

First Aid for Children with
Emotional Difficulties
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FIRST AID
for **YOUR** Emotional Hurts

Edward E. Moody, Jr., Ph.D.



++ HELPING CHILDREN
WITH EMOTIONAL
PROBLEMS

²¹ And Jesus asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. ²² And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” ²³ And Jesus said to him, “‘If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.” ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”

Mark 9:21-24

You are not alone!¹

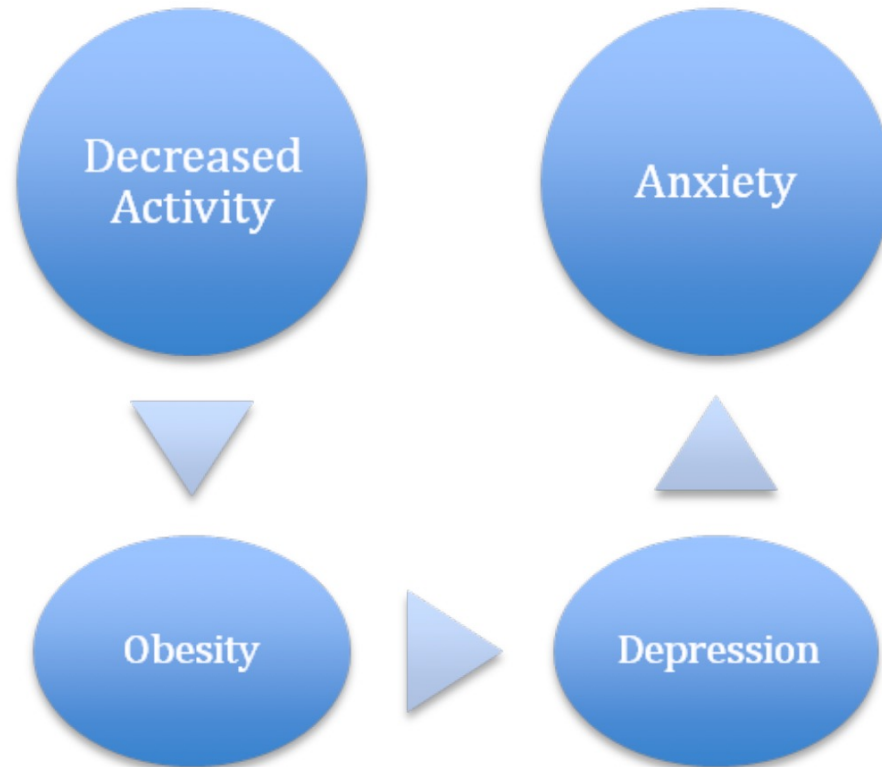
10% to 20% of youths (around 15 million in the United States) meet the criteria for a mental health disorder.

The goal is to equip parents to help their children

Educate
parents
regarding
the scope of
the problem

- > Half of depressed youth are believed to have two or more other diagnosable problems.²
- > Children who are depressed are 30 times more likely to also have some type of anxiety disorder.³
- > Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have been found to be more likely to suffer from anxiety, depression, and oppositional defiant disorder.⁴

Left
unaddressed,
one problem
leads to
another



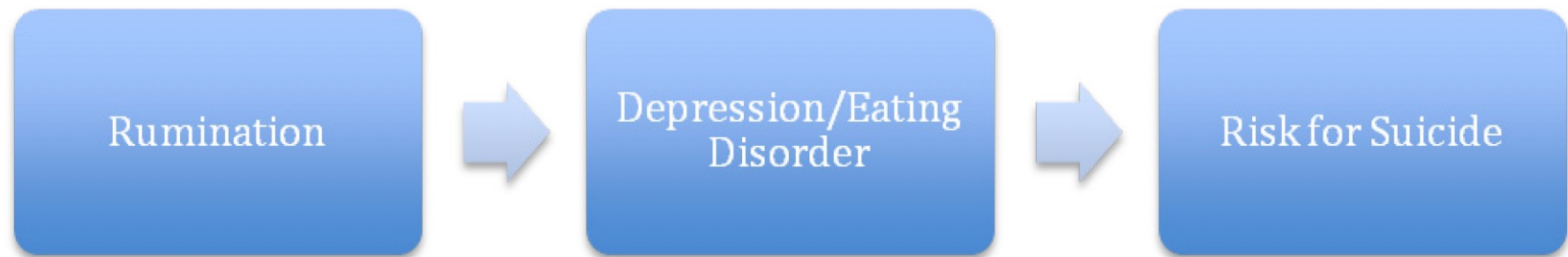
Rumination



Depression/Eating
Disorder



Risk for Suicide



Thinking



Behaving



Relating

Intervene at
every level

Thinking

- Excessive Fear
- "There are germs everywhere"

Behaving

- Obsessions and Compulsions
- Excessive handwashing

Relating

- Avoiding others
- Avoiding others to avoid disease

Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.

