Nourishing Resilience: A Holistic Approach To Soothing Anxiety And Shaping Behavior Transcript

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Introduction to resilience, anxiety, and stress

Welcome back to ADHD, Autism and Chronic Disease Parenting Summit. I'm here with a fantastic function of nutritionist Jess Sherman. And we're going to talk today about resilience anxiety, anger.

You know, these are some really important topics. Everyone's too anxious these days. It's unfortunate. But that's you know how it is. So thank you so much for being here.

Yeah yeah no problem. And I'm I'm hoping that I can kind of put a bit of a spin on it for people because, there is hope. There's hope. We're under a lot of stress right now, but there's hope.

We are. So maybe you can kind of set the stage a little bit with what you're seeing. And, you know, why you, you find this such an important topic to talk about in terms of anxiety and, and what's going on.

Like what? I mean, obviously, I think most people realize that we're more stressed than ever, but maybe you can set the stage a little bit. Yeah, yeah, yeah, we're we are more stressed than ever and it's just getting worse and it's not going to get better.

So that's the that's the dark side of this. Right. Just because the stress of daily life is going in a certain direction that we don't necessarily have control over, unless we bring some conscious thought into how we're going to decrease that stress in our families.

And that's really what I do. With parents, because I think we're at a bit of a crossroads. We've seen over the last three years, things have really ramped up.

Anybody who has a kid has seen this. Anybody who works with kids has seen this. You know, I work with a lot of teachers.

Why biology and psychology both matter

I was a teacher when I, when I got into this and I was like, oh my goodness, things are getting tougher and tougher. And that's what what prompted me to go deeper into what I do now.

But, we're at we're at this crossroads where I think we know so much from functional nutrition and from holistic nutrition and, and from just integrative pediatrics about the growing child and what that growing child needs on the inside to be resilient.

We know about gut health. We know about toxins, we know about nutrition, all of these pieces. And then child psychology has done a great job at at helping us understand the attachment needs of kids and the social needs of kids, and how kids develop as social beings.

And what I'm really looking forward to is those two pieces talking to each other. Right? So understanding the psychology of kids and the biology of kids and putting those two things together so that we can really bring resilience to the whole child.

So that's that's what I'm trying to push forward. It's really exciting that we know so much. It's just a matter of now translating that into something real practical for for parents.

Yeah. And so how do we do that? Like, what are the things that you like to talk about with your, your families. And

how do we move in a, in a more positive direction from, from where we are now?

Well, I think, I think the first thing is that it's not an either or thing. It's a yes and thing because a lot of parents will, you know, let's say they're I work with a lot of kids who are, angry.

They're throwing tantrums. Are they? Or they're anxious, either the kind of anxious where they won't leave your side, or the kind of anxious where they're shutting you out and throwing and throwing fits, and they don't want your help.

I work with a lot of kids who are having trouble at school and trouble trouble with their peer to peer relationships and their teachers and things. And so, I, parents are often told, okay, well, there's like practical strategies for setting boundaries and communication and all of these really, I think.

Great. Tact parenting tactics and tools. And then when that and, and from the teachers perspective, classroom management tools, like how do you help kids feel more comfortable and connected from a social perspective?

But then there's this nutrition piece that just doesn't get talked about enough.

Starting with eating, sleeping, and pooping

And I think sometimes people are scared to talk about because no one wants to feel shamed about what their kids are eating or, or there's food access issues, or for whatever reason, there's a lot of guilt and shame around nutrition, but the reality is all of those tactics, all those parenting tactics and management tactics, are going to work so much better and be so much more effective if the child's biology is resilient.

So I'll give you an example. And you I'm sure you've seen this in your pediatric population, a kid who has a lot of yeast in their gut is going to be skinny.

They're not going to want to sit down. They're not going to be able to focus, no matter how many times you remind them and create a positive environment for them and connect with them, their inner biology is off.

They're going to have blood sugar swings, they're going to be giddy. And I act out, and, and it's not because of anything that you're doing. It's because of what's going on in their body.

