUBuffs.com or call 303-492-4356.

And to celebrate National Girls and Women in Sports Day on Sunday, Feb. 24, CU is offering free admission to youth and their parents for skills stations and CU Women’s Basketball Game. Doors open at noon (enter through northwest entrance for clinic). From 12:15-1:30 p.m. students eighth grade and under are invited to attend Skills & Fitness stations hosted by CU female athletes. At 2 p.m. the game begins – CU Women’s Basketball vs. Washington. Adults who accompany kids to the skills stations will get free admission to the basketball game. Must enter before 12:45 p.m. to receive free admission to the skills station and game. The first 500 kids to complete the required skills stations will receive a FREE CU t-shirt!

Also in February:

- CU Women’s Basketball vs. Oregon - Sunday, February 10 at 1:30 p.m.
- CU Women’s Basketball vs. Washington State - Friday, February 22 at 7:00 p.m.

For more information: CUBuffs.com or call 303-492-6414.

>> LGBT Issues for Parents

A parent response to our December article about LGBT issues asked for coverage of transgender issues in families. “How does a parent transitioning genders come out to his/her children?” and “How can parents best support a child who is gender non-conforming?” are two topics that will be covered in forthcoming articles.

A parent changing gender from male to female or female to male is a difficult challenge, to both of the parents and their children, depending on age and developmental stage. In most cases, the parent has struggled, probably since childhood, with the haunting belief that he/she is meant to be the opposite gender from the one biology ordained. Deciding to transition later in life is usually a matter of survival. Trying to fit into society’s norms finally becomes an emotional and psychological crisis; they can do no other than be true to their real nature.

To explain “transgender” to a child, many believe, the younger the better. Keeping the explanation simple for elementary age children is best. They just need assurance that their parents still love them. If divorce happens, principles for all parents to provide a stable home life, and respectful reference to the other parent, are still relevant.

For teen-agers facing their own identity development issues, having a parent change genders is more complicated. No one wants to lose a “father” or “mother.” Their grief requires parents’ respect and sensitivity and **time**. They need time and permission to refuse to meet the “new” parent for a while. Kids need to see what sort of parent is “left behind.”

Societal stereotypes of transgender persons add to the difficulty of family acceptance. Besides traditional religious rejection, there are outmoded beliefs that being transgender is a mental illness, is about sexual orientation, or is a perverted life-style out to convert others. Those beliefs are untrue, but such distortions obstruct the coming out process. Sadly, transitioning adults often lose everything: their jobs, families, friends and their church. Transgender persons are surely role models of courage, choosing to live authentically for being who they truly believe they were meant to be.

To learn more: Howey, N. and E. Samuels (eds), 2000. Out of the Ordinary: Essays on Growing Up with Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Parents. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

Article contributed by the
Boulder Valley Safe Schools Coalition
bouldersafeschools.org

>> Lifelong Learning for Kids

BVSD Lifelong Learning strives to keep kids in our community active, engaged and healthy. Our Winter and Spring Break classes and camps include popular offerings by Science Matters, Bricks 4 Kidz, and the YWCA, as well as art and acting classes. And we have options that promote physical health and life skills – all while having loads of fun!

We invite your child to jump in, get messy and try something new in one of our featured classes below. And visit us at www.bvsvd.org/LLL to check out all of our after-school, no-school day and Spring Break classes for kids.



- Hip Hop and Yoga (ages 7-11)
- Horse Play Level I (ages 8-12)
- Creative Improv for Kids (ages 7-12)
- Shooting Stars Gymnastics and Dance for Kindergartners (ages 5-6)
- Cooking classes taught by Sticky Fingers Cooking and by Chef Cheyne:

Mix, Measure, and Knife Skills, Oh My! (ages 6-10)

World Cooking Day (ages 6-12)

Oodles of Noodles (ages 7-11)

Finger Food Freak Out! (ages 7-12)

Pizza Dough Flying High (ages 7-12)

Spring Break Cooking Camp (ages 7-12)

Chocolate Makers Paradise (ages 7-12)

