



Child and Youth Services



Welcome to our Monthly Newsletter

Holidays can be a time of year that many look forward to in anticipation, for others it can be stressful period. A number of areas like divorce or separation, blended families or grief can impact holidays and how children, youth and parents look forward to these holidays. This month we address these areas and provide helpful tips to help you and your family get through the holidays with a little more ease.

Yours and your family's Mental Health Matters!

Child and Youth Services
Estevan Mental Health
Box 5000-202
1174 Nicholson Road
Estevan, SK
S4A 2V6
306-637-3610

Volume 1, Issue 9

December 2008

TIP OF THE MONTH

- Cleaning □ cooking □ shopping
 - taking the kids to activities □ baking
- ...and the list goes on.

There can be so many things to do in preparation for the holidays and for some this can be stressful and overwhelming. Try to set realistic expectations for yourself. Plan ahead and prioritize. Be sure to take time to relax so that you are not exhausted when the holidays actually come. Santa will understand if there is one less cookie for him!



Sun Country Health Region Child & Youth Services wishes everyone
a **Happy Holidays** and **All the Best in the New Year!**



Coping with the Holidays: Grief

When someone special has died, holidays can be a difficult time of year. The holidays may serve as a reminder of the special individual whom is no longer with us and we often wish the person would be here to celebrate with us. As we cannot prevent these holidays, we need to find ways to cope. Listed below are some suggestions that others have found helpful in coping with the Holiday Season. Family get-togethers may be extremely difficult. Be honest with each other about your feelings. Sit down with your family and decide what you want to do for the holiday season. Don't set expectations too high for yourself or the day. If you wish things to be the same, you are going to be disappointed. Do things a little differently. Undertake only what each family member can handle comfortably.

- There is no right or wrong way to handle the day. Some may wish to follow family traditions, while others may choose to change.
- Keep in mind the feelings of your children or family members. Try to make the holiday season as joyous as possible for them.
- What you choose to do the first year you don't have to do the next.
- Donate a gift or money in your loved one's name.
- Often after the first year the people in your life may expect you to be over it. We are never over it but the experience of many bereaved is that eventually they enjoy the holidays again. Hold on to **HOPE**.
- Don't forget, anticipation of any holiday is so much worse than the actual holiday.

For more suggestions, check online at <http://www.griefnet.org/library/articles/holidays.html>

Coping with the Holidays: Blended Families

Blended families include parents and children from different families. Holidays can be especially difficult as these individuals try to mix these family traditions and events. Try to make holidays the best they can be for everyone by trying some of the following suggestions:

- Include children (all children) in some of the family activities as much as possible. If someone is left out, consider making a new tradition that includes all family members.
- Treat everybody as equally as possible. For some this may mean buying gifts (and spending the same amount) for your stepchildren.
- Consider adopting and changing some of the family traditions to make new family traditions.

Information adapted from: <http://parenting.ivillage.com/>

Coping with the Holidays: Divorce and Separation

Holidays can also be difficult for children and youth as they anticipate whom they will spend their holiday with. Parents should be encouraged to communicate and plan early (visitation schedule) in hope that the holidays will be peaceful for those involved. Some parents may need a written agreement outlining these arrangements. Keep in mind, you may not be fully happy with the agreement, but you may need to sacrifice for the sake of your children. In divorce and separation, there is no way to split the kid(s) evenly each time and this can be disappointing for you. Try not to let your feelings interfere with your child(ren)'s holiday.

From a child/youth's point of view, they may be feeling excited about celebrating two holidays and for others, they may be feeling stressed by having to share with their parents. The division of time during the holidays can act as a reminder of "how things used to be" and this can be difficult for them to accept. Some parents may try to "over splurge" to compensate for the change in the family and make their child(ren) feel better. Avoid doing this; rather encourage your child(ren) to accept the changes that have occurred. If you have young children, as a parent, you may want to consider helping your child(ren) purchase or make a gift for the other parent. Children may want to show their love for both parents by ensuring each has a gift or item.

For more information, check online at <http://www.divorcesource.com/CT/ARTICLES/wetstone1.html>



Question of the Month

Our son died 6 months ago and this is our first Christmas without him. I am worried about how I will cope with the holiday, but also how my 7 year old daughter will too. What can I do to help her through it?

After a loss, holidays and special events can be especially difficult for families. It can be helpful to prepare and think of ways to remember your son during these times. Talk to your daughter about how she is feeling and anticipating the holidays. Discuss as a family ways to remember him during the holidays to try and keep it a special holiday. Your daughter will need to know that holidays and special events will still be special, even if your son cannot be there. Consider making a special ornament for the tree or decorations in remembrance of your son. Don't forget about taking care of yourself.

For additional information, talk to a Child & Youth Counselor near you.



Make a Holiday Craft

These adorable reindeers can be a fun family project to make together.

Supplies needed:

- googly eyes
- pipe cleaners
- candy canes
- POM POMS

You can use any colors you wish to make unique reindeers.

