Building Resilience in our Children

This week the Bedford Public Schools guidance staff coordinated a “Counseling and Community Therapy Roundtable.” All the school counselors were in attendance along with representatives from town counseling services as well as private providers. The group of professionals discussed the increased levels of anxiety and stress they were seeing in children and youth as well as concerns about technology dependence and difficulty handling discomfort and how hard it is for parents often to allow that. It seems as though parents want their kids to be doing something productive and engaging and successful and not have to face unease of any type. A colleague reminded us that “discomfort is good for you” and that many great ideas have sprung from boredom or dis-case.

I was reminded of a parent education event a few years ago with Robert Evans, Ed.D held at Lane School. For those of you unfamiliar with Dr. Evans, he is a psychologist and the Executive Director of The Human Relations Service in Wellesley, Mass. A former high school and pre-school teacher and a former child and family therapist, he has worked with schools and families for over thirty years and has consulted to over 1,700 schools around the country. His presentations are known for their lively wit and plain talk. Evans is also the author of many articles and three books, including Family Matters: How Schools Can Cope with The Crisis in Childrearing.

Roughly 200 parents attended this event which was co-sponsored by Lane School, BEST, and BYFS and titled “Holding On, Letting Go: Raising Resilient Children in Challenging Times.” Evans focused on what it takes to be a confident parent in general and in this day and age. “Not much” is required if the rate of change is slow and the choices for children are few. Our modern society is anything but that, meaning that the dilemma for parents is how to prepare children for their path rather than try to manage the path for the child. Evans highlighted three things children need for a good future - nurture, structure, and latitude - and went on to elaborate on the components of each with specific examples and the importance of each. He paid special attention to structure, or the behavioral expectations box of what is expected. 

You Influence Your Teen’s Lifestyle and Behavior

Did you know that kids who learn a lot about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50 percent less likely to use drugs? It’s important to talk often, listen regularly, and communicate clearly that you do not want your teen using drugs.

Remind kids about NOT drinking and driving. Be sure they know they can call home no matter what. Ask your teen if there are any other adults they would feel comfortable talking to or calling for a ride - a grandparent, a neighbor, a friend’s parent, etc. Then find those people on his list that you like and trust, and ask if they’d be part of your “Call any time, day or night” team. It’s a good idea to put the names and phone numbers (home, cell, and work) for each person directly into his/her cell phone so they’re always with them.

Encourage your teen to spend time with positive role models, including peers, family members or other influential adults. These key influencers can help your teen avoid the dangers of drugs and reinforce the benefits of healthy, drug-free living.

Results from the 2018 Bedford Youth Risk Behavior Survey will give you an idea about students’ lifestyles and behavior that affects their health.

- 76% of high school and 82% of middle school students live with both parents
- 70% of high school students participated in either school or out of school clubs
- Bedford youth were most likely to report having a family adult to talk to: middle school 88% and high school 82%
- Reported stress levels remain high - 59% of middle school students and 78% of high school students report being stressed

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Building Resilience in our Children

Boundaries are not negotiable, and latitude, or the freedom to learn from experiences, consequences, and actions.

With specific examples from his consultations to other schools and his own personal experience as a father, Evans urged parents to avoid two extremes - leaving their child free to solve every problem on his or her own and protecting their child from every negative consequence of an action or inaction. “If you don’t hold the line about what is important,” Evans expounded, “your kids will have no incentive to develop capacity.” What will distinguish children is what they do in their lives when things happen to them.

All parents want their children to become resilient and confident so how can parents strike a good balance between helping and protecting their children vs. letting them grapple with real-life issues? Dr. Evans suggested the following:

- Spend time with each of your children doing something they like to do. He said this was better than reading any parenting book.
- Don’t routinely do something for a child that he or she can do for him or herself.
- When a child presents a problem, don’t leap to fix it but listen and offer them the opportunity to explore their own solutions.

Use disappointment and examples of failure as preparations for developing long term developmental confidence. Kids need to learn to manage and control their impulses to be successful later on, and this will help with that skill.

