As a psychologist who treats many people with trichotillomania and skin picking disorders (referred to here as body-focused repetitive behaviors or BFRBs) I spend much of my time helping clients change specific behaviors, e.g., utilizing targeted coping strategies in appropriate situations. However, many times I find that people are not quite at the point of readiness for using these strategies because they can be inconvenient, often take time, and require remembering to use them. Sometimes parents will want change for their child or adolescent, but the child or adolescent is not quite ready.

Recently, someone asked me if there were things she could do on a daily basis that are just “good ideas” to help with her BFRB. I started thinking about behavior change from a broader perspective and came up with a list of “good ideas” for people suffering with BFRBs. These ideas apply to people who are not quite at the point of readiness for change with their BFRB, as well as those who are in active behavioral treatment. I like these things because they can be inconvenient, often take time, and require remembering to use them. Sometimes parents will want change for their child or adolescent, but the child or adolescent is not quite ready.

Mackensie has been featured in J-14 magazine, on Cosmopolitan.com, gurl.com and MTV.com. She has also been filmed by Buzzfeed.com for "A day in the life of..." video set to air soon.

How does a 16-year-old get featured in such popular media outlets? She asks! Mackensie contacted each of these publishers on her own – and the result is hundreds of thousands of young women hearing her story and learning more about trichotillomania and TLC.

At the upcoming TLC Conference – her fifth! – Mackensie will give the Friday night welcome address. She’ll share news about how she and the other members of the TLC Millennial Task Force are going to make sure teens and young adults across the globe have access to the TLC resources and community that have been so life-changing for them.

Thank you, Mackensie, for all your support - of the staff, the organization and the TLC Community -- and to kids and teens across the globe who are affected by BFRBs!
Everything That I Want to Say

Do not explore me,
the way you would landscapes.
I am picked, plucked
dry of anything soft
or delicate.
Do not, please, do
not run your fingers
over me, expecting silk
that is rich with colours.
Expect the bumps and
grooves of anxiety-
riddled picking of
a moment of
madness.
It does not harm
me and it takes away
the hurt.
I make a deal, sweet.

Relief for
Redness.

via: everythingthatiwanttosay.tumblr.com/

22nd Annual National Conference
April 10-12, 2015 - Arlington, VA
A three-day comprehensive program covering the latest
research findings, state-of-the-art treatment strategies,
and real tools for recovery. Clinicians and patients and
their families attend sessions together, inspiring each
other in a warm, supportive environment.

Thank you to our Conference Sponsors
Special thanks to HairClub for Men and Women -
Our title sponsor for TWELVE years!
The Conference would not be possible were it not for:

Cityworks
Eyebrowz.com
Pullfree App
Rogers Memorial Hospital
John V. Scialli, MD
Stress and Anxiety Services of NJ
stopping.com
stoppicking.com
Tangle Creations

Professional Training Institute: May 1-3, 2015
Los Angeles, CA
Build Your Practice -
Help a Community in Need -
Earn 20 CEUs

The PTI is a three-day intensive training program, facili-
tated by leading experts in the treatment of hair pulling
disorder, skin picking disorder, and related body-focused
repetitive behaviors (BFRBs). The only BFRB training
program ever approved by the American Psychological
Association for CE credits, the PTI provides health care professionals
with practical training in current cognitive-behavioral
treatment approaches for these behaviors.

Workshops
June 20 - United Kingdom
Save the date!

TLC is currently planning our first one-day workshop
in the UK with Scientific Advisory Board members Jon
Grant, MD, JD, MPH, and Suzanne Mouton-Odum, PhD. Please stay tuned for more details as well as infor-
mation about Fall workshops and events.

Webinars - Register Online
BFRBs and Autism: Treatment Considerations
with Fred Penzel, PhD
March 18, 2015
11:00am PT / 12:00pm MT / 1:00pm CT / 2:00pm ET

People on the autism spectrum may also suffer from
BFRBs in addition to their primary diagnosis. In this
one-hour webinar, Dr. Fred Penzel aims to clarify the
behavioral and cognitive differences and similarities
between autism and BFRBs, as well special needs of
this population when seen in treatment. Dr. Penzel will
share practical techniques that can be utilized in assist-
ing patients and their treatment providers in making the
most efficient recoveries.

