



Jeffco F.I.T. Coalition

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BrainWise: Revealing the Hidden Rules of Critical Thinking

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If there are 10 diapers and 8 baby bottles, how old is the mother?

This is obviously a question that cannot be answered without more information about the mother, but many of our clients would answer, "18." Impulsive responses are one of the characteristics, found in many adolescents and adults, called **DICE**:

Don't tell me because I already know it;

Impulsive and Irrational;

Concrete thinkers with no Concern for Consequences; and

Egotistical, prone to Emotional hijackings and feelings of Entitlement.

We work with individuals with DICE, people who make choices that adversely affect their lives. They not only are teen parents, they are the progeny of teen parents. They experience financial difficulties, have histories of broken homes and family violence, and may be familiar with police, jails and prisons. They feel tired, depressed, angry, and hopeless.

Payne (1996) calls similar behaviors a "poverty mindset" or the actions of people who follow the set of rules they learned in their environment. Their patterns of thought, social interaction and cognitive strategies are those with which they were raised. Payne explains these "hidden rules" as the knowledge of the unspoken cues and habits of a group. Hidden rules define how individuals respond to problems. Different groups -- people in poverty, middle class and wealth -- are governed by different sets of unspoken rules.

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BrainWise

1. Wizard Brain® over Lizard Brain®
2. Constellation of Support
3. Recognize Red Flag Warnings
4. Exit the Emotions Elevator™
5. Separate Fact from Opinion
6. Ask Questions
7. Identify Your Choices
8. Consequences Now and Later (GNL) Affecting Others (CAO)
9. Set Goals and Form an Action Plan
10. Communicate Effectively Positive Body Message "I" Messages P.O.V. Assertive Statements

Upcoming Event:

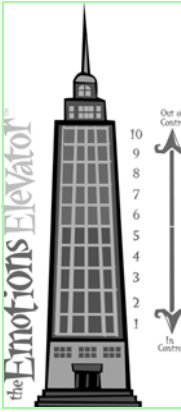
- The next Jeffco F.I.T. Coalition Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 13, 2007 2:30 -4:30 p.m. in the Buffalo Bill Room at the Jefferson County Court and Administration Building, 100 Jefferson County Parkway, Golden, CO.

Become a Member!

Please call
Cynthia Farkas,
303-239-7074



The BrainWise program and its 10 Wise Ways curriculum complement Payne's work. Based on proven theories from the social sciences, education, and neuroscience, BrainWise provides tools to teach the "hidden rules" that underlie thinking skills. Our clients, patients and students may not be able to control many of life's circumstances, but by teaching them skills that help them control their responses, we show them how to solve, not create, problems. And while the "hidden



acted, was the catalyst for developing BrainWise. I had expected my clients to think like me, to understand the consequences of their behavior and to make better choices. When I realized that they had never learned these skills, I saw that a way to break the cycle was to teach them the "hidden rules" of thinking. Everyone has problems, but people with fewer problems have learned "unspoken techniques" that help build resiliency and help



rules" of poverty, middle class and wealth are unique to each group, the "hidden rules" of critical thinking are universal and can be taught across cultures, class status,

"This destructive pattern, along with the knowledge that these young people were acting the only way they knew because it was the way their family members and the people around them acted, was the catalyst for developing BrainWise."



languages, age, sex, and intellectual abilities. Everyone needs to learn thinking skills, from the teenager who does not wear a seatbelt to the religious leader who hides a secret sex life.

them prevent, or manage, the curves that life throws. People with thinking skills had an advantage. They could assess and analyze problems, handle emotions, and set goals. They did not react impulsively, feel victimized or lay blame. Teaching the rules of critical thinking, or the 10 Wise Ways, would give those without the same advantage.

BrainWise is Rooted in Home Visitation

As a former Denver Visiting Nurse, my caseload included first-time mothers and families with reported child abuse, rape and other forms of violence. Thirty years ago we made 3-5 visits and had few outside resources. Although I established good relationships with my clients, I wondered about the lasting impact of my help as they moved on with their lives, experiencing additional crises, problems and sorrows. In later years, I realized that the babies I visited became mothers and fathers who repeated the same cycle.