For more information about Dr. Rob Evans visit his website at www.robevans.org

To view the taped presentation from Lane School visit the Bedford Youth and Family Services website www.bedfordma.gov/youth and check out the “For Parents” section and look in the ‘BYFS Presents Parent Education Workshops’ section. The link is below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFxYKS7bhaM&feature=youtu.be

Building Resilience in our Children

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You Influence Your Teen’s Lifestyle and Behavior

74% of middle school students and 67% of high school students always wear a seatbelt when riding in a car

- Alcohol is the most popular substance. 4% of middle school and 29% of high school students used it in the past month

- 74% of high school students have not had sexual intercourse

- 66% of high school students and 89% of middle school students have never tried an electronic tobacco product

Sign up for Bedford’s Safe Home Program

The Safe Homes program is a support network for Bedford parents with children in grades 6-12 who are concerned about alcohol and drug use at pre-teen and teen parties and gatherings.

Families who join SAFE HOMES promise to provide a safe and supervised home for teen parties. You can sign up online for Safe Homes by going to our website www.bedfordma.gov/youth (Click on Safe Homes).

Participating families will receive a directory booklet containing contact information of others who have joined. The directory will be mailed in late fall to all families that have signed up.

For more information or questions about the Safe Homes Program please call Jessica Wildfong at 781-275-7727.

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Does your student need a ride to after-school activities? Need help with parental chauffeuring duties?

**WHAT:** The DASH is available to transport Bedford residents ages 12 & up throughout Bedford & to some neighboring communities.

**WHO:** The DASH is a pilot program running until spring 2019, providing a 14-passenger, handicapped accessible vehicle.

**WHEN:** The DASH operates between the hours of 11 am & 6 pm, Monday through Friday (excluding holidays & weather emergencies).

**WHERE:** The DASH provides service within Bedford as well as to the towns of Lexington, Billerica, and Burlington. Concord trips are available on Mondays and Tuesdays on a space available basis only. Youth (under 18) pay $1 in town and $2 out-of-town each way. Discount books are available for purchase.

**HOW:** Call 781-275-DASH (3274) or go online at www.bedforddash.com to speak with the dispatcher, fill out the one-time registration form, & book your trip. After initial parental registration and permission, students are able to book trips on their own, or parents can choose to limit trips.

The Bedford DASH is a pilot program providing an on-demand shuttle in the Town of Bedford. The project is funded by the Town of Bedford in cooperation with Middlesex 3 Transportation Management Association, federal transportation grants through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation’s Community Transit Program, along with grant funding in partnership from Lahey Hospital and Medical Center.

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**Watch for Healthy Bedford’s Active Transit**

Watch for Healthy Bedford’s Active Transit events coming up in May!

Healthy Bedford is collaborating with our community partners and the Town of Lexington to encourage and advocate for safe and convenient walking, bicycling, and public transit in Bedford and the region.

Programming will focus on providing education and resources on how to walk and bike safety, building awareness of public transit options, and encouraging folks to embrace these transportation options as part of their day to day life.

Our calendar of events will include a Bike Rodeo at Lane School, a Celebratory Walk and Bike Parade to Davis School, promotion of hikes and bikes at the Council on Aging, Trails Committee walks and more. Watch the Healthy Bedford webpage for an upcoming calendar of events [https://www.bedfordma.gov/healthy-bedford](https://www.bedfordma.gov/healthy-bedford) or check us out on Facebook: Healthy Bedford

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**Healthy Dining On The Go**

Experts say that the average American family eats an average of 4.2 commercially prepared meals per week. This number equates to 18.2 meals in an average month that are prepared outside the home. Government surveys find that food typically eaten out of the home is nutritionally worse in every way than food prepared at home. However, many restaurants offer or will accommodate healthier options.

Consider the following tips when eating out:

1. Ask for it your way - if the item comes with fries or pasta, ask for veggies/fruit or a salad instead.
2. If an item comes with a side vegetable, ask to double or triple the vegetables.
3. Split an entrée with your dining companion OR ask to box half your entrée before it arrives at the table. Surveys show that restaurants often serve 2-3 times more than food labels consider a serving.
4. Drink water throughout the meal. It will slow you down and let the message get to your brain that you are full before your plate is empty.

