

Back to School: 7 Mental Health Tips for Kids

Heading back to school is an exciting time for children and families, but changes in schools, teachers, friends and routines can also make it a stressful one.

Bob Beilke, Ph.D., a pediatric and clinical child psychologist who has worked for 21 years at Mary Bridge Children's Hospital & Health Center in Tacoma, Wash., offers the following advice for starting the school year on the right foot:

1. Establish a routine early

Prepare your child for a successful start back to school by getting them back on routines a week or two before school starts. Ensure your child develops adequate sleep patterns now.

Don't wait until a day or two before school starts to begin sending children to bed at a typical school-year bed time and waking them up earlier in the morning. Incorporate some scheduling into the day (for example, regular quiet reading times) to start easing them back into a more regimented schedule.

2. Talk to your children

It's always good for parents to sit down and talk about what children might be concerned about going back to school. But don't forget to talk about the positives, too. What are children excited about and looking forward to this school year?

...Continued on page 3

Family Counseling Services School-Based Clinics

August is a time when those of us with school-aged children start buying back-to-school clothes and supplies and thinking about how to prepare for the coming school year. Back-to-school time is also a busy one for Family Counseling Services (FCS). FCS school-based counseling services are available in the following Cortland County Schools: Cincinnatus, DeRuyter, Cortland, Homer, Marathon, McGraw, and Cortland Alternative High School. Professional counselors from FCS provide services right at the schools, making it easy for students to benefit from individualized mental health counseling without leaving the school building.

Students can be referred to the program by their parents, guardians, social workers, guidance counselors, principals, and others. In addition to direct services provided to students, the counselors meet with parents or guardians at the start of services and at least once a month thereafter.

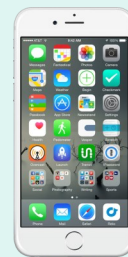
Having counseling clinics in schools is one way to add to the crucial work our schools are already doing. If you would like more information about the school-based counseling program and other services, please call Family Counseling Services at (607) 753-0234, ext 113.





APP OF THE MONTH: Pzizz

If you want to sleep better at night or take incredible power naps during the day, this is the app for you! All you have to do is listen to Pzizz. Headphones/earbuds are recommended for optimal effectiveness, but your built-in phone speaker will work too. Using the latest clinical research, the app's patented system plays you "dreamscapes"—a sleep-optimized mix of music, voiceover, and sound effects that change each night, to quickly quiet your mind, put you to sleep, keep you asleep, and then wake you up feeling refreshed. The app features Sleep, Nap or Focus modules from which to choose.



iPhone: <http://bit.ly/PzizzIP> Android: <http://bit.ly/PzizzAnd>

Antidepressant Microbes In Soil: How Dirt Makes You Happy

Prozac may not be the only way to get rid of your serious blues. Soil microbes have been found to have similar effects on the brain and are without side effects and chemical dependency potential. Learn how to harness the natural antidepressant in soil and make yourself happier and healthier. Read on to see how dirt makes you happy.

Natural remedies have been around for untold centuries. These natural remedies included cures for almost any physical ailment as well as mental and emotional afflictions. Ancient healers may not have known why something worked but simply that it did. Modern scientists have unraveled the why of many medicinal plants and practices but only recently are they finding remedies that were previously unknown and yet, still a part of the natural life cycle. Soil microbes and human health now have a positive link which has been studied and found to be verifiable.

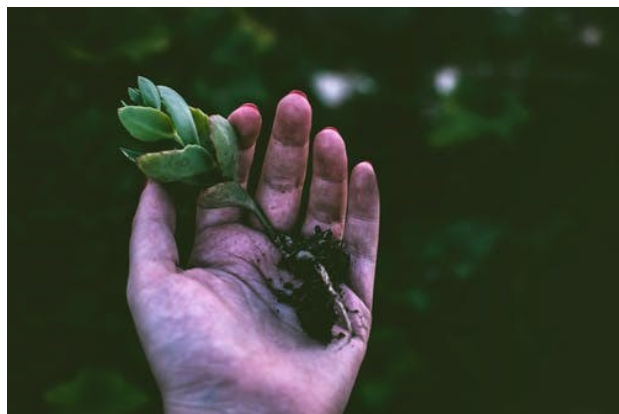
Soil Microbes and Human Health

Did you know that there's a natural antidepressant in soil? It's true. Mycobacterium vaccae is the substance under study and has indeed been found to mirror the effect on neurons that drugs like Prozac provide. The bacterium is found in soil and may stimulate serotonin production, which makes you relaxed and happier. Studies were conducted on cancer patients and they reported a better quality of life and less stress.

Lack of serotonin has been linked to depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder and bipolar problems. The bacterium appears to be a natural antidepressant in soil and has no adverse health effects. These antidepressant microbes in soil may be as easy to use as just playing in the dirt.

Most avid gardeners will tell you that their landscape is their "happy place" and the actual physical act of gardening is a stress reducer and mood lifter. The fact that there is some science behind it adds additional credibility to these garden addicts' claims. The presence of a soil bacteria antidepressant is not a surprise to many of us who have experienced the phenomenon ourselves. Backing it up with science is fascinating, but not shocking, to the happy gardener.

...Continued on page 4



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...Continued from page 1

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3. Ease worries

If children are nervous about a new school, classroom, or teacher, take them to visit the school before the first day. Show them where they'll be dropped off and picked up each day and talk through the school day. Older children may find it useful to get their schedule in advance.

4. Monitor social media

Keep an eye on older children's social media accounts. What are you seeing on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram? What are your children seeing that they might be nervous or anxious about? Restrict your teen from text messaging in bed after bedtime.

