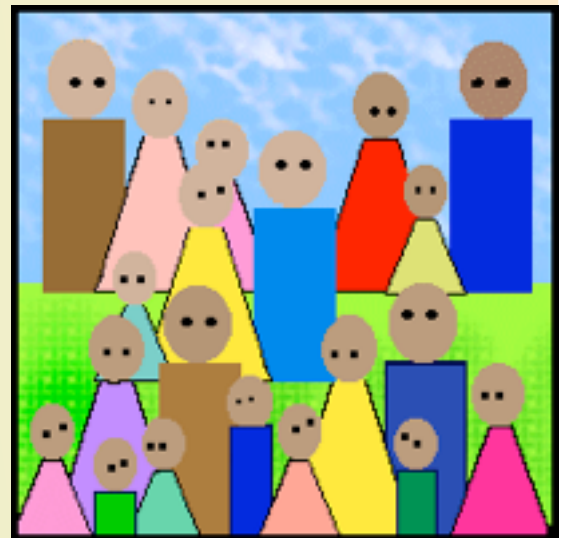


family meetings

Family meetings are an opportunity to foster meaningful positive communication and provide for family discussion, decision making, problem solving, encouragement, and cooperation. They can be structured and formal or flexible and informal. At family meetings everyone has a part and something to contribute. No one is less important than another and family members contribute according to their age and ability

Important ingredients for successful family meetings

- Agenda - Develop a set agenda for each meeting
- Start each meeting by mentioning the positive events and efforts made by family members during the week
- Regular Schedule - Stick to a consistent schedule and be on time
- Establish and stick to time limits
- Ground rules- Establish ground rules at the first family meeting
- Chairperson- There should be a chairperson to lead each meeting, take turns
- Secretary - write down all the decisions made at each meeting
- Problem Solving - Meetings should be used as an opportunity to teach problem solving skills to children
- Attendance - Meetings will not be effective unless every member participates
- Consensus - Strive for agreement of all members when decisions are being made
- FUN- Plan some fun activity to take place at the end of each meeting





Joel Kaufman, Ph.D.
CEO

The importance of family life

How we behave and what we become in life is very much affected by our family life. Families can play a large role in how successful and happy we are in our lives.

Dr. Bengston a sociologist at University of Southern California states that "it is wired into us the need to bond with family members. Historically family relationships have provided the most basic role of all -ensuring survival. Today most people rely on family interactions to provide an affirming and positive experience. They provide a sense of support and identity of who we are and what's unique about us."

Walter Isaacson in the new biography about the genius Steve Jobs talks about the profound effect it had on Steve knowing he was adopted. Isaacson relates a story where young Steve came home crying one day after interacting with a young neighbor who asked him if being adopted meant that his parents didn't want him. His adoptive parents sat him down and said, "No you don't understand, we specifically picked you out" Steve Jobs stated to Isaacson in his interview that "From then on I realized I was not - just abandoned. I was chosen. I was special" Isaacson believes that this is a key to understanding Steve Jobs.

Positive bonding with caregivers and siblings is crucial for the development of adaptive responses for change and growth into a healthy and functional adult. Good bonding establishes a child's trust in others and in self. Inadequate bonding establishes insecurity, mistrust, and self-doubt.

Success stories

J. E. was expelled from school due to possession of marijuana on school campus. JE had been through the diversion process in the past and graduated successfully from the TSP program previously. While meeting with a TSP therapist, JE reported experiencing many ADHD symptoms. JE discovered that part of why he used was to self-medicate because he experienced difficulty in class when he finished his work and had to sit still and wait until the end of class. Coping skills were discussed to address his ADHD symptoms without the use of substances. JE also discovered a class that fit his way of learning while at his alternative school. He is expected to graduate early and expressed an interest in going to college. During treatment JE also explored his interests in careers that would fit his personality and work with his ADHD symptoms instead of working against them. He successfully completed the Outpatient program and has been clean of all substances for several months.

M. is a senior in high school who was referred to TSP due to an arrest he had for possession of marijuana. He was in the diversion program and since day one he never tested positive for THC. He made progress with goals outside of substance abuse and was able to have a job as an electrician's assistant during the summer and after school started he was able to get employment as well. He recognized which friendships would help him in his recovery and made a commitment to stay away from peers who he knew would not assist him in reaching his goals. He was successfully discharged from the outpatient program. He and his family showed interest in continuing services through the aftercare program, seeing the benefits that continued monitoring would provide.

Our services and how to contact us

The Starting Place provides outpatient substance abuse and mental health services to children, teens, young adults and their families. Our services include assessments, individual counseling, family counseling, case management, psycho-educational and therapy groups, school based services, and aftercare/continuing care services. Services are office-based and in-home and school-based. Our hours are tailored to meet the needs of our clients. Fees are based on a sliding scale and we also accept a few different insurances.

If you would like to set up an appointment or speak to someone further about our services, please contact us at (954) 327-4060. You can also check us out at our website at www.startingplace.org

<http://www.facebook.com/thestartingplace>

