Talk overview

1. Nature vs. Nurture
2. Parenting Styles
3. Childhood mental illness
4. Family Wellness- SAFE
5. Parenting with mental illness
Nature vs. Nurture

• 50 years of research summarized data from 14.5 million sets of twins (2015)

• On average, about 50% of individual differences are genetic and 50% are environmental

• Nature
Recognizing mental illness in children
How to get help

Overarching general ideas for family wellness

• Nurture
Parenting styles

Eight Dimensions of Wellness

Social
Emotional
Spiritual
Occupational
Intellectual
Financial
Physical
Environmental
Parenting as a verb

• Being a parent vs “to parent”
• Helicopter, snow-plough, free-range, attachment, survivalist or cotton wool?
• Laid-back Swedish approach, the tightly controlled French or the seat-of-your-pants Mediterranean?
• Elephant moms?
• Dolphin moms?
• Tiger moms?
Parenting styles

Encouragement, explaining the reasoning behind actions and decisions, and setting standards of conduct - high psychosocial competence, higher aspirations, greater academic success and low measures of psychological and behavioral dysfunction.

Do not want to repress their children in any manner - high social competence and self-esteem, but relatively low achievement and school engagement alongside high rates of problem behaviors and drug use.

Unavailable for their children, do not use any form of discipline - worst outcomes in all categories.

Rebelling due to the imposed discipline leading to low social competence and low self-esteem in Western cultures.

Lindner Center of HOPE | UHealth
Let’s take a quiz

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xz6fIsxH_0o

Which style is the best?
What can we do?

• Be mindful of different parenting styles/strategies. Avoid comparisons (Social media)

• Be flexible while checking current family dynamic

• Solicit help if it feels like you are “loosing it” more often

• Knowledge is power- check out some good books on the particular issue you think you are struggling with
Genetics of Mental illness (Nature)

• Up to 90% - Autism
• 79-85% - Schizophrenia
• 30-40% - Depression
• 70-80% - ADHD
• 60%- Alcohol dependence
• 55-60%- Anorexia and Bulimia Nervosa
• 60-70% - Obsessive compulsive disorder

FACTS ABOUT CHILDREN’S MENTAL HEALTH

29.8% of young adults ages 18 to 25 reported having experienced a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder in the past year.

1 in 5 U.S. children and teens have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder.

$247 billion spent annually on mental, emotional & behavioral disorders among youth including for mental health services, lost productivity, and crime.

1/2 of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14.

1 in 4 parents finds it difficult to obtain mental health services for their child.

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

www.aacap.org

Lindner Center of HOPE | UCI Health
Mental and Physical health check ups

• Regular physicals (for middle/highschoolers as well)
• Regular dental check ups (every 6 months)
• Attention to changes in habits/attitudes/behaviors

Moods – Sleeping habits- Eating habits- Friends/Motivation

What is a “normal” change and what should worry me?
Er on the side of caution

• If your gut says something is wrong- listen to it

• Family history of mental illness, even if not clear/not officially diagnosed should be considered as seriously as one would consider family history of cancer, high blood pressure or heart disease

• Persevere in getting to the right treatment team / place/ diagnosis/ treatment modality

• Do your homework and spend the time to educate yourself and your child
Overarching general ideas for family wellness - SAFE

• **Sleep**
• **Activity**
• **Food**
• **Electronics**
Healthy Sleep Duration

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that you get the following hours of sleep on a regular basis for optimal health at each stage of life.

![Bar chart showing recommended sleep duration by age group.](chart)

**Age**
- 4–12 months: 12–16 hours
- 1–2 years: 11–14 hours
- 3–5 years: 10–13 hours
- 6–12 years: 9–12 hours
- 13–18 years: 8–10 hours
- 18+ years: 7+ hours

Suggested sleep duration includes time spent napping.

