Gut and Brain Health Connection: What If THIS Is Driving Your Child's Emotional Dysregulation? Transcript

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Gut-Brain Connection and Emotional Dysregulation

What if some emotional meltdowns don't actually start in your kid's brain, but in their gut? For years, we've talked about emotional dysregulation as a behavioral or a neurological issue, but researchers are increasingly discovering something fascinating, that the gut doesn't just affect digestion, it affects how our nervous system actually regulates.

And when the gut is out of balance, the nervous system can become much easier to trigger. So let's dive into that because I know we're talking a lot more about the guy.

There's so many cool things out there to help us like make our gut work better. But we are not really having a huge conversation about that link. between kids behavior, maybe your own behavior or mental health struggles and the gut.

So let's dive into that because this is going to be helpful. And parents sometimes notice things around their kid's behavior that might be clues to the gut.

Your kid may become a little more irritable or angry or emotionally reactive, and they may start making connections about could food, could things they're doing, their gut really be the trigger.

And sometimes they notice that your kid might have frequent stomach aches, picky eating, constipation, which you've heard me talk a lot about because it's shocking to me how much people live with constibation.

It is so uncomfortable. I don't know how people walk around like that, but it is pretty damn common. And some of the other behaviors we might notice that could be an indicator of gut things is mood crashes when their child is hungry, anxiety that seems to be connected to physical discomfort.

That's a big clue that I think you see in kids and adults and they don't always point to something that parents really aren't told about and that's that gut-brain connection and please go back and listen to the other episodes.

We just did an episode with Cynthia Thurlow talking about the gut brain trauma connection. Awesome, awesome episode. Please listen So let's talk about the gut-brain highway, because they really are deeply connected.

How the Vagus Nerve Links Gut and Brain

We're going to talk solution, so please make sure you stay until the end. I think some of my most favorite things that happen to my clients is when we make tweaks and you start to see something pretty quick and the gut can be one of that but the child's gut and brain as our own are constantly communicated and they're connected through what's called the vagus nerve.

One of the largest nerves in the body and it runs from the brain stem all the way down through the digestive system. And this communication works in both directions.

That's what I often talk about, bi-directional communication. What does that mean? They affect each other. So signals travel from the brain to the gut.

But interestingly, a large percentage of those signals, travel back to the brain and this is where this might be new science for you. And I love it. I'm so glad you're here because the gut brain connection is unfortunately a secret hack in helping your kid be more focused, less anxious, have better mood.

And that's why so many of you are here and listen. And please, if you're listening and loving this on YouTube, If you listening on Apple or Spotify, will you please be so kind to leave a review?

Don't leave me review unless it's a five-star review. save your time for something else. Because if you're not enjoying this podcast, don't listen. But leaving a review helps millions of other parents because these platforms will push out based on one review, it will put your podcast out more.

And so I just would be ever so grateful if this is having an impact and so many of you send me an email that it is, please Please go out of your way and leave a review and it's much appreciated and we will highlight you on our social media as well.

You can always leave an anonymous review, but if you want to be highlighted, leave your name. Let's talk about how that state of the. gut can directly influence mood, stress response, and emotional regulation because it really can.

And there is a loop between your gut brain and how your nervous system regulates. One helpful way to think about this is something that I call the gut-brain regulation loop.

The gut microbiome, the community of bacteria, which lives in your digestive system, plays a huge role in regulating inflammation, brain signaling. You've heard me talk about how serotonin is almost exclusively created in our gut.

Dopamine is in there too. There's a lot of neurotransmitters that get created right there that does not require psychiatric medication. FYI, I'm never telling you to come off your medication, giving you some real science that explains how these neurotransmitters are created in there and we can have such an incredible influence.

Microbiome, Neurotransmitters, and Inflammation

One of my clients told me recently how, and I've seen her a long time, the kids are just doing so great. Kids with PANS, one with pans, with neurodivergence, ADHD, intellectual giftedness.

told me that I had recommended to them this very specific strain of bacteria that was for mood and how it had just flipped a switch on a good way for them.

And I just was so happy because for all of us that know how hard it is for our kids that are struggling, when you find something and they were doing all the other things, please know, and it worked so well, because they were doing the diet.

