

Behavioral Resources And Institute for Neuropsychological Services

the BRAINS Express

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Come See our NEW Facebook Page!

Clinic Opened in December

Lakeshore Office

BRAINS is now offering services in Grand Haven through Affiliation with Generation Care:
www.generationcare.org

Dianne Bruursma, LMSW, ACSW

Individuals Served at BRAINS: Adults, Adolescents, Couples, Family, Pediatrics—Early Childhood

Therapy Services: Neuropsychology, assessment, counseling, social work, couples, groups, Occupational, Physical, Speech Therapies, Neurofeedback, Psychiatry, CITY Program, MAPSS Program: onsite educational therapy and tutoring, auditory processing interventions

Edited by: Rochelle Manor, PhD & Michael Wolff, PsyD, ABPdN



Time to Be a Father

Christopher D. LePage, LLP, LMSW, CAAC

Introduction

Beginning in the middle part of the last century, social scientists John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth produced landmark research chronicling the importance of the mother in the role of infant attachment and early development. Findings in these and other studies were foundational to the establishment of Attachment Theory and served to explain, at least in part, behavioral phenomenon observed in the infants and toddlers of the day. Attachment theory describes the dynamics of long-term relationship between people, especially as in families and life-long friends. Its most important tenet is that an infant needs to develop a relationship with at least one primary caregiver for social and emotional development to occur normally, and that further relationships build on the patterns developed in the first relationships.

While these studies led to breakthrough knowledge about attachment styles and the formation of a large body of literature still quoted and used as a guiding force today, present-day social scientists are steadily becoming aware that the “mother” influence is only a part of the developmental quotient. Astute researchers are increasingly noting the unique and significant contributions to development which fathers bring to the lives of their children. Likewise, astute clinicians are working to actively

incorporate fatherly involvement into treatment plans and clinical interventions.

Social Considerations

Modern-day research provides evidence which suggests the existence of unique contributions of fathers in the lives of their children; in particular in the areas of social and cognitive growth. It has long been understood, primarily through cursory observation, that father’s engage with their children differently than mothers.



Closeness without crowding often characterizes fatherly involvement. This style, researchers conclude, tends to foster exploration which fosters an environment for the child which aids in the development of independence.

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Dr. Ross Park of the Center of Family Studies at the University of California, a researcher of contributions of fathers in child-rearing, states that father-play helps children to better navigate the world of emotional cues from others, which are frequently displayed during play engagement with other children. The father's ability to allow the child a unique degree of latitude in the world of play adds greatly to emotional health in the adult years. Researchers believe these children learn early to rely on others in a healthy manner characterized by mutually beneficial exchange and not in a clinging fashion. Rather, they learn to trust their instincts in relationship to both their environment, as well as those in it under the auspices of father's close proximity. Should the child's instincts lead to danger or overwhelming risk, dad is on the sidelines ready to intervene on behalf of the child.



The modern phenomenon of over-stimulation through highly structured, goal-focused play, has euphemistically been referred to as "helicopter parenting," so-called because of the parent's tendency to hover – physically and/or emotionally- over the child in order to ensure an undue measure of safety and structure. This is the anti-thesis of a father's natural propensity. Rather fathers allow children to engage in the environment on their own terms and not through a carefully calculated strategy which, while often



omitting risk and ensuring superfluous success, can in the long run ill-equip children for the realities of the world.

Cognitive Benefits

Studies also indicate a more practical benefit to fatherly influence – enhanced cognitive development. Increases in tasks requiring verbal skills and those which involve problem-solving strategies, as well as social awareness, have all been attributed to a father's involvement in the rearing process. Park notes that cognitive test scores were higher for children whose fathers engaged in games and age-appropriate activities than for children whose fathers were absent or unengaged. Researchers and social scientists speculate that this may be due in part to a father's propensity to broaden the scope of play to include everyday objects and also to use available toys in ways other than which they were intended by the maker.

This ability to adapt objects in the environment for play and to suggest other uses for everyday objects challenges the child to be creative in problem solving by teaching them to make use of resources that are immediately available in the environment.

