

## Talking Points & Resources

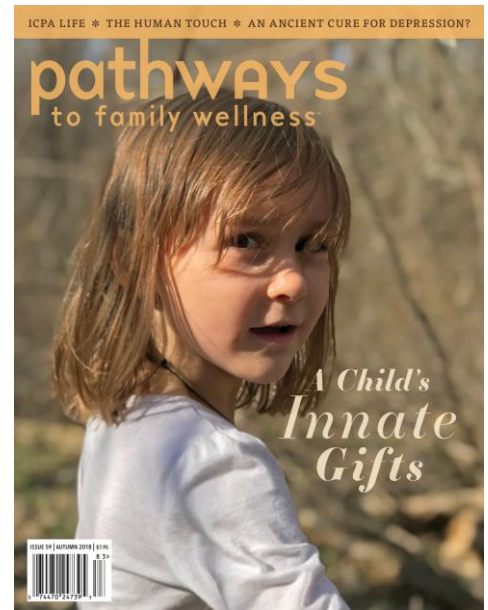
Hello Pathways Connect Group Participants,

### **Preliminary note: There is no wrong way**

To run your Pathways Connect Gathering, the steps below are to help guide you. However, we encourage you to embrace the flow of your gathering and allow for your meeting to take on its own momentum in whatever direction it might go.

### **Step 1: Select topics**

Prior to your group gathering, find and select one or more of the magazine articles that you found interesting and want to share. Pick topics that make you passionate, as these are the easiest to talk about and spark discussion.



### **Step 2: The Gathering**

Welcome everyone present in the group and ask each person to introduce themselves and share a little about themselves. Be sure to share about yourself as well.

### **Step 3: Introduce the topic**

Share with the group your topic and why you chose it, why it interests you, and the importance you see in it. Summarize the article (some article summaries are provided below). You can read the entire article or article summary out loud to your group and share your thoughts at this time.

### **Step 4: Encourage conversation**

We provide questions after each summary section that will help people to engage. Make use of these questions or devise your own.

### **Step 5: Make the chiropractic connection**

At the end of each article summary are notes about how this topic relates to chiropractic. If you utilize these meetings to educate parents on the importance of chiropractic care you will be benefitting your office growth and the health of your community.

**PW #59 Talking Points/Group Questions****EDITORIAL***ICPA Life* by Jeanne Ohm**Article Summary:**

You are not alone in your hopes to have a family enriched with its highest potential. There is an organization of doctors who work for this same goal.

Ask yourself: “What if I could function at my greatest capacity for birth? What if my family and I were cared for in a way that focused on our optimal state of being? What if there were doctors who respected my autonomy and my ability to make informed decisions for my family?”

If moms knew they had this option; if parents had doctors who elevated their family’s strengths, not their fears; if a whole generation could heal and evolve from this new paradigm of health, then a truly amazing thing would occur... We would be given a community of individuals ready to achieve a much better world.

This vision is a reality for many families who have found their “ICPA Life” through the ICPA’s community of 6,000 doctors of chiropractic. What they have found is simply what happens when we ground our health to the reality of our physiological strengths. This is what ICPA doctors offer through their work with the innate intelligence alive in each individual’s nervous system.

A natural outgrowth of this new and exciting paradigm of health is the ideal doctor-patient relationship. Both the doctor and the individual come to find, recognize, and regard as awesome, the body’s natural intelligence. Born upon this discovery, each person is given a newfound trust and desire to reach his or her greater potential. Imagine, finally, a way where we can overcome our inhibitory (often preyed upon) fears and achieve our desired outcomes in all aspects of life.

The awesome intelligence of the human being is well-known to the chiropractic profession, and the gentle care that the ICPA offers for pregnancy, infants, and children, is meant to bring out this intelligence to its fullest in the earliest stages of life.

For ourselves and our children, we can honor our desire to be the best we can by bringing ourselves the gift of a deeper practice. Let’s bring the chiropractic gift into our lives and let’s experience a new paradigm of trust, health, and freedom!

**PARENTING**

***Infant Needs and the On-Demand Life*** by Darcia Narvaez, Ph.D. and Mary Tarsha, M.Ed.

**Article Summary:**

Toxic stress is the kind that gets our wheels moving faster than our vehicles can take us. It is the kind of stress afforded by an “On-demand life” where we no longer have to plan things out, plan a route, and take things slowly. Where, with a few clicks on the remote, a google search, or an Uber app to get us from A to B, our fast paced lives are granted the permission to get even faster. To be in the present moment is the antidote to our toxic stress and to the loss of patience and dignity so common in the world of convenience, the world of “On-demand.”

