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ASSOCIATION



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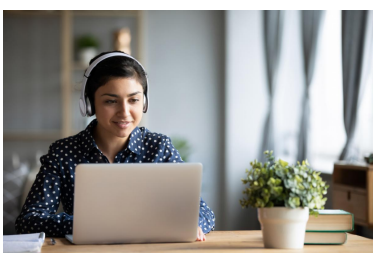
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Spring 2023 Communicator



Selective Mutism Training Institute (SMTI) Updates

Emily Doll, CCC-SLP
SMA Board of Directors Secretary

The Selective Mutism Association recently hosted a Selective Mutism Training Institute (SMTI) for Caregivers online event. Twenty-two caregivers from multiple countries joined the training and participated in this intensive, interactive, two-day event. Topics included an introduction to selective mutism, evidence-based treatment techniques, and collaborating with schools. Participants provided lots of positive feedback about the benefits of the training, including:

- “Practical and realistic tools. I also felt supported by other parents.”
- “Loved the different insights. Thoroughly engaging and educational. Loved that the moderators kept up with the chat throughout, so everyone had their questions answered.”
- “Helpful tools to help my daughter’s teachers and enact help at school.”
- “Thank you so much for your time and generosity with your professional expertise. I am reviewing my notes and feel armed with practical/realistic tools to support my daughter. This weekend was a gift for every parent in that Zoom room.”

Interested in participating? SMA is hosting two more SMTI events in the upcoming months:

- Register now for the [Selective Mutism Training Institute for Professionals](#) - fully virtual, April 29-30, 2023
- Keep an eye out for more info about our next Selective Mutism Training Institute for Caregivers - coming in 2023

**Selective Mutism
and Anxiety in Latin
America: An**

Interview with Fabiana Baracchini Rachel Merson, Psy.D., SMA Board of Directors



Fabiana Baracchini is a psychologist and the director of Centro Mutismo Selectivo

Internacional, an organization in Buenos Aires, Argentina, dedicated to improving the lives of youth with selective mutism and anxiety. Ms. Baracchini is also assists SMA as an International Coordinator and assisted in the translation of SMA's Educators' toolkit into Spanish. In this edited interview, she describes her work in Argentina and with families from other Latin American and Spanish-speaking countries.

Tell us a little bit about your professional background. How did you become interested in working with children with selective mutism?

A few years after graduating as a psychologist, I was working in a children's hospital. I was consulted by a family whose little girl was very outgoing and enthusiastic at home, but who didn't show herself in the same way at school or with her grandparents. Her parents told me that she "got mute when she saw other people." Although they had talked about their concerns with their pediatrician and visited another psychologist before seeing me, they felt that these professionals did not understand how their child was suffering.

I also have a similar personal experience, having suffered from social anxiety and school phobia when I was a child. My mother also experienced anxiety. She was a very smart person and liked to study very much, but had to leave school because she couldn't speak nor socialize there. In fact, she finished school when she was 66 years old.

The mother of the first girl with selective mutism that I treated was so happy with the results, that she told me that I had to help others. I believe that the combination of this situation and my personal experiences impacted me, and I took this as a challenge. This was almost 22 years ago; I started to look for more information about selective mutism and since then, I have traveled to the United States and to the United Kingdom for different trainings and to meet with colleagues who generously shared their experiences with me.

What is your approach to the assessment and treatment of selective mutism? How do you involve parents in your treatment?

In my treatments, families and teachers are very involved. In fact, I consider parents and teachers to be my co-therapists. If I want to help a child, I have to learn about their family and also about the school that the child attends. We work as a team; my role is to guide the parents and the teachers to implement interventions in the context of natural activities and daily routines. Specifically, I provide Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Interventions, focused on teaching functional skills, enhancing motivation and engagement in treatment, embedding active opportunities for teaching in the natural environment, and following the child's lead and interests. I use both behavioral and cognitive strategies and of course work a lot with emotions- but not only the child's emotions. I help parents and teachers to connect with their personal emotions and feelings. I'm convinced that the journey must start with the adult's self-knowledge and awareness of how they manage their own anxieties.

Are there any cultural factors that impact how selective mutism, and child anxiety in general, are understood in your country?

I live in Argentina, but I travel to see families in different parts of the world. I've done treatments in Spain, Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia, Perú, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, and I also do teletherapy with Spanish-speaking families living in Europe and Asia. In my experience, I see that SM is misunderstood worldwide. It is quite difficult to accept that it is an anxiety condition, and it takes a long time to educate schools

about SM and anxiety. Most of the countries in which I work have laws to protect children and ensure their access to education despite mental health concerns, but many educators and professionals still refuse to consider SM as a mental health problem. In particular, I encounter resistance to allowing parents or professionals to enter the school, but this is necessary to deliver the treatment in a naturalistic way. If a child has autism or a learning disability, it is often easier to obtain help from the school than when a child has an anxiety disorder.

