

Promoting positive health and mental health through parent-school partnerships

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Thank you

- Manitoba Association of Parent Councils for inviting me today.
- Thank you for coming today and participating

About you?

About me?

In your work with parent councils – what are some of the concerns that you hear from parents about child health, mental health, learning, and schools?

What is positive health?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) defined health in its broader sense in its 1948 constitution as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Positive mental health

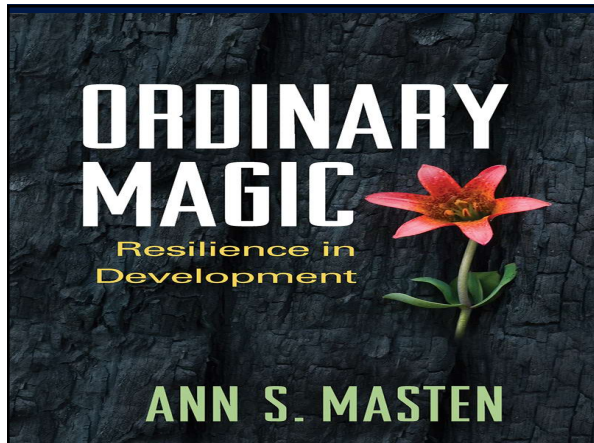
Six aspects of functioning

- self-acceptance
- positive relations with others
- personal growth
- purpose in life
- environmental mastery
- autonomy

Resilience

Two components:

- (1) exposure to significant threat or severe adversity; and
- (2) the achievement of positive adaptation despite the adversity



Ordinary magic: Resilience is normal

- Resilience appears to be a common phenomenon arising from ordinary human adaptive processes.

Developmental cascades

- Positive factors in development (e.g. problem solving, self regulation, curiosity) build later strengths
- Early problems in the child's development may increase problems in the future
- The earlier you provide support the better
- But – it is never too late to build strengths

What factors promote resilience?

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(Sapienza & Masten, 2011)

- Positive relationships with caring adults.
- Effective care giving and parenting.
- Intelligence and problem-solving skills.
- Self-regulation skills.
- Perceived efficacy and control.
- Achievement motivation.
- Positive friends or romantic partners.
- Faith, hope, spirituality.
- Belief that life has meaning.
- Effective teachers and schools.

What systems are most influential for these factors ?

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The places where children spend most of their time

- Parents

The places you can reach parents and children

- Public health system
- Early childhood education
- Schools

What systems are most influential for these factors ?

Health care system

- Public health nursing
- Routine health care visits – family doctor or pediatrician

Survey: Interest in receiving information on healthy lifestyle

Topic	Very interested (%)
Healthy eating	50%
Healthy sleeping	43%
Information on vitamins	41%
Stress management	41%
Maintaining healthy weight	40%
Healthy physical activity	40%
Improving relationships and social life	23%

Survey: Interest in receiving information on healthy lifestyle (60% were parents)

Topic	Very interested (%)
Dealing with challenging relationships in the family	27%
Healthy eating/activity for children	30%
Dealing with parenting challenges	41%
Quitting smoking (22% were smokers)	21%
Reducing alcohol or drug use	13%

Frequency of receiving information that influenced eating, physical activity, and other health habits

Source of information	Quite often or very often
Internet	58%
Television	44%
Magazines	32%
Your education	31%
Pamphlets from your doctor's office	25%
Radio	22%
Newspapers	17%
Posters in the community	13%

Mental Health Problems Are Very Common in Childhood

- 41% will have a problem at some point in childhood
- 22% (1 in 5) will have a severe problem
- More common than most other health problems
- No evidence that they are more common now than they were in the past

Common Problems in Childhood

Problem	Present at some time	Severe at some time	Average age when started
Anxiety	32%	8%	Age 6
Behaviour (include ADD)	19%	9%	Age 11
Depression	14%	11%	Age 13
Substance	11%		Age 15

Collaboration between parents and schools can be a strong support for child health and mental health.

How does your school encourage parent engagement?

Parent engagement

Ontario Parent Engagement Policy identified 4 especially important strategies.

1. School climate

Foster and sustain a positive, welcoming school climate in which all parent perspectives are encouraged, valued and heard

2. Eliminate barriers

Identify and remove barriers to parent engagement that may prevent some parents from fully participating in their children's learning

Reflect the diversity of our students and communities

3. Support for parents

Provide parents with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to support student learning at home and at school.

4. Parent outreach

Review and expand communication and outreach strategies such as local workshops, presentations, tools and resources, to share information and strategies related to supporting learning at home and parent engagement in schools.

Do schools give clear messages about how to contact them?

Is your organization providing support to parents and schools to answer their questions now?

Is your school providing support to parents to answer their questions now?

How do you get information to parents?

