

Understanding Healthy Attachments in Children

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10:15am-11:45am
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Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss 'non-attachment' based view of attachment
2. Understand the problem and process of human development
3. A little bit about PCIT; how PCIT helps to:
 - Improve parenting skills
 - Decrease child behavioral problems
 - Improve the quality of parent-child relationships.
4. Parenting as Therapy (Safety, Security, and Health)
5. What you can do with PRIDE skills to improve attachment
6. Questions and Answers

I have a secret to tell you

In school I was bored by Piaget, Kohlberg, Bowlby*

*These are the big developmental/attachment people.

I struggled with:

- >Secure Attachment**
- >Ambivalent/Resistant Attachment**
- >Avoidance Attachment**
- >Disorganized/Controlling Attachment**

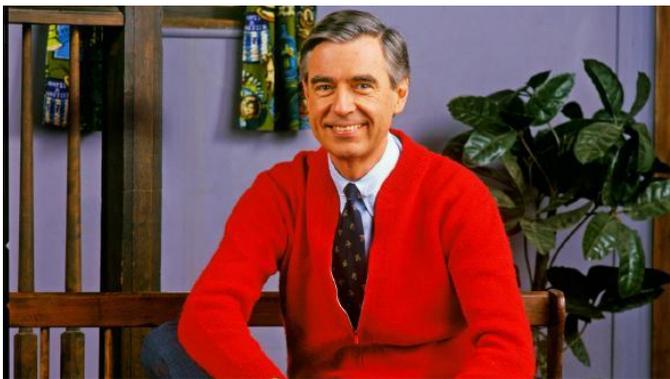
It's not that I disagree, I want more, I want real, I want practical.

**Categorizing people into three groups is difficult.
So, attachment is important – but lets talk real**

Introductions

**Teddy bears*, Barney, invisible friends, Mr. Rogers,
chums and a best friend, girlfriends and boyfriends,
and finally...**

Grinding gears and the woman (or man) you love.



Patterns of interaction over time

John Weisz

A Contextual Approach to Child Maltreatment

- **“Experience” for the nervous system involves the activation of neural findings in response to a stimulus**
- **Repeated firing of neurons in specific areas results in markedly increased synaptic densities**
- **Absence of firing of neurons results in markedly decreased synaptic densities**

“Patterns of interaction over time”

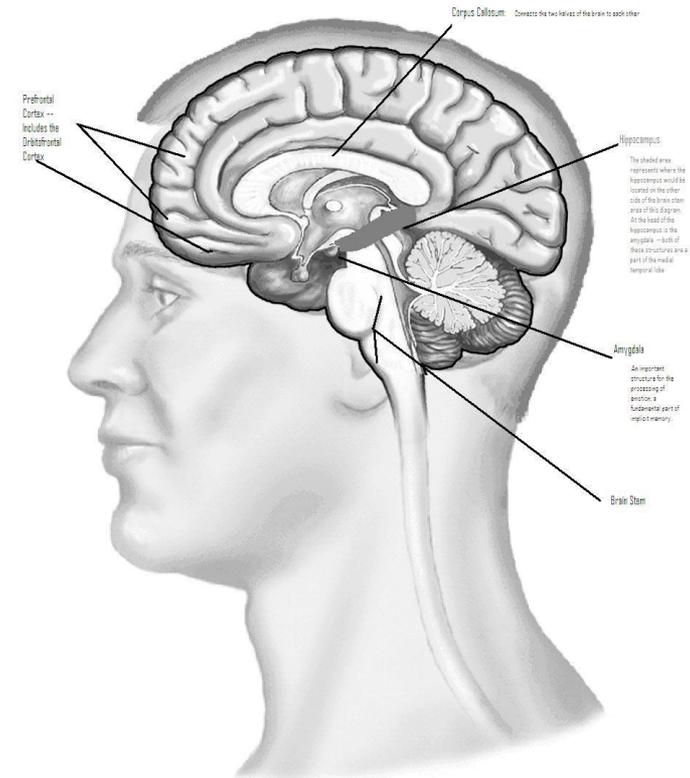


Figure 1: Diagram of the Human Brain looking from the middle toward the right side. Some key structures involved in memory are noted, including the Amygdala (implicit emotional memory processing), the Hippocampus (explicit memory) and the Orbitofrontal Cortex (explicit autobiographical memory processing). Coherent Life Stories may involve integration across the hemispheres via the Corpus Callosum.

