



January CMHM Webinar

# Humor & Family Fun

with Jeannette Burney  
of Children's Choice of Maryland

Thursday, January 18, 2024  
11:30AM - 12:30PM EST





# Activity 1:

## Learning About Laughter



### Objectives

1. To learn about the physical and emotional benefits of laughter
2. To understand the role of laughter at various stages of life





# Laughter is Important!

## Laughter...

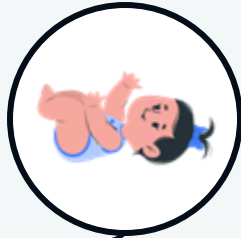
- ★ relaxes the whole body
- ★ boosts the immune system
- ★ triggers the release of endorphins
- ★ protects the heart
- ★ burns calories
- ★ lightens anger's heavy load
- ★ may even help you to live longer

## Tips for Parents/Caregivers:

- ★ Remember to be a role-model.
- ★ Don't laugh at a mean joke.
- ★ Have a sense of humor.
- ★ Encourage family fun time.
- ★ "Let yourself laugh!"

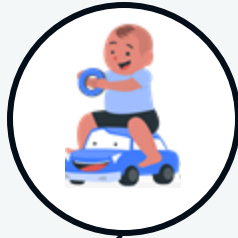
Buchowski, M. S., Majchrzak, | Harvard Health. (n.d.). | Manninen, S. (2017) | Miller, M., & Fry, W. F. (2009). | Romundstad, S. (2016) | Speer, M. E., & Delgado, M. R. (2017) | Yim, J. (2016)

# Laughing Through Life



## Babies

- ★ Can understand humor!
- ★ Begin laughing at 3-4 months old.



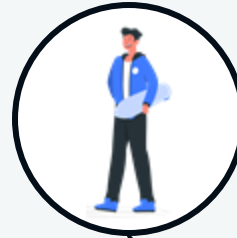
## Toddlers

- ★ Love to play 'peek-a-boo'.
- ★ Will try to make others laugh.
- ★ Think it is funny when pictures and sounds don't match.



## School Aged Kids

- ★ Love to tell jokes.
- ★ Think physical comedy is funny.



## Teenagers

- ★ Love to tell jokes.
- ★ Might make fun of anything 'abnormal'.



## Adults

- ★ Often laugh at the funny things their kids do!



# Laughing Through Life



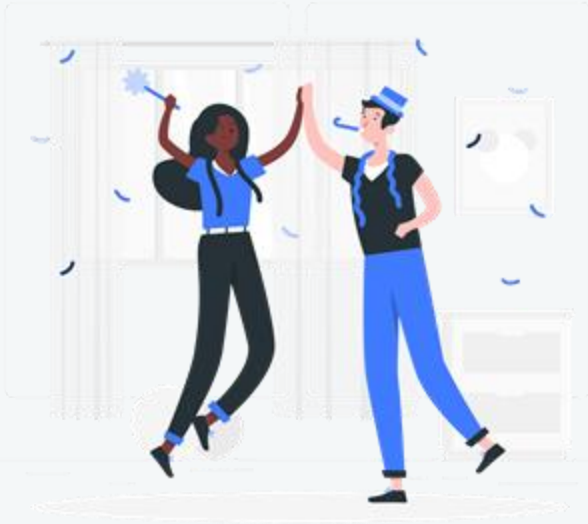
## Reflection Questions

1. Think about a time where you laughed until your cheeks hurt or until you cried...
2. How did that feel?

**\*Relive the laughter\***



## Activity 2: What to Celebrate? And How?



### Objectives

1. To encourage a positive focus and joy in family accomplishments.
2. To help caregivers explore ways they can make family celebrations purposeful and meaningful.





# Things To Celebrate

Why is it important to celebrate the small wins? Our brains are built to **remember negatives more than positives (this is called a negativity bias).**

Remembering the positives takes extra effort—but **it's the positives that build self-esteem.** By renewing self-esteem, you build hope and motivation for the future.

