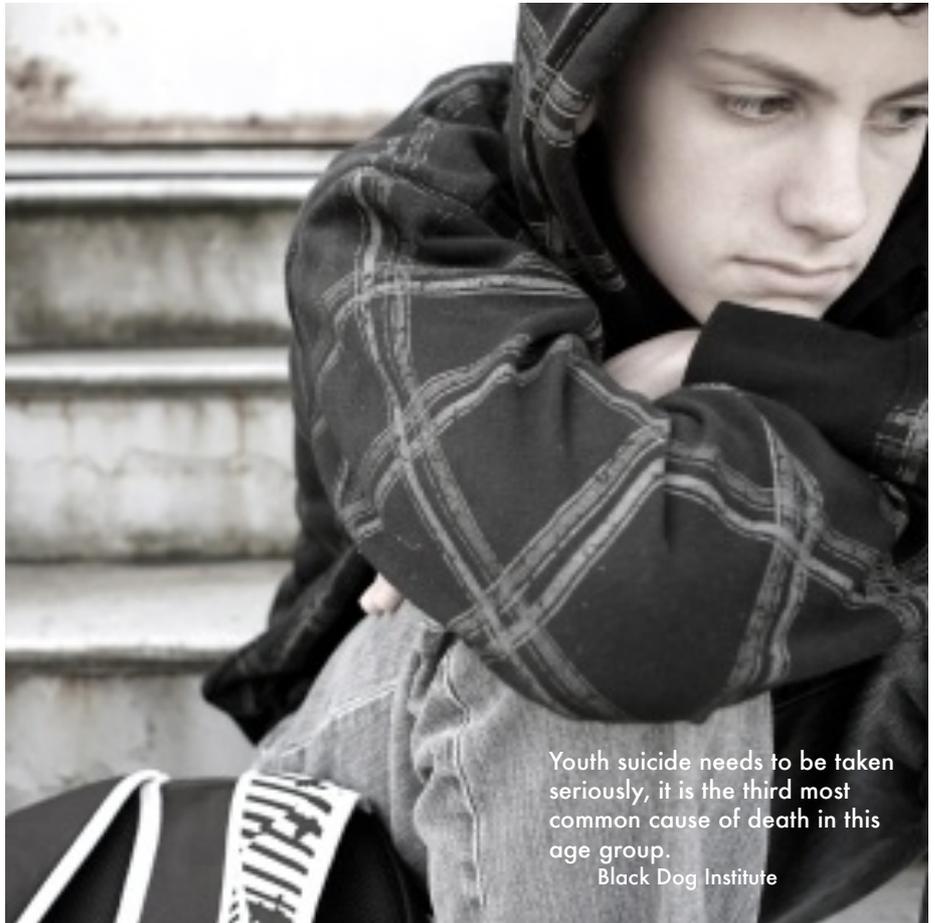


kidthink

psychology

newsletter may 2014



Youth suicide needs to be taken seriously, it is the third most common cause of death in this age group.
Black Dog Institute

Kidthink Psychology: Helping kids to understand and to be understood.

We hope you had a great school holidays and term 2 got off to a great start!

Kidthink has a lot going on at the moment! As you will find out below, there is going to be a new face at Kidthink over Term 2 - Tegan Webb. We are very excited to have Tegan joining us to learn more about becoming a psychologist.

Kidthink has many new families this term - welcome! It is also great to see the fantastic progress with all of the current Kidthink kids. Kidthink is looking forward to sharing some of the great work that our kids are doing while learning about their feelings, how to relate to others and how to be more in control of their behaviour.

Renee Muller - Director and Psychologist at Kidthink Psychology

Depression in teens and young adults

Did you know suicide is the third most common cause of death in teens and young adults? Depression needs to be taken seriously by parents and those close to teens when they notice the signs. These can be hard to detect, but may include the following behaviours that are out of character:

- social withdrawal
- fall in performance at school
- engaging in risk taking behaviour (e.g. sexual activity, reckless driving)
- drug and alcohol abuse

The first step to take if you have concerns for your teen is to take them to the local GP for assessment and referral to the right professional. You may be referred to a psychiatrist (medical practitioner that specialises in mental health and can prescribe medication if required) or a psychologist (cannot prescribe medication, uses psychological therapy techniques).

For further places to get information and support you can check out the following sites:

[BLACK DOG INSTITUTE](#)
[YOUTH BEYOND BLUE](#)
[YCENTRAL](#)

These sites are also teen-friendly!

Thanks for your feedback!

