



MENTAL MINUTES

MARCH 2011 VOLUME 2, ISSUE 5

Advocacy for Special Education Programs

Advocacy in the Classroom

There are several ways to create special education advocacy within the classroom:

- mind-map ways *all* the students are different - for example: some wear glasses, some have allergies, some like dogs, some like to read
- if there is a student with special needs that requires special equipment or modifications, allow for open discussion as to what the purpose for the equipment/ modification is and how it helps the student
- have a special education awareness day
- have books that discuss various special needs (everything from dyslexia to multiple handicaps) in the classroom library

Source: <http://www.brighthouse.com/education/special/articles/71437.aspx>

Special education advocacy aids in eliminating the fears of including students with disabilities into a traditional classroom. Parents of students with disabilities will find special education advocacy in and out of the classroom.

What Parents Need to Know

Both Federal and state laws mandate special education in the United States. Nonetheless, parents of children with exceptional needs often face an uphill battle when it comes to obtaining the education their children need and deserve. Special education advocacy can be found through agencies designed to speak or write for the children and their parents. Advocates cannot provide legal counsel, however, they can help parents to find an attorney if one is needed.

Many states have special education advocacy organizations. For example, in Massachusetts, there is SPaN, Inc. (Special Needs Advocacy, Network), which offers parents information and resources. In addition, most states' education departments have resources and information that parents can access. Knowing there is someone who understands the legal aspects of special education helps parents to focus on finding the best educational experience for their child in a school that is open and accepting to children who are differently abled.

Getting to Know You

One of the simplest ways to advocate for special education is to provide opportunities for the school and community to see firsthand the inclusion of students with special needs as they participate alongside other students. Honest and open discussions of a student's abilities and needs helps their classmates understand why Jane must wear a special hearing device or why Johnny is strapped into a wheel chair. Discussions about how all of the students have different abilities and talents soon create an atmosphere of understanding.

Special Education Awareness

Depending on the school, Special Education Awareness Day

could be observed by one classroom for the benefit of the entire school or by the entire school for the benefit of the community. Planning for events should be made well in advance of the actual observance (several months to a year depending on the size of the observance).

Some ideas for the observance include:

- Plays, chorus or band concerts in which students with special needs participate with their peers. Incorporation of sign language by all the children would add to the festivities.
- Stations with various opportunities for students to see, feel, and listen to special needs equipment or modifications. For instance: wheel chairs could be made available from the local hospital with students being allowed to push each other through an obstacle course. (This can be an opportunity for discussion on accessibility.) Alternatively, students can be blindfolded with a friend to lead them around. (This enables discussion on how it feels not to see as well as how properly to assist someone with visual impairments.
- Computers might be set up with various special education programs for the student to see demonstrated.
- Awards can be given to students, teachers and community members in appreciation of their advocating for special education.
- Presentations could be given by professionals who can speak on subjects such as Special Need Challenges and Fears, Living with Special Needs, etc.

It Takes Everyone

Special education advocacy assists students as well as the community to understand that we are all different - physically, intellectually and emotionally - but yet we are all the same in that we all wish for respect, friends, and kindness. Schools and classrooms, in which special education advocacy is part of the norm, help everyone.

Source: <http://www.brighthouse.com/education/special/articles/71437.aspx>

Upcoming Trainings: Friday, March 25, 2011

Special Education Advocacy: 101 8:30 am - 12:30 pm (4 CORE CEU Hours)

David Glick of Triad EduPsych, PC will aid workshop participants in understanding the best way to advocate and treat special education and disability.

[Click here](#) for more information and to Register!!!

Suicide & Homicide:

The Impact on Today's Children and Adolescents 1:30 - 5:30 pm (4 CORE CEU Hours)

Homicide and suicide are the second and third leading causes of death, respectively, among teens ages 15 to 19, after unintentional injury. This workshop will include discussions on the etiology, symptoms, appropriate diagnosis, treatments, suicidal behaviors, and the impact on family and school environments in this population. Therapists, Mental Health Professionals and Educational Professionals, such as School Counselors and Social Workers, are often on the front lines when dealing with children and adolescents struggling with suicidal and homicidal ideation inside and outside of the home. This workshop will address how to respond to these individuals, and coordinate care with the treatment team and family.

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Violent Loss: Losing a Child to Homicide or Suicide



When a child dies a violent death such as suicide or homicide, survivors are left with not only their grief at the loss of their child, but with a heavy burden of legal proceedings and inner turmoil. Other bereaved parents are generally left to grieve in peace, but when there has been an act of violence, frequently

the police and other investigators are involved, the public is alerted to what has happened, and the case, especially in a death by homicide, may drag on for a year or more.

