

Families under Fire

by: Bright Tomorrows Staff

Bright Tomorrows deals with families in crisis everyday. It is easy to feel like the world will never be the same or is hopeless after a crisis occurs. It is important to pull together and draw from the strengths within yourself and all of your family members when crisis hits.

Here are some general tips on how to best respond as a family when crisis hits:

- Don't blame each other. Poorly functioning families try to attach the blame to someone inside or outside the family. Healthy families see the crisis as a family-centered problem. They work together to correct or change the problem.
- Be patient. Well-functioning families recognize the need for peace-making, patience and consideration. Poorly functioning families quickly respond with anger.
- Be good stress managers.
- Practice a healthy lifestyle and plan well-deserved relaxation times.
- Try to gain control over whatever part of life you can.
- Remain optimistic, striving to see the brighter side, without denying reality.
- Help each family member have high self-esteem and help them be self-reliant. Praise each other often and encourage the strengths of each person.
- Give daily reminders of your love and appreciation. Healthy families are clear and direct about feelings, particularly expressions of commitment, affection and praise.
- Do things together as a family. Go on family outings, plan fun time at home, hold family meetings, play together and go to church together.
- Talk openly and honestly. Poorly functioning families may not talk, may keep secrets, or have many topics they cannot or will not discuss with each other.
- Develop a strong social network by participating in community organizations, accepting help and supporting others.

In the past several weeks Bright Tomorrows has been overwhelmed with the number of new cases of reported child abuse coming through our center. The number of child forensic interviews and family crisis counseling we provided this past month and a half was almost double what we normally provide. Our hearts go out to these families and as always we strive to restore the laughter, joy, hopes, and dreams of every child and family who comes through our doors. For more information about Bright Tomorrows visit www.brightcac.org.