

Foster Care Forum

Waukesha County
Health & Human Services
April 2012



Seeing A Therapist

By: Adoption Resources of Wisconsin - ARW/FCARC

You know you need some help. You are really suffering. Intense painful feelings won't go away. You feel awful and don't know how to change it. You know you are acting in a way that makes you feel worse and bothers other people. But you don't know how to change how you act or how to feel better. Talking to a therapist may be what you want. You may really need to see someone to help you work out some things.

Or you might feel just the opposite - that a therapist is the last person you want to see, but the adults in your life "make" you go. Their intentions are good - they know that working with a therapist can help kids feel better, work out tough issues and learn ways to handle problems. They think you may be able to get some help in therapy.

Lots of kids are embarrassed about seeing a therapist. Some don't want anyone to know. Others think it's boring. Some are uncomfortable sitting in a therapist's office. Or some may want help and feel the therapist doesn't understand at all.

Therapy isn't always comfortable. Therapy is a process to help you know yourself and learn how to handle your problems in ways that work. It requires hard work, honesty and facing difficult emotions like fear, anger and sadness. Working out problems in therapy isn't easy and takes time.

It's hard to know what to expect when you first see a therapist and how to get the most out of therapy. Here are some myths about therapy and some truths that may help you get a good perspective working with a therapist.

Myth #1

Seeing a therapist means I am crazy. Teens - and others - see therapists to help them work through difficult times, feel less sad or just plain vent. It's a safe place to focus on yourself and learn to deal with problems. It doesn't mean you're crazy. It means that you are facing some tough stuff in your life, just like most kids in foster care have faced.

Myth #2

Being in therapy is a sign of weakness. It takes courage to change things about yourself and to work through personal issues that may be making you miserable.

Facing yourself and changing what you don't like isn't easy. If you've been in the system, you may have faced some difficult times - some things that - no one should have to face. This takes a lot of strength.

Myth #3

You can fix yourself alone. Sometimes a therapist will see you alone. But often he or she will have your foster parents or other family members included in part of your sessions. In most situation, you will still have confidential conversations with your therapist, but your parents (or foster parents) may sometimes be called in, too.

We don't live alone, and your family needs to know how they can help you and make the changes they need to make. Those who are living with you need to understand you, support you and learn how to best care for you, whether you are one month or 18 years. As the song says, "we get by with a little help from our friends."

Myth #4

The counselor magically changes you. A counselor is there to help you look at what is hard in your life and help you work on goals that you want to work on. He or she may be able to help you make some changes that will help you become happier and make your life easier. Meeting with a therapist isn't magic, but it's a change to get a glimpse of yourself and what you can do to make your life better. It's hard work - not the counselor - that makes your life better. Remember that. You make the change.

Myth #5

Therapists are all the same. You should probably go to a therapist more than once before you decide whether you can relate to that person or not. If you can't relate, discuss it with the therapist - a good one will want to discuss it. Tell your worker or foster parent that you just don't relate, but be prepared to have some good reason. You might have to try a few before you find the right one.

Greta Anderson, a former youth in care, says "I didn't understand why therapy was so important until after I met my 5th therapist. She listened, offered support, but most important of all, she became personally invested in my well-being and I trusted her."

Greta goes on to say, "I knew that even when I moved around and had to be tough, in her office once every two weeks, I could

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Prospective Foster Parents need to do Part 1 of the training on the following website:

<http://www.wcwt.wisc.edu/foster-parent-training>

We will then meet to discuss the learning points and to answer your questions.

Thursday,
April 12, 2012
6 - 8 PM

All Classes are held in the Brookfield Room G137 in the Human Services Center located at 500 Riverview Avenue.

Please enter the building at door 6. Call Shari Rather at (262)548-7267 to register.



