

# Turning a New Leaf



Volume 9, Issue 4

- Promoting healthy relationships and personal growth from a Christian perspective -

Fall 2017

## Co-Parenting 101: Making Divorce More Manageable for Children Ashley Elcock, BA and Shelby Manning, BS, Therapist Interns



While we all have read how divorce can negatively affect children, many do not realize that the co-parenting and parent-child relationships that parents build determine whether or not their child will experience these effects long term. Most children deal with varying amounts of stress in the first few years following a divorce, and this is to be expected as family roles and interactions adjust to the changes that come with divorce. However, parents play a major role in helping to lessen this stress by how they choose to interact with each other.

Co-parents who are able to put aside their differences and work together to create a positive, relational bond with their child produce the best outcomes. On the other

hand, when children see conflict between co-parents, or are drawn into this conflict, it creates emotional demands for loyalty from the child that can lead to stress at home and other environments.

Conflict between parents is the most stressful aspect of divorce for children and is associated with problem behaviors, anxiety, depression, and a decrease in academic performance at school. Fortunately, research shows that low levels of conflict between divorced parents can lead to better adjustment for children than high levels of conflict between married parents. Essentially, the way parents communicate with each other and with the children can make adjustments more manageable.

Parents can help their child begin to work through the divorce by being open and honest in an age-appropriate way about the changes that have happened. By acknowledging that the romantic relationship has ended, but being very clear that the parenting relationship and their love for their child will not change, children are able to work through these changes because they are reassured of their parents' continued love and support.

Some parents may experience guilt and choose to be more lenient on house rules during this time. This can

lead to more stress on the children if the other parent chooses to enforce rules. It is crucial to provide children with structure and consistency between households as it provides security and predictability for them. While households will differ in some aspects, parents might discuss rules about bedtime routines, school projects, chores, and cell phone usage as a way to get on the same page. Understand that adjustment to your parenting style is not about giving in to your ex's requests but about benefiting the children.

### Co-parenting Do's and Don'ts

**Do Remain Positive.** Be supportive of the other parent in talking to your child. Undermining the other parent in front of the child will only increase stress and confusion during this adjustment.

**Don't Accuse. Discuss.** When there is conflict between parenting decisions or styles, address it directly with the other parent when your child is not present. Do not use the child as a messenger.

**Do Update.** Important information regarding the child such as significant milestones

and doctors' appointments should be shared with each parent.

**Don't Overshare.** Recognize what is appropriate to share with children and be honest with them about the divorce. Oversharing can be emotionally taxing on children.

**Do Shower the Child with Love.** Let them know that the divorce was not their fault and that they are still loved by both parents. Create a safe space for conversations about difficulties and disappointments.

**Board of Directors**

**President**

Rev. Joel Sheeres

**Vice President**

Brian Smith

**Treasurer**

Michael Reagan

**Secretary**

Bev Lich

**Directors**

Bruce Bere, Mary Boonstra, Lisa

Doot-Abinoja, Liz Dorn, Gene

Eenigenburg, Glenn Fiala, Claire

Griffith, Donna Hamstra, Tanya

Harper, LaVerne Jordan

**Stated Clerk**

Rev. Gerrit Veenstra

**Executive Director**

Terry Top



**Offices**

2325-177th Street  
Lansing, IL 60438  
(708) 895-7310

11035 Broadway, Suite D  
Crown Point, IN 46307  
(219) 226-1810

5578 W. 1100 N  
Wheatfield, IN 46392  
219-270-7602

info@newleafresources.org  
www.newleafresources.org

**Our Mission**  
New Leaf Resources promotes healthy relationships and personal growth through counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.

**All Online Gifts Doubled on November 28!**  
**Connie Brott, Development Director**

**M**y husband and I are frequent passengers on Southwest Airlines. On our most recent flight, I had a flash thought -- New Leaf Resources and Southwest Airlines have something in common! What could that be? Read on...

Boarding Southwest, we are looking forward to vacation time. As we begin to relax, flight attendant "chatter" interruption takes place -- the safety speech/demonstration of which I have a tendency to continue relaxing and tune out.

However, the flight attendant has my full attention when our flight lands at its destination and begins its taxi to the terminal. The "chatter" is now important -- announcements for connecting flights, turning on cell phones, etc.

**Then, on Southwest Airline flights, the final announcement comes "...we know**

**when you fly, you have many options. Thank you for choosing Southwest..."**

No matter how often we fly, when I hear... *thank you for choosing Southwest...*, it provides a relational moment. However, on our most recent flight, the thought flashed through my mind how New Leaf and Southwest had something in common. Southwest is grateful the Brotts choose Southwest Airlines as it helps provide a positive "bottom line." On the other hand, New Leaf is grateful for the relationships of all who choose to support our ministry not for a "bottom line" impact but because your support makes a difference in clients' lives by providing client financial assistance. And, this year New Leaf is providing an additional option for your support:

**On-Line Giving Tuesday (November 28)**

A postcard will reach your mailbox in time to provide details on how your gift can be doubled on **Giving Tuesday**.