Our On-demand lives play a toll on our kids from a very young age. “We start to think that babies should conform to our preferences on-demand, too...but they cannot” says Narvaez and Tarsha. The needs of babies exist in a totally different world dominated not by convenience, but by the here-and-now present moment awareness. Essential components to sustain this awareness are what Narvaez and Tarsha call “the evolved nest” which include on-request breastfeeding, extensive affectionate touch, self-directed play, and quick responsiveness to needs. In short, maintaining the infant’s world of present-time awareness is what will allow him to develop into adulthood upon a healthy trajectory. Or put simply by Narvaez, “At a very basic level, babies are self-actualizing when their needs are met.”

This is where parenting meets psychology and the spiritual dimension of life. According to psychologist Abraham Maslow, it is the “betrayal in relationships” early in life that leads to the “thwarting of the self.” Of course, we all are bound to encounter such a thwarting to some degree, but it is the parents’ recognition of the baby’s soul/spirit/being that encourages them to provide what babies need most. According to Narvaez and Tarsha, an “evolved nest” based upon natural conditions, free of physical or emotional neglect or interference, is the ideal encouragement and one that nature has evolved in us.

Resilience, less anxiety, fewer physical health problems and many other benefits discussed in their article have been substantiated by the plethora of research developed out of neuroscience, developmental psychology, and other fields. The effectiveness of early care experiences have been validated. The question is only, what can we do about it?

We understand toxic stress from our own perspective, but what does it look like from an infant’s point of view, living in her world of present-time awareness? Well, for an infant, toxic stress simply means unmet needs. According to the authors, “Long lasting effects of unmet needs include both personality and emotion regulation disorders” or in the language of psychologists, “it pushes the child off the trajectory for self-actualization.”

Here is a little practical suggestion from Tarsha and Narvaez for families working toward the full-actualization of their kids through attentive, conscious parenting, and it's practical and very straight-forward:

- 1) Build extra time into your schedule! For example: If you need to leave the house by 5:00, factor in an extra 20 minutes as a buffer, allowing for the child's request to nurse, to change diapers, to play, or to receive affectionate touch and attention before moving forward. Modern stress is often predicated on time-restraints, and without buffers like these there's little chance to meet your child's needs in a non-stressed manner. Furthermore, this added time ameliorates your own stress, allowing you to buffer against the stress of navigating the schedule, thus safeguarding against an "on-demand" life.

### Questions for Consideration:

- What keeps you in a fast paced mood during the day or night?
- Is there a time of day or night that is most stressful on you?
- Is there a time of day that is most stressful on your child?
- What are some mental, or other, tricks/tactics that you've experienced that have ameliorated the stress on your family from an "on-demand" situation (such as being late to school, or forgetting of an appointment)?
- When your infant or child is under stress, i.e. expresses unmet needs, do you validate it as much as you would your own time-dependent stressors?
- What's the difference between meeting an infant or young child's needs vs. spoiling their ego?
- Are there any barriers to providing your infant needs that you feel you want to discuss with the group?

### Chiropractic Connection:

It's not just physical traumas to the nerve-system or brain which can lead to higher cognitive difficulties like emotion regulation. The reverse is true, too. Emotional betrayal and feelings of resentment or loss can transfer across the nerve-system affecting physiology and even muscular-skeletal changes in posture, which when prolonged, can turn into a form of physical trauma itself. One of the first noticeable changes we see after emotional stress is in fact posture changes, and it's easy to detect.

In childhood, we experience our fair share of physical bumps and bruises, but there is also an inevitability of emotional trauma. This psychological stress thwarts our self-actualization just as much as physical traumas can and do. If profound, it can offset the trajectory of our lives considerably. It is not the place here to begin an exploration of the modes of detecting our childhood traumas, but to suggest that there is a way we can safeguard our children against

them. There is a way to build resilience from the bottom up, to ensure that normal, healthy function reigns.

Chiropractic builds our nervous system's resilience against stresses. But the question to ask also is: *To what extent can old traumas from emotional stressors resolve in adults with a bottom-up approach to the nervous system like chiropractic?* While it is important to improve children's resilience, it may be equally important for parents to heal their own patterns from past traumas in order to be the best role-models and caregivers. To provide for our children on multiple levels—physical, emotional, and psychological—goes hand in hand with a multi-level approach to health and well-being that recognizes the integral nervous system.

