



think News

Newsletter from
Think Psychology Solutions

Psychologists & Clinical
Psychologists:
Vanessa Hamilton
Terese Hutchison
Jason McCrae
Brigid Ryan
Lisa Knipe

Thought Bubbles

Experienced Eating
Disorders clinician joins
Think

Lisa Knipe is joining Think Psychology Solutions from early May having previously been working Northside in Private Practice. Lisa, like all Think Psychologists, is able to handle general clinical psychology issues however also has a special interest in conditions associated with eating. She has worked at the ACT Mental Health Eating Disorders Unit, run specialized programs for Bullimia Nervosa and previously worked in private practice with clients experiencing difficulties with obesity, over eating, losing weight and any weight related issues.

In addition to Lisa's focus on eating disorders she also has worked in the area of perinatal mental health having just completed a stint as a Locum Psychologist at Calvary Hospital where she worked with mental health and perinatal clients dealing with depression and anxiety during pregnancy and the post natal depression period.

We're excited to welcome Lisa, who has been a registered Psychologist for close to 15 years, particularly with her interest and experience in Eating Disorders and weight issues. When she's not at Think Lisa is completing her Clinical Doctorate at ANU so she won't have too much time to spare!



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Prevention of Anxiety Disorders in Early Childhood

The World Health Organisation predicts that by 2030, internalising problems, such as depression and anxiety, will be second only to HIV/AIDS in international burden of disease (Mathers & Loncar, 2006). Internalising problems affect 1 in 7 school aged children, and if left untreated can negatively impact their peer relationships, academic functioning, and their future mental health, adult relationships, employment and increase the risk of early mortality. Internalising (emotional) and externalising (behavioural) problems are among the most common difficulties of early childhood, affecting approximately 15% of those aged 18 months to 5 years (Bayer et al., 2011).

Anxiety disorders are the most common psychological disorders in early to middle childhood, and the earliest form of psychopathology to present in children. Retrospective studies of adults with anxiety disorders indicate that most adults report their anxiety's onset occurred in childhood. Children with anxiety disorders are at a significantly higher risk of developing depression and substance use problems during adolescence (Rapee et al., 2010); and the prevalence of depression dramatically increases during middle adolescence.

Early childhood offers a window of opportunity for effective mental health promotion to children at risk. The strongest precursor of internalising problems in young children is 'temperamental inhibition', an infant temperament type characterised by fearfulness and a tendency to withdraw from new and novel situations. Other known risk factors include harsh and overprotective parenting, and parental internalising problems.

In 2010, Rapee and his colleagues at the University of Macquarie conducted two successful efficacy trials of a prevention program called *Cool Little Kids* for parents of inhibited preschoolers. This parenting program aims to prevent shy or sensitive preschool children from developing anxious and emotional problems during their transition to school. A six-session parent group focuses on parents implementing strategies to develop their child's bravery by reducing overprotective parenting interactions. A population level trial is currently being conducted at community preschools in Melbourne (from 2011-2014).

(Go to http://www.rch.org.au/ccch/research.cfm?doc_id=14219 for information on this trial).

Medical practitioners are beginning to refer younger children and their parents to psychologists who can provide parents with the necessary psycho-education and parenting strategies to confidently build their children's resilience to situational fear and worries and prevent their children developing more complex and debilitating anxiety and depressive disorders in the future.

Terese Hutchison, Psychologist.

Bayer, J. K., Rapee, R. M., Hiscock, H., Ukoumunne, O. C., Mihalopoulos, C., Clifford, S., & Wake, M. (2011). The Cool Little Kids randomised controlled trial: Population-level early prevention for anxiety disorders. *BMC Public Health*, 11, 11.

Mathers, C. D., & Loncar, D. (2006). Projections of global mortality and burden of disease. *Plos Medicine*, 3, e442.

Rapee, R. M., Kennedy, S. J., Ingram, M., Edwards, S. L., & Sweeney, L. (2010). Altering the trajectory of anxiety in at-risk young children. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 167, 1518-1525.

Understanding and Managing Stress

What is stress?