The physical nature of the play is also imperative. Men tend to engage in physical play which can condition a

child both mentally and physically aiding in developmental milestones such as fine motor skill coordination and development. This play involves strategizing physical movement for maximum potential with minimum effort, and planning toward the achievement of goals.

Statistics

The behavioral impact over time is evident in the following statistics:

Children with Fathers who are involved are 40% less likely to repeat a grade in school.


SOURCE: National Household Education Survey

Children with Fathers who are involved are 70% less likely to drop out of school.

Children with Fathers who are involved are more likely to get A's in school.

Children with Fathers who are involved are more likely to enjoy school and engage in extracurricular activities.

Even in high crime neighborhoods, 90% of children from stable 2 parent homes where the Father is involved do not become delinquents.



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Adolescent girls raised in a 2 parent home with involved Fathers are significantly less likely to be sexually active than girls raised without involved fathers.

Kids without Dads

From 1960 to 1990, the number of children living only with their mother jumped from 5,100,000 to 15,600,000. Just 27% of American kids live with their biological mother and father.

About 40% of kids whose parents are divorced have not seen their father in at least a year. Ten years after divorce, more than two-thirds of those living with their mother haven't seen their father for a year.

This doesn't mean that moms aren't doing an incredible job being single parents. But the male influence in child development is unique and not easily replicated by mothers. Finding male mentors, male family members who can engage in play and parenting tasks, and engaging in social activities with male leaders (i.e., Cub Scouts, martial arts classes, sports), or even eliciting trusted neighbors and teachers to engage is important.

As research adds to the body of existing literature in support of fathers' contributions to their children's development, social ideas about the role of the father will likely be challenged and reshaped to better reflect the true impact they have on the citizens of tomorrow.

Sources: *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 1994. *Development and Psychopathology* 1993

How Can Caregivers Help Children Through Traumatic Situations

Diane Bruursema, LMSW, ACSW, CAAC

According to the Child Trauma Academy (www.childtrauma.org) and Dr. Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.(2009), each year in the United States approximately *five million* children experience some form of traumatic experience. More than *two million* of these children are victims of physical or sexual abuse. Millions more are living in an atmosphere of domestic violence.



Natural disasters, car accidents, life threatening medical conditions, sudden death of a loved one, house fire, pet loss, natural disaster, homelessness, etc. all can have traumatic impact on a child.

By the time a child reaches the age of *eighteen*, the probability that he or she will have been affected directly by interpersonal or community violence is *one in four*.

Traumatic experiences can have a devastating impact on the child, altering their physical, emotional, cognitive and social development. This can then increase the risk of social and physical

problems such as ongoing victimization, school failure, antisocial behaviors, assorted mental health disorders, drug abuse or teen pregnancy. The traumatic event may significantly challenge the child's sense about the world and the stability and safety around them. Very young children may not understand what has happened and they will be confused and or frightened by the event as well as the reactions of their caregivers and other loved ones. The children are literally trying to process what has happened. Children will generally find a way to solve the problem and normally not have the facts to make sense of the situation. They will end up processing the best they can and seem to function all right for short periods of time and then have what we call in the psychology field a "delayed reaction" to trauma. They will then begin to have problems coping with the reality and begin to either internalize or externalize their experiences. They can shut down with emotions and appear aloof and depressed or they could act out their emotions and become almost anti-social as a means of trying to cope with something that is just too hard to comprehend. Often children will make up parts of the story in order to cope and will often use their imagination as a means of explaining what has happened.

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They often do not want to “bother” the adults or have the adult “breakdown” and will try to manage the problem by themselves by using various ways to relieve the stress. Children then are confronted with very powerful emotions that can be frightening and painful to them such as shame, guilt, embarrassment, self-loathing, frustration, disgust, fear, worry, etc. Because children do not have the same capacity as an adult to understand what has happened, they will make false assumptions. For example: “The tornado came because I was naughty”. Children seek out answers and comfort but often don’t know how to ask for it. Also, the caretakers sometimes can feel helpless and unsure if they should talk to the child about the stress, fearing it could make it worse.