Thanks to those who participated in the Kidthink survey! We love to know how we can become better at Kidthink and what we are doing that works! If you still haven't had a chance to participate, the survey is still available online. It only takes 5-10 minutes and we would really appreciate it! Go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8P5YLX8>
THANKS!!

Kidthink has some BIG news!!



2014

Renee and her husband Adam are expecting a baby in October 2014. This is very exciting news for them both and they are looking forward to becoming parents and for Renee to make all the mistakes that she teaches other parents not to make!! Renee intends to finish client sessions on September 5, 2014. After this time, she will be able to offer Skype for suitable clients until she is due. Please discuss with Renee directly if you would like to pursue this option. Renee will advise clients directly when sessions will be resuming - when she starts to get some sleep time and can make sense again!

DOES YOUR CHILD NEED HELP IN GETTING IN CHARGE OF THEIR BIG EMOTIONS? CONTACT US AT KIDTHINK FOR FURTHER INFO

Kidthink will have a new face this term...

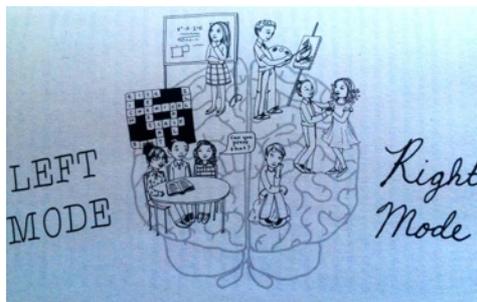
Tegan Webb is a provisional psychologist who is completing her training to become a psychologist with full registration. She will be observing some sessions during term 2. Tegan is observing so that she is able to learn new skills about how to work as a psychologist with children and their families. She already works with many families through her current position at Lifestart.

It is up to each individual family whether you feel comfortable with Tegan observing the session. She will be very grateful for the opportunity to see how Renee works with your child or family as this gives her the opportunity to learn these skills for herself. Please let Renee know if you would prefer that Tegan is not present for your/your child's session. If you have any questions about Tegan, please contact Renee at Kidthink.



Helping kids to get in charge of their emotions using the 'whole brain'.

We all have two sides to our brain - the left and right side. Our left side is the logical side that likes 'words' and likes to sequence things. The right side is our emotional side that gives us our 'gut feeling' and intuition. It is driven by the body and lower brain. It is important that these two sides work together and enable our kids to use both logic and emotions in order to be able to understand themselves and be well balanced. If we only used the left side and its 'logic' for example, we would be extremely void of emotion and it would be difficult to relate to others. If we only used the right 'emotional' side, we would quickly become overwhelmed with our feelings and body sensations.



Often kids are using only their 'emotional' right brain when they have meltdowns or anxiety. What we get is a child who is not able to listen to reason as they are not utilising their left 'logical' side. Sometimes, kids use their left brain only and deny or ignore their feelings. This is no healthier a response, as we can also lack perspective and become too literal in our interpretations (e.g. not understanding a joke because we only read the words but not the context of the non verbal body language).

So, what we want is to help kids learn how to use both sides of the brain together to support mental flexibility and emotional resilience. Two main things we can do as parents are to **connect and redirect** our children and help them to **tell stories to calm big emotions**.

Q + A with Tegan

Tegan Webb, Provisional Psychologist

Why did you want to become a psychologist?

My grandmother worked with older people and people with disabilities, and my mum works with children with disabilities. Their passion for encouraging independence in others, and their ability to see strengths in every person inspired me to choose a career that would allow me to foster the same values. My careers advisor at high school suggested psychology after giving me some vocational assessments and from my very first lecture at university in 2004, I knew I was on the right path.

What is your favourite memory working with children?

I worked in a beautiful little primary school in West London for two years. I was working with a small group of children who needed some extra support with attention and reading. One little boy spent several reading sessions in a row under the table, saying he really hated reading. I felt really lost as to how to help him! One day, he yelled "It's snowing!" and ran to press his face against the classroom window. I had only seen snow once or twice so I was only seconds behind him, pressing my face on the window to watch the snow fall. He looked at me, so surprised that we shared this excitement. I whispered "Let's finish our reading so we can go and play in the snow". He sat back down and read his three pages with ease. I realised he was in fact not struggling with reading at all! I put him into a more challenging reading group and set up a reward system of outside play time to motivate him. He taught me a lot about making assumptions about a child's ability based on their behaviour.

What do you get up to outside work?

