

# HEALTHNET NEWS

A newsletter for public librarians and others interested in consumer health information services

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## NETNEWS

### DEALING WITH BULLYING.....RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Parents and teachers feel the pain of the children they care about when children become victims of bullying. What can adults do to help children deal with bullying, prevent its recurrence, and change the negative behavior of bullies... whether these personal assaults occur in person or in cyberspace?

A 2008 Connecticut state law (*An Act Concerning School Learning Environment* P.A. 08-160) described by the Connecticut Commission on Children in a document at <http://tinyurl.com/5sjlwhm> "requires each school board to develop and implement a prevention and intervention strategy to address bullying."

**Please note**, a review of the book **Cybersafe**, published by the American Academy of Pediatrics to guide parents, appears in this issue of *Healthnet News*.

There are resources for parents and children that may be of help within or outside the school setting.....

### FOR TEENAGERS...

"Dealing with Bullying." at [http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/problems/bullies.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/problems/bullies.html) is an online publication, directed at teenagers, from the Kidshealth website, a resource of the "nonprofit Nemours Center for Children's Health Media." It discusses the feelings of bullying victims, characteristics of bullies, actions to protect yourself when bullied ("Bullying Survival Tips"), and provides guidance and encouragement to bullies ("It's never too late to change.")

Teenagers reluctant to read the entire article may select the "Listen" link to have it read aloud.

The advice is practical and clearly stated. (e.g. "For teens, though, the tell-an-adult approach depends on the bullying situation.")

The [Connecticut Infoline/211 website](http://www.infoline.org) describes bullying and cyberbullying and emphasizes to students that "Bullying Is Not Acceptable Behavior and you don't have to put up with it." The online discussion at <http://www.infoline.org/InformationLibrary/Documents/Bullying%20lb.asp> concludes with a link to Connecticut-based bullying prevention providers from the Infoline Community Resources Database.

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*FOR CHILDREN.....*

Stop Bullying Now! at <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/> is a colorful, graphic-filled website from the federal government's U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In bold letters it assures children that "You Can Make a Difference!"

In addition to offering an explanation of bullying, its signs, its effects, and the motivations of bullies, the website offers guidance about what to do if you are a victim or witness of bullying. The website is enlivened by entertaining, animated cartoon videos of bullying incidents that offer specific advice about how classmates can support bullying victims.



There are also games and quizzes about the content of the videos.

The website is available in Spanish as well as English.

The Kidshealth website article on bullying at <http://tinyurl.com/ykc5b5m> acknowledges to children that "Bullying is a Big Deal." The article recognizes that it certainly feels that way to children who are harassed by other children and may feel very isolated as they are experiencing the pain of hurtful actions or words directed against them.

The easy-to-read article offers techniques for dealing with bullies and reminds children that "every kid [including a bully] has a choice about how to act." The article concludes by reinforcing that "no one needs to put up with a bully's behavior."

*FOR ADULTS.....*

The adult section of the Stop Bullying Now! website at <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/adults/default.aspx> offers advice to parents about cyberbullying, describes steps to take if your child is a target of bullying, and counteracts myths about children who bully ( e.g. The website states that bullies are *not* usually loners *nor* are they likely to have low self-esteem).

"Adults and Children Together Against Violence," a project of the American Psychological Association, national organization of psychologists, at <http://actagainstviolence.apa.org/bully-dickman.html> , offers specific recommendations to parents whose children have been affected by bullying.

The Connecticut Clearinghouse offers a brief, online overview of bullying and its consequences at <http://www.ctclearinghouse.org/Topics/topicView.asp?TopicID=57> On the webpage, there are links to additional informational resources.

The National Library of Medicine's MedlinePlus website for health consumers provides a Health Topic page about bullying, its management and prevention, at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/bullying.html> . In addition to guidance for parents, there are links to related, recent news articles and citations for research journal articles.

New York University Child Study Center focuses on cyberbullying, its impact on young people, and recommendations for parents' effective responses, in their website article, "Cyberbullying: What Parents Should Know" at [http://www.aboutourkids.org/articles/cyberbullying\\_what\\_parents\\_should\\_know](http://www.aboutourkids.org/articles/cyberbullying_what_parents_should_know)

## *EPILEPSY...AN ONLINE TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS*

For a parent, watching your child experience a seizure is a frightening experience.



Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon occurrence. Of the approximately 3 million people diagnosed with epilepsy in the United States, 300,000 are children fourteen years of age and younger.

Children diagnosed with epilepsy have experienced more than one seizure unrelated to another medical condition. Seizures may begin unexpectedly, occurring in children with no family history of epilepsy.

Treatments for children with epilepsy have advanced. Despite advances in treatment and a reduction in the spread of erroneous myths about epilepsy, the parents of children newly diagnosed with epilepsy may have many questions about the condition and its treatment.

To help parents of children who have been recently diagnosed with epilepsy, the Epilepsy Foundation has created a free, online Toolkit for Parents at [http://www.epilepsyandmychild.com/content/Epilepsy\\_Tool\\_Kit.pdf](http://www.epilepsyandmychild.com/content/Epilepsy_Tool_Kit.pdf)

The 62 page Toolkit addresses parents' concerns about diagnosis, current treatment, managing epilepsy at home, first aid when seizures occur, sharing information about your child's diagnosis, creating a support network, and expectations for children with epilepsy at different stages of growth. It includes a glossary of common epilepsy terms as well as a guide to online and print resources.

The Toolkit has helpful forms that may be individualized, such as a Seizure Action Plan, a Seizure Record Form, Medication Record form, Seizure Observation Record, and a First Aid for Seizures document with cartoon-style graphics.

Parents may request a paper copy of the Toolkit by sending an email to [dmcgruder@efa.org](mailto:dmcgruder@efa.org)

An informal, informative video in which parents recall their families' experiences and make recommendations to parents of newly diagnosed children appears on the Epilepsy Foundation website at [http://www.epilepsyandmychild.com/7\\_12\\_gallery.html](http://www.epilepsyandmychild.com/7_12_gallery.html)

Additional resources and support are available through the national Epilepsy Foundation at <http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org/> and in Connecticut through the Epilepsy Foundation of Connecticut at [www.epilepsyct.com](http://www.epilepsyct.com)

## *MENTAL HEALTH CARE... A GUIDE TO FINANCIAL PARITY*

A fall that may lead to a diagnosis of a broken leg...sudden chest pain or shortness of breath....numbness on one side of your body...These are situations that clearly need immediate medical care.

When you or a family member breaks a leg or experiences symptoms of a heart attack or stroke, you have no doubt that your insurance company will cover the expenses for your care, as stipulated in your insurance policy.

However, many individuals in need of mental health treatment have found care for mental illnesses unavailable to them because of mental health coverage restrictions by their insurance company.

The recent passage of the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act) has changed this imbalance between mental health insurance coverage and medical and surgical coverage. This law, however, applies "only to self insured and large employer group plans. It does not apply to individual or small group plans."

Among its provisions, the new law stipulates that:

“Lifetime or annual dollar limits imposed on mental health/addiction benefits may NOT be more restrictive than those imposed on medical/surgical benefits, financial requirements (e.g., deductibles, co-payments, coinsurance, out-of-pocket expenses) imposed on mental health/addiction benefits may NOT be more restrictive than those imposed on medical/surgical benefits, and

treatment limitations (e.g., frequency of treatment, number of visits, number of days, or similar limits on scope or duration of treatment) imposed on addiction/mental health benefits may NOT be more restrictive than those imposed on medical/surgical benefits.”

Although this law was implemented in fall of 2009, and Connecticut has a mental health parity law, obtaining mental health coverage equal to medical and surgical coverage has often been frustrating and difficult for patients and their advocates.

Parity Implementation Coalition, a combined effort of the consumer advocacy organization, Mental Health America, and other professional and consumer advocacy groups has published an online “Parity Toolkit For Addiction and Mental Health Consumers, Providers and Advocates” at [http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/files/Parity Toolkit Final.pdf](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/files/Parity_Toolkit_Final.pdf)

The Toolkit is written to help in “Simplifying the Appeals Process.” It provides “Strategies for Winning Disputes with Your Health Plan. “

It includes specific, detailed guidance (including sample appeal letters) in consumer-friendly language, a glossary of insurance terms, and links to state and federal resources.