Bedford has several establishments participating in our Healthy Bedford Healthier Dining Program. To learn more about the program and our participants, visit: [https://www.bedfordma.gov/healthy-bedford/pages/healthy-bedford-healthier-dining-programapplication](https://www.bedfordma.gov/healthy-bedford/pages/healthy-bedford-healthier-dining-programapplication)

For more information, contact Carla Olson, Healthy Communities Coordinator at 781-275-7727 x4330 or colson@bedfordma.gov
District Attorney Marian Ryan Launches iPhone App to Educate Teens About Healthy Relationships

In recognition of February as Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan has launched a new mobile application for iPhones called Healthy Heart Matters to help young people identify when a relationship may be unhealthy or potentially abusive.

This application development was spearheaded by local high school students across Middlesex County and who provided feedback about what they wanted to know. The result is an easy to access tool that gives teens scenarios that will resonate with them, hopefully makes them think critically about behaviors that may become normalized among their peers, and provides tips and resources about healthy dating.

Dating abuse is about power and control. Tools like the Healthy Heart Matters app allows teens, survivors and their peers to become knowledgeable and empowered to recognize the signs of abuse and know where to turn if they need help.


The app can be downloaded and is available for free on iOS devices.

Additional Resources:

About Dating Violence
https://reachma.org/what-we-do/about-dating-violence/

Dating Violence: What Parents Need to Know

Guidance for Schools and Districts on Addressing Teen Dating Violence
http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/safety/teen-dating.docx

Lauren Dunne Astley Memorial Fund
https://laurendunneastleymemorialfund.org/

Preventing Teen Dating Violence

For more information contact Jessica Wildfong, Prevention Services Coordinator at 781-275-7727 ext. 4331 or jessicaw@bedfordma.gov.

Look for our next newsletter in Fall 2019!
Faces of Bedford Returns!

Many of you may remember the Faces of Bedford Photo exhibit that debuted Bedford Day, Saturday, September 16, 2006 at Bedford Town Hall. Sponsored by the Violence Prevention Coalition (VPC) and funded in part by the Bedford Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, the project was part of the Anti-Defamation League’s No Place for Hate program at the time and was supported by a grant made possible through the generosity of their program sponsor Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. The exhibit contains 27 photos and family descriptions, showcasing the diversity in our community at that time.

The VPC chose to highlight 30 families of all types, including people who have grown up in Bedford and chose to raise their own families here, as well as more recent additions to our community. Included were members of our community who represent a variety of races, generations, educational backgrounds, economic backgrounds, and belief systems. It was our intention to illustrate the diversity of Bedford and encompass some of the overlooked groups, as well as people who are driving forces within our community. We wanted to celebrate this diversity, as it is part of what makes Bedford such a warm, welcoming, and accepting place to live.

Much has changed in Bedford in 13 years. The children featured in the exhibit have grown, some families have moved out of town or separated, others in the exhibit have died. The Bedford community has become even more diverse. While the VPC is not proposing a redo of the project at this time, we were thinking it would be edifying to take a look at our recent past prior to turning the exhibit over to the Bedford Historical Society and prior to Bedford’s upcoming 290th anniversary celebration this September.

The Faces exhibit will make its first reappearance this month at the regular meeting of the Bedford Historical Society, Sunday, 2/24/19 at 2 p.m. at Old Town Hall in the Great Room on the 2nd floor. Plan to come a little early and take a look at the exhibit before attending the meeting and presentation by Town Historian Sharon McDonald on slavery in Bedford. After that, the exhibit will be available to travel to various organizations, events, and businesses in Bedford and will likely make an appearance at Annual Town Meeting Monday, March 25th, 2019. The Citizen plans to profile some of the Faces families so watch for that!

Plans are underway to have photos displayed in the Bedford Historical Society display case at the high school later in the spring for a time-limited period. If you are interested in arranging the Faces of Bedford exhibit for your group or organization, please call 781-275-7727.

