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Understanding the person in your life who is anxious

By Carol M. Shirley, Registered Psychologist, with ENIGMA

It is not surprising, nor is it such a leap, to think that because my mother experienced significant anxiety that I would as well. Nor is it such a leap to conclude I have passed that anxiety along to my children. The phrase "anxious mothers beget anxious children" contains a kernel of truth (more so if the mother is the primary care giver).

People with anxiety recognize when there are behaving irrationally but in those anxious moments it is near impossible to be rational (our thinking brain goes off-line). Unfortunately, anxiety is expressed through irritability, negativity and it feels controlling to others. Support in those anxious moments would feel compassionate, loving, soothing, calming, and safe. There needs to be a knowing that the person

who is experiencing the anxiety is out of control and feeling very vulnerable and that once their brain gets back online the rational, real person will return. Fighting, or arguing with someone who is experiencing significant anxiety is like adding gas to a fire and not helpful.

The people I have met who have anxiety are typically super responsible and rational when they are not anxious. They can make great decisions, help others feel safe and most often have highly sensitive personalities. When anxious, they are responding to fear (real or imagined), they are afraid of the conditions they have set up in their minds. People with anxiety are most often very judgemental of themselves and tend to be quite hard on themselves once their anxiety calms. They rarely use

their success to exemplify their ability and most often remind themselves of their failures and use those to justify the harshness of their words and thoughts toward themselves. This begins to create a rather vicious cycle. If you have been in that cycle for a while, you have likely become very good at making your life more stressful than it needs to be.

I appreciate defining anxiety is best done in the context of our nervous system and emotional responses, but I like to talk about it in terms of being in a relationship with oneself where we have learned not to trust ourselves. People with anxiety tend to have few self-soothing techniques, they often have very negative self talk and constantly compare themselves to others and always fail to measure up. Peo-

ple with anxiety tend to believe others judge them the way they judge themselves and others are not going to accept them because they don't accept themselves. They tend to have higher expectations for themselves than they do for others and they rarely see or allow for being human. Expressions such as, be kind to yourself, treat yourself like your best friend, and be compassionate with yourself are so very often said by me and others because we know that healing your relationship with yourself is one of the biggest factors in overcoming anxiety

People with anxiety tend to (consciously or unconsciously) work to control outcomes. Afraid of potential outcomes they steer in the direction of their desired outcome. The more we try to control the



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more out of control we become and of course the more anxious. Remember you can only control yourself, what you say, think and do. If there are things beyond your control that make you anxious you would be better served to learn to self soothe, show self-compassion and learn that you are safe even when things don't turn out the way you would like. Learn to control your internal environment, you will feel free, and have little need to control the outer world or the people in it.

People with anxiety live in the future, always focused in possible negative out-

comes and feeling as though the possibilities are more of probabilities. While through out it all their bodies are responding as though the event is happening in the now and unfolding in the worst possible way. I call that dying a thousand deaths before you even get to the event. Live in the now...focused on what is happening right now. Plan for the future, yes, and learn to trust yourself knowing that no matter what happens you will handle it and you will.

For more information go to www.carolshirley.ca or phone 902-495-3181.

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Budget and savings: Here's some advice to help you achieve your objectives

Submitted by The Sutherland Wealth Management Group

Whatever your goal may be, saving is often the first step to achieving it. You could be setting some money aside to pay for a vacation, a car, or a first home – or maybe to plan for your retirement. For some, saving money may seem difficult. Here are some tips and advice to help you adjust your budget to make your dreams a reality.

Step 1: Make a budget

To find out how much you can save, you first need to account for your income and your expenses. Then, you'll be able to determine which expenses you could potentially cut down on. The one way to figure out all these variables is by making a budget. It's an essential tool and the first step towards better financial habits.

Why are budgets important? With a budget, you can make projections for the coming year, which will establish a global vision of your financial situation and help you set your savings goals. Then, make some projections at the start of each month to make sure you're still on track with your initial plan, and

follow up at the end of the month to ensure everything looks good.

Step 2: Determine your capacity to save

After you've made your budget, you can figure out your savings capacity, meaning the percentage of your income that isn't used to pay off your required monthly and annual expenses that you can allocate to your savings.

Whether you're saving \$25 per week or per month, that's already a good start. The number doesn't matter. You can increase that number when you're able to. The important thing is to start as early as possible, develop the right reflexes, and turn it into a habit.

