

VOL. 2 ISSUE 5 • MAY 2024

MOSAIC MINDS

Official Newsletter of Midwest Autism & Therapy Centers



SUPPORT OUR FUNDRAISING TEAM FOR STEPS FOR AUTISM - MN

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2024: 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Steps for Autism is an inclusive event for all abilities with a resource fair featuring in-person sponsors and activities. The walk will be at the pace and distance choice of each participant. Funds raised stay local to support social and recreational programs, counseling and consulting services, classes, trainings, and more!



ROC at the St. Louis Park Rec Center
3700 Monterey Dr, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Show your support by donating to our fundraising team at givebutter.com/nbCJGt/midwest-autism-therapy or scan here



This Issue:

STEPS FOR AUTISM - MN
PAGE 01

INTENSIVE VS. FOCUSED
THERAPY
PAGE 02

LOOK WHO GOT
PROMOTED!
PAGES 03

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
PAGE 04

AUTISM MONTH RECAP
PAGE 05

WHAT'S IN A DIAGNOSIS?
PAGE 06

NEW CLINICIANS
PAGE 07

GET CONNECTED
PAGE 08

Read this issue
and more online!





ABA CARE MODELS:

INTENSIVE VS. FOCUSED THERAPY

ABA therapy isn't one-size-fits-all. You'll also need to determine whether your child should receive intensive or focused therapy services. The choice between the two is influenced by many factors including age, developmental level, case complexity, family dynamics, and more. Let's take a closer look at intensive vs. focused therapy and explore the differences between these two care delivery models!

INTENSIVE AUTISM THERAPY

Intensive ABA Therapy (also known as Comprehensive Therapy) refers to a treatment regime that is extensive in frequency, duration, or scope. What this means in non-clinical terms is that intensive therapy equals a high number of therapy hours over an extended period to meet a range of complex developmental concerns. Goals for intensive ABA therapy vary from child to child, but often include individualized treatment plans to support intellectual functioning, language & communication development, daily living skills, and social functioning.

Typically, these programs provide 25 to 40 hours of therapy each week for 1 to 3 years. Intensive services are often recommended for children with Level 2 or 3 Autism Spectrum Disorder who have significant delays in more than one developmental area.

FOCUSED AUTISM THERAPY

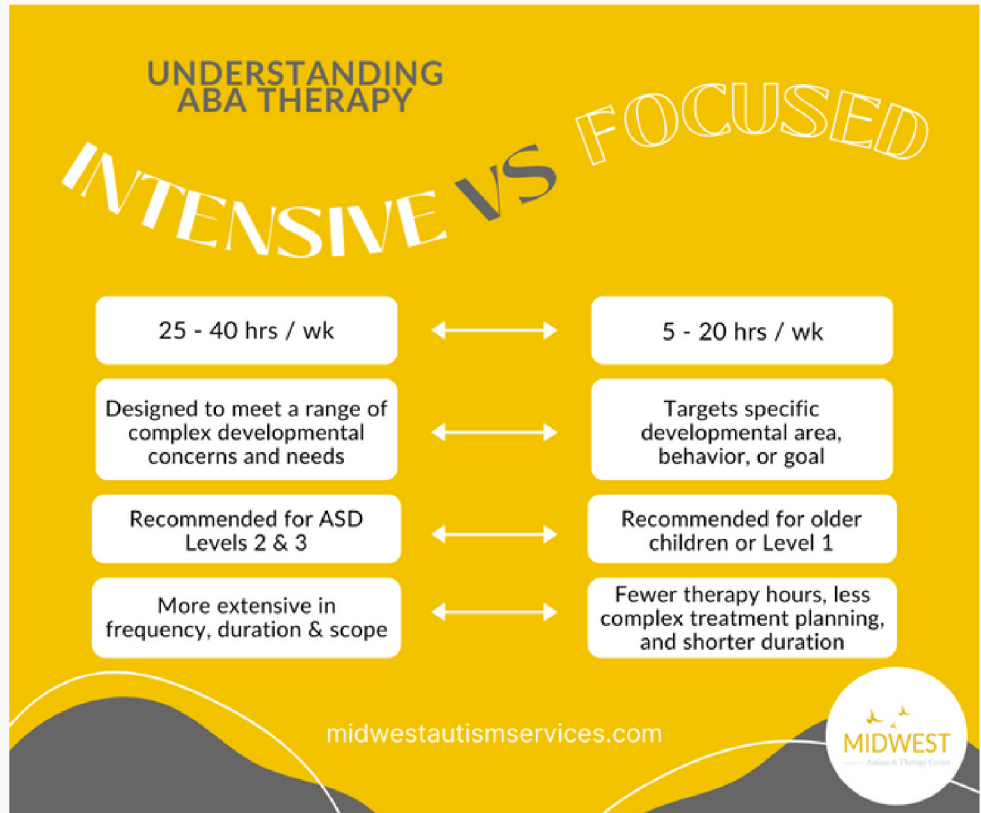
Focused Therapy is a less intense option designed to target a specific developmental area, behavior, or goal, rather than a wide range of developmental skills. In short, focused therapy means fewer therapy hours, with less complex treatment planning and, usually, a shorter duration of treatment.

