



START OUT THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR EXCITED TO SUCCEED, NOT ANXIOUS

Look around and one can't help but notice that school is back in session: gathered students on the corners waiting for the bus; discounts in the stores for critical school supplies; kids with books in their lap before and after afterschool activities. For many students, while they groan about homework, the beginning of the school year is exciting. They enjoy reuniting with friends, meeting their new teachers, and reviewing syllabi of the upcoming year. For other students however, it's terribly angst-ridden.

Summertime sometimes offers a buffer to learning and organizational challenges for well-intended students. The break allows for confidence-boosting in other areas where one can excel outside of studies. "Back to the grindstone" so-to-speak, these challenged kids must face the struggles they fear they will once-again fail. Reasons for such anxiety can range from the prior-year's struggles they are terrified to revisit to intimidation of the upcoming year's expectations. Regardless of the reason, the result is fear and anxiety which may add additional obstacle to any possible achievement.

Margaret Wehrenberg, PsyD published in the September/October 2005 issue of the **PSYCHOTHERAPY NETWORKER** "10 Best-Ever Anxiety- Management Techniques." She has been in private practice as a psychologist and addictions counselor for more than 20 years. She also specializes in trauma and anxiety, working with adolescents and adults. She's the cofounder of the Reflex Delay Institute, and the author of **Stress Solutions: Effective Strategies to Eliminate Your Stress**.

Her methods fall into three basic categories: **DISTRESSING PHYSICAL AROUSAL; TENSION, STRESS, AND DREAD; THE MENTAL ANGUISH OF RUMINATION (or mulling over and over the same thought)**. Here are her ten recommendations:

Method 1: Manage the Body. Healthy lifelong habits, including cognitive care, contribute towards better anxiety management.

Method 2: Breathe. This is a great tool to have in the toolbox when managing anxiety. Wehrenberg cautions: "The biggest block to making breathing truly helpful is the time it takes to practice it until it becomes an ingrained habit."

Method 3: Mindful Awareness. Becoming aware of what is happening to us, our self-talk, and our responses empower us to stop what might seem "automatic pilot" and regain our ability to "pilot" ourselves.

Method 4: Don't Listen When Worry Calls Your Name. Relaxation is a power response to the physical tension resulting from low-grade fears. This can interrupt the festering process of the anxiety and maintain calm. This response changes the "habit of worry."

Method 5: Knowing, Not Showing, Anger. Sometimes fear of being angry is incredibly anxiety-provoking. Becoming intimate with your emotions, and giving yourself the permission to feel the full spectrum of emotions, can provide an important step when managing anxiety. Enabling yourself to feel comfortable with all of your emotions and expressing them safely contributes to self-concept, as well as reduces anxiety.

Method 6: Have a Little Fun. For some, Wehrenberg's recommendation for fun is the most difficult: "Laughing is a great way to increase good feelings and discharge tension. The problem for anxious clients is that they take life so seriously that they stop creating fun in their lives, and they stop experiencing life's humorous moments. Everything becomes a potential problem, rather than a way to feel joy or delight.

2009 NATIONAL AUTISM CONFERENCE

This year's National Autism Conference was held at the beginning of August at The Penn State Conference Center Hotel, State College, PA. It provided evidence-based information to assist educators, providers, and families in developing effective educational and therapeutic programming for all students with autism spectrum disorders, including Aspergers. If there was a topic, or a group of topics, of interest -- and you wished you could have participated -- it isn't too late!

Visit the website to view archived webcasts: <http://www.outreach.psu.edu/programs/autism/webcasting.htm>

A BACK-TO-SCHOOL AIDE FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS WITH ADHD & LEARNING CHALLENGES

This is a great reference now available FREE by ADDitude magazine!

9 WAYS TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS AT SCHOOL: For Children with ADHD & Learning Disabilities Like Dyslexia

Sections include:

10 Conversations to Have at the Start of the Year

With your child, your teacher, your doctors, other parents and more.

Advocating for Your Child

Write a letter to your child's teacher to ensure success at school this year.

Reading Help That Grows with Your Child

Watch for the transition from "learning to read" skills to "reading to learn."

