

When to Find a Therapist for Your Teen: a Guidance Counselor's Perspective

Parenting a teenager can be one of the most rewarding - and at times, most challenging - experiences. The teen years are filled with emotional highs and lows, growth spurts, questions, and plenty of mood swings. While some defiance or dramatic outbursts are part of the process, there are times when a teen's struggles go deeper than typical growing pains. Knowing when to seek counseling can make all the difference.

In my 24 years as a high school counselor, I've met with countless students navigating tough seasons of life. Sometimes, we work through things in just a few sessions. Other times, the signs point to something more serious, and I'll recommend professional counseling. I know that can be a hard message for parents to hear. Some worry it's an overreaction or feel unsure about the idea of therapy. But when I see a student in real distress, getting them the right support is not just helpful - *it can be life-changing*.

So how do you know when it's time to take that next step?

If your teen shows ongoing signs of emotional distress: frequent crying, withdrawal from friends or family, or expressing hopelessness - it may go beyond a rough patch. Other red flags would be sudden behavioral changes, dropping grades, or a loss of interest in things they used to love .

Any mention of self-harm or suicidal thoughts, no matter how casual it may seem, needs immediate attention. Do not brush that off. These moments call for professional care.



Other warning signs include extreme anger, constant conflict at home or school, or run-ins with the law. Substance use can also be a sign, as teens may try substance use to cope with deeper emotional pain. If your teen has gone through a major life change - divorce, the loss of a loved one, or bullying - therapy can offer a safe place to work through those feelings.

Sometimes, teens just feel overwhelmed by academic pressure or peer expectations and don't have the tools to cope yet. That's okay, counseling can help with that too.

As a parent, reaching out for help doesn't mean you've failed. It means you care deeply. Getting your teen the support they need can lead to healing, growth, and a healthier future. And that's something to be proud of.

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Grief Support Group at Illiana Christian High School

New Leaf has been sending therapist Deanna Ramirez, MSW, LSW to Illiana on a weekly basis to host a 'grief group' for students. The 7 week program gives students a guided group where they can share their stories and hear others; all while learning mental health tools for handling these challenging experiences.

The group has gotten a lot of great feedback from students, faculty and parents; and will potentially be offered in the coming school year as well. Meetings take place entirely during school hours, rotating times so no class period is missed more than once. The group's success in helping students manage grief, as well as learn to build their emotional vocabulary & mental health toolsets has moved New Leaf and Illiana to consider adding an 'anxiety group' for next year.

New Leaf hopes to expand this offering to more schools in the future.

Christian Youth Leaders Lunch

In March, New Leaf hosted a lunch at Faith Church - Dyer for youth leaders from around the region. While the 30 in attendance ate their , we presented what our ministry does and how we work with students and families. We hope we were also able to provide a space for these youth leaders to get to know each other. We took questions towards the end and noticed a need to create tools to help these leaders handle situations where they identify a student as needing further support.

Getting to hear from these youth leaders helped us understand some challenging situations they face. For example, when they recognize a student needs a more clinical level of support than they can offer. That talk with the student, and with the student's parent(s) can be an uncomfortable one. We recognize that as an opportunity to help by creating materials to make sure that process is well-informed and reassuring.

Another Major Insurance Provider Onboard: Aetna!

As of April 18th, we are now in network with Aetna! This new partnership was the success of our admin team's hard work and will mean receiving more new clients, as well as costing less out-of-pocket for our clients who have Aetna, and should even give us the chance to move some clients off Client Assistance—freeing up funds for new clients!

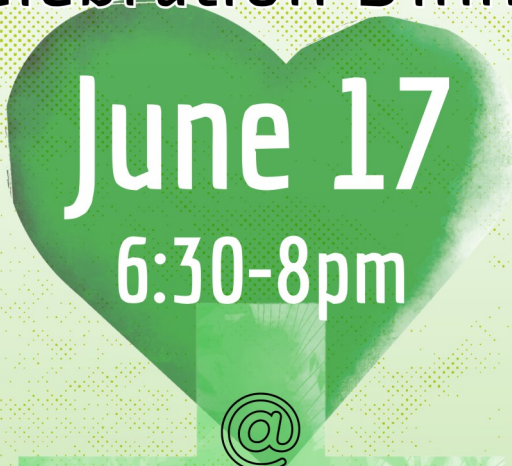
If you've ever referred someone to New Leaf, now is a great time to ask them if they ended up seeing a therapist here. Not working with their insurance is a leading reason for clients looking elsewhere.

**Our Mission:**

**To promote healthy relationships,
personal growth and healing
through professional counseling,
education, and consultation
from a Christian perspective.**



Celebration Dinner



**ILLIANA CHRISTIAN
HIGH SCHOOL**

10920 Calumet Ave, Dyer

New Leaf updates
Raffle items
Childcare provided!
(include ages w/ RSVP)

No cost to attend*



«« RSVP by May 30 at this link
or email info@newleafresources.org

*All costs for the evening are funded by
business sponsors. Donations to New Leaf
Resources will be accepted throughout evening.

Second 2025 Celebration Dinner Hosted in DeMotte, June 24th!

Our annual 'Celebration Dinner' is when we show our gratitude to all the people God is working through to see our mission succeed.

Over the last several years, we've noticed so much **great work being done out of our DeMotte office, and so many supporters coming from that area** to attend our Celebration Dinners in Dyer, that we thought we could show our appreciation by hosting a second dinner there this year! So join us at Sandy Pines Golf Club, from 6-8pm on June 24th. No cost to attend & free childcare at our Wheatfield office! Donations accepted at the dinner.

To RSVP,
follow the link on the right,
call 708.895.7310, or email
info@newleafresources.org



When Parents Hurt

Book Review by Denise Jones-Williams,
LPC & Licensed Clinical Therapist

JOSHUA COLEMAN, PH.D.

**When
Parents
Hurt**

Compassionate
Strategies
When You and
Your Grown Child
Don't Get Along

"A wise and helpful book."
—FREDERIC LUSON, Ph.D.,
Director, Stanford Forgiveness Projects,
and author of *Forgive for Good*



Parenting is HARD...

Even with our best efforts, sometimes we hit an insurmountable wall with our children.

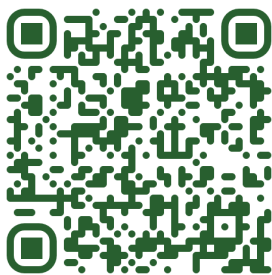
'When Parents Hurt' by Dr. Joshua Coleman is my go-to for clients who find themselves navigating the rocky waters of the "no contact" zone. Written in straightforward, no-fluff language, the book gives parents a

clearer understanding of what's really going on when their kids shut them out. Several of my clients have expressed that Dr. Coleman's book helped them experience God's grace for both themselves and their children; finding power in accepting what they can't control. This super easy read helps hurting parents do as Ephesians 6:13 recommends, after you've done all you can for your kids... just stand!

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- New Leaf updates
- A Book Review

**RSVP Info for our
June Celebration Dinners
in Dyer and DeMotte!**

**Have a story to share about
New Leaf Resources?**

You can help new clients find
us on Google Maps by adding
your review through the QR
code below:



**Success stories can
encourage others to reach
out for support as well!**

