

# Torticollis – Beyond the Basics: Improving Postural Alignment, Motor Skills and Feeding Outcomes Through a Multi-Disciplinary Lens

**Dana Kizer, MS, OTR/L, BCP**

**Anais Villaluna, SLPD, CCC-SLP, BCS-S, CLC**

**Trisha Thorne, PT, DPT, PCS, c/NDT, CNT, NTMCT**

## Faculty

**Dana Kizer** is an occupational therapist, Board Certified in Pediatrics, and has a special interest in feeding as well as sensory processing. She has worked in a variety of pediatric settings including a pediatric hospital, specialty clinic, private practice, and home health. Dana has presented on feeding therapy and interventions nationally and across virtual platforms. Dana is a published author on the subject of pediatric feeding disorders. She currently volunteers her time with Feeding Matters by serving on the Pre-Conference Committee and the Family Advisory Council to help families navigate the complex world of pediatric feeding disorders. In addition to her professional experience with feeding disorders, Dana brings a family perspective to her treatments and teaching experiences as her initial experience with feeding therapy occurred when she would accompany her younger brother to his feeding therapy appointments. She has seen first-hand the difference therapy can make in the lives of patients and their families.

**Anais Villaluna, SLPD, CCC-SLP, BCS-S, CLC** is a trilingual Speech-Language Pathologist and Board Certified Specialist in Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders. She earned her BS and MS from Texas Woman's University her clinical doctorate from Northwestern University and is a PhD student in Health Services Research at Texas A&M University, focusing on improving the implementation of evidence-based care for pediatric dysphagia. Anais practices in a variety of pediatric hospital settings, with gastroenterology and otolaryngology teams. Her clinical work is centered on medically complex infants and children with feeding and swallowing disorders, and she is passionate about translating evidence into practice to improve care quality and outcomes. She has presented nationally and virtually on topics related to pediatric dysphagia, culturally responsive practice, and implementation science, and is a published author in peer-reviewed journals. Anais also holds leadership roles with organizations such as the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) and Feeding Matters. Her work emphasizes interdisciplinary collaboration, clinician education, and ethical, system-level change to advance pediatric dysphagia care.

## Faculty continued...

**Dr. Trisha Thorne** is a licensed physical therapist and Board Certified Clinical Specialist in Pediatric Physical Therapy (PCS). She has over 15 years of expertise in pediatric settings including NICU levels II/ III/IV, multi-disciplinary NICU follow-up clinic, hospital inpatient and outpatient settings, home health, and private practice. She is a Certified Neonatal Therapist, Certified Neonatal Touch and Massage Therapist, and Certified Neurodevelopmental Therapist. Trisha specializes in myofascial/manual therapy interventions, treating medically fragile infants; as well as, infants with torticollis and associated postural dysfunctions contributing to gross motor developmental delays and feeding difficulties.

## About this Course

Learn important considerations and strategies beyond the basics to utilize when providing intervention to infants and children with torticollis. Torticollis is a complex diagnosis with many interrelated factors which can contribute to, cause or be associated with torticollis. By learning to think critically using a multidisciplinary lens, therapists will be better equipped to provide effective assessment and interventions. Different perspectives will be discussed and considered when implementing a multifaceted and holistic treatment approach. Attendees will be given as well the opportunity to problem solve with the presenters in the areas of developmental milestones, posture, fine/gross motor development and feeding & swallowing skills. By viewing torticollis through a multidisciplinary lens, attendees will gain effective tools to treat the multifaceted aspects of torticollis.

## Learning Objectives

- Identify the embryological, neurological, anatomical, physiological, and/or developmental factors that cause, contribute to, and/or result from torticollis.
- Recognize the red flags associated with torticollis that indicate a need for further assessment.
- Relate how torticollis affects infant gross/fine motor, speech and feeding development.
- Choose an appropriate and evidence-based assessment tool to utilize when working with infants, toddlers, and children with torticollis.
- Determine when and why to apply strategies when working with infants and children with torticollis based on presenting impairment and response to intervention.
- Choose positioning strategies to improve participation in functional activities across motor, language and feeding skills.
- Recognize the contributions of different therapy disciplines in promoting feeding skills.