I spend some evenings and weekends at college, to become fully registered as a psychologist. I love to take dance classes at Sydney Dance Company and I absolutely love trying new restaurants and cafes. But my favourite thing to do is travel back to the Southern Highlands where I grew up, to visit my family, including my beautiful 2yo nephew and 5mo niece.

Tegan is looking forward to meeting all of the Kidthink families and learning lots about being a psychologist this term. Don't forget to make her feel welcome and say "Hi".

BOOK of the month: ATTACHMENT FOCUSED PARENTING Dan Hughes

This book is a fabulous resource for parents in establishing secure attachment with their children. Children's physiological and emotional regulation, self-reliance, resilience, social competence, intellectual development, communication and language, and self-worth is influenced by attachment.

'Like' Kidthink on Facebook

Kidthink Psychology is on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/kidthinkpsychology
Click on the link to like our page for fun tips on parenting, videos to help with various kid stuff, new research and recommendations for online resources for common issues.



Kidthink Comics

See the hard work of two Kidthink kids below learning the lessons of their left and right brain and how they can be more in charge! Comics are a great way to help kids to visualise tricky or difficult experiences and problem solve a 'better outcome' for next time.



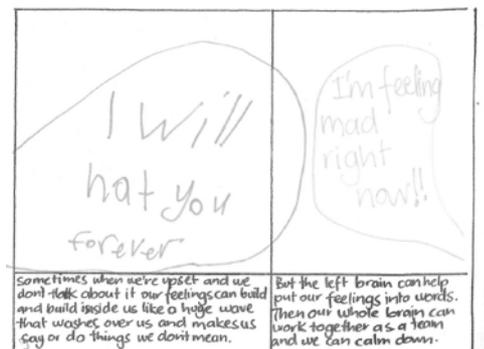
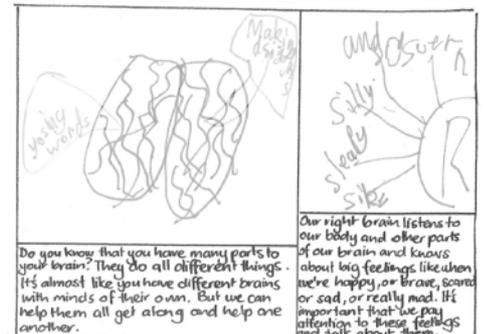
Connect and redirect involves first connecting with your child's right brain using your right brain. When our child is distressed, we need to connect to the emotions first and let them 'feel felt' before we talk about rules.

Responses that would achieve this during a meltdown include:

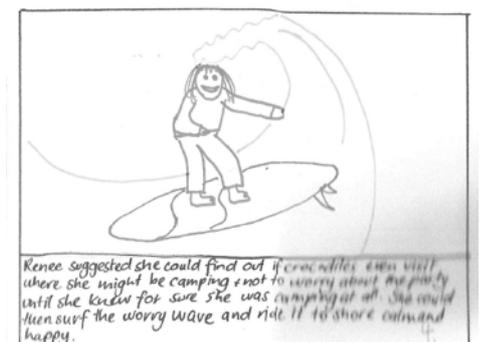
- "It's really hard for you right now"
- "You are really struggling with this aren't you?"
- "It hurts when you feel like no one cares"
- "I know how much you wanted to keep playing with your toy"

Allowing the child to feel like their perspective is understood allows their big feelings to calm. It also allows your child an opportunity to access their left 'words' side of their brain and explain how they are feeling. This enables them to reintegrate the two sides of the brain. We then redirect by using the left side of the brain, e.g. problem-solve and

plan how to resolve a problem in a much more calm way. It may be helpful to give your child some time and space before you attempt this technique if they are having a really huge emotional meltdown.



Telling stories to calm big emotions involves giving the child perspective to overwhelming experiences. Examples could be getting hurt or sick, bullying, grief over loss of a loved one. Painful, disappointing or scary experiences can be overwhelming for some kids and can be very difficult for children to accurately understand what is happening. For example, let's say John got sick at school and then was so scared by this experience he refused to go to school afterwards. It would be essential for John to have opportunity to sit down with his parent and either retell the story or have it interpreted for him, using the facts. The most important part is to emphasise how John was able to cope with the situation and that it is now over. It will be useful to go through the story a few times over a period of time - you will be amazed at how much more relaxed the child will be and empowered by the third or fourth attempt at telling their story. It might be helpful to use this activity to 'tell someone else' what happened like mum, dad, grandma or grandpa.



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You may remember the book of the month from our last newsletter - 'The Whole Brain Child' by Daniel Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson. This book is a great resource for finding more about how you can teach your child these great lessons about being more in charge of their emotions and behaviour.