

Helping your child express what she's feeling

QUESTION:

I am dealing with terrible morning sickness and can hardly manage anything at this point. I know I am going to be OK eventually, but my three-year-old daughter seems really mad at me for not spending very much time with her. I don't want her to feel abandoned but am not sure what to do?

Answer:

I think the first thing to remember is that a new baby coming in to the family (even if it is just in your tummy right now) is a big adjustment for everyone even if it is a very happy and planned event. The entire family needs some time to adjust to the new reality.

I am very encouraged by the fact that you have already made the link between your daughter's "mad" behaviour and your pregnancy. This is the first step in helping your child deal with scary and difficult



feelings, and a much better alternative than just placing her on the naughty mat, chair, or stool as a way of solving a behaviour problem.

In therapy, we talk about reframing problems so that we can better understand what is really going on underneath acting out behaviours. These acting out behaviours are used by children, and also adults, when they are not able to use words to express what they are

feeling. So, I would reframe your daughter's acting out behaviours (e.g. yelling, pushing and tantrums) by saying that her mad behaviour is her way of saying, "I am worried you will not be with me anymore because all of your love and attention will go to the baby."

The important thing that I tell the parents I work with is that we do not need to insulate children from all difficult experiences, but we need to put words on them so that we can help soothe the underlying anxiety they are feeling. This is certainly true in the case of soon-to-be-expected siblings because it is also very healthy for children to have to accommodate other siblings (and parent's) needs into their daily experience.

I would suggest that when you and your daughter have some time together that you simply talk to her about what you think she might be feeling. You might say, "Do you feel

sad that mommy is sick and I can't play with you as much as I normally do?"

Don't worry if you don't get much of a response, the words are sinking in. When she is getting mad, you can say, "You are mad because the new baby is taking up a lot of my time." Then just add simple things like, "I am always going to be right here with you," or, "I have enough love for you and the new baby, you don't need to worry about me going away."

Of course you need to choose the right words for your child's age and how you normally speak with her. The basic idea is that if you respond to, and soothe her underlying feelings and anxiety, her behaviour will improve. But even more important, your daughter will learn something that will help her throughout her life — that she can express her feelings directly, a caring person will respond and she

won't need to act out by being mad and punitive against others.

Julia Staub-French, M.A.,

R.C.C., director of clinical programs at Family Services of the North Shore. Questions? Write onthecouch@familyservices.bc.ca or call 604-988-5281.

health notes

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ship for people with relationship difficulties, holds weekly meetings on the North Shore. For more information, phone 604-515-5585.

Compassionate Friends of the North Shore: A support group for bereaved parents meets the second Wednesday of every month, 7:30 p.m. in the upper lounge of North Lonsdale United Church, 3380 Lonsdale Ave., North Vancouver. Info: Cathy at 604-926-6513.

Dual Diagnosis Anonymous, a support group for persons recovering from an addiction and mental illness, meets every Monday evening at Lions Gate Hospital in seminar room C (behind the cafeteria). For more in-

formation, phone Larry at 604-980-4152.

Eating Disorders: A support group for parents meets twice a month at Lions Gate Hospital. For more information, phone Susan at 604-926-6100 or Kathy at 604-925-3032.

Gamblers Anonymous for Women: Fridays, 2 p.m. at the Avalon Women's Centre. Info: 604-913-0477.

Midwifery Care North Shore holds meet and greet chat groups on the first Monday of every month, 9:30-11 a.m. at Citroen Cafe, 208 Lonsdale Ave., North Vancouver. Info: 604-984-6960.

Mood Disorders: A self-help, peer-led support group for people with mood disorders, their families and friends, every other Thursday, starting Feb. 8, 7-9 p.m. in meeting room No. 3, at John Braithwaite Commu-

nity Centre, 145 West First St., North Vancouver. Info: Greg at 604-873-0103.

Nar-Anon: A support group for family and friends of people with drug addictions meets every Sunday, 7 p.m. at the Alano Club, 176 East Second St., North Vancouver. Info: 604-878-8844. Newcomers welcome.

Nar-Anon Newcomers' Meetings: A support group for family and friends of people with drug addictions offering the beginning steps of a 12-step program of understanding, friendship and coping strategies, Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m. in the Corner Room at the Alano Club, 176 East Second St., North Vancouver. Info: 604-988-8844 or www.members.shaw.ca/naranon.

—Compiled by Pamela Stone and Debbie Caldwell

E-mail information for your non-profit, by donation or nominal fee event to listings@nsnews.com.

Richard Juryn Trail Day & Festival

Organizers wish to thank our supporters:

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People have become concerned about what their skin is absorbing from beauty products. For over 10 years Nature's Creations has been committed to educating consumers on the hazards of toxic synthetic ingredients in skin care products. "It's very serious, and women are starting to take it seriously" says Suzanne Laurin-Seale of Nature's Creations Aromatherapy and Natural Day Spa. "The average North American woman exposes herself to over 200 synthetic toxic chemicals a day."

Buyer Beware. Many companies have jumped on the "natural" band wagon promoting purity. However, to call a product natural it only has to legally contain 10% natural ingredients. Read labels and ask questions. Nature's Creations is check-

a-block full of 100% natural products. They produce a line appropriately called Natural Beauty Skincare® that is 100% natural and delivers fantastic results.

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Natural Beauty Skincare® products are hand made with pure botanical oils and natural preservatives for every kind of woman, with every type of skin; dry, sensitive, rosacea, couperose, oily, acne, scarred, mature, and teenage skin. As well as skincare products the store carries a fantastic baby-care line, body lotions, massage oils, soaps, foot products, and more. They are located at:
205 Lonsdale Ave., North Van
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Closed Sundays & Mondays
Products are also available wholesale to stores, spas and clinics.

Introducing a new section running monthly in the North Shore News.

On these pages, you will find the Arts Alive North Shore calendar of events and festivals. Read about a wide range of arts and culture including the performing arts that you can find on the North Shore.

This section will inspire you to **Get Going, Get Real and Get Hooked** into the arts and culture on the North Shore.

Watch for the first edition running Wednesday, July 30.

Only in the

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