

Jewish Family Services

Thoughts from Adrienne

By Adrienne Rosenberg, JFS Director



The following letter was written to an ex-spouse in an effort to help open the lines of communication. In the interest of their children, I have changed the names to protect confidentiality.

Dear Bob,

I think you really care about how Susie and Michelle feel and that you want them to know you love them, so we need to come to an understanding for the girls' sakes.

They need and deserve to know when they will see you each week — ahead of time — so that they have a chance to arrange activities to accommodate you, since you are a priority in their lives. They want to have a firmly scheduled time with you, one which neither they nor you cancel without advance notice. And, please, let me know directly about your plans so that the girls won't be in the middle, adding more unnecessary frustration to their lives.

Both girls love both of us and need both of us. They get angry and confused if I say bad things about you — just as they get angry when you insult me. Their loyalties are torn! They shouldn't have to deal with our anger! We both love them and need to make their lives less stressful. I think a big step in the right direction is for us to talk/discuss/argue on our own — alone — leaving the girls out of our problems. They are still little and should not have to have such worries.

You and I should be able — as adults and parents — to help the girls to love both of us without feeling guilty and miserable. I am sure you are concerned too and want to have a healthier relationship with one another for all of our sakes.

Joanne

Evening Counseling Hours Added

Jewish Family Services is pleased to announce that ten additional counseling hours have been added to help meet the demand for services. Iris Madison, MSW, staff counselor, is now employed 30 hours to ease the agency's waiting list. Part of these hours will now include evening counseling hours to help accommodate working persons. All counseling fees are on a sliding fee scale with insurance payments arranged if possible.

Iris has extensive family

Single parenthood is never easy, but the role of parent can be tested in more ways than one after a separation and divorce. During this period, feelings of anger and hurt about the former spouse are high. It is frequently difficult to separate one's anger and keep an equal balance for the children. Although it sounds good to say that a divorce is between parents and not children, it is not so easy to carry this out. It is hard not to prejudice the children about the ex-spouse when you wish you could never see him/her again. It is painful to hear how much fun your children are having with their other parent when you are angry because he/she is already dating, for example.

The truth is, however, that all parents love their children and do not want their divorce to affect them. Some of the emotional effect is not in the parents' control, for separation and divorce does influence all family members. But studies have shown that those parents, who pull together for the sake of the children, do have control over helping their children feel more secure. This is a time when being for the "kinder" will create positive emotional results although it requires sacrifice on the part of the parents.

I recently came across a list of do's and don'ts for separating parents which I think may be helpful on this subject. I'd like to share it with you:

DO

...Arrange for both parents to be present when announcing an impending separation or divorce.

...Tell your child that you both love him and that the divorce is not his fault.

counseling experience and training. She has been on the JFS staff since January, 1988. Her responsibilities have included counseling, planning Jewish Family Life Education programs, and serving as a consultant to the JCC's Mother's Morning Out program and Temple Israel Preschool.

To make an appointment with Iris or to inquire about the services of the agency, please feel free to call 364-6594 or 364-6596.

...Listen and be non-judgmental when your child discusses the divorce or his other parent.

...Encourage your child to maintain a relationship with both parents.

...Put aside any anger about your former spouse when communicating with your child.

...Seek professional help if your child isn't adjusting to the new situation.

...Encourage your child to tell his teacher about the divorce.

...Remember holidays are stressful and impossible to be "as they were."

DON'T

...Pump your child for information about your ex-spouse.

...Prejudice your child against your ex-spouse with negative comments.

...Brainwash your child into thinking the other parent is totally bad.

...Ignore changes in behavior that persist for more than three months after a separation.

...Try to hide the reasons for divorce from your children.



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SPECIAL NOTICE

WE ARE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD-HEARTED PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER A COUPLE HOURS ONCE A MONTH TO DRIVE SENIORS TO THEIR DOCTOR APPOINTMENTS, FOR GROCERY SHOPPING, ETC.

CALL JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES FOR DETAILS
364-6594

JFS "Friends Campaign" Begins

Ron Katz and Dr. Marvin Shapiro, cochairmen, announce that the annual Friends of Jewish Family Services Campaign begins on June 1, 1989. The monies from this campaign ensure that all those people who reach out to Jewish Family Services can be served.

Jewish Family Services is there for members of the Jewish community when needed — when crisis occurs, when you don't know where to turn, when your parents move to our area, when your children need help, when you just can't cope, when seniors need transportation, when your parents have difficulty, when drugs or alcohol interfere, when you're alone or think you are, when there is a question about community services, when there is illness or death, when the money just doesn't go far enough, when you are out of work, when you think no one cares or will

help, when you're going through divorce, or when you need support.

The monies given to Jewish Family Services by the Charlotte Jewish Federation, the fees collected, and the donations made go a long way, but not far enough. That is why additional monies from the Friends Campaign are necessary. Your support will allow the agency to continue providing the high level of service that you or a member of your family may need and already expect.

A community mailing has gone out explaining the needs of the agency. Staying a "Friend" or becoming a "Friend" will strengthen our ability to help individuals and families who need us.

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