Generations Family Counseling Overview

- Generations Family Counseling is a group of mental health professionals who came together over a shared belief that human relationships are the most complicated, challenging and meaningful parts of life.
- There are five mental health practitioners on staff to help adults, adolescents and children deal with life stressors and relationship struggles.
- Generations takes a family systems approach whenever practical, working with family members individually and as a group to achieve the best results in as short a time as possible.
We work with children, adolescents, adults and families

- Depression
- Stress and Anxiety
- Phobias
- Grief and Loss
- Emotional and Physical Abuse
- Trauma and Sexual Assault
- ADHD
- Eating Disorders
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- PTSD

- Prepare and Enrich Premarital Counseling
- Life Coaching
- Play and Sand Therapy
- Communication Issues
- Blending Families
- Living with Medical Conditions
- Codependency and Boundaries
- Anger Management
- Parenting Stress
- Self Esteem and Self-Confidence Issues
- School and Homework Difficulties
- Behavioral Problems in Children

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Parent Coach
Board Certified Biblical Counselor

- BA in psychology from William and Mary
- Double Masters in Counseling and Psychology from Rhode Island College
- Certified by the Love and Logic Institute
- Trained in ScreamFree Parenting
- Certified by the AACC
Adolescence - a time to transition from dependence to independence.

Developmental Stage - the search for identity and autonomy often results in power struggles between parents and kids

What do you fight about?

Rules and Relationship – Who Should be in Charge?

- Rules without Relationship = Rebellion
- Relationship without Rules = Mayhem

Picture a rope connecting you and your child
- If you are pulling too hard, he will pull back with all his might and a battle for control will ensue
- If you aren’t pulling hard enough, there is too much slack on the rope and he will act out, trying to find the connection (kids naturally want limits)
- The proper tension on the rope = shared control
The Science of Control

- A child who feels he has *some* control over his life will spend little time and energy trying to manipulate and control the parent.
- A child who feels he has *no* control over his life will spend much of his time and energy trying to manipulate the system and the adults around him.
- Children who feel a lack of control, recognition, and/or appreciation find ways to sabotage their parents and themselves in their determination to get control.
- Parenting with Love and Logic helps parents learn to give children control on the parents’ terms and to build strong, positive relationships with their children.

www.loveandlogic.com

Does this look familiar?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njTlqHCr4yo&list=FLXH2SUhk1b7HobcvsjIvnw&index=1&feature=plpp_video
What did Mom do right?

- Focused, full attention
- Asked a lot of questions
- Assessed ownership of the problem
  - Mom does not plan on working harder than child to find the solution
- Made enforceable statements
  - Told child what she was willing to do, rather than what the child had to do, or making a threat
- Empowered and validated child
  - Can-do message

Love and Logic Formula

- Love and Logic formula “C.O.O.L”.
  - “C” is for control that is shared
  - “O” is for ownership of the problem
  - “O” is for opportunity for thinking
  - “L” stands for empathy and letting consequences do the teaching
The C.O.O.L. Formula

“C” is for control that is shared

Having choices helps kids feel in control

- Be sure to pick two choices you can live with
- If the child doesn’t choose, be prepared to choose yourself
- Never give a choice unless you’re prepared to allow the child to live with the consequences
- Example: Kids are acting up at the dinner table
  - Sit at the table politely, or take your noise outside
  - Finish your dinner politely, or wait to eat at breakfast
  - Eat with us politely, or alone after we’re finished

Praising and validating her good choices helps the child develop confidence and a strong internal voice.

Choices You Can Live With Exercise

- Child is playing video games instead of doing homework
  - A. Would you rather play for 15 minutes now or 45 minutes when your homework is finished?
  - B. What would be best for you, finishing your homework before you play or banking all your game time for the weekend?
  - C. Feel free to ________ or ________
  - D. You can either ________ or ________

- The child’s bedroom is a mess
  - A. Would you rather clean your room by dinnertime or pay me to do it?
  - B. What would be best for you ________ or ________
  - C. Feel free to ________ or ________
  - D. You can either ________ or ________
The C.O.O.L. Formula

