

FAMILY TIMES

Provided by the MPS Mental Health Team



Caregiver Corner

BY RENDY JANSSEN, LMFT

The Language of Family Time

I've worked with hundreds of families since becoming a therapist and one thing that is a common struggle for families is quality family time. Lives are busy. Between work, extracurriculars, homework, and just life duties, it can feel difficult to carve out meaningful time. One thing that is important is the way we talk about time spent as a family. Make a point to call family dinners as such. If you're going to watch a movie or play a board game, call it family movie night or family game night. One of the things I saw was that kids and teens in particular struggled to see those things that are done regularly as quality time without a label. The way we talk about things is important.



Family Connection

BY ELIZABETH ASPLIN, CTRS/L

Scavenger Hunt

Grab a piece of paper and a pen and create a scavenger hunt right inside your very own home or neighborhood.

Story Time

Pick out your favorite story or chapter book, snuggle up on your bed or couch, and read together!

Hide and Seek

A good ol' fashion game of hide and seek in the house on those cold winter days can be fun for the whole family. Make it extra special by turning off all the lights and playing hide and seek in the dark!

Community Events

Date | Event

- 1st-30th Downtown in December
Continues: Devon Ice Rink
- 26th Russian National Ballet's The Sleeping Beauty: Armstrong Auditorium 7:30pm
- 25th-30th Oklahoma the Musical: Civic Center Music Hall 7:30pm

Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of our children.

-CHARLES R. SWINDOLL



Academic Tools to Support Learning

BY KATY CREECY, MSW, LCSW

Sequence (Reading, Writing, Science, Math, Social Studies)

Understanding sequence—that one thing follows another—is a skill that helps in all subject areas: reading, writing, science, math, and social studies. Use sequencing words throughout your routine and discussions, including first, next, then, and finally. You can cut pages out of an old calendar and ask your child to put them in order. Create a “sequence of events” story or comic strip with a familiar activity—making a sandwich or brushing teeth. Using their favorite books, write events on popsicle sticks or sticky notes and have them place them in order.

Source: Reading Rockets

Mental Health Discussion

BY SUMMER KING, LPC & LADC/MH

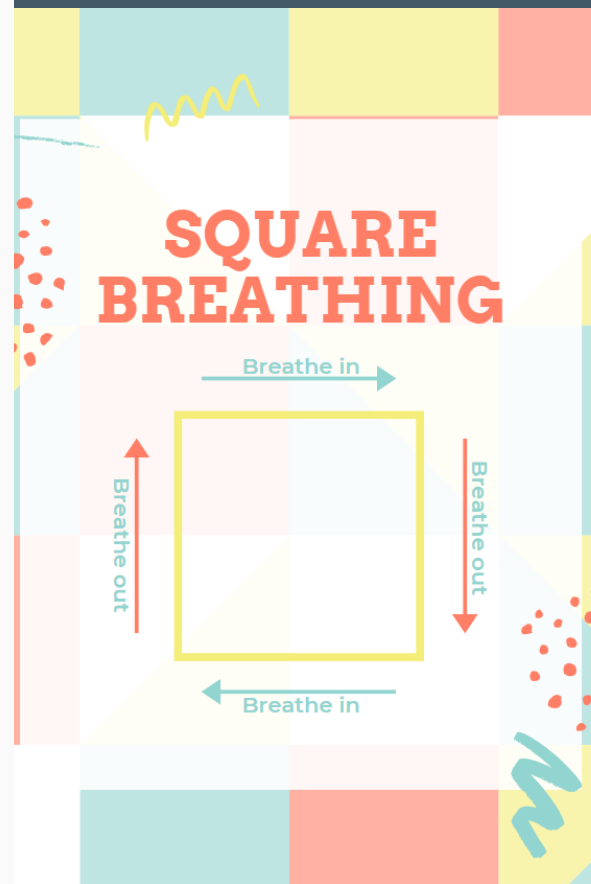
New Year, New goals! While not everyone is excited for New Year’s Resolutions, the idea of starting off the new year by evaluating your goals can be important. The act of writing down goals has been shown to be important in accomplishing goals. As the new year begins, it may be helpful to figure out goals with short-term goals that will help to meet a bigger long-term goal. One tip is to always make sure your goals are S.M.A.R.T.

