

children in crisis



Cases of autism and ADHD are soaring, schools and families are in crisis. **Linda Porter**, a teacher and psychologist with radical vision, has pioneered a new holistic education therapy with amazing results. She tells **Carolyn Burdet** about the way forward for healing children's emotional and behavioural problems

Simon sits in a foetal position, howling and rocking himself inconsolably. Why? It could be that his pencil broke in art today, or maybe it's to do with his life so far. From birth, Simon has experienced abuse and neglect that most of us wouldn't think possible in today's society. He lived as a 'street child' until two years ago. The house was derelict, boarded up, infested with rats and cockroaches. What little food they had was scavenged by his older brother, Mark, rummaging through dustbins, begging, stealing. Ironically, there was never a shortage of 'uncles' coming to the squat, to feed their 'habit' or to inflict the worst type of abuse on the children. Simon bears scars on his head and face where he was repeatedly hit with stiletto heels. He has learning difficulties and needs to be led to a quiet room when he can't cope with his pencil breaking. He doesn't have the understanding or language skills to express the traumatic memories of his childhood. Simon is one of many children who cannot attend a mainstream school because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties. He was one of 30 children at a Primary Pupil Referral Unit in Wolverhampton. Life started to improve when he was randomly selected to be part of an initiative called Holistic Educational Therapy, originally funded by the behaviour improvement in schools programme run by Wolverhampton Children's Services.

Education crisis

Simon's case involved severe child abuse, but behavioural and emotional issues affect children from all social backgrounds. Children as young as three are deemed uncontrollable and are being referred to pupil referral units; children like Vernon, who threw an aquarium across his nursery classroom. He was diagnosed autistic.

Cases of autism and hyperactive attention deficit disorder (ADHD) are rising, schools can no longer contain the extent of behavioural problems.

Hyperactive children are being excluded from classrooms unless they take medication – prescriptions are soaring – and even so, many end up in pupil referral units. Last year the Archbishop of Canterbury made the headlines saying our children are in crisis.

Indigo generation

Schumann resonance – the scientific method for monitoring the vibrational frequency of our planet – has risen measurably over the last 20 years (see the work of Gregg Braden) and these children are being born into the planet's higher frequencies.

With their food intolerances, respiratory allergies, and behavioural issues, this new generation of children has forced a public awareness of the chemical and electromagnetic pollution that they are growing up in.

We feed them a diet saturated in unprecedented levels of pesticides, additives, and artificial sweeteners that creates an internal toxic environment. (Check the labels – even toothpaste and 'sugar free' baby medicines contain these chemical additives.)

We overload their immune systems with vaccines that have uncertain health implications (the mercury preservative used in vaccines during these children's babyhood has been proven to have a toxic effect on brain cell development).

We keep them under artificial lighting and sit them in front of VDUs that entrain their brainwaves to levels of excitability and stress, and in their leisure time we leave them to engage in virtual combat on their Playstation games and watch DVDs of films that portray violence and aggression as normal.

And we wonder why there is a surge in behavioural problems?

Then we use drugs to suppress the children that the education system is designed to fail, who can no longer cope with their anger and despair. Yes, it's a crisis.

Pioneers in the complementary field refer to them more positively as Indigo or Crystal children, and say they have come to heal patterns of abuse that span generations and that these highly sensitive children are here to challenge an education system based on suppression of spirit rather than empowerment of life purpose. A toxic lifestyle is making them ill. Their sensitivity is calling for a change in how we treat the planet – and our children.

Helping families to cope

Not all the children on the HET programme have suffered the neglect and abuse that Simon has. Martin is from a family of five boys, living in a small two-bedroom house. His dad was in prison and his mum found it hard to cope – his elder brother beat mum up in dad's absence. Martin hated the way people looked at him – he'd show them. The older kids were cool, they gave him cigarettes. All Martin had to do was steal things; if he got caught it wouldn't matter – he was too young! What were they going to do about it?

