

Our Mission

Our mission is to support parents by helping them gain the strength and strategies necessary to guide their family through the maze of autism. We believe that autism and other related developmental disorders are a **FAMILY JOURNEY**. When a child is diagnosed, everyone in the family is impacted. Each individual member experiences and responds to the diagnosis in their own unique ways. It is important to have a shared understanding and open communication about the disorder and its impact on the family and the family's future. This journey will have its challenges and having **open communication, shared responsibility and a strong marital relationship** can serve as buffers against the stressors related to autism. In addition, we are here to help families locate appropriate services for their child. As choices are plenty, making an informed decision is crucial. Our services are focused on helping families find ways to SUCCEED and find HOPE in autism.

We're here to help you make informed choices and provide a safe environment to explore the different ways to **find balance for yourself and your family** as you navigate your way through the world of autism.

Autism Program Director

Dr. Tina Shaffie (PSB 32234) received her Doctorate Degree in Psychology specializing in Marriage and Family Therapy from Alliant International University. Her dissertation focused on the impact of having a child diagnosed with autism on marital satisfaction.

Dr. Shaffie is also the Clinical Director of 4Autism, a local intensive behavioral intervention agency. With her combination of family therapy training and over 10 years of experience working with autistic children and their families, Dr. Shaffie has an in-depth understanding of the struggles involved in raising children with autism and other related developmental disorders.

I have so many questions...

- What is autism?
- What treatments are available?
- How will autism impact my family?
- How will we handle its challenges?
- How will we cope financially and emotionally?
- How will autism impact our child's future?
- Will our marriage survive?

We are here to help you and your family find solutions and hope...

Dr. Tina Shaffie (PSB 32234)
Autism Program Director
Supervisor: Dr. Frances Smith (PSY 478)

The Center For H.U.G.S.
23792 Rockfield Blvd., Suite 200
Lake Forest, CA 92630
Phone: (949) 770-4847 ext. 13
Fax: (949) 770-4020
www.centerforhugs.org

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The
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AUTISM Family Support Services



Autism Is A Family Journey

Let Us Help You Navigate



Helping your family find HOPE and SUCCESS

Workshops

The gifts and challenges of autism

This workshop provides an overview of the symptoms of autism and available treatment options. You will learn the importance of understanding and recognizing your child's strengths and utilizing his or her talents to bring out their best. Autism is like a puzzle and this workshop will help you better understand and connect its pieces.

Parenting a child with autism

This workshop focuses on the parenting challenges of children diagnosed with autism. You will learn tools to help you reduce challenging behaviors, find appropriate ways to set limits, use reinforcements and teach new skills.

Impact of your child diagnosed with autism on your marriage

Learn how autism can impact your marriage and what you can do to build a strong base and support for yourself and your family. This workshop gives you tools for communication, understanding and coping as a couple. We will help you strengthen your marriage as you support each other through the journey ahead.

Support Groups

These groups provide a safe and comfortable environment to share your experience with other families, increase social support, expand healthy coping strategies, and experience a sense of connection and understanding.



Nurture the Gifts of Autism

Consultation and Referral Services

When a child is diagnosed with autism, he or she can benefit from a combination of treatment options and support services. These may include: occupational therapy, speech therapy, IEP support, neurologist, nutritionist, etc. Understanding what is needed and locating the appropriate services can be an overwhelming and challenging process. Our consultation and referral services help parents address their concerns by connecting them with the appropriate resources.

Family Therapy

The diagnosis of a child impacts the entire family. In a supportive therapeutic environment your family can process through the stages of grief as well as work on redefining your family roles and responsibilities as you learn to effectively navigate through this family journey.

Couples Therapy

The parental unit serves as the core of the family system, carrying most of the family's burden and stress. If the couple learns healthy adaptation techniques, the marital relationship can serve as a buffer for coping with the demands of caring for an autistic child. Couples therapy helps you focus on the marriage by reconnecting and learning healthy communication and coping skills.

Individual Therapy

Mother, Father, brother(s) or sister(s) can utilize the confidential and safe therapeutic environment to explore their own individual feelings and challenges about living with a family member diagnosed with autism.

AUTISM Workshops:

- The gifts and challenges of autism
- Parenting a child with autism
- Impact of your child diagnosed with autism on your marriage

We also provide additional presentations that can be tailored for specific audiences (ie: school staff or parents).

For workshop enrollment or inquiries please call Dr. Tina Shaffie (949) 770-4847 ext.13