

ST. ANN'S HOME & SCHOOL

FALL 2007

Celebrating 82 years of helping children and families.

Some Principles for an Effective and Safe Practice: Evaluation, Syndrome, and Quality

by David D. Kaminister, M.D.

Practicing psychiatry with children and adolescents can be a hard gig.

A typical scenario which we encounter has a child and his or her family, who present with a wide array of significant psychiatric, medical, and psychosocial challenges, coming to our office and seeking help. Often, the family has had discouraging experiences with the mental health system and, despite the best efforts of involved clinicians, feel that they are receiving less than optimal support for the challenges posed by their child(ren). Some come to appointments with the fantasy and/or expectation

that psychotropic medication can serve as a panacea for all the problems impairing the happiness and functioning of the child and the family system or, conversely, come with feelings of distrust and severe apprehension about medication. In addition, while we have experience and expertise on the use of psychotropic medications in children, the fact remains that the scientific evidence base regarding the indications, efficacy, and safety of these agents is still in its early stages of development.

In the years in which I have been practicing, I have developed a few simple,

but, in my opinion, highly meaningful principles which guide me in my work with children, adolescents, and their families. Given all of the difficulties and uncertainties which are necessarily present in this work, I feel that such tenets anchor my practice and lay the groundwork for safe and effective care. Here are a few of my favorites:

1. Good treatment derives from a good evaluation.

It is vitally important, whenever possible, to take the necessary time to perform a thorough psychiatric evaluation, even if this takes more than one clinic visit. This involves taking

a careful history and taking the time to consider multiple sources of data (e.g., family, therapist, school, and other involved clinical personnel) in considering diagnoses and formulating a treatment plan. This also helps protect against the possibility of starting a medication treatment prematurely which has the possibility of exacerbating the underlying problem. No treatment is better (and safer) than wrong treatment.

2. Think syndrome, not symptoms, whenever possible.

Better treatment, in my

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New Adolescent Center Groundbreaking

APRIL 24, 2007 WAS A GREAT day at St. Ann's Home & School. The weather cooperated, and ground was broken for the new 28,000 square foot Adolescent Center scheduled to open in April 2008. More than 100 friends, supporters and public figures attended the ceremonies marking the

first new construction since the cornerstone for the existing building was laid in 1923. Helping to kick-off the project were (Front, L to R) Denis Grandbois, St. Ann's President & CEO; William M. Manzi III, Mayor of Methuen; Cardinal Sean O'Malley, OFM, Cap; and Sister Theresa Bouthot, IHM, former Administrator and Director of Social Services, 1953-1973.

Cardinal O'Malley helps break ground for New Adolescent Center.

News From Around Our Campus

THANKS

As we once again enter the fall season, it has occurred to me that the notion of summer "down time" is fast becoming a nostalgic memory. However, our children all did enjoy a week on Cape Cod at the Father Sullivan House, thanks to the generosity of the New England Food Foundation and the Essex County Community Foundation. The New England Food Foundation makes this house available to us for five weeks in the summer time, and we are able to send most of our residents there at some point during the summer. It is always a memorable time for our children and we extend our gratitude

to these foundations that make this possible.

In this issue, Dr. Kaminester provides some practical information on the use of psychotropic medication. The popular media often report on the perils and benefits of these medications. Dr. K discusses how the careful and judicious use of medications, along with individual, family therapy, and other therapies, can work most safely and effectively.

ADOLESCENT CENTER

It is exciting to see the construction of our adolescent center coming to fruition. The theme for this year's summer school session was building design



Denis Grandbois, President/CEO

and construction. I wish to thank Bill Harris from Signor Harris Architects for the presentation that he made to our summer students, and K. C. Lavery and Marcia

Carlson from Barr and Barr Builders for their tour of the construction site.

A FAREWELL

Finally, I wish to extend our collective best wishes to Ed O'Brien, who retired from St. Ann's after over 35 years of service. Ed, who served as the Director of Residential Care, was deeply respected by the children, staff, and community for his commitment to the many children he worked with over his long career. His talents will be missed by all.

Good luck, Ed!

As always, please feel free to contact me for more information about St. Ann's Home and School.

Annual Raffle Benefits New Adolescent Center

OVER 200 INDIVIDUALS

were hoping to win big in the St. Ann's Home & School Annual Raffle held June 7, 2007 during staff recognition festivities. The grand prize, a getaway seven day luxury vacation to the Caribbean, Vail, Las Vegas, Europe or the destination of your choice, was won by Mr. William Kelly of Salem, NH. Pictured here is his wife, Marsha, accepting a check from Denis Grandbois, St. Ann's



Marsha Kelly accepts a check for the grand prize from Denis Grandbois.