Martin's mom and dad were both abused as children; dad had been in a children's home and finally sought help through counselling to break his patterns. Soon, Martin's entire family were on the Holistic Educational Therapy programme at the Pupil Referral Unit. Dad is now out of prison and starting a parental support group for HET. Mum's stopped smoking and is taking care of herself. Nan's arthritis in her hands is much better, since Martin has been giving her hand massage with lavender. He learned to do this on the HET programme while at the pupil referral unit.

Ron is a 13 year old attending a school for children with mild learning difficulties. He has Tourettes syndrome – his parents couldn't take him anywhere. On the HET programme it was noticed that food additives set him off and his diet was regulated. In just six weeks there was a marked improvement, and his parents were delighted that they could organise family outings. When Ron came off the programme his behaviour deteriorated. But now Ron knows which additives set him off and make him feel bad, and he reads the labels on everything he eats, so he can manage his own condition.

Vernon was three years old when he threw an aquarium across the nursery. He was diagnosed on the autistic spectrum – he was unable to express his feelings other than through aggression and violence. His mother couldn't cope with his behaviour, and looking after her newborn baby.

Within days of being on the HET programme, Vernon could say 'Please Miss, I can't sit on that chair because it has a chalk mark on it – it's dirty,' something he couldn't cope with before, without hurting other children in a rage of frustration. He now comes and asks his HET therapist for the remedies that bring peace of mind for him and relief for his mom, who is coping much better with looking after her baby and managing her toddler's challenging behaviour.

Innovative support

Wolverhampton Local Children's Services Authority has spearheaded a new solution to behavioural problems, and is one of many authorities across the UK introducing complementary therapies to support families who are struggling to cope).

Holistic Educational Therapy was devised by Linda Porter, a radically caring teacher, psychologist, complementary therapist whose postgraduate work on statistical evaluation analysis provided sound monitoring criteria to assess the results of the multi-pronged method.

The HET therapies are given by various staff in schools and social agencies, deputy or head teachers, classroom assistants, school nurses, social inclusion pupil support workers, and learning mentors. It costs less than £600 to train a therapist for the HET programme and just £800 per organisation (not per child) to set up the resources needed for a school.

The results of the HET programme speak for themselves. In the past seven years, 85 per cent of the objectives set with these young people and their families have been met, and a Pupil Referral Unit employing a full time HET therapist has achieved their highest ever SAT results.

Holistic therapy

HET is a holistic therapy that teaches basic good nutrition, simple self-help techniques, and a range of emotional therapies for the whole family.

The holistic therapy is based on common sense and sound advice, like eating breakfast and cutting out artificial additives, and simple ways to support loving family bonds with hand massage. Schools teach about eating fresh fruit and drinking water instead of fizzy drinks, and parents are advised to avoid additives and chemicals like aspartame. In Simon's case there were nine years of dietary deficiency to address.

“ We use drugs to suppress the children who can no longer cope with their anger and despair ”

HET for brain injured youngsters

HET also provides some hope of improvement for brain injured youngsters. Can you imagine being so scared at night that you hold the edge of the mattress so tightly you can't sleep.... and not being able to speak to anyone about why? Being unable to manage going to the toilet alone? Not being able to say a sentence like... 'I am not happy because everyone is ignoring me...'

This is how life was for Amy, 18-years-old, and brain-damaged from a meningococcal infection at birth, now attending a school for children with severe learning difficulties. The strain on the family was unbearable.

The nighttime terror was what finally prompted them to seek help. Amy was one of the lucky ones – a place was available on a Holistic Educational Therapy programme (HET).

Within a few weeks things started to change. Amy spoke her first sentence. 'I am not happy because everyone is ignoring me.' She held eye contact, went to the toilet on her own, and went to sleep at night ... peacefully. Her first unflinching healing steps are now coming to standstill. Why? Social Services have taken over from Children's Services in providing care service for Amy, and Social Services have no HET therapist in situ to take over supporting the family in learning how to access the toolbox of remedies available for self help and empowerment, remedies that Amy and her family found so beneficial in holding them through their long dark night of the soul. Can you imagine being given a gift so precious and then having it taken away?