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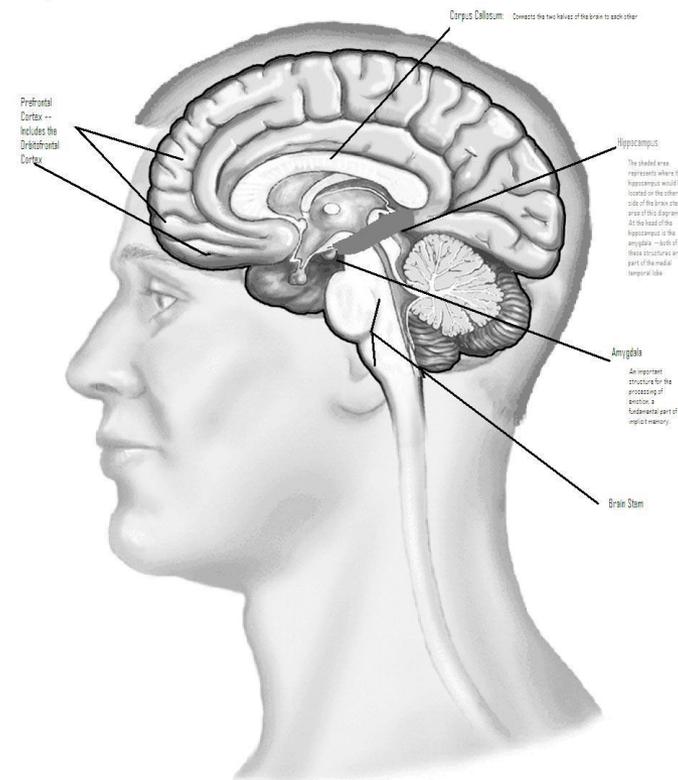


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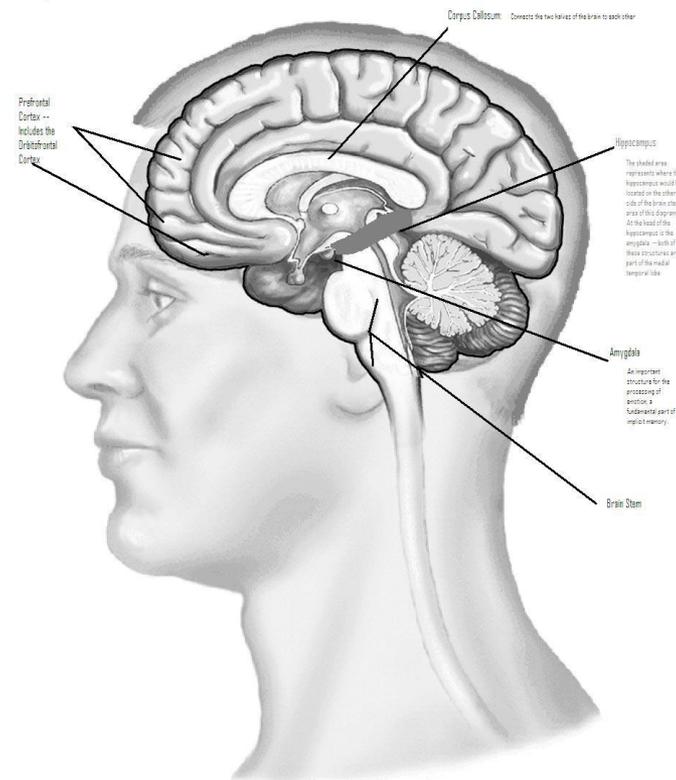
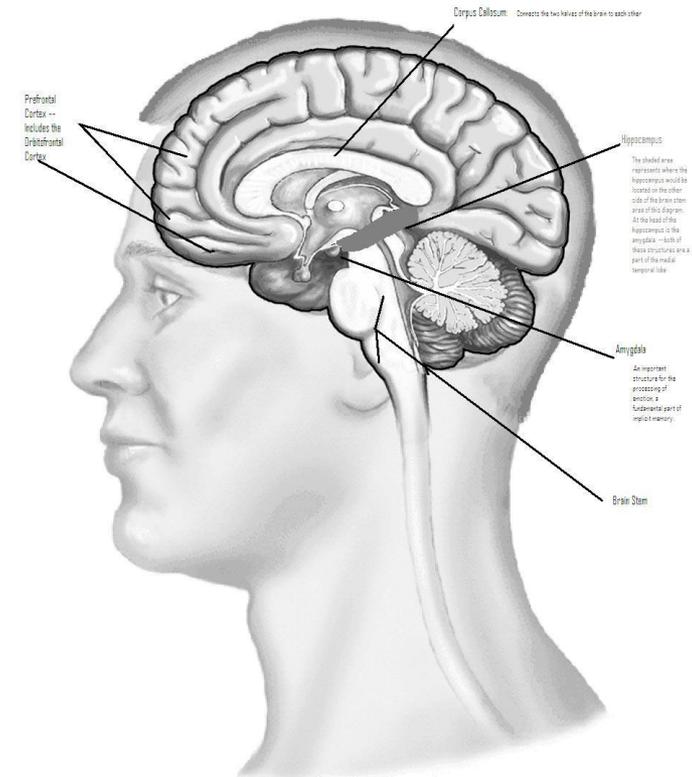


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A Contextual Approach to Child Maltreatment

- Interpersonal process in human development
- Activity settings



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A Contextual Approach to Child Maltreatment

This is what child development is all about...

