

Fall, 2011 Newsletter

TMS Psychological Services, P.C.

Farewells & Welcomes

Farewell to Nora Maridueña, Psy.D., who has taken a break from her private practice work to focus on further professional development and credentialing. We thank Dr. Maridueña for her service, and wish her the very best. We are pleased that we can link Dr. Maridueña's previous clients with another one of our clinical staff or to other professionals within the community.

Welcome to Matthew Ross, Psy.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist. Dr. Ross comes to us with a wealth of experience in assessment and therapeutic services for adults, couples, families, and children in school, hospital, and nursing home settings.

Welcome to Ms. Pam McQuaid, MA, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). Ms. McQuaid has dedicated the last 16 years to the delivery of trauma-sensitive mental health services to children, adolescents, and young adults in emergent and urgent care settings, and brings her rich experience to our private practice work.

We are delighted to have Dr. Ross and Ms. McQuaid with us, and to expand our services to you.

Re-Introducing Ms. Kate Wilford, MA, Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) & RPT

What is a RPT?

Registered Play Therapists (RPTs) are credentialed by the Association for Play Therapy after earning at least a Master's degree, as well as a License in a mental health field, and completing hundreds of hours of training and supervision specific to Play Therapy.

Play Therapy is a therapeutic treatment approach which, like other therapies, seeks to help children understand and cope with difficult feelings and find solutions to problems. Children often are not able to express their thoughts and feelings verbally, but most do so naturally in their play. Toys can serve as the child's words and play as the child's language (Landreth, 2002). RPTs work from many different

theoretical orientations, but all work towards the goal of the child's attaining age-expected understanding and regulation of feelings and behaviors.

Our RPT: We are delighted to have Ms. Kate Wilford on staff; Kate has extensive training and experience as a RPT, particularly in working with young children who have experienced emotional, physical, and/or familial crises and trauma. We also are pleased to offer children and families a full array of specialized RPT services in our newly designated Play Therapy Room. If you or someone you know would benefit from RPT services, please contact our office. Thank you.



Re-Introducing Ms. Melissa Lofton, MA in Special Education, & BCBA

What is a BCBA?

Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) receive specialized training in Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). BCBAs strive to determine how a client's behavior affects functioning across all domains. BCBAs perform assessments to identify and define all aspects of client behaviors targeted for change. BCBAs then use this information to determine and implement appropriate interventions and supports for the desired changes.

What is Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)?

When many people hear the term Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), they tend to think of a particular teaching methodology that is popular with families of individuals within the Autism Spectrum, called *discrete trial training*, which is actually just one aspect of ABA services. Since the 1960s, ABA procedures have been and can be used to help individuals with all kinds of behavioral chal-

lenges. For example, ABA therapy can help to reduce interfering behaviors, help establish and maintain on-task (e.g., school-related) and positive behaviors (including those related to emotional regulation), and increase effective social communication/interactions. Ultimately, ABA can be tailored to meet the specific needs of individual clients (of all ages).

Our BCBA: We are delighted to share the good news that, in June of 2011, our staff member Ms. Melissa Lofton, obtained her board certification in Applied Behavioral Analysis after thousands of hours of academic and clinical training. As a result of Ms. Lofton's recent certification, we are pleased to be able to provide you with a full array of ABA services. If you or someone you know would benefit from ABA services, please contact Ms. Melissa Lofton directly at x11 to discuss your needs. Thank you.

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"Autumn,
the year's
last, loveliest
smile."

William
Cullen
Bryant

Inside this issue:

New Staff 1

Play Therapy 1

ABA 1

Back-To-School 2

Back-pack Safety 2

Lost & Found 2



Back-To-School

The beginning of a new school year can be a stressful time for children, with new teachers and classmates, bigger classrooms, new routines and more schoolwork. This time can be particularly unnerving and overwhelming for children who are facing major transitions such as starting elementary school or entering middle school. As a parent there are proactive steps you can take to support your child as he or she heads back to school.

- Express interest and enthusiasm about the start of the school year. If you are confident and excited, your child will be too.

- If you have visited your child's school already, you are one step ahead of the game. If not, take a walk around the school with your child and locate his or her classrooms, lunchroom, playground and restrooms. This will help you keep "in sync" with your child's every-day experiences at school.

- Take time to listen to your child and discuss aspects of the new school

year that he or she is worried about. Remember to let your child know that it's normal to feel nervous about the start of a new school year. For parents of younger children, suggest that your child take a family photo or special object to school to make his or her surroundings more comfortable.

- Spend time each day talking to your child about what happened in school. Give your child positive feedback about his or her new experiences.

- Praise and encourage your child to become involved with school activities and try new things.

- Attend school functions and stay involved in your child's education. Children whose parents are more involved with their education have higher achievement, are better adjusted and are less likely to drop out of school.

- Make a point to learn about how your child develops not just physically, but socially and emotionally, as well. If you are aware of what's typical behavior and

thoughts for your child's stage of life, you will be able to tell more readily when things may not be right.

Anxiety and stress about starting school is normal for a child and usually passes within the first few days or weeks. If your child continues to seem anxious or stressed, it may be time to seek help.

*Excerpt taken from Mental Health America:
www.nmha.org*

If problems persist, consider contacting us. We would be pleased to help you and your child with any adjustment issues regarding school-related demands and activities.

"Even if something is left undone, everyone must take time to sit still and watch the leaves turn." -- Elizabeth Lawrence



Backpack Safety Tips

At the beginning of the school year, it is important to be mindful of the potential of overloaded backpacks to be harmful to children. It is estimated that nearly 5,000 individuals visit emergency rooms each year due to backpack injuries. Experts recommend the following practices to ensure that your child's backpack is used properly:

- ◆ Ensure that the backpack you purchase is sturdy and is the proper size for your child. When making the purchase, be sure to abide by the age

recommendations listed on the manufacturer's label.

- ◆ Opt for shoulder and waist straps for extra stability.

A recent study by the American Physical Therapy Association found that as much as 50% of children surveyed carry backpacks that are too heavy.

- ◆ When loading the backpack, be sure that the contents are balanced to prevent any unnatural postures that can

cause discomfort or pain.

- ◆ Note that the maximum weight for a loaded backpack should be *no more than 10-15% of the child's body weight*. If your child cannot stand up straight without any discomfort, the backpack is too heavy.

Exercising these suggestions will place less strain on your child, and can prevent a pre-disposition for future back or shoulder injuries. For more information, please visit:

www.backpacksafe.com



Lost and Found...

We recently located an asthma inhaler in the Administrative Office. The item was noticed on July 13th, and has yet to be claimed. If you believe this inhaler belongs to you or your child, please contact our office. Thank you.