

Weaving a Lifeline for Struggling Parents from the Tattered Remains of the End of My Rope

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Parenting is not an easy job for anyone. None of our kids come with a user's manual, so most of us rely on techniques that were used by our parents, or maybe we pick up some parenting books from the library. But what happens when none of that works? What if your child suffered from extreme anger, severe anxiety, and became violent upon hearing the word "no"? This is a very real problem experienced by a growing number of adoptive and foster parents; and also step kids and biological kids who suffered trauma in the first few years of life.

In severe cases, some of these kids might be diagnosed with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD), a rare and serious condition that has a big impact on society. If left untreated, these kids can grow up to become criminals like the Parkland School shooter or the Oklahoma City Bomber (both diagnosed with RAD). In most cases, the frightening behaviors associated with RAD are confined to the home, with the mother or primary caregiver being the target of rage.

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Gina Heumann

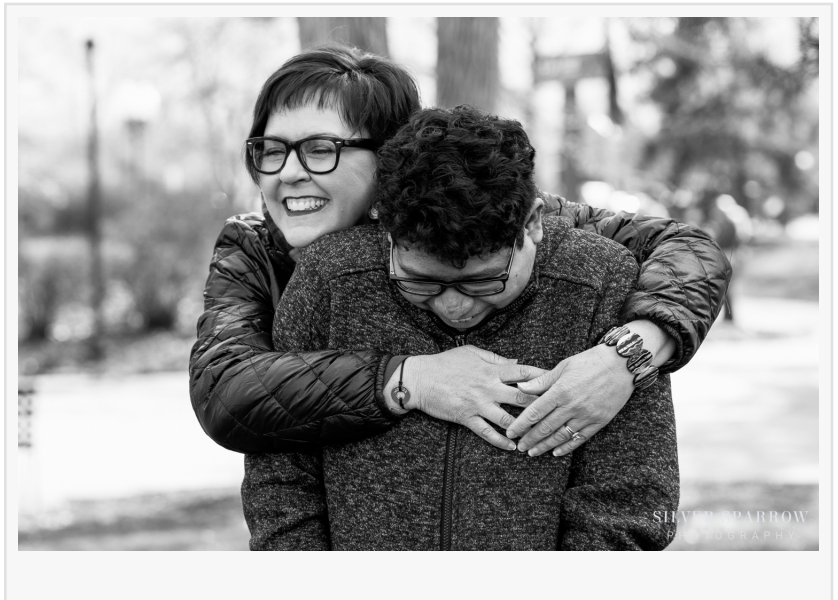
Despite giving unconditional love and support to RAD kids, traditional parenting techniques seldom work... this is because that trauma has rewired the brain, keeping it in a constant state of fight or flight. When you're in that hyper-vigilant state using the primitive part of the brain, there is no access to the higher level thinking skills, so these kids cannot be reasoned with. Sticker charts, timeouts, and other popular tactics can actually make these kids more angry. Many parents of RAD kids (including us) have holes

in their walls, bruises on their bodies, and continually have to replace broken electronics, lamps,



and furniture that was most likely hurled across the room.

As you can imagine, raising a child with RAD is frustrating, lonely, and frightening. In most abusive relationships, the victim is instructed to leave... but you can't do that when it's your own kid. Desperate parents are embarrassed to talk about these problems, and the whole family is at risk, including vulnerable siblings. RAD parents often suffer from PTSD themselves from years of physical and emotional abuse.



I am a mom who knows this firsthand and lived to tell about it. Our youngest son was severely neglected by his foster mom before we adopted him. For 12 long years, our family suffered the undiagnosed impact of RAD, while feeling completely inadequate as parents. Unsolicited advice came from strangers, friends, and even family – most of it judgmental and unconstructive, and none of it worked.

I became afraid of my own child. One night when he was seven, I was roused from a sound sleep with a punch to the head because he was still mad that I took away his video games eight hours earlier. He often told me he wished I were dead. I learned to sleep with one eye open, which meant, I almost NEVER slept. As he grew older, his size and ability to hurt me increased exponentially. I spent years trying out anything and everything I could learn about, and diving more and more into debt paying for treatments and therapies that didn't end up working to try to establish some sense of normalcy in our family.

My son hit rock bottom when he was 12. After being dragged out of school in handcuffs for assaulting a teacher, he was taken to the juvenile assessment center. It was at that point that we finally found the right interventions, the right therapeutic school, and a world-renowned mental health practitioner to help him heal. Today my son is a normal high school senior achieving things we never thought possible... a steady job, friends, and even a serious girlfriend. And he now has aspirations to become a RAD therapist himself!

On one of those desperate days when the world was falling apart in my house, I lay on the floor of my walk-in closet crying and praying to God or the Universe or whoever would listen... that if I ever got through to the other side, I would dedicate my life to helping others. We started with a book about our journey (Love Never Quits) which was awarded a gold seal by the Parent's Choice awards. But unless I can get a hold of Oprah (please send her my way...), that isn't going to make a big enough impact. Then I set my sights on TEDx, crossing that scary speech off my bucket list

and hoping to get the word out... and the very next week, the world shut down for a global pandemic and my plan to continue speaking was stalled.

COVID gave me time to plan... Now on a mission to assist more parents and teachers in helping RAD kids, I have launched a new business, [Trauma Drama University](#). This hopeful community provides education, support, and resources to set struggling parents on the right track for healing and connection, and most importantly, to ensure they don't have to tackle this alone. I've designed an online RAD Boot Camp to teach parents the basics of trauma, how to access a healing mindset, symptoms of PTSD, and treatments and therapies that are helpful to heal trauma. Monthly Zoom sessions introduce members to experts who can help. A private discussion board allows parents to discuss challenges in a private forum with others who "get it". There are even self-care activities, book discussions, and movie watch parties.

If you or someone you know is struggling with a challenging child who's suffered from trauma, I encourage you to take a look at our website to learn more about this fantastic program. Our next Zoom session is "Trauma Tuesday", October 12th at 3pm MST to discuss how trauma affects the brain and how social skills groups might help. Try it for free here using the coupon code "GUEST35" – it will be recorded if you aren't available. We'd love to have you!

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