

10 Ways a Child Psychologist Can Help Your Family

*A guide for concerned and frustrated
parents*



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Your children are your highest priority. You would do anything for them. If they get sick, you take them to a doctor that specializes in children because you want them to get the best treatment possible. However, if your child is suffering from behavioral or emotional issues, you aren't sure what to do. You may try combating these issues on your own, and you can probably do a pretty decent job for a while but eventually you start to get exhausted. After you feel like you've tried everything you're at a loss as to what to do. A child psychologist can help!

Child psychologists have specialized training to help your child improve every aspect of their lives.

A child and teen psychologist will get down to your child's level. When you bring your child to a psychologist, you and your child can focus on areas of concern and growth. As treatment progresses, you will see drastic improvement. A psychologist that specializes in children knows that every child is different and every parent is different. They will customize their approach to best help you and your child.

Here are the top 10 ways that a child and teen psychologist can help your child and family

Improve Your Children's Self-Esteem and Body Image While Working with Them to Develop Their Identity

As children transform from little kids to pre-teens, something starts to happen: they start to question who they are. While you surely have a big impact on how they think of themselves, unfortunately, the kids at school sometimes have an even bigger impact. Children are mean to each other; that is no secret. Constant teasing and bullying can have a

very negative impact on your children's self-esteem. If this issue is not rectified in a timely matter, these effects will be seen throughout your child's teen years and even into adulthood. Poor performance at school can also have an impact on a child's self-esteem.

However, if you bring them to a specialized child psychologist, you can help your child focus specifically on self-esteem issues. They will work with your child to combat the negative thoughts they have about themselves and help them replace these thoughts with positive, uplifting ones. With an improved self-esteem, your children will no longer be held back by a lack of positive self-identity. They will have tools to deal with bullying and peer problems and will learn how to pick healthy friends.

Work with Your Entire Family to Help You Get Along Better and Teach You Targeted Parenting Strategies for Your Specific Situation

Family dynamics are can be quite complicated. Power struggles and arguments within your family may lead to feelings of tension. There is a good chance that many members of your family are unhappy and stressed. However, when family dynamics are improved, everyone will actually look forward to being home again and doing things together and the family will function much better.

When a child psychologist works with your family, they focus on getting to know each member in order to understand the current strengths and weaknesses in the family. Each person needs to feel important and understood. The focus will be on what each member of the family needs to do in order to improve the family situation. Everyone learns to work together instead of against each other. No one person is the problem, but everyone agreeing to change is the solution.

The standard parenting rules do not work for every child. If you have been using them with no improvement, there is probably a good reason why.

As parents, you will learn effective parenting strategies that allow each parent to work together, instead of against each other. When kids see the parents willing to change some of what they are doing, they are more open to changing as well.

Improve Your Child's School Performance by Combating Behavioral Problems and Developing Individualized Study Strategies/ College Application Process

Oftentimes, when children act out at school, their behavior is a yellow flag of deeper issues. If there are problems with relationships with peers or teachers, this can often lead to acting out as well. Perhaps they are yearning for attention, or maybe they have an attention or learning issue. If your child is not doing as well in school as you think they should be or if they have had a sudden change in their performance in school, a child psychologist may be able to help.

Some kids learn and study differently. A child psychologist can recommend specific techniques that will help them study more effectively and be successful at school. With peer relationships, often a child gives up on friends, or makes choices that push friends away or causes them to be bullied. Developing new skills to choose friendships, set boundaries, and handle stressful situations successfully are important life skills.

As your teen approaches their senior year of high school, the choice of what college to attend is very overwhelming. A teen psychologist can also help your children differentiate between the colleges they are considering and help parents to feel like they are advocates for their teen.

Eliminate Anxiety, Worries and Sleep Problems From Your Children

Children can develop fears, worries and anxiety about specific situations or about many things. Oftentimes, they have worries that keep them up at night or make them stressed unnecessarily. Younger children may

struggle with separation anxiety. These fears and worries can build into more fears and stronger avoidance reactions as time goes on and can even lead to health concerns.

As a parent, you are probably used to sacrificing your sleep for your children. However, this does not have to be a way of life. Anxiety and worries may be the reason that your child does not sleep very well. Over time, sleep problems can lead to irritability, trouble focusing, problems at school, and even health issues.

When a child psychologist meets with your child, they will help you and your child figure out how to deal with these areas. Your child can develop tools and strategies to better manage and reduce the worries. Your children will feel relief as they realize that everything is going to be okay. Parents are armed with the same tools and strategies to help your child.

