



## My Child is in Therapy: How Can I Help?

### Your Role in Your Child's Therapy

#### After 2 – 3 sessions you want to understand

- What therapist thinks about the problem
- How therapist thinks they can help
- Kind of treatment therapist will use
- How often therapist will meet with child and family
- Your role
- Always ok to ask questions

#### Sometimes entire family participates

- Therapist may ask each member's view of problem
- May suggest changes in behavior that may help

#### Sometimes may work with child and parents together Defiance, aggression, withdrawal are ways of coping with difficult emotions

- Recognize that children may copy negative coping style and relationship patterns from people who matter most
- Best when both partners in relationship involved in treatment
- Even if problem did not develop in parent-child relationship

#### Focused difficulties – fears, anxiety

- May be individual, cognitive behavior therapy
- Need adults to model how to manage distress
- Help practice new coping methods
- Encouragement to face fears
- Supportive adult to cheer them on, celebrate progress

#### You learn tools child is learning and serve as:

- Calm, supportive coach
- Enthusiastic supporter

#### Therapy may focus on parent's response to child's behavior

- Reflect on your understanding of behavior
- Consider what child may be communicating through behavior
- Reflect on your response to behavior

#### You may be asked to reflect on ways your childhood affects your thoughts, feelings and behaviors as a parent

- Reflect on your relationship history as a child
- Consider ways you may be responding to child as reminder of your history
- Consider ways you may be "triggered" into acting like one of your parents at their worst