Go into the next generation of CBT:
A demonstration of mindfulness, acceptance, and
dialectical behavior therapy for hair-pulling &
skin-picking
with Ali Mattu, PhD
May 1, 2015
12:00pm PT / 1:00pm MT / 2:00pm CT / 3:00pm ET

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been shown
to be effective in treating BFRBs. Members of the TLC
Scientific Advisory Board have now begun applying a
new generation of CBT treatments to BFRB problems.
This session will introduce you to these treatments,
specifically Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
(ACT) as well as Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT).
Participants will learn what makes ACT and DBT
different from traditional CBT, understand the scientific
basis between autism and BFRBs, as well as special
considerations in treatment. Dr. Penzel will
share practical techniques that can be utilized in assist-
ing patients and their treatment providers in making the
most efficient recoveries.

Have you visited the webinar Archive?
Over 23 Hours of Recorded Sessions!
The webinar archive includes all previously aired pro-
grams, featuring top clinicians and BFRB advocates.
Topics include treatment information, pharmacology,
stress management, interpersonal skills, and special
videos for parents and teens. If you’ve lost the link,
please email info@trich.org to have it re-sent to you!
Join nearly 500 adults & children, parents, treatment providers & researchers for a weekend of hope, answers and community.

Learn From the Best
All weekend long you will enjoy close access to the world’s top treatment providers to answer your questions, share the most current research and demonstrate top clinical and self-help interventions – all for about the cost of two therapy sessions.

Research for a Cure
Learn about the most ambitious and promising work in the history of BFRB research - the BFRB Precision Medicine Initiative. Hear from the scientists themselves about how this initiative will speed the identification of new treatments for those suffering from hair pulling, skin picking, and other BFRBs - and how you can be involved.

Support + Community = Healing
Intimate behavior-specific support is offered for all ages. The TLC Conference offers something you won’t find on the internet - real, in-person connections with a caring, supportive community.

There are several registration options to fit your time and budget. (Partial scholarships and payment plans are available.) And, Passover-friendly meals will be served.

Register online at www.trich.org, or give us a call at 831-457-1004 to find out more!

TLC’s Professional Training Institute and Virtual Professional Training Institute = “Proven Results”

TLC’s training programs are facilitated by leading experts in the field of BFRBs, OCD and anxiety.

The only BFRB-training of its kind, the PTI provides health care professionals with practical training in current cognitive-behavioral treatment approaches for these behaviors.

Three Ways to Train in 2015:
Los Angeles - May 1-3
New Jersey - Fall 2015
DVD training - order at store.trich.org

Build Your Practice - Help a Community in Need

Learn More: www.trich.org

Clinicians trained at TLC’s Professional Training Institute (PTI), or with TLC’s video series the “Virtual PTI,” “saw an increase in the percentage of their BFRB patients who achieved abstinence” as well as an “overall increase in symptom reduction for their patients.”

Hair Pulling and Skin Picking are treatable disorders.

“Getting the word out: Cognitive-behavioral therapy for trichotillomania (hair-pulling disorder) and excoriation (skin-picking) disorder.”

Annals of Clinical Psychiatry, February 2015
**Research Update: BFRB Precision Medicine Initiative**

Submitted by the BPM Fundraising Committee

TLC has brought together the leading BFRB scientists from across the country to design a research initiative that will radically change the available treatment options for people who live with BFRBs like hair pulling and skin picking disorders.

These scientists believe that the BFRB Precision Medicine Initiative is unlike any previous research effort in this field.

Together, they have set the ambitious goal of achieving 70% treatment success for BFRBs within 7 years.

**We're Glad The President Agrees With Us!**

If you listened to President Obama’s State of the Union address, you might have heard him refer to his new “precision medicine initiative.” While the President’s initiative is not directly focused on BFRBs, his statement reflects the growing consensus for “precision medicine” as the most promising direction for medical research.