Knowledge mobilization:

- getting the right information
- in the right format
- to the right person
- at the right time
- to support decision making

Variable formats

- Different people prefer different formats
- Concise is good
- Visually interesting is good
- Do we rely too much on oral communication?

Teachable moments

Teachable moments at school

- Starting Kindergarten
- Transition to Grade 1
- Start of every school year
- School breaks and return to school after school break
- Report card time
- Parent teacher meetings

Pushing information out

Making it fun

Available when parents have a concern

Key principles

- Parents are the captains of the team – they don't always take on this role – authoritative parenting
- If parents take a leadership role and get good support from community resources children will be happier and develop more resilience.
- Parents want to hear about effective strategies for accomplishing family goals.
- The earlier the better.

Concepts

- Supporting parents on issues of concern one issue at a time
- Intervening early to have an early impact on development (developmental cascades)
- Easier to develop an early pattern of healthy behavior than to change a problem pattern when it has developed

My work with parents of young children– what are parents concerned about?

- What can I do to give my child the best start in life?
- How can I encourage school success?
- My child is a picky eater. How do I encourage healthy eating?
- My child does not listen to me.
- How do I help my child deal with conflict and frustration, including not getting his/her way?

Parent concerns

Things that may be off the radar with some parents but are very important

- Encouraging age appropriate independence
- Encouraging problem solving
- Encouraging friendships with other children
- Ability to delay gratification
- Screen time

Some examples

Healthy management of screen time

Seductiveness of screen time!!

- Powerful as a child minder
- Children learn very quickly using resources that are in the home – viewing pictures, starting videos
- Children will advocate for more
- Parents are often very engaged in screen time – TV on in the background, checking email, showing videos, television as recreation

Impact of increased screen time

- Dramatically decreased physical activity
- More passive activities, not as much engagement with the environment, problem solving – decreased mastery
- Increased problems with weight for children and adults, association with heart disease
- Less time for reading for pleasure
- What about contact with friends? Screen time as a substitute for time with friends and family? Reduced empathy?



Managing screen time

Recommendations from national pediatrics associations

- 1 to 2 hours on weekdays max
- 2 hours a day or so on weekends max

Managing screen time

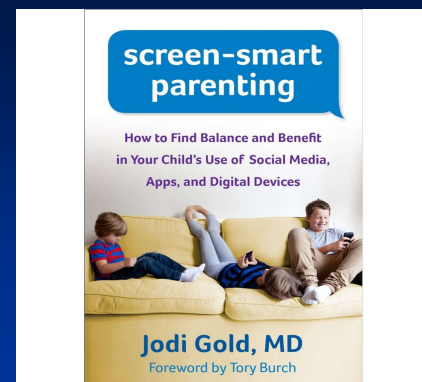
It is one thing to make recommendations but parents may run into problems. Can you help them with problem-solving?

1. Be in charge – parents are the captains of the team!
2. Have rules, set limits
3. Set a good example

Describing common problems and solutions

- I'm bored
- I just want to finish this
- But it's the weekend, but other kids can do it, but my friend is over
- I don't want to go to bed because I am not tired
- Eating with screens on
- Its my game, my phone, my laptop

Material for parents: Managing screen time



Dissemination: Screen time as an example

- Getting information (and discussion) to parents early and repeatedly
 - Prenatal visits
 - Postnatal visits
 - Nurse and physician visits
 - Early childhood education
 - Regularly throughout school

Children's sleep

Where have you seen information about children's sleep?

What information did you come across?

What about sleep in adults?

What have you heard about that?

Parents have a wide range of concerns about sleep – not a single problem

- Does not want to go to bed at bedtime
- Will only go to bed with a specific parent (Mom or Dad)
- Often out of bed to ask for something
- Reports difficulty falling asleep
- Will only fall asleep if parent in room or bed (and sometimes parent has to stay)

Parents have a wide range of concerns about sleep – not a single problem (2)

- Sleeps in parent(s) bed
- Gets up in night to come to parent(s) bed
- Wakes up with frightening dream or crying
- Awake for long period during the night
- Wakes up very early in morning

Normal sleep

Most parents have little information about normal sleep. There is a lot of incorrect information in the media about normal sleep for children and adults.

The body clock

- People use the term body clock to describe the normal pattern in wakefulness and sleepiness humans (and animals) have over the 24 hour day. This pattern changes over the age range and differs from person to person. For most people, the sleep/wake cycle is quite consistent from day to day. A very irregular schedule or shift work (for adults) can interfere with this pattern.

Daytime changes in wakefulness and sleepiness

Our sleep/wake cycle influences us in the daytime as well as in the night. The technical name for this is circadian rhythm. The changes in the level of hormones with this cycle influence alertness and concentration.

Key points

- Some children and adults take longer to become alert after waking up in the morning even when they are in a good sleep routine. This does not mean that they have not had enough sleep.
- It is normal to have different levels of alertness and sleepiness at different times during the day. Feeling sleepy for one or two periods during the day is quite normal.

