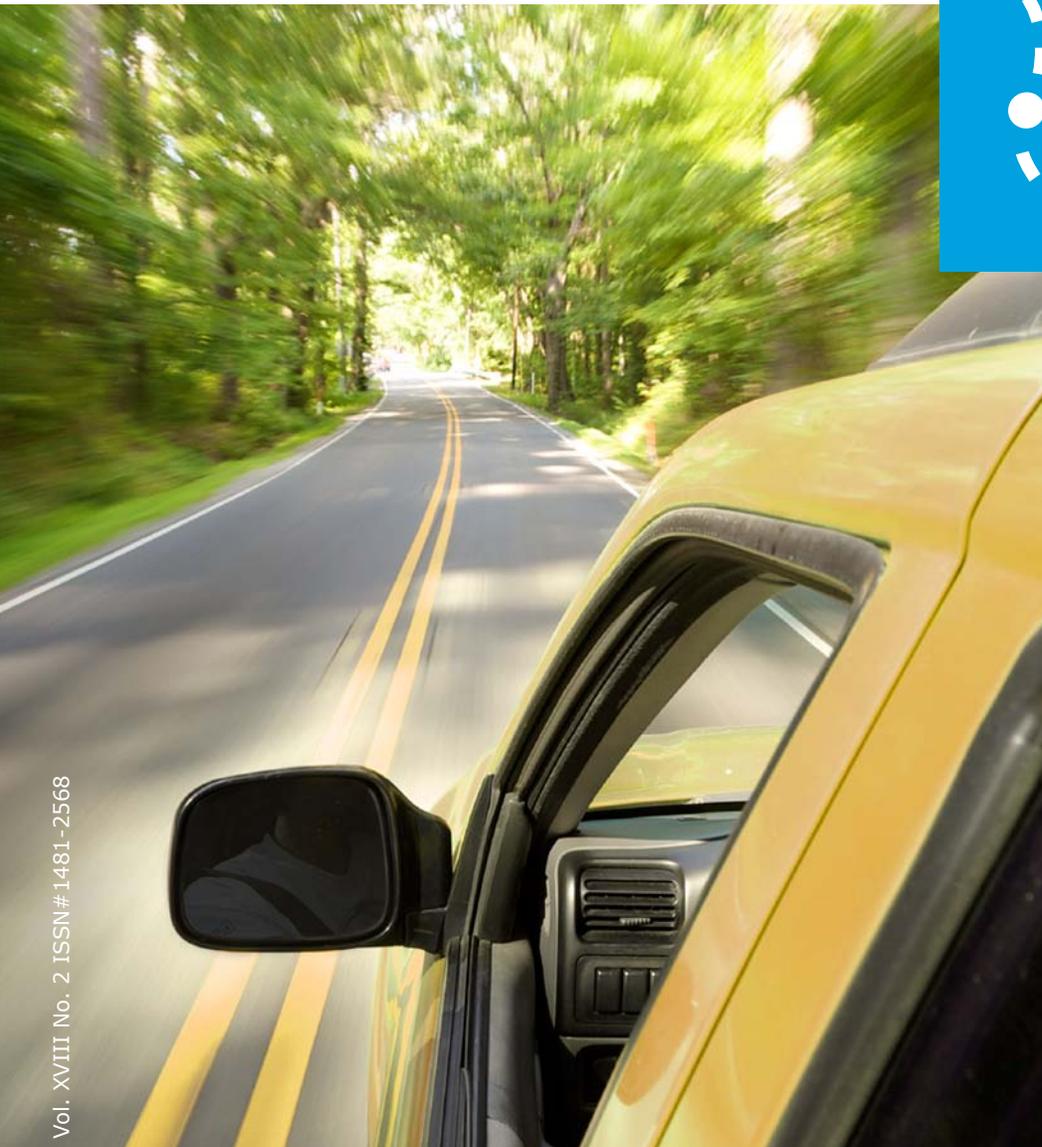


The SOLUTION *source*

Thunder Bay Counselling Centre Newsletter
By Colleen Ginter, Clinical Counsellor at Thunder Bay Counselling Centre

For You & Your Family

Summer 2014



Unplugging On A Family Road Trip

It's summer time! Time to come out from the layers of clothing that protect us during the deep freeze of the past winter. Time for vacation. Time for a road trip with the kids! Here's an invitation to think about how you will spend your time while confined in a car for eight hours a day with your kids!

It would be really tempting to just let them engage with their devices all day long, which would allow for a quieter ride. There are other choices though. We might think about the opportunity for connection that a family road trip would provide! Maybe some fun! In our busy lives how many chances do we have as families to just chill, be together and have some fun?