Pass the Pancakes (ages 7-12)

Farmers’ Market Day (ages 7-12)

>> Helping to Prevent the Development of an Eating Disorder in Your Child

At the Eating Disorder Program at Children's Hospital Colorado, we provide intensive treatment for anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and a variety of atypical eating disorders "not otherwise specified." An eating disorder arises when a person develops a distorted relationship with food and weight that goes beyond simple dieting, exercise or feeling too full. Eating disorders often begin with dissatisfaction in appearance and efforts to eat healthier or exercise more, but for some people these behaviors can lead to harmful thought patterns and behaviors with life-threatening consequences. Sometimes no actual diet is involved; the child/teen can experience a relentless drive to be thinner and an avoidance of fat. Eventually, the pursuit of thinness becomes an obsession assuming more importance than anything else in the person's life.

While the majority of patients at Children's Colorado are adolescent females, eating disorders do not discriminate by age, gender, socioeconomic status or ethnicity. In line with this diversity, we offer a specialized track for young children and boys, as such children are regularly part of our treatment program.

Despite extensive research, the cause of eating disorders is largely unknown. We can, however, influence kids in becoming resilient, flexible and informed, which can be protective factors in prevention.

- Be a good role model, eat family meals together regularly and encourage balanced eating and activity.
- Avoid negative comments about appearances of yourself and family members. Emphasize the whole person, beyond looks. Don't criticize or tease your child about minor weight gains, and avoid power struggles over food.
- Help your child build healthy self-esteem. Give him/her opportunities to explore different interests and build confidence.
- Emphasize flexibility - allow your child the freedom to explore a variety of methods to arrive at the destination instead of believing there is one "right" way of doing things.

by Dr. Mindy Solomon
Clinical Program Director, Eating Disorder Program,
Children's Hospital Colorado
Assistant Professor, University of Colorado

**Dr. Solomon will be one of the speakers at the Boulder Valley Gifted & Talented's presentation, The Perfect Storm.*

The Perfect Storm

How Common Traits of Gifted/Talented Males and Females Function in the Onset and Maintenance of Eating Disorders

Presenters: Dr. Jennifer Hagman, Dr. Mindy Solomon, and BVSD graduate Kaelen Williams

Wednesday, Feb. 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Monarch High School Library
329 Campus Drive, Louisville

Certain traits found in gifted individuals may potentially put them at heightened risk for developing eating disorders. This presentation will address signs and symptoms of eating disorders, how to talk to a friend or loved one you suspect might be struggling, common misconceptions about what eating disorders are and who they impact, and a family-centered approach and philosophy for treatment. Sponsored by Boulder Valley Gifted & Talented.

www.bvgt.org/events or programming@bvgt.org

>> Free After-School Programming for Teens

The YMCA BreakThrough Arts program provides the most comprehensive offering of free after-school art and leisure classes available for BoulderValley teens grades 9-12. Classes are offered in a safe, drug-free space which allows teens to spend their afternoons exploring their creativity, connecting with caring adults and creating lasting relationships with their peers. With classes that are designed by teens, all youth have the opportunity to find their passion, build developmental assets and re-awaken their love of learning.

YMCA BreakThrough Arts is sponsored by the YMCA of BoulderValley Community Support Campaign and Foothills United Way.



Session I: January 14 - March 22

Creative Writing & Slam Poetry Mondays, 3:45-5:45 p.m.

Innisfree Poetry Bookstore & Café, 1203 13th Street, Boulder

Learn the basics and gain inspiration from practicing poets. Express yourself through your own written pieces, perform them and receive feedback in a creative and respectful environment.

Natural Highs Tuesdays, 4:15-6:15 p.m.

Hope Boulder, 4705 Baseline Road, Boulder

Join this positive, supportive, sober community of young people who are committed to living and following their passions, exploring states of consciousness in healthy ways and experiencing deep human connection in community!