In addition to the White House, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has also identified precision medicine as the central focus of its research efforts. Here is a recent blog post, by Tom Insel, the Director of the NIMH, about why he sees precision medicine is the key to new mental health treatment discoveries: http://www.nimh.nih.gov/about/director/2015/precision-medicine-for-mental-disorders.shtml

**The BPM Initiative is at the cutting edge of medical and mental health research.** Aligned with the precision medicine focus of the President and the NIMH, the BPM Initiative is using precision medicine to identify new, patient-specific treatments for BFRBs. If you’d like to learn more about our BPM Initiative, visit www.trich.org/research

**What Is a Research Protocol -- and Why Does It Matter?**

With numerous research institutions collaborating on the BPM Initiative, it will be critical to ensure that data is collected uniformly across all participating institutions. Participating scientists have been voluntarily their time throughout much of 2014 to establish research protocols that specify exactly how each element of data is to be collected. In February 2015, a small group of BPM scientists gathered in Salt Lake City for an intensive weekend to finalize this work. The resulting protocols will help ensure that each BPM intake center is using the same procedures with every patient.

**BPM Fundraising Update**

Like any groundbreaking effort, the BPM Initiative will require adequate funding to succeed. Our projected budget for the three-year Phase 1 is $5.1M.

To date, we have raised over $600,000. These funds are allowing us to hire a BPM Director and begin the research work through in-depth analysis of our existing 800-patient data set.

The BPM Initiative has been intentionally designed for flexibility and scalability. This means that we are able to begin research immediately with the funds in hand. It also means that new contributions can be put to work immediately towards the next step of our research plans.

If you or someone you know would like to help dramatically change the landscape of treatment opportunities for hair pullers and skin pickers, please contact TLC’s Executive Director Jennifer Raikes for more information about making a philanthropic investment in the BPM Initiative.

Jennifer can be reached at Jennifer@trich.org or (831) 457-1004.

We are truly blessed to have such a dedicated and talented team of scientists and clinicians leading the groundbreaking BPM Initiative.

If you’d like to learn more about the BPM Initiative, visit www.trich.org/research.

*“Precision medicine for mental disorders could be even more transformative than for cancer.”*  
- Tom Insel, MD, Director of the National Institute of Mental Health.
So what are these good ideas?

Exercise
Dreaded exercise! This is always one thing that people resist most and it is also the one thing that can be the most helpful. When people think of exercise they think of running a marathon or becoming a body builder. I am simply talking about increasing your activity level on a daily basis. Research shows that even moderate activity like walking or riding a bicycle can cause the brain to secrete neurotransmitters that help the body to feel happy, relaxed, and less anxious. In addition, exercise helps to improve one’s health and fitness, which can lead to improved self-esteem and confidence.

Examples of ways to increase your activity level are:
• Take the stairs when possible
• Go for a walk after lunch or dinner
• Ride your bicycle instead of driving when possible
• Take up a hobby like tennis or swimming
• Jump on the trampoline with your child
• Play outside with your child(ren) when possible

Get enough sleep
Not getting enough rest can lead to anxiety, depression, and increased sedentary activity (the most dangerous time for people with a BFRB). Make sure that you (or your child) are going to bed around the same time every night, have the same general routine each night (our bodies really like routine when it comes to sleep), avoid screen time right before bed, avoid caffeinated drinks after 2pm, and engage in relaxing activities just before bed like reading, listening to relaxing music, or taking a hot bath or shower.

Wash your hair at least every other day
This might sound like a strange suggestion, but clinically I see that people who wash their hair regularly are less likely to be engaged in hair pulling. Most people with trich will tell you that they are less likely to pull clean hair, especially clean, wet hair. This does not mean that people with trichotillomania have poor hygiene or dirty hair, I am just saying that keeping hair clean and avoiding letting it “go an extra day” can stave off unwanted hair pulling episodes.

Apply moisturizer and cuticle oil daily
Similar to having clean hair, having soft, supple skin can also head off skin picking episodes because it reduces itching, dry skin, flaky skin, dry cuticles (cuticle oil works best here), and brittle nails. In addition, applying moisturizer, cuticle oil, or even filing nails daily can not only reduce urges and picking triggers, but it sends a message to yourself that “I am taking care of myself” which can be important.