The power of 1000 little things over 1 or 2 big things

“The strength of the relationship is a function of the consistency and continuity of the interaction”

“Patterns of interaction over time”

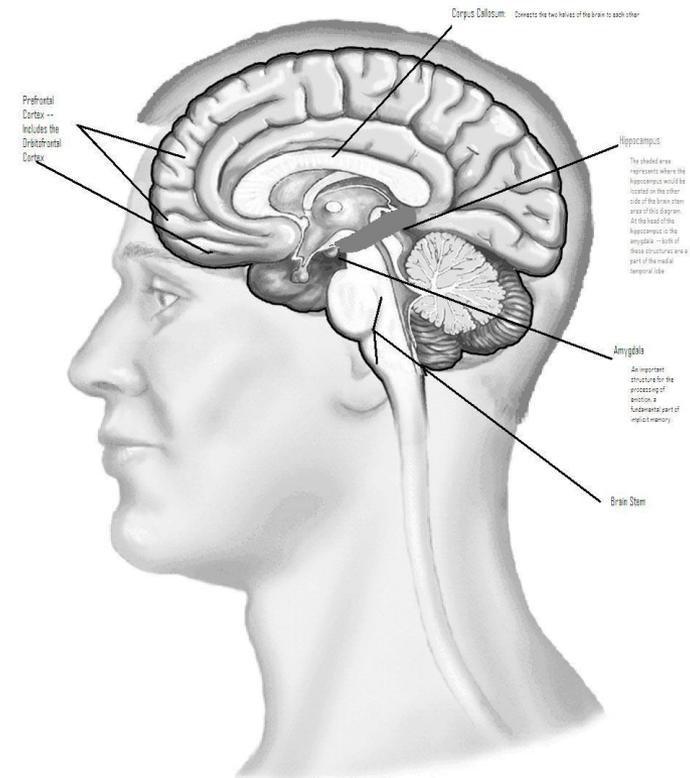
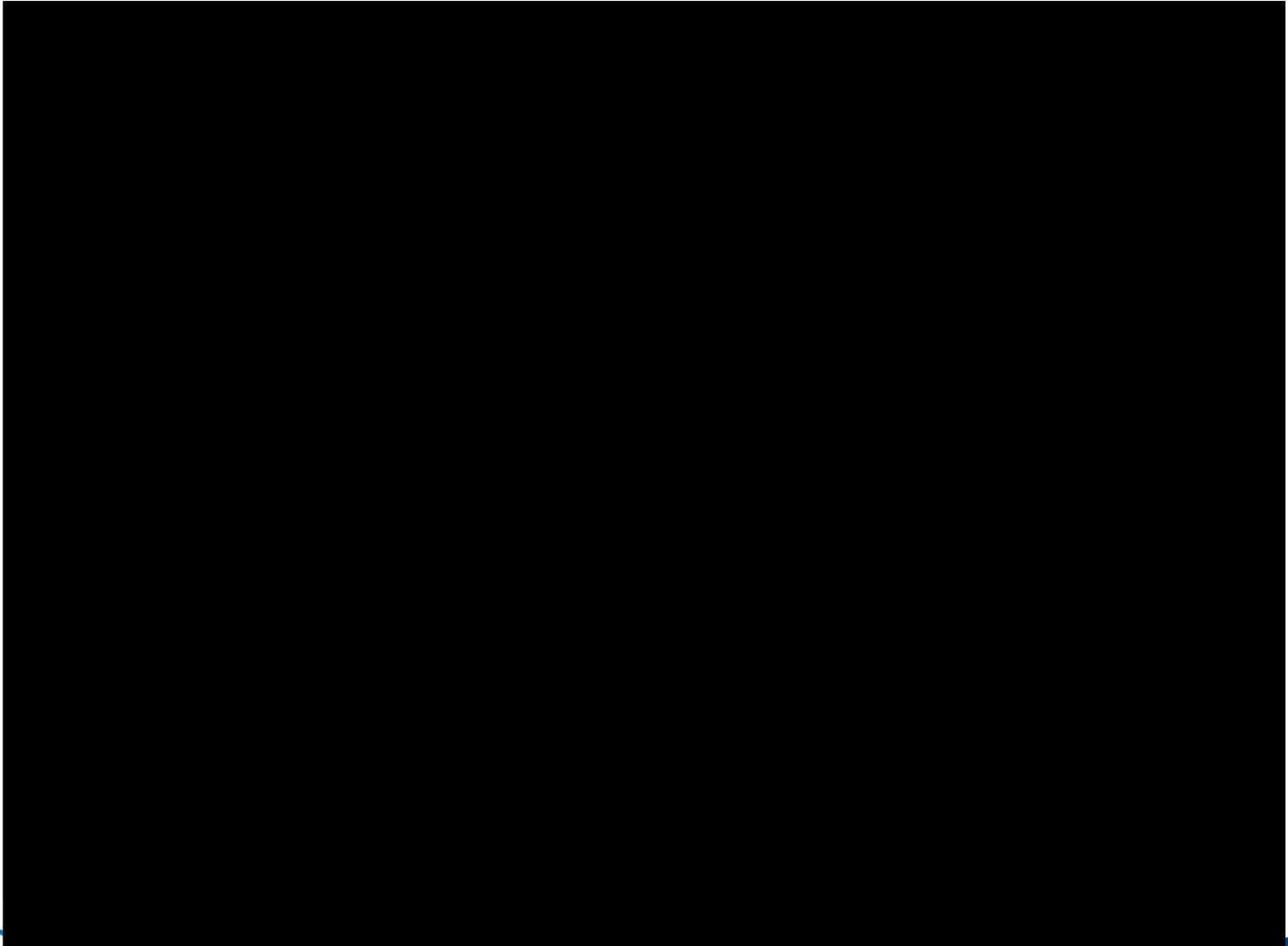


