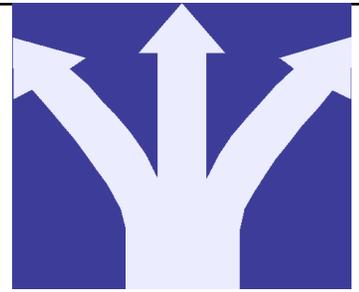


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Women and Anger: The Special Challenges of Single Parenting-Part 2

This issue of the Outlook Associates newsletter presents further strategies to help single parents address their anger:

◆ Put Yourself in Your Children's Shoes

Think about things from your children's perspective. What do you think it is like for them when Mommy gets angry? How do you feel about how your own parents exhibited anger during your childhood? How would you ideally like to handle anger in front of your children?

◆ Apologize

Acknowledging to your children that you overreacted out of anger in a given situation can go a long way towards healing, and shows them that you can take responsibility for your actions.

◆ Forgive

Working towards forgiveness can be a tall order, especially when there has been a serious breach of trust in a relationship. It is usually easier for to forgive a child for transgressions rather than an ex-partner, other family member or friend. However, even when a parent is going through a bitter divorce (with a lot of heartache and possibly betrayal or violence) persisting in seething with anger, especially in front of children helps no one. Taking necessary protective steps, and finding safe people and places to vent out anger are more helpful.

◆ Tap Into Your Emotional Support Network

Sometimes extended family and friends can be an invaluable source of support for a single parent – helping with emotional support, childcare and financial assistance. At other times, however, a parent's "support network" may be more of a burden than a help – requiring more assistance from you than you are able to give. In this case it may be helpful to connect with groups that can provide support. Parents Helping Parents is one group that provides support for parents during difficult times. However it is important to explore issues such as when and where a group meets,

or whether or not childcare is provided or needed, before you commit to a group.

◆ Develop a Reasonable Self-Care Plan

Adequate rest, nutrition and exercise are important for anyone's mental health – but as we all know, these basic self-care steps are not that easy to balance with the demands of daily life. With the added demands single parents typically face, maintain self-care may be even more difficult. Brainstorm ways you might reasonably fit self-care into your life without putting more burden on yourself. For example, taking a walk during lunch hour at work might be much more feasible than buying a gym membership and trying to get there.

◆ Find Specialized Professional Help

Seek out individual or group therapy to help manage anger if it is too much for you alone. There is no shame in seeking additional support in making the positive changes you'd like to make. It is important to find a clinical social worker or other mental health professional who has experience in helping clients to reduce anger reactivity. Additionally, there are psycho-educational groups which can help you develop concrete anger management skills.

◆ Medication

Sometimes, despite learning and practicing concrete anger management skills, an individual may need a psychopharmacological medication evaluation by their primary care physician or a psychiatrist to help manage the behaviors that accompany their anger. Without appropriate medication, some trauma survivors, individuals recovering from chemical addictions, and people struggling with chronic mental illness may have difficulty "slowing down" their anger responses enough to be aware of them, and attempt to change them.

Resource:

Parents Helping Parents – Offers peer-led parent support groups and a 24-hour Parental Stress Hotline.

www.parentshelpingparents.org

info@parentshelpingparents.org

Parental Stress Line 1-800-632-8188

(This article was written by Julie Catalano, LICSW)

FROM OUR FILES:

Workplace Bullying Linked to Increased Use of Psychotropics

Workplace bullying increases psychotropic medication use among men and women who have been victims of bullying and in those who witness it according to a study published in 2012.

Tea Lalluka, PhD, University of Helsinki, in Finland, and colleagues found that after adjusting for age and prior medication use, women were approximately 50% more likely to have a prescription for psychotropic medication if they had been bullied at work.

Men who had been bullied at work were more than twice as likely to have been prescribed a psychotropic medication compared with those who had not been bullied.

Witnessing workplace bullying had a similar impact on psychotropic medication use among men and women.

“Our findings highlight the significance of workplace bullying to subsequent psychotropic medication reflecting medically confirmed mental problems,” investigators write.

Previous research by the same group of researchers showed that workplace bullying is associated with common mental health disorders, including sleep disorders. In addition, they note that bullying victims are at higher risk for subsequent depression, mental distress and illness related absenteeism.

Medscape Article, December 17, 2012.

Childhood Trauma Directly Linked to Adult Aggression

Stressful experiences in early life are associated with higher rates of increased long-term aggression, an animal study suggested in article published in 2013.

Investigators from the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (EPFL), Switzerland, found that male rats that were submitted to fear-inducing experiences during the Peripubertal period exhibited high and sustained rates of increased aggression in adulthood, even against unthreatening rodents.

Perpubertally-stressed rats also showed hyperactivity in the amygdala, a region of the brain involved in emotional reaction.

In contrast, the same rats exhibited little activation in the orbitofrontal cortex.

Previous research examining the brains of violent individuals has shown the same deficit in orbitofrontal activation and the same corresponding reduced inhibition of aggressive impulses.

“In a challenging social situation, the orbitofrontal cortex of a healthy individual is activated in order to inhibit aggressive impulses and to maintain normal interactions,” states Carmen Sandi, PhD, head of the EPFL’s Laboratory of Behavioral Genetics, “But in the rats we studied, we noticed there was very little activation of the orbitofrontal cortex. This, in turn, reduces their ability to moderate negative impulses.”

Medscape Article, January 17, 2013

Upcoming Events

Julie Catalano, LICSW will be running a 12 week anger management group for women starting in September. She can be reached at somervillecounseling@gmail.com or 617-429-4738

Joe Pereira along with Sherri Snyder-Roche will be conducting a workshop on stress management. It is entitled, “Be Prepared...When Life Throws You a Curve Ball.” The workshop will include yoga, mindfulness skills and creative relaxation. It will be held on Sunday, November 8th from 9am to 1pm at the Heartwell Institute in Worcester, MA. Fee is \$80.00. For further information contact Joe Pereira at 781-643-5251 or jpereira@outlookassociates.com. To register: www.IntegratedPsychotherapy.com/workshops