

PARENTING WISELY OVERVIEW

Why was Parenting Wisely (PW) developed?

Parenting Wisely was developed for agencies serving at-risk families looking for low-cost, time-limited, effective interventions. Training staff to implement evidence-based programs is becoming increasingly popular, but it is expensive and requires an ongoing commitment of quality control. Agencies need a simple program that is not dependent upon complex practitioner skills. PW was created to fill that need. Based on Functional Family Therapy, a cognitive behavioral systems approach, PW teaches parents skills and techniques to help them better understand and deal with their children. PW focuses on increasing understanding and communication among all members of the family. The program points out, in a non-blaming manner, how a user's current parenting practices may be contributing to their family's problems, and then demonstrates proper parenting techniques which have been shown to improve family relationships as well as children's problem behaviors.

Effectiveness

PW has been proven to be effective at: 1) increasing parent's knowledge about proper parenting skills; 2) increasing use of good parenting methods; 3) decreasing children's problem behaviors; 4) improving family relations, including parent-child bonding, reducing conflict (hitting and yelling), and improving communications; 5) reducing teen and parental substance abuse and tolerance for children's substance use, and 6) increasing parental participation in additional parenting education. All of this is accomplished in two-to-three hours of the parent (and child), using this computer program, thus freeing up valuable staff time. PW has been shown to be effective, or more effective than twelve-week parenting courses and individual therapy with the child.

Who Can Benefit From Parenting Wisely?

The PW program can be used to assist a wide variety of families exhibiting the following problems: Behavior problems; Delinquency; Substance Abuse; Truancy; Domestic Violence; Teen Pregnancy. The program can also be useful if parents are divorcing because the stress of a divorce can lead to less effective parenting skills among those parents who typically parent well. Parents who are involved with the courts for offenses such as DUI are also good candidates for this program because drinking problems are often tied to family stress, which in turn leads to less effective parenting. Parents in all of these cases need to learn communication skills, problem-solving skills, and discipline techniques not based on force or coercion. Parents in adult literacy classes, often learning to use computers, are also often in need of good parent education. This program is being used successfully with any parents including grandparents, foster parents, teen parents and stepparents who would like to develop more effective parenting skills. As a preventive program, PW can be used with parents not having difficulty with their children who wish to improve family relationships or who wish to prevent future child behavior problems. When parents and children learn to communicate better and discipline in a collaborative way, they increase protective factors to shield the children from the dangers of adolescence (delinquency, substance abuse, depression, violence, school failure, pregnancy). The program also is an affirmation tool, since it affirms the good parenting skills parents currently use and gives them hope and confidence. PW can also be preventive when used with teens and young adults in middle schools, high schools, and colleges prior to their becoming parents.