Each child starts their day at school with a milky drink, and organically sourced vitamin-mineral supplements, and antioxidants. One parent evaluating her autistic son's participation on the programme said: 'The whole family has been re-educated on how to eat.'

Research shows the benefits of protein at breakfast for increasing concentration and attention span, and studies have shown the benefits of a diet high in Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs) for brain alertness – especially for children with hyperactivity or attention deficit disorder. EFA supplements are given as flaxseed rather than fish oils due to concern over pollution in fish.

Helping hand

Many children diagnosed with behavioural problems are prescribed the psychostimulant Ritalin (methylphenidate hydrochloride) to reduce fidgeting and subdue disruptive behaviour. However, research studies into this medication have raised concerns over long-term effects on children's neurological development.

One of the likely side effects of taking Ritalin is insomnia. Children and their families on the HET programme learn hand massage using lavender and chamomile essential oils to calm the nervous system. Massage is relaxing and supports loving touch within the family.

On the HET programme, the children and their families are empowered with simple safe-help techniques, extending to psychotherapeutic techniques, and the more esoteric philosophy of the healing frequencies of music and flowers.

Flower power

Dr Bach's flower remedies are given initially. Rescue Remedy is well known, but Rock Water and Crab Apple are helpful for easing obsessive repetitive behaviour and a rigid need for routine associated with autism, while Clematis brings attention and focus to the here and now.

Bach flower remedies are followed by deep-acting Phytobiophysics Special Care™ formulas, formulated especially with the sensitive generation of Indigo and Crystal children in mind,

by Dame Professor Diana Mossop, working alongside Linda Porter for the HET programme. These natural tree essences include Olive for Love (it balances issues of abandonment), Walnut for comfort (to recover from a sense of betrayal), and Apple, to calm hyperactivity and support speech and learning. Prof Diana Mossop explains, 'Olive is a medicinal tree, each part of the Olive tree sustains and heals.'

'The Olive Love formula is a master formula, which supports the emotional level. It corresponds to the Indigo treatment point, the third eye brow chakra, that vibrates on the most powerful spiritual planetary energy.'

These remedies work at a subtle emotional level to help to heal layers of defence mechanisms that are built up to protect themselves in a hostile and toxic environment of society today. During the healing process, children may briefly regress to the age when emotional damage occurred to recover deeply.

Simon, the traumatised boy who was so badly abused and deprived of a nurtured childhood, began to cuddle a teddy bear for the first time in his life while taking the drops. For therapists and psychologists, this is a sign of profound emotional healing.

The Special Care formulas are new to the HET programme, trials are on-going and statistical analysis of the effectiveness of the Special Care formula is still being evaluated. Linda Porter says, 'Our case studies show that just treating the child with these formulas is consistently healing the behaviour of the whole family. It seems to be tracing abuse patterns back through the DNA, clearing the ancestral line, affecting the cellular consciousness of the whole family,' says Linda. Now that there is a hypothesis, HET therapists will continue to test, research and evaluate the results.

Colour therapy

Phytobiophysics is based on an understanding of how emotional and spiritual trauma and crisis affect our health. Flower formulas are given to clear emotional trauma and to aid nutritional assimilation, to support a healthy immune system

It is a complex mind-body philosophy of psycho-neuro-immunology, incorporating flower essences and vibrational colour therapy.

Frequencies emitted by body cells, correspond to frequencies emitted by flowers. All frequencies correspond to wavelengths of colour of the full spectrum from ultraviolet to infrared – so the colours a child chooses reflect the flower formulas that may be beneficial for them.

Cost of the problem...

- Autism has risen 1000 per cent in the past two decades – before the 1980s, 1 in 2,500 children was diagnosed as autistic, now the figure is 1 in 250 or even higher – the figure is sometimes assessed as 6 in 1,000.
- The number of children prescribed Ritalin for ADHD has increased 90-fold in ten years. In 1994 there were just 4,000 prescriptions for methylphenidate, ten years later there were 359,000. It costs £1,400 a year per child to prescribe Ritalin.
- It costs on average £1,000 per child per annum to provide support for a child with behavioural problems in a primary school, £3,000 for a secondary school pupil, £10,000 for a child to go to a pupil referral unit, £15,000 to go to a school for children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, £15,000 for a child to be placed in foster care, and £30,000 upwards for a child in residential care.
- That's just the countable cost – 40 per cent of robberies are committed during school hours by children aged between 10 and 16, according to a Mori poll for the Youth Justice Board based on a six-month study by the Metropolitan Police.