*SleepEducation.org*

A sleep health information resource by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine

Lindner Center of HOPE | UC Health
On importance of sleep

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACUTE EFFECTS SLEEP LOSS</th>
<th>CHRONIC EFFECTS SLEEP LOSS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tired, lethargic</td>
<td>High blood pressure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bags under eyes</td>
<td>Obesity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of dexterity</td>
<td>Obstructive sleep apnea</td>
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<td>Insulin insensitivity</td>
<td>Cardiovascular disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leptin insensitivity</td>
<td>Psychiatric disorders-depression</td>
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<td>Increased Ghrelin secretion</td>
<td>Overtraining</td>
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<td>Weight gain</td>
<td>Illness/Injury</td>
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<td>Insomnia</td>
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<td>Fall asleep at in appropriate times</td>
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<td>Strength loss</td>
<td>Muscle loss</td>
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Sleep Hygiene

• It is a family affair

• Fixed bedtime and an awakening time through the week

• Sleep rituals, sleep diary, comfortable bedding, moderate room temperature, limited excess noise and a well ventilated room.

• No naps, no caffeine 4-6 hours before bedtime, no exercise before bed.

• No clock-watching and no electronics in the bedroom. Using a cell phone at night can increase depression and lower self-esteem, especially in teenagers.

• **90% of kids get less sleep than recommended (2015)**

The American Heart Association
Recommendations for
Physical Activity in Kids

At least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity aerobic activity Every Day

© 2014 Learn more at heart.org/KidsActivityRecommendations.

Children’s Physical Activity Pyramid

- Cut down on T.V. watching, video and computer games, sitting more than 30 minutes at a time

- 2-3 times a week:
  - Leisure & Playtime: Table tennis, soccer,АО hockey, dance, martial arts, swimming, boating, golf
  - Strength & Flexibility: Push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, jumping jacks, stretching

- 3-5 times a week:
  - Aerobic Exercises (at least 20 minutes): Walking, jogging, biking, swimming, canoeing, skateboarding, rollerblading, rope climbing

- Everyday:
  - Play outside, take the stairs instead of the elevator, help around the house or yard
  - Bathe your pet, pick up your toys, walk to the store, go for a walk

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The importance of family meals
Screen time

1. Sedentary activity
2. Isolation – minimum human interaction involved
3. Limited ability to develop healthy coping strategies
4. Commonly inappropriate content
5. Can compromise sleep and can increase irritability
Parenting with mental illness

• 68% of women and 55% of men with mental illnesses in the United States are parents

• Often depression or anxiety disorder can go undiagnosed for a long time

• Stress (e.g. parenthood) aggravates mental illness

• Parenting, especially children under 5 y.of age, is one of top 10 stressors from biological standpoint
Vicious circle of parenting with mental illness

- Irritability, mood swings, insomnia, anxiety, lack of interest/motivation, changes in appetite/weight, isolation, sadness, panic, guilt, fatigue

- Low mood, low energy
- Problems at home/work
- Need to push even more
- Keep pushing and doing
- Something FEELS WRONG
Child’s perspective

• Kids are scared of the unknown
• Kids often know more than we think they do
• Kids don’t blame but they need to understand
• Kids need to be given age appropriate tools on how to handle mental illness in parents
• Kids will not love less because the parent is sick
• Kids catch lies quickly and lose trust
• Kids need to be reassured that parental illness is not their fault
Unless the child is properly informed, they:

• Can think it is their fault the parent is sick
• Can blame the other parent
• Can learn how to protect the sick parent in a dysfunctional way (lie, take on more than age appropriate)
• Can develop unhealthy defense mechanisms (passive aggression, acting out, displacement)
Look for answers / ask for help

“Something is off” can be a diagnosable illness requiring help/treatment

This is very difficult to do when one is sick.

Support of other parent/relatives. No blame and judgment (~brain tumor?)
Take home-message

• Parenting is very hard even for a healthy person
• Family wellness is a true family affair
• Parenting with a sick brain makes it even more difficult
• Acknowledge the problem, get informed, seek help, recruit support
• Be kind to yourself!

Take good care of yourself for the sake of your kids
Your committed action

• What will you do to strengthen your mental health?

10 TIPS TO STRESS LESS

1. **Look for opportunities in life’s challenges**
2. **Go for a walk with a friend**
3. **Focus on things you can control**
4. **Ask for help**
5. **You give, someone else gives a smile**
6. **Get involved with a cause you believe in**
7. **Ruminative ticket**
8. **Go to bed earlier**
9. **Breathe**
10. **Take a dance class**

VISIT www.mentalhealth.asn.au

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION NSW 1300 794 991

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Welcome to being a parent of a teenager. Prepare for a large amount of eye rolling, emotional outbursts, and thoughts of running away. And that's just the parents.