Building Healthy Relationships

We all learned that supportive social connections have a powerful influence on how long and how well we live but in recent years the body of evidence is growing even more linking the quality of our relationships to specific physical and psychological health outcomes. Positive benefits to health can come from supportive friends, a caring church community, or also an enduring bond to a pet. On the other hand, unhealthy abusive relationships are associated with chronic disease, stress and mental health disorders.

The good news is that we do not need to be rich to cultivate healthy resilient families. However, it does require investment of time, the will to intentionally set priorities, and the decision to make choices wisely as a family. Here are some effective practical ideas that can assist us to build resilience in the family:

1. Include family worship in your daily schedule and seek God’s presence as a family. An important protective factor is to plan for daily family worship. The family that prays together and seeks God’s will together builds resilience factors. A solid spiritual foundation is a major protective factor against pain and disease. Angels can make the home a little piece heaven on earth for “the sweetest type of heaven is a home where the Spirit of the Lord presides.”

2. Make quality time for face-to-face interactions.

Sometimes in our busy lives people choose to relate to others on social media or the internet with little time spent on ce to face interaction. In order to build resilient families we must include time for one-on-one interactions as a family. Give each member of the family quality time to listen to their concerns and interests, their struggles and joys. This will build a protective bridge that will hold through rough storms of life.

3. Share meals and recreational time as a family.

There is plenty of evidence of how beneficial family meals can be for reducing at risk behavior in kids and youth, but it is also important for healthy relationships among adults. When the TV is turned off and people can speak and listen to each other family bonds are strengthened. When the family spends time having fun together and being physically active that too can enhance the family intimacy.

4. Cultivate love, kindness and courtesy in respect for each other.

A hallmark of healthy relationships is to be intentional in being courteous, loving and kind to each other. Words of respect and kindness can do much to ensure a pleasant and happy atmosphere in the home. On the other hand if there is conflict among parents the children will partake of the same spirit. Inspiration says that “our happiness depends upon this cultivation of love, sympathy, and true courtesy to one another” and that “if the will of God is fulfilled, the husband and wife will respect each other and cultivate love and confidence.”

5. Forgive one another.

Forgiveness brings healing not only to the person who is forgiven and especially to the one who forgives. Carrying bitterness towards someone we love will affect our health in a negative way. Forgiving someone may not necessarily mean reconciliation, like for instance in the case of violence or an abusive relationship. The critical aspect of forgiveness is to pray for the who hurt us and sincerely wish them well. We will not always have approval of everyone and we must accept that. However, we are reminded to “do all we can to live in peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18-NIV) and to forgive those who have hurt us in any way. August 24 is ENDitNOW Abuse Awareness Day in the Adventist church globally. Plan to host a program. For more info go to www.NADWM.org or www.adventistwomensministries.org.

1. WHITE, E.G. The Adventist Home, p. 15
REACH ACROSS

Health Ministries Resources

- **Adventists InStep for Life Mobile Apps** are available for download for android and iPhone users. You must first register at the website listed above then download the app (INSTEP or ADVENTIST INSTEP), and start recording your physical activity right on your phone.

- **F as in Fat Report -- How Obesity Threatens America's Future** Trust for America’s Health (TFAH) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) have released this 10th annual publication. The report examines strategies for addressing the obesity crisis, and includes annual rates and rankings of adult obesity and obesity rate trends by region, age, gender, education and income. It is filled with visuals, graphics and interesting data displays. See http://www.healthyamericans.org/report/108/.

- **Children’s Eye Health and Safety Month! (US)**: August is Children’s Eye Health and Safety Month—a great signal for you to get your child’s eyes checked before school starts. Most children have healthy eyes. But there are conditions that can threaten good vision. More than 12 million children suffer from vision impairment, and eye injuries are one of the leading causes of vision loss in children. www.hap.org/health/topic/eyemonth.php; http://healthfinder.gov/nho/JuneToolkit.aspx.

- **World Humanitarian Day (Canada)**: World Humanitarian Day is an occasion to celebrate and remember the tireless work performed by aid workers in difficult, sometimes dangerous situations. It highlights the important role international cooperation plays in responding to humanitarian crises. http://www.nationalmemoryscreening.ca/about.php.

