



Families Working Through the Tough Times Together

In today's society, families are very diverse. Families may consist of single parents raising children, two parents raising children, grandparents raising grandchildren, aunts and uncles raising nieces and nephews, step families, and adoptive families. According to Family Service America, Inc., a family consists of two or more people, whether living together or apart, related by blood, marriage, adoption, or commitment to care for one another. Regardless of what the make up of the family is, during life's challenges, families benefit from working together. Below are a few quick tips and resources to get you started:

Schedule a family meeting

Family meetings are the perfect opportunity to allow and encourage family communication. Even a preschooler can contribute by drawing a picture of their thoughts. This is the time to discuss matters that will affect the family. Once the issue is identified, the family can brainstorm ways to tackle it. By creating a plan together, each member plays a role in helping the family achieve their goals. Addressing many of a family's concerns during a family meeting not only strengthens the family, it will enhance the younger member's ability to work as a team and make decisions. Nurturing these life skills will increase their self esteem and prepare them as they meet their individual challenges throughout their development. Parents/caregivers may find that engaging the family in the process will help reduce their stress.

Identify your resources

To effectively create a plan, your available resources must be identified. Make a list of all your resources- time, money, family etc. Remember, extended family, friends and neighbors are resources too.

Make wellness a priority

Eating right and exercising are a large part of being able to handle the troubling moments in life. Preparing and eating a healthy meal as a family cultivates the family relationship as well as the physical body. After dinner, go for a walk or bike ride around the neighborhood or in a nearby park. It doesn't matter what activity you choose, just make it a priority to get up and get moving.

Be optimistic about the future

Families who spend time together, communicate and maximize their resources are able to meet the difficult moments of life with the confidence that they will be better and stronger individually and collectively.

Each tip given, research has identified as an attribute of a strong family. Families who communicate, develop and implement strategies to address difficult times are better equipped to sustain and persevere during the tough times.

Resources

Family Finances

Financial Crisis and Families

http://www.extension.org/pages/Financial_Crisis_and_Families

Financial Crisis and Youth

http://www.extension.org/pages/Financial_Crisis_and_Youth

Success and the Single Parent: The Money Crunch

http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/document_he342

Children and Money

http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/document_he160

Families & Stress

Teaching Children Coping Skills

http://www.extension.org/pages/Teaching_Children_Coping_Skills

Dealing with Family Stress

<http://extension.missouri.edu/extensioninfonet/article.asp?id=2502>

From Family Stress to Family Strengths

<http://www.cdc.gov/NASD/docs/d001201-d001300/d001249/d001249.pdf>

Relationships

General Relationship Information from the University of Florida

http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/families_and_consumers/relationships/

Your Money Matters

http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/document_fy046

