



Chicago supports autism

Discover innovative programs

Neurofeedback 101

Improving your brain functions

Feeling nervous?

Manage your anxiety

MEDIA PLANET

September 2010

MENTAL HEALTH



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TIPS

A HEALTHY MIND

How Chris Prentiss saved his son Pax's life through his revolutionary treatment paradigm

PHOTO: PASSAGES MALIBU

help

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NEWS

CHICAGO AREA ORGANIZATIONS INNOVATE TO HELP AUTISTIC CHILDREN

Question: How are two Chicago area organizations developing new techniques to effectively reach the largest number of autistic children and their families?

Answer: They are pushing to constantly develop new programs and encouraging every family that has a child affected by autism to search out an effective intervention program.

Shawn Jeffers, executive director of Little City Foundation said, "Our programs don't eliminate anything from a person's quality of life, they only help to add communication abilities, and to help parents become better parents to their children with autism."

Innovative programs to aid families and children

Amy Shymansky, director of operations for Skill Sprout, a local pro-



SKILL SPROUT'S BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS CONSULTATION assists parents in taking control of their child's learning by accurately assessing areas of skill deficit and designing highly effective instruction that maximizes your child's learning. PHOTO: SKILL SPROUT

vider of professional services along the autism spectrum, said, "It's very rewarding to work with children and play a key role in increasing new skills for them and decreasing problematic behavior." The innovative in home services which Skill Sprout offers along with web based

training services help improve the lives of children affected by autism. Shymansky added, "With 20 clinicians in the field working eight to twenty hours with these families and children, we are constantly coming up with new techniques to better help these children."

Little City Foundation serves some of Chicago's most vulnerable children through its ChildBridge programs and services, which provide around the clock care and treatment for nearly 200 children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, all in an effort to help children have the life skills they need to live as independently as possible.

So much more to be done

Even with all the great work that Little City Foundation and Skill Sprout undertake, Shymansky envisions eventually being able to reach many more families and children with autism. She also said, "There are effective interventions that exist and it's so important that families are aware of this and seek out these programs."

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DON'T MISS!

Everyday anxiety or an anxiety disorder? Here's the difference.

Everyday anxiety

- Worry about paying bills, landing a job, a romantic breakup or other important life events.
- Embarrassment or self-consciousness in an uncomfortable or awkward social situation.
- A case of nerves or sweating before a big test, business presentation, stage performance or other significant event.
- Realistic fear of a dangerous object, place or situation.
- Making sure that you are healthy and living in a safe hazard-free environment.
- Anxiety, sadness or difficulty sleeping immediately after a traumatic event.

Anxiety disorder

- Constant and unsubstantiated worry that causes significant distress and interferes with daily life.
- Avoiding social situations for fear of being judged, embarrassed or humiliated.
- Seemingly out-of-the-blue panic attacks and the preoccupation with the fear of having another one.
- Irrational fear or avoidance of an object, place or situation that poses little or no threat of danger.
- Performing uncontrollable repetitive actions such as excessive cleaning, checking, touching or arranging.
- Recurring nightmares, flashbacks or emotional numbing related to a traumatic event that occurred several months or years before.

For more than a decade, AAPC has prided itself on providing the best resources for those who live with autism, love someone with autism and who want to learn more about autism. Our award-winning books and other materials reflect our unwavering commitment to providing practical, effective information to parents, teachers, professionals and individuals whose lives have been touched by autism.

Visit www.asperger.net or call us toll free at 877-277-8254 to learn more about the resources that best suit your needs.





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NEWS

INTERNATIONAL OCD FOUNDATION PRESENTS OCD AWARENESS WEEK

Imagine living with constant doubt. Is the door locked? Are my hands really clean? Did I turn the oven off?

These questions seem to have easy answers. But for someone with obsessive compulsive disorder, there are no easy answers. Instead, there are the constant demands of intrusive thoughts and repetitive rituals.

Obsessive compulsive disorder affects some four million Americans and has no cure. The International OCD Foundation exists to help those struggling from this disorder. Since 1986, the International OCD Foundation has worked to educate the public about OCD, keep the mental health community informed about the latest treatment and research, connect OCD sufferers with treatment providers and support, and advance research for more effective treatments.

What is OCD?

OCD is a debilitating brain disorder that causes problems in information processing. The brain gets stuck on a particular thought or urge and just can't let go. OCD involves having both obsessions and compulsions. Obsessions are often fear-based, leaving sufferers worried about germs and contamination, harming oneself or others, losing control or having



aggressive urges. Some suffer with intrusive sexual thoughts, excessive religious or moral doubt, or forbidden thoughts. Some suffer from perfectionism or need to have things "just right." Common compulsions, in which sufferers engage to temporarily relieve their obsessions, are: washing, repeating, checking, touching, and counting. Although there is no known cure for OCD, many patients find meaningful and long-term symptom relief with cognitive behavior therapy and medication.

October 11-17, the International OCD Foundation presents the second annual OCD Awareness Week. Across the country, the Foundation, its affiliates, and OCD treatment providers will host events, lectures, support groups, and more all in an effort to increase awareness to end the stigmas and misconceptions on OCD and mental illness. Anyone can be involved. Visit www.ocdfoundation.org for more information.

INTERNATIONAL OCD FOUNDATION

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↓ DON'T MISS

The joy of recovering from eating disorders

The mental health field has come a long way in the last thirty years in its ability to identify, understand and treat eating disorders.

No longer hidden from public view, anorexia and bulimia have become household words. Eating disorders have gained broad recognition as symptoms such as extreme weight loss or weight gain, bingeing, purging, and food restriction are now spoken about far more openly than ever before. Research has given us a greater understanding of the problems and a variety of treatment approaches have proven to be successful.

Nevertheless, one's initial encounter with an eating disorder—whether from personal experience or that of a loved one—can be frightening, confusing, and overwhelming. The emotional turmoil of an eating disorder often is made worse by mistaken beliefs that the disease is simply about a desire to be thin and condemns the sufferer to a life-long struggle with food and weight loss.

While societal pressures to be "thin" play a part, the problems have even deeper roots in psychological conflicts and unresolved

emotional needs. When attention is placed simply on weight gain, or stopping destructive behaviors without identifying and resolving the deeper, underlying conflicts, recovery becomes short-lived and even greater frustration, discouragement, and hopelessness follow. The best treatment practices these days focus on helping restore normal eating behavior, but also focus on treating unresolved traumas and on developing more effective coping skills.

Fortunately, there are excellent treatment options available today which provide real hope for complete and lasting recovery. By uncovering and resolving the underlying issues, those who once suffered can find freedom from their struggles with food, fat, and dieting. These newer treatments don't just help people "get better," they also help them find, in their healing journey, ways of creating lives that are rich, meaningful, and fulfilling—beyond their wildest dreams. This is the joy of recovery!

Dr. Anita Johnston is author of [Eating in the Light of the Moon](#), and senior expert to [Focus Healthcare of Tennessee](#), treating chemical dependency and eating disorders.



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