They were regulating the nervous system and the missing ingredient was the right bacteria. So when that gut is balanced and healthy, the Nervous System tends to regulate stress more effectively because it's got the right neurotransmitters, right?

And in each one of these things, remember, it takes stress out of our stress cup. And when the gut becomes inflamed or imbalanced, the nervous system can become much more reactive because that stress cuff is way too full.

In other words, that gut imbalance can increase inflammation. When we increase that inflammation, you have increased nervous system sensitivity, which can really make emotional regulation much harder because their body, that neurotransmitter, their gut, the inflammation is not in balance.

Every little thing adds to that stress cup. So when a child's gut is out of balance, again, they're nervous systems may become more easily overwhelmed and that can show up as emotional dysregulation, big emotions, And here are some signs that your gut may be affecting regulation because parents will notice patterns that suggest a gut-brain connection may involved.

And you may see things like mood shift after certain foods, irritability when blood sugar drops, frequent stomach aches during stress, constipation, or digestive discomfort, energy crashes or fatigues, behavior changes when sleep is disrupted.

Yes, these can really overlap with other areas. And it does not automatically mean that the gut is involved, but these are clues. When kids have a lot of digestive issues, we do have to assume that there can be a gut issue.

Now, sometimes they can have digestive issue because that's how the body is handling its stress. No matter what, these are clear indicators that we need to look more closely at what's happening to our child.

And we always want to Look at the gut. In fact, in our one to one program, we have been doing a lot more gut work and using tools like the tiny health poop test.

There's no affiliate there. I don't get a commission for saying that. And I've always recommended stool testing to look at the bacteria balances or lack of or having too much or of certain bacteria is not enough of others and all these other things and seeing if there's infections.

But these there are more resources now to help parents and so they can take action.

Signs the Gut May Be Affecting Behavior

Now, I always recommend working with a provider, but there are providers everywhere and that's important to get proper guidance, especially today when there's a lot of full of bologna and cheese influencers who really have no clinical experience.

So I really want to caution you from working on licensed people that have never had clinical experiences and they're just a certified parent. Doesn't mean they are not giving good information but working directly.

I personally have been in the inside of learning how little training people have had when they're actually guiding other people, and you really need to be careful.

You really want to make sure that wherever you're investing your hope, your time and your resources, the person's a qualified person. I cannot say this enough.

So it's a big deal. Let's get back to the gut. But when parents see these clues that the Gut-Brain Loop may be affecting the nervous system, what can they do?

Many families that I've worked with will recognize something's going on. And so I remember I told you the positive that we had somebody where they were really struggling to get over their hump, right?

So the one child was neurodivergent, the other was pan, had lots of meltdowns and for different reasons, lots stomach aches. And the stomach was the, other thing is that one was restrictive eating.

So there was lots confusion as to what was going on. And they were trying their best to eat incredibly healthy and mom was sneaking a lot of things, but they, mom and dad were unsure what was happening.

Like, is this behavioral? Really feel that there is still a gut issue here. And at this point, they we're working just with their naturopathic physician.

These are people that I had spent a lotta time with, so I was happy to help. And so then we stepped back and we really looked at the whole picture, sleep, diet, digestion, stress, all that stuff, and then realized, okay, this nervous system is getting better, but we should be moving at a faster trajectory.

And that's when I said, let's look at The Gut. That just became one piece in helping these kids' nervous systems regulating better and getting them back on track.

And once that nervous system, once the gut had more stability, the emotional regulation just dramatically improved in both of these kids. It just makes me so happy to know what a hard journey they had and how much things made a difference.

So why does this all matter for kids that are dysregulated? Because the nervous doesn't operate in isolation. And many of you are like, should I only do your con PMF?

Should I do this? I don't only that. So we have to look at how things are all connected. And for here, your immune system, digestive system hormones, every and your gut.

They're all connected. And instead of being overwhelmed by that, get excited. Because when we take a systems approach, which is the only way I do, and you know you have to regulate first or nothing else is going to work, we start to see the endocrine system works better, the gut system, works, better that inflammation starts coming down.