Lisa's Corner

Lisa Roberts
Manager of the Children and
Family Division

I had the wonderful opportunity the other evening to attend a presentation by a Nationally recognized author and pediatrician, Meg Meeker, on "Raising Strong Daughters in a Complicated Culture". It is really tough being a parent these days! I believe the more we can arm ourselves with further education, ideas and support, the better equipped we are to do this demanding job! I have two daughters myself, ages 13 and 9, so I was very excited to hear what Dr. Meeker had to say. I was not disappointed and walked away with some powerful messages and tools I'd like to share with you. Dr. Meg started by talking about the pressure we put on ourselves to be the "perfect" mother, the "perfect" father, the "perfect" parent and really challenged us to consider what that really means...giving our kids the most and best opportunities (running from activity to activity everyday in hopes of having the next All Star athlete, chess player, actor, singer, fill in the blank)? Being responsible for making our kids happy ("since when did that become a parent's responsibility...I don't recall that being my mom's job!")? Always telling our children how fantastic they are at everything so they end up with wonderful self esteem (rather than being honest and realizing they can't be great at everything but helping them learn what their own unique talents and abilities are)? Dr. Meg really encouraged all of us to slow down the frenetic pace and make "face to face" time with our kids a priority. Spend time really **enjoying** our kids and listening as we give them time to tell us who they are. Time where we are not focused on accomplishments, compliance, conformity or message (lecture) giving. Face to face time with our kids regularly, without distraction of electronics, work, others, etc. She challenged everyone in the room to create an "electronic free" evening a week in their homes, no t.v., no cell phones, no video games, no movies, and therefore, no distractions. Dr. Meg acknowledged that anyone can raise "high achievers" ... there's a formula out there for that. But she challenged us to balance the time and attention we give to accomplishments, compliance, performance with time spent on character development. Kids determine who they are from the messages they get from us...make sure those messages are ones you want them to hear! Lastly, Dr. Meg stressed the importance of both parents or both mother and father "figures" in every child's life. She quoted research that reported the best predictor of a girl's self esteem in the future was the amount of positive, healthy affection by her father or male father figure. Dads are tremendously important to our girls' healthy development! At first glance, many of these ideas may seem simplistic. But when you consider actually implementing them into your daily life, they become much more complex and complicated. I encourage you to think about how these ideas could enhance your sons and daughters future and I wish you the best of luck implementing them. I would love to hear your thoughts as well as your successes or challenges. Always feel free to email me at lroberts@waukeshacounty.gov.

Lastly, I would like to take a moment to introduce you to Rebecca Hollister, the new Permanency Services Supervisor for Waukesha County. Rebecca comes to us from Milwaukee with over 12 years of Child Protective Services experience in multiple different capacities. Rebecca has been a case worker, CPS supervisor, trainer, worker mentor and program implementation administrator. Rebecca's wealth of knowledge and experience is a great asset to Waukesha. She is a strong advocate for kids, parents and foster parents alike. Rebecca has a thorough knowledge of Chapter 48 law as well as CPS standards and will be a tremendous support to her staff. Please help me welcome her to Waukesha!

Thanks everyone and Happy Easter!

Lisa



Training Offered By Waukesha County

Parent Café Host Training

April 17 & 18, 2012 (both dates are required to attend)

5:30 - 8:30 PM

Center for Excellence

N4W22000 Bluemound Road
Waukesha

To confirm your attendance or need of child care, please call 262-548-7267.

Parent Café

May 17, 2012

5:30 PM

Center for Excellence

N4W22000 Bluemound Road
Waukesha

To register for childcare, RSVP or for questions call, 262-548-8080.



Training

The Dark Side of Digital Technology:

The Internet, Cell Phones and Social Media

May 1, 2012

6:00 - 9:00 PM

Cost: \$20 per person for webinar

Free in person at Waukesha County Human Services Building

Waukesha County Human Services Building

500 Riverview Avenue
Waukesha, WI 53188

Register with Shari Rather at 262-548-7267 if you are attending the in person free seminar at Waukesha County Human Services Center

Register online at: <http://socialmedia-youth.eventbrite.com> for Webinar

Caregiver Health: Finding the Balance in Life

May 8, 2012

6:00 - 8:00 PM

Cost: \$15 per person

In person or via webinar

ARW

6682 W. Greenfield Ave., Suite 310
Milwaukee, WI 53124

Register online at: <http://caregiverhealth2012.eventbrite.com/>

Attachment in Infant Adoption

May 31, 2012

6:00 - 8:00 PM

Cost: \$15 per person

Webinar or in person at:

Catholic Charities - Madison

30 S. Franklin Street
Madison, WI 53703

Register online at: <http://infantattachment.eventbrite.com/>

Parents Place Programs

262-549-5575

www.ppacinc.org

Prices for some classes may apply. Call 262-549-5575 to register.

Free pre-registered childcare is available while attending most classes. Space is limited.

Love and Logic ®

Monday, April 2 - 30

6:00 - 7:30 PM

Parenting: the Early Years/Born Learning

Tuesdays, April 17, 24 and May 1, 7

5:30 - 7:00 PM

Teens Managing Anger

(For Parents and Teens)

Tuesdays, April 3 & 10

5:30 - 7:00 PM

Wednesday Workshops - Making a Change/Goal Setting

Wednesday, April 18, 2012

5:30 - 7:00 PM

just cry and tell her how scared I really was. Everyone deserves a place like that."

Greta is currently in college and hopes to go to grad school to become an art therapist.