Just as Southwest knows we have many options to choose from for our flights, you, you and your spouse, or you and your family have many options for supporting ministries. Thank you for including New Leaf Resources in your choices; your support helps provide hope, help, and healing and is very much appreciated.



**Fight Those Seasonal Blues**

**A**s the days get shorter, many people report feeling tired or sad, clinically known as Seasonal Affective Disorder. If you or a loved one struggles during the winter months, here are some ways to help you stay happy and positive.

**Revel in the morning sunshine**—Open your window shades and let the natural

light in.

**Exercise**—Exercise increases endorphins and has been reported to have comparable effects to therapy or anti-depressants.

**Stay the Course**- Continue to participate in your normal activities and hobbies.

**Go Outside**—Studies show that spending as little as five minutes outside can lift your

spirits. A winter stroll, snowshoeing, ice-skating, or snow skiing are all ways to have fun outdoors this winter.

**Travel**—Extra sunshine is beneficial for SAD sufferers, but taking a break from work is good for everyone's mental health.

**Cut down on Sugar**—Eat complete meals with protein and fiber for optimum mental and physical health.

## New Leaf Welcomes New Therapist



**L**icensed Marriage and Family Therapist, **Tonya Moore**, joined New Leaf's staff in September. Tonya sees clients in the Crown Point office and specializes in the areas of marital, couple, and family therapy, pre-marital preparation,

divorce recovery, women's issues (adolescents, teen and adults), individual relationship issues, stress management, anxiety, depression, abuse and trauma issues, and spirituality/religious issues.

Tonya's goal in therapy is to help clients identify, acknowledge, and change a situation that is maintaining or causing stress, pain, and emotional distress. She is passionate about walking alongside people in crisis to offer hope and healing in their brokenness and welcomes a safe, comfortable, and trusted environment throughout one's journey. Tonya has been trained in

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Emotionally Focused Therapy, Gottman Couple Therapy, and integrating biblically-based Christian principals with psychological principles to offer Christian counseling and Christian premarital counseling to those who request a Christian perspective.

Tonya is thrilled to join New Leaf's team saying, "I am happy to be at New Leaf because I agree with

its philosophy and mission. The world is full of hurting people. New Leaf acknowledges the brokenness of humankind and the need for our dependence on God's grace and love. As a new member of the clinical staff, I can provide professional counseling from a holistic point of view that promotes change and encourages hope and healing to individuals from all walks of life.

## New Office Staff Member



**P**lease join us in welcoming Diane Ramos as our new Accounting Clerk. Diane will be supporting New Leaf's front desk operations by answering phones, processing intakes, scheduling appointments, and taking payments in order to keep our ministry working smoothly! Diane

will also be helping with insurance verifications and processing financial information for our clients.

Starting in September, Diane comes to New Leaf Resources with 23 years of experience in the medical field and 10 years of experience in accounting.

Diane is married, cites her 87-year-old grandmother as her role model, and is proud to be part of a large, close-knit family.

Diane is thrilled to be part of New Leaf's ministry saying, "I am very happy to join the staff at New Leaf since it is a place that helps people and that is what I

## Speakers Available!

Is your church group looking for a speaker for your MOPS, Grief Share, Divorce Care, or Stephen's Ministry? **New Leaf Resources can help!**

*Our highly-trained therapists are prepared to speak on a variety of topics including:*

- Parenting
  - Marriage Issues
  - Healthy Relationships
    - Stress
  - Self-Care and Self-Love
    - Sexual Addiction
    - Grief
    - Alcoholism
    - Divorce
  - Blended Families
  - Work/Life Balance
    - Anxiety
    - Depression
  - Anger Management
- and more!*



love to do! I am a people person and my goal is to ensure every person I come into contact with is happy. I want everyone who visits New Leaf to feel comforta-

ble and welcome! I have always wanted to be involved with counseling so I am so happy to be part of New Leaf's staff"

## Save a tree

Would you prefer to get this publication via e-mail? Please let us know by sending us your e-mail address to [terri@newleafresources.org](mailto:terri@newleafresources.org).



Find us on  
**Facebook**

 **new leaf resources**  
hope. help. healing.  
2325—177th Street  
Lansing, IL 60438  
[www.newleafresources.org](http://www.newleafresources.org)

Return Service Requested

Non-profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Lansing, IL  
Permit No. 8



## Calling all Superheroes!

Mark your calendars for Giving Tuesday on November 28. All gifts given online to New Leaf Resources on November 28, up to \$20,000, will be doubled that day!

Please give to New Leaf Resources online on November 28. by visiting [www.newleafresources.org](http://www.newleafresources.org).

Remember - your gift will have TWICE the impact and change TWICE as many lives!

### New Leaf Resources is...

A **professional mental health agency** which provides counseling services to individuals, families, couples, children, churches, schools and businesses.

A **ministry** which brings the best possible care to those we serve, striving to reflect God's grace and love to all who seek help.

A **community resource** offering educational services, prevention programs, training, support and coaching.