Directions: Cut the pipe cleaner in half and twist onto the top of the candy cane. Bend the pipe cleaner into shapes to resemble antlers. With the help of an adult, glue on the eyes and nose. Your reindeer are ready to go!

High "5"



Thanks! That was nice of you! Thank You! **I appreciate it!**

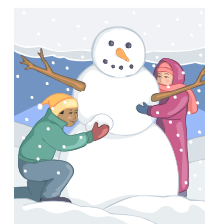
This holiday season be sure to show your appreciation for the gifts you received or the "special things" someone has done for you. These words may mean a lot to someone special in your life.

Play Time!

Spend some time with your family over the holidays.

Here are some suggestions:

- color a picture. Local newspapers have several holiday themed coloring pages
- make an ornament for the tree
- play a board game
- spend time outside! Make a snowman or go sledding



Arcola Mental Health

Arcola Health Centre
P.O. Box 419
Arcola SK S0C 0G0
Ph: (306)455-2159

Kipling Mental Health

Kipling Memorial Health Centre
Box 420
Kipling SK S0G 2S0
Ph: (306)736-2638

Weyburn Mental Health

Community Health Services
Building
P.O. Box 2003
Weyburn SK S4H 2Z9
Ph: (306)842-8665 or
Toll Free 1-800-216-7689

Child and Youth Services

Offers:

- Counseling Services for parents, children and youth under 18 years of age. This may include assessment or treatment for a wide range of behavioral, emotional or developmental difficulties.
- Individual, family or group counseling
- Psychological Assessments
- Community Education & Consultation Services

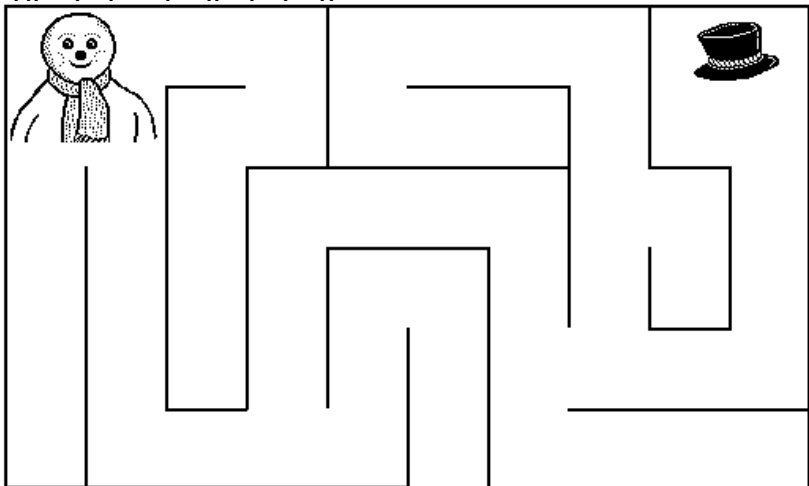
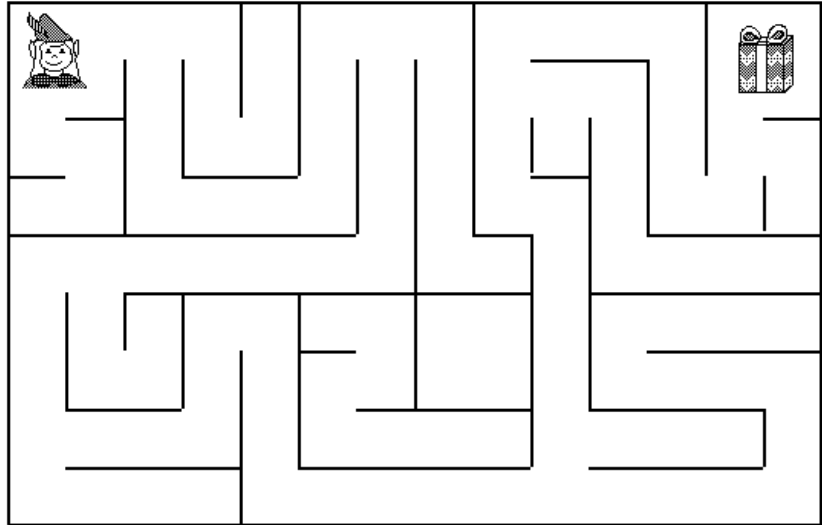
Accessing Services

Parents, adolescents or helping professionals may request services by calling:

Child and Youth Services
Intake Worker
1-800-216-7689 Or
306-842-8665

There is no fee for services.

This Month's Activity



Help Frosty find his hat

©1995-1998 The Kid's Domain
www.kidsdomain.com

Do You Have a Question or An Idea About a Topic?

Feel free to share your ideas and question with us!
We are always striving to provide information,
resources and activities to help you and your family.

Find us on the Internet!

If you would like to view past issues of the Child and Youth
Services Newsletter, look for us on the Internet at

www.suncountry.sk.ca/