President & CEO. Thanks to the great support, the Annual Raffle netted nearly \$15,000 to go toward the new Adolescent Center, now under construction. Second prize was a fifty inch Panasonic Plasma TV and a \$50 Best Buy gift card; third prize \$1,000; fourth prize \$500; and fifth prize \$250. The Raffle, now in its

fourth year, has become quite popular in the local community for its chance to win not only great prizes, but to support the children and adolescents at St. Ann's Home & School. If you would like to be on the mailing list for next year's raffle, please contact the Development Office at 978-682-5276, ext 205.

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An Effective and Safe Practice

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opinion, tends to follow thinking about the issues at hand in terms of what psychiatric syndrome is present. For example, when the child or adolescent complains of insomnia, I try to put this symptom into a clinical profile rather than just automatically treat the symptom. Is the insomnia due to poor sleep habits (which are



David D. Kaminester, M.D.

often rectifiable nonmedically), substance-induced (e.g., caffeine in the afternoon or evening), or due to prominent mood (e.g., depression, mania) and/or anxiety symptoms (e.g., PTSD)? Often, just

3. Quality, not quantity, often wins the day.

Better treatment is not synonymous with greater number of medications. There are circumstances in which polypharmacy (i.e., the use of more than one medication at a time) can be very beneficial towards stabilizing a child or adolescent. For instance, Pediatric Bipolar Disorder can often be managed successfully by combining medications such as mood stabilizers (e.g., lithium), antipsychotics (e.g., risperidone), and adrenergic medications (e.g., clonidine). However, often I find that children coming to my clinical attention are on several different classes of medications, some of which are presumably designed to address certain presenting symptoms but may actually be reducing the clinical efficacy of other medications in the regimen, or even inadvertently worsening some of the underlying clinical issues (e.g., antidepressants in Pediatric Bipolar Disorder). Sometimes, the most helpful clinical maneuver is eliminating potentially activating medications

Better treatment is not synonymous with a greater number of medications.

adequately treating the underlying illness (e.g., Bipolar Disorder) can significantly help many of the ancillary symptoms (e.g., anxiety, insomnia) without requiring the addition of another medication. And this brings us to a corollary principle...

from a regimen, rather than starting something new. I also find that exploring higher doses of a single agent can be more effective and safe treatment than adding a second, as each medication added can increase the risk of a medication interaction.



Students, residents, and staff get a first-hand view and tour of the construction of the new Adolescent Center courtesy of Barr & Barr Builders Project Superintendent K. C. Lavery and Project Manager Marcia Carlson.

Building on an Education

WITH CONSTRUCTION OF the 28,000 square foot Adolescent Center well underway, students and residents of St. Ann's Home & School recently got an up-close-and-personal look at the project. More than 75 residents and students of St. Ann's Home & School, together with their teachers, donned hard hats and were given a personal tour of the Adolescent Center building project by Barr

& Barr Builders Project Superintendent, K.C. Lavery and Marcia Carlson, Project Manager. The new facility, being constructed adjacent to the existing building, is scheduled to open in April 2008. Connected to the existing building via a tunnel, the Adolescent Center enables St. Ann's Home & School to care for the burgeoning number of adolescents in need of specialized care.

We invite you to get involved

Support from the community is vital to our mission here at St. Ann's Home & School. For 82 years we have helped children and adolescents in need through our residential facility and Chapter 766 Special Education School. Proud of our past, today, with our new Adolescent Center, we build for the future to ensure the growing numbers of children and adolescents in need can get help in a caring, warm environment. The children of St. Ann's Home & School need your help and support more than ever. To learn more about ways to give, please contact the Development Office today.

John J. Rice, Director of Development at 978-682-5276, ext. 205 or jrice@st.annshome.org or visit our web site at www.st.annshome.org. Thank you!



ST. ANN'S HOME & SCHOOL

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Celebrating 82 years of helping children and families.

The St. Ann's Home & School Difference

ST. ANN'S HOME & SCHOOL specializes in providing residential, outpatient and day school treatment options for a wide range of behavioral and emotional disorders, including Asperger's Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD), Reactive Attachment Disorder, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, ADHD, Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Learning Disabilities, behavioral problems, substance abuse, and marital

and family conflict, as well as other diagnoses afflicting children and families. Our programs include:

- The Residential Treatment Center for Children
- The Behavioral Treatment Residence (BTR)
- The Special Education School
- The Community-Based Acute Treatment Program
- The Diagnostic Program
- The Respite Care Program
- The Outpatient Clinic Program

For Information about Admissions, contact Joe Cronin, Director of Admissions, at 978-682-5276, ext. 175 or jcronin@st.annshome.org

"St. Ann's has had a positive impact on my son's life and a very positive effect on our family life. The structure, support (for both parent & child), and consistency has enabled my son to succeed and have confidence in himself." Ruth M. (Parent)

How to contact us

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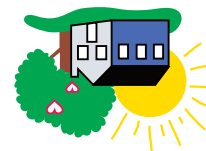


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