

SUMMER – GOOD TIME TO RECONNECT WITH CHILDREN

“During the summer months, parents have a unique opportunity to strengthen their relationships with their children or teenagers,” noted Danielle Heller, LCSW, Clinical Director of Child and Adult Services at West Bergen Mental Healthcare. Established in 1963, West Bergen provides counseling and psychiatric services for individuals and families in need.

With school out and no homework to be concerned about, the summer recess affords parents and children a more relaxed and less structured environment. The increased leisure time allows parents the opportunity to “check in” on their children emotionally.

Often, Ms. Heller explained, parents spend a great deal of time talking to their children about outcomes. What did they do in school that day? What is the homework assignment? Did they finish their homework? Summer is a unique time to reflect... to talk to children about how they feel emotionally.

“It is a chance to listen to our children with our hearts”, Ms. Heller continued. “As parents, we can initiate the conversation about feelings. Help your children tell their own story... be patient and allow them sufficient time to answer. Ask, do you remember when you were angry with Todd? How did you feel about the way you handled the situation? Would you do anything different next time you feel angry?” are some of Ms. Heller’s suggestions.

Established in 1963 as a child guidance clinic, today West Bergen provides comprehensive services for all age groups with various levels of need. West Bergen is committed to meeting the psychological needs of each of its clients with sensitivity and responsive, innovative services of the highest quality. West Bergen strives to improve the quality of life in Bergen County and beyond – *one life at a time*.

West Bergen offers services for children and adults in three convenient locations: West Bergen Mental Healthcare, 120 Chestnut Street, Ridgewood, NJ 07450, (201) 444-3550; West Bergen Center for Children and Youth, One Cherry Lane, Ramsey, NJ 07446, (201) 934-1160 and West Bergen Counseling Group, 3 Post Road, Oakland, NJ 07436, (201) 651-1900.