What are the most important cultural considerations in your treatment of children with selective mutism?

Argentina is going through a social and economic crisis, and the education and the health services are not good enough. Most of the hospitals are in Buenos Aires, but even there, mental health services are limited and most families cannot receive treatment. This situation is similar in all the Latin American countries.

Moreover, in Argentina, more than 50% of the population is poor and many children are not able to finish school. Because this is such a big and sad problem, SM and emotional well-being are not one of the priorities of the public health system. There are not public health services to help children and families with anxiety.

What resources are available for anxious children, and their families, in your country?

As I mentioned above, public mental health services in Latin America are quite limited. There are not specific resources for anxious children and their families, and it is impossible to meet the demand for care. In order to help address this shortage, my staff and I are working hard to establish a non-governmental organization, and we hope to be finished before the end of 2022. I am realistic, and I know that we cannot give all the help that families need, but as a first step, our foundation will be focused on creating awareness in society about selective mutism, and offering resources to help children and families suffering from anxiety.



Navigating Playdates with Selective Mutism

Lola Ravid, Volunteer Contributor

Playdate (noun) \play-day\: date and time parents send children to play together.

Everyone says playdates should be easy, but they weren't! Not for me. In what constituted almost three years of doing weekly playdates, both R and I learned a lot about how to navigate them. What worked and what didn't work. It was no other than an emotional journey that paved the way to the most successful outcome. The fact is that establishing playdates with a socially anxious child takes a different set of eyes and approach. I want to share how playdates helped my son overcome selective mutism (SM).

During a camping trip in the Spring of 2016, my son, R, broke his silence and started speaking. On that day, fellow preschoolers rushed to my tent to deliver the most unexpected news. With so much enthusiasm in their little voices, they said, "R spoke to

us!" The excitement was vibrant and contagious. I couldn't believe it. All those years of hard work and dedication finally gave way to fruition. I thank playdates for that success as much as I thank the therapy itself.

Playdates, playdates, and more playdates. They are the key to success, as practice brings comfort, and comfort brings loud voices. SM playdates go differently than a typical playdate. They require a lot of effort and are complex; every parent with a child with SM can concur. I may even go as far as to say initiating playdates with a child with SM can be flat-out intimidating. We simply hope to set up playdates as the child gets better and acclimated with social cues and words to navigate the playdate the way children usually do. I used to wake up every morning hoping my child would suddenly speak without cues or a gentle push. Honestly, at that time, I did not realize there was a lot of work to do. However, I understood that progress comes when we are pushed outside of our comfort zones. Playdates shouldn't be uncomfortable, but for most of us, they are. I know it was for me, but I pushed through for R's benefit and well-being.

A clinical report published in 2018 by the American Academy of Pediatrics, entitled, "[The Power of Play: A Pediatric Role in Enhancing Development in Young Children](#)" shares a pediatrician's insights on the importance of play in promoting social-emotional, cognitive, language, and self-regulation skills. The report discusses the benefits of playdates to the development of the whole child. Through play, a level of health is established, and most importantly, the play offers opportunities to practice the skills they need to live in a complex world. I cannot express the significance of implementing playdates alongside scheduled cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) sessions. It is through continuous practice that improvement occurs. Speaking and being heard is the most significant gift anyone can have. For those of us who have never experienced SM, it's probably something we take for granted, but not for those struggling to let their thoughts known.

So, how do we navigate playdates with an anxious child? Here are some tips:

Before the playdate:

- **Choose the right playdate:** Talk to your child and get to know their likes, dislikes, and comfort level. They can give you insights into who would be a suitable playmate. The goal is to find the right playmate that adds comfort to social interaction and makes it a great first experience. Personally, R and I made a list of possible playmates. It worked.
- **Connect with parents:** Start a conversation with other parents and initiate an invitation to a playdate. Share the commonalities between the children and take note if there is an interest from the other party. Most importantly, be transparent about SM and explain that playdates are essential for improvement. Don't be shy about sharing your journey. You will be surprised that most parents will understand and be happy to collaborate on anything you need. I shared our journey openly and attempted to answer all of their questions. I then thanked them for helping me through the challenging journey.