Graffiti Art & Urban Design Tuesdays, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Attention Homes, 3080 Broadway Avenue, Boulder

Learn the art of Graffiti, from basic and advanced lettering techniques to urban composition. Make your own tag name and practice your new skills in a fun, productive environment!

Aerial Dance & Circus Arts Wednesdays, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

New Vista High School Gymnasium, 700 20th Street, Boulder

Basic low flying trapeze skills such as swinging and large circular flies are covered. Move from the ground into the air and back again in this unique and exciting class! Note: insurance forms and waivers are required to leave the ground.

Culinary Arts Thursdays, 3:45-5:45 p.m.

Centaurus High School Kitchen, 10300 East South Boulder Road, Lafayette

Learn how to make your cooking efficient and healthy. Classes include basic kitchen skills, menu planning and meal preparation with a focus on farm-to-table, seasonal cooking and healthy eating.

YMCA of BoulderValley - www.ymcabv.org

Mapleton Center Y • 2850 Mapleton Ave., Boulder • 303.442.2778

Arapahoe Center Y • 2800 Dagny Way, Lafayette • 303.664.5455

>> Rotary Youth Leadership Awards

As they have been doing for 25 years, the Boulder Rotary, BoulderValley Rotary and Flatirons Rotary clubs will again be sending potential leaders to a **Youth Leadership Conference** in July 2013. Slots are available for 8-10 current sophomores or juniors (students who will be juniors and seniors in 2013-14) and 7-10 students who will be eighth graders in 2013-14. The conference is an action-packed week designed to build confidence and leadership skills through problem-solving exercises, challenge course, group discussions, skits and team-building activities to name a few.

There are three week-long conferences:

- The conference for high school juniors or seniors is scheduled for July 14-19, 2013, at the YMCA Camp in Estes Park.
- Two conferences will be held for eighth graders (current seventh graders apply), one the week of July 21-26 and the second the week of July 28 - Aug. 2, 2013. Both of these conferences are held at the Ponderosa Conference Center in Larkspur, CO.

This is a magnificent opportunity for young people! The Rotary Clubs pay the \$450 registration fee for each candidate. Interested students may apply online to be chosen for the conference. Go to www.rmRYLA.org for more information and to apply. A member of one of the Rotary Clubs will contact the students after reading the applications in April/May.

>>Calendar of Classes & Events

FEBRUARY 2013

Saturday, Feb. 2, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Beyond Consequences

Presenter: Heather T. Forbes, LCSW

Learn about raising and working with children with difficult and severe behaviors. Presentation incorporates the understanding that neuroscience gives us to explain the thinking and perspective of children whose regulatory systems have been compromised through traumatic experiences. Admission is free to attendees who bring a copy of one of Heather's books or buys one at the event. This training is approved by the NASW Colorado Chapter for six hours of Continuing Education Credits. Training takes place at the Crossroads Church of Denver, 9725 W. 50th Ave., Wheat Ridge, CO. See website for details and to register:

www.beyondconsequences.com/bcilive/index.html or 407-965-1131.

THRIVEupdate for BVSD Parents

Published by BVSD
Written by local experts
and parents

THRIVEupdate Editorial Board

Managing Co-Editors

>> **Leisha**
Connors Bauer
Boulder Healthy
Youth Alliance

>> **Dr. Jan Hittelman**
Boulder Psychological
Services

Copy Editor &

Publication Designer

>> **Maela Moore**
BVSD Communications

Content Contributor

>> **Andrew Tucker**
BVSD Counseling

Translator & PEN Chair

>> **Eugenia Brady**
Certified BVSD Translator

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

Monday, Feb. 4, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Write Your Life Story

Ever wanted to record the events of your life? Attend this workshop to learn the how's and why's of autobiographical writing. Facilitator: Elizabeth Matthews, LPC
A Pathways to Parenting Success Workshop – Free and open to the public.
Meadows Branch Library, 4800 Baseline Road, Boulder

www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com

Wednesday, Feb. 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

The Perfect Storm: How Common Traits of Gifted/Talented Males and Females Function in the Onset and Maintenance of Eating Disorders

Presenters: Dr. Jennifer Hagman, Dr. Mindy Solomon, and BVSD graduate Kaelen Williams

Monarch High School Library, 329 Campus Drive, Louisville 80027

(See page 5 of this Thrive Update newsletter for more information.)

