



Counseling services

The best investment you can make — yourself

Each day, your ability to influence your child – whether during a simple shared moment or when pondering life’s larger choices – depends on the trust and understanding that has grown between you. Building your skills and self-confidence, specific to your child’s needs, can make a world of difference.

I provide short-term assessment and counseling, typically over a period of eight weeks, for children, teens, adults and families. Should you need ongoing follow-up, I’m a member of the MindSource Center and can refer you to one of our skilled therapists.

Parent-child consultation plans

Our brief parent-child consultation plans are designed to resolve a challenging issue, find ways to make more rapid gains, and make the best use of existing resources in your area. We work to improve your child’s long-term quality of life by developing skills that make a difference now and into the future. These plans are customized for each family and may include:

- A list of strategies for managing challenging behaviors
- A jump-start on a “home program” that promotes a more joyous and productive relationship
- A step-by-step action plan
- Observations at school or other settings and feedback
- Identifying obstacles to progress and/or addressing untreated conditions
- Reducing sibling/family stress

Consultation packages

Addressing challenges for today

Building skills for tomorrow

Brief consultation makes efficient use of time and resources by zeroing in on the obstacles to your child's ability to learn and grow. Working together, we identify any challenges – including anxiety, inattention, difficult behaviors, and school or friendship struggles – and develop a plan that not only addresses today's concerns, but recognizes the skills your child will need to become a self-sufficient and socially connected adult.

Depending on the length and purpose of your consultation, you may be provided with information to clarify your direction and strategies to reach both short- and long-term goals and/or reduce family stress.

Parent-Child consultations work to improve...

- Management of specific behaviors
- Results from treatments and services
- The quality of family relationships
- Communication, routines and discipline
- Relationships with peers, siblings and others

What does the process look like?

Each consultation process begins with a parent meeting to talk about your child, your family life and the goals you want to accomplish. Then we discuss a proposed plan that's tailored to meet your needs within a brief time frame (typically four to eight sessions).

At this point, you can agree to the proposed plan or take time to consider the options presented. Later, when I meet with your child, I will try out strategies to explore what will successfully promote competence, growth, positive change, or produce feelings of motivation.

Your specially-designed plan may include a brief report and videotaped feedback session, six-month treatment goals with recommendations and resources, and a follow-up session to revise the plan after you have had time to practice and see progress.

Why is this approach different?

Many providers do assessments at a central location without following up with you or taking the broader view of your experiences with school personnel and other professionals. My approach is more comprehensive and personalized, addressing challenges that persist past the treatments and programs your child may have done in the past.

Our work together involves a process of gathering data, including a careful observation of how your child:

- Takes in and processes information
- Interacts with the environment
- Uses you as a source of emotional and learning support
- Communicates, responds and checks for feedback
- Responds to problems and communication breakdowns
- Manages anxiety

After gathering data, we can organize treatment priorities and move forward in a way that provides you and your child with a “just-right challenge” to build motivation and a stronger working relationship.

How is a developmental perspective different from others?

Since my background is developmental psychology, I see individuals on the autism spectrum (and with other conditions) of all ages and view the impact of today’s growth over a lifespan. When any part of your child’s complex brain development becomes “stuck,” growth is delayed. Fortunately, your child supplies many clues (often behavioral) which help us identify solutions.

As we discuss your child’s developmental strengths and needs, I’m able to describe for you how treating these “stuck” areas now may impact such quality-of-life issues as future employability, safety, capacity for relationships, and emotional stability. The solutions we discuss may involve shifts in environmental factors, adding or modifying supports, and providing opportunities for learning.

Why would we choose to work with you?

As a parent, I’ve managed the challenges and demands of children who are not only difficult to raise, but who are poorly understood by schools, professionals and a world where they don’t quite fit in. In the words of one of my sons, “I’m a puzzle piece that doesn’t fit, and people keep trying to push me into the space that they want me in.”

Parents of poorly understood children are often anxious and angry, depressed and discouraged – and isolated. They need someone who understands how their child thinks, feels and processes information. One of my greatest rewards is to witness the development of a parent-child relationship that produces genuine, lifelong learning, growth and independence for the child.



Dear Parent:

Thank you for contacting me about **Brief Consultation** packages specialized program options. Enclosed is information for you to review. Feel free to contact me or my office manager if you would like more information or clarification. You may schedule an intake appointment to discuss your situation with me personally, to determine what services or next steps might be most appropriate for your circumstances.

Brief Consultation packages offer a multi-faceted, individually tailored service that is a cost-effective option to other more costly assessments. This unique service fills in gaps for parents who may be facing challenges or unresolved concerns that can often remain a problem even after diagnosis, assessment, and multiple therapies are on board. Consultation packages are designed to offer practical expertise and structured recommendations that will address these areas of difficulty, and also be useful long after our work is complete. This is accomplished both by providing a broader view of what your child needs from you and the treatment team, and through useful, hands-on strategies geared to help you and your child succeed. By conducting a skilled, more intensive study of your child than typical ongoing psychotherapy appointments can provide, brief consultation makes efficient use of time and resources by zeroing in on your child's capacities to learn and grow. Working together, we identify any challenges or obstacles to progress and develop a plan that not only addresses today's concerns, but recognizes the skills your child will need next as foundations for future success. Depending on the length and purpose of your consultation, we may focus on: clarifying a treatment plan that accelerates progress, resolving a challenging behavior at home or school, identifying gaps in your child's programming and getting connected with appropriate resources, and/or developing parent-based strategies to use at home. Because brief consultation packages are uniquely customized to meet the needs of each child and family situation, an initial session is necessary to determine a course of action that fits your circumstances. After this session, you may receive a proposal for a brief consultation package, along with other recommendations and referrals appropriate to your needs.

Thank you for your interest in these services. Since I see individuals of all ages, across the lifespan, and all levels of functioning, I am truly concerned when any part of your child's complex brain development becomes stuck and growth is delayed. Fortunately, your child has you. My goal is to provide you with useful strategies, information, and support so that you may successfully guide your child past obstacles. I'd like to support you to impact such quality-of-life issues as future employability, safety, capacity for relationships, and emotional stability. I hope that we will have an opportunity to discuss your child, your specific concerns, and the resources and services that may be useful for you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Carrie Sheppard'.

Carrie Sheppard M.Ed., LMHC
MindSource Center, LLC