For Parents:

The Millennial Task Force Answers Your Most Frequently Asked Questions

Friends and family often struggle with how best to support their loved-one who suffers with a BFRB. For many families, trying to talk about a BFRB can create almost as much suffering as the disorder itself. To help, TLC's all-volunteer Millennial Task Force hosted two live webinars this year, giving parents a chance to ask all the questions your own children or loved ones won't - or can't - answer. Here, we've compiled some of the questions that the task force was asked most often.

Q: Explain to me how it feels - what you experience when you have a desire to pull and when you fulfill that desire? I want to understand more but my daughter is not willing to share this with me.

A: For me, it's not so much the feeling on my head after a hair has been pulled out; it's more about the feeling of actually pulling something out of something. Weeding for me is very similar to trich. Except with trich, I feel like I am getting rid of imperfections. For instance, I absolutely love to pull out hairs that have split ends because it feels like I'm getting rid of a flaw.

Q: Will eyebrows and eyelashes grow back regardless of how long picking has gone on? Are there particular products you would recommend to help cover it up?

A: I've been pulling my eyebrows for seven years and fortunately, they've always grown back. I've been using Clinique eyebrow pencil for many years now and love it. They have quite a few different shades and it's waterproof, so no need to worry about swimming. It's definitely reduced stress for me now that I don't have to worry about my eyebrow makeup coming off. I also like Benefit eyebrow pencil and their product, ka-BROW! (both of which are also waterproof).
Upcoming Events

Get tickets and details for these events and more at bfrb.org/events

Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) Conference: San Francisco, CA

April 6-8, 2017

TLC staff, along with members of our Scientific Advisory Board and professional community, will be on hand to share BFRB resources with the 1000+ clinicians and researchers in attendance through lectures and an exhibit booth. Our staff will be on hand to talk about TLC programs and services as well as distribute brochures and treatment guidelines. If you are attending, please stop by our booth and say, "Hi!"

Annual Conference on BFRBs: St. Louis, MO

April 21-23, 2017

There's still time to register and save as a TLC Member! Please join us in St. Louis for a refreshing and fulfilling weekend with the TLC community. The next two conferences will be on the West and East Coasts -- now is the time if you live in the Central US!

This year we're offering 117 workshops facilitated by leading clinicians, researchers, and community leaders. The conference is a special opportunity to connect with others who suffer from these disorders and access expert clinicians and researchers who understand and care. Up to 12 continuing education credits will be offered for mental health clinicians. A special pre-conference treatment intensive, with TLC Board Members Dr. Marla Deibler and Dr. Renae Reinardy, offers an opportunity for adults with a BFRB to develop a personalized plan for recovery with two of the top treatment providers for BFRBs. Participants will gain new perspectives on the role each individual's BFRB serves in their life, understanding why, where, and how a person engages in their BFRB so that individualized interventions can be selected to help the person achieve their behavioral goals.

Scholarships are still available. Learn more and register at bfrb.org/conference.

Visit bfrb.org/events for detailed event information.
When TLC Board Member, Chaille DeFaria, CPCC, and BFRB treatment provider Karen Pickett, MFT, read about This is My Brave in the August 2016 issue of Oprah Magazine, they knew they had to bring the event to Los Angeles -- and that TLC needed to be involved. "TLC has been creating community for 25 years for people who suffer from BFRB disorders," shared Chaille. "We are honored to have this opportunity to bring TLC and This is My Brave together in reducing shame and stigma by sharing these powerful stories."

This Is My Brave was created in 2014 when a group of passionate advocates came together for a common goal: ending the stigma surrounding mental illness through artistic storytelling. Since then, This is My Brave has become a leading platform for individuals to share their true stories of overcoming mental illness to end stigma.

Chaille and Karen worked tirelessly to assemble an incredibly talented cast of 14, secure sponsors and donors, and promote the event. On January 22, more than 320 people braved thunderous storms to hear the cast of 14 share their compelling stories, through spoken word, music, and dance. TLC member Sharon Johnston spoke passionately about her struggle and eventual remission from trichotillomania. The event increased public awareness of BFRBs and other mental health disorders while raising $20,000 to support TLC's outreach and educational programs!

We are proud to have had this opportunity to partner with This Is My Brave in shining a light on mental health issues while giving BFRBs the attention they deserve. We'd like to extend special gratitude to Pacific Coast Psychiatric Associates and Depressed Cake Shop for their sponsorship of this event, This is My Brave Executive Director Jennifer Marshall for her support and guidance, the incredible cast for bravely sharing their stories, event photographer and TLC Member Madeleine Marine, and to Chaille and Karen for having the vision, tenacity, and heart to make it all happen.

