Violence Against and Among Kids

March and April are months that highlight the need to raise awareness about Youth Violence and Child Abuse in our communities. Most people do not realize how abuse or violence against or among our children and youth may impact their mental and physical health as adults.

Much research has linked child abuse to mental health problems such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep problems, low self-esteem, as well as physical health issues like obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, among other health conditions. In fact, child abuse is seen as a major public health problem that needs to be stopped.

As a church we have had the ENDitNOW campaign, which focuses on prevention of any form of abuse. In fact, on May 1-4, 2014 we will have a major ENDitNOW Summit organized by the General Conference and North American Division. (Learn more at www.NADWM.org).

Additionally, we know youth violence has major negative consequences among youth that affect their social, physical, emotional and spiritual health as well. Educating our youth to manage anger properly, find peaceful solutions to conflict, promote respect and tolerance, and support safety strategies can go a long way to help prevent youth violence in our communities. These educational activities and many others can be done in partnership with the youth ministries of your church or in partnerships with our church schools. Several resources on how to do this are available at www.nationalsave.org.

An important aspect is that when young people are involved in service activities and when they have a role model to mentor them, they have less chances of engaging in violence, gangs, or at risk behaviors. Thus, we need to involve them in service activities to help those in need. Health Ministries provides several opportunities to engage our youth in ways that will make them feel useful in helping meet other people’s needs. Check out some of the ideas available in several languages listed in this website http://www.gysd.org/project_toolkits and look for the Adventist volunteer opportunities at the NAD office of volunteer services at www.hesaidgo.net.

We must remember that parents and family environments play a major role in the lives of our children and that God will bless each effort we make to help our kids grow in stature as Jesus did while on this earth. There are a many parenting resources available from the NAD Family Ministries department that will help parents understand how to have healthy kids and spiritually strong homes (see www.adventistfamilyministries.com).

We specially encourage parents to engage in the Instep for Life initiative as a family, and encourage their kids to participate in the pathfinder’s instep4life challenges.

Starting in April, PBS will be showing a video produced by Loma Linda University focusing on understanding and preventing child abuse. We encourage you to see the video but also to invite your neighbors and community friends to also watch.

May each of us honor God by making a difference in the children we come in contact with at home, at church or in the community!

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Health Ministries Resources

- **NAD Health Summit and Health Professionals Conference** The plenary presentations for the Health Professionals Conference and the NAD Health Summit are now available for viewing at the website www.ChooseFullLife.org. DVD’s of John Bradshaw’s evening presentations and the Summit plenary sessions will be available for purchase soon. Details are forthcoming.

- **NAD Mental Health Sabbath Follow Up Survey** On Sabbath, February 15, 2014, the North American Division held its first Mental Health Sabbath. We are now asking every health ministry director to answer a quick follow up survey to learn of your church’s participation. Please go to: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TMJ8PH3 and participate. Materials will be available for download throughout the year at www.NADHealthMinistries.org.

- **Oshkosh InStep4Life Challenge** Adventists InStep for Life is sponsoring a 3-day challenge for pathfinder clubs at Oshkosh. Club leaders are encouraged to sign up today. Deadline is May 31, 2014. Free t-shirts, pedometers, patches, medals, trophies and financial awards will be available to top performers. There will be a 5K, a ‘booth-camp’ exercise challenge, and a 1 mile run challenge, one each day. Sign up at www.AdventistsInStepforLife.org.

- **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 and contact info. The site is 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 include how many seats you have available. Send it to NADHM@nad.adventist.org or click on ‘contact us’ at the website.

- **Facts with Hope videos** The NAD Health Ministries has launched 1min videos with evidence-based counsel on healthy choices for a full abundant life. These wholistic Facts with Hope videos are available on Youtube.com, Facebook, and twitter. You can also see the latest ones at the website www.FactsWithHope.com. This is a site designed to connect with the public and with young people in particular. The site links to the Choose Full Life site listed above where other health programs and spiritually related meetings are listed across the NAD.

- **March is National Nutrition month** “Enjoy the Taste of Eating Right” is the theme for National Nutrition Month® 2014. Consumer research confirms that taste tops nutrition as the main reason why one food is purchased over another. While social, emotional and health factors also play a role, the foods people enjoy are likely the ones they eat most. For resources including fun games for kids go to www.eatright.org/nmn or http://www.eatright.org/nmn/games/ or www.nadhealthministries.org.

- **April is Alcohol awareness month** Make the most of this opportunity to encourage prevention and recovery efforts in your church. You can start an Adventist Recovery Ministry in your church and sign up to receive the free Journey to Life newsletter at www.AdventistRecovery.org. You can also order the new Unhooked DVD series at our store online (see www.nadhealthministries.org). For general national resources go to www.ncadd.org.

- **Health Calendar Emphasis - MAR/ARP**
  - USA: http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/nho.asp?m8
  - **March 2014**
    - National Nutritional Month (USA and Canada)
    - National Problem Gambling Awareness Month (US)
    - 7-11 National Youth Violence Prevention Week (USA)
    - 10-16 Brain Awareness Week (USA and Canada)
    - 25 American Diabetes Alert Day (USA)
  - **April 2014**
    - Alcohol Awareness Month (US)
    - National Child Abuse Prevention Month (US)
    - Daffodil Days: Cancer Awareness (Canada)
    - 4 World Cancer Day (US)
    - 7 World Health Day (US and Canada)