#### *UNDERSTANDING THE BODY...THROUGH ONLINE ANIMATED VIDEOS*

Would an animated online video help your Library’s users understand the functions of specific parts of the human body?

The National Library of Medicine’s MedlinePlus website for health consumers at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/> has added a new collection of more than 78 videos that describe human organs, body parts, and the effect of disease on the body.

This new resource offers videos with audio (and online text) in both Spanish and English.

Select the “Videos and Cool Tools” tab on the home page of the MedlinePlus website to see links to all English videos. From this web page, select the “Espanol” tab to view the list of Spanish video links.

The videos demonstrate stroke, atherosclerosis, swallowing, ultrasound, cataract, heart bypass surgery, ovulation, Parkinson’s disease, Cesarean section, ultrasound, glaucoma, kidney stones, and other anatomy-related topics.

The name of the physician who reviewed the video content and the date of the most recent review is stated at the bottom of each video’s opening page.

You will also encounter links to individual anatomy videos on related MedlinePlus health topic pages and online encyclopedia articles. For example, the Macular Degeneration health topic page will include a link to the anatomy video as well as to print and online sources of information.

The videos are formatted to play in QuickTime. You may access a free download of the Apple QuickTime software player at <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>.



## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

The following titles are recommended to public libraries and other libraries providing consumer health information services. They are not part of the UCONN Health Center Library collection.

**CyberSafe. Protecting and Empowering Kids in the Digital World of Texting, Gaming, and Social Media.** Gwen Schurgin O’Keeffe. Elk Grove Village, American Academy of Pediatrics, 2011. 335 p. (ISBN 978-1-58110-452-3).

The world of our children is never the familiar world we grew up in. Times change...but rarely have methods of communication expanded and transformed as rapidly as they have in the last decade.

Parents are responsible for providing guidance and limits for their children as they grow, but how can parents guide their children effectively if they do not understand the technology that occupies so much of their children’s lives and diverts them from schoolwork, family time, and face-to-face socializing?

Pediatrician and health journalist Gwenn Schurgin O’Keeffe has written this handbook especially for parents who are not as knowledgeable about social media, MP3 players, and podcasting as their children are.

This book’s goal is to update parents on technology already familiar to their children and to recommend ways to set realistic, child safe guidelines for their use.

This book is one of a series of publications for parents by the American Academy of Pediatrics, national organization of pediatricians. The American Academy of Pediatrics’ publications for parents are concerned about children’s social and psychological as well as physical development.

The author describes how children’s style of searching differs from that of adults, explains myths about children’s Internet use and the reality underlying these myths, offers guidelines to help determine the validity of websites, states warning signs for online dangers a child may experience, emphasizes that “real world” etiquette applies online as well as in face-to-face interactions, identifies Internet safety tools that can track children’s Internet use, and explores online gaming.

Each chapter concludes with citations to the resources for the author’s recommendations. Some of the helpful details are hidden among the wordy text.

This book provides helpful, practical guidance for parents about the “digital world.”



Most important, it reminds parents, that despite being “digital natives,” children still need guidance from adults as they learn to make mature choices.

**How to Find Mental Health Care for Your Child.** Ellen B. Braaten. Washington D.C., American Psychological Association , 2011. 265 p. (ISBN 1-4338-0898-6).

Could a child you know be affected by a mental health disorder?

More than 20 per cent of American children have a mental health condition that impairs their effective participation in daily life and their enjoyment of interactions with family, friends, and classmates. The National Institute of Mental Health reported this statistic after a national survey of more than ten thousand teenagers aged 13 to 18.

Only a little more than one third of these affected children received mental health services and professional mental health therapy.

Dr. Ellen Braaten's book guides parents unfamiliar with mental health disorders and the mental health care system in effectively seeking help for their child. Dr. Braaten is an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School and an experienced child psychologist. Her book is published by the American Psychological Association, national professional association of psychologists.

But, first, a parent, concerned by her child's distressed behavior and daily impaired functioning, must determine if the child actually has a mental health problem.

Therefore, the book offers guidelines to help determine if a child's behavior is "something to be worried about.." It describes the evaluation process (including how to convince a child to attend initial evaluation and therapy sessions), and discusses an array of possible treatments ("more than 550 different treatment approaches are currently in use to help children"), among them psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive, family, medical and biological, and combinations of types of treatment.

