

Empower

A newsletter from Mercy Family Counseling

EMPOWER:

*The Mercy Family Counseling
Newsletter*

Welcome!

Mercy Family Counseling provides *The Mercy Touch*[®] to those experiencing mental health challenges through person-centered counseling, medication management and other psychiatric services, community education, and support groups. And, we're looking to extend our service by issuing a newsletter with helpful information.

Look for this newsletter quarterly. Feel free to share it with others.

In this edition:

- New child psychiatrist
- Understanding mental health credentials
- Focus on PTSD, treatment, and providers

Subscribe or unsubscribe at:
MercyFamilyCounselingServices@
mercyare.org

Meet our Providers: Spotlight

Dr. Rene Duregger, child psychiatrist, recently joined the staff of Mercy Family Counseling treating children ages 5 through 18. Her responsibilities include the assessment and treatment of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders through evaluation and medication management.



Certified by the American Board of Psychiatry & Neurology, Dr. Duregger attended medical school at St. George's University School of Medicine, Grenada, West Indies, and completed residencies at the University of Kansas School of Medicine and the University of Iowa School of Medicine.

DR. DUREGGER IS ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS.

Call Mercy Family Counseling at (319) 398-6575 to schedule. All insurance payers are accepted.

*“The greatest gifts you can give your children
are the roots of responsibility and the wings
of independence”*

Denis Waitley, Author



Upcoming Events

Depression Support Group: Second Tuesday of the month, 12:10-12:50 p.m. Drop-ins are welcome and there is no charge. Call (319) 398-6575 for more information. Meets at Mercy Family Counseling on Blairs Ferry Road.

Trauma Skills Group: Ongoing, by referral only. Call (319) 398-6575 for more information. Meets at Mercy Family Counseling on Blairs Ferry Road. Check with your insurance company for coverage.

Pain Management Group: Ongoing, by referral only. Call (319) 369-4777 for more information. Meets at Mercy Medical Center Outpatient Psychiatry Department. Check with your insurance company for coverage.

Who's Who in Mental Health Treatment

Psychiatrist: A **psychiatrist** is a medical doctor with specialized training in mental health treatment. He/She is able to prescribe medication, but rarely provides therapy.

Psychiatrists at Mercy Family Counseling:
Bruce Sieleni, MD and Rene Duregger, MD.

Clinical Psychologist: A **clinical psychologist** has a doctorate degree in psychology. He/She often provides testing services as well as individual and group therapy, but does not prescribe medication.

Psychologists at Mercy Family Counseling:
Caroline Moniza, PsyD and Scott Eilers, PsyD

Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner: A **psychiatric ARNP** is a master's level registered nurses with specialized training in mental health. He/She diagnoses mental illness and prescribes medication, but rarely provides therapy.

ARNPs at Mercy Family Counseling: Nan Ambrosy, ARNP; Nancy Howe, ARNP; Jamie Smith, ARNP

Licensed Mental Health Counselor: Or **LMHC** for short, is a **counselor** with a master's degree in mental health counseling. He/She diagnoses and provides therapeutic treatment for mental or emotional illnesses, but does not prescribe medication.

Mental Health Counselors at Mercy Family Counseling: Shawn Stepp, LMHC; Katie Moon, LMHC; Lisa Lahr, LMHC; Aubrey Hepker, LMHC; Ann Alliger, LMHC

Licensed Independent Social Workers (LISWs): Are **social workers** with a master's degree in clinical social work. He/She diagnoses and provides therapeutic treatment for mental or emotional illness, but does not prescribe medication.

Social Workers at Mercy Family Counseling: Libby Dunnigan, LMSW; Mary Tharp, LISW; Gretchen Thompson, LISW; Tamara Taylor-Hillyer, LISW; Michelle Myers, LISW; Brenda Keenan, LISW; Cynthia Hemesath, LISW; Mike Caudill, LISW

who's who

Focus On Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Psychological trauma, also known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), occurs when an individual has experienced, witnessed, or discovered the aftermath of an incredibly difficult and frightening event such as physical or sexual abuse, an accident or a disaster, a violent crime, or active combat duty. Trauma can also occur from losing a loved one unexpectedly and/or tragically.

Not everyone who experiences traumatic events develops PTSD. It is normal to feel shaken and disturbed initially, but sometimes the feelings that go along with the events (such as fear, anger and confusion) go away on their own. For other people, those feelings do not fully improve on their own, and they may feel frightened, irritated, or confused for months or even years after the event.

Some common symptoms of PTSD include unwanted memories, nightmares, difficulty feeling safe in certain situations, negative beliefs about other people or the world in general, unexplained physical health issues, disturbed sleep, anxiety, and depression.

PTSD is very different from other mental health conditions. It is caused by a long-term reaction to a major life stressor, whereas most other mental health conditions are caused by a combination of genetics, biology and environment. The symptoms of PTSD do not get better by simply talking about it or having a good listener, nor do they improve on their own as time passes. Additionally, PTSD does not generally respond well to medication. **The best way to recover from PTSD is to work with a trauma therapist trained in the most effective treatment methods described below.** If you are exhibiting symptoms or seeking treatment, call Mercy Family Counseling (319) 398-6575 for an appointment. Request a therapist or psychologist trained in cognitive behavioral therapy, exposure therapy, or eye movement desensitization and reprocessing.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT focuses on changing how people think and behave. Experiencing a trauma can significantly change thoughts and behaviors.

For example, if we are hurt by another person, we may "learn" that people cannot be trusted and begin to socially isolate ourselves, which can negatively impact our mood, happiness, our relationships with friends and family, and productivity in areas such as work or school.

A therapist helps explore and challenge these beliefs will work on returning the patient to a pre-trauma quality of life.

Exposure Therapy

Exposure therapy involves some form of harmless exposure to triggers that remind the patients of a traumatic experience and provoke a distressing reaction. Why does this help? Because gradual exposure reduces sensitivity to triggers, and eventually helps patients return to living the way they did before the trauma.

Exposure therapy can include learning to revisit places or re-engaging in activities. It can also include talking or thinking about traumatic experiences. It's performed in a specific, pre-planned order, typically starting with less triggering situations or memories and gradually working up to those that are more triggering, all with the support of a trained professional.

Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR)

EMDR uses an eight-step process which identifies and works with traumatic memories. Along with bilateral stimulation of the brain in some format (eye movement, taps, or clicks occurring in rhythmic patterns), the client revisits the memory in small bites of thirty seconds or so. The brain is able to reprocess those memories so the memories remain but they no longer have the powerful emotion connected to them.

Below, meet the Mercy Family Counseling staff providing PTSD treatments.
Call (319) 398-6575 for an appointment.



Scott Eilers, PsyD
CBT
Exposure Therapy



Gretchen Thompson, LISW
CBT
EMDR



Shawn Stepp, LMHC, CADC
CBT
EMDR

“And the time came when the pain to remain tight in the bud became greater than the risk it took to blossom.”

Anais Nin, Author



Additional Resources

[NAMI \(National Alliance on Mental Illness\)](#)

[NAMI of Iowa](#)

[Abbe Center](#)

[National Institute of Mental Health](#)

[Anxiety and Depression Association of](#)

[America](#)

[Foundation 2](#)

[American Psychiatric Association](#)

[Mental Health America](#)

[Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance](#)

[American Psychological Association](#)

[The No Stigmas Project](#)



Photo Courtesy: Pam Olson

[Mercy Family Counseling](#)

1340 Blairs Ferry Road

Hiawatha, Iowa 52333

(319) 398-6575