

Talking Points & Resources

Hello Pathways Connect Group Participants,

Preliminary note: There is no wrong way

To run your Pathways Connect Gathering, the steps below are to help guide you. However, we encourage you to embrace the flow of your gathering and allow for your meeting to take on its own momentum in whatever direction it might go.

Step 1: Select topics

Prior to your group gatherings, find and select one or more of the magazine articles that you found interesting and want to share. Pick topics that make you passionate, as these are the easiest to talk about and spark discussion.

Step 2: The Gathering

Welcome everyone present in the group and ask each person to introduce themselves and share a little about themselves. Be sure to share about yourself as well.

Step 3: Introduce the topic

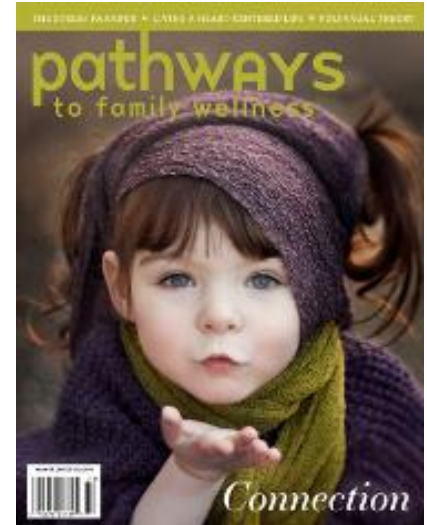
Share with the group your topic and why you chose it, why it interests you, and the importance you see in it. Summarize the article (some article summaries are provided below). You can read the entire article or article summary out loud to your group and share your thoughts at this time.

Step 4: Encourage conversation

We provide questions after each summary section that will help people to engage. Make use of these questions or devise your own.

Step 5: Make the chiropractic connection

At the end of each article summary are notes about how this topic relates to chiropractic. If you utilize these meetings to educate parents on the importance of chiropractic care you will be benefitting your office growth and the health of your community.



PW #55 Talking Points/Group Questions**FEATURE*****The Stress Paradox*** by Kelly McGonigal, PhD**Article Summary:**

What do you think the role of stress is in life? Most people give stress a negative charge, and many look upon stress as the source of disease, heartache, suffering, and as a major block to achieving a better life. But this mindset is a slippery slope toward disaster! Stress is a two-way street. On one hand, stress can indeed give rise to disease. Stressful days can provoke sadness, anger, anxiety, depression, heart problems, subluxation, and the list goes on. But, as Kelly McGonigal emphasizes, stress is also the prime indicator for whether or not you will experience positive emotions in life such as joy, laughter, love, and growth.

Researchers came to this conclusion upon surveying thousands of people from different countries and they were perplexed to have found precisely the opposite of what they had expected. However there was no way around the evidence; no matter how they looked at it, stress was a fundamental predictor of well-being in people's lives! This appears paradoxical, but the explanation is quite simple.

According to McGonigal, the effect of stress is determined by the meanings we as individuals assign to it. When a stressful event comes to you, whatever meaning you assign to it has enormous potential to determine either a positive or negative outcome. Imagine a chemical stressor such as smelling a foul/toxic odor, or a physical stressor such as hard labor or frequent slouching in front of a computer screen, or imagine an emotional or intellectual stressor such as disagreement in the home. Each one of these potential stressors should be regarded as unbiased packets of energy that have the potential to drive us toward greater growth and empowerment, just as much as it has the potential to crash us into anxiety and disease—all by the authentic meaning we give to it.

What McGonigal is offering is not the simple adage that perception is everything. This we have heard before and already know. What she offers in her article, *The Stress Paradox*, is the passion and incentive necessary to actually take on this new "stress mindset" to become more accepting of stress. Why? Because, as McGonigal says, "a meaningful life is also a stressful life... and you can use stress—not as a signal that there's something wrong with you or that life is somehow fundamentally toxic and killing you—but as a sign that something you care about is at stake."

