

# on your mind

A PUBLICATION OF CHILD & FAMILY PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Recommended books  
and apps to help you  
manage symptoms

Microaggressions: How  
they can lead to anxiety

When sports-related  
anxiety gets in the way

Conquering fears with  
exposure therapy

Managing anxiety  
right here, right now

How to help anxious  
kids stay in school

Tap your way to relief



## COPING WITH ANXIETY

Anxiety is one of the most common reasons individuals come to CFPS for help. Anxiety is what we experience when we worry, and it is not always a bad thing. A little bit of anxiety helps us pay attention to something that we need to address and can even help us focus better — for example, when we are competing in a sporting event or involved with an important project.

Too much anxiety, though, can get in the way of both our performance and our happiness. It can cause us to have sleep problems, impact our relationships and even affect our physical health. When anxiety significantly interferes with our ability to function in our everyday lives, it is referred to as an anxiety disorder, and these disorders require treatment. Sometimes all the treatment required is brief counseling, but at times medication might be needed in addition to longer term counseling.

These are some of the most common types of anxiety disorders:

**Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)** is characterized by chronic, excessive worry about everyday life, such as health, money, work and family, even though there are no obvious reasons for concern.

**Panic disorder** is when a person has repeated, unexpected panic attacks. A panic attack is a sudden surge of intense fear in situations where there is no danger or threat present.

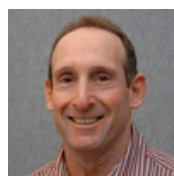
**Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** can occur when someone is exposed to one or more terrifying events, such as violent personal attacks, accidents or military combat. These events might be relived through nightmares and flashbacks long after they happened.

**Social anxiety disorder** is characterized by overwhelming anxiety and excessive self-consciousness in everyday social situations. The person may fear being judged or doing something embarrassing and, as a result, may avoid social situations altogether.

**Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)** is when a person has recurrent, unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and/or repetitive behaviors (compulsions). For example, a person who obsessively thinks their hands are always dirty may compulsively wash their hands hundreds of times a day.

This issue of *On Your Mind* addresses various topics relating to anxiety. I hope and trust that you will find the articles both interesting and helpful.

**Larry Beer, Ed.D.**  
CFPS President



**cfps**  
Child & Family Psychological Services, P.C.

CONNECT WITH US: [childandfamilypsych.com](http://childandfamilypsych.com) 269.372.4140



# BOOKS, APPS TO HELP YOU MANAGE SYMPTOMS

by **KIM HIATT**

Limited Licensed Psychologist

**M**any people are affected by and seek treatment for anxiety each year. In addition to getting professional treatment with a therapist, some people turn to self-help resources as an adjunct to therapy.



Whether you struggle with situational stress and anxiety, a general-

ized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, social anxiety or even depression, the following books and apps may be helpful guides in managing your symptoms, decreasing levels of stress and anxiety and developing relaxation or mindfulness skills and habits.

**APPS** Smartphone technology and interactive apps have made resources more readily available with the tap of a finger or click of a button. There are numerous apps available that can help you while you are at home, at work, in the community or at school. Following are some of my recommendations; most are free downloads and have options to access more exercises through a subscription.

**Headspace** — Headspace teaches the basics of mindfulness and meditation. You can practice these skills with exercises and activities to promote relaxation. It also includes exercises to improve sleep.

**Calm** — This soothing app provides relaxing sounds, sleep stories, 10-minute relaxation programs and guided meditation. You can set daily reminders to stop and breathe or be mindful.

**Simple Habit** — This is the mindfulness app for busy people, offering 5-minute mindfulness activities to reset your day. With these audio meditations you can bring a little peace to your day whether

you need to transition from work to home, calm yourself before a presentation or otherwise relieve stress.

**Pacifica** — Based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Pacifica can be used for depression, stress and anxiety. In addition to tracking changes in your mood, this self-help app can help you learn and practice relaxation exercises, improve health behaviors and recognize negative thought patterns contributing to depression and anxiety.

**Breathe 2 Relax** — This app helps users learn how to use and practice diaphragmatic breathing to decrease symptoms of a panic attack. Diaphragmatic breathing exercises also assist in stress management, anger control and stabilizing mood.

