

Parent/Child Role Reversal



Family Development Resources, Inc.



Parent/Child Role Reversal

Parent-child role reversal is an interchanging of traditional role behaviors between a parent and child, so that the child adopts some of the behaviors traditionally associated with parents.

In role reversal, parents act like helpless, needy children looking to their own children for parental care and comfort.

Parent/Child Role Reversal

The effects of role reversal on abused children are destructive. Assuming the role of the responsible parent, children fail to negotiate the developmental tasks that must be mastered at each stage of life if they are to achieve normal development and healthy adjustment.

Parent/Child Role Reversal

- Failure to perform any of the developmental tasks not only hampers development in succeeding stages, but also further reinforces feelings of inadequacy. Children in a role reversal situation have little sense of self and see themselves as existing only to meet the needs of their parents.

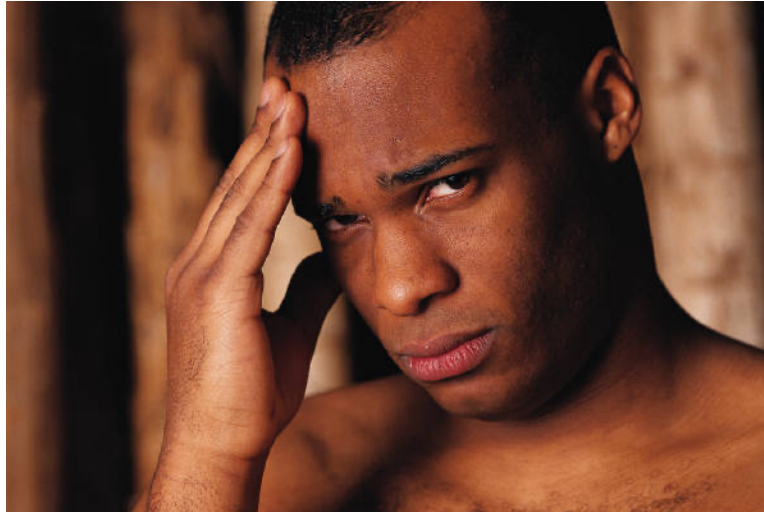
Role Reversal

- Are there current families you are working with that need work in this area?
- -What are some examples?

Common effects (products) of role reversal on children:

1. Children fail to negotiate the developmental tasks of childhood.
2. Develop feelings of inadequacy.
3. Lag behind in social and emotional development.
4. Often view themselves as existing to meet the needs of others.
5. Develop a “role-based” identity.
6. Have a limited sense of self.
7. Have difficulty relating to children; play is acting foolish.

Dealing With Stress



What is stress?

- Stress is an emotional response to the demands of life.
- Stress is the one feeling most everyone is concerned about, and for good reason.
- Getting a handle on stress can mean a healthier and longer life.

Good Stress and Bad Stress

- Not all stress is bad.
- Actually, there is some stress that is good.
- Good stress activates us to use our personal power in positive ways to meet our needs, desires, and wants.

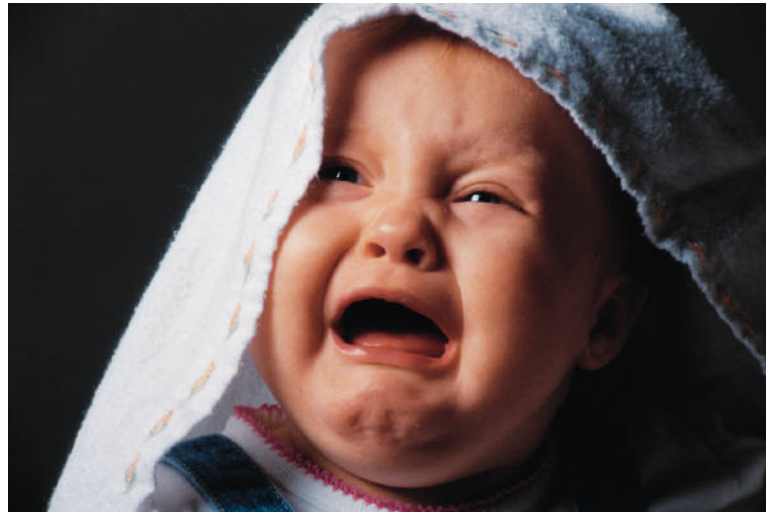


Good Stress and Bad Stress

- The kind of stress that is bad is called **distress**, or stress that drains us physically, emotionally, and socially.
- Bad stress or distress shows up in symptoms like headaches, backaches, ulcers, diarrhea, fatigue, anxiety, depression, lashing out, or withdrawing from others.

