

Pediatric Counseling Solutions

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*Emotional Support
for
Families and Children
Dealing with
Chronic Illness*

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Owner/Therapist

My Heart Baby



Coarctation of Aorta (Repaired)
Mitral Valve Stenosis, Mild
Bicuspid Aortic Valve

What is a Chronic Illness?

- A chronic illness or medical condition is a health problem that lasts three months or more, affects a child's normal activities, and requires frequent hospitalizations, home health care, and/or extensive medical care ([Mokkink et al. 2008](#)).
- Epidemiologic studies suggest that as many as 1 out of 4 children in the U.S., or 15 to 18 million children age 17 years and younger, suffer from a chronic health problem ([Van Cleave et al. 2010](#); [van der Lee et al. 2007](#)).

Congenital Heart Disease (CHD)

- Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) is the most common type of birth defect affecting 8 out of every 1,000 newborns.
- Each year, about 35,000 babies in the United States are diagnosed with CHD. Nearly 25% of those are critical congenital heart defects.
- As a result of dramatic advances in the medical and surgical management of CHD, 85% of infants with CHD are now expected to survive to adulthood, and CHD is regarded as a chronic disease rather than a terminal one.

Stress

- CHD will affect children, adolescents, and families in every phase : diagnosis, treatment, recovery, and survivorship.
- Each phase of a chronic illness can present children and their families with significant challenges and stressors.
- Even the stress itself will change from acute stress of the diagnosis followed by the long-term chronic stress.

Caregiver Stress

- The caregiver struggles with their own problems, feelings, and stress on top of caring for their child with a chronic illness.
- It is okay for the caregiver to ask for help and seek help from professionals for themselves along with care for their child.

Stress

- The child's illness can be made worse by stress in other areas of their lives. Therefore it is important to understand ways that the child, adolescent, and family cope with stress.
- After understanding what works and doesn't work it is key to develop effective interventions for the child, adolescent, and family to enhance coping skills, adjustment techniques, and support.

Children and Chronic Illness

- Children with chronic illnesses are more likely to experience frequent doctor and hospital visits.
- Some of their treatments may be scary or painful.
- Hospital stays can be frightening and lonely.
- Children with chronic illnesses may feel "different" than other children.
- Their activities may be limited.
- In many cases, their families must change how they live to accommodate the child.

Children and Chronic Illness

- The way children react to/with a chronic illness depends on several factors:
 - the child's personality
 - the child's developmental stage
(kids' understandings of illness and their coping strategies change as they grow older)
 - the specific illness
 - their family
 - their friends

Fears of Children with Chronic Illness

- The Fear of ...
 - Loss of Control
 - Changed Self Image
 - Dependency
 - Stigma
 - Abandonment
 - Expressing Anger
 - Isolation
 - Death

What treatments are available?

- Psychoeducation and Supports
 - General information and interventions to help improve healthy coping skills, relaxation, and mood.
 - ex. Increased social supports; school interventions; increased frequency of appointments with primary care; increased physical activity; involvement in social groups; mindfulness techniques; grounding exercises

Mindfulness Activity

1, 2, 3

CLAP

3, 2, 1

CATCH

PAINT



Grounding Exercise

The 5-4-3-2-1

- This technique gets you to use all your five senses to help you to get back to the present. It starts with you sitting comfortably, close your eyes and taking a couple of deep breathes. In through your nose, out through your mouth.
- Now open your eyes and look around you. Name out loud:
- 5 – things you can see (you can look within the room and out of the window)
- 4 – things you can feel (the silkiness of your skin, the texture of the material on your chair, what does your hair feel like? What is in front of you that you can touch? A table perhaps?)
- 3 – things you can hear (traffic noise or birds outside, when you are quiet and actually listening things in your room constantly make a noise but typically we don't hear them)
- 2 – things you can smell (hopefully nothing awful!)
- 1 – thing you can taste (you can always leave your chair for this one and when you taste whatever it is that you have chosen, take a small bite and let it swill around your mouth for a couple of seconds, really savoring the flavor)
- Take a deep breath to end

Grounding Exercise

Draw Around Your Foot (in your mind)

- Place your feet on the ground.
- In your imagination pick your favorite color to draw an outline around each foot.
- Start at the heel.
- Using your imaginary pencil slowly go up the side of your foot to your pinky toe.
- Make sure you draw around each toe.
- Then go back towards the heel.
- Repeat on the other foot.