Questions for Consideration:

- What type of specific stressor is most likely to evoke a negative meaning and response from you?
- How have we, as researchers and laypersons, come to conclude that stress is inherently negative?
- Do we have the capacity to create our reality? Or are we more like unwilling subjects fated to our inborn nature?
- How much do you value a new stress mindset, and what would you be willing to do to see it take permanent hold in your life? Are there any ways you can think of that will help create a sustained, positive outlook toward stress? (Would you be willing to read this article 17 times to imprint this message permanently in your mind? It may work ;)

Chiropractic Connection:

Stress in life has been targeted as a major source of most ailments in life. Your Chiropractor's office, as well as your Medical Doctor's office may both agree on this point. But there appears to be a caveat to this largely accepted conclusion about stress and the caveat is this: stress *can* be the cause of disease...but it *is* also the cause of things like well-being, growth, joy, and love.

Knowing the truth of this paradox, we can learn to 'take in' stress in a way that reflects its positive potential for our lives. This is where chiropractic comes in. Subluxation is a helpful sign that your body has been taking in stress *negatively* over a sustained period of time. If the same stressor were received by the body harmoniously, we would not experience the pain of subluxation, because the subluxation wouldn't exist! The fact is we are not trained to harmoniously receive stress in our life, neither on a physical/chemical level nor on a mental/emotional level through what Kelly McGonigal calls, the appropriate "stress mindset." Furthermore, even if we were masters of stress, physically, chemically, and mentally, there can always be accidents that happen outside our control.

Chiropractic has the ability to re-align our nervous system to its innate potential, which is simply the potential to *take in stress constructively*. The elegant aspect of adjustments to the nervous system through chiropractic is that not only the physical/chemical pathways, but also the emotional and mental pathways are re-integrated toward greater balance.

NEW EDGE SCIENCE*Living a Heart-Centered Life* by Paul Lenda**Article Summary:**

The heart's magnetic field is something to be occupied with from now until sunset, every day of every week, until we can finally understand it, and connect with it for ourselves—it's that important!

This magnetic field of the heart extends far beyond our body and offers us a closer perception of the world around us. Like stepping outside one's home to see the sky, the heart offers an exit from the brain which can only see things through an aperture. When the brain in the head learns to follow the brain in the heart, magical things can begin to happen. Drastic improvements in a caregiver's ability to heal have been shown to occur when the caregiver connects to his or her own inner heart and creates coherence. Not only is a heart-centered life fulfilling for oneself, it can affect others at a distance in profound ways.

EVERYTHING in the world can be regarded as a wave. Therefore all mental and material manifestations can be seen as wave propagations that emerge from a larger, universal wave-field. As Joseph Chilton Pearce wrote, "Our body and brain form an intricate web of coherent frequencies organized to translate other frequencies and nestled within a nested hierarchy of universal frequencies." This "intricate web of coherent frequencies," formed by our body and brain represents the ideal state of being. As Paul Lenda describes in the article, "When a person [learns to] project a Heart-Coherent field filled with caring, love, and attention, living organisms respond to the information in the field by becoming more responsive, open, affectionate, animated, and closely connected."

This topic is so immense and rich that we can hardly begin to summarize it here. All we can hope to do is ignite the passion to learn how to embed our mental frequencies within the frequencies of the heart, and to further ignite our bliss and radiant health giving ability by harmonizing our heart's frequency with the natural world.

Questions:

- Have you ever experienced a physician or care-giver who seemed to heal by presence alone? Does the model of heart-coherence help explain this phenomena?
- What time of day do you find your heart-center to be most inviting?
- Do you believe it's possible to be in heart-coherence at the same time you're completing a difficult mental task?

- Have you ever done group exercises that provoked a greater sense of coherence and would you mind sharing your experience?

Chiropractic Connection:

Biological fields are composed of [electrical] vibrations that are organized, not random, and have the capacity to selectively react, interact, and transact internally and with other fields.”

- Renee Levi, Ph.D.