**Panic Relief** — Panic Relief provides education and addresses frequently asked questions about panic attacks. Exercises and tutorials can help you relax and shorten the duration of a panic attack.

**BOOKS** There's no shortage of books offering educational material on different types of anxiety, symptoms, treatment and the development of skills that can assist in decreasing and coping with symptoms of anxiety. Among those I recommend are:

**Rewiring Your Anxious Brain: How to Use the Neuroscience of Fear to End Anxiety, Panic and Worry**, Catherine M. Pittman and Elizabeth M. Karle — This book looks at the neuroscience behind anxiety. The authors explore two areas of the brain (amygdala and cortex) to help readers make sense of fear and learn to change the way they respond to panic, worry and anxiety.

**The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook**, Edmund J. Bourne — An excellent resource for those struggling with anxiety,

fear and worry as well as for mental health professionals. It explores anxiety-related diagnoses, treatment options/recommendations, medication, exercise, nutrition, wellness and self-help exercises.

**Anxiety Workbook for Teens: Activities to Help You Deal with Anxiety and Worry**, Lisa M. Schab — Written by a therapist to assist teens in developing and implementing positive coping skills to manage anxiety, this book helps readers recognize thoughts contributing to anxious feelings and provides useful tools and exercises to decrease symptoms of anxiety.

**Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy**, David D. Burns — Written by a psychiatrist, this book uses the CBT approach to identify how thoughts contribute to depression and anxiety. By identifying negative thoughts and how they are being processed or interpreted, people can make changes to these thoughts to improve their mood. *Feeling Good* also provides information on treatment for depression, including guidance on medications.

**A Path with Heart: A Guide Through the Perils and Promises of a Spiritual Life**, Jack Kornfield — This book is for those who have an understanding of mindfulness and meditation. Written by a psychologist trained as a Buddhist monk and teacher of meditation, it is a spiritual guide to living in the modern world.

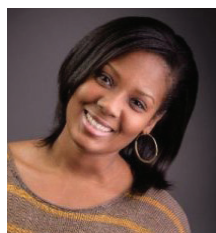
**The Relaxation Response**, Herbert Benson with Miriam Z. Klipper — This classic book introduced the mind/body approach to decreasing stress by making the connection between relaxation and a decrease in heart disease and other physical conditions. Recommended for anyone wanting to decrease stress and improve health, especially those dealing with heart disease or chronic pain.

# 'I DIDN'T MEAN IT THAT WAY'

## MICROAGGRESSIONS AND THEIR CONNECTION TO ANXIETY

by JANEÉ STEELE, Ph.D.

Licensed Professional Counselor



For people of color and other minority groups, brief, everyday insults known as microaggressions can be a significant

source of anxiety. Microaggressions are subtle, often unintentional put-downs that reflect prejudiced or discriminatory messages about minority groups in our society. They can be verbal or non-verbal and can even be the result of good intentions. Still, the result can be that they make members of minority groups feel less accepted, unsafe and, in turn, anxious.

Here are a few common examples of microaggressions:

- Mistaking a person of color for a service worker
- Forcing applicants to choose between male and female when completing forms
- Assuming a person's significant other is of the opposite sex
- Raising your voice or speaking slowly when talking to a blind person
- Asking a multiracial person, "What are you?"
- Using the word gay to describe awkward or socially undesirable behavior or appearance
- Asserting that "When I look at you, I don't see color" or "In America, everyone has the same opportunities"

Microaggressions communicate unconscious biases and beliefs that suggest the targeted individuals do not belong and that invalidate the experiences of targeted groups. Having low diversity in the workplace, for example, communicates the message that certain individuals do not belong

or can only go so far, while colorblind messages such as "Everyone has the same opportunity" suggest that people of color and other oppressed groups experience poor social outcomes due to their own laziness and that discriminatory social systems have little or no part to play.