Distress and Unmet Needs

- Distress can often be attributed to our inability to get our basic needs met.
- As humans, we have several needs we need to fulfill.



Distress and Unmet Needs

- **Social Needs**
 - The need for friendship or companionship.
- **Emotional Needs**
 - The need for love, praise, or feeling worthwhile.



Distress and Unmet Needs

- **Intellectual Needs**

- The need for intellectual stimulation, for thinking new thoughts, for reading challenging books, or for learning something new.

- **Physical Needs**

- The need for sleep, food, and exercise.

Distress and Unmet Needs

- **Creative Needs**

- The need to make something, to dance, write a poem, listen to music, or create something.

- **Spiritual Needs**

- The need to know that we are part of something bigger than ourselves and that we can increase our awareness of and sensitivity to it.

Distress and Unmet Needs

- Getting our needs met reduces our stress and allows us to be the caring parent we want to be.
- It also allows us to help our children get their needs met and reduces their stress.

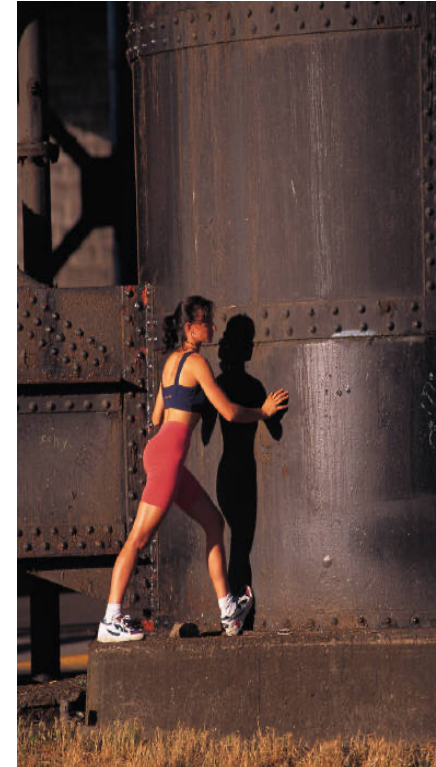


Handling Stress

- The most important aspect of stress is the ability to handle it.
- Since most stress is self-induced, the ability to handle it rests primarily with each person.
- The following are some proven strategies for reducing stress.

Physical Approaches

- Get regular exercise.
- Improve your diet.
- Listen to your body.
- Learn relaxation skills.
- Get adequate sleep.



Mental Approaches

- Adopt a new attitude.
- Increase self-worth.
- Set realistic expectations.
- Keep a positive outlook.
- Improve your communication skills.
- Leave work at work.
- Get organized.

Social Approaches

- Develop a support network.
- Develop a social life.
- Volunteer your time.
- Develop a sense of humor.
- Relax.
- Develop hobbies.



Helping Children Handle Their Stress

- Contrary to popular belief, adults are not the only ones who feel stress.
- In many ways, life can be a lot more stressful for kids because they don't have all the resources adults do in relieving their stress.

Helping Children Handle Their Stress

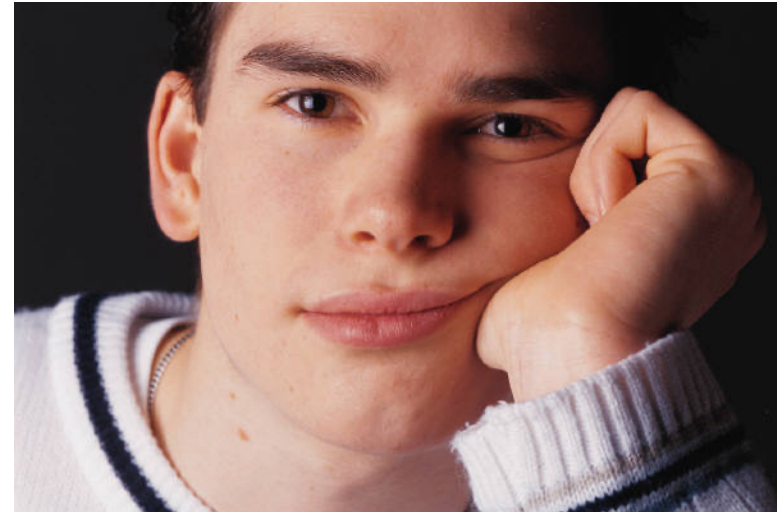
- For example, when parents argue, kids worry.
- Children ask, “What’s the matter?” and are told, “Nothing.”
- Children have no one to talk to about their fears so they internalize them and their health and personality are affected.