So we need to once we start to get the biology on line and give them all of the nutritional resources than they need, and make sure that their gut health is on online, then all of the other stuff works better.

So it's a yes, and they're both really important. I just want to see them come together because that's when true resilience happens. That's when great stuff happens.

Yeah, that makes perfect sense. And where should parents start? So if they're like, you know, they're on their journey and and they're like, okay, you know I get that we're not having we don't have the best diet or or you know, I'm seeing a lot more anxiety or I'm seeing temper tantrums or anger outbursts and I'm going to do something about it.

Like, what are the things that you talk about with your clients, of ways that they could start or that the things that they should be thinking about most?

Well, I think the first thing is to remember that you have to start where you are. You have to start with what is doable. You're a busy parent. I'm a busy parent.

We know what it's like to have kids. You're juggling a million things, and so it has to feel simple and doable. So I usually throw out a lot of things to parents.

I tell people the first, the first trifecta that we look at is eating, sleeping, and pooping. Your child needs to be eating,

sleeping, and pooping in order for them to have emotional resilience and emotional flexibility.

So but within that, we can start whatever with whatever is easiest, which with whatever makes sense because they're all related, I think, in cycles and circular motions.

They're all related. Right? That the better you eat, the better you're going to sleep, the better you're going to poop and the better you poop, your better you're going to sleep. So.

So it doesn't matter where you start.

Reducing sugar and improving hydration

So within there, you know, maybe I'll throw out like, like one thing you could do for the eating piece is just, you know, get curious, first of all, and be really compassionate about where you're at and just do a little audit at how much sugar is coming in sugar, fiber and water.

Those are probably the first three things to have on your radar. How much sugar is coming in. And again, not to blame and shame yourself because it creeps in and it is everywhere.

But most kids that are just regulating that their nervous systems just regulating are getting too much sugar and not enough fiber and not enough water.

So and even within that, where do you want to start with a new water bottle, with a new water filter with some sources of fiber, baby throwing some some extra flax in there in their smoothie for some extra fiber.

So it has to feel simple and doable, and then one step in front of the other. Yeah, great. And I would say, you know, even just hearing what you're saying and I've talked about this many times before, like what we're drinking matters a lot because you can you can tackle two of those really simply, you know, if you're thinking about what we're drinking, drinking more water and maybe getting rid of juice or sodas, I don't know if you expect families about that, but I think that's a a huge, you know, pretty simple area to make a huge change.

If your kids are drinking a lot of juice or soda because you're getting a lot of sugar and, and not necessarily, you know, the good kinds of sugars and usually a lot of preservatives and other things.

And it's not really filling them up either. Yeah, absolutely. And, and, also having them take their own water to school and not relying on the water that's at school because you just don't know the quality of that water.

And there's been some pretty scary studies around, around water. And what's in that water. So having your child take your water from home and then you can have your own water filters at home.

But that also helps you gauge how much they're drinking. Because if they're if they have a water bottle, I was I was stunned. I, my my son asked the other day whether we could buy him a new water bottle because he's like, we, I go through that water within the first hour of school and and I was like, yeah, we can buy you a new like for sure.

But it just it, it, it called our attention as a parent child in our, in our relationship as to how much water he was drinking. So because a lot of parents don't even know what their kids are doing at school, why would how could you know you're not there?

So that's that's something simple. And I also always hesitate to say it's really simple to do anything because because kids are kids and and parents are stressed.

But if you do have a child who throws a fit when you take the juice away, soda is a different story. I, throw your fit because yes, I it my kids like I am not buying that soda that really doesn't have a place in a child's diet in anyone's diet.

The stuff should just be gone.

How diet changes affect behavior

But, but to juice, I would. It is a lot. It's a lot. There's just as much sugar in juice as there is in soda. So it's like 30 to 40g in orange juice. So.

You know, I don't I don't want we have to work with a child's nervous system. And when we just rip something away from them that they're used to and that they love it, this regulates them, especially if they're already volatile.

And I work with those kids who are, like, already super stressed and it interferes with your relationship. So, start watering it down, start teaching them how to do that.

