

Catherine Boomus, MD, Joins Munson Healthcare
Occupational Health and Medicine

Munson Healthcare is pleased to welcome Catherine Boomus, MD, to the Occupational Health and Medicine team in Traverse City.

Dr. Boomus chose the field of occupational medicine because she is fascinated by how people interact with their work, work processes, and environment. The field allows her to not only incorporate her interest in medicine, but also engineering, public health, and clinical informatics.

She has special interests in surveillance required from exposures to toxicants, regulatory examinations, causation evaluations, and fitness for duty exams.

“I enjoy getting to know organizations and their employees so that we can collaborate toward the goal of safe and effective work,” she says.

Dr. Boomus attended medical school at Michigan State University College of Human Medicine and completed residency at UCLA Medical Center. She is board certified by the American Board of Preventative Medicine.

Learn more at munsonhealthcare.org/FindADoctor.



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= MENTAL HEALTH CORNER =

Not Everything Needs Fixing

In this edition, I'll be speaking directly to the men. As men, we're often valued for our ability to solve problems. Something breaks, we fix it. Something isn't working, we figure out why. This can be useful, but it can also be a double-edged sword when it's applied where it doesn't fit. Often this is when it's a person and not a furnace or the brakes on our car.

Men, sometimes the person sitting across from us doesn't need a solution.

Our modern life, as I've written before, increasingly teaches us that discomfort is a bad thing and needs to be fixed. And when someone we care about is hurting, their discomfort can make us uncomfortable too. As men, our tendency is to fix whatever the problem is so that the discomfort goes away, not only for them, but for us as well.

We'll typically offer advice, solutions, and action plans, but sometimes grief, disappointment, fear, anger, sadness, all these perfectly normal emotions, sometimes they just need room to exist. And this can be difficult if you, like me, are a natural-born fixer.

Men, if your wife tells you that she's had a difficult day, your tendency would be immediately tell her what she could do tomorrow to fix that, and if our child is disappointed, as a dad, we might start explaining why that isn't so bad. As we get older and our friends come to us grieving, as fixers, our tendency is to try to find something encouraging to say.

The important thing to understand here is that while as men we can sometimes come across as less emotional or less feeling than women, we shouldn't mistake that for indifference. The truth is quite the opposite. We want to help. It's in our blood.

Men, sometimes the other person just needs to know that they don't have to go through it alone.

Instead of immediately asking, "How can I fix this?" try any of the following questions:

- 1. Does this actually need fixing?
- 2. Does this person want advice, or do they just want me to be there with them?

3. Can I tolerate their discomfort without trying to remove it?

Men, it is important to understand that listening without fixing isn't passive. It requires active patience, restraint, and grounded emotional strength.

Sometimes loving someone means having enough strength to sit with them while they carry it. This is yet another way that we all win at life.

-Adam DeVaney, LCSW, CECF

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Adam DeVaney is a clinical social worker and therapist with over a decade of experience working with clients with a diversity of challenges from addiction and anxiety to overcoming trauma and helping people to learn what it takes to live their best lives. Along with his wife, Mandi, he founded Life's Work Clinic in Kalkaska, Michigan, and Life's Work Coaching with a local and global footprint. Adam has dedicated his life to serving others and walking with them on their healing journeys.



Squish Those Feelings

There is a trend that just keeps growing. It seems that every kid has some kind of squishy toy. They play with them, squish them and pound on them. They are stretched and pulled in every way they can be. Some of the designs are really cute and fun. They can be a very helpful therapy tool if used properly.

When using squishes or any other type of fidget kids need to understand they are a tool. They are to help them when needed. They are not to replace talking about emotions. They are not to be used to squish all of your feelings into and then to not talk about them. That is just another way to bottle up big feelings.

When using these tools or toys in therapy I encourage kids to talk about their feelings. If I feel the fidgets are creating a distraction, I will have my client kiddo put them up so we can actually talk about their feelings.

Sometimes, these toys are so distracting that kids don't actually talk. They just want to play. It is their way of avoiding talking about their feelings or thoughts. We want kids to learn about their feelings and how those emotions feel in their bodies.

Sometimes this is really hard for kids because their feelings are so intense and big that they don't want to feel them. Kids have a hard enough time expressing emotions sometimes, we need to encourage them to talk about how they feel.

These fidgets and other therapy toys have their time and place of when they can be helpful to kids. If they are replacing kids actually talking about how they feel, this is a problem.

Using these toys in moderation is helpful for kids. Using them while they are talking to someone about emotions is what can be helpful. Kids need to learn how to communicate their emotions, not squish them into a toy, never to be talked about again.

These toys are wonderful and fun, but they also need to be used for what they were meant for, which is as a tool to express emotions, not bury them. I have a basket of very carefully selected fidgets and squishes for my kiddos to use while we are talking.

Some kids need to be able to do something with their hands while we talk. I offer them other things like blocks, Magnatiles, or Legos they can use while we talk. This is just as helpful as fidgets to keep kids hands busy while we talk.

You can create some kind of calming corner in your classroom or home for your child to go to when they are struggling. At home that could be their room. At school, many teachers have very nice calming corners set up for kids to use when they need it. All of these things are wonderful tools if used properly.

They are not to be used to replace a good old-fashioned conversation to talk about what

emotions a child is feeling and how to fix the problem.

Alison Neihardt, LPC, NCC

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Alison Neihardt is a local child therapist at her private practice Helping Kids Counseling Services, LLC located in Kalkaska, MI. Reached at 231-590-4812 or email hkupnorth@gmail.com

