

## Clinician Highlight

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**Nancy Rotter, PhD**

*Clinical Director, Child Psychology*

Psychiatry/Child Psychiatry

**Tell us a little about your clinical practice and your role in your practice/division/department.**

I wear several hats in my department at MGH. Over the past 10 years, my clinical work has shifted to focus on program development, leadership and supervision/mentorship, from a primarily direct clinical practice. My clinical focus at MGH has been in providing mental health assessment and intervention to children with medical illness and their families. For many years I worked with both the Pediatric Gastroenterology service and Pediatric Food Allergy Center (FAC), shifting my focus to food allergy in the last several years. I work as part of multidisciplinary team in the FAC, supporting children undergoing procedures, alongside the medical and nursing team, such as those participating in food challenges and providing skills to children who have developed anxiety related to their allergies. I have developed some Quality Improvement initiatives to improve screening for anxiety in children with food allergies and to support caregivers of very young children manage their stress related to parenting children with food allergies. For about 10 years, I co-directed the Pediatric Behavioral Medicine Program with Deborah Friedman, PhD, where we embedded/integrated 9 psychologists into many of the speciality care programs (e.g. Endocrine, GI, Sleep, etc) and developed a postdoctoral fellowship program. Most recently, I co-founded and co-direct the Integrated Primary Care (IPC) program, with Archana Basu, PhD, which we were fortunate to pilot due to the mental health crisis that developed during the COVID 19 pandemic. I am also very committed to training and served as the co-director of the child psychology internship track for many years and continue to supervise postdoctoral fellows and mentor junior and mid-career faculty.

**When did you come to MGH and why?**

I came to MGH in 2005, to work with psychologist, Dr. Bruce Masek, PhD, who was the director of the MGH Child and Adolescent Outpatient service at the time. He and I had worked together at Boston Children's Hospital where he directed the Pediatric Behavioral Medicine Service, and I was excited to have the opportunity to work under his leadership again. We explored ideas for developing a Pediatric Behavioral Medicine program at MGH, which I was eventually able to do with another colleague, though sadly, it was after his departure.

**Is there a project or program you want to tell us a little about?**

I have been fortunate to be a part of the development of several clinically-based programs, but am particularly excited about the Pediatric Integrated Primary Care (IPC) program, which I co-developed and launched with my co-director, Archana Basu, PhD in 2021. Although I long-wished to create this program, in which we place psychologists or postdoctoral fellows into primary care pediatric clinics to

provide evaluation and brief, evidenced-based treatment intervention, the mental health needs of children resulting from pandemic stress was the catalyst to launch this program. We began by assembling a team of psychologists and collaborating with two mental health-savvy pediatricians to develop the structure for the program. We started with a postdoctoral fellow in 2 pediatric clinics, and with postdoc assistance and a little bit of philanthropic support for psychologist time, we are currently covering 2 1/2 days per week in pediatric group practice and adolescent medicine clinics, with an overwhelming positive response from pediatricians and families alike. The team has also expanded offerings outside of the pediatric clinic time to offer up to 3 visits of consultation/brief intervention and several parenting groups. It has been gratifying to begin to integrate mental health services by going "further upstream" and seeing children when they come to their pediatric visits and to work with such an outstanding team of psychologists and pediatricians.

**What is one thing you love about your work?**

It is the relationships with those with whom I work. This includes the children and families that I take care of, my psychologist, psychiatrist and pediatrician colleagues, and the entire team in the Food Allergy Center. I feel honored and privileged to join with families to help them develop new ways of thinking and new skills in managing stress and mental illness in the context of a child's medical illness. Collaborating across disciplines is a welcome learning experience in addition to an opportunity to develop new programs and Quality Improvement projects. I am very grateful for the team of psychologists with whom I work. They are extremely talented clinicians, who support me and each other and are deeply dedicated to patient care, even in the context of the current mental health crisis.

**Tell us a little bit about your life outside of medicine.**

I am married with pets (currently, 2 Golden Retrievers). My husband, Todd Wilson is a carpenter/contractor who is forever improving our home as his side hustle. For fun and relaxation I enjoy doing photography, gardening, listening to live music, spending time with friends and watching international TV/streaming series (who knew that I would develop a fondness for British crime procedurals during the pandemic?).