Or start to, to shift brands, check to see if what you're buying is actually has added sugar in it. And that's a good first step to, to take. And so, so shift to a whole, you know, a better brand.

So you can take steps, simple steps like that. But, but, it is important to, to start to consider how much sugar our kids are getting because it's, it's a little bit it gets out of control quickly. Yeah.

And from your experience of working with families, especially with kids that are a little bit more anxious or having some behavioral concerns, do you like how how beneficial do you find it?

Just focusing on on on diet first. I mean, there's other things that we can focus on. If you want to talk about anything else that you kind of recommend to your families that that's great.

But I just, you know, I always find it helpful to hear from practitioners who are doing this every day because I feel like some parents just don't necessarily believe how big an impact you can have, even just by changing your diet.

I see it all the time. I mean, not just with with anxiety, but with almost any, you know, condition that if there's one thing that makes a huge difference in kids, it's changing up their diet.

Sometimes it's getting with it, getting rid of gluten and dairy or other things, removing the sugar. It's not always that simple, but you almost always see an improvement in symptoms.

Whatever it is, it's not necessarily a magical cure for everything, but you might get 5 to 10% improvement. That's a huge difference for a kid who's having anxiety.

If it drops it even a little bit just from changing up the diet, and then also gets the body back a little bit more in balance, which helps with other things.

So what are you seeing when you're working with clients? And. Yeah, yeah. And you know, it also helps them feel a different weight in their body, which is super exciting to see in a kid when you when you make a little change to their diet and they start to feel differently and they start to say yes to different opportunities or having more success at school or what have you, that's what's really excited, because they they get this embodied feeling of what it feels like to feel well and do well.

So, so that's really exciting. We don't always start with the food because when we have, food has a lot of baggage around it.

Nourishment beyond food and building connection

Food has a lot of, strings tied to it, you know, and, and so I like to blow out the word nourishment to think of the different ways that we nourish our families.

Food. Food is one of them. And it's a really important one. But we also need hydration, like we've talked about. We

also need good quality sleep. We also need we also need to move.

We need to move our bodies. We need good quality air quality water. So so those things are really important. And we also need really strong connection with our with our caregivers as as kids, kids and parents.

And sometimes that's where we start is just starts just to consider how much time you're actually spending, quality time. You know, you're spending together because life gets really busy.

Are we eating meals together anymore? Are we playing together anymore? You know, are we having special, special quality time or are we making eye contact?

So sometimes that's a good place to start, because if you want to change a child's diet and they are making a fuss about it, the more stressed they are, the harder it's going to be.

And one of the quickest ways to access their nervous system and make them feel less stressed is to connect with them and have some fun. And then changing the diet gets a little bit easier.

I love that those are very practical, actionable steps. They're not magical, you know, secrets. And it never really is. I mean, it's important to work with a practitioner if you feel like you're doing some of the basics and you're not getting to where you want to, or you want a more personalized, you know, some more personalized guidance, I think that that's always going to get you farther working with somebody that that really can, can dig in to your specific situation.

But at the end of the day, a lot of this isn't rocket science. It's, you know, we talk about it across basically every interview. You know, I've had any time I talk to anybody who's in the integrative world, it's like getting back to the roots, getting back to the foundations.

I call it seeds of health, stress, environment and toxins, exercise, diet and sleep. And I talk about that in my book. And, you know, everybody pretty much does. Right?

I mean, you mentioned that everyone's got their own mnemonic and it's not again, it's not rocket science because it's the things that you need to be nourished.

And, and we're just forgetting to do those things. We're just just so busy. You then the rocket science pieces, the application it learning this stuff is easy, you know, and it's translating what you're learning and what you know into action and doing that.

When I started working with kids specifically, I noticed that is one of the major differences. And why not a lot of people do this work with kids is because it's it's one thing to try to change your own health, but it's a completely different scenario to try to change the health of another person.

