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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Attention: Health/Food/Lifestyle Section Editors

ADABC seminar helps parents manage anxious kids

Almost 3,400 Abbotsford children held hostage by anxiety disorders

Vancouver – Raising children in a volatile world is challenging enough, but it's especially difficult for parents of children suffering from anxiety disorders.

Children with anxiety disorders are among the best and the brightest, but are afraid to engage in life.

An anxiety disorder may first present as an unwillingness to participate in normal activities most kids enjoy such as sports, sleepovers and even attending school, as well as in somatic symptoms such as chronic stomachaches and headaches.

According to Abbotsford-based psychologist Dr. Susan Goldsmith, those symptoms may progress to changes in eating, sleeping and toilet behaviors, and pronounced tearfulness or tantrums. Older children may withdraw from friends or situations where their anxiety may be noticeable. Repetitions of behaviors, such as hand washing, checking locks, and stepping/tapping patterns, may also indicate the presence of an anxiety disorder.

Anxiety disorders in children are more common than one would think and can get in the way of any kind of future or hope for a normal life. Approximately 10 per cent of children suffer from one or more anxiety disorders, and 80 per cent go untreated. That amounts to almost 3,400 children in the Abbotsford area.

Goldsmith says she commonly treats children with generalized anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and phobias.

"Causes of anxiety disorders may be trauma such as experiencing abuse (e.g. sexual, physical, emotional, verbal), or a very frightening episode (e.g. dog bite). Other causes are believed to be biochemical and run in families," said Goldsmith.

Thankfully, help is available. To help educate parents about anxiety disorders and facilitate early intervention, the Anxiety Disorders Association of BC (ADABC), in cooperation with the F.O.R.C.E. Society for Kids Mental Health, is offering a free and helpful seminar on Jan. 22 in Abbotsford on parenting children with anxiety disorders. The seminar will teach parents how to identify if a child has an anxiety disorder, and how to manage the problem at home.

"The Family Skill Building Seminar will provide practical skills that parents can use to help their children cope in their environments. It will help parents be as supportive as possible to their

children,” added Goldsmith.

The ADABC-sponsored Family Skill Building Seminar takes place in Abbotsford on Jan. 22 at 7 p.m. at the Garden Park Tower, 101-2825 Clearbrook Road. ADABC will also be hosting seminars in the Tri-Cities area, Vancouver, Victoria, and Richmond. For more information, call 604.525.7597, email info@anxietybc.com, or visit www.anxietybc.com.

Funding for ADABC programs is provided by Fraser Health, the Provincial Health Services Authority, the Ministry for Children and Family Development, and other regional health authorities and foundations. ADABC members play a key role in supporting the ongoing dissemination of resources and advocacy with their membership fees and donations, while the public and corporate sponsors assist ADABC during its fund-raising campaigns. ADABC is very grateful to all its supporters and well-wishers.

ADABC is one of seven provincial agencies that make up the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information. These agencies are working together to provide high quality, evidence-based information on mental health and substance use to help individuals and families living with mental health and substance use problems live productive, fulfilling lives. Funding is provided by the Provincial Health Services Authority with additional support from the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

The Anxiety Disorders Association of BC, a non-profit organization, was established in 1999 by a group of concerned consumers, family members and professionals. Its mission is to increase awareness and promote education of anxiety disorders, increase access to evidence-based treatment, and encourage and develop new treatments and delivery.

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