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How to Have Your Family Thriving Guaranteed

7 Simple Yet Powerful Strategies
to Help Your Child's Behaviour
Without Medication



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Chapter One: Daily Stress

**“How to reduce the daily stress of your
child, and your family...in just 15 minutes
or less”**



If you have a typical family life then I should imagine you have a busy household. Families come in many forms from the traditional model right through to grandparents raising children, single parents and various forms of step families. One or both of you as parents are working; there is the children's schooling to take care of; then after school activities such as sports, and other clubs and games. Then throw in household chores, getting meals ready in the evening, supervising homework and before you know it everybody is busy, tired and too stressed to go to bed. Sleep becomes something that is neither stress free, nor nourishing to your body, but rather something that gets fitted in between all of the other activities that are in a twenty four hour period.



Let's look at this a little closer. Most of us have a day that starts with stress – we get up in a hurry; rush to get children and ourselves ready for work and school try to organize domestic chores that need to be done and then all dash out of the house. It's a rush to school, rush to work, and rush to do the chores and then you get stuck in traffic. Then when the children are due to finish school the rush starts again.

Children don't need to (but do) attend their after school activities dance and more sport: they also have a strong need to talk to their friends on the phone, mobile text, talk via computer chat. Maybe they want a friend to come over and play, or they just want to sit in their room. Maybe computer games are their habit of choice but no matter what they want to do, family time as such and any resemblance of a routine are being eroded with each passing minute.



What is clear in family homes like this is that firstly there is very little time for family connection; one on one connection with parents or a relaxation or shut down period. Now we as adults can sometimes take some "me" time or a glass of wine before going to bed, but...

**Have you ever considered what your children are doing to
reduce the stress in their lives?**

Increasingly, children are taught by school and society to know they have rights, and that is fine. Unfortunately what they are not taught is that with these rights comes a certain degree of respect that they should have for their parents, teachers and other adults in positions of responsibility. The reason this has occurred is a result of the increasing awareness and backlash against child abuse. Children were encouraged to "speak up" and to be "heard" and while it is absolutely vital that all of our children understand their right to do so in connection with abuse, neglect, bullying and other problems children might encounter; what this right was never intended to be was a tool to cause parents even more stress.

In modern homes children often have what I call the 'upper hand'. They have learnt that if they nag their parents for the latest gadgets, for their friends to come over; to be taken somewhere (NOW); or for money to buy something that absolutely "everybody" else has and then parents will often just cave in to these demands. This is because it is often easier to do than to spend the time explaining to their child that their demands at the time are not practical, are not affordable, and is not considerate of others or anything else. Unfortunately once a parent has given in once then the child learns that with time and persistence (not to mention an often annoying attitude) that they can continue to get their own way. A more proactive way of dealing with this problem for example would be to teach them about money and how to create making the money for what they want.

Another stress that is placed on families in recent times is the problem of eating disorders, and the increasing incidence of childhood obesity. This problem, where children are either carrying too much weight, or are developing really tall but very thin, can occur for a number of different reasons including poor diet, and a lack of exercise. Many children are pushing to do what their friends are doing, and parents are going along with what they demand, not realizing what is happening to their child's health. Some parents do notice what is happening but are unsure as to what to do about it so they let the situation continue. This means many children might be going to before school training, after school training, and then playing sport on the weekend as well. Nobody knows how much each child is doing, because the teachers, parents and coaches are may be working in isolation from each other and so no-one becomes aware of any potential health problems until the child becomes really ill, feeling pain, overtired or stressed.

Children need to be heard by the adults around them. They need to know that it is safe for them to let you know when they are getting too tired or over stressed. But this is often difficult when parents too are trying to cope with the stress the child's activities place on the household. Parents need to find ways to empower themselves as parents and learn how to first notice things that are going on with their children and then have the tools to cope with the situation as it occurs.

Society today is about too much exercise and few realise the huge impact this will have on children's growth. Parents are trying to cope with stress, fatigue, money issues, huge medical problems, and sickness in elderly parents.

Children are undertaking heaps of activities plus doing the hard work at school, ready to go to university and having careers and full on jobs. They know exercise does make them feel better in the short term, but too much exercise can lead to problems with the family home life, long term injuries, stress and fatigue and children who can end up suffering permanent health problems before they reach thirty years of age. Using exercise as a means of dealing with both overweight, and under nourished children is a double-edged sword for most families and this is affecting all children.

Over exercising has an impact on family life in so many areas. There are increased costs for the families who also have to pay for additional uniforms, fees, extra fuel and running costs. Time together as a family is reduced as is the opportunity to create home cooked meals – fast foods becomes an easy option which is simply perpetuating the problem with their overweight children. Fast foods often contain addictive elements and most lack any nutritional value for growing children.

The family also suffers from the fact that the parents are often away from home nearly every night, transporting their children to various activities. Parents get tired; children get tired. Homework and school work becomes harder and basically as the family gets more worn out they become stressed and grumpy with each other because they have no time to relax.