This destructive pattern, along with the knowledge that these young people were acting the only way they knew because it was the way their family members and the people around them

Growth of BrainWise

Research shows that it takes 50 or more contact hours to change behavior (Bartlett, 1985). In 1995, schools were one of the few places available that gave us this degree of contact. We piloted BrainWise with nine classes of teen mothers and teenagers identified as at-risk by counselors in Denver metro area schools. Over the last ten years, the program has grown and is taught in Early Childhood Education (ECE) classes and in colleges extension centers, in public schools and private schools, in jails and church groups, to developmentally disabled individuals and college engineering students, and to families on Indian reservations and illiterate Chinese girls who are targets of



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sex traffickers.

This past year, in partnership with Rotary, a worldwide service organization, we piloted a literacy project we hope to replicate nationally. Villa Park, a northwest Denver community with a 13% high school graduation rate and large Spanish-speaking population, has two elementary schools.

At one of the schools, second and third grade teachers are teaching BrainWise in their classrooms, and Rotarians

(some who are bilingual) are teaching BrainWise to the children's parents. The parent meetings have been so successful that the parents have requested new classes for their friends and family who want to learn BrainWise.

This "double dose" of BrainWise ensures that the thinking skills would be reinforced at home. The other elementary school is serving as a control school, and their intervention includes a donation of books and

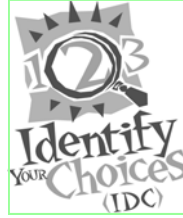
Rotarians reading to children.

The program's growth is supported by research showing evidence of its success, including recognition for putting into practice the research findings of Eric Kandel, Ph.D., winner of the 2000 Nobel Prize in Medicine. Dr. Kandel proved the brain's neuroplasticity" or its ability to form new neural connections (Kandel,2000). BrainWise uses a picture of the brain and has clients draw lines showing that they are making neural connections to the prefrontal cortex every time they learn a wise way



(Barry and Welsh, 2007). Explaining complex brain functions using simple explanations is why the 10 Wise Ways is a universal method and can be taught to individuals of all ages, cultures, and educational abilities. By revealing the "hidden rules" -- describing how the brain works and why it is important to practice using thinking skills -- BrainWise opens opportunities for participants to throw away their DICE and replace it with smart choices and decisions.

- For more information on BrainWise curricula and teaching aids, go to: www.brainwise-plc.org
- A book for parents, *How To Be BrainWise*, is available at: www.howtobebrainwise.com



About Jeffco F.I.T. Coalition



Jeffco F.I.T. Coalition meets twice a year and publishes this newsletter biannually. Thank you for your

"We find delight in the beauty and happiness of children that makes the heart too big for the body."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

interest and support of organizations and agencies providing services to Jefferson County's children ages 0-3 years. If interested in becoming a member of Jeffco F.I.T. coalition, please contact Cynthia Farkas, chairperson at 303-239-7074.

Mission:

To enhance and promote supportive services to Jefferson County families with children, prenatal to age three. Jeffco F.I.T. achieves its mission through information sharing, coordination of services, and identification of gaps in services.

Goals and Objectives:

- ◆ To promote information sharing among service providers
- ◆ To increase awareness of available services
- ◆ To improve coordination and collaboration of services to families
- ◆ To promote the enhancement of continuum of services

For more information about the coalition see page 4 for member contact information and please visit:

<http://health.jeffco.us> .

Coalition Updates



Jefferson County Human Services—Jefferson County's Second Annual Resource Fair is being planned for Summer 2007 at Jefferson High School in Edgewater. There will be twice as many booths with community resources, cultural performances, and other activities for families to enjoy.

For information, contact Ashleigh Sedbrook at 303-271-4825 or asedbroo@jeffco.us

JCDHE Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) –JCDHE was invited by Invest-in-Kids to host a meeting with the **British Health Minister** and her delegation during their visit to Denver on December 6- 7, 2006. England is planning to implement the NFP program at 10 pilot sites as part of their Social Exclusion Action Plan. The PFHF team enthusiastically shared first-hand information on how the NFP works at the local level, including joint home visits for two of their guests. The meeting and tea were enjoyed by all!





We're on the Web!

<http://health.jeffco.us>

F.I.T. Newsletter is a biannual electronic newsletter produced by JCDHE! Editions will be emailed to you. Please call or send us your email address and website url so that we can include a link on the web page:

Phone: 303-239-7074 >> Email: cfarkas@jeffco.us

Contact Us . . . Coalition Members

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