Welcome!

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Insight/Outreach, the newsletter of the Center for Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy. This is one way we will inform our supporters about the work we are doing and tell you about our achievements and goals. We chose the title Insight/Outreach to reflect the dual focus of the Center.

The “insight” part of our title refers to the individual psychotherapy we provide to children and adolescents, along with consultation with parents and referrals when indicated. In this work, we work together with kids and their parents to understand the underlying meaning of the problems they bring. This individual psychotherapeutic work turns the focus inward, to the inner emotional world of the child, so that fears, wishes, anxieties, and longings can be explored through talk and play. The work depends on a steady, reliable relationship with a therapist who provides a trustworthy, safe, and confidential space. Therapy takes place quietly and is largely an invisible process, yet one that leads to lasting transformations for the child and his or her family.

We apply what we learn from individual work to our “outreach.” This part of our title encompasses the work we do that turns outward to the community. Much of this work takes place in our Schools Initiatives, in which we provide a variety of mental health services on site in schools. Among these services are group counseling, therapy to students, and consultation with teachers and principals. In addition, the Center staff offers community education, speaking to parent organizations, graduate students, professional meetings, and groups interested in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy.

Through all these activities, we are “applying psychoanalytic understanding to everyday life.” This tagline is a reference to Freud’s book, The Psychopathology of Everyday Life. In this 1901 volume, Freud demonstrated the universal way in which thoughts and feelings that are out of our awareness get expressed through mistakes, blunders, forgetting, and the proverbial “Freudian slips” that are a part of everyone’s experience.

This book was a bestseller when published, evidence of the way in which Freud’s ideas were immediately recognizable and familiar to many. Contrary to the trope that psychoanalysis is an outmoded, expensive form of treatment suitable only for a select few, our aim is to demonstrate how the fundamental principles of psychoanalysis allow us to understand all facets of everyday life. The Center puts these principles in action through the insight and outreach work we do every day.

Help us reach out...

The Center for Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy, a vision of Paul C. Hollinger, MD, was founded in 2008 with a lead gift from Joan and William Dutton. CCAP is a program of The Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible, charitable donation to CCAP, please call Denia Barrett at 312.922.7474 ext. 323. Gifts of any amount are greatly appreciated and will have a direct impact on the services we are able to provide. Your gift can and will make a difference to the many children, parents, and families whose lives can be changed by The Center for Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy.

Serving the emotional needs of children, adolescents, and their families

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In praise of hard work

“You’re the best!” “Perfect!” Trophies for everyone! Do such accolades boost children’s self-esteem or do they have unintended consequences? Stephen Grosz offers insight into this question in his New York Times best-selling book, *The Examined Life*. Grosz, the featured speaker at a recent benefit for the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis, titles one chapter in his book “How Praise Can Cause a Loss of Confidence.” This apparent paradox invites a closer look.

Grosz cites a study of 128 ten- to twelve-year-olds who were asked to solve a series of math problems. Upon completion of a first group of questions, some of the children were praised for their intellect and others for their hard work. When given harder problems to solve, those who had been praised for their effort were more willing to attempt new approaches, were more resilient, and attributed their failures to how much effort they put in, not to lack of intelligence. Those who had been praised for how smart they were worried more about failure and were less persistent in their efforts as the degree of difficulty increased. Grosz offers his psychoanalytic insight into underlying reasons some of us as parents may err in the direction of being too indiscriminately congratulatory.

*To show how different we are from our own parents who we may remember as critical or withholding of praise*

*To raise our own self-esteem by admiring our children in front of others to show what a great job we’ve done as parents and how amazing our offspring are*

According to Grosz “empty praise parallels thoughtless criticism” in the sense that either extreme ignores who the child is and how he or she feels. He quotes a retired Indiana remedial reading teacher, Charlotte Stiglitz, “I don’t praise [children] for doing what they ought to do… I praise them when they do something really difficult… I also think it is important to say thank you (again, not for doing something expected but for patience, for example).

Many of the children who are referred to The Center for Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy struggle to maintain a good internal measure of self-esteem. Some have had too little loving investment from others in support of their efforts; some are too hard on themselves, even when successful; some may cover over anxiety and low self-regard by misbehaving. Our clinicians may help by meeting with parents to think together about what they can do to reinforce their child’s self-esteem and encourage the pride and mastery that come with hard work. In other cases, when lowered self-esteem interferes at home, at school, or with friends, individual psychotherapy may be a valuable resource for gaining insight into what contributes to the problem and helping a child fully develop the capacity for positive and realistic sense of self-worth.

Note: a limited number of Stephen Grosz’s book are available for sale at the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis.

Outreach In schools

The 2014-15 school year is underway and the Center for Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy Schools Initiatives projects are off to a good start. Through the generous support of a charitable trust, weekly group therapy services will be provided by Center therapists in three Chicago Public Schools in Englewood. At the Montessori School of Englewood, two social work graduate students who are doing a unique two-year “psychoanalytic field placement,” will provide on-site therapeutic services to individual students. Center therapists will be returning to a high school in Uptown to offer similar on-site services and consultation to teachers and staff. In Greater Grand Crossing, a number of therapists and volunteers at a CPS elementary school are bringing support to the staff’s Culture and Climate team. Look for details about these projects in the next edition of Insight/Outreach.

During the previous year CCAP therapists provided 1,147 hours of individual psychotherapy through the Child Clinic and 1,700 Hours of school-based services.