Honoring the electrical nature of the human being invites us to explore our heart's magnetic field and the potential it has to create coherence in our mind and life. When we think of a body, we usually think of flesh and bone and the many separate parts that make up the whole. But when we begin to view the world around us through the heart, the 'parts' of our body dissolve, along with the objects and people around us, into a unified field of wholeness. Chiropractors work with the nervous system and the electrical nature of the human organism. With electricity in the body, surrounding fields of energy emerge, whose effect can be felt and worked with. Chiropractors lead people to recognize the electrical nature of our body by correcting subluxations and aligning the nervous system which gives the electro-magnetic field of a person of any age the ability to better harmonize with their inner and outer environment.

FAMILY WELLNESS***Sleeping Like a Baby*** by Sarah Ockwell-Smith**Article Summary:**

“What we really need is not to sleep-train our babies and toddlers, but to build a network of support once again for parents—a ‘village,’ as some say.” The truth of this statement by Sarah Ockwell-Smith is matched only by the revolt against it by modern society in the form of sleep training methods and industry backed ‘solutions’ to infant sleep. ‘Hungry baby’ formula, crib music and products, and of course, the cry-it-out method, all feed on the dissociation parents have about their children’s biological and natural sleep requirements.

The natural sleep cycle of infants and young children demand from parents that they re-organize their own sleep preferences in order to foster a healthy growth in their baby. Otherwise, the option is to attempt behavior modification and behavior suppression in order to ‘fix’ the biological mechanisms that cause children to seek nurtured attention in the middle of the night. Many parents have chosen co-sleeping as an obvious solution that builds trust for the child to learn self-soothing when he matures into his adolescent brain. However, despite natural, biological growth patterns based on evolutionary bonding (growth patterns that are pivotal for proper emotional regulation later in life) many parents have sworn an oath to a modern parenting philosophy which jumps the gun and seeks separation-induced behavior modification even before the child has the ability to speak.

Perhaps because of the false idea that healthy babies ‘sleep through the night,’ as well the dangerous illusion that infants, (like adults) have both the ability *and prerogative* to learn how to ‘self-soothe,’ many in our culture have adopted a method of child-rearing that, if being honest, parents of this philosophy themselves would say causes a gnawing sensation in their gut. In order to continue to serve the Western lifestyle, parents have sacrificed one of their most basic gut instincts which is to offer protection and nurturance for one’s offspring through the darkest moments of the night. Thankfully, owing to emerging science about the effects on the nervous systems of infants under cry-it-out, this ‘modern age’ parenting philosophy has the foreshadowing sign of becoming defunct in the near future.

As Sarah Ockwell-Smith explains, “If parents were truly educated about the sleep behaviors of normal babies and children, and the illusion of the perfect ‘contented little baby’ sleeping 12 hours a night, was replaced with evidence-based information, then everything would change.” In effect, the result would be that parents would discontinue their preference for sleeping unencumbered “like babies” and would create the support network that allows real BABIES to

sleep the way they were born to sleep—next to the hearts of their parents. See *Co-Sleeping* by Kathleen M. Waddington on page 38.

Questions:

- Do you have any experiences with peers, grandparents, or health care professionals that have made this topic a hot button for you?
- Does anyone here have experience transitioning from crib sleeping to co-sleeping? How has this changed your own sleep during the night? Has it made life easier or more difficult, being sure to remember the impact that your emotions can have on health and vitality.
- What are some other areas where inherent biological mechanisms in babies and toddlers have been challenged by status-quo thinking?

Chiropractic Connection:

Chiropractic is a pillar of well-being for children today. Realigning the nervous system to enhance function can offer help in the developing child in all areas of life, including their quality of sleep. Many parents who report irritability, colic, irritable bowels, and many other negative stressors in their children often report improvements after presenting their children with chiropractic care. Sleep is a time when the brain waves enter a frequency that allows the body to restore and rejuvenate. The mechanisms of sleep are still largely a mystery, even for adults, let alone for children, but we can be sure that the nervous system is a prominent piece of the puzzle to understanding the mechanism and importance of sleep. The beauty of chiropractic care is how it honors normal physiology. Chiropractors don't treat illnesses, they restore normal physiology so that all systems connected to the nervous system can function as nature designed them to.