Research shows that individuals who experience microaggressions are at an increased risk for anxiety and other forms of psychological distress. A recent study of black university students, for example, found that racial microaggressions were associated with anxiety symptoms,<sup>1</sup> while another study found increased anxiety and post-traumatic symptoms not only among those directly targeted by the microaggression, but by those who indirectly experienced the incident as well.<sup>2</sup>



There are many ways we can reduce microaggressions and thereby anxiety in our environments:

- Examine ourselves and correct our own beliefs or behaviors that may be offensive to a minority group.
- Read or listen to material that explains the history of oppression in our society.
- Listen when someone says we've offended them.
- Speak out from our positions of privilege. As a straight person, rather than laughing at gay jokes or accepting use of derogatory language, I can politely correct others by helping them realize how

their jokes or language might be offensive. We can all help marginalized groups "shoulder the burden" in this way.

As members of targeted groups, one way to manage anxiety due to microaggressions is to seek counseling. Counseling can help you process incidents and validate your experience. It may even help you identify ways to become more empowered in your environment.

Another way is to increase your sense of social connectedness. In the study of black students mentioned above, the researchers found that social connectedness can be a buffer against anxiety. Therefore, developing a sense of community with individuals who have similar experiences or understand your point of view can be an effective strategy for coping with microaggressions in everyday life.

As members of society, we are all subjected to messages that influence our views of the world. Sometimes these messages reflect prejudiced or otherwise negative attitudes toward members of oppressed groups that cause us to say or do things that may be offensive to others. As mental health professionals, rather than seeking to place blame, we hope that discussing microaggressions and their negative influence on the psychological well-being of various groups will increase awareness and result in a more inclusive and mentally well community. We all have a role in creating a safer, more welcoming (and less anxiety-provoking) world.

<sup>1</sup>Liao, K. Y-H., Weng, C-Y, & West, L. M. (2016). Social connectedness and intolerance of uncertainty as moderators between racial microaggressions and anxiety among Black individuals. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 63, 240-246.

<sup>2</sup>Nadal, K. L., Issa, M. Leon, J., Meterko, V., Wideman, M., & Wong, Y. (2011). Sexual orientation microaggressions: "Death by a thousand cuts" for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 8, 234-259.



## WHEN SPORTS ANXIETY GETS IN THE WAY

by **EMILY LINDSAY**

Limited Licensed Professional Counselor  
Temporary Limited Licensed Psychologist

*Editor's Note: While this article focuses on athletes, it can be relevant to anyone who performs publicly, including musicians, actors and public speakers.*



**S**tress and anxiety affect many individuals, but research has found that athletes are more likely to struggle with these

conditions than the rest of the population.

Sports-related anxiety, which can range from a few jitters to a full-fledged panic attack, can negatively affect an athlete's ability to perform at full potential. NBA star Kevin Love's recent panic attack during a basketball game brought this issue to the public forefront, but you don't have to be a professional athlete, an Olympic champion or have a room full of trophies to experience the effects of performance anxiety.

A certain level of performance anxiety — that is, being “pumped up” — can be helpful in competition by increasing focus and motivation. But too much anxiety can cause muscle tension, sweating, trembling and other physical symptoms that impact the individual's ability to compete. Further, negative thought patterns and expectations of failure can bring about a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Performance anxiety in sports is often described as a decrease in athletic performance due to too much perceived stress. Perceived stress often increases in athletes on game day because (1) they have an audience and (2) they have extremely high expectations of their success. This type of stress is often based on the way they

interpret the situation, environment and magnitude of the game they are playing. It is rarely the external situation that causes stress, but rather the way the athlete's self-talk describes the situation. If there is a significant difference between how an athlete performs during practice and how that athlete does during competitions, anxiety may be affecting performance.

Fortunately, the thoughts and self-talk athletes have regarding the event can be modified, adjusted or controlled with appropriate mental practice.

How are elite athletes consistently able to rise to the challenge when faced with tough competition? Research shows that self-confidence plays a big role. If athletes are confident in their ability, they are more likely to have a positive reaction to being “pumped up” and will thrive on the challenge of competition. They interpret arousal as excitement rather than



anxiety. Self-confidence tends to be highest when athletes believe in their ability and feel they have properly prepared for competition. When confidence is strong, it tends to crowd worry out of the mind.

