

---

# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

---

Vol. 1, No. 27. February 27, 2009

Dear Colleagues:

I had an unsettling experience last night that really made me think, and I want to share it with you. I attended an LSU women's basketball game with friends, and as an avid Tiger fan, I was on my feet cheering my team, only to have an older couple (supporting the other team) hurl verbal abuse at me for blocking their view of the game. Naturally I wanted to give back some of the treatment I was getting, but fortunately, cooler heads prevailed. My friends who surrounded me with positive support and good judgment encouraged me to take the high road, and ignore them. And I did.

Everyone has their trigger points and vulnerabilities, myself included. My first inclination was to engage. I am so grateful to have been surrounded by people who supported me, in the right way, when I faced a challenge. My friends had my best interest at heart, not some personal agenda.

We all have rough spots and moments when our judgment may be clouded. That's true for each of us, for our staff, and certainly true for our kids. One of the highest risk factors for youth is peer interaction with other delinquent kids. The opposite is also true – successful youth have positive peer interactions. We should be grateful for true friends who help us through those challenging situations. Our kids need to learn to choose wisely. That's a lesson we need to pass on to them.

One of the things we need to keep in mind is our role in providing services and support to our youth. Every one of us in every office and facility is a member of the treatment team, and we should all serve as positive role models – for family, our co-workers, our subordinates and most important of all, our kids. Those of us who work with youth know that kids are expert at finding our hot spots and pushing our buttons. When someone gets on our last nerve, we must always keep a cool head and encourage those around us to do the same.

I would encourage you to take an inventory of who you spend your time with - your friends and colleagues. Do we surround ourselves with people who provide positive support or people who encourage negative behavior? I hope each of you is surrounded by people who provide only a positive influence. If you find in your heart that some of your acquaintances send the wrong message, you will have the courage and self-esteem to rid your life of those who are in it for their own purpose rather than being the kind of people who help us get through life's challenges. We all need to be the right kind of friend in order to have the right kind of friends.

I hope each of you had a great week and a safe and enjoyable Mardi Gras holiday. Please remember that you are appreciated. Thanks to every one of you for all you do, sometimes under trying circumstances, to take care of our kids and meet the mission.

Sincerely,

“Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*

Mary L. Livers, MSW, PH.D, Deputy Secretary

---

Office of Juvenile Justice • PO Box 66458 • Baton Rouge, LA 70896 • e: Whatsupdoc?OJJ@la.gov • www.ojd.louisiana.gov