In the future BRAINS Express Newsletters, I will be writing a follow-up to this series in order to help caregivers assist children in improving their skills at managing traumatic events in their children’s lives. I will address some key issues related to a child’s potential set of reactions that can occur. This can help education all of to be even more compassionate and wise in how we react to our children’s needs.

What is Anxiety?

Liane Holliday Willey, EdD
Author ~ Speaker ~ Autism Consultant

Change and new environments or experiences, can cause a complete break down of calm, the result of which is generalized anxiety. Unfortunately, those with PDD have more problems with change and new experiences, than most, and hence; more crippling anxiety episodes. Not sure if you suffer from anxiety? Check out the list below of the most common types of physical problems anxiety is known to produce, and see if you do indeed suffer from one or more:

- Sweating
- Accelerated heart rate
- Hyperventilation
- Shaking
- Light-headedness or fainting
- Nausea
- Fear of bodily harm

I myself am well aware of most of these symptoms, as anxiety chases my psyche often. What a menace it can be a true monster so very formidable. Should you suffer from anxiety, try one of these tips to dissuade it from biting too hard!

- Flooding - the person is exposed to their particular claustrophobia trigger, until their anxieties pass. Hopefully, the realization that they lived through the trauma with no physical harm, etc. will lead them to believe the trigger is not as harmful as they originally feared.


- Selective desensitization - Counter-conditioning - when flooding is deemed too risky, counter-conditioning can be a



solid option. First the person learns how to use specific relaxation and visualization techniques when they begin to feel the anxieties produced by their triggers. The trigger is then introduced, slowly, while the person is encouraged to use the coping skills they learned, during the anxiety episodes. After repeated practice doing this, the fears should subside and the triggers should become less powerful.

- Cognitive behavior therapy - the person is helped to see that his or her own thoughts shape feelings and reactions, not the experiences themselves. By so doing, the person can redirect his thoughts to accept change and new experiences in a more rationale and healthy manner.
- Medications - such as tranquilizers and anti-depressants. Drugs known as beta- blockers may be used to treat the physical symptoms of anxiety, such as a pounding heart. (Disclaimer- Liane Holliday Willey neither endorses nor discourages the use of medications. This decision is best left to individuals and their physicians.)

It is not easy coping with anxieties. It is even more difficult learning to overcome them. Do your best to face them with any number of the coping strategies above, and you’ll be doing your best to put anxieties in their place... away from you!



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BRAINS' New Lakeshore Clinic Opened in December!

In affiliation with Generation Care, BRAINS opened a lakeshore office at 16760 Lincoln Street in Grand Haven. Appointments can be made by contacting BRAINS, (616) 365-8920.

Here is an upcoming class that Diane will be offering there from 6pm to 7:15pm:

Assert Yourself—April 14th

Learn how to express your feelings, thoughts, beliefs and opinions in an open manner that doesn't violate the rights of others. Learn how to avoid low self-esteem.

BRAINS' Awarded Three-Year CARF Re-Accreditation

Just this month, we received our CARF Re-Accreditation. This accreditation represents the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded to an organization and shows the substantial conformance to standards of care. This accreditation has resulted from a rigorous peer review process and has demonstrated to a team of surveyors completing an on-site visit that its programs and services are of the highest quality, measurable and accountable.

We are very excited about this and want to thank the entire team for all of the hard work that they put into this process. This year we were awarded our outpatient programs on the Lakeshore as well.

Thank you,

Michael & Rochelle

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Holistic food, organically grown, carefully processed without additives, and what you would expect if you had your own farm. Voss Family Farm strives to grow the best food around. We want good nutrients, good flavor, and "good for you" food. Meats, grains, and berries that are organically certified and can ship or be delivered directly to you. Our quality and reputation is based on holistic food products that we put our on table and are happy to share with you.

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**“Suffering,
Hope, and
Wholeness”
guest writer:
Dr. Jamie
Wright,
FACCOG,
ABAARM**

I have an exciting message for you: YOU CAN BE WELL! The question is, will you develop and commit to creating your own wellness philosophy?

My family and I have been on our personal wellness journey for almost 3 years. It has moved us from poor health, fatigue, and confusion to a life of power and purpose.