A natural tendency for a person who comes against an obstacle is to push harder. Unfortunately, with stress and anxiety in sports, pushing harder against

those feelings has the potential to make them worse — in essence, one gets stressed about being stressed and anxious about being anxious. Therefore, athletes need a new skill set to deal with anxiety more effectively. Author, consultant and clinical psychologist Richard J. Butler suggested a mnemonic device called **PRESSURE** for athletes and performers who have a hard time coping with anxiety in competitions and other high-pressure situations:

**P**repare – Psychologically prepare for what you will face during the competition.

**R**elax – Use diaphragmatic breathing exercises prior to competition to prevent over-arousal, which can negatively affect performance. (See more on diaphragmatic or “belly breathing” on page 6.)

**E**xternalize – Believe that problems are not within yourself, especially if you feel that there are too many demands being put upon you.

**S**tay Positive – Strive to have confidence in your abilities.

**S**ingle Minded – Stay focused on the task at hand — useful in both training and competition.

**U**nite – Particularly in team sports, consider what roles others will fulfill and the importance of working together as a team throughout the competition.

**R**e-evaluate – Put the event into perspective. Ask yourself, “How important is this event in the real world?”

**E**xtend Yourself – Give your best performance every time no matter how important or unimportant the competition is perceived to be, whether it is a practice, regular season competition, conference final or championship.

*continued on page 5*

# CONQUERING FEARS WITH EXPOSURE THERAPY



by **JULIE CARBAJAL**

Limited Licensed Psychologist  
Limited Licensed Professional Counselor  
Certified Advanced Alcohol & Drug Counselor



A therapist and scholar I greatly admire defines anxiety as what shows up when something is important and the

outcome is uncertain. Since outcomes are often uncertain, if we don't experience some anxiety, it means that nothing is important to us. In other words, if we're not experiencing anxiety at least some of the time, something is wrong!

However, pathological anxiety occurs when we begin avoiding certain situations (crowds, friends or heights, for example) or escaping from them (by using mood-altering substances, checking phones, leaving situations, etc.) in order to decrease anxiety. Escaping or avoidance provides short-term relief, which is reinforcing because it feels good. So the next time we consider trying something and anxiety shows up, we remember what felt good last time (avoiding and escaping), and so we do that again. Anxiety disorders develop as a result of this cycle. In time, we find that our range of possible activities has decreased, our quality of life has become limited, and our world is shrinking.

Exposure therapy is one of the most effective evidence-based therapies for overcoming anxiety disorders, including Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and trauma disorders. With the help of a therapist, and typically as part of a cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) treatment plan, exposure therapy gradually and repeatedly exposes the

individual to the situation or object they fear until the fear subsides.

Exposure therapy has two principal delivery vehicles: imaginal exposure and in vivo exposure, often (but not always) used together. With imaginal exposure, the client imagines or revisits the scenarios that provoke anxiety by talking about them. With in vivo exposure (or "real life" exposure), the client is put in the actual situation that causes the anxiety.

Because individuals who experience anxiety avoid situations, places, people and things that are usually objectively safe (e.g., going places alone, touching doorknobs), they haven't been able to find out whether or not these things are really as scary or dangerous as they may believe. During exposure therapy, they test those beliefs using their own experience and eventually break the cycle of avoidance.

Initially, individuals believe that if they don't avoid those situations, their anxiety will be too intense to handle. In exposure therapy, they stay in those situations and realize that their anxiety eventually decreases over time and with multiple exposures. This process is called habituation, and it can occur with both imaginal and in vivo exposure.

I explain to clients that it's kind of like watching a scary movie. The first time,

it can be frightening and emotionally upsetting. But imagine seeing the movie 50 times and how different it would feel the last time. That is how habituation works.

Not all fears are caused by a thing or a situation. Some people, particularly trauma survivors, fear and avoid certain images, thoughts or memories. Imaginal exposure can be used to help someone confront an unwanted thought or memory and gradually defuse its power to provoke anxiety.

At the end of exposure therapy, many clients feel more in control of their lives, feel more confident and generally experience a significant reduction in, if not a remission of, symptoms (up to 80 percent for some diagnoses). They begin to realize the world is safer than they thought and not full of dangers to avoid. They are able to do what's important to them, even when the outcome is uncertain. They know that if anxiety shows up, they will be just fine.