Proverbs 12:25

Nearly 10% of children meet the diagnostic criteria for an anxiety disorder.⁷

Common anxiety disorders

Separation
Anxiety
Disorder

Social Anxiety
Disorder

Generalized
Anxiety
Disorder

Obsessive-
compulsive
Disorder

Posttraumatic
Stress
Disorder

Utilize professional helpers

Provide the evaluator with . . .

- A specific description of the concerning behavior.
- When does the behavior occur?
- Where does the behavior occur?
- How often does the behavior occur?
- What kind of impact does the behavior have on the child?



Excessive Fear

Timidity

Overdependence

Thinking

Break the Chain

Be strong, and
let your heart
take courage,
all you who
wait for
the Lord!
Psalm 31:24



Psalm 46—The Worst Case Scenario Psalm

Read Psalm 46. What is God to us?

- A refuge and strength (verse 1)
- Help in trouble (verse 1)
- Immovable in times of crisis (verse 5)
- With us in times of crisis (verses 5, 7, 11)
- Our fortress (verses 7, 11)

At what times will God help us?

- When the mountains fall into the sea—the worst moments of our life (verse 2)
- During war and other crisis (verse 9)

¹⁰ Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

¹³ For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you."

Isaiah 41:10, 13

Personalize the Promise

¹⁰ Fear not Joe, for I am with you; be not dismayed Joe, for I am your God; I will strengthen Joe, I will help Joe, I will uphold Joe with my righteous right hand.

¹³ For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, Joe “Fear not, I am the one who helps Joe.”

Isaiah 41:10, 13

Behavioral
Inhibition

The diagram consists of two horizontal blue arrows pointing to the right. The first arrow is split into two sections: the left section contains the text 'Behavioral Inhibition' and the right section contains 'Anxiety'. The second arrow is also split into two sections: the left section contains 'Exploration' and the right section contains 'Confidence'. The arrows are set against a white background with a gray border.

Anxiety

Exploration

Confidence

The Mathew Model of Relating with the Environment (Matthew 6)

1

Don't be anxious
(verses 25, 27)

- Isn't there more to life?

2

Look (verse 26)

3

Seek (verse 33)



Thinking

- Root: Excessive Fear
- Replace with: Confidence



Behaving

- Root: Behavioral Inhibition
- Replace with: Explortation



Relating

- Root: Timidity
- Replace with: Matthew 6 Object Lesson

A joyful heart is
good medicine,
but a crushed
spirit dries up the
bones.

Proverbs 17:22

- Nearly 20 percent of young people experience depression.⁴⁹
- 1.7 percent of adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 attempt suicide.⁵⁰

Prevalence of Depression in Children⁵¹

<i>Age</i>	<i>Prevalence Rate</i>
Preschool children	1-2%
Middle childhood (ages 6 to 12)	2-3%
Adolescence	4-8%

Criteria for a Major Depressive Episode⁵³

To meet the criteria for a major depressive episode a child must have five (or more) of the symptoms listed below in the same 2-week period. At least one of the symptoms must be either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure.

- Depressed mood or irritability most of the day, nearly every day.
 - Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all or almost all activities most of the day nearly every day.
 - Significant weight loss (when not dieting) or weight gain (5% change in a month), or increase or decrease in appetite. In young children, failure to meet expected weight gains.
 - Unable to sleep or sleeping too much nearly every day.
 - Unintentional and purposeless motions or slowing of mental and physical activity nearly every day.
 - Fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day.
 - Recurrent thoughts of death.
-

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graph LR; A[Ruminating] --> B[Negative Beliefs]; B --> C[Depression]
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Ruminating

Negative
Beliefs

Depression

An Example of Ruminatio

¹⁰ He said, “I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”

¹⁴ He said, “I have been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”

1 Kings 19:10, 14

But his delight
is in the
law of
the Lord, and
on his law he
meditates day
and night.
Psalm 1:2



Bringing into
captivity every
thought to the
obedience of
Christ;
2 Corinthians
10:5b

*Thought record*⁶⁹

Date	Situation	Behavior	Emotion	Thoughts	Responses
------	-----------	----------	---------	----------	-----------

Behaving



Sleeping



Eating



Get active

Increased
Activity



Decrease in
Depression



Reduced
Suicidal
Risk



The Problems Solving Approach

- Define the Problem
- Generate Alternatives
- Implement a Solution
- Evaluate the Outcome

Problem solving approach⁷²

Identify the problem to be solved.

