



THERAPY ASSOCIATES (HK) LIMITED



## Eating Disorders Assessment Now Available at Therapy Associates

Obsessing about weight is often a way of disguising other issues.

Eating disorders are multidetermined: cultural, individual and family factors contribute to their development in different ways for different individuals. While eating disorders may begin with a preoccupation with food and weight, they are most often about much more than food.

People suffering from eating disorders often use food and the control of food in an attempt to compensate for feelings and emotions that otherwise seem overwhelming. It is important to complete a comprehensive evaluation in order to individualize the treatment protocol.

We are very pleased to announce that a complete eating disorders assessment and - if indicated - treatment is now available from Sandra Comer, Ph.D., at Therapy Associates.

The treatment protocol is a well-established Cognitive Behavioral approach. The goals of treatment include: learning about the physiological, psychological, and cultural factors which are important in eating disorders; to normalize eating behavior; to recognize thinking errors made in regard to bodies and weight; and to development more adaptive ways of coping with stress.

Dr. Comer uses a collaborative, time-limited approach that aims to empower clients by teaching them skills that are applicable outside the therapy sessions.

For more information about TAL's Eating Disorders Assessment package and treatment or to make an appointment, please contact the TAL offices by telephone at (852) 2869-1962, or by email to talhk@talhk.com.



<b>INSIDE:</b>	
Eating Disorder Assessment	2
ADHD: Comp. Assessment	3
Wendy Kou: New Associate	4

### About Therapy Associates

Dr. Jadis Blurton and her team of professionals at Therapy Associates (HK) Limited, located in the Central District of Hong Kong, have been serving the community's educational and mental health needs since 1997. At TAL, highly qualified mental health professionals provide services ranging from fostering personal growth and development, to the the untangling of personal issues, to the treatment of mental illnesses. At Therapy Associates, Ph.D.-level psychologists and auxiliary and support staff provide a comprehensive range of services to individuals, couples, families, schools, and corporate clients.

Events: TAL and Friends	June	July	August
	<p><b>7 &amp; 21</b> ADHD Adult Support Group 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. TAL Library</p>	<p><b>1</b> Public Holiday</p>	<p><b>8</b> F.O.C.U.S. Meeting 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM 2909 Pacific Plaza 418 Des Voeux Rd. West Call 2849-8218 for details</p>
	<p><b>10 &amp; 17</b> Social Skills Workshop 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. TAL Library</p>	<p><b>8-10</b> G.O.A.L. Camp Sai Kung Country Park Call 2869-1962 for details</p>	<p><b>16</b> ADHD Adult Support Group Will not meet due to Summer break</p>
	<p><b>13</b> F.O.C.U.S. Meeting 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM 2909 Pacific Plaza 418 Des Voeux Rd. West Call 2849-8218 for details</p>	<p><b>19</b> ADHD Adult Support Group Will not meet due to Summer break</p>	<p><b>31</b> Welcome Back Wine &amp; Cheese 6:30 - 8:30 PM TAL Office Call 2869-1962 for details</p>

## The Eating Disorder Assessment

- **EATING DISORDER INVENTORY.** This is a questionnaire that measures those factors considered to be critical to the development of an eating disorder. The factors include: Drive for Thinness; Body Dissatisfaction; Bulimia; Interpersonal Distrust; Ineffectiveness; Perfectionism; Interoceptive Awareness; Maturity Fears.
- **THE FAMILY ASSESSMENT MEASURE.** This instrument can be completed by pre-adolescents, adolescents and adults to measure the strengths and weaknesses within a family. The results are useful in determining how much the family dynamics may have contributed to the development of the eating disorder, and may suggest a need for family therapy.
- **BECK DEPRESSION INVENTORY** (or Beck Depression Inventory for Youth for teens). Depression is often comorbid with eating disorders and in the case of severe depression, medication may be recommended.
- **BECK ANXIETY INVENTORY** (or Beck Anxiety Inventory for Youth for teens). Anxiety is also frequently comorbid with eating disorder diagnoses and as such needs to be further investigated.
- **FAMILY HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE.** This investigates any pre-existing medical conditions in the family, such as diabetes, that have been found to be associated with eating disorders.
- **IN-DEPTH CLINICAL INTERVIEW.** The clinical interview seeks to discover precisely when the preoccupation with food started and any triggers that may have contributed to it's commencement. Typical eating patterns are investigated and information on weight history is recorded.

