

Indications of Progress in Therapy

One of the overarching goals of beginning and continuing therapy is to decrease the debilitating symptoms one experiences and to be able to live a more meaningful life; moving from dysfunction to function.¹ As a parent, there are times where we may not know when our child is showing progress and seeing if the “prescribed” treatment plan is working. Below are some indicators that may show therapy has been effective:

- *Reduction in Symptoms*
 - As your child engages in therapy, the goal is to see a reduction of symptoms. For example, if one struggled with anxiety, they may have a symptom of panic attacks. An indicator of progress would include decreased frequency of the attacks occurring and/or decreased severity. There are symptoms that may not “go away”. However, if your child can utilize the skills being taught in therapy to manage the symptoms, one should see the progress.
- *Improvement in Functioning*
 - Depending on the severity of the problem that your child is seeking therapy for, their functioning and daily living skills may have become impaired. Here are some indicators that improvements are being made:
 - Sleep: better quality of sleep, less interruptions, decreased restlessness, decreased fatigue and increased energy
 - Appetite: depending on if the child struggled with increased appetite or decreased appetite, one would see a shift to a balanced diet
 - Daily living skills: improvement in hygiene (showering, brushing teeth, changing clothes), tasks such as laundry, cleaning up their room, etc.
 - School: improvement of grades, decreased truancy, motivation to go to school, completing homework, improved focus
 - Work: improved attendance, able to focus and complete tasks, improved performance
- *Interpersonal Relationships*
 - As one makes progress, their ability to engage with others improves. Examples could include increased socialization with peers, friends, coaches and family, decreased isolation and/or improved or marked difference in communication pattern with parents.
- *Overall improved mood and affect*
 - Decreased sadness, brighter/more engaged, not as “on the edge”; overall, the above indicators can lead to your child showing an improved mood and affect

¹ Jacobson, N.S., & Truax, P. (1991). Clinical significance: a statistical approach to defining meaningful change in psychotherapy research. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 59(1), 12-19.