On the day of the playdate:

- **Choose a comfortable zone:** An essential tip is to conduct initial playdates at home in the child's comfort zone. Slowly, you will be able to extend the length of time and expand to an outdoor setting and even add another playmate. Two playmates suddenly become a trio and slowly include other children. In our case, we started at home, then transitioned to the local park, a favorite restaurant, and finally, a big outing like a pumpkin patch. Witnessing his progress and his confidence was a beautiful experience.
- **Be the mediator and have a structured plan:** Implementing this tip is the most significant difference between a typical playdate. R was 3.5 years old when he was diagnosed with SM. Our treating professional showed me how to become the mediator; it was a practical approach. I became R's voice, which meant I was the middle person between my son and the playmate. The playmate would ask R a question, and R would whisper into my ear, then I would share that answer with the

playmate. Throughout their play, I encouraged R to sound out letters or attempt to answer independently. At that time, R and his friends were still into stuffed animals and pretend play, so I structured playdates to incorporate many fluffy stuffies; they became the glue to their great conversations. This implementation brought out a lot of improvement over time.

Post-Playdate:

- **Talk about the playdate and discuss its success:** Take a moment to discuss how your child felt throughout the playdate. If you see any positive change or improvement, share it with your child and indicate how proud you felt about how they navigated that particular situation. You can even do so by rewarding with a special treat if you see that your child is slowly doing things on their own. Model social behavior by having conversations with the playmate's parents. They will watch how you navigate social interactions and will copy you. Converse, connect, and show them how it's comfortable for you. Your confidence will shine through and give them the confidence to push through.
- **Practice, practice, practice:** Keep having playdates. Family events and outings are the same, by the way. If there is an opportunity to engage in a social setting, strive to participate. The more it's practiced, the more significant the improvement. The fundamental component here is to continue and push through, despite the challenges, and encourage them to improve their speaking abilities and ability to read social cues.

Through the implementation of the points mentioned earlier, we found our success. I say ours because it was a team effort; it was a community that supported the need of a child who needed to practice navigating social interactions. R was six years old when he didn't need me as the mediator anymore. The children at the campground were witnesses to it. It was a miraculous recovery. Those years of being the mediator and actively managing playdates weekly, in addition to the CBT sessions, was a lot of hard work. It was a season. Now, I am happy to share that when playdates occur, R does his independent thing; he understands and responds to social cues, sometimes a lot better than other children without a history of SM. I get to connect and have coffee with the parent. I always support when needed, but it's different now. It feels like the typical playdate we all hope to have one day. I hope you will soon experience that feeling: the feeling that assures you that your child is improving through daily practices such as engaging in playdates. Improvement takes time and a great deal of effort. I encourage you to implement more playdates and be the mediator; you will see the improvement right before your eyes. You are actively doing the treatment by engaging in playdates through expanding therapeutic techniques outside the therapy room. Play is not just about having fun, but also about experimenting, risk-taking, and testing boundaries. In all honesty, it works; it does work.



My Story

Letizia Gavioli, Volunteer Contributor

I was sitting on the couch, resting after work, and looking for something to watch on TV. Something light. During my channel surfing, my attention was caught by a program showing how horses have a positive impact on children with disabilities, especially for those affected by selective mutism.

What? What was it she said? It sounded familiar. I hurried to find more, went online, and googled 'selective mutism'.

The Selective Mutism Association (SMA) was the first result on the page. I opened it. While I was reading I had mixed emotions: one part of myself could not believe it, like I had found gold. The other was still in doubt and anxious to find more. However, the more I was reading stories, looking at videos, and continuing to read over and over again, the

more a sense of peace was flourishing inside me. Eureka! At the age of almost 50, my childhood was finally making sense and more importantly, I could say to myself: "It was not my fault."

I did not talk at school from the age of 7 until I finished at 14, the legal age to do it. I did not want to continue school because it was a burden. I did not have many social interactions. I stayed home most of the time in a protective environment. I remember the first time I talked. It was for my grandfather, who was sick in hospital and asked for a cappuccino. My mum could not go and asked me, which meant I had to talk. I knew he did not have much time to live, so I did it. The one sentence I was repeating along the way was, "A cappuccino take away." Inside myself, I was shaking and freezing at the same time. It was very weird. The cashier and the barista did not know that these were my first words in a public place. I was 18. That was the first step towards my personal journey of fighting against feelings, trying to understand why I was so different, trying to make sense of my life.

It is amazing how something that should be a normal part of everyday life was a matter of crossing an invisible bridge for me. Would the bridge support me? Why do other people cross it without any worries? But I could not see it, so why trust that I will be safe?

