

SPRING  
2008

# FOCUS



## Psychological & Counseling Centre, LLC

1201 South Main St., Suite 100  
North Canton, Ohio 44720  
330 244-8782  
fax 330 244-8795  
www.vistapcc.com

Vista Psychological & Counseling Centre along with Walsh University will offer a **free** seminar on **INTERNET SAFETY** for parents and teens on **Tuesday, June 3, 2008, at Walsh University.** See page 2 for details.

### TECHNICAL DIFFICULTY

A national survey of 1,500 youth aged 10 to 17 explored the characteristics of those who had formed close relationships with people they first met online. Girls and boys who reported high levels of Internet use and home Internet access were more likely to report close online relationships. Fourteen percent of the youth sample reported close online friendships with 2 percent reporting online romances. Girls were found to be slightly more likely than boys to have close online relationships. And girls ages 14-17 were about twice as likely as girls 10-13 to form close online relationships.

Those in the sample who reported problems were more likely to have formed online romantic relationships, been asked by online friends for face-to-face meetings, and attended face-to-face meetings with people they first met online. The two problem characteristics associated with online relationships were high parent-child conflict and being highly troubled. The girls with high levels of parent-child conflict reported yelling, nagging, and taking away privileges



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by parents at higher levels than the other girls. The highly troubled girls had levels of depression, victimization, and troubling life events at a higher level than the other girls in the sample. Girls in either of these categories were more than twice as likely as the other girls in the sample to have formed close online relationships.

Those in the sample who reported open communication with friends and family and who have people to talk with about online encounters; can get advice about behavior they find weird or alarming; and, therefore, may develop a sense of appropriate and inappropriate online behavior. In contrast, it may be that those youth with problems are less likely to receive good advice and feedback.

*Teenage Research Unlimited. Internet Safety Survey. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Cox Communications, 2006.*

David Finkelhor, Kimberly J. Mitchell, and Janis Wolak. "Escaping or connecting? Characteristics of youth who form close online relationships." *Journal of Adolescents* 26 (2003), page 105.

### PROTECT YOUR TEEN ON THE INTERNET

Have the computer in a central location rather than in your teenager's room.

Review your teen's browsing history.

Monitor chat room and instant messaging activities.

Learn the online shorthand lingo

Develop and enforce online behavioral contracts with your kids.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

There are many resources for parents of teens. Here are a few helpful links:

[www.becybersmart.com](http://www.becybersmart.com)

[www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org)

[www.ikeepSAFE.org](http://www.ikeepSAFE.org)

[www.netSMART.org](http://www.netSMART.org)

[www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org)

[www.cyberangels.org](http://www.cyberangels.org)

[www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org)

[www.protectkids.com](http://www.protectkids.com)

### Inside this issue:

Internet Safety Seminar	2
Parents as Scapegoats	2
Time Management for the Morning Blast-Off	3
Working Moms' Guilt	3
Couples Rules for Greater Trust	4
Don't Be a Party to Teenage Drinking	4

# *INTERNET SAFETY*

## *What Every Parent and Child Needs to Know*

*Sponsored by Walsh University's Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
and Vista Psychological & Counseling Centre, LLC*

**Tuesday, June 3rd**

**7 - 9 PM**

**Walsh University's  
Barrette Business and Community Center**

*Learn about...*

~ **Potential dangers of the internet** ~

~ **What NOT to do** ~

~ **Ways to be safe and responsible online** ~

*Featuring...*

**Technology Specialist Eric Curts  
North Canton City Schools**

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### **PARENTS AS SCAPEGOATS**

In his book, *Stopping at Every Lemonade Stand*, James Vollbracht tells the story of a dad whose daughter was on the phone in the same room where he was working. At a certain point, she put her hand over the phone and whispered, "Dad, Abbie wants me to spend the night at her house, OK?" Dad thought for a moment and said, "You've spent the last two nights with friends, so we need you home tonight." The daughter gave him a disapproving look and began lobbying to get him to change his mind. Finally she played her ace, and said, "Dad, everyone else is going to be there. It means everything to me to show up. I have to go!" Dad almost gave in, but instead, he held his ground. After she hung up he expected an emotional explosion. Instead of exploding, she glanced up and said, "Thanks, Dad, I really didn't want to go anyway!" And what did dad learn? That it was the daughter's job to push the envelope and his job to keep the boundaries.

Sometimes our children struggle with the pressure to conform and the desire to do what they know is best for them. Even when they have the reasonability, they may experience difficulty explaining their choices and getting their peers to respect them. Offer yourself as your child's scapegoat. Let him/her know that they can always "blame" it on you, telling their friends, "I can't because my Mom (or Dad) won't let me!" Their ability to stand by their own choices will come with maturity. In the meantime, help them find a way out.



## The Morning Blast-Off

Morning—it's the fresh start built into each and every 24-hour block of time. But with all the hassles of getting lunches made, homework gathered, last minute ironing done—not to mention icy windshields that need scraping—morning is often the most stressful part of the day. Don't despair—mornings can run like clockwork, once you toss time-wasting mindsets and embrace these time-saving tips:

### Time Waster #1: Scarlett O'Hara Mentality.

(Remember Scarlett in *Gone With the Wind*? saying, "Tomorrow's another day"?) Whether it's checking homework, filling out a permission form, or planning what you're going to wear—anything postponed till the a.m. only adds to morning madness.

**Time-Saver: Pre-plan.** Because morning hours are precious, develop an evening routine that eliminates the need to think about anything in the morning. Examples: Family members can make lunches, set the breakfast table, and get gas in the car.

