



MAY HIGHLIGHTS



May is National Mental Health Month. This year, the theme "Live Your Life Well," challenges us to promote health and wellness in homes, communities, schools, and inform those who don't believe it's attainable. **Live Your Life WellSM** is a national public education campaign dedicated to helping people better cope with stress and enhancing their well-being.

Source: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/may>

May is National Foster Care Month... You Can Change a Lifetime! All children — including the 463,000 American children and youth in foster care — deserve a safe, happy life. Young people in foster care especially need nurturing adults on their side because their own families are in crisis and unable to care for them. Each May, we salute the compassionate people who make a difference by serving as foster parents, relative caregivers, mentors, advocates, social workers, and volunteers. Thanks to these unsung heroes, many formerly abused or neglected children and teens will safely reunite with their parents, be cared for by relatives, or be adopted by loving families.

Source: <http://www.fostercaremonth.org/Pages/default.aspx>

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MENTAL MINUTES

May 2010

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Factsheet: Helping Children Grow Up Healthy--Mind and Body

It is easy for parents to identify a child's physical needs—nutritious and balanced meals; adequate shelter and clothing; sufficient rest and physical activity; immunizations; and a healthy living environment. However, a child's mental and emotional needs may not be as obvious. Good mental health allows children to think clearly, develop socially, learn new skills, build self-esteem, and develop a positive mental outlook.

These are the basics for a child's good mental health:

Give children unconditional love.

Children need to know that your love does not depend on their accomplishments.

Nurture children's confidence and self-esteem.

Praise and encourage them. Set realistic goals for them. Be honest about your mistakes. Avoid sarcasm.

Encourage children to play. Play time is as important to a child's development as food. Play helps children be creative, develop problem-solving skills and self-control, and learn how to get along with others.

Enroll children in an after school activity, especially if they are otherwise home alone after school. This is a great way for kids to stay productive, learn something new, gain self-esteem and have something to look forward to during the week. Or check in on children after school if they are home alone. Children need to know that even if

you're not there physically, you're thinking about them, and interested in how they spent their day and how they'll spend the rest of it.

Provide a safe and secure environment. Fear can be very real for a child. Try to find out what is frightening him or her. Be loving, patient and reassuring, not critical.

Give appropriate guidance and discipline when necessary. Be firm, but kind and realistic with your expectations. The goal is not to control the child, but to help him or her learn self-control.

Communicate. Make time each day after work and school to listen to your children and talk with them about what is happening in their lives. Share emotions and feelings with your children.

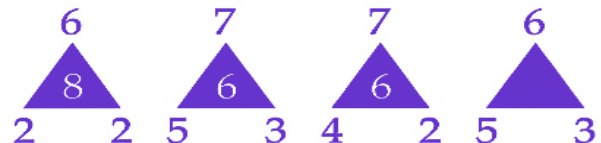
Get help. If you're concerned about your child's mental health, consult with teachers, a guidance counselor or another adult who may have information about his or her behavior. If you think there is a problem, seek professional help. Early identification and treatment can help children with mental health problems reach their full potential.

Source: <http://mentalhealthamerica.net/go/information/get-info/workplace/helping-children-grow-up-healthy-mind-and-body>



MENTAL MINUTE

Which figure should be placed in the empty triangle?



Exercise

Along with a healthy diet, exercise can improve your health and well-being. Exercising regularly can increase your self-esteem and confidence; reduce your feelings of stress, anxiety and depression; improve your sleep; and help you maintain a healthy weight. Find a type of exercise that you enjoy and talk to your doctor. You might enjoy walking, jogging or even dancing. You don't have to go to a gym or spend money to exercise. Here are some things you can start doing now to get active:

- Check out your local community center for free, fun activities.
- Take a short walk around the block with family, friends or coworkers.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Make sure the stairs are well lit.
- Turn on some music and dance.

Source: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/mhm/2009/stay-well>



Staying Well When You Have a Mental Health Condition

When you have a mental health condition, you may not realize how important your overall health is to your recovery. Having poor overall health can get in the way and make recovery harder. Finding ways to take care of your health can aid your recovery and help you feel better. Here are some things you can do.

Connect With Others

Spending time with positive, loving people you care about and trust can ease stress, help your mood and improve the way you feel overall. They may be family members, close friends, members of a support group or a counselor at the local drop-in center. Many communities even have warm lines you can call to talk to someone.

Advocate For Yourself

You deserve good health care. All too often, people with mental illnesses develop other health conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes, because their health is overlooked. If your doctor is not asking about your overall health, let him know that it's important to you and essential to your recovery.

Get The Care You Need

Get routine check-ups and visit your doctor when you're not feeling well. It may be due to your medicine or a symptom of your mental illness. But it could also be a different health problem.

Plan Your Sleep Schedule

Sleep can affect your mood and your body and is important to your recovery. Not getting the right amount of sleep can make day-to-day functioning and recovery harder. For tips on how to sleep better, contact the National Sleep Foundation at 202-347-3471 or visit www.sleepfoundation.org.