Step 3: Define your objectives

Ideally, your very first short-term goal should be building an emergency fund. In fact, saving is also essential for building an emergency fund or financial cushion that amounts to three to six months' worth of expenses. It will help you pay for your expenses even if you're on disability, if you lose your job, etc.

cont. on pg.12...

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KNOW ABOUT YOUR CAR AIR FILTERS?

Why do you have to replace the air filter in your car?

When the air filter in your car gets clogged or worn out, this affects the quality and quantity of the air going into your engine.

How often should you change the engine air filter in your car?

You should change your air filter every 20,000 km or once a year. But if you're driving mostly on city streets or dusty roads, it's a good idea to change the air filter in your car more often, or to at least inspect it regularly.

A quick cleaning to clear out the built-up particles is part of the recommended maintenance of your car: simply blow them out with an air compressor or give the filter a quick vacuuming, and you're good to go.

Neglecting to change your air filter could cause serious damage to your engine, so you're better off replacing it frequently, as required.

This way, you can rest – and drive – a little easier.

What is a cabin air filter?

The primary purpose of cabin air filters, located on most vehicles since 2000, is keeping the air inside your vehicle's cabin clean.

It's typically located behind the glove compartment or under the hood or dashboard on most modern vehicles.

Its job is to filter all of the air that comes through the car's HVAC system to prevent pollutants, such as dust, pollen, smog and mold spores from entering. The filters can also catch rodent droppings, leaves and other unwanted debris. They help with allergy problems.

Besides improving air quality, replacing the cabin air filter may prevent an expensive repair. "When the air is dirty the A/C will work harder."

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HRM MLAs and MPs Working Hard for YOU!

Canada Summer Jobs

By Darrell Samson, the Member of Parliament for Sackville-Preston-Chezzetcook

This year's Canada Summer Jobs program will offer up to 120,000 jobs for young Canadians between 15 and 30 years of age, representing a **50% increase from 2020**. With this significant increase, more employers and youth will be able to apply and benefit from the program.

Last year, there were **227 CSJ positions** in Sackville-Preston-Chezzetcook, representing a **\$854,329** boost to our local economy! These positions are important to many organizations who provide valuable services in our communities, as well as small businesses who rely on the extra staff over summer months.

Applications for businesses and organizations to get a CSJ position has closed. As we approach summer, there will be many opportunities for our youth to earn some money, or perhaps even get their first job experience.

Constituency Youth Council

I am very pleased to announce that the **Constituency Youth Council** has been established with participation from high schools in our riding.

Listening to the ideas and concerns of our youth gives a fresh perspective on many issues facing Canadians today. I look forward to engaging with these bright young minds over the coming months and reporting on our collective progress on issues that are top of mind for them.

If anyone is interested in joining the Youth Council, please feel free to contact my office.

Stay Up to Date!

When there are last minute changes to programs (e.g. deadline extensions, new details or qualifications, etc.) or new COVID-19 federal protocols (travel restrictions, vaccine updates, etc.), we always post them on my Facebook page. This is the best way to communicate these changes to the residents across the riding to deadlines in a timely manner. I hope you will consider following my Facebook page (www.facebook.com/darrellsamsonliberal) so you can stay up to date too.

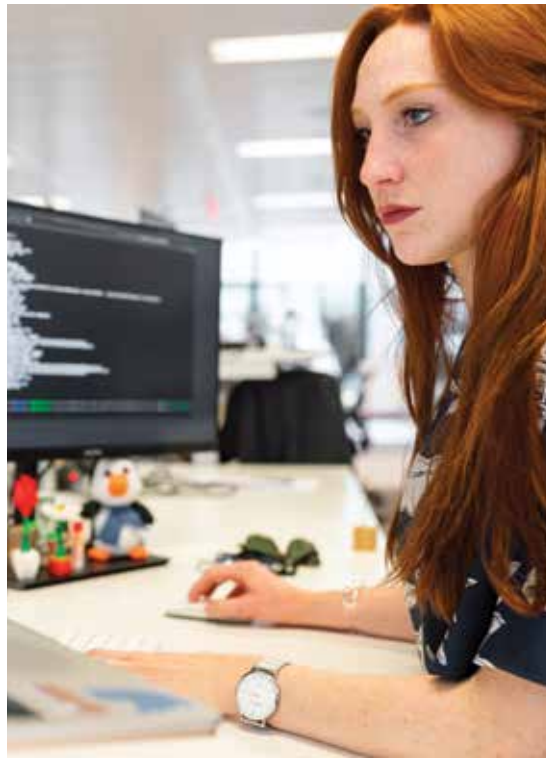




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Parenting in the time of COVID-19

