



SOOKE REGION COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

The Sooke Region Community Health Initiative (CHI) is a grassroots community movement working towards improved health and wellbeing of everyone in our region, from Beecher Bay to Port Renfrew, by engaging the population in their own health, bringing together services and supporting community health interests.

Latest CHI Activities

Age-Friendly Committee

In honour of **International Day of the Elderly October 1st**, a celebration was held at Ayre Manor from 2-4pm; a result of a multi-organisational collaboration. There was cake, music and mocktails. Seaparc had free admittance for seniors on the said date.

Sooke Region Volunteer Centre (SRVC) and New Horizons Grant

Free Lunch & Learns, as well as 2-hour and 4-hour workshops, have been booked and promoted from September through to January 16th. Please check out our calendar at www.sookeregionresources.com/calendar-events for details and to register. Please spread the word.

The SRVC is also attending as many community Board meetings as possible to gather more information on the needs of these organizations from their perspective. This also provides an opportunity to share more information on SRVC membership and the workshops being offered.



SOOKE REGION COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Seniors Managing at Home

The regional study identifying the gaps of seniors living at home is progressing with several well-attended focus groups in Sooke, Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River. November will include a few more peer discussions, including Port Renfrew. Regional First Nations contributions are also welcomed.

Board and Steering Committee

We have been working through our by-laws, vision and mission statement while waiting for approval of our organisation's name. The latter is to be announced hopefully in our next newsletter. We have finished reviewing our past strategic plan from 2011-2014 and have celebrated these successes. We have proceeded to plan until 2017; to be finalised shortly. We continue to reach out to new potential members, in order provide a balanced representative both geographically and demographically.

Upcoming meetings - all are welcome to attend!

- **Steering Committee** - Wednesday, November 4th at the T'Sou-ke Nation Health Office, Lazar Rd - 9:30 - 11:30
- **Board** - Wednesday, November 25th, 2015 Sooke Child, Youth and Family Centre (Seminar Room #3) @ 6:30pm – 8:30pm.
- **Age-Friendly Committee** - Wednesday, Nov 25th at the Sooke Child, Youth & Family Centre, 6672 Wadams Way, Sooke – 9:30 – 11:30



SOOKE REGION COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Issue Awareness

Can Gender Neutral Parenting Reduce Sexual Stereo-Typing?

For the last decade or so there has been an increasing amount of pink and blue influences on children's wardrobe fashions, toys for boys are boldly coloured and aggressive contrasted by the sparkly sweet pastels of princess heaven for girls. Clear distinctions are being made by adults and then peers as to limitations and stereo-typing between the sexes, already being perceived at the pre-school age. As a result, the gender neutral parenting movement is gaining momentum. But is gender neutrality the way to reduce gender bias?

Literature in the 1990s, such as John Gray's Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus —insinuated that the genders were so contrary that they came from different planets. With the help of neuroscience, **many researchers now believe that the two sexes are far more similar than different**. In addition, the transgender movement has taught us that "gender is more fluid and less fixed than many of us previously believed".(2)

Researchers have found that children playing with masculine toys and/or spatial toys predicted adult spatial ability and math test scores **above and beyond biological sex**, while girl toys have been shown to promote verbal ability, creativity and complexity —skills that are highly valued in today's business world.(1)

It has been suggested that many parents may be “missing the mark in ways they're not even aware of.” Children are bombarded all the time by toys, cartoons, television shows, and books that reinforce society's beliefs about girls and boys, “and if parents don't correct those stereotypes head on, then kids hold a lot of beliefs that would surprise parents.” (2) However this opinion relies on the parents' ability to influence their child at all times. As soon as the child is of school age, the parents' ability to shield the child from unfavourable stereo-typing becomes difficult.



SOOKE REGION COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

In the very basic biological differences—men are bigger and taller, and women give birth. This in itself can lead to tremendous behavioral differences.(2) However it has been shown that **variations within genders are greater than variations between them.**(2) "In order to remove certain stereo-types within professions, be it male or female dominated, the learning environments could be more encouraging and reflective of the minority gender, for example through changing the physical environment of classrooms and laboratories to make them more appealing to the less represented sex. (2) This is despite the fact that there are now more female students at the university level than male in our country at present.

Interestingly enough **newer democracies are more likely to have strong female political representation** despite classical stereotyping, than older democracies like Canada, "which is slower and involves grappling with the conventions of older institutions." (3) It is therefore still necessary to adapt our social structures and institutions in order to assure a certain degree of success.

It is perhaps a step in the right direction to gender neutralise through the individual child for their own innate characteristics, supporting with un-biased resources so that they themselves can determine their own path without social predetermination and anxiety. However present social structures need to develop a vision and framework of holistic acceptance for the present generation of adults, if we are to set a precedent for the next generation.

Source links:

- (1) <http://www.in-mind.org/blog/post/why-gender-neutral-toy-aisles-might-help-childrens-development-stay-on-target>
- (2) <http://alumni.berkeley.edu/california-magazine/winter-2014-gender-assumptions/engendering-sons-it-doable-or-even-desirable>
- (3) <http://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/women-politics/>

For more CHI information or to subscribe/unsubscribe, please email: SookeRegionCHI@yahoo.ca