Summary of Grounding Exercises

- As you can see, grounding helps you get out of your brain and bring your focus to your body. Try several when you are only slightly worried about something and then chose the ones that you like best and practice them so they are easy to remember when you really need them.

What treatments are available?

- Psychotherapy

- Many types of therapies are available. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), Family Therapy, Psychodynamic Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy, Moderated Group Therapy, Moderated Support Groups, Art Therapy, and Religious based therapy programs.

What treatments are available?

- Medications

- Effective in reducing the intensity and the length of depressive episodes, anxiety, and/or other comorbid issues. However, associated risks make them a little more intimidating for families and providers.



Resources

Apps/Podcasts/Websites

- Best Meditation Apps of 2019
 - www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/top-meditation-iphone-android-apps
- My Mind Body + Soul
 - www.bodyandsoul.com.au/mind-body/wellbeing/the-best-podcasts-for-mindfulness-and-meditation/news-story/f78bac16e3f703b071a853e71fd5e378
- Tara Brach
 - www.tarabrach.com/rain
- Resilience
 - <https://www.apa.org/practice/programs/campaign/resilience>
- HealthyChildren.org
 - <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/heart/Pages/Challenges-Faced-by-Parents-of-Children-with-Congenital-Heart-Disease.aspx>

websites Just for Kids

- Kidshealth.org
 - <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/>
- Band-aids and Blackboards for kids
 - <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/faculty/jfleitas/bandaides/contkids.html>

Websites Just for Teens

- Teenshealth.org
 - <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/>
- Band-aids and Blackboards for teens
 - <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/faculty/jfleitas/bandaides/contteen.html>
- Resilience for Teens – Got Bounce?
 - <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/bouncen.html>

Websites Dealing with Death

- Solution Talk
 - <https://www.solutiontalk.ie/irish-times-parenting-qa-with-dr-john-sharry-my-child-is-obsessed-with-with-us-dying/>
- Psychology Today –
Young Children and the Fear of Death
 - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/going-beyond-intelligence/201802/young-children-and-the-fear-death>

Finding Therapy/Counseling

- www.psychologytoday.com
- www.mentalhealthamerica.net/finding-therapy
- www.theravive.com

Pediatric Psychologist Specializing in Medical Conditions

- **Dr. Cynthia Ward**

- Phone: 404-823-1660
- Email: drcynthiamward@gmail.com
- Website: www.northatlantapediatricpsychology.com
- Address: 515 E. Crossville Rd, Suite 210, Roswell, GA 30075

- **Dr. Katherine Spencer**

- Phone: 648-882-7889 x727
- Email: dr.spencer@bia1.com
- Website: www.bia1.com/katherine-s-spencer
- Address: 6000 Lake Forrest Drive, Suite 103, Atlanta, GA 30328

- **Dr. Camara Murphy**

- Phone: 678-782-2560
- Email: office@soublispsych.com
- Website: www.soublispsych.com
- Address: 1003 Bombay Ln, Roswell, GA 30076

- **Dr. Marla Shapiro – Neuropsychologist***


- Phone: 404-937-3107
- Email: info@ganeuropsych.com
- Website: www.ganeuropsych.com
- Address: Path Group, 550 Pharr Road NE, Suite 605, Atlanta, GA 30305

- **Dr. Cindy Schoell**

- Phone: 678-283-5961
- Email: drschoell@gmail.com
- Address: 1244 Clairmont Rd, Suite 101, Decatur, GA 30030

National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

- www.ffcmh.org/resources




National Federation of Families
for Children's Mental Health

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Resources


Ensuring that you have the right resources based on your role in your community is crucial to the development of your skill sets, as well as those around you. We have outlined a set of resources below based on your role in the community so that you may easily and quickly find the information that you're looking for.




For Families,
Parents, Caregivers




For Youth and
Young Adults




For Children




Mental Health




Family Driven




Peer Support
Specialist




Education




Wellness




Integrated
Care




Advocacy, Policy
and Legislation




Juvenile
Justice




Funding




Suicide




Family Run
Organizations




Newsletter
Archives



Website Links



Webinars



Check Out Our
Pinterest Page

Mental Health Resources

- Georgia Crisis and Access Line
 - GCAL: 1(800)715-4225
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
 - aacap.org
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline
 - 1(800)273-TALK



Discussion and Questions

Contact Information



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