Social Skills 101

Help children with ADHD practice good playground behavior.

Writing Like a Big-Screen Pro

If your middle- or high-school student has trouble with writing homework, he may just need some direction. Share these Hollywood-inspired tips with your teen.

ADHD Tips for Teachers

Children with the most challenging behaviors are sometimes the most fascinating, the most knowledgeable, and the deepest thinkers. Look for their positive qualities while helping them improve their behavior.

Homework Without Tears

12 ways to make homework a less stressful part of the daily game plan

Request Your Copy Today! Visit: <http://www.additudemag.com/RCLP/sub/2728.html>

PRACTICAL LIFE SKILLS FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM OR ASPERGER'S

The next 10-week session of Practical Life Skills for Young Adults with Autism or Asperger's Syndrome will begin in mid-September. Each of the 10 class members will be provided with an individualized outline for navigating the daily experiences of life. Class sessions will include such topics as casual conversation for social situations, job skills, time and money management and dating, and will use videos, role playing and other visual imagery to help class members understand the presented concepts.

Sessions will be held at Villa Maria in Lutherville on Mondays from 6:30-8 p.m. for youth ages 15-18, and on Wednesdays from 6:30-8 p.m. for those ages 19 through their late 20s.

An interview is required before the first session. Contact Janet Palmer for an appointment: 410.343.2153

UPCOMING EVENTS

BCC-ASA benefit at Mt Washington Tavern

Wednesday, September 9th 6pm – 2am

Mt. Washington Tavern, 5700 Newbury St, Baltimore

Enjoy an evening out with family &/or friends while supporting this worthwhile event.

Benefit features a silent auction, big 6 gambling wheel, raffles, live music, and a magic show.

Make sure to confirm reservations by 5pm the day of the event and reference the Autism Society.

For More Information, contact Heidi Shoemaker: 410.207.5031, heidi@AdvancingAutismAwareness.org

Adult ADD & Relationships

Friday, September 11th, 6 – 10 pm

Turf Valley Resort, 2700 Turf Valley Road, Ellicott City

Featured Speaker: Gina Pera, author of *Is it You, Me or Adult ADD*, adult relationships

Greater Baltimore Chapter of CHADD

Tickets: \$40 per person

For More Information: www.chadd-mc.org/pera-event

Family First: Positive and Practical Parenting Workshop Series

Monday, September 21st, 3:30 – 5:30pm

Howard County Office of Children's Services, 3300 N. Ridge Road, Suite 380, Ellicott City

Explore the ages and stages of child development, including brain development and the developmental domains: cognitive, social-emotional, motor, and language.

Cost: \$50.00 for all 6 workshops.

Other workshop dates: Sept. 28; Oct. 5, 19, and 26; Nov. 2

A discount is offered if both parents attend. Financial assistance may be available. Registration required.

For More Information, or to obtain registration form: 410.313.1940

Dining Out with Autism Awareness at The Main Street Tower

Wednesday, September 22, 4 – 9pm

The Main Street Tower Restaurant in Bel Air will host a night of dining out with other families that understand your unique situation in a setting that accommodates your family's needs.

- gluten and casein-free menu items**
- a quiet area in case of need
- reduced background music
- a restaurant staff trained in autism sensitivity

Families interested in attending are encouraged to call ahead.

** *Mario will make these special diet items any night if you call in advance*

For More Information: 410-838-8007. Or visit: www.mainstreettower.com/

School Success for Kids with ADHD

Wednesday, September 23rd, 7:15 – 9pm

Twinbrook Library, 202 Meadow Hall Dr, Rockville

Speakers: Drs Stepah Silverman and Jacqueline S. Iseman

For More Information, visit: <http://www.chadd-mc.org/category/montgomery/>

Giving a Fish a Bath: Educating and Protecting the Adolescent Brain

October 2nd, 9am – 4:30pm

Harford Community College, Edgewood Hall, Bel Air

Speaker: Frank Kros, The UpsideDown Organization

Recent discoveries in neuroscience offer exciting insights into how the brains of our teens really work and the special "brain-based" challenges facing adolescents as they mature. Senior adult and disabled retiree tuition waivers apply.