Key points (2)

- In many cultures, people take a siesta (or a short nap) in the middle of the day. Adults may use catnaps to recharge their batteries during the day. While short naps (less than 15 minutes) are helpful for adults, long naps will meet some of your daily sleep requirements and may result in sleeping less deeply that night. Teenagers may start taking naps again depending on their sleep schedule.

Key points (3)

- Feeling tired (and even sleepy) a few times over the day is also normal for children and adults. There are many ways to rest in addition to sleeping. When you or your child feel tired, it is helpful to listen to your body and take time to rest. There are many ways to rest including sitting and reading a book, talking to someone you like, or closing your eyes for a few minutes.

How much sleep is necessary for each child?

At every age, there are tremendous differences in sleep requirements. Even in the first two years of life there can be two or three hours difference in the time two children (even in the same family) sleep when they are at the same age.

How much sleep is necessary for each child?

Some healthy children (and adults) are short sleepers. They require less sleep and may be generally more energetic than most people. There are some advantages to being a short sleeper – including having more time each day to do interesting things.

Observing sleep requirements

- The only way to know your child's sleep requirements is to observe the amount of time your child usually sleeps. If your child is having difficulty with the sleep routine, keeping a daily log for a few weeks can really help. A copy of a log is in the following material. This will help you to see patterns your child's sleep routine and how much sleep he usually requires.

Helping set your child's body clock

When considering changes in the sleep routine, most parents focus on the going to bed time. It is much more effective to focus on the getting up time. If you want to make changes in the sleep schedule and you focus on the getting up time (making it earlier or later), the going to bed time will adapt to that change over a number of days.

Some basics

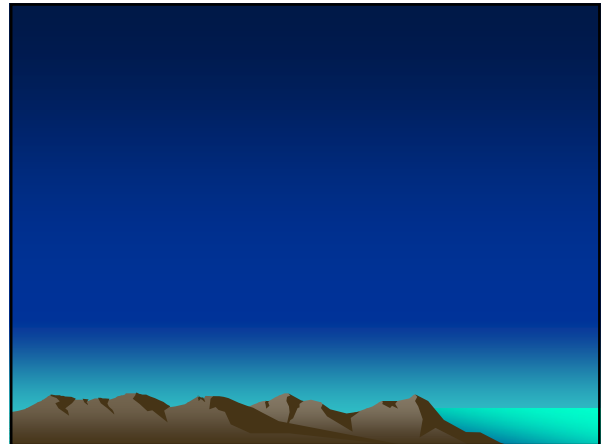
- Watch out for weekend and holiday changes in sleep routine.
- Wind down time before lights out
- A realistic bedtime
- Going to sleep is not work

Problems falling asleep

- What approaches have you heard of?

Problems falling asleep

- Most effective approach: later going to bed time.



Role of the school in promoting resilience

- children spend a large proportion of their waking hours in school
- develop academic skills, life skills, and forming lifelong relationships.
- possibility for ongoing contact with parents.

Friendships

Friendships

- Think of your three closest friends.
- How old were you when you met them?
- Where did you meet them?

What can parents and schools do to promote friendships?

What can parents and schools do to promote friendships?

- Have an awareness of the importance – watch for children who have problems with this.
- Play dates – challenge in arranging this
- Schools – observe interactions during free play times
- If children are struggling provide extra support

Teaching problem solving in the home and school

Problem solving fits very well with many school activities

- All children benefit from learning an explicit approach to problem solving
- It can be adapted for various ages right down to Kindergarten age

Children who Learn to Solve Problems:

- Realize that they have options
- Develop confidence in themselves
- Become more capable people
- Learn to develop emotional self-control

Steps to Solving Problems

- Step 1: What is the problem?
- Step 2: How big a problem is it?
- Step 3: What could you do?
- Step 4: What would you like to try doing?
- Step 5: How well did the solution work?



Self regulation

- Learning to accept and deal with emotional distress
- Learning to delay gratification – not having everything you want right away
- Good for there to be some things you want and will work to achieve
- Learning to cooperate with others
- Age appropriate independence

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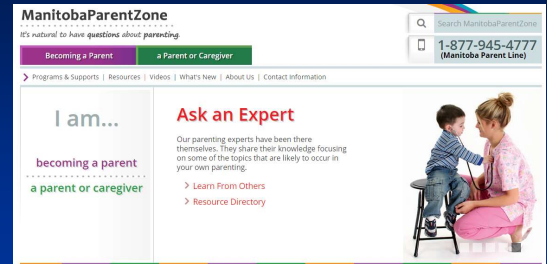
Your parent council

- You are already doing a variety of things to support parents and the school
- Is there more you can do to encourage parent engagement with the school?
- Is there more you can do to promote positive health and mental health?

MAPC website



Manitoba Parent Zone



Triple P



Thank you