### For more information or to make an appointment

Please contact the TAL offices at (852) 2869-1962, by email to [talhk@talhk.com](mailto:talhk@talhk.com), or see us on the Web at [www.talhk.com](http://www.talhk.com).



**Sandra Comer, Ph.D.**

Dr. Comer has been treating adults as well as adolescents in Hong Kong since 1997. She has specific interest and expertise in eating disorders and body image concerns. Dr. Comer received her Ph.D. in Psychology from Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. While completing her studies, Dr. Comer interned for six years in the Ottawa Civic Hospital's outpatient psychiatric clinic, working primarily with stress management and eating disorders.



## ADHD: The Need for a Comprehensive Assessment

By Dr. Jadis Blurton

I am often asked why it is necessary to do a comprehensive assessment for the evaluation of ADHD. It seems like an easy diagnosis - why does it involve so many tests and so much time? In order to answer that question, we need to look at the reasons that a parent would want an assessment in the first place. There are five main reasons for getting an assessment:

### To identify ADHD behaviors and determine their magnitude

To be honest, this is the easiest part of any assessment. In fact, most parents already know if their child is not paying attention at home or in school, if the child's behavior is impulsive, or if she seems overactive or forgetful. Of course, it is important to see how that child compares to other kids her age to determine whether the extent of the problem is unusual. To do this we rely on parent reports and teacher reports and compare their assessment of the child to other kids. But, again, this is not particularly difficult and is often something the parent or teacher can tell the psychologist before any testing is done at all.

The primary symptoms of ADHD are available on the internet: look them up, and if your child fits the criteria you do not really need to spend a lot of money to find this out. It makes no sense to pay a professional money to find out what you already know, so an assessment should not just tell you that your inattentive child is not paying attention. That's like going to a doctor to find out that your leg is hurting because of the pain in your leg. If your leg hurts, you don't need to go to a doctor to find out that it hurts. You need to go to a doctor to find out why it hurts and what to do about it.

### To eliminate other reasons

Even if you know that your child is behaving in ways that fit the ADHD criteria, you really do not know why. There are many reasons that a child can appear to be inattentive, hyperactive or impulsive, and many of them are not easily apparent to parents and teachers. For example, many kids are overly sensitive to background noise, which is common in most classrooms. Such a child might be verbally able and understand everything that is said to him but may be "spacing out" in class because the background noise interferes with what the teacher is saying and he is struggling to understand. The same child might be acting out at home because of the stress of a frustrating school day. Other children may have hidden processing problems that make schoolwork so difficult that they quickly wear themselves out and have problems concentrating. They appear tired or inattentive or resistant, not because they have ADHD but because they have been working too hard.

Some kids react to depression or anxiety by exhibiting exactly the symptoms that describe ADHD. Thus, the diagnosis becomes a bit more tricky. For example, since depression or anxiety are experienced by many kids who are having problems at school, we are faced with a problem of "which came first, the chicken or the egg?" Is ADHD causing anxiety, or is anxiety causing attentional problems?

It is very important for a professional to look at all the possible reasons for ADHD behaviors and to rule them out as causes or to tease out the interaction between the symptoms. It is also important to note that research indicates that as many as 50% to 70% of children with ADHD also have some other learning disorder or diagnosable emotional problem. For this reason, to diagnose ADHD without looking at these other factors is irresponsible. (Incidentally, the same degree of thoroughness is necessary for the diagnosis of learning disorders. Clearly, the fact that many learning disorders are not immediately apparent means that every attempt should be made to look at all aspects of a child's cognitive development. Just knowing that a child can't read, for example, does not tell you why he can't read.)