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**Dates to Remember**

**2014**

- **March 7-9**
  - Northern California HM Training
  - NADHM@nad.adventist.org
- **May 2-4**
  - ENDITNOW Summit on Abuse
  - Silver Spring, MD
  - www.nadwm.org
- **June 16-20**
  - Arizona Campmeeting HM Workshop
  - Prescott, Arizona
  - NADHM@nad.adventist.org
- **June 24-28**
  - Potomac Campmeeting HM Workshop
  - NADHM@nad.adventist.org
- **July 8-12**
  - 2nd Global Conference on Health
  - Geneva, Switzerland
  - www.healthministries.com
- **August 13-15**
  - Oshkosh InStep4Life Challenge
  - www.adventistsinstepforlife.org
- **August 28-31**
  - Southwestern Union HM Training
  - NADHM@nad.adventist.org
The North American Division held its Health Summit from January 24-February 2, 2014 in Orlando, Florida. About 300 participants from several countries attended and left motivated to engage in comprehensive health ministry outreach. This Summit focus was the launching of Comprehensive Health Ministry, a new branding of ‘medical missionary work’, where ministries collaborate more intentionally in health ministries outreach. Besides the 40 plus available training seminars, John Bradshaw-It is Written Speaker- lead a series of messages for the community entitled “Thriving in a Broken World”. Leah Scott and Hubert Cisneros hosted the evening program and heavenly music was featured throughout with talented artists. The evening messages and all the plenary sessions were streamed live and are now available for viewing at www.ChooseFullLife.org. DVDs will available for purchase soon.

Health Professionals Conference

This year the NAD Health Summit included our first Health Professionals Conference that took place on the first weekend, Jan 24-27, 2014. This conference was organized in partnership with Loma Linda University (LLU) and brought together the Deans of the various LLU Schools to present and discuss the role of health professionals in comprehensive health ministry. On Sunday we held several short workshops of interest to health professionals, including a special one for faith community nurses who also held their Association meeting.

Adventists InStep for Life Awards Celebration

The InStep for Life award ceremony took place on January 25, 2014 in Orlando, FL, as part of the NAD Health Summit. This 3rd Award Celebration included the keynote messages of Dr Ben Carson and Acacia Salatti, acting director for the Health and Human Services department of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Over 25 churches, schools, hospitals, Conferences and Unions received a special award for their participation in InStep for Life and Let’s Move Day activities. The highlight this year was the 10 Pathfinder clubs that received $1000 awards for their top miles and participation rates. An Oshkosh Instep4Life challenge was announced for 2014.

Faith Community Nursing, Recovery, and Health Ministry Students Complete Training

Hundreds of people received training during the NAD Health Summit. Among the over 40 training seminars available throughout the week, dozens attended the NAD sponsored trainings. Among them were the official training for Health Ministries developed by the NAD Health department team entitled “Creating a Vibrant Health Ministry,” the official Adventist Recovery Ministries training entitle “12 Steps to Wholeness” which features the 12-step support meetings for people struggling with addictive behaviors, as well as the faith community nursing training. Students left enthusiastic about being equipped to bring hope, healing and wholeness to those in need in North America.
**Facts with Hope**

**FACT** A series of studies looking at Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) such as child abuse or neglect, has showed that it can lead to obesity, cardiovascular disease, and even diabetes in the adult life.¹

**HOPE** Some parenting practices are associated with more favorable health behaviors in children. A study of 805 child-parent dyads showed that when kids perceived their parents to be very warm and responsive they had higher intake of healthy nutritious food, while kids who perceived their parents to be less warm or responsive had a higher intake of unhealthy high caloric food.² God designed that a home should be a little taste of Heaven. As a parent, you can set limits and provide structure while demonstrating caring words and loving gestures.

**FACT** Children are negatively affected by victimization and the violence they witness in their homes and neighborhoods. A study of 167 caregiver-child pairs showed that youth witnessed violence was also linked to child aggression, depression, anger, and anxiety.³

**HOPE** This study shows that witnessing parents abuse each other through hurting words or actions can have the same negative effect as if the kids had been abused. Ask God and His angels to abide in your home by prioritizing daily worship and prayer as a family, and demonstrate words of love and compassion with your spouse, child or parent. Proverbs 12:18 states, “The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

**FACT** Youth and their parents do not seem to agree on the amount of youth-witnessed violence exposure. In a study of 766 child-caregiver pairs demonstrated that 42% of youth reported witnessing youth violence, compared to only 15% of parents. This discrepancy suggests that a lack of parental awareness regarding youth violence exposure may impair parents’ ability to provide emotional support and coping skills, potentially leading to maladjustment in their children.⁴

**HOPE** Having dinner together is one of the ways that parents and children can engage in conversation about their daily experiences. Open non-judgmental conversations can go along way to assess the types of experiences that youth have in school or in the company of their friends. As parents become more aware of how much violence their young kids are witnessing daily they will be better able to connect them with appropriate mental health services.

**FACT** Studies show that family related factors have the strongest influence on the likelihood and the ramifications of youth exposure to violence. Good family functioning has been found to be protective in kids who are victims of violence outside the home thus reducing the chances they will become perpetrators of violence. Also, living with biological parents, having good family cohesion and authoritative supportive parenting were found to compensate and/or protect kids from being victims and also perpetrators of violence.⁵

**HOPE** Invest in your family. Learn more about positive parenting strategies and how to build your home as a safe haven for your kids so they are ready to face the world and be resilient, despite the environment they are exposed to. Making time for one-on-one activities together, providing psychological and emotional support, and most of all, teaching them to rely on God as a friend and Counselor, will be the best gift you can give them.

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**References:**

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“... 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

This free newsletter is published by Health Ministries, North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. To learn more or subscribe, visit our website www.nadhealthministries.org, email Katia.Reinert@nad.adventist.org or call (301) 680-6733

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