Wetting & Soiling Syllabus

Introduction

Expert – Dr. Richard Delaney

This course explores five types of wetting and soiling problems in children, offers insights into the motivation for the behavior, and gives ideas for coping.

Wetting as an Emotional Outlet

Scott, an 8-year-old foster boy, urinates anywhere but the toilet.

- The role of early abuse and neglect
- The child who never expresses negative emotions, like anger or sadness
- Helping the child learn to express feelings in words

Wetting as Self-Defense

Caroline, 12, urinates all over her bedroom and bed and sleeps in a soaked bed every night.

- The role of sexual abuse
- Creating a “defensive perimeter”
- Helping the child find other ways to feel safe, especially at night
- Helping the child talk about fears

Classic Wetting

Gregory, 9, lives with his aunt while his father is in prison. He wets the bed several times a week and once or twice in the past year wet himself during the day.

- Heredity
- Deep sleepers
- Immaturity of the nervous system
- Special medical and developmental concerns
- Advice
Soiling and Smearing

Oliver, 10, is being raised by his grandparents. He soils himself and then hides the evidence.

- The role of neglect and abuse
- When a birth parent neglects to toilet train
- Soiling to express hostility
- Medical evaluation
- Helping the child express anger
- Helping the child maintain personal space in healthier ways

Constipation and Withholding

Jason, 8, is on the foster-adopt track. He is frequently constipated and will go days without a bowel movement.

- Medical evaluation to rule out a physical cause
- Developmental delays
- Reaction to a caregiver’s premature and coercive attempts at potty training
- An attempt to maintain some control
- A way to express feelings or frustrations
- Stool softeners and dietary changes
- Coaching to build awareness of body sensations

General Steps

A list of tips for helping children with wetting or soiling problems.