The journey has been long and very hard, considering that when I was a child, my silence was not understood, like other children with SM. Unfortunately, nothing was done for me at an early age. In addition, I had other issues with my family and it was like a big giant intertwinement of problems. All this shaped me, and because it is not possible to buy another ticket to live a second time, I am trying my best to grow and be part of this world.

I believe improvements can be made but it takes time, education, awareness, empathy and understanding to help people with different diagnoses. I hope the shame, the stigma, and all the negativity associated with mental health will soon be part of the past. Let's all work towards this goal.

We love to share personal stories of those who have overcome selective mutism or who are supporting another person in overcoming selective mutism. By sharing these stories, we can have a better understanding of the unique experiences of our writers and strategies they found helpful. We celebrate each story as unique to the individual writer and it's important to note that others with SM may have a different experience. If you have a story to share, [please contact our newsletter editor, Emily Doll.](#)

Looking for support in overcoming selective mutism?

[Find a treating professional near you](#)

Upcoming Events

Advanced Therapeutic Solutions for Anxiety

Lunch Bunch Group Therapy

Dates: Saturdays weekly March 4 - May 27

Times: 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

Target Audience: Children with selective mutism

Location: Oak Brook, IL

Description:

ATSA's Lunch Bunch is ideal for children in the advanced stage of group therapy as well as those who require continued maintenance of treatment gains. Lunch Bunch provides a safe environment to practice age-appropriate activities and conversations within a simulated school lunch and recess. The therapeutic goals include habituating to anxiety, decreasing behavioral inhibition, increasing verbal interaction, and applying treatment gains into the school setting, and it is offered as a flexible option in which you select the dates to attend.

For More Information: Contact Iris Sanchez, Intake Coordinator /

Come Play Group Therapy

Dates: Tuesdays weekly 3/14 - 5/16 | Saturdays weekly 3/11 - 5/13

Times: 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm | 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Target Audience: Children with selective mutism

Location: Oak Brook, IL

Description:

Come Play therapy group is intended for children who are ready to move beyond the verbal relationship with their Individual Therapist and develop a verbal relationship with a Group Therapist, and promotes positive peer relationships, ego development, and identity formation. Therapeutic goals include habituating to anxiety with peers, decreasing social inhibitions, and increasing peer interaction.

For More Information: Contact Iris Sanchez, Intake Coordinator /
intake@advancedtherapeuticsolutions.org / 630-230-6505

Social Thinking Group Therapy

Dates: Saturdays weekly 3/11 - 4/15 | Wednesdays weekly 6/14 - 7/19

Times: 9:30 am - 11:00 am | 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Target Audience: Children with selective mutism

Location: Oak Brook, IL

Description:

Social Thinking Group at ATSA is an intermediary outpatient group, intended for children who are ready for a more challenging group experience, where group interaction and presentations in front of the group are expected. Therapeutic goals include habituating to speaking peer to peer, habituating to presenting in front of the group, strengthening peer interactions, and increasing social awareness and skills. This group is ideal for children who tend to be strong-willed, rigid in their thinking, tend to avoid groups and/or have difficulty in groups, and who need general social skills practice to improve their relationships.

For More Information: Contact Iris Sanchez, Intake Coordinator /
intake@advancedtherapeuticsolutions.org / 630-230-6505

Social Exposure Group Therapy

Dates: March 18 | May 6 | May 13 | May 27 | June 10

Times: 10:00am - 11:30am | 9:30am - 11:00am | 1:30pm - 3:00pm | 1:30pm - 3:00pm | 1:30pm - 3:00pm

Target Audience: Children with selective mutism

Location: Oak Brook, IL

Description:

The purpose of Social Exposure Group is to help transfer treatment gains into the community setting. These groups are for children who have reached goals in the clinic, school, and/or community setting individually, and who have progressed enough to take their new skills into a more public arena. Social Exposure Group involves imaginal exposure, role-play, preparation, and in-vivo exposure and is designed to be a flexible option where parents can pick and choose in which groups they would like their child to participate.

For More Information: Contact Iris Sanchez, Intake Coordinator /
intake@advancedtherapeuticsolutions.org / 630-230-6505

ATSA Adventure Camp 2023 Counselor Recruitment

Dates: Training: June 16 - 17, 2023; Lead in Sessions: July 11 - 29, 2023; Adventure Camp: July 31 - August 4, 2023

Times: 8:00am - 4:00 pm; minimum of 5 hours; 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Target Audience: Educators and professionals who treat/work with children who have selective mutism

Location: Oak Brook, IL

Description:

