



# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

November 2024

Volume 1, Issue 6

Through our monthly newsletters, Let's Talk About aims to educate and connect with our clients by raising awareness on issues that pertain to mental health - our specialty.

Your story matters and so do YOU!

## EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Early childhood mental health awareness refers to recognizing and understanding the emotional, social, and cognitive development of young children. This awareness emphasizes the importance of nurturing children's mental health to support their overall development and well-being. By prioritizing early childhood mental health, we can help children reach their full potential and create a healthier society overall.



## INTERNATIONAL STRESS AWARENESS

NOVEMBER 6

International Stress Awareness Day is observed on the first Wednesday of November each year. This day aims to raise awareness about the impact of stress on individuals and communities and to promote strategies for managing and reducing stress. In this newsletter, we discuss different types of skills to overcome our everyday stressors.



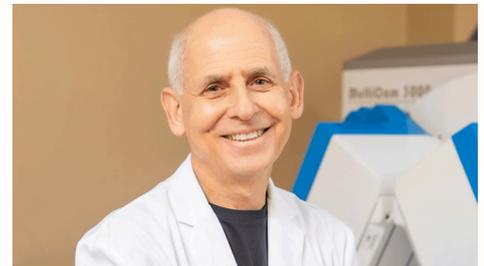
## MANAGING FAMILY DYNAMICS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Managing family dynamics during the holidays can be challenging, but with some thoughtful strategies, you can foster a more harmonious environment.



Here at LTA, we always want to promote healthy family relationships. This month we address ways in which we can cope with the chaos that often times arise during the holidays and how to make it through the holiday season.

## LET'S TALK ABOUT LITERATURE RAISING MENTALLY STRONG KIDS



In this month's book recommendation, *Raising Mentally Strong Kids*, Dr. Daniel Amen and Dr. Charles Fay focus on strategies to cultivate emotional resilience and mental strength in children. In our newsletter, we discuss the impact of Dr. Amen and Dr. Fay's research and discoveries on how you can better prepare to raise mentally strong children.

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Let's Talk About  
Mental Health Counseling  
Psychological Immigration Evaluations



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# Early Childhood Mental Health Awareness Month

## SUPPORTING YOUNG MINDS

November is Early Childhood Mental Health Awareness Month, focusing on the emotional, social, and psychological development of children from birth to age five. Research indicates that experiences during this formative period shape the architecture of a child’s brain, laying the foundation for future learning, behavior, and health. **The CDC reports** that about **1 in 6 children** in the U.S. aged 2-8 have a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder, underscoring the importance of early identification and support.

During early childhood, significant brain growth occurs, with **90% of a child’s brain developing before the age of five**. The ability to form secure attachments, understand emotions, and develop coping mechanisms during this period influences future mental health. Positive early relationships with caregivers and responsive environments can foster resilience, while negative experiences, such as trauma or neglect, can increase vulnerability to mental health disorders later in life.

### Promoting Mental Wellness in Early Childhood:

🌱 **Secure Attachment:** Secure attachments with caregivers serve as a protective factor against stress and anxiety. Responsive caregiving—where a caregiver responds appropriately to a child’s needs—helps build a foundation for emotional regulation. According to **Harvard’s Center on the Developing Child**, secure attachment can reduce a child’s risk of anxiety and depression as they grow.

🌱 **Building Emotional Awareness:** Emotional development begins early, with children as young as 18 months showing basic forms of empathy. Helping children identify emotions, such as through facial expressions or language (ex., “You look sad”), supports emotional intelligence. Research suggests that children who learn to name their emotions are better at coping with stress and have fewer behavioral problems.



🌱 **Play and Emotional Growth:** Play is essential for emotional and social growth in children. Through play, children learn how to interact with others, negotiate, and manage conflicts. In fact, **play-based interventions** have been shown to be effective in helping young children process trauma and build resilience.

Parents, educators, and communities play a critical role in supporting early mental health. Raising awareness about the signs of emotional difficulties—such as persistent sadness, extreme irritability, or social withdrawal—can lead to early intervention and better outcomes. Early childhood professionals and pediatricians are vital partners in identifying and addressing these concerns.

### Clinician Corner



“Supporting the mental health of young children is a journey that requires patience, understanding, and love. By fostering emotional intelligence and resilience, we equip our children with the skills they need to thrive.

At Let’s Talk About, we value our collaborative relationships with caregivers immensely. Our goal is to offer our youngest clients supportive guidance while educating parents along the way. Contact our office if your child is in need of mental health support or if you are in need of parental advice.

*Michelle Asencio, L.M.H.C.*

## International Stress Awareness Day is Nov. 6th

### STRESS AND ITS GLOBAL IMPACT

Stress is the body's response to challenges or demands, and in moderate amounts, it can motivate individuals to achieve goals or respond to critical situations. However, chronic stress can lead to adverse health outcomes.

**The American Psychological Association** reports that **77% of people experience stress** that impacts their physical health, while **73% say stress affects their mental health**. The physiological effects of stress include increased blood pressure, faster breathing, and heightened muscle tension, all of which are part of the body's "fight or flight" response. Over time, if left unmanaged, these stress responses can lead to conditions such as hypertension, anxiety, depression, and a weakened immune system.