Thank you to our Donors:

- American Legion
- Women’s Auxiliary
- Anonymous (4)
- Bedford Motel
- Bedford Post Office Employees
- Bedford Schools Administration Employees
- Callahan’s Kenpo Karate
- Cambridge Savings Bank
- Carleton Willard Village Resident’s Association
- Carriage House Doubletree Bedford Glen
- First Parish in Bedford Social Responsibility Council
- Flatbread Company
- Keller Williams
- Michael & Lea Ann Knight
- Mettler Toledo
- Millipore Corporation
- Moison Ace Hardware of Bedford
- O’Malley & Colangeli CPA’s
- Staples
- VFW Post 1628
- Whole Foods & The Residents of Bedford through your Taxes
Don’t Gamble With Your Mental Health

About 4 to 6 million people in the U.S. have habits that qualify as problem gambling in any given year, and less than 10% of them will seek help for it.

While there is stigma surrounding all mental health disorders, there are additional misconceptions about gambling disorder. Many people see it as a weakness or character flaw, and don’t understand how someone can’t simply stop gambling when it begins to disrupt their life.

Gambling disorder was officially defined as a compulsive disorder, but was later re-categorized as an addiction, since the symptoms people experience are similar to that of other addictions.

There are serious consequences to gambling addiction, including a heightened risk of suicide. Other harmful impacts can also be devastating, including financial struggles like bankruptcy, relationship difficulties, loss of employment, depression, anxiety, and other forms of addiction, including alcohol and substance use.

The good news is there are growing resources available for those living with gambling addiction, including group or individual therapy support and medication. About 30% of those with gambling disorder are also able to recover on their own, without professional intervention.

It’s never too early to seek answers or seek help. Taking the first step and being able to recognize symptoms of problem gambling when you first think you see problem gambling could save you or a loved one from serious consequences.

Symptoms include:
- Escalating the amount of money gambled in order to feel excitement, or to make up for previous losses (also known as chasing the loss)
- Being unable to cut back or stop gambling, or feeling restless and irritable when attempting to stop
- Preoccupation with gambling
- Lying about the amount of time or money spent gambling
- Losing a relationship, job or other opportunity due to gambling

If you’re unsure of whether you or a loved one might have a gambling disorder, you can take a free, anonymous online screening at www.bedfordma.gov/youth under the screenings section to get more insight into your particular circumstances. After you take a screening, you’re connected with local resources that can aid in your recovery.

Test Your Knowledge on Drug and Alcohol Abuse

The 2018 Youth Risk Behavior Survey provides data from our students on their risky behaviors. Last spring, students in grades 6-8 (John Glenn Middle School - JGMS) and grades 9 - 12 (Bedford High School - BHS) answered questions about smoking, drinking, sexual behavior, bullying, and other risky behaviors. This data helps inform the health curriculum in our schools and health programs offered in the town. See how well you know our students by taking the following quiz. To take the full quiz online visit our website www.bedfordma.gov/youth and go to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey section.

We have taken three of the questions from the Bedford Youth Risk Behavior Survey to test your awareness of local use patterns. You can find the answers on the next page.

Bedford Youth Risk Behavior Survey IQ Challenge

1. Among Bedford high school teens, how many reported drinking alcohol in the past month? On average:
   A. A few: About 29%
   B. Half: 50%
   C. Most: 80%
   D. Almost All: 97%

2. Among Bedford high school teens, do more teens report using marijuana or alcohol?
   A. More use alcohol.
   B. More use marijuana.
   C. About the same.

3. What is the most common way that Bedford High School students gain access to alcohol?
   A. Ask someone of legal age to buy it for them
   B. Get it from older friends or siblings
   C. Get it from home with parent’s knowledge
   D. Take it from parents or a friend’s parents
RECOMMENDATIONS

Areas of Prevention for Families:

- Parents are the most important influence on their teen when it comes to risky behaviors. It’s important to talk often, listen regularly, and communicate clearly that you do not want your teen using alcohol or drugs. Using alcohol or drugs before the brain has fully developed increases your risk for future addiction dramatically. Delaying use has been shown to decrease risk by as much as 80%.

- Families need to continue to remind kids about NOT drinking or using any substances and driving, or riding with someone who has, and be sure they can call home for a ride no matter what. Research shows that kids who learn the risks of drugs and alcohol from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use than those who do not.

- Parents can help to keep stress levels down by being certain that kids have a balance between activities, school, and unstructured leisure time. A good rule of thumb is involvement in one sport and one kind of other activity at a time.