Myth #6

The rest of the world doesn't have any problems. This is not true. Until the world is better educated about mental health, this myth will continue. Bodies get sick: people get colds, flu and some get terrible diseases like diabetes or cancer. But there are very few people who don't ever have an illness.

It's the same with the mind. When you look around at school and others seem to have happy perfect lives, it's just not so. Most people suffer different mental illnesses during their lifetimes. Studies indicate that 8 out of 10 people will have a least one episode of major mental illness during their lifetime. Some experts think the number is higher than that.



Some mental illnesses are like dealing with colds and others are like dealing with HIV or diabetes. The brain works because of biological and chemical processes, just like the body. Some people suffer from depression, anorexia, or have a bipolar disorder.

Maybe you are anxious or depressed. It's hard to get through, but some people get over it even without any help. For a long lasting or more difficult mental illness, you need help to get better. Know that there is help out there. Our bodies sometimes need a physician and our minds sometimes need a therapist.

Myth #7

It is your fault if you have a mental illness. If you have been in the foster care system, it's likely you have had some trauma in your young life. Mental illness has many causes, some of which are biological, situational and/or chemical. Sometimes even poor nutrition or poor prenatal care can cause a mental illness to surface.

For some people, mental illnesses are caused by genes that have been passed down in a family. This does not mean that, for example, you will be a schizophrenic if one of your parents is. But you may be more prone to it than others who don't have many people in their family who suffer from schizophrenia.

Until there is a cure for the various illnesses, learning to deal with it with therapy, prescription drugs and support is the way to lead the best life you can.

Myth #8

Therapy is just talking. It's true that a lot of therapists talk and listen, but some therapists specialize in art, music, writing, or groups as important ways to work on issues. If you were in play therapy when you were younger, you know there are lots of ways that therapists work with children. If you are ever not comfortable with therapy, tell your caseworker and foster parent.

Don't Quit!

Sometimes when hard emotions are coming out in therapy, you might want to quit. Think hard before you give up on therapy. When it's hard to deal with some things you are talking about in therapy, it might be exactly those times when you are working out a lot of stuff inside. Try to hang in there. If you do decide to take a break from therapy, that's okay, too. Maybe you'll want to go back in a year...or 10 or 20 years.



No matter how easy other people's lives may seem, everyone has problems. For some, mental health problems will not be a major obstacle. Even then, therapy may really help, along with hard work and persistence to get through bad times.

If you are faced with chronic problems, you'll need hard work, courage, and lots of support. Therapy is often one of the best ways to work through the really tough times in life.

Seeking therapy for your child is really seeking therapy for your whole family. It is a difficult decision for any parent to make. This is especially true when there are so many myths and stereotypes out there about therapy.

The messages that we receive about what therapy is like on television and in the media are not always accurate. It can also be challenging to find a mental health provider who understands the unique dynamics of a family created through adoption.

Below you will find myths about therapy uncovered. If you have reservations about seeking therapy for your family, this information will help you make informed decisions and give you realistic expectations about therapy.

Myths

Seeking therapy is a sign of weakness. It takes courage and strength for a parent to identify when their family needs the help of a counselor and take the steps to see that they get it.

Many children that find forever families through adoption have been through things that are hard to think about. It is easy to assume that because your child is not a part of your loving family that those past experiences are simply in the past.

- Past experiences can be part of shaping the person that your child is becoming.
- Acknowledging changes need to be made and seeking outside help is not a sign of weakness. **My child is in therapy, not me. He needs to get better, not me.** When your child is in therapy you, as a parent, play a vital role.
- You need to monitor, and help with, your child's progress. A counselor may want to check in with you at the beginning of a session, the end, or both.
- The counselor may even want your family to participate in a session together.
- Your child exists within your family. Everyone in the family experiences the disruption when one person is having a hard time and the whole family will need to help facilitate changes.



The counselor is going to fix the child. The role of the counselor is to help your family identify what the issues are and then help them arrive at the means necessary to make changes.

Adoption Resources of Wisconsin Events

Starry Night at the Movies with Jockey Being Family

Friday, April 27, 2012
Jockey International, Kenosha, WI
6 - 9 PM
Free

Foster & Adoptive Parents Rock Dance Party

Friday, May 4, 2012
Quaker Steak & Lube, New Berlin, WI
7 - 9 PM

Fourth Annual Homes for Kids Golf Outing

Thursday, August 23, 2012
The Bull, Sheboygan Falls, WI

Sponsorship opportunities also available

Contact Information: Jenna Czaplowski
414-475-1246

April 2012 Foster Parent Spotlight

Carmen & Chris Otto



Carmen and Chris Otto were introduced by mutual friends at a softball game. Carmen was attending college at Whitewater when she met and married Chris. The couple has now been married for 20 years. They have 7 children, 3 of whom were adopted, Zack 18, Sam 16, Charlie 15, Maddie 13, Jonathan 12, Owen

10, and Ben 9. The children play an active role in fostering. Carmen said fostering can be difficult but the joy of being able to help outweighs the challenges and is something they will not learn in a textbook.

