

CHRISTIAN COUNSELING Agapé



Newsletter — November 2016

Meet Agapé Therapist Stephanie Roofner MA, LPCA



Stephanie Roofner, MA, LPCA

Growing up as a missionary kid in Italy, I ate incredibly good food, went to Italian public schools and travelled to many countries. I also knew at an early age that I had a heart for helping hurting people and decided to study psychology with the focus on how to integrate what I learned with my Christian faith. My future plans also included a desire to work with children and families.

My educational journey included an internship at Calvary Addiction Recovery Center while attending Phoenix Seminary in Arizona. While working with those struggling with addictions, God showed me His power to change lives. After graduation, I worked at a methadone clinic for a year and then, in God's providence and sense of humor, I began doing what I originally set out to do, working with children and their families. My husband Stan and I then moved with our three cats to the great city of Charlotte to make a life for ourselves here. To ob-

tain licensure in North Carolina, I became an intern at Agape Christian Counseling and have had the privilege of serving the Charlotte community with Agape as a licensed counselor since February of 2016.

I am currently specializing in helping children and teens overcome crises and difficult life transitions. This can be done through therapeutic play and interactive games, toys, art, music, and drama. I also use interactive techniques when working with families, adults, and couples using several research based therapies. My passion is to walk alongside individuals in their journey of healing, redemption, growth, and freedom.

Most recently, I have been involved in counseling young girls who are making the journey out of human trafficking. This is an exciting, but often treacherous road that requires patience and much prayer.

Another way I enjoy helping people in their journey to health is through teaching Zumba and fitness classes. My own therapy is sometimes a good dance and a hard workout!

Therapeutic Play—What Parents Need to Know

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to a man in HIS language, that goes to his heart."—Nelson Mandela

For children that language is **PLAY**.

WHAT IS THE GOAL?

Play is used to help children ages 3-10 safely and creatively enact, resolve, and prevent their psychosocial struggles in order to develop and build both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills such as communication with others and regulation of feelings.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

Play can include creativity and artistic expression, music, movement, games, pretend and projective exercises which can be child directed or therapist guided. During play children express what is too painful to say with words by projecting their feelings and difficult situations onto objects and toys. During play children are also free to create their

world as they want it to be. The therapist closely observes the play and the child's facial expressions and behaviors while responding in an accepting and understanding way. This creates a safe and supportive environment for the child to be and grow. The therapist takes a more directive role in therapeutic play with older children and integrates other cognitive and behavioral techniques.



WHAT ABOUT PARENTS?

Parents must be greatly involved and invested in treatment in order for change to be maintained. Parents can learn how to better connect with their child and change behavior. The following web sites contain additional helpful information: <http://www.a4pt.org> and <http://www.playtherapy.org>.

CLINICAL STAFF

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When to Seek Counseling for Your Child

By Galina Olivera-Celdran, PhD, LPCS, LCAS — Executive Director/Therapist

Every child experiences occasional problems at home or at school. It could be a conflict with a teacher over turning homework in too late; a fight with a sibling over sharing their favorite toy; a disagreement with a parent over limiting their TV time. Moving, changing schools, or facing any new situation might result in your child temporarily experiencing sadness, fear or anger. In cases when these reactions become severe and prolonged, Agape Christian Counseling recommends seeking professional therapy if your child experiences the following:

- **Emotional distress that disrupts daily functioning or interferes with the achievement of age-appropriate developmental milestones.** The signs of distress may include sadness, tearfulness, mood swings, anger, social withdrawal, anxiety, change in appetite, insomnia, increased sleepiness or school failure. Usually, this distress follows a significant life event such as a death of a family member, friend, or pet; divorce or a move; abuse; trauma; a parent leaving on military deployment; or a major illness in the family.
- **Difficulties that interfere with scheduled family or school activities.** For example, your child's exaggerated fears about going to school or separating from you cause you to be late for work, miss important meetings, or even miss an entire day of

work. In other instances, your child's inattentiveness, hyperactivity or impulsivity at home or school lead to difficulties with completing assignments, following directions, or making good decisions.

- **Serious medical problems that regularly disrupt your child's normal routine.** Counseling can help your child develop coping skills to deal with his or her unique situation. You may also need help to understand how to best support your child.
- **Symptoms or behaviors that are severe or potentially life threatening.** This would include situations in which a child is experiencing false auditory or visual sensations, setting fires, assaulting others, or seems severely depressed and/or makes remarks about committing suicide.

Most of the time you can help your child cope with problems without seeking professional help. However, if your efforts do not seem to make a difference and your child's problems persist, therapeutic intervention is recommended. Counseling will help your child discuss or "play out" their problems and develop necessary skills to resolve or cope with them. Counseling also provides a place for you as a parent to address concerns, develop better parenting skills and helps make your participation in your child's treatment process more effective and meaningful.

Pictures from our Friends of Agape Dinner—October 20, 2016



Agape counselor Jennifer Dean, LPC-S interviewed Robyn Nicholson, LPC, and Stephanie Roofner, LPCA, of Agape, and Hollis Johnson, MA, of Forest Hill Church about their work with survivors of human trafficking.



Thank you to everyone who attended our Friends of Agape "Path to Freedom" Dinner on Thursday, October 20, 2016. We loved meeting you and look forward to having you join us again next year.