



PCIT

# Parent Child Interaction Therapy

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## Today's Learning Objectives

- Overview of PCIT treatment process
- How PCIT is a specialized play and family therapy intervention
- Clinical considerations which precede PCIT treatment
- Equipment and appropriate toys to select
- Alternative implementations

## Preface

- PCIT was originally designed in the 1970s for children with behavioral problems aged 2-7 and their parents/caregivers.
- PCIT is the creation of Dr. Sheila Eyberg of the University of Florida, applying a model of operant conditioning first developed by Dr. Constance Hanf.
- Eyberg's PCIT protocol integrates traditional play therapy techniques into operant conditioning
- Hembree-Kigin and Cheryl McNeil later wrote a manual, *Parent-child Interaction Therapy* (Plenum, 1995)
- In addition, protocols for have been adapted by Cheryl McNeil and further adapted by the personnel at the Trauma Treatment Replication Center of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Childhood Trust.

# Who it helps

- Designed specifically for broad range of behavioral, emotional, and developmental problems, including:
  - Physical/Verbal aggression
  - Lying
  - Classroom conduct problems
  - Stealing

# Examples (cont'd)

- **Hyperactivity**
- **Bonding in blended families**
- **Whining**
- **Low self-esteem**
- **Sad mood**
- **Developmental delays**
- **Generalized Anxiety**
- **Post divorce adjustment**
- **Abuse sequelae**
- **Separation anxiety**



# PCIT

- Conducted in the context of dyadic play.
- Developmental perspective is essential to providing effective treatment.
- Many problems that arise in parent-child dyads are related to developmental struggles for autonomy or inappropriate developmental expectations held by parents



Where to begin?



# Pre-PCIT - Issues To Consider

## Abuse clarification issues

“The strongest evidence for PCIT is in treatment children with disruptive behavior disorders. However, PCIT appears to be a promising intervention for families who have abuse and trauma histories.” (PCIT Protocols and Checklist, Preface page)

David Kolko and Cynthia Swenson – Clarification issues from individual to family therapy.

## Clinical Training and Supervision

### Contraindications – Adult & Child

# Factors Impacting Effectiveness

## Parents - Exclusion Criteria

- Active substance abuse
- Severe psychopathology
- Mental retardation (PCIT has been successfully taught to parents with mild retardation)
- Sex offenders (Primary Exclusion Criteria)

## Child

- Pervasive developmental disorder under review at this time.
- Child under the age of 2 and over 7 (extension to 11)



# Challenging Families

- Severe marital discord
- Extreme family chaos
- Unmotivated
- Court ordered

**”The NCTSN is a groundbreaking effort that blends the academic best practices of the clinical research community with the wisdom of front-line community service providers”**

# SET UP

- Equipment
  - Toys
- Training, paperwork and supervision

# **E q u i p m e n t**

- **Two-way mirror**
- **Stop watch**
- **Video camera**
- **Sound system between play and taping rooms**
- **Pair of Walkie-talkie units**
- **Place for clean-up box or shelf area where toy items may be returned**

# T o y s

## **AVOID Ones that.....**

- **Encourage rough play present harm to self or others, i.e., guns, swords, or knives.**
- **Can get out-of-hand and require multiple limit setting, i.e., paints, airplanes.**
- **Discourage conversation, including board or card games which have pre-set rules.**

## **SELECT Ones that....**

- **Nurture creative, constructional toys like..... building blocks, Legos, Duplos, tinker toys, Lincoln logs, Erector set, play food and dishes, train set, play garage with cars and play kitchen.**
- **Play dough, child scissors, crayons, stencils and paper.**

# Introduction - Baseline

## 1<sup>st</sup> Session

Recording parent and child functioning in three PCIT areas:

**Child Directed Interaction - CDI**

**Child directing the play**

**Parent Directed Interaction - PDI**

**Parent directing the play including Clean Up - CU**

**Child cooperating with the parent/caregiver's directions**

# CDI: Baseline Session

## Introduce parent/caregiver to first session

1. Provide coaching to parent/caregiver about stressors and barriers to treatment.
  - a. ability to attend treatment regularly
  - b. acknowledge parental stressors dealing with youngster's behavior.
  - c. parent receives basic directions, let the child lead CDI, you lead during PDI and finally direct the child to clean up at the end.
2. Present overview of the PCIT program
  - a. CDI – therapist will teach parent/guardian play therapy skills to enhance their relationship and child's compliant behavior
  - b. PDI – learning specific discipline techniques to teach your child to obey your direction and decreases acting out behavior. In the first session this includes clean up.

