

Episode 16 – How can Chiropractic Care Help Someone with SM?

Hello and welcome to the Selective Mutism HELP, Home Educational Learning Program, Podcast, my name is Kelly, and I will be your host. This podcast aims to give you the help you need to support the person in your life affected by Selective Mutism. In this episode I will be talking about how chiropractic care may help someone with Selective Mutism. I'll tell you about our journey and what we've learned along the way. Let's get started.

Welcome to episode 16 of the Selective Mutism HELP Home Educational Learning Program podcast. My name is Kelly, and I am a parent of a child with Selective Mutism. Being that I am a parent and not a medical professional, this podcast is for informational purposes only. Last Fall I was experiencing some medical issues that I felt like a traditional doctor wasn't able to help me with. I was recommended by someone in my neighborhood about a chiropractor that used the Activator technique. I was always freaked out by the idea of someone cranking on my neck and back, so the idea of using the activator tool seemed much more my speed. During my assessment they did a thermal scan which measures the heat on each side of the spine. When there is a change in temperature it can indicate that a subluxation is present and needs to be adjusted. Needless to say I had quite a few areas that needed to be addressed. The chiropractor explained that the spine is like a hose. If it is straight with no subluxations there is a strong signal that is sent from the brain to the other areas of the body. When there is a subluxation, your spine becomes a kinked hose. When a hose is kinked and you turn the water on, water may only trickle out or not come out at all. Same with your spine, some of the signal from your brain to the rest of your body may be able to go through, but it might not be as strong as it needs to, or it doesn't make it at all. This can cause all sorts of issues with your body – headaches, digestive issues, emotional dysregulation, and so much more.

Fast forward a month or so and I started talking to my chiropractor about our daughter, Selective Mutism and the upcoming Summit. She mentioned to me that I should talk with one of her colleagues from a different chiropractor office about a technique called Neuro Emotional technique and how she has used that technique to help a young child break through their mutism. We decided to set up an assessment for our SM daughter at my current chiropractor and at the one that was recommended to us. We did the same thermal scan that I did and I was shocked to see her results. At just under 8 years old, 15 out of the 25 vertebrae that were scanned were in the red meaning there was severe interference. All of her Cervical vertebrae were in the red and it was explained to me that this was the area that helped regulate emotions. So, if there is a lot of interference, she isn't going to be able to manage or regulate her emotions. Ding ding ding! This was a moment where things were finally starting to make sense! Through all the CBT work we had been doing this past year, I always felt like there was something stopping her from being able to use the techniques she was learning. She knew what she needed to do when she was anxious, but she could never do it and I think this is why! Her brain couldn't send the appropriate signals to the rest of her body to help calm her down because of all the interference! We started weekly adjustments and little by little we were starting to see changes. It seemed she was becoming a little calmer and had less emotional outbursts. She enjoyed the activator because it was effective without using any twisting or cracking. They had a really great technique that helped relax the sympathetic nervous system – the system that gets activated when stressed – to let the parasympathetic nervous system take over and work

to calm us down. What they would do is find a specific nerve in our gluteal region and apply light pressure. Then they would systematically place their hand on the spine starting low and gradually moving up the spine. This would help activate the parasympathetic nervous system which would put the stress response at bay. They have used this technique on me a couple times and I was amazed at the response my body had to it. I will never forget driving home and being able to take the biggest, deepest breaths I had ever taken. It was so freeing and made me feel weightless. When they would do it on our daughter, the chiropractor could see and feel the big breaths our daughter was able to take.

After three months of going once a week it was time for our daughter to have her thermal scan done again. Yet again, I was completely amazed at the results. She only had 1 area of her spine in the severe category, and two in the mild category, everything else was exactly as it should be. Seeing this made me really understand the power of chiropractic care. Just a few years ago if you would asked me if I'd ever send my daughter to a chiropractor I would have said absolutely not, there is no way this is going to help her emotional well-being. Now I wish I would have done it sooner! It can be hard to try a new method of treatment if you don't understand the benefits from it and if you don't know anyone who has benefited from it. I can tell you from our experience that there is a place for it and if you are interested in learning more, reach out to a local chiropractor and have an evaluation done.

Now I want to back up a little bit, because I had mentioned that we were recommended to go to another chiropractor which used a method called Neuro Emotional Technique or NET. I'm going to warn you, this is going to sound crazy and bizarre, but it has brought about so much positive change to our daughter. I am not an expert on this subject, so I'm going to do the best I can to explain it to you. My understanding is the Neuro Emotional Technique works with the old part of our brain, the mammalian part, or the limbic system – however you want to think of it as. This part of the brain is the area that controls our emotions. It houses our good friend the amygdala which puts us in fight or flight and it forms and stores our memories, among other things. At some point in our lives for one reason or another our brain creates what is known as a Neuro Emotional Complex. This is when a memory is stored in our brain and can cause physiological changes to our body. The goal of NET is to unlock that stored memory and get rid of the feelings surrounding that memory to then rid of the body of the physiological changes. The technique our chiropractor uses is the meridian technique to find specific pressure points to help release the memory that is creating stress in the body. This is where it gets weird, but bare with me. In order to find the memory, they need to find a starting point. This is done through muscle testing. Our daughter would hold her arm out and resist the movement of the chiropractor pushing down on her arm. She would then touch the area of her forehead between her eyes and starting saying ages – birth, 1 year, 2 year, 3 year, etc. When certain ages were called out, our daughter's arm would go down even though she had been resisting. This was an indication that there was something in that year that held a memory that was causing a physiological change. They would then explore that age and try to narrow into the memory. The three ages which have come up over the sessions have been birth, 2, and 5. These years were unprompted and only brought up because of the loss of resistance in her arm. When our daughter was born she had swallowed meconium and they were concerned she would get it in her lungs when she did her initial cry. They warned us ahead of time that they were going to cut the umbilical cord right away and rush her to the warming table to start suctioning out the

