



## OU ISRAEL PARENTING COLUMN

Michal Silverstein, MS

# Is Therapy Needed?

**Question:** My child is acting up and I'm feeling lost when it comes to parenting. Should I go to parenting classes/counseling or does my child need therapy?

The world of therapy can be overwhelming and confusing to navigate. I will try to clarify the distinctions between the therapies/services and discuss what type is most effective when managing different parenting situations.

Parenting classes, usually in a group setting, are recommended for parents at any stage. They provide general parenting tools and strategies related to discipline, communication skills and managing daily routines. Parenting classes also provide basic information on normal child development. Parents can gain confidence, knowledge and direction from these classes which helps to create a stable home environment.

When parents feel that their problems are consistently overwhelming or they feel stuck, it may be a good idea to seek private one on one parenting guidance or counseling. This is when a professional provides tailored guidance based on your family's needs. Parents may seek parenting guidance when they notice negative patterns in the family that repeat themselves and feel hopeless or at a loss for what to do. The counseling process allows parents to reflect on their past experiences and what they bring to the parent child relationship. With professional

guidance, parents can decide what patterns and parenting styles they'd like to hold onto or develop and what they'd like to discard. Parents become empowered and more mindful about their parenting choices and create new, healthier patterns.

Parenting guidance is also helpful when a parent is triggered by a specific child's behavior and gets into repeated power struggles with that child and resentment builds. Parents learn how to tolerate behaviors, set boundaries and reduce conflict. They also develop a communication style that's effective in building a positive relationship and connection with that child.

Change in the home begins with the parent/s. Many times lack of boundaries, chaos and constant negative cycles can be remedied by parents seeking counseling. This tends to trickle down to the children and things many times fall into place. Families can definitely benefit and get back on track when parents seek help and apply consistent parenting skills.

When a child suffers from anxiety, depression, o.c.d, fears, etc, he may need more individual support. The child can benefit from one on one therapy sessions where he can express his complex feelings in a safe space guided by a skilled professional. Even if parents have great parenting skills, when a child has a chemical imbalance or struggles with emotional distress, it may not be enough.

Parents can set the tone in the home and have a good rhythm but when you have a child who can't or won't follow the rules, then he may need more support in the form of one on one sessions. Usually the combination of parenting counseling and individual therapy for the struggling child is a winning combination.

Be'hatzlacha ■

**Michal Silverstein** has a MS in educational psychology and counseling. She facilitates parenting workshops in and around Jerusalem and maintains a private practice.

**Shabbat afternoon  
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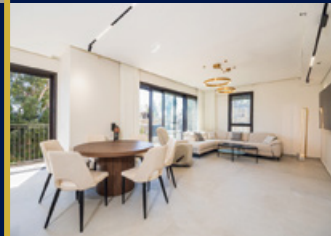
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