Adventure Camp uses PCIT-SM and includes application of behavioral intervention and

exposure therapy. In this 5-day, 30-hr intensive treatment (6 hrs/day), each camper is paired with a counselor who guides their camper through the exposure tasks scheduled for that day. ATSA runs the camp in a school, where school activities are simulated, including roll call, morning meeting, snack, recess, lunch, show and tell, riding the bus, etc., In addition, the children go on field trips to generalize verbal behaviors in the community. These successive exposure tasks, delivered during the 9am-3pm schedule like a typical school day, and provided a week or two before the end of summer break, provides an ideal analog for preparing the kids when their actual school resumes in the fall. If you are a teacher, paraprofessional, school social worker, or other school-based provider, you can benefit from this training. If you are a therapist of any level (including graduate students), a teacher, school SW, psychologist, psychiatrist, SLP, OT, or other professional who may encounter a child with SM in their work, you can benefit from this training.

For More Information: Contact Iris Sanchez, Intake Coordinator / intake@advancedtherapeuticsolutions.org / 630-230-6505

Adventure Camp Intensive Group Treatment for Selective Mutism

Dates: Monday, July 31, 2023 - Friday, August 4, 2023

Times: 9:00am - 3:00pm CST

Target Audience: Children with selective mutism

Location: Elmhurst, IL

Description:

Adventure Camp is a five-day in-vivo, in-situ intensive exposure therapy program designed to simulate the classroom environment to treat students with selective mutism. It runs in August so that the therapy occurs right before the start of the new school year, increasing treatment carryover into your child's school. Adventure Camp runs from 9am - 3pm for five days (Monday - Friday), providing 30 hours of intensive exposure therapy, as well as five hours of parent guidance, for a total of 35 hours of therapy in one week, expediting treatment. Lead-in Sessions, in which therapeutic methods are used to facilitate and reinforce verbal communication to prepare your child for the camp, run from Tuesday July 11 - Saturday July 29. In the simulated classroom, your child has the opportunity to practice their communication goals. Each child is assigned to a counselor (1:1 ratio) and the counselor applies evidence-based therapeutic strategies to reduce anxious-avoidance mutism and increase verbal communication. For younger children, the simulation includes morning circle time, free play, snack, and typical structured and unstructured activities experienced in the early childhood classrooms. For older children, the simulation includes morning assembly, non-structured and structured group work, structured class activity, and therapeutic role plays to practice classroom presentation as well as social interaction. Both age groups experience lunch, recess, in-classroom visitors, field trips, and bus rides. All counselors have received training under the direct supervision of SM specialist Dr. Carmen Lynas.

For More Information: Contact Iris Sanchez, Intake Coordinator / intake@advancedtherapeuticsolutions.org / 630-230-6505

Brighter Outlook and Anxiety Treatment Center

Kids Out Loud Summer Camp

Dates: July 24-July 28, 2023

Times: 9am-2pm

Target Audience: Children with SM, Ages 4-8

Location: Maryland/Washington DC Metro Area

Description:

Kids Out Loud is a 5-day therapeutic day camp experience that provides intensive behavioral treatment for children between the ages of four and eight diagnosed with selective mutism. We strive to help children practice and build confidence in brave speech and social interaction, getting a jump start before the new school year. Each child receives a 1:1 trained counselor that works on individualized goals, including peer-to-peer interactions, speech in small and large groups, presenting during structured activities, social skills, and self-advocacy. Engaging and hands-on activities include group games, scavenger hunts, arts and crafts, music, and special events (e.g., magician, petting zoo, ice cream truck). We create a school-like experience through circle time, center work, and

show and tell. In addition, our program includes 5 hours of live parent training and 2 hours of school follow-up intervention.

Two child psychologists direct the Kids Out Loud Program, Dr. Veronica Raggi and Dr. Courtney Keeton, who have over thirty years of combined experience specializing in the treatment of selective mutism. Dr. Raggi has directed camp intensives for children with SM for the past six years.

Camp is located in the lower elementary school building on the beautiful campus of St. Andrew's Episcopal School at 8804 Postoak Road, Potomac, MD 20854, in the Washington DC Metro Area.

For More Information: Please visit our website at:

<https://www.brighteroutlook-cbt.com/kol-kids-therapy-camp> or contact Veronica Raggi, Ph.D. at 301-200-2154 or vraggi@brighteroutlook-cbt.com; or Courtney Keeton at 410-800-7591 or ckeeton@anxietymaryland.com

ChildForward, Inc

Calgary Summer Camp for Selective Mutism

Dates: August 18-21, 2023

Times: 9:00am-2:00pm

Target Audience: Children ages 5 to 9 years old

Location: Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Description:

Campers will practice talking and social skill goals across situations to build momentum and confidence heading into the new school year. Camp will include classroom-like activities each morning and fun social activities each afternoon. Each group member will be provided individual support with their identified talking and social skill goals. Campers can expect to face common challenges in their school day in a supportive environment as well as lots of fun with same-aged peers!