Susan Leblanc – MLA Dartmouth North

I recently noted that we are fast approaching March Break in Nova Scotia, and it didn't take me long to remember how March Break didn't really end last year, because of the COVID-19 restrictions. It was during March Break 2020 that we learned that one week would turn into three weeks, and then a few days later, another two weeks. Before we knew it, our kids were not returning to school until September.

I have to admit, I felt a sense of panic: "what if it happens again?"

As a working mother of elementary-aged children, I felt like those months of March-June of 2020 were a real rollercoaster of emotions. I was grateful for the slightly later mornings, and seeing my children more. I was energized by the daily walks or bike rides we took as a family around our neighbourhood—really the only way we could get adequate physical exercise. I was worried about my kids' emotional well-being because of not seeing their friends and their development in school from missing so many weeks of learning (even though my partner was an excellent at-home teacher!). I was anxious and stressed about not being able to get my own work done quickly and efficiently because of the family pressures of working from home. We got through it, but it was not easy, and that as someone who lives in a two parent household, and has a backyard.

I know my experience is not unique and many parents struggled with the situation. Many still are as they navigate COVID-19 cases in their children's schools.



Photo by Gustavo Fring from Pexels

A school may shut down with very little notice, leaving parents scrambling to find child care or pivoting to working from home. And I know the situation is similar for parents with children in childcare settings. Add to this the stress of actually being exposed, or in fact contracting the virus, and it's a lot to handle.

Policies like implementing access to paid sick days and access to daycare for essential workers would go a long way to relieving some of the pressure for working families.

Let us hope that 2021 will see an end to the pandemic and that we can go back to or achieve a good work/family balance!



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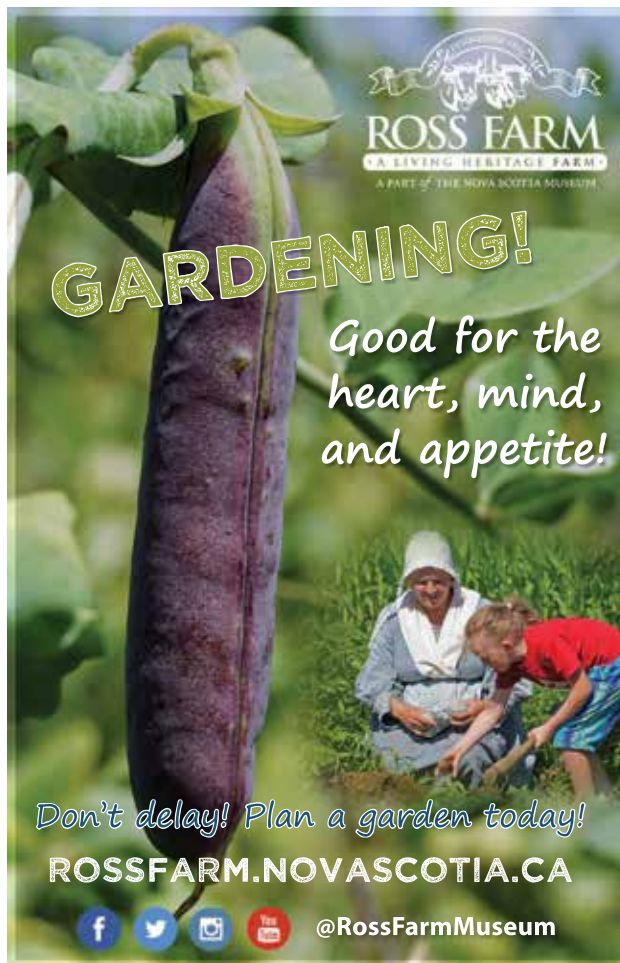
Winter is for gardens too!

By Pete Cullen, Executive Director,
Ross Farm Museum

The dead of winter. The snow is aging on the ground and we're all wondering when the next storm will hit. The holidays are over and perhaps we are feeling just a little stir crazy. Definitely time to start thinking about this year's GARDEN!!!