Testing, Providers, and Looking at the Whole Picture

When we don't address that what we see is a brain more sensitive. sensitive to everything. And that can mean that nervous system can move into fight, flight, or freeze more quickly, can be stuck there, and it can means why you're not getting better.

So many of you are sending me things. I'm looking at your, when you take the solution manager, I look at them. I want to know what's happening and many of you more and more are reporting more serious clinical issues and not getting help.

That is concerning for me because we have practical ways to support the brain. And so let's talk about practical way to the support of the gut-brain connection because parents are always asking me where to start.

So the good news is that many the same things that support gut also support Hello, the nervous system. So good nutrition with fiber rich foods, fiber helps benefit the gut bacteria and produce compounds that reduce inflammation, which then helps your brain signaling and things like fermented foods diverse foods that help build the microbiome.

And of course, reducing highly processed foods that have a lot of crap in them and sugar and they disrupt bacteria and increase inflammation, which makes the nervous system way more reactive.

So, and then hydration. I think hydration, I learned this from my bestie, Shelly, who is, was the first functional nutritionist in New Zealand. We skip hydration And a lot of people in my one-on-one program over the years, I had them do electrolytes because we struggle with hydrating.

I struggle, with I need to take electrolyte. So I drink a ton of water. There's actually a huge water right here. And I do it all the time. But we are in environments where there's lights, there are sounds and kids who are neurodivergent or struggling with emotional reactivity of any kind, your system is going to start overworking.

You know, I've been seeing that in three decades in those brain maps. And so we want to make sure we're hydrating. It's important for the brain, the nervous system, that got your immune system can't underplay it.

Guess what? No soda, please. Stick to water. We put a little cranberry juice with no sugar as a splash. water related thing. Kids don't like water, but try to flavor it up with natural things.

You want to support sleep. Sleep helps regulate stress hormones, which then supports the gut microbiome and restores the nervous system balance. Again, everything's connected and supporting that nervous-system regulation activities that calm your nervous makes such a huge difference in your gut function.

Practical Ways to Support Gut and Nervous System

In the episode with Cynthia, you learned about the connection between stress and trauma in you gut and your

hormones and how it's all connected. We are always regulating and that connection is the vagus nerve and it makes a difference.

Movement, being in nature, deep breathing, laughter, predictability, all activate the parasympathetic nervous system. We have to get into that state where digestion and regulation improve and that's when it happens.

Stop thinking it's just a gut problem or it is just this. Behavior is influenced by many systems and the nervous system, the brain, immune system the digestive system and environment.

They're all connected, but the gut is one piece of that biological puzzle that parents often overlook. And sometimes supporting that piece can make a meaningful difference, just like it did from my former client's kids.

She's actually my friend. I wish that for everybody, because sometimes it's a part of your journey. It's piece to the puzzle, that keeps moving you forward.

Not everything you do is going to be a light switch, but sometimes it can. And this is one of those things that I feel like many of you miss and undervalue.

Things like probiotic, all that stuff makes a huge difference. But we want to really focus on proper foods to help build our gut. There's nothing wrong with probiotics.

They are wonderful. I've been on them since the 90s. People probably didn't even know they existed. Dr. Rowe, always doing this stuff since the early 90s.

But emotional regulation just doesn't come from one system in the body. And that result is that many systems, when we improve the nervous system, they start working together.

The brain, the nervous system, immune system that got endocrine system and they all start helping each other out. That's what I've been seeing for three decades with all these people fly in over the world.

I started regulating their nervous systems and all the systems started improving. And then we looked at which system was off and what were the clues. Don't you worry, we're going to talk a lot more about this in terms of what are the pieces in the dysregulated kid and one of the signs we need to look for.

But we support those systems together. We give children a stronger biological foundation of regulation. So amazing. And so if you're trying to understand what may be driving your kids behavior, your emotional dysregulation, the best place to start, of course, is the Solution Matcher.

It's going to help you identify the pattern. That's exactly why I created it. easy to take and it can identify what may be affecting your kid's nervous system and then give you the path on what you need to focus on because this is not easy.

And you can take it at drrosanne.com forward slash help because when you understand the pattern, you begin supporting your child's brain. their emotional regulation, their self-regulation, your family's co- regulation.

And these things all add up in a positive way. I hope this was really insightful.