Examine the costs and benefits of solving the problem.

List all resources and information available.

Generate as many possible solutions, without evaluating these solutions.

Rank order the most desirable to least desirable solution.

Develop a plan of action based on the best solution.

Identify each step in the sequence.

Identify the resources needed for each step.

Schedule the first step.

Evaluate the outcome.

Revise the plan if necessary.

Reward yourself for carrying out the steps.

Role-play
Role-play
implementing
the chosen
action

Implement
Try the
selected
strategy out

Evaluate
How did it go?

Thinking

- Root: Rumination
- Replace with: Meditation

Behaving

- Root: Sleep/Eating problems
- Replace with: Eating and Sleeping Regimen

Relating

- Root: Inactive
 - Replace with: Problem-solving approach
-

Why do adolescents attempt suicide?⁵⁶

These results are from 120 adolescents who had attempted suicide.

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Percent that Endorsed</i>
To get relief from a terrible state of mind	68
To die	67
To escape for a while from an impossible situation	66
To make people feel sorry for the way they've treated you; frighten or get someone back	35
To make people understand how desperate you are feeling	34
To find out whether someone really loved you or not	32

THE OTHER SIDE OF Suicide

BY DR. EDWARD MOODY

I MOVED THROUGH THE HOSPITAL AS QUICKLY AS I COULD WITHOUT RUNNING. I COULD SEE A DISTRAUGHT MAN SPEAKING TO THE RECEPTIONIST. HE KEPT REPEATING THE NAME OF A PERSON AND SAYING HE KNEW HE WAS AT THE HOSPITAL. AS I WALKED UP THE RECEPTIONIST SAID, "SIR, WE ONLY HAVE PATIENTS LISTED IN OUR DATABASE." I TAPPED THE MAN ON THE SHOULDER AND OFFERED TO TAKE HIM TO THE FAMILY OF THE MAN HE WAS LOOKING FOR. AS THE RECEPTIONIST'S WORDS BEGAN TO SINK IN HE REALIZED HIS FRIEND HAD DIED.

"This was an accident, right?"

"No, he did this to himself," I said.

In that moment I witnessed the uniqueness of death by suicide. His face told me an accident, even a homicide would have been more bearable than this.

Every day, 121 people in the United States take their lives. I hope you never have to deal with the other side of suicide but chances are that you or someone you know will at some point. Hold on to this article for that day.

Years ago I worked as a staff psychologist at a correctional institute where on average I dealt with a suicidal person every day. We constantly trained staff and worked hard to prevent suicide. Though I never had anyone complete a suicide it was a constant worry of mine. Unfortunately, as a pastor, I have become too familiar with the other side of suicide. I have written about suicide prevention but in this article I will focus on some things to consider after a person has taken his or her own life.

