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WALNUT STREET THERAPY HUB

The Official Walnut Street Newsletter For All Things Therapy

WHAT BRINGS KIDS TO THERAPY?

What behaviors might you see that hints that someone should be referred?

HOW TO REFER A STUDENT

Do you have a student you would like to refer for therapy services? Here are the steps how.

COPING SKILL OF THE MONTH

You can never have too many coping skills in your toolbox. This month is all about the 5-4-3-2-1 coping skill using our senses.



Amanda Berg, LMHC-T

ABOUT THE THERAPIST

Hi, I am Amanda Berg! I moved down to Des Moines in January of 2020 after I got married to my awesome husband Carter. Carter is currently in medical school at DMU. I received my Master's degree at Adler Graduate School up in MN. My degree is in both Clinical Mental Health Counseling, and Art Therapy. Art Therapy is using art in therapy to help someone express themselves in a way they may not be able to with words alone.

WHAT BRINGS KIDS TO THERAPY?

The short answer to what brings kids to therapy is, a lot of different things. The DSM-5 (2017), a diagnostic criteria book used in the US to make a mental health diagnosis, explains that a child is a candidate for therapy when they are experiencing distress or showing behaviors that impact their social, educational, or other areas of functioning. Cullinan (2018) also shows that kids are in need of therapy when they are trying to cope with something, which they cannot do it alone, such as parent's getting a divorce, parent or guardian illness, school problems, deficient social skills, or even bullying. School-based therapy, specifically, is appropriate for a variety of needs including symptoms of behavioral and emotional concerns as well as family and trauma related concerns. A way you might notice a student or child who is in need of therapy would be based on their behavior. For example you might refer a child who is aggressive and runs out of the classroom often, or you might refer a child who is quiet, shy, or alone most of the time. If you are unsure if a child is right for therapy, reach out to me, Amanda Berg, or our school counselor, Kate Busch, and we can help determine the level of support needed for the child.

HOW TO REFER A STUDENT

School-based therapy is appropriate for a variety of needs including symptoms of behavioral and emotional concerns as well as family and trauma related concerns. If you know of a student who could benefit from therapy services, you can reach out to Kate Busch, School-Counselor, or start filling out the referral form yourself. All parents/ guardians **must** be notified prior to a referral being made. Forms should be turned into Kate Busch. I currently have openings and can quickly get your students intake process started.

COPING SKILL OF THE MONTH

Coping skills are used at times when we feel dysregulated as a way to re-regulate ourselves and be able to move forward in a situation. Therapists tend to teach their client's multiple coping skills, because no one coping skills will work for all situations. One way to think about this is a toolbox, and by learning new coping skills, you are adding more tools to your toolbox that you can use in the future.

The **5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique** is typically taught to someone who experiences anxiety, as it can be a tool to help bring someone back to the present moment they are in and help distract themselves from the anxious thoughts (Countdown to make anxiety blast off, 2020). What you do is you take a moment to observe around you **5** things you can see, **4** things you can feel, **3** things you can hear, **2** things you can smell, and **1** thing you can taste (Countdown to make anxiety blast off, 2020). This technique can also be adjusted to fit your circumstances. For example, you might not always be able to taste something in the moment, so you could skip taste. The point is to allow your brain to come back to the present moment to help stop the anxious thoughts, so **however it works best for you is a great way to do it**.

Sources:

- Countdown to make anxiety blast off. (2020, June 6). Retrieved October 28, 2020, from <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/5-4-3-2-1-countdown-to-make-anxiety-blast-off>
- Cullinan, C. (Ed.). (2018, March). Taking Your Child to a Therapist (for Parents) - Nemours KidsHealth. Retrieved October 28, 2020, from <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/finding-therapist.html>
- Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-5 (Fifth ed.). (2017). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association.
- Orchard Place's School-Based Therapy FAQ sheet