That's right! There are three good reasons to begin planning your garden! First, as we saw last year, we have to remember to order our seeds early! Order a mix of things that do well in a variety of types of weather. We may be in for another dry summer! Check your seed descriptions to plant accordingly. Secondly, planning now will give you a constant supply of fresh produce over the summer. This can be done in window boxes, back yards or across acres and acres. A garden doesn't have to be big to bring big benefits to you and your family! A 6th story apartment window box can still produce a lot of herbs that will light up a summer salad, sandwich pasta dish! You don't have to be self sufficient in everything, but you can start with something!

Third, and not least importantly, simply beginning the process now will bring you some excitement during these cold, short days. Having this type of mid-range plan is always a good thing. It can be adapted. More



importantly still, planning for the renewal of life—for the beginning of growth—creates a natural sense of hope, fun, enjoyment, and enthusiasm to the last half of winter. As well as perhaps a vitamin supplement here or there, planning for the spring garden is food for the soul right now. Get online, go to your local supplier, support your local seed companies. You'll begin reaping the rewards of gardening months before you put the first seed in the ground!

Budget and Savings...cont. from pg.6

If you've managed to free up some money you can put towards your savings, we recommend defining your goals and the timeline for them. You'll always be more motivated to save if you have a specific goal.

Step 4: Make a savings plan

After that, we recommend making a savings plan to reach your goals. Your savings plan should address these two questions: how much do you want to save up, and how long are you giving yourself to hit that number?

Once you have the money you need for a car, for example, don't stop saving. Maintain those good habits.

Step 5: Choose the right account

It can sometimes be hard making heads or tails of TFSAs, RRSPs and savings accounts. That's why the expert recommends meeting with an advisor. They will explain the different types of investment vehicles to you and suggest the one that's most appropriate for your goal.

Step 6: Meet with an advisor

No income or goal is too small. Some people don't make a lot of money but still manage to set aside a good amount. Often, it's just a question of reflexes and habits.

Finally, keep in mind that saving doesn't mean depriving yourself. There's no immediate gratification. But the day you reach your goal thanks to your savings rather than your credit card, you'll feel a great deal of satisfaction. Saving means preparing for your future.

Questions? Reach out to us at anytime at terry.sutherland@nbc.ca.

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Health & Wellness

What's so special about a Specialist?

By Dr. Sarah Davidson DDS, MSc (Ortho) FRCD (C),
Halifax Orthodontic Specialist Group

Have you ever found yourself faced with a referral to a dental specialist only to hear that your neighbour's dentist does everything at their own office? Have you wondered why?

The field of Dentistry is complex from the outside but is important to understand. A dentist is a person who completes four years of dental school where they undergo special training in the head and neck region. Typically, a student entering dental school will already have completed at least one degree. Before attaining the designation of Dentist (DDS after their name) all dentists in Canada must complete all requirements of their individual programs but also pass a National Board Exam for competency.

A practicing dentist has a broad scope of practice, meaning they can do a wide range of procedures from fillings, to crowns to root canals, and orthodontics. Some dentists find themselves particularly passionate about a certain niche and focus their time and energy in that area. They often do continuing education courses to help build their expertise in a certain area. Dentists who choose this path often refer to their practices as "limited" to a certain area. However specialized they choose to make their practice though, it is still different from a Specialist's practice.

Confused yet?

True dental specialists are dentists who complete dental school and then go on to study an additional number of years (typically 2-6) in one particular area of dentistry. For example, an Orthodontist is someone who studies for three additional years focusing entirely on tooth movement with braces and Invisalign as well as growth modification. An Orthodontist no longer practices any other aspect of Dentistry and instead works with your general dentist to deliver you complete care. Students in these specialist programs are referred to as "residents" much like a medical resident. Often times they are also called a graduate student as these additional years of study can lead to a Masters degree. Upon completion of these extra years of study, these residents are tested by yet another set of board exams to achieve the designation of Board Certified Specialist. In Canada, specialists that have the designation FRCD have completed this exam process. There are 9 nationally recognized dental specialties in Canada. You can verify that the person you are seeing is a registered dental specialist by visiting

NSdental.org.