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-based

Source: [Goal-setting](#) | [Depression Center](#) | [Michigan Medicine](#)

Regulation Skill-Square Breathing

1. Starting at the top of the square, move your finger from left to right while taking a deep breath in through the nose.
2. Go down the right side of the square slowly exhaling or breathing out through the mouth.
3. Going across the bottom of the square from right to left, take another deep breath in through your nose.
4. Then, going back up the left side of the square, slowly exhale or breathe out through the mouth.
5. Repeat 3-5 times.





Easy Baked Taquitos!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1 ½ cups refried beans or vegetarian canned refried beans
- ¼ cup salsa
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ¾ cup shredded cheddar or Mexican blend cheese
- 14 6-inch flour or corn tortillas
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, for brushing
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt, for sprinkling

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the green onion, refried beans, salsa, chili powder, and shredded cheese.
3. Laying a tortilla out flat, spoon about 2 tablespoons of the bean mixture in a dollop onto the bottom half of the tortilla. Tightly roll the tortilla from the bottom (the filling will spread out and hold the tortilla together). Place the taquito seam-side down on the baking sheet. Repeat for the remaining tortillas.
4. When the taquitos are assembled, brush the tops with oil and sprinkle them with a bit of salt. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until crisp and browned. Some of the beans will come out the ends of the rolls, which is expected.
5. For an added touch, serve with salsa, guacamole, or sour cream.

Source: [A Couple Cooks](#)

Tech Talk

BY DAVENE FINDLAY-WILLIAMS, MSW, LCSW

Best Apps for the Family

1. **FamilyApp**- Sharing information with family members.
2. **Lala Breakfast**- This app for recipes and meal planning even allows your kids to get involved in the process. They'll be able to select from a variety of foods, and this will create a shopping list for parents.
3. **OurHome**- OurHome is perfect for tackling the to-do list. Its gamified task management system rewards you and your family for completing all the fun and mundane tasks, from budgeting to feeding the animals.
4. **Remember the Milk**- This top family app functions as a to-do list and reminder that ensures you never have to do that again.
5. **Busy Kid**- Offering your children an allowance for a chore well done is an important tool for teaching your kids about money. In addition to providing chore suggestions, your children can complete their calendar chore charts at their own pace.
6. **Cozi**- With Cozi, you can simplify the hectic schedule of your family! Cozi can easily organize activities, to-do lists, appointments, and shopping lists so that you all know what's going on.
7. **Life360**- If you have a big family, Life360 can be the ideal way to keep tabs on everyone. In addition to being able to communicate, this family app allows location sharing.
8. **FamilyWall**- FamilyWall is a secure family app iOS offers to share photos, events, and to-do lists with everyone. It even has a color-coded calendar that shows all the upcoming events for your family and a chat function.
9. **Steller**- It can be a fun pastime for parents and kids to get together and make a picture book of a special event. And the Steller family app can do the legwork for you!
10. **Chatbooks**- Chatbooks has you covered! This fantastic app empowers tech-savvy parents to easily take photos from their phones and create photobooks.



D.I.F.Y.- Do It For You

BY TAYLOR WRIGHT, LPC-NCC

With spending close to a third of our lives asleep it is easy to see that sleep is essential; but, up to a third of the population may suffer from insomnia (which is a lack of sleep or poor quality sleep) or other sleep problems. Sleep, often forgotten, is just as important to our health and bodies as eating, drinking and breathing. It is vital for maintaining and sustaining good mental and physical health. Sleeping helps us to recover from mental, as well as, physical exertion by allowing our bodies to repair themselves and our brains to consolidate our memories and process information.

Sleep and health, whether that be mental or physical health, are strongly related. Sleep disturbances can be one of the first signs of distress. Poor sleep is linked to physical problems such as a weakened immune system and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. These poor sleep patterns, cycles, or habits can affect mood, energy and concentration levels, our relationships, and our ability to stay awake and function at work during the day.

There are 4 main pillars that affect good sleep: Health, Environment, Attitude, and Lifestyle. If you would like more information about HEAL please [click here](#).