For More Information: Contact groups@childforward.ca

Cognitive and Behavioral Consultants

Voices Rising

Dates: July 31-August 4, 2023

Times: 9am-2pm daily

Target Audience: Children ages 4-10 with selective mutism

Location: Westchester, NY

Description:

Cognitive and Behavioral Consultants in Westchester (NY) is hosting Voices Rising, a five-day, in-person SM intensive camp for children between the ages of 4 and 10. This is a wonderful opportunity for your child to get brave talking practice in a classroom-like environment and interact with new peers and adults. Camp-like activities and games, exposure opportunities, and visitors will be part of the program. The dates will be Monday, July 31 through Friday, August 4 at a school close to our White Plains office (9-2pm daily). Parent training is an integral part of the program.

For More Information: Spots are limited so please contact sm@cbc-psychology.com for more information and to register.

The Feelings Place

Confident Kids Camp

Dates: August 14-18, 2023 with fade-ins the week before

Time: 9am to 3pm each day for camp

Target Audience: Children with selective mutism ages 8-12

Location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Description:

Confident Kids Camp is a 5-day in-person camp for kids with selective mutism. There will be 3 classrooms and we have a few spots left in our oldest classroom which will be for 8-12 year olds. There is also parent training every day which parents are expected to join.

For More Information: <https://www.thefeelingsplace.com/confident-kids-camp-toronto> or email admin@thefeelingsplace.com

Freedom Camp

Freedom Camp 2023: Intensive Treatment for Selective Mutism

Dates: June 26-30, 2023

Times: 9:30am-2:30pm

Target Audience: Children 4 -14 years of age with selective mutism

Location: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel – Pruneyard Plaza, 1995 South Bascom Avenue, Campbell, CA 95008

Description:

This camp is designed for children 4 -14 years of age with selective mutism. It is a wonderful opportunity for children with selective mutism to become more comfortable and increase verbalizations with peers and adults in a supportive setting. All Freedom Camp Counselors will be specifically trained in selective mutism treatment techniques. These fun-filled days will provide campers with opportunities to practice using their brave voices in individual, small group, whole group settings, and field trips within the shopping center. The camp will be led by Catherine Eckel, Ph.D. and Dr. Agredano, both of whom specialize in the treatment of selective mutism. Parents will be provided with feedback on their child's experience at camp. Campers are asked to bring their snacks, drinks, refillable water bottles and lunch to camp.

For More Information: Visit <https://www.selectivemutismbayarea.com/> or contact Catherine Eckel, PhD, ceckel@drcatherineeckel.com

Growing Minds Psychology

In-person Conversation Group

Dates: Wednesdays, April 26-June 14, 2023

Time: 5pm EST

Target Audience: Children ages 7-10 with SM, social anxiety, or other social-related difficulties

Location: 414 East 75th Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10021

Description:

Our in-person conversation group provides opportunities to practice social interactions in a fluid manner. We work on higher-level goals like decision-making, fluent speech, sharing opinions, and playing games with peers. Components of CBT are also integrated and are tailored based on the needs of the group. This group is a great fit for kids who have already received treatment, but need additional opportunities to practice interacting socially with support from a treating professional. Our conversation group is run by Dr. Carly Mayer.

For More Information: Contact info@growingmindsnyc.com

Kurtz Psychology

LifeTown SM Intensive Field Trip

Date: April 24, 2023

Time: 9:30am - 1pm EST

Target Audience: 3-9-year-olds

Location: LifeTown, 10 Microlab Rd, Livingston, NJ 07039

Description:

We will be leading a half-day, SM intensive field trip at a simulated village called LifeTown, located in Livingston, NJ! On this field trip, parents and counselors will support brave

behaviors in simulated "real life" situations. Children will start at the bank to take out money that they will spend in various shops, such as the pet store, craft store, ice cream stand, nail salon, grocery store, etc.

For More Information: Contact info@kurtzpsychology.com
(212) 658-0110 ext. 124

Summer 2023 Mighty Mouth Kids Camp

Dates: Camp Dates: August 14-18, 2023; Lead-In Sessions: August 7-11, 2023

Times: Camp Days: 9AM - 2PM EST

Target Audience: 3-9-year-olds

Location: 57 West 57th Street, Suite #1007 New York, NY 10019

Description:

Mighty Mouth Kids is the intensive group behavioral treatment model developed by our own Dr. Steven Kurtz and is now accepted as a gold standard treatment for selective mutism. Mighty Mouth simulates a real classroom and social setting where the children get repeated practice successfully talking with teachers and peers in our in-person camp classroom. We train the parents to be the agents of change to help the kids talk in the same situations that became "contaminated," where they were previously unable to speak, such as in morning meetings, Show 'n Tell, and stores.