So all specialists are dentists but not all dentists are specialists. The bottom line is that you need to be informed about the level of expertise of the person who is treating you. As a general rule, as the complexity of a case increases, so does the necessity of having a specialist provide the treatment. That said, understanding case complexity is something that can be very hard to determine. Talk to your dentist and if you have more questions, don't be shy to inquire about a specialist's perspective.

When it comes time to choosing care for the special ones in your life, consider the specialized knowledge and training of a board-certified dental specialist!

Dr. Sarah Davidson is a Board-Certified Orthodontic Specialist with the Halifax Orthodontic Specialist Group. She is a co-owner of The Brace Space in Bedford (Larry Uteck), The Brace Space (Sackville) and Stuart & Davidson Orthodontics (Dartmouth), offering conventional braces and Invisalign for children, teens and adults. For more information, contact (902) 455-7222.



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Seniors' Living Care

Trial Stays at The Berkeley - An Opportunity to Experience Retirement Living

Submitted by The Berkeley



Retirement living is apartment living for seniors with the benefit of included meals, housekeeping, social activities, and additional safety features. Sometimes misperceived as an option for seniors needing care, retirement living is not always recognized for its full potential as an excellent option for independent, active seniors. There is nothing we would love more than to show you the reasons retirement living is very much about living life to the fullest with less responsibilities and greater peace of mind!

A common misperception with retirement living is a belief that there is a loss of inde-

pendence. However, retirement living increases independence by providing greater access to social opportunities and a marked decrease in exhausting responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning and house maintenance. At The Berkeley, our supportive infrastructure and the organic benefits of community allow residents to enjoy a full lifestyle with a multitude of choices.

An in-person tour of our communities is a fabulous eye opener. It is an opportunity to see the most important characteristics of retirement living at The Berkeley - a warm, welcoming environment, our residents coming and going, enjoying the bright and

beautifully decorated common spaces while awaiting the next organized activity or embarking on a pursuit of their very own. It also allows us to showcase the spacious apartments that our residents furnish with their own belongings and are proud to call home!

Seeing is believing, but there is truly no better way to recognize these benefits than to experience them firsthand for a period of time. Hence, our Trial Stay option! Whether familiar with the benefits of retirement living or not, it is a significant decision and a big undertaking to move to a new home. At The Berkeley, we have Trial Stay Suites available for

one to three months at a 25% reduced rent. Coming to live at The Berkeley on the short-term can give you a sense of what to expect as a full-time resident without any pressure. We are proud to say that at least 90% of our trial stay residents have chosen to make The Berkeley their permanent home. Let us give you a glimpse into what life could be like if you joined one of our communities!

For more information, to book a tour or a trial stay, please contact Jenn Walker at (902) 802-0346 or jenn.walker@theberkeley.com.



Redefining Family Connection

By Bayshore Home Health

Being separated from family and friends can be very stressful—after all, humans are social creatures, and we depend on our relationships and social networks for support, friendship, and fulfillment. Loneliness among seniors is also a serious concern.

To stay connected while social distancing, many people are finding alternatives to in-person visits. Here are nine ideas to try:

Regular phone calls. For many seniors, this is the easiest way to stay in touch with friends and family.

Texting and more. For seniors who are comfortable using technology, you can also connect with text messages, emails, video chat, and social media.

Hold a virtual dinner party. Everyone prepares their meal at home and joins a video chat. The

nice thing about video chat is that you can see each other's facial expressions and body language.

Email and blog updates. To keep senior loved ones in the loop about what you and your kids are up to, create a short e-newsletter with photos and text, and send it out every few days. A family blog is also a good way to share updates, and visitors can add comments.

Read bedtime stories together. If your senior loved one can use video chat, see if they'd like to read aloud to their grandkids in the evening. If using the phone is easier, try using speakerphone.

Get crafty. Invite the kids to create digital greeting cards, photos and artwork to email to their grandparents.

Play online games. There are free online versions of classics like card games, chess and back-


gammon, or newer multiplayer games that kids will also enjoy.

Watch a movie together. Netflix Party allows people in different places to watch a movie or TV show together.

Arrange home care services. If you live far away from your loved one and are concerned about their well-being, consider hiring a professional caregiver. Home care services include companionship, housekeeping, meal preparation and more.

Taking advantage of different ways to connect that can help us feel closer and support each other.

For more information call Bayshore Home Health at 902-580-2221.