- **Advertise your health program for free:** The NAD has developed a website with listings of health programs for the public. Anyone can advertise their health outreach program in any city or state in the NAD and use the free online registration system that allows you to know ahead of time who will attend along with their contact info. The site is [www.ChooseFullLife.org](http://www.ChooseFullLife.org). To advertise your event, simply send information with name and contact info for coordinator, location, time and description of event. If you wish to use our registration system so people can print an entrance ticket, please send us how many seats you have available. The info may be sent to NADHM@nad.adventist.org or click on ‘contact us’ at the website.

- **Health Calendar Emphasis – AUGUST**
  USA: [http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/nho.asp#m8](http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/nho.asp#m8)

  **August 2013**
  - Children’s Eye Health and Safety Month (US)
  - National Immunization Awareness Month (US)
  - National Breastfeeding Month (US)
  - Psoriasis Awareness Month (US)
  - 1-7 – World Breastfeeding Week (Canada/US)
  - 19 World Humanitarian Day

- **Looking Forward (September 2013)**
  - Child Cancer Awareness Month (Canada/US)
  - Men’s Cancer Awareness Month (Canada)
  - Fruit and Veggies—More Matters Month
  - National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month
  - National Recovery Month
  - Whole Grains Month
  - 8 - 14 National Suicide Prevention Week
  - 10 World Suicide Prevention Day
  - 15 - 21 National Rehabilitation Awareness Celebration
  - 28 Family Health & Fitness Day USA®
  - 29 World Heart Day

**Dates to Remember**

**2013**
- **August 19**
  - Lets Move Day Webinar
  - www.adventistsinstepforlife.org

- **August 20**
  - Health Ministries for Pastors Webinar
  - www.NADHealthMinistries.org

- **August 24**
  - ENDitNOW Abuse Awareness Day
  - www.enditnow.org or www.nadwm.org

- **September 16**
  - Lets Move Day Webinar
  - www.adventistsinstepforlife.org

- **September 22**
  - Let’s Move Day
  - www.adventistsinstepforlife.org

- **September 24**
  - AAFCN Membership Meeting
  - www.adventistsinstepforlife.org

- **September 28-29**
  - Pacific Union HM Training
  - NADHM@nad.adventist.org

- **October 5-6, 2013**
  - Columbia Union ARMin Training
  - NADHM@nad.adventist.org

- **October 28**
  - NAD HM Committee Meeting

**2014**
- **January 24-Feb 2**
  - NAD Health Summit
  - Orlando, FL
  - www.NADHealthSummit.com

- **July 8-12**
  - Second Global Conference on Health
  - Geneva, Switzerland
  - www.healthministries.com
NAD HEALTH MINISTRIES

GNYC Hispanic Campmeeting Embrace Health

On July 12-20 hundreds of people joined together at Camp Berkshire to seek a revival as a family in a beautiful nature setting. Over 2000 people gathered to learn effective ways for ministry outreach and for improving their own health and the health of those around them. NAD Health Ministries director Katia Reinert led the group on daily health lectures and every morning an enthusiastic group walked and recorded their miles faithfully. At the end of the week dozens received awards for the number of aerobic miles completed. The Hispanic Adventist community left committed to “choose a full life and to tell the world” about God’s message for restoration as part of the NY13 effort. NY13 evangelistic effort goes beyond 2013 until Jesus returns.

ATLANTIC UNION

NY13 Evangelism Makes Use of the ‘Right Arm’

Nearly 12000 gathered at the Nassau Veteran Coliseum in Long Island, NY on June 28 for a special event to celebrate God’s blessings during the NY13 initiative. Following the Health Summit in March where many received training, hundreds of churches held health outreach events and seminars (see www.ChooseFullLife.org) teaching a message of health and hope and making many friends for Christ. The NETS (Northeast Evangelism Training School) students and many others were actively involved with churches in reaching out in love and compassion using the right arm of the gospel. Over 130 people were baptized that Sabbath and nearly 2000 have already committed their life to Christ. Reaching the urban cities with a message of hope and wholeness continues to be a major focus of the mission in North America.

PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE

Faith Community Nurses Receive Training

A class of nine nurses participated in the Foundations of Faith Community Nursing class offered by Adventist WholeHealth Network during the Pennsylvania Conference campmeeting in June. The interfaith class included four Adventists, with additional representation from Catholic, Lutheran, and Methodist faith traditions, as well as a non-denominational Spanish-speaking congregation, from all around Pennsylvania. One nurse came from as far away as Michigan! Three of the nurses have Masters degrees, several are/have been Nursing educators, and one (who suffered a stroke at 41) attended classes with her service dog. After the culminating Consecration Service, one of our interfaith participants approached Cheryl Goff, AWHN administrator, and shared, “On behalf of those of us who are not members of your denomination, I want to express our great appreciation for the amazing graciousness of the Adventist Church in providing such a special training program for nurses of all faiths!” shared Joyce Christman, BSN, FCN, Coordinator. To learn about future training opportunities go to www.AdventistFCN.org.

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

Global Partnerships in Nursing Conference

A group of more than 200 nurses from around the world joined together for the 10th Global Nursing Partnerships Conference in Bali, Indonesia. Co-sponsored by Loma Linda University and many other Adventist nursing schools around the world, the Conference has also received special funding from the Ralph and Carolyn Charitable Foundation all these years. The main focus of the conference was to explore the essentials of Adventist Nursing and how Adventist Nurses can make a difference both in the workplace, at church, and in the community. Dr Patricia Jones, GC Health Ministries Associate Director and professor at the LLU School of Nursing, reminded the group the many opportunities for Adventist nursing leadership globally to assist in improving the whole person health of communities.
CHOOSE to spend more time with FAMILY and FRIENDS cultivating HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Facts with Hope

FACT A lack of social ties is associated with increased mortality. Researchers at Brigham Young University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill analyzed data from 148 studies on health outcomes and social relationships, involving more than 300,000 men and women across the developed world, and found that those with poor social connections had on average 50% higher odds of death in the study’s follow-up period (an average of 7.5 years) than people with more robust social ties.1

HOPE Regularly spending time with others may be one of the most important things you can do for your health. The influence of social relationships on the risk of death was as powerful as smoking and alcohol consumption and exceeded the influence of other risk factors such as physical inactivity and obesity.  

FACT The Mental Health Foundation in the United Kingdom commissioned researchers to survey 2,256 adults to learn more about people’s experiences of loneliness. They found that one in ten adults (11%) said that they felt lonely often. They also noted that many people are embarrassed to admit to feeling lonely. This was highest among young adults (42%, compared to 30% of those aged 35-54 and 23% of those over 55).2

HOPE The problem of loneliness in society is a prompt for our churches to take a closer look how well we are doing at building circles of support around those in our communities who are starving for relationships. A focus on developing friendships will not only improve their well-being, but also provide opportunities to introduce them to the greatest Friend of all.

FACT Researchers who followed 1,138 seniors for an average of five years found that not only is socializing linked to mental and thinking ability, but also about how well one is able to live independently. Each one-point increase on the social activity score was linked to a 47% drop in the rate of decline in cognitive function.3

HOPE God designed our brains and hearts to function best in the context of relationships. In fact, the phrase “one another” is used more than 70 times in the New Testament. With a growing demographic of older Americans, we can make a difference in their quality of life simply by spending time with “one another.”

FACT In one of the most famous experiments on health and social life, researchers at Carnegie Mellon University exposed hundreds of healthy volunteers to the common cold virus, then quarantined them for several days. The study participants with more social connections and with more diverse social networks (work, sports teams, church) were less likely to develop a cold than the more socially isolated study participants.4

HOPE Spending time with friends may be one of the easiest health strategies for boosting immune function. It’s inexpensive, it requires no special equipment, and we can engage in it in many ways.

References:

“... I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.” Deuteronomy 30:19, NIV

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EVERY CHURCH A CENTER FOR HEALTH, HEALING AND WHOLENESS IN THE COMMUNITY