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A starting video...



DISCUSSION

OBSERVATION OF INTERACTION

- What did you see?
- What would you like to see change?

And now for ~~something~~ slightly
completely different...



PCIT

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION THERAPY

What is PCIT?

PCIT is a dyadic Intervention treating children 2 to 7 years old with disruptive behaviors and caregivers who have (at least) regular contact with children.

- Therapists coach the parents while playing with their children, using an FM receiver (2 way mirror/ video feed)
 - Adaptations in home settings
 - Adaptations in low-tech settings
- Course of treatment- 14 – 20 weeks
 - CDI – Enhance the parent-child relationship, teaching parents to attend to appropriate child behavior
 - PDI – Teach parent effective behavior management techniques
- Assessment driven
 - Assessment informs didactic, coaching strategies
- Process of treatment- from “hear” to “do”
 - Intake assessment → didactic teaching → coaching → skills mastery

PCIT Treatment & Observation Room



What you can do...

Relationship Enhancement

Praise

Reflection

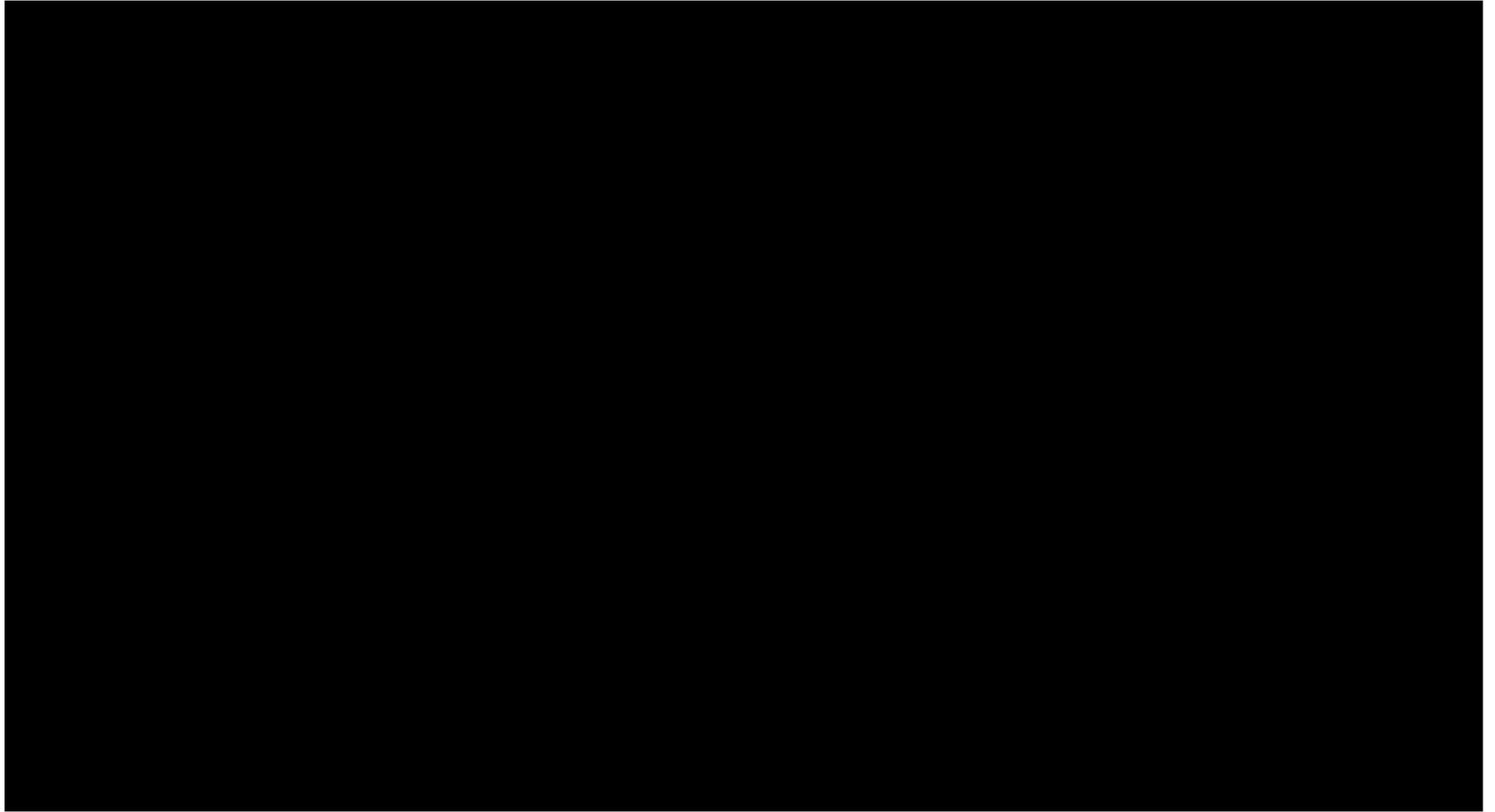
Imitation

Description

Enthusiasm

There is also a Discipline part, but not for today

Video example of PRIDE skills



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What makes PCIT work?

Research tells us...

In a meta-analysis of parenting programs (Kaminski et al., 2008), what works is:

- Increasing positive parent-child interactions and emotional communication skills
- Teaching parents to use time-out
- Encouraging consistency

PCIT Process



- Emotional Availability research
- Parent attributions of children's behavior

Child maltreatment and Positive vs Negative behavior



The power of positive interactions

Group Exercise

Developing your CDI Skills

PRIDE Skills

Praise

Reflection

Imitation

Description

Enthusiasm

CDI Skills

Discussion

- **What do you think of the effectiveness of PRIDE skills training?**
