



June



June is PTSD Awareness Month

- PTSD in Children

POST-
TRAUMATIC
STRESS
DISORDER



The National Comorbidity Survey Replication- Adolescent Supplement is a nationally representative sample of over 10,000 adolescents aged 13-18. Results indicate that 5% of adolescents have met criteria for PTSD in their lifetime. Prevalence is higher for girls than boys (8.0% vs. 2.3%) and increase with age. Current rates are about 3.9% overall. There are no definitive studies on prevalence rates of PTSD in younger children in the general population.

One of the most recommended forms of therapy for PTSD victims is play therapy. Diagnosis for PTSD in children, adolescence, and adults requires the presence of re-experiencing, avoidance and numbing, and arousal symptoms. While there are age-specific features for some symptoms, processing trauma through play can be very beneficial. In fact, key symptoms among elementary aged children up to teenagers show processing in posttraumatic reenactment in the forms of play, drawings, verbalizations, and acting.

For more information, check out

http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treatment/children/ptsd_in_children_and_adolescents_overview_for_professionals.asp

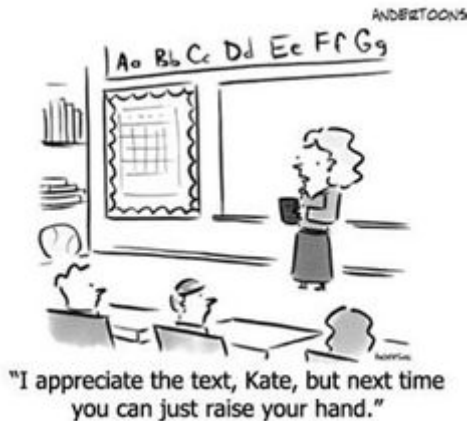
- Playing Together in a Technological World

There is a rising concern among teachers and parents about the amount of screen time today's children have. For younger kids especially, parents often find it easier to use tablets and TV as a babysitter. It gives them some peace and quiet while the children can safely distract themselves. For older children, the goal becomes to stay connected with peers via texting and social media, not to mention TV and video games.



A 2009 [Kaiser study](#) reported that children aged 8-18 engage with media 7.5 hours per day, on average. However, the American Academy of Pediatrics advises that kids spend no more than 1-2 hours per day in front of a screen.

Many experts have suggested limiting the amount of screen time that kids have each day, but there's a catch for many parents: they don't want to give up screen time either. A study in 2011 found that 53% feel upset when denied access to the internet, and 40% feel lonely when they're unable to go online, even for a short period of time. One person interviewed indicated that the 24-hour device-less experience was "like having my hand chopped off."



In other words, there is a changing dynamic in the way that parents and kids function and it affects the average child's development. For developing children, it lessens four critical factors necessary to achieve healthy development: movement, touch, human connection, and exposure to nature. One article states that "these types of sensory inputs ensure normal development of posture, bilateral coordination, optimal arousal states and self-regulation necessary for achieving foundation skills for eventual school entry. Young children require 2-3 hours per day of active rough and tumble play to achieve adequate sensory stimulation to their vestibular, proprioceptive and tactile

systems. Tactile stimulation received through touching, hugging and play is critical for the development of praxis, or planned movement patterns. Touch also activates the parasympathetic system lowering cortisol, adrenalin and anxiety. Nature and "green space" has not only a calming influence on children, but also is attention restorative and promotes learning."

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cris-rowan/technology-children-negative-impact_b_3343245.html

So, the answer may not be to rid technology from the family altogether, but to make sure other ways of interacting are encouraged. In an article by Soren Gordhamer, he suggests that "the path ahead is one of conscious engagement, one in which parents join kids in games and other means of technological engagement, all the while making sure their children connect in other ways as well. The question is not, should people live connected or disconnected lives? Instead ask, how do we live connected in *all* aspects of our lives, whether online, talking to a family member or taking a walk outside? The desire to be connected will not go away. But the ways we connect should expand to include more activities. That way, time spent digitally connecting will be one form of many."

http://mashable.com/2011/09/14/parenting-tech-children/#_Tj4jOofY5qw

• Activities the Family Can Do Together

Sometimes, the best way to get the family to play together is by scheduling fun activities. Here is a list of things you can do this summer to keep the imagination active and promote social development with your kids.

• Make a Time Capsule

Preserving your artifacts is a fun way to celebrate your family now and later—just don't bury the collection. "When it's unearthed, if ever, it's usually a soggy mess," says Paul Stephen Hudson, a cofounder of the Atlanta-based International Time Capsule Society. Pile everything into an archival box, then stow it away in a cool, dark place. Include the big stuff (artwork, school reports, notes to your future selves) and the little (movie stubs, a printout of a Facebook page, a toy with its batteries removed so they don't corrode). Items that won't stand the test of time: delicate clothing, food, or tapes and discs that will be outdated by technology. Add a silica-gel pack (which comes with new shoes) to absorb moisture, and set a date for the big reveal in 25 years.



• Plant Something



Stick to surefire zucchini, cherry tomatoes, and bush beans, says Charlie Nardozzi, a Vermont-based gardening expert and writer (howtogrowing.com). Use a one-by-two-foot self-watering planter and let your cofarmer handle the watering and harvesting. You may pull more than your share of the weight (and weeds), but if it convinces your kids to eat a vegetable, it's *sow* worth it.

• Get Cooking

Teach your kids an old family recipe, or start a brand-new tradition by baking bread. If your kiddos can mold Play-Doh and make mud pies, they'll be experts at kneading dough. (The hands-on fun quotient is the same, but the result is much more appetizing.) Find a foolproof whole wheat bread recipe. Or, if you all think you deserve something sweeter, make cookies with fun shapes.



• Create Self-Portraits



You've got a hard drive full of family photos, but drawing self-portraits captures the present in a more revealing way. Preserve the results for posterity by displaying the masterpieces gallery-style on a wall. Or scan and upload the artwork, then have the images transferred onto everything from postage stamps (pictureitpostage.com) to totes and water bottles (shutterfly.com), so you won't have to wonder whose is whose.

• Go on a Scavenger Hunt

Limit the territory to the backyard or the inside the house and kids will suddenly notice objects that they usually overlook. Set a time limit (a half hour for 20 clues should do it), and supply each child with a bag to hold his booty and a list of clues. Spark their imagination with things that are open for interpretation, like “something that smells really bad” or “an object that starts with the letter K.” (This also keeps the kids from clobbering one another while racing to the one blue spatula.) When time is up, tally who found the most items. Aside from bragging rights, the winner gets a fun prize, such as a gift certificate to the movies or the ice cream shop.



<http://www.realsimple.com/work-life/family/family-activities/view-all>

This excellent enote was composed by Joel Rittenhouse, JMU Department of Psychology.

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