Often there is a mandatory autopsy, the body and belongings are held for evidence, and there may be a long delay before the survivors can see the body and find closure through burial or cremation. The justice system may take over the situation and the survivors are often left out of the loop of information and denied the opportunity to participate. Added to this is the reaction of not only the general public, but friends and even family members.

In an article in *The Atlantic Monthly* entitled "A Grief Like No Other" by Eric Schlosser, he says, "The fear of murder has grown so enormous in the United States that it leaves a taint, like the mark of Cain, on everyone murder touches. One might expect that the families of murder victims would be showered with sympathy and support, embraced by their communities. But in reality they are far more likely to feel isolated, fearful, and ashamed, overwhelmed by grief and guilt, angry at the criminal-justice system, and shunned by their old friends."

The reasons for this are only partially clear. Most bereaved parents (and siblings, grandparents and others) have experienced the distancing of formerly close friends and relatives. No one mentions the deceased child, life goes on for everyone around them, and the bereaved family is left to mourn in an isolated bubble, alone. People are afraid of death. When someone dies at a young age, the truth is forced upon them that anyone can die, at any time, without warning. The subconscious reaction is often to make distance between themselves and survivors in an effort of self-protection.

People are also typically extremely uncomfortable by the pain of another. In addition, we all resist change, and the death of a child brings change into the heart of every relationship the survivors have. They themselves are

irrevocably changed by the death of their child; over a long period of time, and through the tortuous process of grieving, the lives of every family member will be transformed, and they will emerge from the death and grief experience as different people. Many former friends and even relatives cannot accept this, and wait for the survivors to "get back to normal." They cannot accept that there is now, for them, a "new normal" that is permanent, and they may let the relationship go rather than adapt to what has happened.

When the death has been through suicide or homicide, these realities are greatly magnified. Survivors may feel shunned by their former friends, and very few may mention the loss and ask how the parents and siblings are doing, much less mention the cause of death. Added to that are the parents' heightened feelings of guilt; it is natural, though not realistic, to go back in time and ask what they could have done differently—notice the signs of depression, not let their child go out with certain friends, be home more, offer more advice, or different advice, give more discipline, or less discipline, not be annoyed so much, or show more disapproval for that lifestyle, not have moved, or chosen to have moved—the questions and the guilt can be endless.

The reality is that parents have done the best they could, with what they knew, and the resources they had at the time. The old adage is never more true than now that hindsight is 20:20 vision. The child made choices that played out in a way he or she did not anticipate. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 90% of those who die by suicide have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder at the time of death. People, especially men, are very good at hiding symptoms of depression and other disorders. They do not want to be seen as weak, mentally unstable, or unable to solve their problems without help. If the survivors have not perceived their child's pain, that was as the child intended it. *Metanoia.org* explains suicide succinctly: "Suicide is not chosen; it happens when pain exceeds resources for coping with pain."

If you have lost a child to suicide, homicide, vehicular homicide or other violent death, seek help from those who truly understand your pain, isolation and sorrow.

Source: <http://www.examiner.com/family-grief-bereavement-in-national-violent-loss-losing-a-child-to-homicide-or-suicide>

Incidence extrapolations for USA for Homicide:

16,889 per year, 1,407 per month, 324 per week, 46 per day, 1 per hour

Source: <http://www.wrongdiagnosis.com/h/homicide/prevalence.htm>

Incidence extrapolations for USA for Suicide:

29,199 per year, 2,433 per month, 561 per week, 79 per day, 3 per hour

Source: <http://www.wrongdiagnosis.com/s/suicide/prevalence.htm>

MENTAL MINUTE

In the left column you have a pair of words. Your goal is to find a third word that is connected or associated with both of these two words.

The first pair is PIANO and LOCK. The answer is KEY. The word key is connected with both the word piano and the word lock: there are KEYS on a piano and you use a KEY to lock doors.

Key is what is called a homo-graph: a word that has more than one meaning but is always spelled the same.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. LOCK — PIANO | 7. BED — PAPER |
| 2. SHIP — CARD | 8. ARMY — WATER |
| 3. TREE — CAR | 9. TENNIS — NOISE |
| 4. SCHOOL — EYE | 10. EGYPTIAN — MOTHER |
| 5. PILLOW — COURT | 11. SMOKER — PLUMBER |
| 6. RIVER — MONEY | |

Self Care Corner: How to Teach Self Help Skills to a Special Needs Child

Everyone strives for independence, whether it is to brush her own teeth, dress herself or even make her own bed. A special needs child is no different. Teaching self-help skills to a special needs child will help build self-esteem as well as allow the child to gain independence in everyday tasks. Taking time to teach a special needs child self-help skills will benefit him for a lifetime.



Instructions

1. Choose a self-help skill to work on.

It is important to focus on one skill at a time, as a child with special needs can become overwhelmed easily.