And so, so I try to bring it back to just what you said is like, let's, let's fill in the basics. Let's make sure the basics are covered. And when we do that, what we're actually doing is we're creating a culture of nourishment in our homes, where we're telling our kids or showing our kids this is how we do things here.

We take care of our bodies. Here's how we do that. And then when we're not feeling very well, we think, what's fallen off the plate, so to speak? Let me like, revisit what?

What is my body? Okay. Right. I stop drinking water or I've been, you know, staying up too late watching Netflix or, you know, it starts to click. But if you ever have that conversation with your kids, and if you don't set up that culture in your home, then the outside culture, what's out there?

What is going to permeate and all the junk is going to come in and all the advertising is going to come in and all the all this stuff's going to come in.

So I feel really, really protective over my home because I don't have so much control over the culture out there. But I am the CEO of my home. It's like.

Yeah, those are great, great points. And I agree with them 100%. And and just to finish off, I'm curious, you know, to leave people with, you know, what would be your one action step that you would want a family to do today?

If there was one thing that you could hope that people would do. I heard you say a couple great things like drinking more water, having spending more family time eating together.

Yeah.

Creating a healthy family culture

If there was one thing that you could pick out, I mean, there are many things you could do, but what would you want a family to do today or this week to improve their health a little bit?

Oh, that's a really hard question, because they have to really take some time and consider what's doable for them. You know, take that's a. Different.

That I mean, that's one thing. That's what I was going to say. Like like watch, listen to all of these summer interviews. And I think it's really important with these summits or podcasts or whatever people are listening to, whatever they're consuming is to take what you're learning and translate it into a piece of action, just like you're talking about.

So I think that's kind of my tip is to take all of the things that are resonating and decide, just make a decision about what feels doable for you and know and just know.

Knowing also that there are people out there, all of these, all of the people that people have been hearing from, right, who are here to help. But you have to identify first where you need help.

Right. And then find help because and because that's the thing we always feel like we can do it ourselves. We're like, I should be able to do this. This isn't rocket science, but it's that application piece.

It's the accountability piece. It's the making sure that there is space for this piece where where people lose the plot. Yeah, no negative analysis. That's beautiful and brilliant.

And again, simple, but more important than really any of the tips, right. Because the tips are useless and it's not going to be actionable for your family or you.

Yeah, yeah. I find that whole concept of like, as as the leader of your family, you are in charge of the culture that is set inside your family. You are the leader of that.

So you get to decide. And then here's the other piece. If you have a parenting partner, have a conversation about it. If you ever see your parenting partner.

Because, yeah, sometimes your ships passing in the night, but really sitting down and consciously thinking about the culture that you want to create in your home is something we rarely do.

Yeah. And that's like, I mean, you know, just funny enough, it's like the literal title of my book, right? Parenting at your child's pace. It's like literally thinking about what what's important for for your family in your situation, trying to, you know, tune out a lot of the noise out there, having a general understanding of what's going on, but then figuring out what makes sense for for you.

Because not everybody can do every single thing. But there are some great practitioners out there and people and information that we can use for ourself in our own family to decrease our stress and to make our family healthier.

But but you have to figure out what's going to make sense for you, for your own family and your own kids. So that I think that's really, really wise and insightful.

And I really appreciate you being here and being a part of this.

Finding support and final takeaways

Can you tell people a little bit more about where to find your social media website, anything like that? Yeah, everything is at Jess sherman.com. That's my website.

And we have a we have a family membership there. My book, which is called Raising Resilience, is there or it's on Amazon. And I that that'll give you some starting points as well.

And, you know, right back to the very first question that you asked me about stress. We can't we can't handle stress when we're not well nourished. Nourishment is the foundation of our stress management system.

So the more things get stressful the more nourishment we need. So that's what I'm trying to help people understand. That sounds like a good book title like nourishment as a foundation or something like that.

There you go. Yeah. Next one coming up. Well, thank you so much for being here. And, I really appreciate you taking the time to chat with us. A super important topic.

Everyone's dealing with anxiety and stress and this is really, really helpful. So thank you everyone for tuning in. And I'll see you in the next, next session.

Thank you.