# Child Directed Interaction

## **Parent/guardian explanation:**

- a. Behavior shaping strategy
- b. Follow youngster's lead through their play
- c. First session is to record how they do together on CDI, PDI and clean up.
- d. Teach the parent play therapist skills to better manage their youngster's acting out behaviors.
- e. Helps the therapist theorize how the problems operate.

## **Therapist objectives:**

- a. Establish baseline
- b. Assess the ability of the adult to manage the child's behavior in a therapy setting.
- b. assess the child's actions/interactions with their parent  
in the same setting.
- c. Record the CDI, PDI and CU segments.

# Baseline session events:

Parent directs child through these three phases of PCIT for the first time with basic standardized directions from the therapist. Parent/guardians are, at this point, to use their current skills. No treatment has taken place. The therapist codes the scores in all areas for each person.

- CDI
- PDI that includes clean up element.
- Few families attain mastery in this session

# Paperwork: recording data

## Coding Sheet

- The Coding sheets contain recording items for parent and child's behavior.
- Specific directions on how to identify types of behaviors
- Provides data recording improvement or regression.



# PCIT Baseline Assessment Completed

## CDI Treatment phase begins

At the beginning of all subsequent sessions

1. During the first 5 minutes (child aged 2 to 7 10 minutes child aged 8 to 11) , therapist records CDI session, using data collection sheets.
2. Next, therapist assists the parent through the balance of the session using PCIT coaching.
3. Systemic, dyadic with a parallel process from therapist to parent and from parent to child.

# PCIT: Measurable Objectives

Children aged 2 - 7

In five minutes

- 10 labeled praises
- 10 reflections
- 10 behavior descriptions
- No more than 3, questions + commands + criticisms.

Children aged 7 to 12

In 8 to 10 minutes

- 12 behavioral descriptions
- 8 labeled praises
- 2 or fewer commands plus criticisms + questions.

**Avoid:**

**Critical statements**

**Direct and indirect commands**

**No questions.**

Funderburk, Burwitch, Chaffin et al, 2003

Eyberg & McNeil, 2003



# Child Directed Interaction

# Therapist as a coach

- Using PCIT coaching helps the parent/guardian be successful implementing PCIT.
- Assists parent practice of CDI components in the office to use daily at home.
- Record sessions and behavior changes.
- Remain enthusiastic and hopeful during the process.
- The key to PCIT is direct coaching of parents in selective positive attention, strategic ignoring, and discipline.
- Parenting classes do not change the behavior of caretakers
- **Coached and supported skills building does change the behavior of caretakers**
- Direct caretaker coaching results in:
  - Immediate correction of errors
  - Caretaker mastery and self confidence
  - Direct observation about what is happening. Most people are not accurate reporters about their own habitual behaviors
  - Faster learning by caretakers

## CDI – Parents use

**Praise** – child's  
appropriate behavior with  
labeled or unlabeled  
praise

**Reflect** – appropriate talk

**Imitate** – appropriate  
play

**Describe** – appropriate  
behavior

**Enthusiasm** – be  
enthusiastic



# Parents

## Avoid

Commands

Criticisms

Questions

and

No, Not, Don't,

Stop, Quit





# Praise:

## Labeled and unlabeled praise

Labeled: **That is a great way to sit still while we play today, I like that very much.**

Unlabeled: **Good, nice job, well done.**

# Reflection:

The child leads the conversation

Child: I drew a tree.

Parent: Yes, you made a tree

Child The doggy has a black nose.

Parent: The dog's nose is black.



# Imitate appropriate play:

## The child leads the play

Child: I put a nose on the potatoes head

Parent: I'm putting a nose on Mr. Potato Head too.

Child: Draws a circle on the paper.

Parent: I'm going to draw circles on my paper just like you.



# Describe appropriate behavior:

Parent says to the child

- You're making a tower.
- You drew a square.
- You put the girl inside the fire truck.
- You put the woman in the car.



# Enthusiasm:

Child: (carefully places a blue Lego on a tall tower of blocks)

Parent: (gently touches the child's back) and says, you are REALLY being gentle with the toys!