NUTRITION***Beyond Organic*** by Sam Fisher**Article Summary:**

Many people have taken the organic revolution into their own homes by purchasing organic supermarket items in the hopes to help limit the presence of harmful chemical pesticides and herbicides that are making their way into people's bodies, water sources, and consumer products. Organic is no doubt the way of the future for sustainable agriculture, large and small, but the word organic alone does not satisfy some forward thinking farmers who have branded themselves 'beyond organic.'

It is easy to ignite skepticism for 'beyond organic' foods, wondering "if it's not certified, how can we know it's organic?" Well, with the consolidation of 'certified' organic foods by industrial-scale corporate producers, many are beginning to recognize that the bar for organic food standards is being rapidly lowered. As large scale producers try to band-wagon the consumer preference for USDA organic, we can expect a decline in real quality organics. This is particularly true in the realm of animal products. As Sam Fisher puts it, "An organic CAFO (confinement animal feeding operation) is still a CAFO, whether it is 40,000 chickens under one roof with only "said" access to the outside, or hundreds of beef animals in a dirt feedlot... In the beef scene, all the feed is brought to the steers and consists of organic grains and other harvested material, regardless of the fact that cattle are herbivores and were not designed to eat grain." Simply put, "There's no evaluation of whether the production model aligns with the way the animals would live in nature." And according to Fisher, "perhaps the most arrogant overstepping of nature's template ever created by man, is to confine an animal as intelligent and inquisitive as a pig to a concrete-and-steel building atop a pit of its own excrement." Organic or not, the conventional systems of production differ very little in the amount of love and appreciation they offer to the living creatures who are meant to sustain our life.

Sam Fisher and like-minded farmers call themselves beyond organic for multiple reasons, not least of which includes the fact that their food and animal production models are drastically different from the industrial "organic" models. For example, Sam raises chicken "on pasture in floorless field shelters that give access to all nature has to offer, moving them daily to a new area to allow them full benefit of the pasture." They believe "all beef (and dairy) should be 100 percent grass-fed and grass-finished...on land that has been chemical-free for more than 20 years."

Regardless of whether the farmer has sought out organic certification by the USDA, there are a growing number of reasons for consciously minded individuals and families to seek out unconventional, "beyond organic" produce, especially meat and animal products for they transcend traditional systems of production in ways that organic certification could scarcely

begin to quantify or qualify on paper. The way Fisher puts it is clear: “As Big Organic becomes more industrialized and the contrast between it and conventionally produced food lessens, I believe “beyond organic” **local** food will be the future.” And I might add only the notion, true to the fullest, that this local food is certified LOVED by both producer and consumer alike.

Questions:

- If anyone has visited a local farm, dairy farm, chicken farm, vegetable farm, or other, please share your experience, and describe the scenery. What was the cost/reward ratio for you having decided to acquire your foods from a local farm?
- How has your perception of organic changed over the course of your life?
- Do you know anyone who derides organic food?
- If there is one animal product you think you would be better off avoiding completely, which one would that be?

Chiropractic Connection:

“The Family Cow, a local farm based in Lancaster PA has been the source of all my meat and dairy products for over 2 years, and the reward, mentally, emotionally, and nutritionally, cannot be overstated! The best part is they deliver to my Chiropractors office, benefitting the local community there and many of my friends who receive chiropractic care at this amazing scene!” — John Marc

Chiropractors have been on the leading edge of many important health trends and lifestyle modifications over the course of their entire history. There is ample reason to seek out a chiropractor for this reason alone! Raw milk, probiotic enzymes, targeted nutritional supplements, and outstanding lifestyle advice is a common ingredient in many chiropractic offices. There is a passion embedded in the chiropractic profession that has, from its beginning, given people avenues toward greater health and well-being through the chiropractic adjustment on the nervous system. Along with this passion is the fire to lead people toward a lifestyle that supports the paradigm of greater well-being and they always encourage people to seek even more than the vital adjustment. For this is one more reason why chiropractors are some of the most trustworthy doctors and advisers for people in the world today.