Stress can be described as feeling overloaded, wound-up tight, tense and worried. It can be a reaction to a short-lived situation, such as being stuck in traffic, or it can last a long time if you're dealing with relationship problems, a spouse's death or other serious situations. Stress becomes problematic when it interferes with your ability to live a normal life over an extended period and can have a major impact on the individual, their family, work and broader society.

The statistics of stress

Our ability to manage stress can have a serious impact on our physical and emotional well-being. Consider these sobering facts:

- 43% of all adults experience adverse health effects due to stress
- Stress is linked to six of the leading causes of death in the United States: heart disease, cancer, lung disease, cirrhosis of the liver, accidents, and suicide
- It is estimated that stress costs the Australian work force over \$30 billion annually in reduced productivity, workers' compensation benefits, and absenteeism.
- Up to 90% of all doctors' visits are for stress-related illnesses, ailments, and complaints.

What are the symptoms of stress?

When a stressful event occurs, our bodies respond by activating the autonomic nervous system, the 'fight or flight' response.

Staff Summary:

Psychologist	Clinical Psych?	Children (Under 12)	Adolescent (12-18)	Adult	Specialities/Interests/Experience
Vanessa Hamilton	✓	✓	✓	✓	Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar, parenting issues and stress.
Terese Hutchison		✓	✓	✓	Children (primary school age and under), adolescents, anxiety in kids, disabilities and the elderly.
Jason McCrae	✓		✓ (Males)	✓	Anxiety and adjustment disorders, men, alcohol and substance use, relationships.
Brigid Ryan	✓		✓	✓	Perinatal mental health, adolescents, stress, and anxiety related disorders, depression.
Lisa Knipe			✓	✓	Eating disorders (esp. Bulimia), obesity and weight issues, perinatal mental health, anxiety, stress and depression.

Referrals:

Referrals can be made directly to an individual psychologist or a general referral to the practice. Our reception staff will take a brief intake assessment with the patient over the telephone, to ensure an appointment is booked with an appropriate psychologist and within a suitable time-frame.

While the physical changes help us to try to meet the challenges of the stressful situation, if the stress is ongoing and the physical changes continue, they can lead to other physical and psychological symptoms, such as;

- **headaches, other aches and pains**
- **sleep disturbance, insomnia**
- **high blood pressure**
- **upset stomach, indigestion, diarrhea**
- **weakened immune system**
- **heart disease**
- **anxiety &/or depression**
- **difficulty concentrating**
- **fatigue**
- **feeling overwhelmed and out of control**
- **feeling moody, tearful**
- **anger, irritability**

Types of stress;

1. **Acute stress** - typically a reaction to specific demands and pressures of a particular situation.

2. **Episodic acute stress** - some people experience acute stress over and over, often referred to as repetitive stress episodes. These may result from a series of very real stressful challenges or may result from an individual's tendency to be a bit like a 'stress machine'. These people worry endlessly about bad things, are frequently in a rush, impatient and see everything as urgent. Some people experience stress as a combination of real stressors and a tendency to operate like a 'stress machine'.
3. **Chronic stress** - this involves ongoing demands, pressures and worries that seem to continue with little hope of ending. This type of stress tends to wear people down over time and has a negative effect on relationships and health.

When to refer patients

If high levels of stress continue for a long period and interfere with a patient's quality of life, it is worth referring them onto a mental health specialist, like the psychologists at Think Psychology Solutions.

Vanessa Hamilton, Clinical Psychologist.

Source: Understanding and managing stress, Australian Psychological Society (2011)
The Stress, Anxiety and Depression Resource Centre & Work Safe Australia

Psychological Testing Services

Think is now expanding the range of services offered to the public. In addition to providing a wide range of psychological therapy services we are now offering cognitive and emotional assessment for children and adolescents. Cognitive and emotional assessment can assist parents and teachers to better understand a child/adolescent's intellectual abilities as well as their emotional state. An in-depth understanding of both allows parents and teacher to better help a child/adolescent who may be struggling academically and/or socially.