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Love Where You Live

“There are many things I love about living at The Berkeley. It’s hard to pick just one, but I can give you a good example of what I mean. My first choice would be our monthly Dining In with Gloria night. A small group of residents get together to take part in the preparation of the meal. Hearing the chatter and ‘whatnot’ is warm and priceless. Working together works! Following that, we sit down and socialize over a meal we helped to create. Many of us miss our kitchens and The Berkeley certainly fills our ‘plates’ with opportunities to fulfil what we have missed. These are nights to remember!”

Doreen F. has lived at The Berkeley Gladstone for almost 10 years. She enjoys her lifestyle, living amongst friends in a community where there is always something interesting to do. She comes and goes quite a bit as well—before COVID-19 hit, Doreen still travelled with her family. Doreen has a positive outlook, a fabulous sense of humour, and a mischievous twinkle in her eye. A chat with her is always full of laughs.



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Education

Laugh It Off! Laughter Reduces Stress and Improves Learning for All Ages

Submitted by Oxford Learning

Did you know that laughter can improve learning? It's true! Humour and laughter are not just linked to helping you relax and feel better, they are also linked to helping the brain improve retention and recall... in other words, how well a student remembers a lesson and how long they remember it for. Laughter is a great form of stress relief, and that's no joke!

Here's How Laughter Can Improve Learning:

1. When we laugh, the brain releases the chemical dopamine, also known as the feel-good hormone.
2. Laughter makes us relaxed and less anxious.
3. As anxiety decreases, the brain's ability to retain information increases.

source: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/laughter-learning-humor-boosts-retention-sarah-henderson>

Reluctant to Learn? Laughter Can Help.

For students reluctant to dive into learning whether it's in the classroom or online at home, humour can help create an upbeat atmosphere that sets the stage for learning to happen.

Because students feel good and are relaxed, they are less worried about how they will perform when learning. Their

brains are happy, and that makes learning easier and more enjoyable.

When students start learning from a place of relaxation and happiness, learning becomes more enjoyable.

Take a Laugh Break!

Feeling well is linked to learning well. If students are feeling stressed about learning, try sandwiching laughter in between learning sessions. This will not only boost mood but will also help students remember what they are learning.

Make it meaningful: educators say that the key to using humour to enhance learning is to make the humour meaningful to the topic. This is why teachers often incorporate humour into instruction such as telling a math joke before an algebra lesson or sharing a riddle before science class.

Laugh and Learn at Home

Interested in using laughter to make learning at home easier? Whether it's before an online class or before cracking the books to begin a nightly homework session, take a minute or two to read some jokes, watch a bit of standup, or scroll through memes.

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CRAFT CORNER

Create your own design... Pysanky Easter Egg

By Jenny Joan Larisey,
Craft Consultant for Maritime Hobbies Crafts

Now that spring is just around the corner it's time for me to get out the Pysanky box and see how many eggs I can decorate before Easter.

Pysanky, a tradition of eastern European countries, is a technique to colourfully decorate eggs with stunning motifs of

folk art. Unlike traditional Pysanky my designs do not tell a story. I like to use the technique of wax resist with my own designs. Simple patterns and fewer colors can be just as striking as a more detailed egg.

Starting with farm fresh eggs is preferable to commercial eggs as the latter tend to have a thinner



shell and are sprayed with oils or wax. If you can get your hands on duck or goose eggs they are slightly bigger with a less fragile shell.

A pencil, kistka, beeswax and candle are the tools you need to draw out your design. Once the basic guide lines are penciled onto your egg you are ready to use the kistka. Your kistka is like a heated fountain pen and the "ink" is the melted beeswax. Use this tool just as you would a pencil to draw on the surface of the egg.

Note: Alternative to a kistka is a tool called a "drop pull". This can be made at home by inserting a pushpin into an eraser on a pencil, the size of the head on the pushpin will determine the width of the wax line.

Once you apply beeswax to an area, it will seal in the colour underneath. Therefore, the first lines you draw onto a white egg

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will stay white through the entire process. Each time the egg is dipped into a new dye and more beeswax is added to that, the new colour is sealed. When using multiple colours, you want to dye from light to darkest.