Watch videos from the show at bfrb.org/mybravela.
Q: Has anyone had luck with the "buzzing bracelets"?
A: These are most successful for people who aren’t aware of when they’re pulling/picking. BFRBs are often subconscious behaviors, so if your child doesn’t know when they’re engaging in the behavior, it may be worth it to try one of the bracelets. Of course, they won’t stop the behavior, they will simply just make your child aware of it.

Q: Is the TLC Conference appropriate for a 9 year old or is it geared more towards an older crowd?
A: You can totally bring your child! There are workshops for all different ages, so it’ll definitely be appropriate for your nine year old. By the first night, they’ll have tons of friends!

Q: Do you think attending the TLC Conference could expose our daughter to new ideas to pull?
A: No, I don’t. For most people, it’s actually hard to start pulling from new areas or picking in different ways. The conference is a great way to learn self-help strategies, as well as meet other people who have BFRBs, which is oftentimes key in dealing with your BFRB.

Q: Does re-routing your pulling site help? My daughter had been pulling at her hairline, but moved to her crown. I had suggested she shave the nape of her neck so that the stimulation of the shaved area might re-direct her. Does this sound like it would work?
A: Unfortunately, it’s very hard to change the area you pull from. I’ve tried to switch the area I pull from to be my arms and legs, but it just doesn’t work that way - not only do I not get the urges to pull from there, but I also don’t get nearly as much satisfaction. You can’t change where your child pulls from, and neither can they.

Q: My child wants to tell their friends about their BFRB. Should I let them?
A: This is your child’s decision, not yours. If your child feels brave and comfortable enough to confide in others about their BFRB, then, by all means, let them! Not only is this great for awareness (you never know who else has a BFRB), but hopefully it’ll ease the discomfort of your child having to keep a secret from their friends. Oftentimes, your child’s friends will be much more supportive than you think.

Q: When I see my child pulling or notice they have pulled, what can I do/say that is helpful and not shaming or damaging?
A: Don’t tell your child to ”stop pulling,” as that’ll make them feel bad. Instead, offer them a fiddle toy or see if they want to do a different activity. It is not uncommon for children not to pull around their parents, so suggest an activity you two can do together, such as doing a puzzle, going on a walk, or getting a manicure. This may prevent them from pulling or picking.

"When friends make negative comments, they may be lacking information. Education is a powerful tool. Providing factual information can be very helpful."

Q: How can I teach my child the best way to respond to negative comments about their appearance?
A: Was the person who made the comment a friend, acquaintance or stranger? When friends make negative comments, they may be lacking information. Education is a powerful tool. Providing useful pieces of information can be very helpful. When an acquaintance makes negative comments, your child can decide how to best respond. He/she may want to educate the person or may choose to ignore the comments. The same can be said for comments from a stranger. Education may not always work or may be too hard to do. Ask for help from adults. Parents, teachers, guidance counselors may all be good sources of information and support for your child. Helping your child find a comfortable way to address these comments is an important skill.

Note: the information in this article is based on personal experience and is not intended to provide treatment or medical advice.
Q: Should I let my daughter get a wig? Isn't that enabling her?
A: One of the worst parts about having trich is that it takes away a lot of your self-confidence. If your child wants a wig, let them get one. While it may not "fix" their trichotillomania, having a wig will allow them to feel somewhat normal again – or at least look normal again. A great place to look for wigs is one of our sponsors, The Hair Club for Kids, which provides free wigs and hairpieces to children under 18 suffering from medical hair loss.

Q: What do I say/not say to my child?
A: Do not, by any means, scold your child or punish them for pulling/picking. Your child's BFRB is not something they can control, and it is not their fault for pulling/picking. In addition, do not point out your child's pulling, such as by saying "you look like you've been pulling a lot." Oftentimes, this will make your child feel very bad about themselves. What you should say to your child is how you love them unconditionally, and that they can always talk to you. Remind them that you are on their side and that together, you can tackle this BFRB. If your child tells you that they haven't pulled/picked for a certain amount of time, praise them; this is a very hard task to accomplish. If they do relapse, though, just say it's okay, and that everyone relapses.

Q: How do I explain my child's appearance to my friends and family?
A: Many parents find that explaining their child's appearance to close friends and family is essential, since these are people that your child will see often. Explain to them (in private) that your child suffers from a BFRB (you can explain what they are) and because of that, they might look a little different (such as bald patches, scarring, etc.). Also tell them not to bring it up to your child or point out their appearance, as those can be very difficult and uncomfortable situations for your child. If family members know ahead of time, this will make it much easier on your child.

Q: How do I cope with this?
A: There is no one way to cope with your child having this disorder, just like there is no clear-cut treatment. It is important to remember perspective - that this will not kill your child. You can get through all of these days even if it's not fun or easy. No parent likes seeing their child go through something like this, and it is totally understandable that you are feeling overwhelmed. Reach out to other parents in the BFRB community. They all are going through this, just like you. You are not alone.

