

NURSES CORNER

Childhood Stress



Stress is something we all experience. There is good stress, manageable stress, and according to the CDC's new report on The Effects of Childhood Stress on Health Across the Lifespan, there is also Toxic Stress. Good stress challenges children to grow, for example a new birth, meeting new people, or seeing new places. Manageable stress occurs with events such as a death in the family, separation or divorce, natural disasters, or even a deployment. These things can cause anxiety in a child, but with strong adult support, can be overcome. Toxic Stress is a prolonged bad experience that may last months or years, such as abuse, neglect, or family dysfunction.

Toxic stress can change the way the brains functions, lower ability to tolerate stress, impair the immune system, and damage memory and the ability to learn. The only way to lessen the effects of Toxic Stress is through strong adult support. To see the summaries of papers on the effects of toxic stress go to www.developingchild.net.

A government agency can give us information and guidance, but we must be willing to admit that, without strong family, faith and friends, our children could experience toxic stress. We also need to be willing to brainstorm strategies that will help others in our community who do not have strong support.

So how do we do this?

1. Ask ourselves "are my children experiencing toxic stress or manageable stress and if so, do we have the support needed?"
2. Seek out parent education that addresses parenting in a hands on setting with our children so that new coping skills can be applied in a safe environment.
3. Help our children learn how to avoid abuse, even with those close to them, and feel comfortable reporting it.
4. Recognize adverse childhood experiences so that we can help families that experience toxic stress and help them seek out community support.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month/Month of the Military Child. A Brown Bag Lunch Series will be offered every Thursday in April from 1200-1300 at Little Hall.

- April 10-- No TV! No Computer! Fun activities with your child
- April 17-- How to teach your child Money Skills/Savings for College
- April 24-- 30 minute Dinners

I urge you to consider taking part and recommending them to your neighbors and friends. We as a military community know that only with support can we have healthy families who flourish.



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