**Disclosures:** **Anais Villaluna** receives a salary from Texas Children's Hospital and Feeding and Swallowing Specialists of The Woodlands. She receives a speaking honorarium from Education Resources, Inc. She has a non-financial relationship with IDDSI (International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative) as a US IRG Pediatric Co-Chair, Communication Committee Member. She has a non-financial relationship with Feeding Matters as a volunteer for Digital Outreach Committee. **Dana Kizer** receives a salary from Texas Children's Hospital and Feeding and Swallowing Specialists of The Woodlands. She receives a speaking honorarium from Education Resources, Inc. She has a non-financial relationship with Feeding Matters as a volunteer for Family Advisory Committee. **Trisha Thorne** is the owner of Physical Therapy Developmental Specialists. She receives a salary from Texas Children's Hospital. She receives a speaking honorarium from Education Resources, Inc. She has no non-financial relationship to disclose.

Help your patients achieve better outcomes.

## Schedule – Day 1

9:40 am to 5:00 pm EST (US)

- 9:40-10:00 Webinar Registration/Zoom Course Opens
- 10:00-1:00 Differentiating Different Types of Torticollis
- Relation of anatomy & physiology to developmental milestones
  - Assessment of Postural Alignment (IPAT: Infant position Assessment Tool) and AIMS (The Alberta Infant Motor Scale)
  - Differentiating between postural, muscular, SCM nodule
  - RED flags & neurological signs and considerations
- VIDEO CASE ANALYSIS**
- 1:00-1:30 Lunch
- 1:30-3:30 CASE ANALYSIS: Treatment Strategies
- RED Flags
- Asymmetrical posturing
  - Abnormal muscle tone
  - Full head lag
  - Retention of primitive reflexes (ATNR)
  - Abnormal movement patterning
  - Containment babies (SNOO and mamaroo Babocush current trends)
- Impacts on development
- Compensatory postures
  - Midline postural control musculature weakness
  - Immature sensory and behavioral organization
  - Visual deficits
- 3:30-3:45 Break
- 3:45-5:00 Impacts on gross and fine motor development
- Positioning
  - Stretching
  - Strengthening
- LAB:** Massage techniques, stretching, and functional strengthening play activities
- Midline postural alignment
  - Tummy time and organizational activities with gentle vestibular weight shifts for alerting prior to feeding
  - Upright positioning: activate vestibular, vision, and proprioception to activate postural control system prior to feeding
  - Gas relief interventions
  - Stool evacuation

## Schedule – Day 2

9:40 am to 5:00 pm EST (US)

- 9:40-10:00 Webinar Registration/Zoom Course Opens
- 10:00-10:30 Impacts on feeding
- Facial asymmetry
  - Tongue control and coordination
  - Swallowing
- Gastrointestinal RED Flags**
- Reflux
  - Constipation
- 10:30-1:00 CASE ANALYSIS: Problem solving through case studies
- Key interventions/strategies to improve postural control
  - **DEMO:** treatment strategies (massage, midline postural alignment, vestibular regulation, eliminating containment barriers)
  - **DEMO:** Treatment for GERD (massage, burping strategies)
  - Strategies to increase postural control and muscle tone for feeding
  - **LAB: DEMO** various infant postural control alerting activities; burping strategies; gas relieving posturing)
- Clinical Assessment of Feeding and Swallowing in the Infant, Toddler, or Child with Torticollis
- 1:00-1:30 Lunch
- 1:30-3:30 Clinical Assessment of Feeding and Swallowing for the Infant, Toddler, or Child with Torticollis
- Controversial topic: tethered oral tissues
- Clinical swallowing observations
  - Recommendations
- Compensatory Strategies
- Positioning - and why
  - Flow rate changes - why and when
  - Thickening - why and when
- 3:30-3:45 Break
- 3:45-5:00 Pulling it all together
- Gross motor
  - Developmental
  - Feeding
- LAB:** Treatment strategies & DEMO
- Positioning strategies
  - Therapeutic handling
  - Feeding interventions
- CASE ANALYSIS: Problem solving through case studies

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## WEBINAR DATES AND TIMES – November 7 and 8, 2026

9:40am EST • 8:40am CST • 7:40am MST • 6:40am PST

Registration is for both sessions. Zoom log-in instructions and course materials will be emailed/ added to your ERI account 5-7 days prior to the webinar.

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**WEBINAR: Torticollis – Beyond the Basics: Improving Postural Alignment, Motor Skills and Feeding Outcomes Through a Multi-Disciplinary Lens**

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☐ **November 7 and 8, 2026**

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