It is important to note that stress manifests itself differently in varying situations. For example, work is a leading source of stress for many individuals.

**The World Health Organization (WHO)** has recognized burnout as an occupational phenomenon, describing it as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. Symptoms of burnout include emotional exhaustion, feelings of negativity or cynicism related to one's job, and reduced professional efficacy.

Young people are also experiencing high levels of stress. **The 2023 Stress in America Survey** revealed that 47% of teenagers reported feeling stressed about school. The academic pressure, combined with social expectations and family dynamics, contributes to significant levels of anxiety and stress in adolescents.

Chronic stress has been associated with increased risk for conditions such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Research by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) indicates that prolonged stress

exposure can lead to inflammation, which is a common underlying factor in many chronic illnesses. This is why it's crucial to learn effective stress management skills. **Some include:**

**Mindfulness and Meditation:** Studies have found that individuals who engage in mindfulness practices show a reduction in stress levels. Practices such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and guided visualization can lower cortisol levels and improve well-being.

**Physical Exercise:** Physical activity stimulates the production of endorphins, also known as the body's natural mood enhancers. Regular physical activity is linked to lower levels of anxiety and depression. Just **30 minutes of daily exercise** can decrease overall stress levels and improve sleep, which is often impacted by stress.

**Social Support:** Developing a support system of friends, family, or support groups is crucial in mitigating the effects of stress. Individuals with a strong support system are more resilient to stress, anxiety, and depression.

On International Stress Awareness Day, take a moment to reflect on your sources of stress and implement at least one new strategy to manage it. Whether it's a breathing exercise, taking a walk during lunch, or talking to a trusted friend, small steps can lead to big improvements in managing stress. Contact our office for further guidance!



# Managing Family Dynamics During the Holidays

## AWARENESS AND EARLY DETECTION

The holidays are often portrayed as a season of joy, connection, and cheer. However, for many, they also come with their fair share of stress, challenging family dynamics, and emotional fatigue. Whether it's unspoken tension, differing expectations, or the sheer chaos of getting everyone under one roof, holiday gatherings can test your patience and emotional resilience. Here are some ways to make it through the holidays with your sanity and relationships intact:

 **Set Realistic Expectations :** One of the most common sources of holiday stress comes from unrealistic expectations. It's easy to get caught up in the idea of a perfect holiday, but reality rarely matches up. Understanding and accepting that things might not go perfectly—someone may bring up a sensitive topic, the food may get burned, or plans might change—can help reduce stress and make you more adaptable.

 **Establish Boundaries:** Boundaries are crucial when navigating family dynamics. Whether it's deciding how much time to spend with relatives, steering clear of certain topics, or choosing not to attend an event, it's important to set and communicate your boundaries in a calm, respectful manner. Remember, setting boundaries isn't about creating distance from loved ones—it's about creating healthy limits which allow relationships to flourish.

 **Practice Social Detachment when needed:** You cannot change how others behave, but you can change your response. Family members may bring up controversial topics, make remarks that sting, or behave in ways that are hard to understand. Practicing emotional detachment means allowing others to have their emotions and opinions without absorbing their negativity or feeling responsible for their actions.



 **Prepare coping Strategies:** It's helpful to have a few strategies at the ready to help manage stressful moments. Whether it's a long-standing family dispute or subtle tensions that arise, being prepared with coping tools can make a big difference. These might include relaxation techniques, mentally planning an exit strategy, or redirecting conversations towards neutral or positive topics.

 **Practice Empathy, But Protect Yourself:** Family gatherings can bring old wounds to the surface. Practicing empathy can help, as it encourages us to see situations from others' perspectives. It might be that your relative's behavior is rooted in their own stress or unresolved issues. Empathy can de-escalate tensions, but it's also important to protect your own well-being.



# Let's Talk About Literature



## Raising Mentally Strong Kids

By: Daniel G. Amen, MD & Charles Fay PHD

"Raising Mentally Strong Kids" by Dr. Daniel Amen and Charles Fay focuses on nurturing children's mental and emotional health to help them thrive. The book combines neuroscience with practical parenting strategies to foster resilience and mental strength. Some key takeaways include:

- **Understanding the Brain:** Dr. Amen explains how brain function impacts behavior and emotional well-being, emphasizing the importance of mental health education for parents and children.
- **Nurturing Resilience:** The book provides techniques for helping kids cope with stress and setbacks, teaching them to view challenges as opportunities for growth.
- **Encouraging Healthy Habits:** Dr. Amen highlights the role of nutrition, exercise, and sleep in maintaining a healthy brain, which in turn supports emotional stability.
- **Teaching Emotional Intelligence:** Parents are guided on how to help their children identify and manage their emotions effectively.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** The book stresses the importance of praise and encouragement, fostering a supportive environment that boosts confidence.