Eat a low sugar diet high in fruits and vegetables
Like exercise, this is a recommendation that most people do not like. We all know that we should not eat junk foods, but in the moment they taste good to us. Make efforts to rid your house of sugar and sweets that can be tempting, throw away potato chips and fried foods, fill your fridge with fresh fruit and vegetables to give you healthier options when hunger strikes, and drink plenty of water instead of sodas to reduce sugar intake. Another helpful suggestion is to avoid getting overly hungry by eating regular meals. When we get too hungry, we tend to make poor choices and tend to grab the “bad” stuff.

Practice active relaxation
Active relaxation is different from lying on the couch watching TV. It involves engaging in purposeful activity that is aimed at reducing stress and anxiety. Examples of active relaxation include:
• Deep breathing exercises
• Progressive muscle relaxation
• Meditation (there are hundreds of types)
• Prayer
• Visualization
• Journaling
• Sitting outside and connecting to nature

Active relaxation helps to reduce your overall level of stress, which helps to reduce BFRB triggers.

Engage in pleasurable activities
People who are engaged in activities that they enjoy are less likely to pull and pick (at least while engaged in the activity). Activities can be reading a good book (be careful if this is a trigger for you), doing something creative, writing, playing with your pet, working in the garden, calling a friend, or taking a walk on a beautiful day. Schedule pleasurable activities each week and make time for the things that you enjoy.

Work on self-compassion and treating yourself kindly
Many people with BFRBs are hard on themselves, whether it is for hair pulling or skin picking or for other things. Take time to think about how you talk to yourself—are your words kind? Do you talk to yourself like you are talking to your best friend? Are you judgmental toward yourself or do you have very high standards for yourself? If you find you tend to say harsh or critical statements to yourself, write these down. Then, think about what you would say to your best friend if he or she said these things to herself. Try saying these new thoughts to yourself next time, see if you can change your internal dialogue to be more supportive and loving.

Do one thing a week to help someone
The extensive research in the Positive Psychology literature on cultivating happiness shows that kindness toward others and thankfulness (below) are two key factors that lead to a happier person. As the saying goes: “Happiness is the milk of human kindness.” Doing kind acts actually makes us feel better, even if the person is a complete stranger or does not even know that you were the one who did the nice thing! Each week, pick one nice thing to do for another person, e.g., make dinner for someone who needs help, mow someone’s yard that has a relative in the hospital, offer to drive a neighbor’s child or does not even know that you were the one who did the nice thing! Each week, pick one nice thing to do for another person, e.g., make dinner for someone who needs help, mow someone’s yard that has a relative in the hospital, offer to drive a neighbor’s child to school while she is dealing with a stressful situation, hold the door open for a stranger who is holding too many bags, help pick up someone’s belongings that have spilled, etc. Helping others gives us a quick boost of happiness and confidence, try it!

Practice gratitude
The other way to immediately feel better is to say think you, either to someone specifically, to God or your higher power, or to the universe. Each day, remind yourself of the things that you are grateful for in your life. It is so easy to get focused on the negative, the things that are wrong, what you do not have vs. what you do have. You might even think back on you life and maybe remember a person who helped you out along the way (a coach, teacher, family friend, roommate, counselor), someone whom you never thanked. Write this person a letter or email telling him or her that what they did for you was helpful and say thank you. Not only will you feel better for having thanked this person, but imagine how they will feel when they receive it!

Not everything on this will sound good to every person and some things are likely already in place in your life. Identify 2-3 things that you would be willing to try for a week and see how you feel. Some you may decide to keep in your life and others you may not, but at least try them. Each week you can add a few more “good ideas” to your daily life and try them out until you have tried them all. Even if you are not actively working on your BFRB, these changes can help you to function better as a person in general, and will help to you feel happier and more confident. Good luck and feel free to email me with more “good ideas” or even to let me know how you did with these- suzimoo@aol.com.

Good Luck!

Suzanne Mouton-Odum, PhD, is a psychologist in private practice in Houston, Texas. She has treated people with trich and other body-focused repetitive behaviors since 1993, and has been a member of the Trichotillomania Learning Center Scientific Advisory Board since 2001. Dr. Mouton-Odum regularly attends and presents at the TLC Annual Conference and other events. She is the co-owner and lead developer of the www.stoppulling.com, www.stoppingkm.com and the app, Pullfree. She is also co-author of The Parent Guide to Hair Pulling Disorder. She is happily married and lives in Houston with her husband and two children.
It is event-planning season here at TLC. Leslie and Kelly are very busy preparing for the Conference, of course, but also organizing all our events both virtual and live all around the country for the year to come.