5. Foster positive friendships

For kids who are worried about friendships or loneliness, encourage them to reconnect with a friend before the start of school. Schedule a play date before school starts and help them make plans to see each other at recess or lunch on the first day of school. Pre-load the start of the school year with positive relationships that will help buffer some of the less positive experiences.

6. Create homework strategies

For children who are not academically inclined, the onset of school may signal a time of increased stress and worry for both students and parents. Work with your child to develop a plan for getting homework done and assignments turned in on time. Make a plan to touch base with teachers regularly. Even check your student's backpack when they come home from school. Set an after-school routine, such as bathroom break, snack and homework before playtime.

7. Don't stress, parents

Parents have their own set of worries. Talking to other parents can be helpful, as can getting as much information as you can. Review your child's schedule. Set up a time to meet your child's teacher or school principal and figure out a way to communicate that works well for both of you.

The bottom line: Organization and communication with your child can help start the school year on the right foot both at school and at home. Read the entire article [here](#).

by Halley Knigge



The Mental Health Association of Cortland County would like to share our sincere appreciation to Ahren Morse from Homer, New York for choosing us in her efforts to raise awareness for Mental Health through a Facebook fundraiser. Through her efforts, Ahren was able to donate funds to the Mental Health Association of Cortland County. This contribution allows us to continue with our *Book Sharing* program, which provides people in our community mental health resources at no cost. If you wish to learn more about this program or are interested in supporting our cause contact us through e-mail at mhacortlandny@gmail.com.

BOOK SHARE PROGRAM

The Mental Health Association of Cortland County offers a book share program, developed for Mental Health related readings only. (Fiction or non-fiction) It's *free* - your client gets to *keep* the book, and therapists can send multiple requests for books for multiple clients! Please note, there is a cap on funding, so be mindful of your requests. For more information or to make a request, email us at: mhacortlandny@gmail.com





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Antidepressant Microbes In Soil: How Dirt Makes You Happy

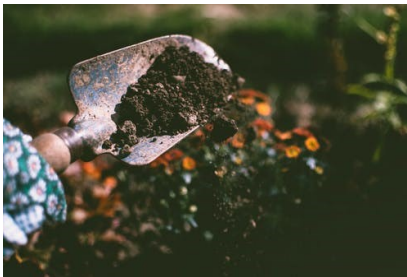
Mycobacterium antidepressant microbes in soil are also being investigated for improving cognitive function, Crohn's disease and even rheumatoid arthritis.

How Dirt Makes You Happy

Antidepressant microbes in soil cause cytokine levels to rise, which results in the production of higher levels of serotonin. The bacterium was tested both by injection and ingestion on rats, and the results were increased cognitive ability, lower stress and better concentration on tasks than a control group.

Gardeners inhale the bacteria, have topical contact with it and get it into their bloodstreams when there is a cut or other pathway for infection. The natural effects of the soil bacteria antidepressant can be felt for up to 3 weeks if the experiments with rats are any indication. So get out and play in the dirt and improve your mood and your life. Read entire article [here](#).

By: Bonnie L. Grant, Certified Urban Agriculturist



WISHING WELLNESS CENTER REOPENS

The Wishing Wellness Center is pleased to announce they have reopened and are continuing to accept peer referrals. Their location at 24 Church St. in Cortland is open Monday—Friday, 8:30am—4:30pm and closed for the lunch hour from 12-1pm.

Please feel free to contact Julie Partigianoni, Peer Services Program Manager with any questions: (607) 423-7472.

SUMMER LUNCH PROGRAM

Catholic Charities provides nutritious, free meals to kids throughout the summer. Please share!

CITY OF CORTLAND SITES:

Dexter Park Monday-Friday 11:30 – 12:30
140-143 Elm Street Through August 23rd

Randall School Park Monday-Friday 11:15-12:15
31 Randall Street Through August 23rd

Suggett Park Monday-Friday 11:45-12:45
89 Madison Street Through August 23rd

PREBLE SITE:

Preble Park Pavilion Tuesday – Friday P/U 12-1:00pm
Rt. 218 only Preble Through August 16th

Call ahead (607) 423-3991

For more information call (607) 756-5992 ext. 134 or e-mail: summerlunch@ccocc.org

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND SUPPORT

Food for Thought

is on hiatus for the summer. Check back this fall for more great lunchtime learning opportunities or email lbarbin@fcscortland.org with any questions or suggestions.

607 Healing Hearts

Monday, August 19, 6:00-8:00 pm
165 Main St, Cortland

Grief support group for parents/guardians who have experienced the death of an adult child.

For more info: 607healinghearts@gmail.com

Cortland LGBT Men's Group (Monthly)

Cortland LGBT Resource Center, 165 Main St Suite B

For more information: (607) 756-8970

Parents & Change Support Group

August 19 September 16 October 21

6:00 to 7:30 pm

Community Center, 90 Central Ave, Cortland

Contact: Becky Tripp (parentsandchange@yahoo.com)

Caregivers Support Group

Thursday, August 22, 3:00-4:00 pm

Conf Rm B, Basement of GCMC, 134 Homer Ave, Cortland

For those who provide support for someone aged 60 or older.

For more info: Caregivers Resource Center (607) 753-5060.

If you have an upcoming community event or article you would like considered for inclusion in the MHA Newsletter, send your submission to kristin@sevenvalleyshealth.org by the 14th of the month prior, or subscribe to the newsletter via email.

Disclaimer: The information presented here does not constitute professional medical advice. Individuals respond to treatment for mental health conditions in different ways, and treatment plans often need adjustment over time. Patients should work closely with their doctor and other health professionals in order to achieve optimal control of symptoms.