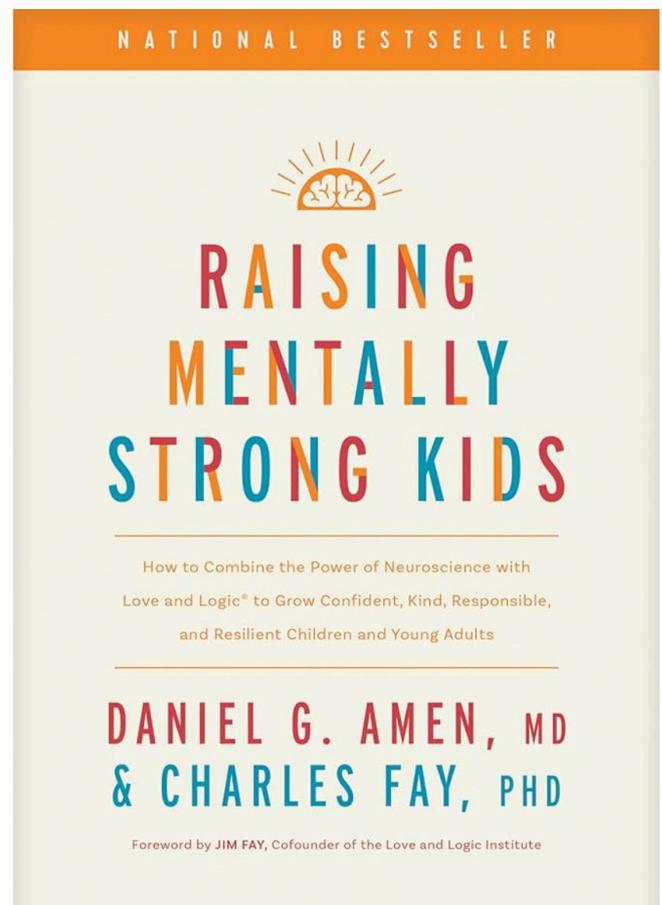
## How can this book help you?

Reading "Raising Mentally Strong Kids" by Dr. Daniel Amen can benefit you in several ways.

The book provides insights into the connection between brain health and emotional well-being, helping you understand your child's mental processes better. With a more comprehensive understanding of mental health, you'll be able to learn practical techniques for fostering resilience and emotional strength in your children.

Learning how to communicate more effectively with your kids while helping them express their feelings and thoughts will improve your relationship. This ultimately allows you to navigate challenges that naturally come with raising children more effectively.

Overall, this book equips you with tools and insights to raise resilient, mentally strong kids, fostering their emotional and psychological development.



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## OUR CLINICIANS

### Michelle Asencio

**Specialties:** Anxiety, Depression, Mood disorders, Sexuality issues, Sex Therapy, Couples, Marriages, Adjustment Disorders, Pre- Marital. **Spanish Speaking. 13 years old +**

**Modality:** Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Sex Therapy, Solution Focused Therapy, Client Center Therapy, Brief Solution Therapy, Couples Therapy

### Kaiza Canales

**Specialties:** Anxiety, Depression, Anger Management, Mood Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, Pre-Marital, Couples Therapy, Trauma Focus, Parenting, Social Skills - **Spanish Speaking. 6 years old +**

### David Gomez

**Specialties:** Anxiety, depression, Anger Management, Mood Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, Behavioral Issues, Parenting Issues, Parenting, Autism, Social Skills. **Spanish Speaking. 3 years old +**

### Breckin Crowley

**Specialties:** Anxiety, Depression, Mood disorders, Anger Management, Mood Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, LGBTQIA+, Transgender, Substance Abuse, Trauma, Alternative Lifestyle, Sexuality, Couples Therapy, Social Skills . **Adults 18 +**

### Mary Marrero

**Specialties:** Mood Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, Life Transitions, LGBTQIA+, Spirituality Issues, Parenting Skills, Grief, Loss, Personality Disorders, Eating Disorders, Human Developmental Challenges, and Substance Abuse Problems. **Spanish Speaking. 6 years old +**

### Paola Balseca - Registered Mental Health Counselor Intern

**Specialties:** Anxiety, Depression, Pre & Postpartum Depression, Anger Management, Mood Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, Behavioral Issues, Parenting Issues, Social Skills, Couples, Domestic Violence. **Spanish Speaking. 6 years old +**

### Tisifene Taylor - Registered Mental Health Counselor Intern

**Specialties:** Anxiety, Depression, Pre & Postpartum Depression, Anger Management, Mood Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, Behavioral Issues, Parenting Issues, Social Skills, Couples, Domestic Violence. **6 years old +**

# OUR MISSION STATEMENT

At Let's Talk About, our mission is to provide compassionate, evidence-based mental health therapy that empowers individuals to overcome challenges, cultivate resilience, and live fulfilling lives. We are committed to creating a safe and supportive space where clients can explore their thoughts, feelings, and experiences without judgment. Through collaborative and personalized treatment approaches, we strive to promote healing, growth, and positive change. Our goal is to empower clients to harness their strengths, develop effective coping skills, and cultivate meaningful connections with themselves and others. Together, we work towards fostering a community where mental health is prioritized, stigma is challenged, and individuals thrive.



WE APPRECIATE YOUR REFERRALS!



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