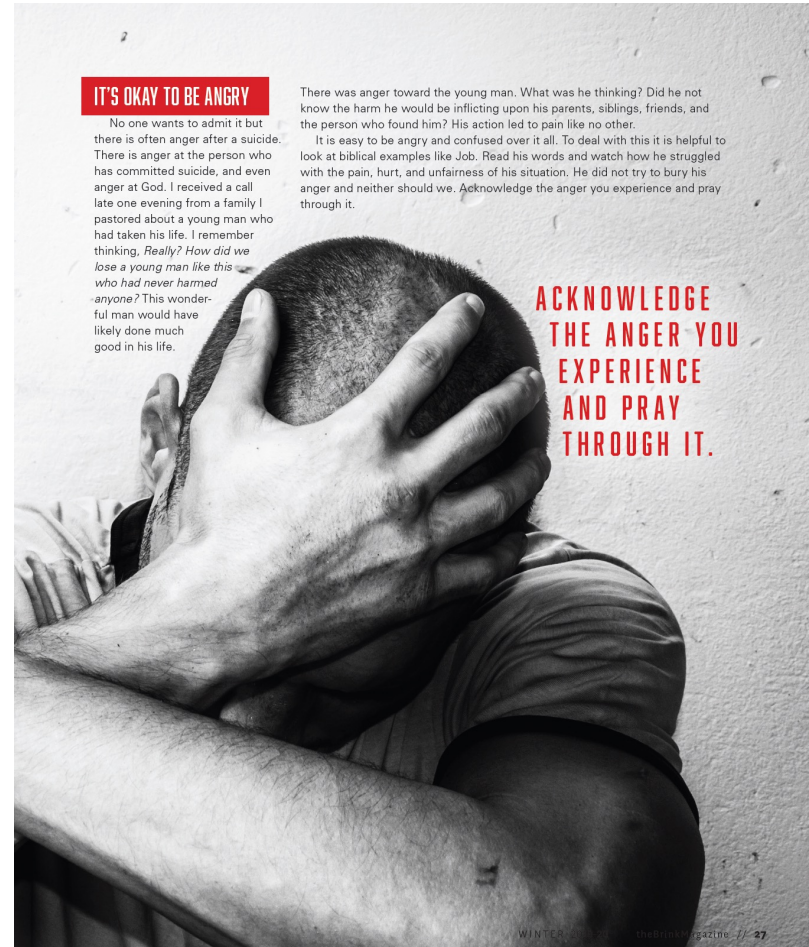
IT'S OKAY TO BE ANGRY

No one wants to admit it but there is often anger after a suicide. There is anger at the person who has committed suicide, and even anger at God. I received a call late one evening from a family I pastored about a young man who had taken his life. I remember thinking, *Really? How did we lose a young man like this who had never harmed anyone?* This wonderful man would have likely done much good in his life.

There was anger toward the young man. What was he thinking? Did he not know the harm he would be inflicting upon his parents, siblings, friends, and the person who found him? His action led to pain like no other.

It is easy to be angry and confused over it all. To deal with this it is helpful to look at biblical examples like Job. Read his words and watch how he struggled with the pain, hurt, and unfairness of his situation. He did not try to bury his anger and neither should we. Acknowledge the anger you experience and pray through it.

**ACKNOWLEDGE
THE ANGER YOU
EXPERIENCE
AND PRAY
THROUGH IT.**





SOME PEOPLE EXPERIENCE PAIN WE COULD NEVER COMPREHEND.

GIVE SOME GRACE

As you process what has happened it may become clear that the person did not realize the pain he or she would cause. Many years ago I did crisis counseling after the homicide of a young man. I was talking to another young man, much like the one who had been killed, and he said, "You know, Jerry (not his real name) would have never believed how much people cared about him and how sad they would be about his death." It is not a direct comparison but I suspect that most people who take their lives don't understand fully the harm they are inflicting on others. I encourage you to give them some grace just like you would if they had died from texting while driving or driving too fast through a curve. Most of us have done something risky without fully considering the impact it would have on those we care about.

A young man I had once tried to help later engaged in a serious suicide attempt. In fact, were it not for the wise and quick thinking of the staff at the facility and the heroic actions of medical personnel he would not have survived. I met with him after the event and he apparently perceived my anger over what he had done. Many of those who addressed his needs probably did not sleep for a week. He finally said, "You don't understand... I didn't see any way out." This man was pleased and relieved he survived but when he attempted suicide he was at a point where he felt like he had no other choice. Incidentally, he still felt that way. Though he was not suicidal at that moment, his decision to harm himself made sense to him. It seemed to him like the only way to stop the pain. Some people experience pain we could never comprehend.

THIS IS NOT OKAY

At the same time, it is important to convey to everyone that suicide is not okay. Too often, within about six months of a suicide, another person within that circle will attempt suicide. Talk about the pain the event has caused and stress that others should not put their loved ones through this.

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT

There is often guilt after a suicide. We tend to do a lot of "If I would have done this," which is a way of torturing yourself. This is not your fault. One of the gentlemen I worked with had attempted suicide several times. At some point he had a kind of breakthrough and committed to living. He agreed to give me all of the items he had been hiding in his cell to use to kill himself. He was in an isolation cell, which was the most secure place in the facility. But as he stepped around

the cell, he removed a piece of plastic from one place, an item from another place, and I began to realize how easy it would have been for him to kill himself. As I held all of this contraband I was relieved. Then he said, "You realize I don't need that to kill myself." He went on to describe how he could stand on top of the toilet and fall, striking his head. I could tell he had thought it through. Then he said, "It's my choice." At that time this bothered me. But in the years that have followed I have been comforted by his words. It really is their choice. Remember, it's not your fault.

TALK TO SOMEONE

I pray that God will give you someone with whom you can talk. Look for people who are more concerned about you and your well-being than consumed about how the person you cared about has died. Find someone who will listen to you, who will help carry this burden (Galatians 6:2). Once you find someone, embrace and cherish this person. People like this are gifts from God.

