



CENTERSTONE

Wellness Program

Take Time to Take Vacation: Five Facts about the Benefits of Taking a Break

Today's families are very busy – too busy to take a vacation some might believe. Add to that financial loss and living in uncertain economic times, and many families feel as though they simply can't take a break.

However, routines and rituals, like vacations, are important to the health and well-being of families. It's healthy to take a break from the daily demands of juggling work and home. We should consider the benefits of play and family time together and perhaps redefine what vacation means.

Here are five facts about the benefits of taking a break or vacation.

Vitamin D is free

Vitamin D is essential for maintaining healthy bones and keeping the immune systems and nervous system functioning normally. Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin made by the body, in the skin, from exposure to sunlight. While this essential nutrient is available as a supplement, spending some time outdoors each day (as little as 5-15 minutes) can provide the needed benefits. The best part: the sun is free! Further, preliminary research suggests Vitamin D can help prevent various forms of cancer, including breast, prostate and colon cancers.

Play is not just for kids

Taking time to play has powerful benefits for children and adults. Play has been said to be the single most significant factor in determining our success and happiness. Play is just as important as sleep! Play involves anticipation, surprise and pleasure. Adults who play can enjoy freedom from time, rules and responsibilities, bringing balance to their busy lives.

Relationships are enriched

Spending time together enriches a marriage, which strengthens the family foundation. Through traditions and rituals, such as vacations, any relationship can be enriched. Vacations and other traditions make memories and are the glue that binds us. Vacation can provide an opportunity to talk with one another, learn new skills or discover new interests.

Children feel love, support and safety

Children who witness their parents and grandparents having fun, laughing and enjoying life learn valuable lessons about life. Spending time together as a family provides children with feelings of love, support and safety, which are key components for thriving in today's uncertainties.

Vacation time shrinks stress

Vacation helps shrink stress and anxiety while also boosting the mental and physical health of the entire family. We need a brain break, a detour from deadlines and a timeout from technology! It takes effort to unplug from the ever-spinning world around us, but one's mind, body and spirit will be renewed by re-plugging into the joys of quality time with family and friends. Isn't it time for you to take a break?

About Centerstone

Centerstone (www.centerstone.org), a not-for-profit organization is the nation's largest provider of community-based behavioral healthcare. With a history that spans over fifty years, Centerstone provides a full range of behavioral health and related educational services to more than 64,000 individuals of all ages and their families annually. Children, adolescents, adults, seniors, and families all receive help from a multitude of different programs in more than 120 facilities and 150 partnership locations in Tennessee and Indiana. Centerstone is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in Tennessee and The Joint Commission in Indiana. For more information about Centerstone, please call toll free at (888) 291-4357.

About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone's wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone's Crisis Management Strategies.

In recent years, Ms. Gillpatrick worked for the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center in Memphis. There, she co-developed a model program for the state of Tennessee entitled, "Homicide Response." Her work in this area received the 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.