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In other words, I am here to empower you with information, and it is up to you to make the decisions that are right for your family.

Day 1 Introduction to Chronic Illness

Our New Normal

When I think about the children's story, "Chicken Little," I think about this small, intense, reactionary chicken running around exclaiming to everyone that the "sky is falling!" His concerns, no, his *sheer panic*, is met with everything from rolling eyes to indifference. He is ignored and sometimes even ridiculed as he desperately tries to get the masses to look up, to see the imminent danger, to believe what he says so that his community can save themselves. Is Chicken Little making a big deal out of nothing, or does he see what the rest of us do not? Is this what many progressive healthcare professionals, parents, and functional and lifestyle medicine professionals are sounding the alarm about when they report that the health of our human population is on the rapid decline, and all because of the choices we are making and the dangers we are ignoring?

These are big questions that are difficult to face, especially when it comes to the health of our children. But this is why you brave parents are here. You want to know what's wrong and how we can fix it.



ADHD, Alzheimer's, autism, obesity, autoimmunity, diabetes, heart disease, fatigue, learning disabilities, mood disorders, eczema, allergy, asthma, and general malaise are just some of the conditions, diseases, and illnesses people are succumbing to in epic numbers, and even when their symptoms are undiagnosable or not defined according to any particular disease, people are coming to their healthcare professionals feeling not quite right, dragging, tired, never really well. At the writing of this program, it is reported that 10% of children in the US have ADD/ADHD and 17% are labeled as "learning disabled," most schools are peanut-free zones due to the staggering number of children who have anaphylactic reactions to peanuts, and with autism rates climbing from 1 in 150 in the year 2000 to 1 in 68 in 2013, if this trend continues, a whopping 50% of our children born in the year 2032 will have autism! The questions we are all asking are: why? What is happening? And what can we do about it: for ourselves and for our children?

Call me Chicken Little, but isn't it apparent that the sky *is* falling?

I am sure that every parent in this program knows there is more to family health than the new normal of sub-optimal health we are now experiencing. Mothers, fathers, grandparents, and caregivers strive for more for our families. I hope these words inform, inspire, and empower you so you can make. that. shift. happen! To recovery. To ease. To vitality.

I ask you: what are the biggest problems we are facing *right now*? How many of those problems exist due to "the nature of things," and how many are caused by the decisions we are making? And instead of answering those questions of myself, I ask those questions of you. I encourage you to look around and note what you see. Even if you don't have the stats and numbers and studies in your back pocket to validate your own concerns and observations, note what *you* are seeing in *your own* family, *your own* community, *your own* backyard. Have a look in your schools and workplaces, in the malls and hospitals and other public spaces. What do you see? We don't need scientific studies to tell us that chronic illness, obesity, cancers, mood problems, and dementia are rapidly replacing generally good mental, emotional, and physical health. The evidence is undeniable, we actually don't need studies and research to assert that less of us are living as robust, vital, engaged, purposeful people well into old age.

Chronic Illness Defined

In 2018, the Netflix original docuseries, *Afflicted*, debuted. Those with chronic illness were hopeful that the show would shed some light on chronic illness, giving the world a more compassionate and thorough understanding of conditions like mold illness, Multiple



Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), electromagnetic sensitivity, chronic fatigue, autoimmunity, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), and Lyme disease, some of the most devastating chronic conditions people are facing in increasing numbers today, even, and sometimes, especially, our children. Some of these illnesses are catalysts or are interwoven with the common diagnoses our children are receiving today such as autoimmunity, allergy, and cancer. The hopeful people watching were sorely disappointed as the show made the 7 “sick people” they were following appear crazy and the “alternative” treatments they sought (after modern medicine failed them) even crazier and only for the desperate.

Let’s be realistic about the intent of the show (which was for entertainment) and remember that dark, freakshowesque productions get a lot of attention and popularity, so it is not surprising that Netflix would play a few mind games by how they presented the subjects and the therapists and how they twisted the words of the experts they interviewed with some clever editing to make it appear that even *they* thought the illnesses were all in their heads.

But what the producers inadvertently did was create a series that is, in fact, a reflection of how we see modern chronic illness in society, at large, a reflection of how you may be starting to feel perhaps having seen the 11th practitioner who wants to prescribe medications for your child but offers you nothing more or simply doesn’t have any answers, options, or hope for you. Many parents and their children can be classified as weird, desperate, mentally and physically unwell people looking to unproven, expensive, maybe even *dangerous* voodoo therapies outside of the “safety” of the medical standard of care for any kind of improvement to their situations. Parents can feel defeated and frustrated and discouraged from seeking anything but the standard of care.

We are here in this program to not only turn all of that around but to completely tear down the standard of care so that we can rebuild a brand new way of nurturing our families’ health based on solid science and holistic practices recognizing that our children are whole people and there is no one pill or cure for anything. In this program, we look less to bandaids and more to root causes; we aim for improvement, possibility, and optimization.