I want to highlight some of these great opportunities for community – and to make a case particularly for the virtues of the live, in-person events big and small.

From the very start, small though we are, TLC has been a national – and even international – organization and we’ve always depended on technology to bring our far-flung community together.

In our earliest days, that mostly meant the telephone. Christina started TLC spending countless hours answering calls from trichsters all over the world. The only source of good information about trichotillomania were the packets of brochures and photocopied articles she’d mail out.

In some ways things haven’t changed – we still answer many calls every day from people needing advice, and most of all, an understanding listener. And we still mail out packets chock full of articles and brochures; often with a warm personal touch – stickers from Alice, a note from Dana. And TLC is still the source for trustworthy and up-to-date information about BFRBs.

But… at the risk of sounding old-fashioned, I’m going to say there is nothing like personal connections made face-to-face. I urge you to take advantage of opportunities for live interactions with other pickers and pullers, and to meet the researchers and clinicians who are devoting themselves to our cause.

Don’t miss the rich, unparalleled experience of sharing a weekend with hundreds of other pullers and pickers, parents, and dedicated clinicians and researchers at our Annual Conference. Nervous about what to expect? Our shared commitment to the group itself, as well as to our personal recovery goals, created a strong bond among the members. We grew to care deeply about each other and we’d pull each other back from negative self-talk, or despair. If I called myself a freak for my BFRB, wouldn’t that be like calling all the wonderful people in the group freaks, too? So maybe, I was really okay – because they sure were.

Though it isn’t actually that difficult to start a group, it can seem daunting. And groups can be fragile and go through rough patches. This year, TLC is expanding our efforts to support the support group leaders and foster new groups forming. So consider joining – or starting – a support group yourself this year. You’ll be able to meet monthly via web conference with other group leaders, share ideas, trouble shoot any issues, and gain inspiration. We’ll help you publicize your group, too. You don’t have to be a BFRB expert. You don’t have to be recovered. All you have to be is committed to being there. I’d describe it as giving a gift to yourself.

Think about it!

With love, Jennifer
Together, we are building the resources our community urgently needs.

**Did you know that your donations support a targeted awareness campaign every fall?**
This year, one skin picker’s gift of $650.00 enabled us to boost our awareness campaign with Facebook ads – together we reached 150,000 new skin pickers with information about how to find help. **Your gift to TLC has big impact!**

**Did you know that more than 90,000 people visited www.trich.org last month?**
TLC’s website is the place to share our stories, find a support group or therapist, join an online discussion, find local events – or a friendly hair salon – even ask questions of BFRB experts in monthly webinars. **Your gift of $100 ends isolation.**

**Did you know TLC Professional Training Institute graduates report higher abstinence rates for their BFRB patients?**
Clinicians also report seeing more BFRB patients and training their colleagues in BFRB treatment. **Your gift of $1,000 educates a treatment provider – bringing the best current treatments close to home.**

**Did you know that TLC’s Scientific Advisory Board all stand behind the BFRB Precision Medicine Initiative?**
These dedicated doctors have been responsible for the proven treatment advances that help us today – Comprehensive Behavioral Therapy (COMB), HRT, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, NAC – and they have united to develop the BPM Initiative. **Your gift of $10,000 will help launch BFRB research on an unprecedented scale.**

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**Your Support Makes a Difference**

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**Visionaries Circle**

- $25,000
- $10,000
- $5,000
- $1,000
- $500
- $_____/month

- I want to learn more about the BPM Initiative - please contact me.
- I would like to make a gift of stock to TLC. Please contact me.
- I am including TLC in my estate plans.

My donation is in honor of: ______________________________________________________

My name is: _________________________________________________________________

My phone number is: ___________________________________________________________

Email: ________________________________________________________________

Street: ____________________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: ______ Zip: __________________

**Please select a payment method:**

- Check enclosed, made out to TLC (US funds only)
- Charge my credit card. Amount to be charged: __________

Card number: ________________________________ Exp. Date: ______ Securty code ______

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**Thank you for your support.**

TLC is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization and all contributions are tax-deductible. Our TAX ID number is 77-0266587.

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