In the past, the family has taken in single mothers and helped them until they can get themselves on their feet. They have done mission work in Romania. Carmen home schools her seven children and still has time and energy to foster. Chris and Carmen stepped up to help a family member and they adopted Maddie in 2002. 2007 was a very busy year when they adopted Jonathan and Owen. The family decided to get licensed in Waukesha County for foster care in 2011, and have had two placements.

Chris' parents were foster parents so Chris grew up with foster children in his family home. Carmen stated the family entered into foster care to make a difference in the life of a child and to help those families who need it. They really enjoy Waukesha County's shared parenting and mentoring programs. The most rewarding part of foster care for the Otto's is knowing you might make a difference in the life of a child and their family.

If Carmen could give any advice to foster parents, it would be to have everyone on the same page, go to meetings, get information, and use the Adoption Resource Library. It is important to remember to be patient as change takes time, and to be sure fostering is a right fit for

everyone in the household as well as for the foster children. Lastly, Carmen stated that realizing you cannot help and fix everything but do what you can, was tough but freeing and helpful. She advises to take it one day at a time.

Greetings Foster Parents:

It is that time of year that I have Milwaukee Brewer Tickets available. I have tickets for the following games:



- May 9, 2012 against the Cincinnati Reds at 12:10 PM

Please email me if you are interested in a game and the number of tickets you need and I will forward you the tickets for use by you and your foster children only. If you cannot use the tickets, please return them to me in a timely manner. Just remember you need to use the tickets because the Brewers do keep track of the empty seats.

Hope to see you at the game,

Shari



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| <p>Contact Numbers:</p> <p>Waukesha H & HS 262-548-7212</p> <p>Children's Mental Health Outreach 262-548-7666</p> <p>Medical Emergency: 911 Family Emergency: 211</p> <p>Foster Parent Mentor Jen Barcus..... 262-542-2926 David Mersfelder 262-542-2926 Nikki Mertens..... 262-246-6180</p> <p>Rebecca Hollister, Supervisor 262-548-7271</p> <p>Mary Alice Grosser, Supervisor Relative Licensing 262-548-7272</p> <p>Shari Rather, Foster Care Coordinator 262-548-7267</p> <p>Libby Sinclair Relative Licensing 262-548-7277</p> | <p>February 2012 Placements</p> <p>Regular Foster Care: 35 Children</p> <p>Treatment Foster Care: 13 Children</p> <p>Group Homes: 2 Children</p> <p>Residential Care Facilities: 12 Children</p> <p>Relative Placements: 53 Children</p> <p>Level 2 Foster Homes: 114 Homes</p> <p>Level 1 Foster Homes: 39 Homes</p> <p>Total Homes Assisting Other Counties 18 Homes</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>For Allegations of Abuse and Neglect Support, please call:</p> <p>FASPP Norma Schoenberg 920-922-9627</p> </div> | <p>Social Workers:</p> <p>Jennifer Adler 262-548-7265</p> <p>Bob Alioto 262-548-7262</p> <p>Suzanne Arnold 262-548-7348</p> <p>Kate Flansburg 262-896-6857</p> <p>Laura Jahnke 262-548-7359</p> <p>Maria Maurer 262-548-7345</p> <p>Susan Peck 262-896-8574</p> <p>Madeline Prange 262-548-7394</p> <p>Janis Ramos 262-896-8069</p> <p>Michael Reed 262-548-7347</p> <p>Cindie Remshek 262-548-7639</p> <p>Greg Rewolinski 262-548-7270</p> <p>Elizabeth Russo 262-548-7349</p> <p>Kim Sampson 262-548-7273</p> <p>Mark Sasso 262-548-7346</p> <p>Linda Senger 262-548-7698</p> <p>Deanna Stevlingson . 262-896-8570</p> | <p>We Need You!</p> <p>For more information about becoming a foster parent in Waukesha County, please contact Shari Rather at:</p> <p>srather@waukeshacounty.gov</p> <p>262-548-7267</p> <p>Or visit our website at www.waukeshacounty.gov And follow the links to foster care.</p> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Jack Safro Toyota•Ford•Lincoln•Mercury Lexus•Infiniti•Scion</p> </div> |
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