FOCUS ON THE PERSON'S LIFE, NOT ON DEATH

I encourage you to focus on the life of the one you cared about rather than how he or she died. Consider Samson. The writer of Hebrews briefly mentioned Samson but made no mention of the way he died. The passage alludes to his heroic life (Hebrews 11:32-34). Remember the life of the one you loved.



TAKE REFUGE IN THE LORD

Look to God. I encourage you to focus on passages like Psalm 46. Your world has turned upside down. You may have serious doubts about the person who has done this and wonder if you really knew him or her. You may have doubts about God. Keep going back to the Word. Become one with passages like Romans 8. I do not think it is an

KEEP GOING BACK TO THE WORD.

accident that Romans 8:28 is often misquoted by others in situations like the one in which you find yourself. What happened to you is not good, but you can be assured God will work through it and do good for you. Sometimes well-meaning people may hurt you with the Scripture. We know that Satan misquotes Scripture and even uses godly people for his purpose. He even twisted passages when he tempted Jesus (Matthew 4). Keep coming back to the Scripture and especially Romans 8:31-39. Nothing can separate a person from God (not even depression, confusion, or doubt). And when you do not know what to pray, it is the Holy Spirit who intercedes for you (Romans 8:26). You may not feel like it but God is helping you and He knows what He is doing. I think one of the saddest passages in the Bible is where the family of Samson had to go and retrieve his body for burial after his self-inflicted death (Judges 16:31). Take refuge in the fact that the same God who helped Samson's family over 3000 years ago is helping you today. ☺

Eating Problems

- Approximately 37% of children between the ages 6 and 11 are obese.⁷⁴
- 1 in every 200 school-age girls meet the criteria for anoxeria nervosa.⁷⁵

Eating problems

Anorexia nervosa

Bulimia nervosa

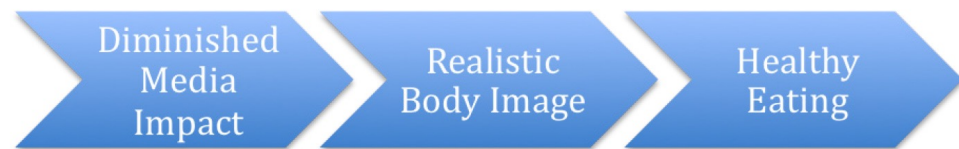
Obesity

Signs there may be a problem⁸³

- Preoccupation with food and weight
- Counting calories or fat grams
- Disappearing to the bathroom after meals
- Missing food/evidence of secret eating
- Excessive exercising
- Eating only diet or fat free foods
- Expressing guilt after eating
- Consuming large amounts of caffeine
- Use of diuretics, diet pills, and/or laxatives

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2



But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:7



You
according to
Psalm 139

¹³ For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.

You
according to
Psalm 139

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

You
according to
Psalm 139

¹⁷ How precious to me are
your thoughts, O God! How
vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ If I would count them, they
are more than the sand. I
awake, and I am still with
you.

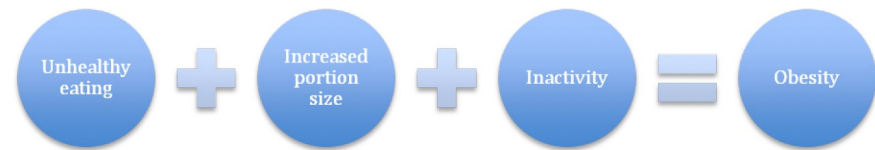
You
according
to Psalm
139

What are you like?

What is God's opinion
of you?

If you
have found
honey, eat only
enough for you,
lest you have
your fill of it
and vomit it.

Proverbs 25:16



⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! ¹¹ Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? ¹² And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

The 18-Minute Dinner

At least 4 times a week

- Turn off all electronic devices near the table (television, cell phone)
- Use your manners (saying “please” and “thank you”) when serving food
- Focus on conversation (Ask, “How was your day?”)¹¹⁵

Spending 20 to 30 minutes together as a family sharing a meal, and you can reduce risk for all sorts of health problems, including obesity¹¹³



Thinking

- Root: Distorted Body Image
- Replace with: Realistic (God-centered) body image



Behaving

- Root: Unhealthy (or lack of) Eating
- Replace with: Healthy Eating/Family Meals



Relating

- Root: Isolation
- Replace with: Real Friendships

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