A great deal of the book describes specific "common childhood [psychological] disorders, " their symptoms and effective treatments. " The author discusses anxiety disorders, mood disorders, eating disorders, learning disabilities, attention and disruptive behavior disorders, as well as autism and other pervasive developmental disorders. She uses hypothetical case histories to illustrate many mental health disorders.

Dr. Braaten presents a generally positive evaluation of the effectiveness of mental health therapies for children and she assures parents that "there is no shame in seeking psychological help for your child." (p. 35)

**Heading Home with Your Newborn: From Birth to Reality.** Laura A. Jana and Jennifer Shu. Elk Grove Village, American Academy of Pediatrics, 2011. 372 p.(ISBN 978-158110-444-8).

**Heading Home with Your Newborn: From Birth to Reality**, is a reassuring guide about caring for infants, written especially for new and about-to-be parents by two experienced pediatricians who are mothers as well as physicians.

The newly published second edition, is one Academy of Pediatrics, professional practical information on feeding, establishing traveling with infants, safety reminders, and



of a series of parent guides from the American association of pediatricians. It includes a great deal of routines, sleep habits, bathing, diapering, car seats, selecting a pediatrician.

The new edition has additional chapters about vaccines, early learning, baby sign language, and the influence of media on infants. There is updated information about organic formulas, newborn hearing screening tests, selecting car seats, and the issue of banking cord blood.

**Safe Patients, Smart Hospitals. How One Doctor's Checklist Can Help Us Change Health Care From the Inside Out.** Peter Pronovost and Eric Vohr. New York, Hudson Street Press, 2010. 282 p. (ISBN 978-1-59463-064-4).

Eighteen-month-old Josie King died in the hospital.

At the time she died, she was recovering from severe accidental burns at one of the U.S.'s renowned hospitals, while being treated by experienced pediatric specialists.

Her death was later attributed to a mistake, a vital medical error that might have been prevented. The error was precipitated by a breakdown in communication on the hospital floor. The physicians who had the authority to adjust Josie's care and medication did not heed the concerns of her nurses and her mother, the ones who were constantly observing her deteriorating condition.

According to the 1999 federal government's Institute of Medicine report, "To Err is Human," an annual death rate of between forty-four thousand and possibly ninety-eight thousand patients may be attributed to medical errors. (<http://tinyurl.com/35yoasq>)

Author Dr. Peter Pronovost, a physician at Johns Hopkins Hospital where Josie King died, and a professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, has focused his medical career on improving patient safety. His impetus had been the death of his forty-five-year-old father from a cancer that had been misdiagnosed.

Dr. Pronovost writes of the danger that "a critical message" about a patient's condition can become "lost in a complex archaic culture that puts patients at risk." ( p. XV) A structured "chain of command" can make urgent communication difficult. (p. XV)

This book is an engrossing narrative of the efforts of Dr. Pronovost and committed colleagues to establish a safety team and a revised error-prevention program at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center. At Dr. Pronovost's urging, Josie's parents provided support and funding for this program. The physicians created a standardized checklist of crucial procedures that needed to be performed in the hospital. Even more importantly, they initiated a change in culture that allowed physicians to admit errors and to welcome recommendations from colleagues and support staff. The result was a dramatic reduction in infection rates.

Dr. Pronovost emphasizes that "...a physician can learn a lot about a patient by listening to the family." (p. 239) Ultimately, it may have been Josie's mother heartfelt retelling of her daughter's tragic story to an auditorium full of physicians that made the difference.

Josie's mother, Sorrel King, wrote about her family's tragic experience and their educational initiative to prevent future medical errors, in a 2009 book entitled, **Josie's Story** (New York : Atlantic Monthly Press, 2009. 275 p. (ISBN 0-802-119204) ).

A website [www.josieking.org](http://www.josieking.org) offers additional recommendations to help families become assertive supports to their hospitalized family members.



*Healthnet News is written by Alberta L. Richetelle and Judith Kronick.  
If you have questions about anything in the newsletter or about Healthnet services for Connecticut public libraries,  
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