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Timmins Family Counselling Centre
Centre de counselling familial de Timmins

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Alternatives to Using Devices for Entertainment

- Pack pipe cleaners and Wik Stix in assorted colours from your local craft store. My kids like making necklaces, swords, bracelets, towers, animals..!
- Take along Find It Games Kids Version. It's a lot of fun. A barrel of beads that you shake and twist to try and find all the items listed on the included scavenger list.
- Bring a journal and coloured pencils for each of them to scribble, write, or draw about their experience.
- Bring story books along to read as a family. Lots of hours in the car make for a great captive audience.
- Throw in a bottle of bubbles for moments you're stuck in traffic and the car just isn't moving. Crank the a/c to high and allow the air to blow bubbles in the car! Perfect distraction.
- Grab a map and let them help you figure out where you are currently and the route you're traveling. Knowing how to read a map is a valuable life skill.
- My kids loved watching the GPS and changing the voices.
- iTouches are a lot of fun and at the hotel most nights we'd change up the games they had so that it was always new. They also love turning on their music for all of us to enjoy. We had some fun dance times in the car.
- Roll the windows down on back roads. There is nothing like being out in the middle of nowhere and soaking up the fresh breeze. There were a few times that they got so excited about a site they saw outside, that we pulled over to let them see and experience it!

PINTEREST



Games

Get Physical

Allow for stretch time or stop at a local park for fifteen minutes of play time.

The Grocery Game

A good way to keep everyone in the car entertained and engaged is to play a memory game such as The Grocery Game. To begin, the first player names an object available at a grocery store that starts with the letter A. The next player has to repeat what the first player said and then add another grocery item that starts with a B. For example, if player one says "apples", player two would repeat "apples" and then might add "bananas". If you forget a grocery item, you're out and the game continues until the player with the best memory wins. If groceries aren't your thing, you can play variations of this game with anything from animals to sports to people's names.

Spelling Bee

A spelling bee held in your car can offer parents the best of both worlds; your child will be having fun and learning at the same time. One at a time, each person in the car takes turns spelling a word. If they spell the word correctly, they remain in the game. If they spell the word incorrectly, they're eliminated from the competition. Keep spelling words until you determine which one of your road warriors is the champion speller. When selecting words, especially for the younger members of your group, make sure that you choose words that are age appropriate.

Reasons to Stay Connected

Bring your iPad, iPhone or laptop along so you can track ahead of time the upcoming attractions just down the road. For example, a nice side trip to the local library, museum or waterpark. Many public places have free Wi-Fi: McDonalds, libraries and tourist attractions. You will see it advertised.

There are tour attractions that you'll need to get updated information on, such as seasonal open times and a lot of times getting a hold of a voice for that information is difficult.



I Spy

To play I Spy, a classic travel game, one person in the car will choose an object around them. He or she then gives the other people in the car a clue by saying: "I spy with my little eye, something...". He or she then will state the object's colour, give the first letter of the name of the object or offer another clue.

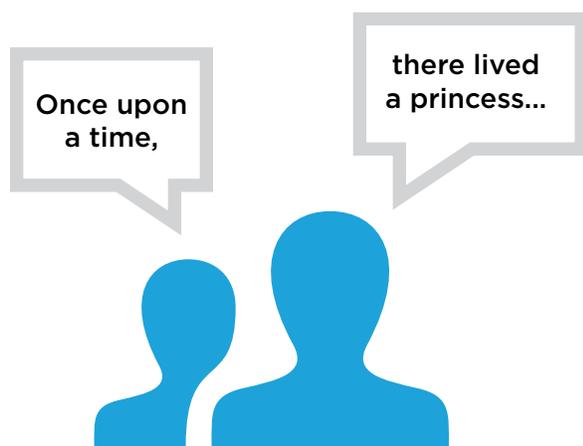
Be sure that players don't choose an object that the car will whiz by too fast. Instead, go for something that is inside the car or that will be in everyone's line of vision for a few minutes. The person who guesses the object correctly is the next person to spy a new item.

Rock, Paper, Scissors

Rock, Paper, Scissors is a classic game that can keep people of all ages entertained while on the road. To play this each player makes a fist and says out loud, "Rock, Paper, Scissors" winging down his or her fist on each beat. After the third beat, each player makes one of three hand gestures; a closed fist representing "rock", an open hand representing "paper" or a V representing "scissors". The winning player makes the gestures of the object that will defeat the opponent's object. In other words, since a rock can destroy a pair of scissors, rock beats scissors. Scissors cut paper, so scissors beat paper. Since paper can cover a rock, paper beats rock.