Use Play Therapy or Animal Assisted Therapy with Young Children

Even if your children are too young to freely talk about their thoughts and emotions, a psychologist that specializes in children will have strategies that will help him to understand them. Play therapy is a unique method that child psychologists are trained in. They will be able to help your child have a safe place to work through their issues. Parent consultation will allow for specific strategies that you can use to address your concerns.

Animal Assisted Therapy with certified therapy dogs has been shown to be extremely effective with children who are not very verbal or who are fearful or uncomfortable initially in therapy. It is an effective form of therapy when other forms of therapy have not worked.

Help Your Children Cope with the Effects of Divorce

Divorce is often the hardest trial that children have to face in their young lives. Not only are their parents no longer together, but they may also

have to deal with a new step-parent or step-siblings. While there is probably a very good reason you and your ex got divorced in the first place, that does not mean that your children understand these reasons. Often, children will blame themselves, or become quite angry or sad.

A child psychologist can help you and your child deal with the changing situation. Sometimes, all children need is another perspective so that they can see the divorce was for the betterment of the family. Parents can learn the best way to work through their divorce while still being an effective and loving parent. Of course, the process is not an easy one, but at the end of treatment, your child will feel more comfortable with the divorce and will be able to move on.

Help Your Children Deal with the Loss of a Loved One (including pets)

When someone dies, children are confused. The person that they love is no longer there, and they don't understand why. Even the loss of a pet can be especially hard on children. When loss is talked about with a child psychologist, the child will have a safe place to explore their sadness, guilt, and anger and develop a better understanding of the life cycle. They will begin to feel at peace with their loss.

Diagnose, Assess, and Treat Mental Health Disorders and Learning Problems

Adults are not the only people with mental disorders. In fact, many disorders develop in childhood but are not diagnosed until many years later. If something seems off with your children, it is always a good idea to take them to a child psychologist. Often, a child is misdiagnosed by a physician. A child psychologist receives extensive training in recognizing specific symptoms and characteristics associated with mental disorders (such as ADHD, depression, anxiety, etc.).

A child psychologist can evaluate your child and make recommendations for treatment. Many of the treatments used are drug-free and will help your children live a prosperous life. With treatment focused on the correct set of problems, you and your child will feel like not only do you have a much better understanding of what is going on, but on how to deal with and improve the situation.

Help Your Children Behave Better

Many children, especially teenagers, like to act out. Younger kids often display temper tantrums, clingy behavior, and problems in school. Children act out for many reasons. Perhaps they are angry with you or they want to prove that they are independent. While they may think that this is just part of being a teenager, know that it doesn't have to be this way.

A child psychologist can help you develop tools that will help when kids are acting out and throwing tantrums. If you pick your battles and only focus on a few key areas at one time, you can develop a workable plan for improvement.

A teen psychologist is an expert at decoding teenagers. Teens are often resistant to the therapy process. However, they are generally wanting freedom and privileges. By gaining their trust that they will be listened to and not judged, a teen psychologist can counteract these issues. With some family work, the teen psychologist can get the family working together and the teens defiance or anger reduced.

Help Your Teenager Combat Peer Pressure and Overcome Drug/ Substance Abuse

Peer pressure is a part of your child's development. Your teenagers want to impress the people around them, so they may willingly participate in activities that they know are wrong. A teen psychologist can help your teenagers learn how to set healthy boundaries that don't have a negative

impact on their lives and the lives of others. Specific strategies can be used with the parents and teen to reduce the chances of future problems.

If your teenagers have already given into peer pressure, it is not too late. The important thing is that you are aware your teenagers have a drug or substance abuse problem. Many parents do not even notice until it is too late. A teen psychologist will be able to work with your teen to help them fight their addiction. Once the addiction is under control, the focus shifts to preventing relapse so that they can reach their full potential.

These are just 10 of many areas that a child psychologist can help you and your child with. They see these types of issues daily and are equipped to quickly give you the answers needed to move your child back in the right direction.

About the Author:

Dr. Steven Lazarus is a Licensed Psychologist in Littleton, Colorado. He has been working with children and teens for over 20 years. He is a Professor at the University of Denver's Graduate School of Professional Psychology where he teaches and supervises doctoral level student. Parents and kids come into his practice out at their wit's end and with a great deal of questions. They leave with hope, motivation, and effective parenting strategies to help their children develop into great kids.

For more information about Dr. Steven Lazarus, please visit his website at www.drstevenlazarus.com