- Be sure to spend enjoyable time together so that interactions aren’t only about school and other “chores.” Eat a meal together, watch a television show, go to a movie, read a book they have to read for school, do a project. Stay connected.

- If you are worried about your child’s mental health, take advantage of Bedford Youth and Family Services mental health screenings section of their webpage [www.bedfordma.gov/youth](http://www.bedfordma.gov/youth) under the “screenings” section. The screening is anonymous and confidential. After answering a few questions, you will receive customized feedback, educational materials, and treatment resources if necessary.

You can view the full executive summary of the 2018 Bedford Youth Risk Behavior Survey as well as some of the main survey findings related to substance use, violence and safety, and mental and physical health on Bedford Youth and Family Services website [www.bedfordma.gov/youth](http://www.bedfordma.gov/youth) under the Youth Risk Behavior Survey section.

Massachusetts rates are available from [www.mass.gov/eohhs](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs)

You can learn more about overdose deaths and national statistics at [www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates](http://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates). For more information contact Jessica Wildfong, Prevention Services Coordinator at 781-275-7727 ext. 4331 or jessicaw@bedfordma.gov.

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**Positive Discipline: Suggestions**

Source: Children’s Trust Fund

**Be consistent.** At an early age let children know that you mean what you say. Don’t make unrealistic threats and do make sure that the consequences fit the behavior.

**Seize the positive moment.** Just as it is important to discourage negative behavior it is also important to catch your child in the act of doing something good. Reward positive behavior with praise and privileges.

**Adopt a non-hitting attitude.** Studies show that spanking, contrary to popular belief, is not an effective way to discipline.

**Listen to your children.** Respect their ideas and try to understand their point of view.

**Love your children.** When a child is misbehaving, it is often the time that they need your love the most. Express disapproval of the behavior, not the child.

**Be a good role model.** Set a good example for your children. They will learn by imitating you. To teach manners, for example, use words like “please” and “thank you.”

**Establish consequences ahead of time.** Let your children know what will happen if rules are broken. “If a toy is thrown it will be taken away.”
Bedford/Lexington Veterans Services

781-698-4848 Lexington  781-275-1328 Bedford
Monday-Friday 8:30-4:30 Lexington  Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:30-4:30
39 Marrett Rd.  Bedford Town Hall, First Floor

BYFS Staff Queries - Main Number: 781/275-7727

Sue Baldauf, Director, x4328 - Counseling referrals or questions ~ General dept. questions ~ Community concern ~ Issue related to Violence Prevention Coalition, Bedford Community Partnership, Business Diversity Training, Progress Fund ~ Parenting Education Topic
Fran Stander, Administrative Assistant, x4329 - General questions ~ General community & Resources ~ Job Match ~ Events & Press Releases ~ New Resident Packets ~ Volunteer Opportunities
Jessica Wildfong, Youth Development/Prevention, x4331 - JGMS After School ~ Peer Mentoring ~ Youth Website ~ Other youth related issues - Alcohol, tobacco, or drug education ~ Diversion ~ Youth Risk Behavior Survey ~ Safe Homes ~ Fuel Assistance
Carla Olson, Healthy Bedford Coordinator, x4330 ~ Safe Routes to School & Healthy Bedford initiatives
Eliot Counselors: 781-275-7727 Lynne Chapas x4332, Laura Smith x4335; Andrea Vana x4333 or 978-369-1113

2018-2019 Youth and Family Services Committee:
Peter Ricci, Chair ♦ Marcia Morgan, at Large ♦ Dori Pulizzi, at Large ♦ Marge Heckman, at Large
Caroline Fedele, Selectman & Recreation Liaison ♦ Jeff Wardwell, Police
Mary Seymour, Board of Health ♦ Ann Guay, School Committee

Job Match

Teens looking for part-time employment?
Residents looking for help with child care, yard work, snow shoveling, odd jobs?
Applications Online or at BYFS Office
Youth may register and enjoy the flexibility of not being locked into a job giving them the freedom to be involved in other activities.
After completing an application the teen is matched to a resident’s request depending on their capability.
Applications can be downloaded at www.bedfordma.gov/youth under Job Match or in hardcopy at our office.
Residents with a job can call Fran Stander at 781/275-7727 or frans@bedfordma.gov