Team Storytelling

Get the creative juices flowing among your fellow road trippers by composing a group story. One person in the car starts by creating the first line of the story. You can start with a simple "Once upon a time, there lived a princess" or come up with something more unconventional like "Joey the frog always had blue spots". Next, each person in the car adds a line and the story builds and builds. Depending on your group's story telling stamina, you could go on for a few minutes or a few hours. To make the game more challenging and fun, make a rule that all of the lines rhyme or instead of going in a circle, call on people to come up with a line. After you've reached your destination, your kids could write and illustrate the story as a token of their road trip adventure.



The Banana Game

If you're looking for a game that doesn't require a lot of thought, try The Banana Game. Keen observation is the only skill required. The first person who spots a passing yellow vehicle gets points. You can award points based on the size or make of the car. For instance, a yellow school bus might be worth five points and a yellow sports car might be worth two.

Another way to heighten the competition is to put a limit on the time you have to spot bananas. For example, the winner of the game could be the person who spots the most bananas in 30 minutes. Or the winner could be the player who sees the largest cumulative number of yellow vehicles during your entire road trip.

Fortunately-Unfortunately

While you're taking a road trip, your kids are a captive audience. Take the opportunity while you have their attention to challenge them to think positively by playing Fortunately-Unfortunately. In this game, one person will make an unfortunate statement and then another player will counter the statement with a positive response. Fortunately-Unfortunately presents endless possibilities for creativity and positive thinking. For example, one player could make the statement, "Unfortunately a lion is going to attack us." A second player would counter with a more fortunate statement such as "Fortunately I took lion taming lessons." The more exaggerated and silly the statements, the better!

Who Am I

Playing the guessing game Who Am I, is a great way to show everyone what they have in common. Think of someone that you and your fellow passengers all know; a family member, friend or neighbor, or maybe a fictional or historical character. Then give clues about the person's identity by revealing his or her hair colour, gender and other distinguishing physical characteristics. Or allow each person in the car to ask only "yes" or "no" questions about the identity of your secret person. Keep giving clues until someone figures out the identity of the individual you have in mind.

This is a variation of the every-popular Twenty Questions, where the only clue players start out with is whether you are thinking of something "animal, vegetable or mineral" or a "person, place or thing." The players must ask questions that you can only answer "yes" or "no" to determine who or what you are thinking about. The goal is to guess the answer in 20 questions or less.

HOW STUFF WORKS



Unplugging! A Lighter Look

Why I'm Getting a Divorce in 2014

Before you start assuming I will be leaving my wife, let me just tell you that's just simply not the case. I'm looking to leave someone else. Someone you may not know about. Someone who takes up most of my time, distracts me from spending time with my wife and even spends time with me during the late hours of the night.

Her name is iPhone 5. She's extremely smart, funny, and reliable and keeps me up to date with all the latest trends. Although she's always by my side, I can't help but notice that she is keeping me from spending time with the people who matter most in my life: God, my wife, my family and my dreams.

She's really good at keeping my attention. So much so that I've been known to completely ignore people when they are trying to have a conversation with me. She tempts me to use her apps while at church, weddings and funerals, instead of enjoying the moment undistracted. She even keeps me from working on personal projects that have strict deadlines.

She's extremely insensitive when it comes to my safety and is always tempting me to be with her while I drive. I can't help but notice she is slowly infecting my social life, my marriage and the lives of those around me. Many people act like it's no big deal, but I imagine the longer one ignores this issue, the worse one's personal relationships will be affected in the long run.

We need to bring our phones back to being an accessory, not a priority.

2014 Challenge: Divorce your phone, your apps, your social feeds and engage in relationships with people that actually matter. Vow to spend a significant amount of time off your mobile devices, unplugged and instead get back to making personal relationships that will stand the test of time.

My wife deserves to be the #1 priority in my life and I don't want anything to get in the way of that. The reality is, we're all married to our phones in one way or another.

Mind you not everyone struggles with this. But I hope you will take this into consideration regardless.

1. Learn to balance the time you spend on your phone.
2. Make your phone an accessory rather than a priority.
3. Give yourself limitations as to when and where your phone can be used.
4. Control how you use your phone and stop allowing your phone to control you.
5. Try spending parts of your weekends unplugged, offline and away from your mobile device.

In 2014, I vow to divorce my phone. Will you join me? Share this with a friend and let's get the "Divorce Your Phone" movement going.

Jarrid Wilson

Helping people is what we're all about.



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Financial assistance available.

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