

# NEWS FROM YOUR PEER LIAISON

## January 2016



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**I UNDERSTAND...  
I AM A FOSTER PARENT TOO**

IFAPA recognizes that foster parents often need the perspective of peers during the foster parenting and adoption experience.

I can provide support and assist you with questions regarding:

- Licensing requirements
- Training needs
- Respite care
- Behavior challenges
- Working with birth families
- Confidentiality issues
- And much more!



www.ifapa.org

### **This year resolve to practice some self-care**

It's a new year: Time for self-reflection and resolutions. This year resolve to put yourself first for a change – at least once in a while.

Caring for children in foster care can be difficult, draining, exhausting and frustrating. Therefore it is important that foster parents take the time to step away, regroup and recharge – in other words we must take time to care for ourselves.

On top of lengthy to-do lists, we are also dealing with challenging behaviors. Children in foster care often project their anger and frustration onto us, which can wear us down.

Remember the safety talk you get before a flight begins? In case of an emergency, oxygen masks will drop from overhead; you are instructed to put your oxygen mask on first and then help those around you. The idea is that you can't help anyone else if you don't have the oxygen you need. The same is true for being a foster parent. It is hard to be the calm, reasonable and compassionate parent we want and need to be if we are too stressed out. In other words, make sure you get a little TLC.

Are you guilty of not taking time for yourself? The National Child Traumatic Stress Network offers these warning signs that you might be nearing compassion fatigue:

- You feel mentally and physically exhausted
- You are using alcohol, food or other substances to combat stress and comfort yourself.
- Your sleep is often disturbed
- You are feeling numb and distanced from life
- You are feeling less satisfied
- You are moody and irritable
- You have physical ailments – headaches and stomachaches

If you suspect you are entering the compassion fatigue zone, it's time to practice some basic self-care. This includes:

- Getting enough sleep
- Eating well
- Getting some physical exercise
- Using alcohol in moderation, or not at all
- Taking regular breaks from stressful activities
- Laughing every day
- Expressing yourself
- Letting someone else take care of you

Deena McMahon, a licensed social worker, said it's important for foster parents to realize that they are worth taking care of and their happiness and well-being are essential to good parenting. She recommends making self-care part of your routine – daily, weekly and monthly.

(Continued on next page)

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Suggestions include:

- Joining a support group where you can talk with others who face the same struggles
- Creating down time every day--maybe it's a morning walk, 10 minutes with the paper and a cup of coffee
- Routinely have something to which you look forward--coffee with a neighbor once a week, date night with your partner once a week or a massage once a month.

“Caring for children who have special needs is a matter of the heart. Self-care is a mind-set and a positive choice. If you can find a balance between caring for your children and meeting your own needs, you will ultimately be much better equipped to do both,” McMahon said.

## IFAPA Training

Register at 1-800-277-8145 ext. 1

[www.ifapa.org](http://www.ifapa.org)

### DES MOINES SERVICE AREA #5

Date & Time	Name of Training & Trainer	Credit	Location
<b>Saturday, Jan. 9, 2016</b> (9am-12:15pm)	<u><a href="#">Decoding the Mystery of ADHD</a></u> (Warren Phillips, Ph.D.)	3 hours	<b>Ankeny</b> IFAPA Training Cntr 6864 NE 14th St. Suite 5
<b>Saturday, Jan. 9, 2016</b> (1:15pm-4:30pm)	<u><a href="#">PTSD in Children and Teens</a></u> (Warren Phillips, Ph.D.)	3 hours	<b>Ankeny</b> IFAPA Training Cntr 6864 NE 14th St. Suite 5
<b>Saturday, Jan. 16, 2016</b> (9am-12:15pm)	<u><a href="#">Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training</a></u>	3 hours	<b>Ankeny</b> IFAPA Training Cntr 6864 NE 14th St. Suite 5
<b>Saturday, Jan. 16, 2016</b> (1:15pm-5:30pm)	CPR & First Aid ( <u><a href="#">Register &amp; Pay Here</a></u> ) To avoid late fees pay by Friday, Jan. 8	4 hours	<b>Ankeny</b> To be announced
<b>Saturday, Jan. 30, 2016</b> (9am-12:15pm)	<u><a href="#">How to Talk So Everyone Will Listen</a></u> (Christy Meyer)	3 hours	<b>Ankeny</b> IFAPA Training Cntr 6864 NE 14th St. Suite 5
<b>Saturday, Jan. 30, 2016</b> (1:15pm-4:30pm)	<u><a href="#">Working Through Anger</a></u> (Christy Meyer)	3 hours	<b>Ankeny</b> IFAPA Training Cntr 6864 NE 14th St. Suite 5

## WINTER CRAFT

### “Soap Clouds”

1 bar of Ivory soap--only Ivory!

The fresher the better.

Place a piece of waxed paper or paper towel in your microwave. Add soap and microwave on high power for a few minutes. Soon the bar of soap starts growing! (Sometimes HUGE--sometimes wimpy). So fun to play with in the tub!! If you smash it, it will break into pieces creating soap dust.



*It's Here...*

*IFAPA's January through March 2016 training schedule. View and register for classes at [www.ifapa.org](http://www.ifapa.org).*