Transcript available. Eligible for 6 MBSWE Category I CEUs and 6 Nursing Contact Hours.

Tuition: \$189 To Register: <http://www.harford.edu/CET/Forms/NoncreditRegistrationForm.pdf>

Start Out the New Academic Year Excited to Succeed, Not Anxious, Con't from p. 1

Method 7: Turning It Off. Some call this the “racing hamster in the cage” of the mind. Learning how to harness the ON/OFF switch of the rumination of fearful thought/situations is key to a lifelong maintenance plan for anxiety. Wehrenberg believes this to be critical: “...brains keep the worry humming along in the background, generating tension or sick feelings, destroying concentration, and diminishing the capacity to pay attention to the good things in life. Seeking reassurance or trying to solve the problem they’re worrying about becomes their sole mental activity.”

Method 8: PERSISTENT Interruption of Rumination. Instant gratification doesn’t live here. Wehrenberg quickly points out a case where a patient stopped after 20 times of interruption. She cautions: “Rumination is persistent, and the only way to beat it at its own game, so to speak, is to be even more persistent.” It needs to be done each and every time, and part of the continuous management of anxiety.

Method 9: Worry Well, But Only Once. Sometimes, we worry for rightful reasons. Life isn’t easy. But facing struggles squarely, evaluating what needs to be done, and doing it is not only helpful to solve the problem, but helpful to stop the worrying. Allow yourself to be concerned about challenges. But once you’ve done what you can do – and given yourself the privilege to worry appropriately -- then you need to revert to Method 7 and 8. Reminding yourself of your plan to solve the problem can be helpful to halt anxiety-progression.

Method 10: Learn to Plan Instead of Worry. Rely on good fundamentals of planning so that you can build confidence in your ability to plan properly. Wehrenberg explains: “Clients who ruminate about a worry always try to get rid of it by seeking the reassurance that it’s unfounded. They believe that if they get the right kind of solution to their problem--the right piece of information or the best reassurance--they’ll then be rid of the worry once and for all.” Faith in your own plan is critical in managing your fear.

Wehrenberg admits these strategies seem simple, but are also very powerful: “People like learning that they have some control over their feelings; it gives them more self-confidence to know they’re not the slaves of physiological arousal or runaway mental patterns. And what we teach them is like playing the piano or riding a bicycle: they own it for life; it becomes a part of their human repertoire.”

INSPIRATION CORNER

“What we learn with pleasure, we never forget.”
-ALFRED MERCIER-



A Program JUST for Brothers & Sisters of Kids with Special Needs

☆ AGES 8-13 ☆

The impact of having a son or daughter with a learning, organizational, &/or behavior challenge can be extremely difficult at times. Think of what it must be like to have a brother or sister with one? Here is a fun, supportive and therapeutic activity for the unique role of a sibling of a special needs kid.

Saturdays 10 am – 2 pm: Sept 12th, Oct 10th, Nov 14th & Dec 12th

Mountain Christian Church, 1824 Mountain Road, Joppa MD

\$40 for all four session, including Lunch!

*Limited number of scholarships available.

For more information or to register please call: 410-578-5169

Sponsored by: Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital • The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region
• Partners for Success Resource Center, Harford County Public Schools

☆ **REGISTRATION DEADLINE** - FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4TH ☆

'NEUROEDUCATION' EMERGES AS INSIGHTS INTO BRAIN DEVELOPMENT, LEARNING ABILITIES GROW

" 'Neuroeducation' —an interdisciplinary field that combines neuroscience, psychology and education to create improved teaching methods and curricula—is moving increasingly close to prime time as researchers gain a more sophisticated understanding of how young minds develop and learn, leading education and brain experts say."

The Dana Foundation's BrainWork article written by Aalok Mehta and featured June 15th summarizes important information gained from both the Johns Hopkins University's "Learning, Arts, and the Brain" educational summit in Baltimore and the "Learning and the Brain" meeting in Washington, D.C., at the beginning of the summer. These events examined links between arts, education and general learning, how learning physically alters the brain, and what goes wrong in students with learning disabilities. "These findings are beginning to directly influence how classes are organized and taught," speakers at the meetings said.