Finally many parents are becoming aware that their children have become individuals who need to be kept entertained nearly all of the time, and this usually involves them being out of the home. If this is happening in your home you might want to work out what level of exercise and entertainment works for you all as a family. As adults you need to ensure that your children have enough energy and sleep for them to be able to do well at school. They need some quiet time and family time; rather than having to be entertained all of the time, and if you want your children to grow up into steady and happy adults, then it is time to help your children enjoy the peace and quiet of the home environment on a regular basis.



What lesson does a hectic home environment teach the child or children? In families where there are more than one child resources such as money, time and energy are even more depleted and the stress situation worsens.

In this type of environment the child learns that their own personal needs are the only important thing in their life, and they spend all of their time and energies making sure things stay that way. They cease to be caring of Mum's workload and won't help with the chores. They fight with, rather

than play with their siblings and this extends into the community as well.

Children who get their own way constantly are less likely to listen to teachers as people they should respect and soon find it hard to get on with others. A large number of children suffer physical ailments they don't discuss, as well as emotional problems such as anger, frustration and stress. Yet when it comes to communicating with a parent their discomfort often turns to playing up which adds stress to the family.

How can we deal with this in a new way? Respect gets respect. Children watch and learn from their parents. They don't know what their parents have put up with all the name calling, be seen and not heard, school bullying constantly all day nothing was ever done to stop it. Children today know how to get what they want, they don't give up, and they have no barrier that says back off and behave.

Children should be doing chores to earn pocket money- it doesn't come come for free. When children are asked to do something their next thought is often, "What in it for me" me" - you answer "your dinner, love". Tell your child that if they want a new toy – a want instead of a need, then they have to find ways ways to get the money for it. This way they are learning the value of the things they have and that they can't expect to get everything they want in life for



nothing. It is helping them to become more responsible.

This is where a family routine, rules and consistency becomes so important and it is up to you as parents (and as a couple) to implement these things to help your children. A child is not old enough to understand the need for quiet time; they are often too busy worrying that they are missing out on the latest gossip from their friends or getting homework done. While their concern is valid enough, you as a parent have to be concerned with their well-being, so one of the first limits you might want to impose in the home is on their communication with their friends and the insistence on family time; one hour of relaxation time before bed during which you could incorporate a massage.

Other things you can do to increase the relaxed atmosphere in your home is to use aromatherapy oils or relaxation music though out the home. Electric oil burners are a safer and better option.



Avoid Fragrance oil and incense sticks especially during pregnancy, pure essential oils are best, there are many books that are available on this subject.

While it is difficult to reduce the amount of stress that occurs during the day a well-rested and calm child is better equipped physical and emotionally to deal with these stresses. Some of the things you can do to help create an environment that will assist in this stress relief (for you as well) are:

- Getting things such as clothes, school equipment, school lunches and other necessary items laid out the night before. Your children can help or do this organizing.
- Working towards and make sure that all homework is done before the evening meal so that the children have a time to relax before bed.
- Make getting dinner ready a family affair – children as young as five years old (and younger at times) can help by preparing, peeling vegetables, setting the table and stirring dishes. Watching & learning about all the lovely smells. To be involved and spending time with parents.
- Insist that everybody sits down together at dinner time at the table. As parents explain to the children how you would like this time together to go and ask what each child would like to share; open the communication lines between you all. This may be new for you as parents but watch what happens. Use this time for you as a family to share your day communications, about what has happened to each of you. To help set the mood have a relaxation DVD music on in the back ground quietly. See more in resources for more ways to help.
- Ensure that everybody has their cell phones off or in their room during the meal preparation time and meal eating times.



What you are trying to do here is create an oasis in the day for you and your children to spend time together as a family. This quiet family time will also lend well into the evening activities when massage can be introduced as part of the bathing and getting ready for bed routine.

Another helpful tip to help consolidate this family and to promote a stress free environment in the home is to set a block of 30 minutes time on Sunday for example, for each person in the family to spend in quiet time. You could have one DVD playing slowly and gently in the background, while the family can just lay on the lawn, or to lay on their bed with a rug over them, or even on the carpet in the lounge. Just lying quietly; eyes closed, resting.

One of the biggest blocks to quality family time in the evening is the scheduling of too many after school activities for the children; especially sports. Some parents feel that their children need sport and activities for life and communication skills but how much is too much? While it is true that some colleges do like to see students who are “well-rounded” your child may not make it through college, if he or she has been pushed through a stressful school life, filled with extra curricular activities as well.

One or two exercise sessions, or out of school sport per week is more than enough for a school aged child. Children are using a lot of energy naturally just to get through their day and if you combine this fact with the knowledge that their bodies are still growing and developing then you can see this tip makes perfect sense. Children who do not have enough rest time do not have the time to let their bodies heal naturally from minor ailments and medical professionals are now seeing many incidences of hip, knee, shoulder, legs and ankle problems in people aged 20 – 30 years old who participated in a lot of sporting activities during their younger years.