Pain and suffering can either crush us or drive us to change. What do you do when you have no where else to turn, nowhere to go but up, and nothing to lose? This is where I found myself three years ago and it is what drove me to change my family's life.

My young wife, and mother of our four children, lived sleepless nights and exhausted days suffering from severe pain, arthritis and fatigue. This had been worsening for years. Standing alone in my kitchen one night I found myself caught between two world views: **the assumption** that this was my lot in life and a sense of **“rebellious hope”** that my wife's suffering was not necessary.

That night, I chose “rebellious hope” and we have radically changed our family's future.

Is “rebellious hope” welling up in your heart? Do you believe that disease is NOT the default state of life? Are you ready for deep change? Then allow us to help you and your family develop an action plan that will lead you down the path of healing change.

Brain's Potential and Dr. Wright are working together to bring “LifeChange Through Wellness” to families across Michigan. We look forward to working with you.

For more information about Dr. Jamie Wright visit www.AmericasAntiAgingDoctor.com

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BRAINS Foundation: These “costs” can be reduced with early and effective access to care.

In Kent County alone, over 18,000 children are estimated to have severe emotional disturbance. These children are at risk of severe behavioral problems, psychiatric hospitalizations, multiple medications, learning disorders, dropping out of school, are placed in special educational classrooms, and are at significantly higher risk for illegal activity or may be placed on life long disability as adults. The sooner we can understand the concerns and intervene, the more likely we can help this individuals in our community to learning, thrive, and have the opportunity to reach their potential.

At a Glance

The BRAINS Foundation is an innovative organization that has come to fruition after a year of intensive work with community and the Foundation Board. The Foundation intends to increase the accessibility for services in the areas of Psychological and Neuropsychological Assessment and Physical and Occupational Therapy in the first year. In the future, we hope that all our services will utilize students who are training through the Foundation to become fully licensed professionals in their field.

Joining with Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital Department of Psychology, we began this Pre-Doctoral Neuropsychological Training Consortium in June of this year.

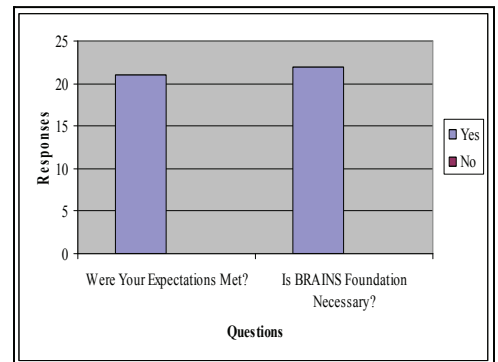
Ultimately, this means more families and children can be served with substantially fewer dollars. Take a look below

Population:

Total # of Served: >250
Total # of Hours: 4279.60
\$437,697.50 in services provided

At the BRAINS Location

Average # of Wage Earners in the Family: 1.02
Average # of Family Members in the Family: 2.98
Average Age for Individual Served: 15.83
Age Range in 2010: 2-59
Average Annual Income for families: \$11,630.33
Average Out of Pocket Cost per Hour: \$5.87
Percent of Individuals Receiving No Cost Care: 90%



Stakeholder Analysis: 100% of persons served through the foundation, who completed satisfaction surveys [everyone served through BRAINS location were sent or offered survey] report satisfaction with the BRAINS Foundation.

2011 Summer Programs

- Reading, Writing, Math Clinics
- Specialized Tutoring based on BRAINS evaluations
- High School Credit Recovery for any high school class

The P.L.A.Y. Project®



Home Consultation Program

- providing intensive early intervention for children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder based on DIR/Floortime
- builds capacity and skills for language
- promotes development and relationships



Encourage Institute's Learning Center at BRAINS
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Dr. Mary Rozendal, Director

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For more information visit: www.encourageinstitute.com

The BRAINS Foundation

Spring Leaves are Blooming!

During the second year of the BRAINS Foundation, we have provided services to families across West Michigan with over \$435,000 in services. We are offering meaningful hope to families affected by developmental, medical, behavioral, or emotional disorders.

Bronze Leaf: \$100 – \$249
Silver Leaf: \$250 - \$499
Gold Leaf: \$500 - \$999
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