Children can routinely bathe, get backpacks together, and lay out their next-day's outfit before going to bed.

**Time Waster #2: Oscar Mentality.** (Remember the messy guy in *The Odd Couple*?)

Dropping things here and there costs you time and sanity looking for lost items. **Time Saver: Keep "A place for everything and everything in its place."**

The sages are right—organizing

tools really do help. Even little children can place shoes in a shoe-stacker; and absent-minded spouses can use a "home basket" where they drop keys after work.

### Time Waster #3: The Lone-Ranger Mentality.

("I have to do this because no one else can do it right.") Are you cooking hot breakfasts every day—even when your kids say they prefer cold cereal? **Time Saver:**

**Give up your fierce hold on morning tasks.** Take turns preparing breakfast; let kids

count out their own money from a "lunch canister," etc. Remind yourself that you're encouraging their ability to say "I can do that myself," an integral part of their self-esteem.

## Working Mom's Guilt

"Whatever you're doing, it isn't enough, so you may as well make the best of it," says Mary C. Hickey, co-author of *The Working Mother's Guilt Guide*. Here are her tips for staying guilt free:

**Keep it light.** "Look for the humor and enjoyment in the situation," says Hickey. If you try to take everything seriously, you're in big trouble. **Remind yourself that time flies—whether or not you're having fun.** "Before you know it, your kids will be asking for the car keys, so you may as well enjoy them while they're young," says

Hickey. Don't waste time lamenting whatever it is you're not doing. **Keep a perspective.** When you consider the alternatives—not working, or not being a mom—you realize it's pretty nice to have the that fullness in your life. "It's a struggle and a balancing act, but kids are also a tremendous pleasure," says Hickey. **Lower your standards.**

You don't have to make the best snacks, and you don't have to be employee of the month. Realize that you have to make choices, juggle, and give up some things—that's OK. **Don't get obsessed.** "To maintain sanity, I take a laissez-faire view of parenthood," says Hickey. "I believe that if you don't obsess on it, good parenting is almost instinctual and you do OK."

**Take care of yourself.** You are not less important than the house plants! If you don't take care of yourself, you won't have any of yourself left for others. So schedule in time just for you.



**"We can no more afford to spend major time on minor things than we can spend minor time on major things."**

Jim Rohn

**"I am only one, but I am still one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."**

Helen Keller



**You can achieve a perfect lift-off in the morning, once you let go of time wasting mindsets.**



## Vista Psychological & Counseling Centre, LLC

Welcome to Vista! Our FOCUS is on you by offering the very best in psychological and counseling services. Established in 2008, our clinicians hold over 60 years of combined experience. We are committed to helping you achieve greater emotional wellness and adjustment by providing individual, child and adolescent, couples, and family therapy. We are available to you Monday thru Saturday with day and evening hours for your convenience.

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1201 South Main Street  
Suite 100  
North Canton, Ohio 44720

Phone: 330-244-8782  
Fax: 330-244-8795  
www.vistapcc.com

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### COUPLES GROUND RULES FOR GREATER TRUST

Want to make sure that your heart-to heart talks with your partner result in greater emotional intimacy—not anger and resentment? Both of you should agree to the following ground rules:

1. I promise no to interrupt you.
2. I promise not to withdraw emotionally or leave physically; I will not reject you for anything you share.
3. I will make it safe for you to express you most intimate feelings; I will stay open to you.
4. Nothing you say will be used against you or to provoke an argument.
5. I will be responsible for my emotions, and I will not blame you for how I fell. If I do blame or complain, I will take immediate responsibility for doing so, and stop.
6. I will share the truth from my heart as caringly, honestly and respectfully as I can.
7. I will love you unconditionally and use any block or conflict that may arise as a stimulus to more learning and greater love.
8. I will try not to manipulate or control what you communicate.
9. I commit to dealing with and working through any barriers that come up in our talks until there is resolution and renewed openness.
10. I agree that we can disagree. As we may not see eye-to-eye about all issues, we will each allow the other his/her feelings, understanding and point of view.

### DON'T BE A PARTY TO TEENAGE DRINKING



**"PARENTS WHO HOST, LOSE THE MOST."**

With that time of year quickly approaching when we celebrate our graduates and make plans for parties and gatherings, we here at Vista Psychological and Counseling Centre, LLC thought it might be important to remind everyone about Ohio's Underage Drinking Laws.

**What parents need to know: As a parent, you cannot give alcohol to your teen's friends under the age of 21 under any circumstance, even in your own home, even with their parent's permission.**

**You cannot knowingly allow a person under 21, other than your own child, to remain in your home or on your property while consuming or possessing alcohol.**

**If you break the law: You can face a maximum of six months in jail, and/or a \$1,000 fine.**

**Others can sue you if you give alcohol to anyone under 21 and they, in turn, hurt someone, hurt Them selves or damage property.**

**Officers can take any alcohol, money or property used in committing the offense.**

**Things you can do as a parent:**

**Refuse to supply alcohol to children.**

**Be at home when your teen has a party.**

**Make sure alcohol is not brought into your home or property by your teen's friends.**

**Talk to other parents about not providing alcohol at other events your child will be attending.**

**Create alcohol- free opportunities and activities in your home so teens will feel welcome.**

**Report underage drinking by calling the anonymous, toll- free Hotline at: 1-877-4-MINORS.**

Remember, "Parents Who Host, Lose the Most."

A program of Ohio Parents for Drug Free Youth with support from the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services and the Ohio Department of Public Safety