- **Can PRIDE skills help improve relationship quality in the families you see?**
- **How do you think PRIDE skills help decrease defiance?**

TRAUMA

How does trauma affect young children?

TRAUMA SYMPTOMS

- Nightmares
- Anxiety

BEHAVIORAL DISTURBANCE

- Noncompliance
- Aggression

AFFECTIVE DYSREGULATION

- Temper tantrums
- Crying/ whining

What does this mean?

Questions, Answers

- **How does trauma affect young children?**
- Are trauma symptoms directly addressed in PCIT?
- Is it necessary to address trauma content directly?
- Is PCIT a trauma treatment?



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How is Trauma Treated in Young Children?

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Treatment strategies:

- A. Improve child relationship security/stability
 - 1) Decrease negative & increase positive interactions
- B. Increase warmth in relationship
- C. Teach parents child treatment skills
 - 1) Recognize child distress
 - 2) Respond appropriately to child distress
- D. Provide normative information about past traumatic experiences

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Treatment strategies:

- A. Improve parenting skills
- B. Increase consistency in parenting
- C. Increase parents' positive response to appropriate child behavior
- D. Improve parent positive perception of child
- E. Predictable discipline strategy for non-compliance

Management of disruptive behavior *may be* treating trauma symptoms

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Treatment strategies:

- A. Decreased child behavioral problems
- B. Acquisition of child coping skills (affective expression, breathing, relaxation)
- C. Parental reinforcement for appropriate expression of distress

Healthy families make a big difference!

What does this mean?

Questions, Answers

- How does trauma affect young children?
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- **Is it necessary to address trauma content directly?**



Questions?

Website: pcit.ucdavis.edu

Web Course: pcit.ucdavis.edu/pcit-web-course

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