Watch What You Eat

Sometimes, medicine can cause you to gain weight. Other times, eating unhealthy foods can cause weight gain. Foods high in calories and saturated or "bad" fats can raise your blood pressure and cholesterol. This can increase your chances of gaining weight and having other health problems, like heart disease and diabetes. Here are some shortcuts you can take to healthy eating.

- If fresh vegetables are too costly, buy frozen vegetables. They can cost less and last a long time in your freezer.
- If you eat at fast food restaurants, many now offer healthy foods such as salads or grilled chicken.
- Talk to your doctor to learn more about how to have a healthy diet.

Manage Stress

Everyone has stress. It is a normal part of life. You can feel stress in your body when you have too much to do or when you haven't slept well. You can also feel stress when you worry about your job, money, relationships, or a friend or family member who is ill or in crisis. Stress can make you feel run down. It can also cause your mind to race and make it hard to focus on the things you need to do. If you have a mental illness, lots of stress can make you feel worse and make it harder to function. If you are feeling stressed, there are steps you can take to feel better:

- Slow down and take one thing at a time. If you feel like you have too much to do, make a list and work on it one task at a time.
- Know your limits. Let others know them too. If you're overwhelmed at home or work, or with friends, learn how to say "no." It may be hard at first, so practice saying "no" with the people you trust most.
- Practice stress reduction techniques. There are a lot of things you can do to make your life more peaceful and calm. Do something you enjoy, exercise, connect with others or meditate.
- Know your triggers. What causes stress in your life? If you know where stress is coming from, you will be able to manage it better.
- Talk to someone. You don't have to deal with stress on your own. Talking to a trusted friend, family member, support group or counselor can make you feel better. They also may help you figure out how to better manage stress in your life.

Do Something You Enjoy

During the week, find time—30 minutes, a couple of hours or whatever you can fit in—to do something you enjoy. Read a book or magazine, go for a walk or spend time with friends. Taking time for yourself to have fun and laugh can help you relax, ease stress and improve the way you feel.

Source: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/mhm/2009/stay-well>

How Mental Health Care Affects Outcomes for Foster Children

Of the approximately half-million children and adolescents in foster care in the U.S., experts estimate that 42 to 60 percent of them have emotional and behavioral problems. Despite the prevalence of mental health problems among foster children, little is known about how pre-existing mental health conditions affect their outcomes in foster care.

A new study co-written by Jung Min Park and Joseph P. Ryan, professors in the School of Social Work at the University of Illinois, followed 5,978 children in foster care in Illinois for several years to determine whether these children's placement and permanency outcomes were affected by their histories of intensive mental health treatment. The statewide sample included all children and adolescents 3-18 years of age who entered foster care for the first time between 1997 and 2001. They were observed through June 2005.

Based upon child welfare and Medicaid records, the study targeted children who received inpatient psychiatric care, because it was an easily identifiable marker of serious emotional and behavioral problems, and it represented especially high levels of mental health care needs. Five percent (296) of the children had at least one episode of inpatient mental health care prior to being placed in foster care.



"According to my previous study, children who received inpatient psychiatric care ended up in foster care within two years of their first inpatient episode," Park said. "Children who receive inpatient psychiatric care have a substantially greater risk for parent-child separation. Our current study shows that when those children enter the child-welfare system, they are more likely to suffer poor outcomes and be left behind in the system."

The study indicated that children with inpatient psychiatric episodes were at greater risk for frequent placement disruptions and were less likely to reunite with their families of origin or be adopted. About half of the sample experienced more than three placement changes during their first spell in foster care. Inpatient mental health episodes among white children increased the likelihood of placement instability for them by 75 percent, while such episodes decreased the likelihood of permanence by 24 percent among African-American children.

The study also suggested that there was limited access to and underutilization of mental health services among African-American children. "Children with a history of inpatient mental health treatment, especially when placed in foster care, benefit from continued follow-up and referrals to community mental health agencies to reduce placement disruptions and facilitate timely permanence," Park said.

Foster-care placements come at considerable cost to taxpayers: Placement in therapeutic foster care can cost \$30,000 or more annually, and placement in residential psychiatric care considerably more. "Early identification of service needs and related interventions for children and youth with intensive mental health needs can be cost-efficient by helping them achieve placement stability and permanence," Park said. During the observation period, about 70 percent of the children in the study achieved permanence by returning to their families or through adoption or guardianship.

The study appears in the Jan. 2009 issue of the journal *Research on Social Work Practice*.

Source: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/01/090113133142.htm>

Recipe Round-Up: Crispy Fish Tacos

Ingredients

1 1/4 pounds tilapia fillets, about 5
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 to 1 1/2 cups water
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon hot sauce
2 teaspoon garlic, chopped
Freshly ground black pepper
1/2 head green cabbage, shredded

1 cup all-purpose flour
Kosher salt
3 cups canola oil
1/4 cup sour cream
1 tablespoon lime juice
3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro leaves, divided
8 corn tortillas



Directions

Cut the fish into 1 1/2-inch chunks.