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Emotional therapy

The HET programme includes counselling and psychotherapeutic techniques and art therapy such as colouring in mandalas, which reflect the child's learning personality. These stand up alongside professional psychometric tests conducted by educational psychologists. There is support for family members who are struggling to cope, with out-of-school stress management clubs and relaxation sessions.

HET's holistic drama therapy is through an educational production, *Willow*, described as 'spiritual interactive theatre' with healing sound frequencies encoded in the musical accompaniment. The theatre production was launched in November 2006, to coincide with anti-bullying week.

Nature psychotherapy

Using her training in psychology and experience in education and therapies, Linda Porter has created a unique resource of counselling materials for primary age children, based on nature photography.

The children describe what they see in the flowers (the pattern of colours on orchid petals may appear to them as doll figures, and they can describe

Risks...

One study conducted at the University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center, found that all 12 children (8 years old) who were enrolled in a Ritalin trial 'experienced an increase in chromosome abnormalities' just three months after starting Ritalin. The researchers concluded that this indicates a possible increased risk of cancer for children prescribed Ritalin. See: www.ahrp.org/infomail/05/03/11.php

what the doll is feeling.) Linda explains, 'In psychotherapeutic terminology, this is helping to access the subconscious metaphors that shape our neuralnets – synaptic mind maps that shape our patterns of behaviour.

Built on principles of Jung, Gestalt, and Rorschach's well-known ink blot test, these metaphors enter our conscious recognition, changing the way we perceive things around us.'

Linda is open to the idea that beyond the psychologists' frame of reference, nature photographs may also access healing through the devic realms.

Animal sanctuary

Another safe way the children can process their traumatic experiences is through working at an animal sanctuary. This research was

aided by a donation of formulas by the Institute of Phytobiophysics to support abused and neglected animals at Green Meadow Animal Sanctuary. 'The children learn about the abused animals' stories and work out which remedies can help them,' Linda Porter explains.

'The children have something to care for, and can relate to issues that are too painful to own out loud, in a safe one-step-removed situation.'

Empowering support

The beauty of HET is that it provides empowering stress management for stressed families, it supports rather than damages children's development and enables them to succeed in their education. It's also inexpensive to implement.

Martin's family life is now so much better that he is back in mainstream school. However, unlike the Pupil Referral Unit, his school doesn't have a HET therapist – they say staff are too busy, no rooms available, they haven't the resources... demand is outweighing the provision of this service as no funding is currently being made available to support this effective behavioural support strategy.

It costs so little and it achieves such amazing results, so what are we waiting for? **ks**



more information

- Linda Porter BA, CertEd, MFSHG, BFRP, MACTA, Dip PhyB M. Assoc is a teacher and complementary therapist, with a degree in psychology. She is a member of the Foundation of Spiritual Healing and Guidance, and chair of the Auricular Candle Therapy Association.

- Linda Porter developed Holistic Educational Therapy with children in Wolverhampton. Hailed as a model of excellence by a DFES consultant, and commended by OFSTED, HET is recognised as a therapy in its own right, written within the framework of National Occupational Standard and is insured and nationally kite marked through ASSOCIAT. An accredited training programme trains professionals in support agencies around the country, to help children. For details of HET training courses see the website: www.holisticeducationaltherapy.co.uk

- Phytobiophysics Superfit Formulas based on tree essences to support optimum nutrition and Flower Formulas to balance emotional wellbeing are available through Kindred Spirit mail order collection, please telephone for details.

- Training in Phytobiophysics is available for health practitioners through the Institute of Phytobiophysics, see www.phytob.com

- Further reading: *The Care and Feeding of Indigo Children* by Doreen Virtue and *Indigo Children* by Lee Carroll and Jan Tober (Hay House).