Helping Children Handle Their Stress

- When parents feel stress, they can exercise, take a bath, or just leave for hours.
- Kids have to stay in, do their homework, or some other passive activity.
- In many ways, the stress children feel is overwhelming. Let's look at stress from a child's viewpoint.

Areas of Children's Stress

- Home
- Community
- School and community violence
- Self



What's A Parent To Do?

- Parents can do plenty to help children manage their stress by following these simple guidelines:
- **Be a role model.**
 - When children see their parents doing healthy things to relieve their stress, the message is clear: “It is important to take care of yourself.”

What's A Parent To Do?

- **Do things as a family.**
 - Family outings can be fun outings, and having fun is a great stress reducer.



What's A Parent To Do?

- **Establish routines.**
 - Family routines are predictable and consistent expectations of life that provide children with a sense of comfort.
- **Praise.**
 - Praise your children for doing and being. When children know their parents are pleased with their efforts, the stress in worrying about “doing the right thing” is dramatically reduced.

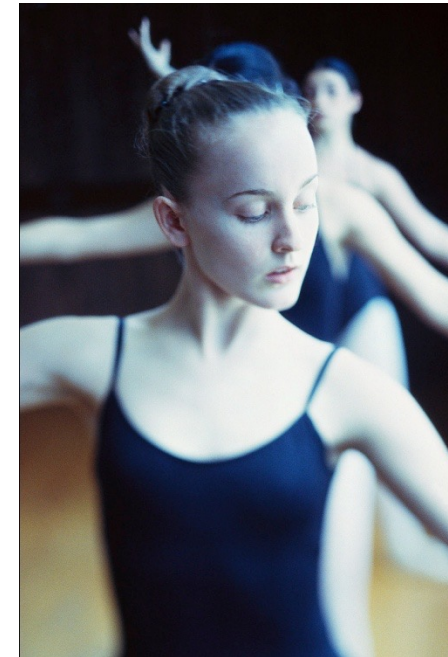
What's A Parent To Do?

- **Acceptance.**

- Nothing helps reduce emotional stress like the feeling of unconditional acceptance.
- Knowing a parent's love is given freely, and is never threatened by mistakes or poor judgments, is the basis of healthy parent-child relationships.

What's A Parent To Do?

- **Encourage sports and the arts.**
 - Get kids active.
 - Organized athletics or street ball are excellent ways to relieve stress, build stamina, and become energized. Music and dance lessons or gymnastics are also good ways to work off stress.



What's A Parent To Do?

- **Massage.**

- Back rubs are wonderful ways to help children relieve their stress.
- Stress is retained in the body. Tight muscles, back and neck aches, and headaches are signs of tension.
- A massage helps lessen stress by loosening up muscles.

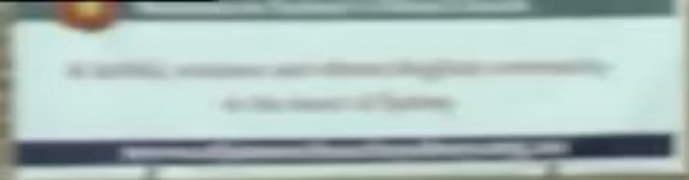
Dealing With Stress

- In short, both children and adults experience stress. It is a natural part of life to feel stressed from time to time, but there are ways to deal with it.



Dealing With Stress

- Most parents give first priority to their children, last priority to themselves.
- The result is stress, harshness, and the desire to disappear and just have some time for yourself. It does not have to be that way if you make a plan.



Role Reversal

- Nurturing Parenting Skills SV Curriculum
- Lesson 10.1 Understanding and Handling Stress