- “O” is for ownership of the problem
- Who owns the problem?
  - Guiding children to own and solve their own problems increases their feelings of confidence and independence, and reduces power struggles
  - Ask yourself, “What’s going to happen to me if that problem doesn’t get solved?” If your answer is “nothing,” then it is the child’s problem!
  - Examples:
    - If the child loses his phone, it’s his problem to solve. If the child loses your phone, it’s your problem to solve (by delivering a consequence)
    - “You may solve your problem any way you choose, so long as it does not make a problem for someone else.”
- We should not work harder than our kids to solve their problem

Guide the child to solve the problem

- With humor
- With love
- With sincerity
- With rules

- Step One: Empathy
  - “How sad”
- Step Two: Empower the child to find a solution
  - “What do you think you’re going to do?”
- Step Three: Offer choices
  - Would you like to hear what’s worked for others in your situation?
- Step Four: Have the child predict the outcome
  - “And how will that work out?”
- Step Five: Give permission for the child to either solve the problem or not solve the problem
  - “Good luck, I hope that works out.”
The C.O.O.L. Formula

- “O” is for opportunity for thinking
  Unenforceable Statements - Fighting words:
  Telling the child what to do, what you will not allow, what you won’t do for him
  - You’re not going to talk to me that way!
  - I’m not letting you go out to play until you have your homework finished.
  - You’re not going to...
  - You better...

  VS

  Enforceable Statements - Thinking Words:
  Telling the child the conditions under which the adult will do something, the choices
  the child has, or when she can do something
  - I’ll be glad to discuss this with you, as soon as you can speak respectfully.
  - You are welcome to go outside as soon as your homework is finished
  - I’ll know you are ready to ______ when........
  - Feel free to......

Enforceable Statements

Fighting Words:
* You better clean your room!
* Calm down right now!
* I’m not picking up the dirty clothes from your floor.
* As long as you live in my house, you follow my rules.

Thinking Words:
* You may watch TV as soon as your room is clean.
* You are welcome to come back into the room when you are calm.
* I’ll be glad to wash whatever is in the hamper, and you can take care of the rest.
* Feel free to enjoy the privileges I give you while you are following my rules.
Practice

- You’re not going to be included in family dinner of you don’t take those ear buds out!
  - Feel free to________________________
- You better not go over your texting limit again this month.
  - I am happy to________________________
- I’m not driving another inch until you guys shut up.
  - I’ll begin____________________________
- Stop fighting with your brother!
  - You are welcome to____________________

The C.O.O.L. Formula

- “L” stands for letting empathy and consequences do the teaching
- Children who experience logical consequences are invested in the problem solving and decision making process and are far more likely to learn from their mistakes.
- Empathy vs. Anger
  - When we respond to our child’s poor choices with anger, they become self-defensive rather than self-reflective
  - Develop your favorite empathetic response, practice it and use it often
    - How sad
    - That’s too bad
    - Bummer
    - What a shame
- Natural (Logical) Consequences
  - Mimic real life scenarios
  - Are related to the infraction
  - Ideally come from sources other than the parents
- How to Destroy the Teaching Value of a Logical Consequence
  - Talk too much
  - Say “This will teach you a good lesson” or “I told you so!”
Effective Communication with Kids

- Choose a teachable moment
  - When things are going well and everyone is calm, not when emotions are high
- Ask questions – be inquisitive, but don’t set up an inquisition
  - More ? than !
- Reflect back what they say for clarity and understanding
  - So, you feel frustrated because I wouldn’t let you go to the mall?
- Use I statements
  - I feel as though you lied to me about where you were, even though I can’t prove it.
- Keep it short
  - The large majority of our words should be used to praise and encourage our kids, whereas corrective or critical messages should be short.

Mission Control: Ready, Set, Launch

- Our goal: to provide tools to help you launch your eighth grader into high school
- 3 part series 4/25, 5/2, 5/9 from 7-9 pm
  - Ready through teaching
  - Set through practice
  - Launch for independence
- Format for each session includes one hour of teaching and a one hour breakout session for small group discussion
Resources

- Parenting with Love and Logic, Foster and Cline
- Connected Parenting, Jennifer Kolari
- The Five Love Languages of Children, Chapman and Campbell