## SPORTS ANXIETY *(from page 4)*

The following strategies are often used by elite athletes to effectively manage their anxiety during performance situations: goal setting; thought-control strategies, such as positive thinking and cognitive restructuring; relaxation techniques, such as progressive muscle relaxation; and focusing on the task at hand by using grounding techniques. Imagery and mental rehearsal of tasks can also help improve athletic performance because they provide familiarity with the task at hand and positive feedback of one's imagined performance.

Anxiety will always play a role in sports performance regardless of an athlete's level of competition or skill. But performance anxiety does not have to dictate an athlete's success if the proper tools and mental strategies are utilized.

# MANAGING ANXIETY RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW

By **ERICA GERGELY, Ph.D.**

Licensed Psychologist



**A**pprehension, worry, nervousness and fear are emotions we all feel, and they can be very appropriate and im-

portant. They can help warn us of potential danger, for example, or prepare us for challenges. However, the level of anxiety present in anxiety or panic disorders is more intense, lasts longer and interferes with daily functioning and quality of life.

Regardless of where you fall on the spectrum of anxiety, there are several strategies you can use to reduce your experience of anxiety and its impact on your life.

## Strive for wellness

Because anxiety affects your mind, body and whole being, focusing on overall mind-body wellness can reduce your vulnerability to excessive, unhealthy anxiety, as well as increase your tolerance for ordinary life stressors. Achieve optimal wellness by attending regular medical, dental and vision exams; eating balanced, nutritious meals (notice what foods make you feel good, bad, calm, energized); avoiding mood-altering substances such as caffeine, nicotine, alcohol and illegal drugs; getting the amount of sleep your body needs; and exercising regularly. In addition to being good for your heart, lungs, bones, muscles and brain, exercise stimulates endorphins – your brain's natural antidepressants.

## Belly breathe

Purposeful and intentional breathing exercises are one of the quickest and most accessible ways to combat the physical symptoms that accompany anxiety. When people experience anxiety or tension,

they tend to breathe with rapid, shallow breaths coming from the chest, which can contribute to an increased heart rate, dizziness, muscle tension and fatigue. Conversely, breathing from the diaphragm, called “belly breathing,” yields deep, even breaths, reduced stress levels and increased feelings of calm.

Practice belly breathing so you'll be comfortable doing it during moments of anxiety. To help children learn, try using guided-imagery techniques, such as having the child pretend to sniff a flower (inhale), then blow up a balloon (exhale).



*\*Assess your breathing following these steps: Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Notice which hand is rising and falling. Aim for the hand on your belly to move with each breath.*

## Practice PMR

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) is another effective strategy for preventing and reducing the physiological symptoms of anxiety. Essentially, PMR is the activity of systematically tensing and relaxing the major muscle groups of the body from head to toe. Using this practice just 10 minutes a day can help decrease heart rate, tension and anxiety and promote relaxation and mental calmness.

You can find PMR scripts, audio files and apps online to guide you.

*\*Try a brief PMR exercise: Reach both arms out in front of you and stretch as far as you*

*can. Raise them up over your head and stretch until you can feel the pull in your shoulders. Now, let your arms fall back to your side for a count of five. Pay attention to the difference in the sensation of tension versus relaxation in your muscles. Repeat three times.*

## Halt the hamster wheel

Rumination, or repetitive, incomplete thoughts about the same situation, problem or unpleasant experience, is another classic symptom of anxiety. Like the hamster continuously spinning on a wheel yet gaining no ground, a ruminative mind is active though not productive. Rumination does not lead to more in-depth understanding or problem-solving, rather it creates tremendous challenges in day-to-day functioning.

If you find yourself stuck on the hamster wheel in an endless loop of repetition – STOP! Physically move to a new location, begin a new activity, go for a walk, call a friend, do anything different to help your mind shift its focus. Using a stop-sign image or actually saying “stop!” will help reduce anxiety over time.

Another strategy is to replace worry with planning. Using this five-step, problem-solving process to tackle small, everyday issues as well as big life challenges can help disrupt rumination and ignite action: (1) *Identify the problem.* (2) *Generate possible solutions.* (3) *Evaluate the solutions.* (4) *Choose and implement a solution.* (5) *Assess the outcome. Repeat steps 3-5 as needed.*

And remember, most things we worry about never happen.

