



# HEALTHQUEST

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOCUSING ON  
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

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## Parent's Place

*Firm & Fair Discipline Strategies  
For Young Children*

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*Alex wants the Pokemon cards at the check-out counter and he won't take no for an answer. Natalie won't eat her dinner because 'the roast beef is definitely a dinosaur and it's yucky'. Fredsen screams at the top of his lungs when he is asked to come in from playing outside. Jacky 's parents find that she "tunes them out" whenever they ask her to do something.*

These scenarios are commonplace for parents and care givers of youngsters - they are challenging and can be exasperating. While there is no such thing as an easy answer or a 'one size fits all response' to managing these situations, these practical strategies and tips can make a difference.

### **To encourage desired behaviors, use When...Then**

"When you eat your dinner, then you can watch television."

### **To discourage undesirable behaviors, use If...Then**

"Mom has said no, that you cannot have the Pokemon cards. If you continue to ask mom to buy you things when she says no, then you will not be able to come to the store with mom next time."

### **Won't take No for an answer**

Avoid the trap of arguing. Set expectations using If ...Then

### **Asking a child to leave an activity that they are engaged in...**

Give notice... "Fredsen, we are going to go into the house in 10 minutes. Next time I call for you, it will be time to come into the house."

### **To increase the odds that your request is heard...**

Children get easily absorbed in the activities they are involved in. Make sure that you have your child's attention before making the request. "Jacky...Jacky, dad is talking to you. Look at dad please" When eye contact is made, then state your request.

### **Take a time out when your child is emotional ...**

When a child is screaming and crying to get their way, it can be difficult to remain calm. Yet remaining calm and firm in your expectations is likely to get the best results. To break the power struggle that can unfold when both parent and child are emotional, take a 2+ minute time out. (note..the time out is for the parent)

### **Be consistent**

Part of being a child is to "want what I want, when I want it." If parents and care givers are inconsistent in communicating expectations then children get mixed messages and use the best way they know how to get their way. Being consistent will help a child understand what is expected of them.

While these tips can go a long way in managing typical yet tough situations with young children, many parents and care givers benefit from meeting with a professional EAP counsellor to discuss and problem solve their unique situations. It is common for parents of young children to feel overwhelmed from time to time and to experience relationship stress as a result of parenting demands. Again, EAP Counsellors can help in these situations.

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## **Compulsive Shopping**

*When 'Shop till You Drop' is a  
Problematic Way of Life*

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Shopping has become such a common and socially acceptable pastime, that it can be hard to imagine that for some people, shopping can be as addictive and problematic as drug or alcohol abuse. While the biggest telltale sign of problematic shopping is DEBT, not everybody with debt has a problem with shopping. Other signs that may indicate a problem exists include:

- ▲ Shopping/spending when disappointed, angry or scared
- ▲ Shopping/spending causes distress in other areas of life
- ▲ Arguing with others about purchases
- ▲ Feeling lost without credit cards
- ▲ Experiencing an emotional high when spending
- ▲ Feeling guilty, ashamed, embarrassed about purchases
- ▲ Finding that purchases go unused
- ▲ Lying about the cost of items purchased
- ▲ Juggling funds to cover expenses
- ▲ Excessive thinking about money

Compulsive shopping is best understood as a coping strategy for other issues and concerns that an individual is experiencing. Professional EAP Counselling can be a first step toward understanding addictive behavior and a new way of life.

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## **A Word on DEBT \$\$\$\$**

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Not everybody in debt has a problem with shopping. No matter what circumstances have led up to a person being in significant debt, the experience almost certainly is stressful and can negatively impact all other aspects of one's life. For many people who are deep in debt, finding the light at the end of the tunnel can seem like a losing battle. Many people have benefited greatly from debt and credit management services offered by professional financial counsellors. Resources for financial counselling are available through your EAP.

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## **Calcium - It's GOOD for All of US**

*Big & Small*

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The connection between calcium and the state of our skeleton is well established. Recent research has solidified the health benefits of calcium to go well beyond strengthening our frame to include reducing the risk of colon and breast cancer; minimizing the pre-menstrual symptoms of mood swings, irritability and anxiety; maintaining body weight and blood pressure at normal levels and preventing kidney stones.

As we move out of childhood, many of us drop our attachment to milk and in so doing we may be missing out on our 1000mg daily requirements of CALCIUM. While milk, cheese, yogurt and ice cream are great sources of calcium so are calcium fortified orange juice, firm tofu and canned salmon.

The importance of a healthy diet never goes out of style and it is never too late to change our dietary life style. Individual Consultations with Registered Dieticians to discuss a dietary plan for healthy eating, weight management and/or disease risk management are available through your Employee Assistance Program.

If you have any questions about any of the topics in this newsletter, or if you wish to discuss a personal situation you may be experiencing, we invite you to contact your EAP counsellors to arrange a telephone or in-person counselling session.

All contact between you and your counsellor is completely confidential.

**English Service: 1-800-387-4765**

**French Service: 1-800-361-5676**

**General Information: 1-888-814-1328**