For More Information: Contact info@kurtzpsychology.com
(212) 658-0110 ext. 124

Weekly Virtual Older Child Selective Mutism Group

Dates: Tuesdays, ongoing

Times: 5:30-6:30PM EST

Target Audience: 9-12-year-olds from NY, VA, or CT

Location: Virtual

Description:

Our group intervention at Kurtz Psychology incorporates evidence-based approaches with engaging and relevant activities to target your child's increased verbalizations and interactions with adults and peers. Children will have an opportunity to meet other children with similar difficulties and participate in weekly lessons simulating a classroom. Over the course of the group, each child will provide one presentation to the group.

Areas of focus: Responding to and asking questions, interacting with peers, participating in a classroom, presenting to a group, etc.

For More Information: Contact smgroup@kurtzpsychology.com
(212) 658-0110 ext. 122

Little Hands Occupational Therapy

Courageous Kids

Dates: Week 1: June 26-29; Week 2: July 10-14

Time: 9:30am-12:00pm

Target Audience: Preschool and elementary-aged children with various anxiety-based disorders

Description:

Courageous Kids is a sensory motor-based behavioral therapy program. The program has been designed to support preschool and elementary-aged children with various anxiety-based disorders such as, but not limited to:

- Selective mutism
- Generalized anxiety
- Sensory processing disorder
- Social communication challenges

The goal of this program is to support children with communicating and participating more freely and comfortably in school and other social settings. A classroom-like setting is created that offers children a safe environment to practice verbal participation: "courageous talking", "courageous moving" and "courageous playing". Children are

positively reinforced for being brave and courageous!

For More Information: Contact the Clinic Coordinator: eo@littlehandsot.com, Clinic Director: gp@littlehandsot.com, or Therapist Running the Camp: nd@littlehandsot.com

Parent and Child Psychological Services of Sarasota

Virtual Teen SM and Social Anxiety Group

Dates: Wednesdays

Time: 5-6pm Eastern

Target Audience: High School aged teens with SM and or Social Anxiety Disorder

Location: Virtual (Open to families in Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Virginia)

Description:

This virtual SM group for high schoolers teaches CBT skills and allows a place to practice social interactions and conversations. Exposures are done in and outside of group. The group is held on Zoom Wednesdays 5-6 PM Eastern.

For More Information: Contact Mireya Saldana- Administrative Coordinator
info@childtherapysrq.com / 941-357-4090

Mighty Mouth Kids- Sarasota

Dates: Parent Training 7/13/23 and 7/14/23; Lead-ins 7/18/23-7/21/23; Camp 7/24/23-7/28/23

Times: Camp 9 am - 2 pm

Target Audience: Children ages 4-9 with selective mutism

Location: 4071 Bee Ridge Road, Suite 204, Sarasota, FL 34233

Description:

This week-long camp based on the MMK model developed by Dr. Kurtz replicates a school/camp setting with a 1:1 counselor-to-camper ratio.

Campers have the opportunity to:

- Practice brave talking in indoor and outdoor group play
- Enjoy snacks and lunch with peers
- Practice raising their hand, participating and asking for help in a classroom setting
- Present in front of the group
- Ask questions to others presenting to the group
- Speak in community settings (e.g., pizza lunch & ice cream store)
- Speak on a field trip

Parent training and live parent coaching are included.

For More Information: Contact Krista Morgan- Administrative Coordinator of Special Projects- info@childtherapysrq.com 941-357-4090

Pinnacle Counseling and Testing Center

Outside Voice Selective Mutism Camp

Dates: March 27-30, 2023

Times: 9:00-2:30pm

Target Audience: Children from ages 3-11 with selective mutism

Location: San Diego Central Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Poway, San Diego

Description:

Does your child have difficulty speaking in school? Talking to peers and new adults? Communicating his or her needs? Outside Voice Selective Mutism Day Camp can help! Outside Voice creates a school-like environment that is made to foster your child's growth and confidence in speaking with new peers and adults. Our skilled counselors will help your child conquer their anxiety around speaking and will help them start to use their "Outside Voice."

