



LETS MAKE IT SAFER AND MORE SUPPORTIVE FOR THEM

I know! I know! I know! I can hear it all now "In my day." or "It didn't do me any harm."

The very things we now say "not to do" all happened to me at school and in scouts. As knowledge improves so we can recognise hidden dangers in many things from the past.

At Uni, as we dissected cadavers, we would see the damage that had been caused to the person when it was a small child, joints that had grown incorrectly, because of excessive loadings, ligaments overstretched in the development phase, and early osteophytes..

Looking at the recognised exercise training manuals we see the enormous number of exercises that are condemned as dangerous, it makes one wonder if my PE teacher, in 6th class, read the wrong book

Also the change in parent contact, and, for a number of other reasons, larger percentages of children are suffering from a sense of inadequacy, and far too often depression. Leaving them needing reassurance and support as to their worth.

This month 'News' is addressing four issues to support you in supporting them.

1. SAFER EXERCISING AND GAMES.

Safety advice for exercise activities comes from the NSW Education Departments, Division of Personal Development, Health and Physical Education. These notes are especially important for Joeys and Cubs who are in their early growth stages, however it should apply to all. Stop them from eventually becoming arthritic sufferers too early in life. (*Unfortunately I cant sue my PE teacher for my aches and pains...he's dead*)

There are a number of issues related to movements that require specific safety considerations. These include avoiding certain exercises that are **POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS**. Some examples of these are:
(*Warwick comments in italics*)

- extreme movements that cause extension or flexion of a joint beyond its normal range, eg toe touches, back arches, deep knee bends; (*sportsmen use special ways of doing similar exercises but they are best left alone, stretching ligaments eventually gives joint problems in later life*)
- movements that involve excessive, rapid or repetitive twisting around a fixed base, eg wall slaps, trunk rotations; (*all exercises that could be considered ballistic in style*).
- sustained or held movements, eg held sit-up; (*Never more than 5 seconds for those below scout age.*)
- repetitive movements, eg arm circling through a small range of movement.
- *Push ups with the hands flat on the ground, Olympians and top athletes are taught to use clenched fists resting on a folded towel, or hold onto a rail. This stops the damaging excessive hyperextension of the wrists*)

Other movements to avoid include:

- running backwards, because of the potential for tripping over obstacles; (*not such a problem for scouts and veterans but still a risk*)
- weight bearing on the head, as children's neck strength is not sufficiently developed; (*Balancing a small book or block is ok*)
- activities that involve excessive flexion, eg frog-jump repetitions;
- hanging by the knees from an apparatus;
- dive rolls. (*as in some forms of tumbling and when jumping face forward onto on a waterslide, from a standing position has produced a large number of neck fractures ,pushing forward from a kneeling position is safer,*)

2. DANGER STRANGER AND OTHER DON'TS

Let's not reinvent the wheel. In NSW the schools do a magnificent job in what they call 'Safe Living'.

This covers topics such as molestation – car accident – swimming and diving – danger stranger etc in a well researched way. They use all the latest DVDs, techniques and methods. It's their teachers who have to cope with parents who complain because the word S*X was used and is turning their child into a potential s*x maniac.

What educators really want is help in reinforcing the message, from parent (*their kidding*) and youth groups etc.

Scouts shouldn't lecture but just simply reinforce the messages by asking the occasional question or two.

* "Who don't you talk to?" (*When they say stranger, then just ask them to describe a stranger... in many cases he will come straight out of a horror movie rather than simply "someone I don't know"*)

* "When do you sing out NO?"

A good game is to have sides or patrols seeing who can sing out NO the loudest or most aggressively etc.

Then the question "When do we say No and which way" (*soft, firm, angry*)

This technique should follow through all of our scouting. Before an activity, abseiling, patrol or Queens Scout hikes. Questioning the youth members as to what emergencies they might expect,? What would they do? Don't forget to ensure **they** mention things like heatstroke and its care etc. You are following your Duty of Care and at the same time teaching them to think about safety and assess the risks.

3. WHY?

Recently I spoke at a meeting which included youth leaders, sports managers and others involved with youth. (*Unlike scouts they pay me to speak*). One main theme arose, which in itself is quite disturbing.

The questions that arose:

- ❖ Why do grown adults feel the need to constantly shout and bellow at youth members in their charge?
- ❖ Why do they have such a negative approach to youth member's performance?
- ❖ Why do they constantly use negative terms like- 'idiot – stupid - hopeless?
- ❖ Why do they give the impression that their members aren't up to (*their*) expectations?.
- ❖ Do they do this to their own families?
- ❖ Are they covering up their own inadequacies?

ARE THEY IN FACT GROWN UP BULLIES?

- ❖ Does scouting allow this? (**DEFINITELY NOT**, they have no place in scouting. As scouts become aware of them they should be spoken to by their GL or DC and given an opportunity to change, over a month or so. If they don't we look at cancelling their appointment..)
- ❖ A question remains. Why cant they use positive terms– praise –compliment – encourage – enjoy doing things with their members – let them learn by doing?

4. AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT.

For some 17 years I was consultant to 3 major boys institutions that catered for 11 to 17 year olds (18 it was usually straight to gaol) these were boys who mostly had a tragic past, some were there because of thefts, car theft; assaults and even murder. They lived at the Home but went to local schools, (*where the principal had little hair, resulting from his pulling it out in desperation*)

One year a person applied to manage one of the homes. He was a graduate in psychology and a Canadian scoutmaster. He and I discussed a plan I had in my mind for some years. Run the home on the Patrol System.

He did (*not mentioning scouts at all, the boys would have rebelled at something that nerdy*) they responded. The 'home council' made decisions on rules, discipline etc. Although unlike scouts they only had three options hanging; lethal injection; electric chair.(scouts have 4 the fourth being "kick 'em out", not an option there) so the manager (leader) would sit in and offer two or three practical more realistic solutions/alternatives.

It was a terrific success, good discipline - a code of conduct they stuck to - less fights and no runaways, until he left, Various new managers started to 'run the show' giving lip service to the system making most of the decisions about conduct etc, soon it was all back to having discipline problems; fights and run-a-ways etc.

I wonder what the point is in me telling this story.

NOW TIME FOR A QUICKIE. A Joey leader had a problem with her four year old using 'rude' words to people.

Last Sunday he told the Priest "You're a POO"

What to do?. She has remonstrated and punished him with no results. Give him a funnier word. Say "You're a banana or clock etc. and laugh with him about it, he will start to use the words that give the most reaction. Its all part of being that age.

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