



family MATTERS

The latest news and holistic views to
keep your clan in tip-top shape

DOWN A NOTCH

Parental involvement is crucial to a child's development, but Florida State University researchers are finding that crossing the line between being supportive and too involved could indirectly lead to issues such as depression and anxiety for young adults.

Greener pastures

Thinking of raising a family in the city? Try to aim for a spot near a park or public garden. Social scientists have reported that adolescents in urban communities may have less aggressive behaviours if they live in neighbourhoods with more greenery.

AND BREATHE

It may seem like a healthier compromise in the short term, but recent research has shown that teens who use e-cigarettes are six times more likely to smoke traditional cigarettes later in life. Plus, those electronic sticks still contain nicotine.

BABY ENVY

If the sight of a newborn leaves you feeling mushy, you can chalk it down to science. Apparently, babies appeal to all of our senses in order to trigger our care-giving qualities. That means those little bundles of joy don't just look cute, but smell and sound adorable, too!

LIVING



Life support

Relationship expert
Jan Day shares her advice
(janday.com)

I suspect my eldest son has an alcohol problem. He drinks most days and I often find half empty bottles of strong spirits hidden around his house. I've tried to talk to him before, but he gets defensive very quickly. What should I do?

It is always difficult to have a loved one who is in denial about an addiction problem. Before you talk to him again, it would be useful to inform yourself about alcoholism, especially the effect it can have on close family. You could do this by attending an Al-Anon family group. You will meet other people in a similar position and that may support you in your resolve to confront this issue in a loving but firm way. You could also talk to an alcohol intervention specialist who is skilled in motivating addicts towards recovery. Chronic drinkers are rarely able to overcome their addiction without specialist help and without having the will to do so.

The fact that he is defensive suggests he has quite a severe problem, but arguing with him isn't likely to get you anywhere. If anything, it will create more distance between you both. When you talk to him, make sure he is sober and that you are in a calm state of mind. If possible have other family members present. This way they can support you in your observations of how his drinking is having an impact on everyone's life.

Let him know that you care about him, but that you are also very worried. Tell him that you would like to help him find a way to overcome this problem. Whatever he says, stay calm and don't get drawn into an argument or into helping him financially unless it is for rehab. You should also avoid taking responsibility for him in any way that enables his habit (e.g. driving him places because he no longer has a license).

Once the conversation gets started, you may be in a position to talk to him about the underlying emotional issues that are almost certainly at the heart of his chronic drinking. Has he struggled with a relationship or is he lacking connections elsewhere? See if you can get him to open up on these points and then you can encourage him to get help or find a therapist to deal with any emotional issues that are pulling him down.