# PCIT - CDI Mastery Criteria Met

- Parent attains mastery criteria
- **Age 2 to 7**
  - 10 labeled praises
  - 10 reflections
  - 10 behavior descriptions
- **Age 7-12**
  - 12 behavioral descriptions
  - 8 labeled praises
  - 2 or fewer commands plus criticisms

# Completion of CDI

Parent at mastery with CDI

Child evidences behavior improvement in sessions and at home.

Next, therapist/coach begins to present PDI elements.

Parent continues CDI 5 min (2 to 7 year olds)  
10 minutes (8 to 11 year olds) at home daily.

# Parent Directed Interaction



# Mastery of CDI

- Parents attains CDI mastery
- Therapist encourages 5\* minutes of “Special Play Time” to continue at home thru PDI process (\*age 2 to 7, 5 min. age 7 to 12, 8 –10 min.)
- Therapist codes CDI for first 5\* minutes of each session thru PDI.
- Therapist and parent transition to PDI.

# PDI - Parent Directed Interaction

## ■ Skills

- Commands
- Broken Record
- Time-out

## ■ PDI Mastery

- With a 5 min time, parents present at least 4 Commands, of which 75% are effective as evidenced because they are obeyed by their child.

# Good Commands

- Good commands are...

Direct

One at a time

Age appropriate

Neutral

Gives Choices

Consequences

Positively stated

Specific

Polite

Limit explanation

Important



# Effective Commands

## **Mastery**

Effective commands need to be direct, positively stated, single commands that give the child an opportunity to obey or disobey.

A Labeled Praise is given immediately after an effective command is obeyed



# Broken Record

Used when a child disobeys or attempts to argue with the parent.

## **Repeat the Command**

- Use the exact same words
- Use the same calm tone of voice each time
- Show no facial expression



# Broken Record (cont'd)

- Act like a Brick Wall. (Parents, be firm.)
- I am here to stay
- I will not bend
- I mean business

# Example of Broken Record

- While in the CDI process in session with coach...
- Parent: Please hand me the book Sarah.
- Child: I have to finish coloring first.
- Parent: Please hand me the book Sarah.
- Child: But my tummy hurts. I'm sick!!
- Parent: Please hand me the book Sarah.
  
- What if the child still does NOT obey??  
PCIT uses Ignore or Time Out

# PCIT – PDI Time Out / Ignore

- A method designed for children who have not responded well to time outs in the past.
- PCIT Time out is taught to parents before time out is used at home.
- Research data collected for PCIT has indicated that PCIT time out method has been effective, especially with children aged 2 to 7.
- PCIT Time Out is a concrete, easy to read and follow decision tree method.

# PDI

- PDI Sessions mirror the CDI sessions
  - Teaching PDI skills
  - Coaching support parent and practice PDI skills
  - Parent homework to translate new skills to home play time.
- No specific time limit some parents need longer or shorter to adapt to PDI.
- Objective score on standardized PCIT measure completed by the parent.



# PCIT Alternative Implementations

- Maggie – PCIT Cultural Recognition.
- Megan - School Based – without equipment
- Susan - Early childhood
- Chris – court ordered / abusive families and clarification.

# Benefits of PCIT for young children



- Originally designed for 2-7 year olds
- Based on behaviors not insight
- PCIT is a relational model
- Stimulates communication skills

# Clarification

- Kolko and Swenson, 2002, Chapter 14
- Clarification when treatment moves from individual to family therapy.
- Family healing, correcting misattributions of responsibility, facilitates the conversation about family abuse.
- Adult abuse to children, what are the facts, awareness, impact and responsibility.
- Developmental recognition of young children's vulnerability to hold responsibility
- Informed clinical supervision to proceed to family therapy, a big decision.



# Questions



# PCIT Practice.....

Presenters as coaches

Please use Play Dough at your table.

Pick partners

One child

One parent

One observer

**CDI - PRIDE**

# Practice

**Praise** – child’s appropriate behavior with labeled or unlabeled praise

**Reflect** – appropriate talk

**Imitate** – appropriate play

**Describe** – appropriate behavior

**Enthusiasm** – be enthusiastic

## Avoid

Commands

Criticisms

Questions

and

No, Not, Don’t,

Stop, Quit



# Thank you

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# Bibliography

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And the following publications:

Hembree-Kigin's and Cheryl McNeil's manual, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, Plenum, 1995.

Kolko, D., Swenson, C., Assessing and Treating Physically Abused Children and Their Families: a cognitive-behavioral approach, Sage Pub., 2002.