In my own practice I see a number of incidences of neck tightness, not able to sleep, aching legs, sore arms, wrists and hands, backaches, stomach aches and headaches in young children who are simply doing too much. Many children do not sleep well or deeply causing change in food habits, attitudes, mood changes, become unhappy, put on weight. Later life can see them start to misbehave, and as these issues increase it can slow their mind and school results start to fall. These children also frequently carry a degree of stress that results in them becoming frustrated although they are often too young to appreciate why they feel this way.

As a parent you may have seen changes in your teen's behavior as their natural hormones kick in and they also start to act out because of the frustrations they carry. You would be amazed at the number of children who think they are 'not good enough', have low self esteem and yet who do remarkably well at sport and struggle in school. But especially as children get older the pressure to perform and get results, increases stress both emotionally and physically. Unfortunately many teenagers who are left to their own devices experiment with drug and alcohol around this time.

Children have no other skills to deal with their feelings. In other cases caring parents, are at a loss to know what else to do, take their children to medical practitioners and are then prescribed medication that is often not necessary and can sometimes be very harmful to the child over the long term.



I have found personally that massage has an amazing effect on children and teenagers, both boys and girls. Massage treatments can take **as little as five to fifteen minutes to do** and yet the benefits from doing it (either yourself as parents, or if you prefer through accredited remedial massage professional) are far reaching, and in many cases long term success.

Take the case of minor physical ailments for example. Our muscular system is a wonderful piece of machinery that enables our body to move. If you can imagine the bones are a coat hanger that holds body shape upright and the muscles like a silk shirt that provides movement.

In cases where the body and muscles are tired or are over stressed small tears can occur in the muscles. Although the fibres do heal up they get small knots in the fibres and over time you start to get very sore and tight in various muscle groups. What is happening is that over time the knots that form to mend muscle fibres end up causing a scar inside the muscle, which then gets larger, weaker and restricted over a very short time, making the problem worse. When this happens it is more difficult for the

muscles to return to their strong and flexible natural state. The muscles become permanently overloaded and stressed, but the more gradual damage they sustain the more likely they are to get to the point where they start pulling the bones in a different direction to what was intended.

The body feels tired and stressed all the time and eventually the body just stops! Migraines, sharp and chronic back and shoulder pain, or extreme fatigue, is all indications that your body has had enough and it wants some time out or help.

By massaging the muscles on a regular basis you are helping to prevent scars build up, and reduce muscle fatigue and this in turn helps prevent major injuries and ill health. If ill health and major injury does occur this will require ongoing massage treatment for many years just to help the individual get some level of comfort; whether this be in the whole leg, arm, wrist, neck or back. Massage helps unlock muscle pain and provides a relaxing mindset for the body to heal naturally; in its own time. Because the muscles feel more relaxed, so does the rest of the body; which helps combat the problems of over tiredness, stress and frustration; which in turn then allows the body to stay healthy and strong.

Things to note when massaging children's sports injuries:

- If the child has sustained physical damage or injury make sure that first aid is done. As soon as possible RICE- Rest, Ice, Compression Elevation is very good start. Talk about having massage treatment with your Doctor or other medical attention required before any massaging treatment takes place Learning first aid can empower you know what to do with different injuries and help you provide support your family.

- Take care to not push down on the effected muscle itself – this will cause more discomfort say on a leg, for example, DON'T massage around the affected area.
- Always use gentle and soft movements when massaging children.
- Pay particular attention around main bone groups – never press directly over child's spine or on any other joint and search instead for the tightened muscle groups.
- Make sure that the room you are massaging in is warm enough so that the child can relax naturally, rather than tensing their muscles against the cold weather.
- Be calm when you are massaging your child; speak to your child quietly. It is okay for them to talk to you or to move around if they wish – just adjust your movements accordingly.

As you are reading this it is easy to feel a little overwhelmed by it all, especially if you can recognize the need for change in your household, yet don't feel you have the energy to put these changes in place. This is a totally understandable way to feel, but I do urge you to look at cutting down the number of outside activities you have to taxi your children too; making sure that there is some quality family time in the home every day and making the time to have a real connection with your children.

The benefits from doing this will include well-rested and unstressed children who are more willing to be responsible in the home and who will help you out with chores and keeping to a family routine. These children will also be less demanding on all of your resources, including money, your time and energy. They will actually respond very favorably to being given more responsibility in the home as they will perceive this

as part of growing up, and all of this contributes towards the happy thriving family life I know you have always dreamed of.



The website www.HelenBrougham.com.au is here to support you and give you what you are looking for in different areas of your life. I'm so grateful to have you as one of our clients and one of our friends!

Enjoy!

Helen