If you or someone you know is struggling to manage their anxiety, help is available. CFPS has numerous clinicians who are skilled in the treatment of anxiety and panic disorders.



# HOW TO HELP ANXIOUS KIDS STAY IN SCHOOL

By **JENNIFER GRUEL**

Licensed Professional Counselor



**T**he Anxiety and Depression Association of America reports that 2 to 5 percent of children struggle

with anxiety-based school refusal, meaning they feel anxious to the point that they don't want to or refuse to attend school.

When children and adolescents are experiencing severe anxiety about attending school, it can be overwhelming for everyone involved. It can also be challenging to know how to help. Fortunately, there are a variety of practical ways to help students at any age who are experiencing school-based anxiety.

Anxiety can present in many forms. It may show up as behaviors like defiance, temper tantrums, isolation, irritability, perfectionism or avoidance. Anxiety can also manifest as physical symptoms, including headaches, stomachaches, nausea, fatigue and muscle tension. Depending on the age and emotional expression of the child, it may be difficult for them to articulate what they are feeling.

If you suspect your child is experiencing anxiety, knowing what to look for can help you open a dialogue and discover what they are feeling and thereby gain insight as to how to help.

For young children, it is certainly normal to experience separation anxiety when starting school. It is common at this stage to see tears, clinginess and defiance as well as avoidance. As a parent or caregiver, make it a point to validate the child's feelings. You might say something like, "You seem nervous. It is normal to

feel nervous when you are trying something new."

Try to create a consistent and reinforcing routine. The more systematic the approach to school, the more comfort children will gain in the process of separating and coming back together. Sometimes I encourage parents to think of their separation as a ritual with a set script. The routine should include a comfortable phrase or two and physical reassurance that is repeated each day. For example, tell your child, "I love you, I am so excited to see you tonight and hear all about your day!" Then one hug, two pats, and leave for the morning.

If there are changes in the schedule or routine, it is important to discuss these in advance so everyone is prepared. Communicating the new schedule allows children to have more predictability, which can reduce anxiety. Sometimes it can be helpful to create a visual schedule or story about the day that allows children to see what's ahead more concretely. Familiarity with what's next can significantly reduce the anxiety of the unknown and help ease

adolescents are better able to articulate their worries more specifically. It is crucial to know exactly what is causing concern in order to approach specific worries accurately. Often these fears are related to challenging social issues or academic concerns.

Sometimes the difficulty for parents is knowing how to help effectively. Counseling can be helpful in providing strategies that children and adolescents can use to build internal skills to manage their anxiety, as well as give caregivers guidance on when to intervene. Allowing children to problem-solve on their own can build confidence and self-esteem, yet some problems are larger than young people can solve independently.

Whatever the circumstances, it is important for the child to continue attending school. If children are able to avoid going to school, what started as a small worry can quickly escalate into a phobia, and then it becomes much more difficult to get them to return to school.

Finally, building caring and supportive relationships with school staff and peers can be very helpful in calming anxiety.

Frequently, even one supportive person — a school counselor, a supportive peer or a caring staff member — can create a welcoming environment at school. Positive relationships can build comfort for



what can feel like, to a young person, a very long time without a special loved one.

Older children, too, need to have their feelings validated. As challenging as it may be, listening without minimizing or dismissing your child's anxiety allows them to share their worries openly so they may begin to problem-solve with you as their ally. Fortunately, older children and

students in attending classes and doing their personal best.

It is natural to worry; it is a signal from our brain that something needs to be different. We can best support students by listening to them and assisting them in continuing to go to school, trying their best and working through difficulties along the way.