The frequency and number of hours varies from child to child, but typically ranges from 5 to 20 hours per week, depending on individual goals. Focused Therapy is often used for older children, or those with milder forms of Autism.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THERAPY CHOICE

To determine which therapy option is best suited to your child, your BCBA will complete a functional behavior assessment. The behavior assessment reviews your child's strengths, challenges, and goals to inform their treatment plan and the type of therapy services required.

Other factors considered by ABA providers include family preferences, lifestyle, transportation, and ability to commit to intensive therapy schedules. Therapy plans are regularly evaluated for effectiveness and adjusted as your child progresses or new goals are identified. For example, a child enrolling at age two might start by receiving intensive therapy and move to a focused therapy model as their needs change and goals are met!





LOOK WHO GOT PROMOTED



ALEX ANDERSEN
RBT - Level 3
Edina Campus



MELANIE BREN,
M.ED., BCBA
Regional Clinical
Director
All Campuses



MAGGIE WEIGOLD
RBT - Level 2
Waukee Campus



SIERRA BURN
Admin Assistant
Waukee Campus



COURTNEY GROOM
Admin Assistant
Altoona Campus



ROSE DELATEUR
Admin Assistant
*West Des Moines
Campus*



On April 13th, Amanda, Shawna and Shayna joined Fi & Friends for their Annual Autism Resource Fair! We loved seeing all your smiling faces, familiar and new!

Our Minnesota team participated in the Autism Society of MN's 29th Annual Autism Conference, April 17-19th. Great connections were made, and we thank everyone who stopped by to chat with Alyssa and Rachel on Day 1 and Tieri and Rose on Day 2!



We are enjoying celebrating our amazing clients and their families on the second Tuesday of each month with a morning complete with coffee and donuts!



On April 20th, Midwest Autism & Therapy Centers participated in the Striding 4 Awareness Walk to Include in Carlisle, IA.



AUTISM AWARENESS & ACCEPTANCE MONTH - APRIL



Teaming up for Autism featuring the Edina team

Each Friday during the month of April, our teams, clients, and families were encouraged to participate in themed dress-up days to show support for Autism Awareness and Acceptance.

Pictured below: The Woodbury team enjoyed a potluck and made goodie bags for their clients in honor of Autism Acceptance Month.

The MN clients also shared their creative talents enjoying the warm weather with chalk and bubbles, and painting indoors.





WHAT'S IN A DIAGNOSIS?

UNDERSTANDING WHY THERAPY PROVIDERS REQUIRE AN AUTISM EVALUATION

If you've spent time researching Autism Centers in your region, you've likely noticed that almost all will require families to have an official Autism diagnosis before a child can enroll in services. And, though this is common practice among clinicians, it's not always clear why a diagnosis is a requirement for care. In this article, we'll answer that question and help you take the first steps toward accessing assessment services.