"The interest among educators in neuroscience is enormous," Ken Kosik, a professor of neuroscience at the University of California, Santa Barbara, said during Learning and the Brain. "We need neuroscientists in schools. Just like we have teaching hospitals, we need teaching schools."

Meanwhile, the Learning and the Brain conferences, held two or three times a year, continue to attract hundreds of educators interested in learning how neuroscience might affect their profession. In fact, the D.C. meeting marked the series' 10th anniversary with a program revolving around arts and creativity.

But experts also warn that, so far, the transition from laboratory to classroom has been slow, a circumstance likely to continue because studies involving school-age children are difficult to design and conduct. In addition, many education-focused companies have made grandiose assertions about the science behind their commercial products, "burning" the scientists evaluating their potential and increasing the burden for researchers working in the field.

He continues outlining the different directions of research testing, and opportunities of application. For example, he highlighted Mariale Hardiman, co-organizer of the Learning, Arts, and the Brain summit, when she was simultaneously principal of Baltimore's Roland Park Elementary/Middle School and a graduate student in education at Johns Hopkins.

A paper Hardiman wrote eventually blossomed into a book, *Connecting Brain Research with Effective Teaching: The Brain-Targeted Teaching Model*, outlining a six-point strategy for incorporating general neuroscience and psychology principles in schools to foster learning and achievement. Hardiman stated at the event: "We can say that we are learning more and more every day—for example, what influences memory, the importance of sleep. But we have to conduct that research; on what children learn and remember, on the practical needs of teachers That [was] part of the reason for the summit."

To read the article in its entirety, visit: <http://www.dana.org/news/brainwork/detail.aspx?id=22372>

BRAIN BYTE



TRUE or FALSE

Smell is our strongest memory-inducing sense. TRUE!

UNDERSTANDING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

Tired of hearing the term and not fully understanding what it means? The Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health and the Maryland Child and Adolescent Mental Health Institute have just published a handbook for families caring for a child with mental health needs detailing the term "evidence-based practice." Parents can add this understanding to their arsenal of aids to bolster their ability to make informed decisions concerning their child with mental health or behavioral needs. Evidence-based practices (EBPs) are treatments that, when implemented correctly and appropriately, can make a real difference in a child's life. EBP generally refers to a program or treatment that has been proven through scientific studies to be effective in improving outcomes for a specific population. It is based on careful research over time, not on informal reports or common practices.

For a copy of the complete handbook, please contact the Maryland Coalition: 410.730.8267 or 1.888.607.3637

ANNOUNCING: ASD BROWN BAG SEMINAR SERIES

Confident Student and **Pathfinders for Autism** are partnering to offer a seminar series on topics of interest to the Baltimore community. The series will run October 2009 - April 2010 at the **Pathfinders for Autism Resource Center** in Hunt Valley. Seminars will be held **Thursdays from 12:30 - 2:00 PM** and will include the following topics and presenters:

Oct. 8 - Executive Functions & Dysfunction; Mary Turos, Confident Student

Nov. 12 - Asperger's Syndrome and the First 12 Years; Dr. Alex Szollos, Human Development Center

Dec. 10 - Neurofeedback for Aspergers & ADHD; Dr. Sheldon Levin, The NeuroScience Team

Jan. 14 - Asperger's Syndrome: The Teen Years & Transition to Adulthood; Dr. Alex Szollos, Human Development Center

Feb. 11 - Sensory Processing; Ida Zelaya, Sensory Street, Inc.

Mar. 11 - Parental Advocacy; Erin Leatherwood, Mental Health Association of Maryland

April 15 - Asperger's in Adults & in Couples & Families; Dr. Alex Szollos, Human Development Center

Details are available on our website. **Registration is required** for each session.

To Register, visit the Calendar of Events on the Pathfinders for Autism website:

<http://www.pathfindersforautism.org/CalendarOfEvents.aspx>

For more information, contact Mary Beth Collins, Confident Student: 410.692.6145, mcollins@confidentstudent.com. Or Rebecca Rienzi, Pathfinders for Autism: 443.330.5370, rrienzi@pathfindersforautism.org