## CFPS STAFF

### HOLIDAY TERRACE Kalamazoo

**President:** Larry Beer, EdD  
Julie Carbajal, LLP, LLPC  
Maureen Corts, LMSW  
Patti Criswell, LMSW  
Dave Fatzinger, EdD  
Jennifer Gruel, LPC  
Linnea Halfvarson, LLP, LPC  
Nancy Hein, LMSW  
Kim Hiatt, LLP  
Paul Hoskins, LPC, LLP, LMFT  
Brian Johnson, LLP  
Jenny Kindt, LLP  
Sarah Krussell, LPC, LLP  
Orianne Lemay, LMSW  
Emily Lindsay, LLPC, TLLP  
Sarah Macklin, LLMSW  
Pamela Mairs, LLP  
Pam Marx, LPC, LMFT  
Lynnette Matar, LPC, LLP, NCC  
Ann Muntter, LMSW  
Jessica Niland, LPC  
Bridget Nolan, LLP, LPC  
Jane O'Grady, LMFT, LLP, LPC  
Karen Oberhill, LPC  
Tami Parke, LLP, LPC  
Kristina Raleigh, LLPC  
Robert Schram, LLP  
Ann Sluyter, LMSW  
Janeé Steele, PhD, LPC  
Dawn Vollink, LMSW  
Ian Warnsley, LLPC  
Aaron Wilson, LMSW  
Mary Zirpoli, EdD

### E. CENTRE AVENUE Portage

**Codirector:** Abbie VanDerWege, PhD  
**Codirector:** Jeff Chicoski, LMSW  
Janice Feller, LPC  
Erica Gergely, PhD  
Gordon Hare, PhD  
Sheri Heflin, LLP  
Shannon Hilton-Smith, LLP  
Chad Muffley, LLP  
Logan Stout, LLMSW  
Julie Waldron, LLP, LPC

### BUSINESS OFFICE

**Practice Manager:** Nikki McGruder

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Cindy Beer

# TAPPING YOUR WAY TO RELIEF



By **ANN MUNTTER**

Licensed Master's Social Worker

Many people look for natural ways to reduce stress and anxiety without medication. Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), or tapping therapy, is one method to do just that. EFT is a self-help technique for calming negative emotions. The technique

involves tapping your fingertips on acupuncture points while thinking about negative emotions you're experiencing and voicing positive affirmations.

These are the same energy or acupuncture points that have been used in traditional Chinese medicine for centuries. Think of EFT as acupuncture for emotional healing without the use of needles.

EFT developer Gary Craig believed that the cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body's energy flow. By releasing blockages within the energy system, tapping rebalances the body's emotional energy and thereby reduces symptoms of emotional distress.

I teach many of my clients how to use EFT because it is a powerful but simple technique that can be done throughout the day as stress builds up or as unexpected events happen. It only requires one minute to complete once you learn the tapping sequence. After using this technique, people usually feel a significant reduction in their stress levels and go about their day with a positive sense of well-being.

You can find out more about Emotional Freedom Technique by visiting [emofree.com](http://emofree.com) and [EFTuniverse.com](http://EFTuniverse.com) or by contacting me at the CFPS office.



## CHILD & FAMILY PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, P.C.

We are a diverse group of psychologists, counselors and social workers dedicated to providing the highest quality mental health services to people needing guidance as they face life's challenges. In a caring, comfortable setting, we serve clients of all ages through individual, couple, family and group counseling.

Our therapists specialize in a wide range of areas, including depression, anxiety, stress management, loss and grief, transitions, relationships, adolescent issues, parenting, self-esteem, trauma, behavioral issues, eating disorders, LGBTQ concerns and addictions, among many others. In addition, we offer psychological evaluations and testing services.

For a complete list of our therapists and their areas of expertise and interest, as well as a list of our therapy groups, visit our website at [childandfamilypsych.com](http://childandfamilypsych.com).

To make an appointment to see a therapist at either our Kalamazoo or Portage location, please call our business office at (269)372-4140. Our support staff will be happy to work with you in choosing an appropriate therapist based on your needs and preferences.

**KALAMAZOO OFFICE** 5340 Holiday Terrace, Kalamazoo, MI 49009  
Phone: (269)372-4140 Fax: (269)372-0390

**PORTAGE OFFICE** 1662 E. Centre Avenue, Portage, MI 49002  
Phone: (269)321-8564 Fax: (269)321-8641

**cfps**  
Child & Family Psychological Services, P.C.



**VISIT OUR WEBSITE** [childandfamilypsych.com](http://childandfamilypsych.com)