What the producers of *Afflicted* missed, entirely, was that it is not these people who are sick, but the polluted, distracted, overstressed world we live in; like our children, they are only the canaries in the coalmine, and their illnesses are an invitation for us to stop and pay attention to what is causing the rising tide of childhood chronic illness today so as not to be swept overboard by it.



But childhood chronic health conditions can be widened to include all health issues that just don't seem to resolve that aren't necessarily classified as chronic illness. What about chronic conditions such as eczema, tummy aches, low iron, acne, constipation, depression, anxiety, learning disabilities, seasonal allergies, joint pain, obesity, general malaise, the list goes on and on and on...these conditions cause a great deal of discomfort and difficulty on their own and can also be precursors to bigger health problems down the road. And what about conditions that are not illnesses but rather "syndromes" or "disorders" such as autism or aspergers or sensory processing disorder? Or "behavioral" issues such as Oppositional Defiance Disorder or anorexia nervosa? What about being tired all the time or generally feeling like crap? Some of the general complaints cannot be classified or put neatly into a diagnostic box, but we don't need a diagnosis to know that something is not right with our children. These complaints may be normal in this day and age, but they are certainly not healthy nor are they necessary or just our child's lot in life. Our children should not be suffering on a daily basis from chronic discomforts.

Why am I explaining all of this to you? Well, because I want you to know that we are going to approach making your child's healing plan in a very different way than you have come across in the past. You must know that my approach to health is holistic and integrated, and because of that, much more complete and successful than the current standard of care. I will give credit where credit is due, but my loyalty does not lie with the self-proclaimed medical "authorities" currently in place; it lies with you and your children. And it is my goal here is to empower you to take the health of your children into your own hands.

Whole Child Wellness

Health is always evolving. We are forever troubleshooting and investigating what the issue might be when we get sick with minor illnesses or when challenged with more life-threatening or chronic conditions. And because health is not a destination but a constantly fluctuating, dynamic state of being, the answer to health and healing is an empowered curiosity to find out what is at the root of our illness and to address the imbalance right where it has started in every area: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Health is digging deep into what might nourish our families and then giving each of us the best chance at being functional and vital.

Like the Disney character Shrek says about ogres, we are also like onions, and our children's health involves layers. There are top layers like the physical body where we see most of the manifestations or symptoms of ill health, such as rashes, colds, aches and pains, fatigue, stomach distress, weight gain, the list goes on. Emotional and mental



symptoms are often manifested as depression and anxiety and poor outlook on life. But both physical disease AND mental/emotional challenges involve both your child's physiology AND the mental/emotional aspect. Therefore, for example, we must not overlook trauma's role in the development of a child's autoimmune condition or poor nutrition in a depressed or anxious teen.

We can go further and identify yet more layers of health, more categories, more components that affect our overall wellbeing such as social health, spiritual health, and even the health of our communities, cultures, societies, the health of our earth, and global health. In relation to all of these internal and external influences, our individual state of wellness can be affected, not only physically and mentally and emotionally, but energetically, as well.

Even big health challenges such as ADHD behaviors, autism, depression, and autoimmunity can often be peeled back to causes such as inadequate nutrition, allergies (as allergic responses are not only watery itchy eyes and sneezing), infection, and toxicity. Finding the root causes of these conditions may very well erase the symptoms or stop the disease processes. Medicating may impede this important process of discovery.

What we can often overlook is the fact that all of this affects our overall health, and that the key to true health lies in how we address it all. There is no physical health without emotional health, and there is no spiritual health without a physical body from which to experience it. Mental health is difficult to attain when you live amongst negative people or a warring society, and physical health is damaged by poor lifestyle practices and high stress lives. And of course, this interplay of the layers of health is not only applicable to adults, but to our children, as well.

For the purpose of this program, we are going to call this approach to health *functional wellness* and our tools and methods we will be using a combination of *functional medicine*, *lifestyle medicine*, and *holistic interventions*.

The Purpose of the Plan

I am pretty sure that you are already aware of the need for a solid plan when navigating the waters of your child's chronic condition. No ship will reach its destination without a map or the ability to navigate with the stars. When it comes to health recovery, it is imperative for us parents to know from where we have come and to point ourselves in the direction we want to go. We cannot waste time turning in circles or feeling lost, sick, and desperate at sea. So, in order to recover your child's health, making a plan can:

- reduce or relieve chaos
- reduce or relieve fear
- help you set goals
- demonstrate purpose for your efforts
- monitor setbacks and successes

Making a plan requires you to:

- get educated
- get organized

...and enables you to:

- be inspired and empowered!

Recommended Reading and Resources:

Family Health Revolution Text-Only Preview

<https://healthyfamilyformula.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Family-Health-Revolution-Intro-Preview-Final.pdf>

The Medicalized Family

<https://healthyfamilyformula.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/HFF-Curriculum-The-Medicalized-Family.pdf>

CHS 4 Reference:

Ita Teigman's Interview of Me: *Mindful Change*

Video https://s3.amazonaws.com/childrenshealthsummit.com/video4/Teigman_Ita.mp4

Audio https://s3.amazonaws.com/childrenshealthsummit.com/audio4/Ita_Teigman.m4a