## INFORMED CHOICE

*The Drugging of Children* by Aletha Solter, Ph.D.

**Article Summary:**

“There might be as many different causes for ADHD as there are children diagnosed with it,” says Dr. Solter, reminding us that this issue is not as easy to address as the 1 in 10 diagnosis in American children (including toddlers) would suggest. First, what are we diagnosing? According to Dr. Solter, “The status of ADHD as a medical disorder has not been established.” Although many medical professionals consider it a neuro-biological disease, “no biological factor has been found to be the cause of these children’s behavior, and there is no medical test to diagnose it.”

What this means is that we are in the realm of pure psychology, dominated by the psychiatric profession which Kelly Brogan, M.D. in the preceding article says, “is coming under correction after decades of collusion with industry and media.” According to Allen Frances, the DSM-IV (Diagnostic Statistical Manual for physicians) Taskforce Chairman, “DSM-V is a wholesale imperial medicalization of normality that will trivialize mental disorder and lead to a deluge of unneeded medication treatment.”

Instead of a medical disorder, ADHD has quickly grown to become a medicalization of normal behavior, which indeed trivializes childhood abnormalities including serious mental disorders, with the only clear victor being the pharmaceutical companies selling prescription drugs.

“On the surface, it looks as if Ritalin is the perfect solution for a child with ADHD...” says Solter, wherein school environments encourage the pressuring of parents to modify children behavior using the drugs. “There is no doubt that the jobs of parenting and teaching become easier when children sit still and do what they are told,” says Solter. But let’s look beneath the surface. What does Ritalin do to the brain?

Sadly, this question is not known, nor have safety and efficacy studies been established for long-term use. What we do know is Ritalin is an addictive substance, inclusive with side effects, withdrawal symptoms, and a message to children which says in short, *your behaviors and feelings can and should be altered with drugs.*

If you’re interested in knowing what a typical childhood diagnosis and resulting drug prescription looks like, just look at the checklist for diagnosis in the DSM-V:

- “Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.”
- “Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (such as schoolwork or homework)”
- “Often has difficulty awaiting turn.”

To really get to the heart of the matter discussed above, Dr. Solter asks, “Are we justified in giving children powerful addictive drugs to make them docile, simply because their behavior is annoying?” The evidence indicating long-term improvements in academic performance are lacking, and studies reveal problem behaviors in the majority of children taking Ritalin sustained well after sustained drug use. Nor are there any guarantees in social relation improvements with Ritalin use.

Since the topic of ADHD is not so simple, it’s a harsh standard to apply a simplistic solution—drugs. We could be asking deeper questions, questions that focus on the individual and his or her life situations. “One should always consider the possibility that an ADHD child is suffering from an overload of stress or the effects of unhealed trauma,” says Solter, and she adds that these considerations must include environmental factors such as toxins, noises, overdosing on stimulants including TV, food dye, processed chemicals, as well as nutritional deficiencies.

This more holistic approach may be gaining traction, but there’s much more work to be done. Here’s a few of 10 suggestions from the article for parents of children who have been labeled ADHD:

1. Find a school that offers plenty of choices and self-directed learning through movement, games, and hands-on activities.
2. Turn off the TV and leave it off. Discourage all other screen time as well, including computer games.
3. Look for all possible sources of stress in your child’s life, and try to minimize stress.
4. Give your child plenty of unstructured play time with opportunities to run, jump, dance, climb, and build.
10. Slow down and try to relax. Remember that your child is a wonderful, unique human being, and that there is probably nothing wrong with your child’s brain. Parenting is a difficult job. Try to get all the help and support you need.

#### Questions for Consideration:

- What are some possible reasons Dr. Solter suggests less or no TV?
- What may be some of the personal, family, or social benefits of your child’s behavior “difficulties” that culture fails to see?
- What are some dietary restrictions/additions that some have heard/attempted in regard to behavior improvements?
- Has anyone you know tried working with a chiropractor and noticed changes in behavior, or overall mood?

**Chiropractic Connection:** To the extent that children struggling with behavior issues have a nerve-system interference involving a chemical, emotional, or physical component, then we can

begin to work specifically to address the issue with chiropractic care. Additionally, chiropractors understand how so much of our well-being rests on lifestyle factors, which is why many are trained to observe the role of nutrition, exercise, and stress reduction and to tailor their recommendations to each individual. Refraining from the use of drugs, especially for children, is a paramount consideration for parents today, when so many issues can find traces back to harmful chemical exposures in the environment. Having worked with the nervous system, and coming from a tradition that honors an individual's ability to adapt and change, chiropractors are an excellent ***starting point*** for parents dealing with issues such as ADHD.