2. Demonstrate the skill to the special needs child.

Allow the child to observe how the new skill is performed. You may want to have the child observe for a week before you begin putting the new self-help skill into practice.

3. Develop a plan for achieving the new skill.

Create a chart that breaks down the skill into

small tasks. Some children with special needs learn at a slower pace, so breaking down a task will give the child a sense of accomplishment at each phase of the process. For example, if you are trying to teach the special needs child to wash her hands, break down the tasks into steps: turning on the water, putting soap on hands, scrubbing hands, rinsing hands, turning off the water and drying hands. In addition to creating a plan, create a reward system for the child as a motivational tool to master the task at hand.

4. Begin teaching self-help skills as close to the finish line as possible.

By working backward, the special needs child will have a sense of accomplishment from the very beginning. Once the task is mastered, the child will be able to move away from the finish line, learn a new task and take on more

responsibility. With the example of washing hands, you will want to start with the child drying his own hands, and then as that task is mastered, open up more tasks until the special needs child is able to wash his hands from turning on the water to drying his hands.

5. Use hand over hand technique to teach the self-help skill.

A special needs child not only needs to see the new task or skill, but since many special needs children are tactile learners, you should take their hands and show them what needs to be done so that they can feel what the task is.

6. Practice, practice, practice.

The only way a special needs child will master the self-help skill is to practice. At every opportunity, make sure the child uses the new skill, whether it is on herself, on others or on objects such as dolls. Learning through play is a great way for the child to keep the new skill fresh. You may be met with resistance from time to time, but if the special needs child does not practice, she runs the risk of losing the skill.

Source: http://www.ehow.com/how_4510211_teach-self-help-skills-special.html

Recipe Round-Up: Hamburger Buddy

Ingredients

- 3 cloves garlic, crushed and peeled
- 2 medium carrots, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 10 ounces white mushrooms, large ones cut in half
- 1 large onion, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 pound 90%-lean ground beef
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 2 cups water
- 1 14-ounce can reduced-sodium beef broth, divided
- 8 ounces whole-wheat elbow noodles, (2 cups)
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley, or chives for garnish

Instructions

1. Fit a food processor with the steel blade attachment. With the motor running, drop garlic through the feed tube and process until minced, then add carrots and mushrooms and process until finely chopped. Turn it off, add onion, and pulse until roughly chopped.
2. Cook beef in a large straight-sided skillet or Dutch oven over medium-high heat, breaking it up with a wooden spoon, until no longer pink, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in the chopped vegetables, thyme, salt and pepper and cook, stirring often, until the vegetables start to soften and the mushrooms release their juices, 5 to 7 minutes.
3. Stir in water, 1 1/2 cups broth, noodles and Worcestershire sauce; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until the pasta is tender, 8 to 10 minutes.
4. Whisk flour with the remaining 1/4 cup broth in a small bowl until smooth; stir into the hamburger mixture. Stir in the sour cream. Simmer, stirring often, until the sauce is thickened, about 2 minutes. Serve sprinkled with parsley (or chives), if desired.

Source: http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/hamburger_buddy.html



Our sister agencies provide an extensive array of mental health services for both children and adults. "Our mission is to provide high-quality, easily accessible services for Georgians, focused on promoting mental and emotional well-being through personal and professional development, family preservation, resource coordination, and individualized treatment.

Community Connections

ABC University kicked off this year's workshop schedule with the topic of Working with Children & Adolescents who Commit Sexual Offenses. The workshop was sold out and proved to be successful at providing overviews of emerging models related to treating Children & Adolescents who Commit Sexual Offenses; current research and literature; and focusing on current thinking regarding treatment modalities.

We would like to give a special thanks to the presenters, Roy Chancey, L.C.S.W. and Jeanne Gersh, Psy. D., who did a phenomenal job delivering the information on this population.

...an even BIGGER thanks goes out to the attendees who came ready to learn, inquire, and lend a wealth of their own experiences and information!

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ON MARCH 25th!!!



Our Non-Profit organization, Atlanta Center for Healing, is looking for Board Members and Volunteers!!!

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Look out for our Quarterly Newsletter!!!

Healing



Hearts

Mental Minute Solution

Solution

1. LOCK — PIANO > KEY
2. SHIP — CARD > Deck
3. TREE — CAR > Trunk
4. SCHOOL — EYE > Pupil (Exam and Private are also possible)
5. PILLOW — COURT > Case
6. RIVER — MONEY > Bank (Flow is also possible)
7. BED — PAPER > Sheet
8. ARMY — WATER > Tank
9. TENNIS — NOISE > Racket
10. EGYPTIAN — MOTHER > Mummy
11. SMOKER — PLUMBER > Pipe

Source: <http://www.sharpbrains.com/blog/2008/02/09/brain-teaser-words-in-your-brain-learn-as-you-exercise/>



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