The dyes for Ukrainian eggs are highly pigmented. You can use food colouring as an alternative but just note that the colours will not be as intense. The amount of time to leave an egg in the dye varies depending on the quality of the shell and the colour and type of dye. So it's best to check often. Some dyes will produce a decent colour in 15 seconds while others take 10-15 minutes. For a stronger colour, you may have to leave the egg in the dye for quite some time!

Be proud of all the designs you create, many people will only see the beauty even if all you see are the mistakes. It took me years to see my mistakes as beautiful art!

Visit *Maritime Hobbies and Crafts* in downtown Halifax for Pysanky supplies, games, puzzles and more. 1521 Grafton Street, Halifax, 423-8870



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Separation Anxiety in Children

By Angie White, The Growing Place

The Growing Place
Early Education Centre

thegrowingplace.ca
902-433-0727

Separation Anxiety in children when starting daycare for the first time is real and is completely normal. Usually separation anxiety starts early, around 6 months and can sometimes last till they are 6-7 years. It can be hard on both the children and parents. There are many things you can do to prepare your child for this transition.

Allowing separation from your child for short periods of time with a friend or family member can help them prepare for the transition into daycare. This will also allow them to get used to bonding with other people when you are not around to help them feel safer. Playing peek-a-boo or hide and seek can show them that when things go away, they will come back. There are also several books that can help with recognizing that when people go away, everything is still going to be okay such as "Llama Llama misses mama" and "Maisy goes to preschool". You can also provide your child's teacher with pictures of family, a comfort item or let them know what their favorite snack or activity is to help keep the child occupied. Take advantage of a transition day or 2 that most centers offer, these are usually just a couple hours in the morning to help the child get familiar with the staff and the routine.

Be careful when setting time expectations with your child as sometimes plans change, traffic happens,

and you may not be able to reach them at the exact time you have told them. Also, be careful not to do too much all at once as it can be overwhelming and cause your child some stress.

Separation anxiety can be hard, and you can prepare but every child is different and will react differently to different situations. Just be patient.

Angie currently teaches the school age program at The Growing Place (Pleasant Street location), as well as assisting with our Inclusion Programming. She is our Arts and Crafts expert, and an endless resource for new ideas to try in the classroom. For more information, please visit our website at www.thegrowingplace.ca

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Wellness Plans for Pets

Courtesy of Carnegy Animal Hospital

More recently, you will read or hear about wellness plans for pets. What does that actually mean?

Veterinary medicine is first and foremost about providing our four-legged family members with the best quality and longevity of life possible. As a pet owner, you may already be familiar with your veterinary clinic's reference to the importance of annual physical exams, a tailored vaccination program, as well as parasitic prevention.

During an annual wellness visit, your veterinarian carefully performs a physical exam of your pet paying attention to:

- Temperature at time of visit
- Skin and coat
- Heart, lungs and abdomen
- Teeth and gums
- Eyes and ears
- Paws and nails

Your vet will review your pet's medical history, if available, to help give a clear picture of his health. Detailed notes from this visit will be maintained in your pet's file for future reference.

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In addition to the physical exam, other concerns may be discussed to help ensure long-term wellness. These may include:

- Vaccination decisions
- Food choices
- Exercise routines
- Parasite control products
- Behavioral training

What if there is a problem?

If potential problems are detected, tests may be ordered; these can include:

- Blood work
- EKG/echocardiogram
- X-rays

Most tests can be performed on-site for fast and accurate diagnosis, and appropriate treatment can usually begin immediately.

However, if more sophisticated testing is required, your veterinarian will use the services of a certified veterinary laboratory offering expertise in board certified specialists in pathology, hematology, internal medicine and radiology.

We are fortunate in our area to have ready access to local specialists in many of these specific areas of expertise.

However, a physical exam often does not usually establish early signs of disease that can be monitored and treated. Early detection diagnostics are a valuable tool to catch potential concerns of early health issues.

Research from the American Animal Health Association clearly supports the importance of conducting internal parasite exams, vector borne disease testing, a complete blood count, and a serum chemistry profile for pets seemingly "healthy". Research has shown that one in four adult and senior pets that present for a healthy pet exam will have diagnostic markers that require follow-up.

Remember as well that pets age at a faster ratio than humans which further shows a reason for including baseline diagnostics in our pet's annual exams, taking it a step beyond the physical observations.

We encourage you to reach out to your veterinarian to explore this more complete preventive program with them.

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