A common misconception is that individuals with Autism "look" a certain way. In reality, there are no real "physical" attributes associated with ASD. Signs of Autism are typically behavioral in nature – for example, regressions in learning (losing a previously learned skill), lack of emotion, repetitive gestures (stimming), avoidance of eye contact, elopement, self-harming behaviors, limited imaginative play, challenges with transitions or social skills, etc. For a more comprehensive list of characteristics, click here.

WHY IS A DIAGNOSIS TYPICALLY REQUIRED FOR SERVICES AT AN AUTISM CENTER?

1. It helps our clinicians understand your child's strengths and challenges.

An Autism evaluation, usually referred to as a Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluation for Autism (CDE) or a Comprehensive Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation (CMDE) in Minnesota, is a thorough, detailed assessment of your child's development.

That full puzzle is what provides us with an accurate diagnosis of Autism and any other co-occurring disorders, for example, Autism plus ADHD or a speech delay. But, those smaller puzzle pieces are just as important as the full puzzle. They provide our clinicians with detailed information to help us understand where your child thrives and where they might need help. In short – a diagnostic report gives us the information we need to create effective, tailored, treatment plans for your child.

2. Insurance Carriers Require an Official Diagnosis to Provide Coverage

A second reason why nearly all therapy providers require a diagnosis is to ensure families receive coverage for services through their health insurance plan.

HOW TO GET A DIAGNOSIS

If you think your child might be on the Autism Spectrum, it's important to consult with a medical professional who can help kick off the evaluation process. Sometimes this means starting with your child's Primary Care Provider (PCP) or pediatrician who will likely do a few preliminary screenings before referring your family to a Psychologist or Developmental Pediatrician for a full assessment.

An Autism evaluation is a lengthy process. It usually takes several hours, so the provider can observe the child's behavior, conduct a family interview, and more. After completing the observation and interview portions of the assessment, the clinician will analyze the results and schedule a follow-up visit to discuss results and recommend next steps for treatment and support, if needed.



Read the complete blog online at midwestautismservices.com/asd-mosaic-minds





HAVE YOU SEEN THESE NEW FACES?

SHAYNA LANDSBERRY, M.S., BCBA, LBA (SHE/HER) *Altoona Campus*

- M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis from Capella University
- B.A. in Psychology from the University of Nevada, Reno

Shayna Landsberry is a Licensed Board Certified Behavior Analyst coming to us from Reno, NV! She graduated with her Bachelor's in Psychology from the University of Nevada and went on to earn her Master's in Applied Behavior Analysis at Capella University. Prior to sitting for her board exams, Shayna worked as an RBT in Reno. Her areas of expertise include behavior shaping, differential reinforcement, and teaching verbal behavior.



ROWAN LANGBEHN, M.S., BCBA, LBA (THEY/THEM) *Hybrid - West Des Moines (Primary)*

- M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis from Simmons College
- B.A. in Psychology from the University of Aberdeen

A graduate of Simmons College and the University of Aberdeen, Rowan has joined us as a hybrid BCBA working onsite, primarily at our West Des Moines office, and with several home-based clients. Rowan has ample experience building programs for school-aged children based on the Essential for Living curriculum, and supporting high-needs students who are unable to attend traditional schools due to behavior severity and limited functional communication skills.



MICHAELA SMITH, M.S., BCBA, LBA (SHE/HER) *Ankeny Center*

- M.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis from University of N. Texas
- B.S. in Applied Behavior Analysis from University of N. Texas

A graduate of the University of N. Texas, Michaela Smith was mentored by Doctors Richard Smith, Traci Cihon, and Joseph Dracobly in the application of behavior principles, administration of functional assessments, and the use of behavior analysis to increase community engagement. Her passion for those on the Autism Spectrum started early through family connection. Michaela continues to examine complex social issues through a behavioral lens and celebrating client milestones big and small!





Sign up to receive email updates from Midwest Autism & Therapy Centers!
Email updates include monthly newsletters, new blog posts, center updates, announcements and more.



Get Connected

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