### To reveal the whole child

A good assessment also measures her strengths. It is important that you, your child and your child's teachers all have a good understanding of your child's gifts, as well as weaknesses. Not only is this essential to your child's self-esteem and acceptance of problem areas, but it also is useful because a child (and a good teacher) can use those strengths to compensate for the areas of difficulty. All too often, a child is aware of what she can not do as well as her peers, but doesn't know how she compares in other areas.

An assessment should reflect the child as a whole human being, not simply report on deficiencies. A good teacher will focus on each child's unique learning style, which includes both strengths and weaknesses.

### To go beyond medication

For most kids with ADHD, medication is a very effective strategy for addressing the problem. In fact, the Multimodal Treatment Study conducted in 1999 found that over 50% of children obtained excellent results from treatment with medication only. But for some children (about one in five) medication is unsuccessful. And even children who benefit from medication do better when it is combined with other strategies at home and at school. A good report should include a number of specific recommendations, including strategies that can be used by the child, his parents and his teachers to make the problems associated with ADHD more manageable. Educational and emotional success may depend just as much on the child developing a repertoire of strategies, the parents helping to foster a positive attitude, and the teacher implementing specific structures, as it does on a certain dosage of psychotropic medication. Unfortunately, children are often being put on medication to "cure" ADHD without addressing these other very important modifications.

### To meet the needs of other professionals

One of the most pragmatic reasons to have a child assessed is to be able to present information to a teacher, school or doctor in the future. Other professionals will be looking at the report to determine its credibility. A report that has diagnosed ADHD based on slim evidence and without examining other possible causes for the ADHD behaviors will not be convincing, especially to professionals who understand the complexities of the diagnosis. If you plan to use the report to inform, educate or convince other professionals, you will need a report that is believable and complete.

It may seem cheaper and easier to get an assessment from someone who will spend a couple of hours with your child and give you a diagnosis. But this is no substitute for a good assessment. You are often left with the necessity of getting a complete assessment later, either because problems persist or because the first report is not accepted by a school or another professional. In the meantime, possible other factors such as processing problems or emotional distress may not have been appropriately addressed and may have become more serious. Even if it seems more cumbersome, it makes much more sense to get all the information you need to address the problems that exist now, and a good report to use in the future.

*Dr. Blurton is the Founder and Clinical Director of Therapy Associates (HK) Limited.*



# Therapy Associates Limited

2869-1962

Psychological Counseling  
Psychoeducational Assessments  
Individual, Couple, Family Growth Services  
Special Needs Tutoring/Speech Therapy  
Marriage Counseling  
ADHD and Eating Disorders Assessments



Wendy Kou, M.A.  
Marital and Family Therapy  
(Art Therapy Specialization)

Wendy Kou has lived in Hong Kong, Canada and the United States, and she speaks and writes fluently in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English. Ms. Kou graduated from the University of Calgary in Canada with a degree in Psychology, and furthered her education with a Master's degree in Marital and Family Therapy with a specialization in the art therapy modality from Loyola Marymount University in California.

Although she works with a number of treatment modalities, Ms. Kou has particular interest and expertise in Art Therapy. Through her re-

search with Chinese immigrants in Los Angeles, Ms. Kou has come to strongly believe that art therapy is an effective and powerful way to break through defenses toward therapy. Art therapy can be a particularly effective modality to overcome negative attitudes and beliefs toward therapy, because it allows individuals to express themselves while remaining silent.

With children, particularly, art therapy allows the expression of feelings and problems for which children may have no words and for which they have never been

able to bring forward to others.

Ms. Kou's education at Loyola Marymount University has given her a strong foundation to integrate her art backgrounds and to use art processes to provide psychotherapeutic services to clients, including children, adolescents, adults and families. The training fully prepared Ms. Kou to become not only a practicing marital and family therapist, but also skilled at integrating art processes within a family systems orientation.

To order additional copies of this newsletter please call us at (852) 2869-1962



THERAPY ASSOCIATES (HK) LTD.  
12/F, CALIFORNIA TOWER  
30-32 D'AGUILAR STREET  
CENTRAL, HONG KONG  
TEL: (852) 2869-1962

Paste Mailing  
Label Here