To make the batter, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl. Whisk in enough water, about 1 to 1 1/2 cups, until the mixture is the consistency of pancake batter.

Heat the oil in a deep skillet over medium heat to 360 degrees F. When the oil is hot, working in batches, dip the fish pieces into the batter and carefully add them to the hot oil. Cook the fish until golden brown on both sides and the fish is cooked through, about 4 to 6 minutes total. Remove from the pan and drain on to a sheet tray lined with a paper bag or paper towels.

To make the sauce, whisk together the mayonnaise, sour cream, hot sauce, lime juice, garlic, and 2 tablespoons cilantro in a small bowl. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.

Wrap the tortillas in a damp towel and microwave on medium for 1 minute to warm. Put about 1/4 cup of the shredded cabbage on each tortilla. Put 3 pieces of the fried fish on top of the cabbage, then top with some sauce. Arrange the tacos on a serving platter and garnish with a sprinkle of cilantro. Serve immediately.

Source: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/sandra-lee/crispy-fish-tacos-recipe/index.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.

Self-Care Corner: 12 Adoptive and Foster Parenting Tips

Know your own family. Assess your individual and family strengths and needs; build on those strengths and meet needs. Make sure you know how your own family feels about fostering and incorporate their opinions when assessing your strengths. As we know, it is not just the parents, or even the immediate family, that raises a child. Your parents, children, siblings and other relatives should be part of your decision to foster.



Manage behaviors. Help children and youth manage behaviors. Foster parents need to use discipline methods that birth parents can learn to use, methods that do not put children at risk for more abuse if they return home. Remember your basic alternatives to physical punishment; ignoring negative behavior, reward positive behavior, taking away privileges, time out, and modeling appropriate behavior.

Communicate effectively. Use and develop communication skills needed to foster or adopt. Be an active listener. Give clear messages, listen well and use tone of voice well. Abused and neglected children may feel worthless and may think their emotions are not worthy of being heard. Parents must listen in order to help build positive self-esteem. This shows the child an important skill which may help them be successful in other relationships.

Build connections. Help children and youth maintain and develop relationships that keep them connected to their pasts. Assist the child in staying in contact with family members. If this is a healthy relationship, and supported by your agency, this will help the child maintain a sense of connection. Find local organizations that will include the child in cultural programs to maintain their heritage.

Know the children. Identify the strengths and needs of children and youth who have been abused, neglected, abandoned, and/or emotionally maltreated. Knowing the child's history will help in your quest to build on their strengths. You must know when their needs require more help than you can offer.

Build self-esteem. Help children and youth build on positive self-concept and positive family, cultural and racial identity. Accentuate each child's strengths and their success as being part of your family. Encourage them to be proud of their cultural and racial identity. Model a positive attitude about your own identity.

Build strengths and meet needs. Build on strengths and needs of children and youth who are placed with you. Do not accentuate the negative. Let them know what you find as their strengths and tell them often. Remember, strengths build positive esteem and needs can be met. Try to meet their needs and know when to turn to others for help.

Assure health and safety. Provide a healthy and safe environment for children and youth and keep them free from harm. Make your home a safe haven and ensure that all children feel secure, not threatened, in your home. Adequate food, clothing and shelter is essential in modeling how parents should care for a child.

Work in partnership. Develop partnerships with children and youth, birth families, the agency and the community to develop and carry out plans for permanency. You may be the person who teaches the birth parents the skills they were never taught, or the person who helps the agency decide when a different permanency plan needs to be made. Know your community resources.

Assess impact. Assess the ways fostering or adopting will affect your family. Talk to each family member privately to ensure that you know their feelings and can accurately make a decision on behalf of the family. You will want to look at the positive outcomes fostering or adopting could bring, as well as any negative outcomes that family members may expect.

Be loss and attachment experts. Help children and youth develop skills to manage loss and attachment. Remember, children separated from birth parents have difficulty trusting adults. They become frightened and confused easily. Take the time to become well informed on loss and attachment. The more informed you become, the better resource you are for your children and other parents.

Make an informed decision. Make an informed decision to foster or adopt. Include the entire family, including extended family, when deciding to become foster or adoptive parents. Genuinely listen to concerns and reply in a non-threatened manner. Discuss your family's long term goals and how fostering and adopting may be a positive tool or negative force in those endeavors.

Source: <http://www.fosterparenting.com/foster-care/12-adoptive-fostering-parenting-tips.html>

Mental Minutes Solution

ANSWER:

3

SOLUTION:

The top number minus the bottom left-hand number is multiplied by the bottom right-hand number to give the number inside the triangle.

Source: <http://www.sharpbrains.com/blog/2007/06/22/pattern-recognition-brain-teaser-the-empty-triangle/>



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