The momentum you gain **from each small success is what will allow you to stay on course toward greater and greater achievements and successes, including achieving your big, long-term goals (28).**

Things to Celebrate

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



# Suggestions for Making it Special



## Food

- Family Favorite
- One favorite dish for every family member
- A new recipe
- A special dish not served everyday
- Picnic (indoors or outdoors)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

THEMES



## Dress

- Dressed up
- Casual
- Costumes
- Formal
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

THEME



## Activities

- Singing/Dancing/Music
- Prayers
- Talking
- Silence
- Holding hands
- Family Circle
- Games
- Telling stories
- Exchanging gifts
- Exchanging Cards
- Saying Blessings
- Movie night (with homemade popcorn?)
- Indoor camping/building a fort
- Talent show
- Puzzles
- Play-Doh

THEME



## Decoration

- Setting the table
- Family ornaments
- Candles
- Handmade items
- Balloons
- Banner/signs
- Streamers
- Flowers
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

THEME





# Planning To Celebrate

What

---

---

Who

---

---

---

---

---

When

---

---

How

---

---

---

*Don't forget to plan to  
**SAVOR!***

# Planning To Celebrate

## In Case of Problems

Sometimes things just do not go the way we plan. Things happen that throw our plans right out the window. We cannot always prevent those things from happening, but we can prepare ourselves for when they do. Think about things that would force you to change the celebration plans you have made. Now write down ways you could change the plans to help make the celebration a success.

What Could Happen?	How Plans Could Change?	Who Would Do What?



## Tying it all together

### Gratitude: Experiencing Awe



#### Objectives

1. To help attendees learn a new gratitude skill that evokes and savors the feeling of awe.



# Gratitude: Experiencing Awe

## Awe

...is described as the emotion that arises in response to experiences that we perceive to be strikingly vast and changes the way we understand the world (25).

## Researchers discovered that evoking a sense of awe...



...expands people's perception of time,



reduces feelings of impatience,



increases willingness to volunteer time to help other people,



leads to a stronger preference for experiences over material products,



increases life satisfaction.

They concluded that **“experiences of awe bring people into the present moment, and being in the present moment underlies awe’s capacity to adjust time perception, influence decisions, and make life feel more satisfying than it would otherwise”** (26).



# Gratitude: Experiencing Awe

## Part 1

02:00

*Think back to a time when you felt a sense of awe regarding something you saw or experienced. Perhaps you witnessed something special in nature, observed an overwhelming act of kindness, or had a critical lightbulb moment. For this exercise, try to think of the most recent experience you've had that involved the feeling of awe. Allow yourself to relive this moment of awe by closing your eyes for a few minutes and remembering as much about the experience as you can.*



# Gratitude: Experiencing Awe

## Part 1

*Think back to a time when you felt a sense of awe regarding something you saw or experienced. Perhaps you witnessed something special in nature, observed an overwhelming act of kindness, or had a critical lightbulb moment. For this exercise, try to think of the most recent experience you've had that involved the feeling of awe. Allow yourself to relive this moment of awe by closing your eyes for a few minutes and remembering as much about the experience as you can.*



## Part 2

**05:00**

*Describe (with words) or depict (with a sketch) this experience in as much detail as possible, including what thoughts went through your mind at that moment and what feelings and emotions arose at the time. Include any positive thoughts and/or feelings that have shown up now as you have relived this excellent experience as well.*





# Gratitude: Experiencing Awe



## Reflection Questions

1. How could you incorporate intentional experiences of awe in your own life?
2. How can you promote experiences of awe in the lives of others around you?





# Final Thoughts

## 1. Be intentional

*Do not wait for the moments to find you—create them.*

## 2. Savor the moment

*Allow the moment to do what it's intended to do.*

## 3. Think yourself happy

*Positive thoughts have the power to Defuse & De-escalate*





# Maryland Respite Program



**Respite provides a break for families with children with significant mental health and behavioral health needs who still reside with their biological parents.**

## What is the Respite Program?

The Maryland Respite Program is designed to help prevent children, who currently live with their parents or guardians, from going into an out of home placement by providing the child and his/her parents with the regularly scheduled, therapeutic break.

## What makes a child qualify for respite?

- 1 The child's mental health condition
  - 2 The child's medical condition
  - 3 The parents' mental health condition
- ★ The child is referred by their therapist

## Expectation during respite

- Involvement in your family
- Religious activities
- Sporting events
- Movies
- Limited therapeutic interventions
- Completion of required paperwork after each weekend