The nervous system underlies all behavior. Indeed, drugs have the explicit purpose of altering brain chemistry, which is vitally related to nervous system activity. Rather than add to the child's toxic exposure of modern chemicals, why not take the approach that works on the nervous system directly? With the chiropractic adjustment as well as the evidence-based practices that are available for all parents to apply (some without any monetary cost such as exercise and outside exposure) there is certainly little if any need to impose a chemical alteration of children.



**TIMELESS WISDOM*****The Ancient Cure for Depression*** by Sara Burrows**Article Summary:**

The cause of depression, according to the author Sara Burrows, as well as author and world renowned speaker Stephen Ilardi, is civilization. “It’s a disease caused by a high-stress, industrialized, modern lifestyle that is incompatible with our genetic evolution,” according to Burrows, and is the brain’s “runaway stress response” according to Ilardi.

The latter connection provokes the idea of chronic, or prolonged stress so absolutely common in modern living. In extreme cases the runaway stress response lasted for hours, never weeks, months, or years. Surely there’s a price to pay. “When it [the stress response] does that, it’s incredibly toxic,” says Ilardi.

“There’s a profound mismatch between the genes we carry, the bodies and brains that they are building, and the world that we find ourselves in.” According to Ilardi, “We were never designed for the sedentary, indoor, socially isolated, frenzied pace of modern life.”

The answer? You guessed. A change in lifestyle. This as opposed to drugs, for the very reason that you can (and we as a society have) thrown millions of pounds of drugs at this issue, and it has not made a dent. Burrows elaborates on Ilardi’s six-step program, which he says have exceeded his wildest dreams:

1. Exercise
2. Omega 3 fatty acids
3. Sunlight
4. Healthy sleep
5. Anti-ruminative activity
6. Social connection

The hardest parts of the program being exercise and social connection. “Exercise,” Ilardi says, “Is not natural.” Rather we are designed to be physically active “in the service of adapted goals,” and in the words of Burrows, “not on a hamster wheel.”

This is partly why hunter-gatherer societies experience very little if any rates of depression, “they get four or more hours of vigorous physical activity every day, but if you ask them they will tell you they don’t exercise.” In the words of Ilardi, “They don’t work out. Working out would be crazy to them. They live.”

Social connection on the other hand, “puts the breaks on our stress response.” “Face-time” as Ilardi calls it, or interpersonal, physical connection with others, requires that we resist the urge to pull away. We must give up the pleasure of social interaction for the “relaxing” entertainment and screen time that often replaces it. “When you have the flu, pulling away is adaptive. When you have depression, it’s the worst thing in the world you could do.”

At the end of her article, Burrows makes the humble and correct analysis that the answer to a more fulfilling life lies in baby steps: “Baby steps away from dependence on civilization, and toward nature, earth skills, and self-sustaining communal living.”

### **Chiropractic Connection:**

A hands on healing modality is so vastly different from a drug based approach. It’s as if the remedy that’s most needed for many of the diseases of civilization is provided by the medium of care itself. Through this modality, each person gets the simple and profound gesture that he is *acceptable*, touchable, included, and worthy to be who he truly is and *who he may become*. If you’ve been depressed or know someone who is, you may remember feeling the pain that your potential is in a perpetual state of un-manifestation. To recognize this pain is actually a gift, a painful reminder that you know how much more there is in you. The harshest misdiagnosis about a disease like depression is the belief that the “solution” should bring you back to a state of normality. The truth is, you are meant to be much more. The life you lived prior was not the one that could bring you to where you need to go. The lesson, therefore, is that the future that’s beyond you is worth it, even if it means crippling you to get the message.

Chiropractic is often regarded as the restoration of normal nerve-system function, but in actuality, it’s what’s beyond normality—it’s the advancement of your innate potential. By freeing the nervous system of limitations, we are not getting a nervous system with improved function, we are opening the doorway to a greater perception, a greater facility make decisions, and a connection to something greater than us, which can be perpetually active in our lives. The balance afforded by chiropractic care gives us a platform to be a higher functional state, which is the awesome ability to co-create meaning out of the chaos of potential that surrounds us.