More Resources at bfrb.org/forparents

Created by the 2015-2017 Millennial Task Force

Parent Video: Talking to A Loved One with A BFRB: This video demonstrates the best ways to show your support and compassion, and how, sometimes, good intentions can have a negative effect.

Parent FAQ: Parents' most frequently asked questions about trichotillomania, dermatillomania, and other BFRBs and how to best help their loved one.

Young Adult FAQ: When a BFRB first shows up in your life, it can be confusing, overwhelming, and scary. This FAQ offers advice for coping with BFRBs -- at home, at school, and with friends.

Advice Column: Get your questions answered by task force members at trichs-n-picks.tumblr.com, an online advice column about BFRBs.

bfrb.org/forparents
Dear friends,

For TLC, 2017 has gotten off to a momentous start. On February 2nd, our team at Massachusetts General Hospital, led by Dr. Nancy Keuthen, saw the first research participant in our BFRB Precision Medicine Initiative.

I am deeply grateful to all the scientists who have brought this initiative from dream to reality over the past four years. They have put in many hundreds of volunteer hours on behalf of our community. Never have I seen their dedication to our cause waiver.

I am equally grateful to all of you who have recognized the urgency of this work and have donated as much as you can to bring us to this moment. Thank you to all who donated to TLC’s annual fund at the end of 2016, and thank you to everyone who has donated additional support for the BPM Initiative.

TLC also started this year with a leadership transition. After eight years of tremendous volunteer service as president of the Board of Directors, Joanna Heitz has stepped out of that role. Brian Haslam is now bringing his great warmth, enthusiasm and business leadership experience to TLC’s presidency.

I really can’t express how thankful I am to both Joanna and Brian for their deep dedication to this organization. Since we first met fifteen years ago, Joanna has been an essential source of non-profit management knowledge and overall wisdom. I’ve been deeply fortunate to have her as a friend and a partner in this sometimes daunting mission. She

Your generosity fuels all the programs and services we provide the BFRB community. Nothing we do would happen without you.

Kevin, a UCLA MRI tech, and Dr. Joseph O’Neill align a brain scan to ensure full brain coverage. On the right, Julia, a volunteer test subject, is getting set up to run the first fMRI scan in the scanner protocol
wraps her enormous heart in much-appreciated dry humor. There has been many a day I could not have gotten through without her. As she contemplated this transition, she did it thoughtfully and with the utmost care for TLC’s interests, as she does everything, and she ensured that we had Brian’s strong leadership at the ready to carry our mission forward.

If you are interested in serving TLC in the areas of policy, governance, and fundraising, please contact me at Jennifer@bfrb.org.

I hope you’ll all stop and say hello to Joanna, Brian, and all the Board members if you see them at the Conference. (I’m posting their photos here so you’ll recognize them!) I could gush about each and every one. And if you are interested in serving TLC in the areas of policy, governance and fundraising, please do reach out to me at Jennifer@bfrb.org.

In a time of so much division, I cherish TLC more than ever. We have always been a welcoming community, where listening, sharing and collaboration has been the heart of our progress. Doctors and patients learn from each other. Researchers and clinicians learn from each other. Parents and children learn from each other. All of us share our stories and learn from each other. My life would be much less rich without these connections. I’m looking forward to spending time with so many of you precious people at our Conference in St. Louis in April.

With love and gratitude,
Jen

TLC’s Board of Directors (from left to right): Brian L. Haslam, President, Josie Sanctis, Secretary, Rahel Smith, SPHR-SCP, Treasurer, Jon E. Grant, JD, MD, MPH, SAB Chair, Chaille Percival DeFaria,CPCC, Marla Deibler, PsyD, MSCP, Joanna Heitz, Ann Hodges, PsyD, Robert McPherson, PhD, and Renae Reinardy, PsyD.
New Booklet Available: Trichophagia

Most children who pull their hair do not swallow it. However, a minority (5%-20%) of those who pull also eat the hair. This can result in an intestinal blockage that can be extremely serious, even life threatening. Our Scientific Advisory Board has examined the literature and studied the experiences of expert clinicians in order to develop recommendations for families and practitioners. Download a PDF at bfrb.org/trichophagia or email info@bfrb.org to request a free copy.

BFRB Ambassador Toolkit

One of the biggest challenges facing the BFRB community is lack of awareness. We need a small army of "Ambassadors" willing to share accurate information and dispel misconceptions in a sensitive and supportive manner.

BFRB Ambassadors help organize and promote outreach programs in schools, colleges and community groups within their communities. Ambassadors will share accurate information about BFRBs, provide resources for individual support, and help support the TLC Foundation by encouraging people to get involved with TLC. Find the information you need to get started here: bfrb.org/ambassadors.

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