



KANE COUNTY
MENTAL HEALTH COUNCIL

making a difference ...together



Message of the Month

May 2013

www.kanecountymentalhealth.org

Kane County Mental Health Council

- The Association for Individual Development 630-966-4000
- Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center 630-859-6562
- Delnor Community Hospital 630-208-3000
- Ecker Center for Mental Health Services 847-695-0484
- Family Counseling Service of Aurora 630-844-2662
- Family Service Association of Greater Elgin Area 847-695-3680
- Gateway Foundation/Aurora 630-966-7400
- Greater Elgin Family Care Center 847-608-1344
- Kane County Health Department 630-208-3801
- Larkin Center 847-695-5656
- League of Women Voters 630-365-2138
- INC Board 630-892-5456
- National Alliance on Mental Illness, DeKalb, Kane-South, Kendall Counties, Inc. 630-896-6264
- National Alliance on Mental Illness-Kane County 847-931-4715
- Presence Mercy Medical Center 630-801-2657
- Presence St. Joseph Hospital 847-931-5521
- Senior Services Association 847-741-0404
- Suicide Prevention Services 630-482-9696
- TriCity Family Services 630-232-1070
- VNA Health Care 630-978-9835

Strong narrative brings families together

As many families face economic hardships with a struggling economy over the past few years, some question how to positively impact family resiliency and effectiveness. Developing a strong family narrative can bring families together in adversity and provide children with a positive understanding of their family. As families communicate about their history, children develop and conceptualize family values and learn how to encounter both positive and difficult experiences. Family narratives come in three forms: ascending, descending and oscillating. In a descending narrative, families discuss their history moving from success to struggle, where as the ascending narrative is the "rags to riches" story. The oscillating narrative includes events that are successes and struggles, and maintains the theme of perseverance no matter what the family encounters. The oscillating family narrative is shown to be most effective in helping children move through difficult situations and maintain an overall positive sense of family resiliency.

In order for families to construct a narrative, they must foster a sense of history. Parents can choose any number of activities to teach about past events and rituals, but also actively work to create their own traditions. Parents can teach about generations past as well as discuss their own history, where they grew up, went to school, met the other parent, etc. Families who come together and enjoy each other can effectively communicate about both conflicts and stories that create their narrative. As children feel as though they are a part of something special, the family can create a sense of belonging that increases happiness and cohesiveness. Also, creating a strong family identity can help adolescents to create and establish a healthy identity. To increase joy and resiliency, families must discuss positive experiences and great accomplishments, but also the ability to persevere through adversity.

by Allyse Rehak, MS, TriCity Family Services

Info Corner: "The Secrets of Happy Families: How to Improve Your Morning, Rethink Family Dinner, Fight Smart, Go Out and Play, and Much More" by Bruce Feiler