Thursday, Feb. 7, 7:30-9 p.m.

Re-Drawing the Lines

Presenter Jonathan Mooney will blend research and human interest stories with concrete tips for enhancing the experiences of bright children with learning disabilities. Tips that parents, students, teachers, and administrators can follow to transform learning environments and create a world that truly celebrates cognitive diversity. This presentation will take place at Boulder Valley Christian Church, 7100 South Boulder Road, Boulder. Cost is \$5 if registration received by Feb. 1 and \$7.50 after that. Sponsored by Catalyst High School.

Get more information at

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=ztu9kgcab&oeidk=a07e6sqfj990d58ab3>

To register, go to

<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?llr=ztu9kgcab&oeidk=a07e6sqfj990d58ab3>

>>Calendar of Classes & Events

FEBRUARY 2013

Monday, Feb. 11, 6:30-8:00

Family Communication

Learn effective communication strategies that will reduce conflict and enhance the parent-child relationship.

Facilitators: Elizabeth Matthews, LPD, and Jeremy Dion, LPC.

A Pathways to Parenting Success Workshop – Free and open to the public.

Mamie Doud Eisenhower Library, 3 Community Park Road, Broomfield

www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com

Tuesday, Feb. 12, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

PEN Presents - Is Your Family Thriving or Just Surviving?

Presenters: Dawn Gelderloos, Real Life Works, and Marty Nunez, Insight Life Coaching.

Southern Hills Middle School, 1500 Knox Dr., Boulder

Changing Your Family Dynamic from Frantic & Frenzied to Fun & Fulfilling. Adults \$10.

www.parentengagementnetwork.org

Wednesday, Feb. 13, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

SEAC (Special Education Advisory Council)

Board Room, BVSD Education Center, 6500 East Arapahoe, Boulder

SEAC is a district wide group open to all. Monthly meetings include forums with special education leadership team, parent education of BVSD services, and presentations from community organizations. We are looking for parent representatives from every BVSD school. Contact Anna Stewart, SEAC Coordinator at 720-561-5918 or anna.stewart@bvsd.org

Saturday, February 23, 2013, 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Parenting Safe Children - A workshop empowering adults to keep children safe from sexual abuse

Presenter: Feather Berkouer, LCSW, trained at the Univ. of CA, Berkeley.

Rock Creek Church, 225 Majestic View Drive, Louisville, CO 80027

Learn how to raise children who are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The Parenting Safe Children workshop uses a three-part prevention model developed over two decades in the field:

1. Parent Education - You will learn what makes children vulnerable to sexual abuse.
2. Child Empowerment - You will learn ten body-safety rules to teach your children.
3. Caregiver Screening - You will learn tools and techniques for screening caregivers effectively.

Cost is \$53.75/person (materials included).

Registration payment is non-refundable & non-transferable to other PSC workshop dates

To reserve your spot, register online in advance at <http://parentingsafechildrenworkshopfeb23.eventbrite.com>

Monday, Feb. 25, 7-8 p.m.

Marijuana and Adolescence

Learn more about the impact of marijuana on youth in our community and what is being done about it.

A Pathways to Parenting Presentation - Live!

BVSD Ed Center Board Room, 6500 Arapahoe, Boulder

Join us live or watch on Comcast Ch22 or streamed on www.BVSD.org.

www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com

Thursday, Feb. 28, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Adolescent Substance Abuse: What Parents Need to Know

Facilitators: Kat Austin, LPC, LAC, and Jen Sutton, LPC, LAC.

Learn about the prevalence of adolescent substance abuse, how to help your child avoid it, and when to get help.

A Pathways to Parenting Success Workshop – Free and open to the public.

City of Louisville Library, 951 Spruce Street, Louisville

www.BoulderPsychologicalServices.com