For More Information: Contact (951)-219-0845 OR info@pinnaclecounselingca.com

Outside Voice Selective Mutism Camp

Dates: July 2023

Times: 9:00-2:30pm

Target Audience: Children from ages 3-11 with selective mutism

Location: San Diego, CA

Description:

Does your child have difficulty speaking in school? Talking to peers and new adults? Communicating his or her needs? Outside Voice Selective Mutism Day Camp can help! Outside Voice creates a school-like environment that is made to foster your child's growth and confidence in speaking with new peers and adults. Our skilled counselors will help your child conquer their anxiety around speaking and will help them start to use their "Outside Voice."

For More Information: Contact (951)-219-0845 OR info@pinnaclecounselingca.com

Simply Psychology LLC

Group SPACE Treatment

Dates: Thursdays, March 30 - May 18, 2023

Times: 6:30pm - 7:45pm (Arizona Time)

Target Audience: Parents of anxious children

Location: Virtual

Description:

Focused on shifting parental responses to anxious childhood emotions has proven to be very effective in treating your child's anxiety! Learn how to identify the accommodations you have been making for your child and learn strategies to reduce those accommodations.

For More Information: Contact Simply Psychology on 602-428-2838 or admin@simplypsychservices.com or visit our registration page: <https://forms.gle/cjBsbfZvbmTmjyQP9>.

Selective Mutism Workshop

Dates: July 25, 2023

Times: 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM (Arizona Time)

Target Audience: Parents, teachers or other school professionals who support a child with selective mutism.

Location: Virtual

Description:

This 4 hour virtual workshop covers the basics of SM, current research and treatment of SM, how anxiety affects the brain, skills you can implement NOW to help your child, parent child interaction therapy skills (CDI (PRIDE skills), VDI skills), role play for proficiency and more!

For More Information: Contact Simply Psychology on 602-428-2838 or admin@simplypsychservices.com or visit our google registration form to register: <https://forms.gle/489JLt1MrJUFodgH7>

Jumpstart - Get Back to School Ready!

Dates: July 29-30, 2023

Times: 9am-2pm each day

Target Audience: Children 4-13 who struggle with transitions, anxious behaviors, school anxiety, speaking to new people, working cooperatively with same age peers, presenting in front of a group, doing board work in front of others, participating in show and tell and/or separating from you at drop off.

Location: Phoenix, AZ

Description:

Our two-day intensive camp, staffed by trained clinicians, is aimed at helping your child transition back to a classroom setting. Note: Your child is not required to be verbal with new adults or peers to participate in camp.

For More Information: Contact Simply Psychology on 602-428-2838 / admin@simplypsychservices.com or see our Registration Form for more information - <https://forms.gle/tNypccWdJ6rQKwQ1A>.

SMart Center

CommuniCamp™ Intensive Group Treatment & Parent Training Program

Dates: March 24-27, 2023; June 23-26, 2023; August 11-14, 2023

Time: Friday orientation: 6:30-7:30pm; Camp Saturday-Monday: 9-2pm

Ages: Children ages 3-17 and their families

Location: Greater Philadelphia Area, Pennsylvania

Description:

CommuniCamp™ is an Intensive Group Treatment and Parent Training & Support Program to help parents, children, and teens (ages 3-17+) overcome Selective Mutism, social anxiety, and extreme shyness.

Children/teens do not need to talk to participate. All are welcome! There is no restriction based on a child/teen's social communication stage.

We will help your child/teen build the social communication skills necessary for school, the real world, and at home implementing the SMart Center's 20+ years of experience treating Selective Mutism using Social Communication Anxiety Treatment® (S-CAT®), the evidence-based treatment approach created by world-renowned Selective Mutism expert, Dr. Elisa Shipon-Blum,

Children/teens receive 15+ hours of treatment, Parents receive 15+ hours of psychoeducation/support throughout the weekend.

CommuniCamp is an excellent supplemental treatment to those already receiving, or plan to receive, individualized care.

For More Information: Please contact LisaMarie Vargas, CommuniCamp Director, communicamp@selectivemutismcenter.org

Thriving Minds

Confident Kids Camp

Dates: July 24-30, 2023

Time: 9am-3pm

Target Audience: Youth with SM, ages 4-18

Location: Brighton, MI

Description:

Confident Kids Camp is a 5-day, intensive therapy program designed to help prepare children (ages 4-18) with Selective Mutism for the upcoming academic year.

For More Information: Contact Katelyn Reed, MS; kreed@thrivingminds.info; registration materials available online at <https://www.thrivingmindsbehavioralhealth.com/confident-kids-camp>

For more upcoming events, check out the [SMA Events page](#) on our website!

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Selective Mutism Association

13750 West Colonial Drive, Suite 350, #213
Winter Garden, FL 34787-4204

[Email SMA Today](#)