meconium so we wouldn't hear her cry right away. I understood and everything they said was going to happen happened. But, after a few minutes of not hearing our baby cry, I started to get scared. I started yelling 'hows my baby, hows my baby' and no one was answering me. Knowing how scared I was, imagine how scared a brand new baby is going to be! She was cold, it was bright, there were people everywhere, she had who knows what in her mouth, her heart rate was really low, and her oxygen saturation was really low. Well, this memory stayed with her even as an 8 year old. It created a weird bond for us within minutes of her life. Thankfully none of the meconium got into her lungs, her heart rate and oxygen saturation went back up and she was given to me probably within 10 minutes.

Just before our daughter turned two I gave birth to our middle son. This meant I had to leave and stay overnight at the hospital. When our daughter came to visit us, now all of a sudden, a new baby was in her life which was taking attention away from her. As a mom of two kids now it was a struggle to make sure the two were being taken care of. I remember our daughter would climb in the babies rock n play and play on the playmat like a baby. I was too tired to realize that she was looking for attention and was acting like the baby in order to get attention. On top of that, I was in the mindset that work was a priority even when having a newborn. I was in the process of starting up a new business while taking on more at my current job. This left very little time for me to be able to process the needs of my kids, so unfortunately I wasn't giving them everything they should have been getting. Our daughter, who is very in tune with other peoples feelings, was picking up on all of this and theses memories were starting to change her physiology. The last session our daughter had, she came out and her face was beet red. I knew it must have been a good session. The chiropractor mentioned that there was a lot of emotion that came out when the birth of our son was brought up.

You can probably guess by now what happened when she was five. Yup, we had our third child. Now there was someone else that was going to take attention away from our daughter. Luckily, I learned my lesson with our second, and instead of making work a priority, I became a stay at home mom which gave me time to focus solely on our family. This age hasn't been brought up again, so I think they were able to clear the memory out. She is still working through somethings with our middle child, so that is something that is still giving her issues.

You may be feeling skeptical with all of this, believe me I was, too. Being that my daughter and I are very connected at an emotional level, the chiropractor felt it would be beneficial for her to do a couple NET sessions with me. This helped me get a better understanding of what happens when the technique is implemented. She started out with the arm resistance and then when she had me think about how I felt in the moments of my daughter's life that gave her issues, she would press between my eyebrows and my arm would drop – a crazy feeling. Then she asked me to visualize my life when my middle son was just born and trying to juggle two kids and work and how all of that made me feel. I had my eyes closed and they began darting around really fast which was an intense feeling. I could feel the frustration, the feeling of overwhelm, the never ending to-do list that I was experiencing all those years ago. Also during this I was pushing on pressure points on my wrists and she talked me through letting it all go, letting the overwhelming feeling be released. At that point, the emotions flooded my body. I got the feeling that I would begin ugly crying at any second. I am the type of person that does not try to show my emotions if it isn't a happy or joyful emotion. I tend to shove down the

feelings of sadness, despair, and frustrations so people don't think I can't handle what life throws at me. This is what that technique does. It gets rid of those feelings so you can live a more fulfilling life. However, I wasn't able to let myself completely go, but I worked through it the best I could. When we were done with that sessions I just blurted out "I feel so guilty." Because I do, I feel guilty that I wasn't the mom I should have been for my kids when our second was born, I feel guilty that my daughter had to live with these emotions for so long and have caused her emotional struggles, I feel guilty that I can't be more open with my feelings. That session opened me up to those thoughts and it is something that the chiropractor will be revisiting at a future visit. Once I can release those guilty feelings, I can change the physiology of my brain/body connection to be a calmer person.

I never knew any of these type of practices and techniques existed. And, again, if you would have asked me a couple years ago if this would be something I'd be interested in, I'd say absolutely not, it sounds completely hoakey! But, take it from someone who has felt the power of it, has seen the subtle changes in our daughter from it, and can tell you it isn't a hoax if you open up your mind to the possibilities. At this moment we are one day away from completely weaning our daughter off anxiety medication. Medication she has been on for almost 4 years. She is able to express herself easier, she is having less behavioral outbursts, and most importantly she is able to speak in every situation she is presented with.

If you have any questions about this topic and would like to connect with me, you can email me at smhelp2020@gmail.com. If you would like more information about NET, visit www.netmindbody.com Thank you for opening your mind to this type of treatment. Take care.