

AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

IN PCIT

October 13, 2010

Tina Houston, Ph.D.
 thouston@childrensinstitute.org

Our Families



Key Engagement Strategies

- **Developing rapport**
 - Identify Kinship Networks
 - Pacing engagement
 - Self-Disclosure
- **Psychoeducation**
- **Support Introspection/Curiosity**
- **Open Discussion of Spirituality**
- **Gender Considerations**

*Material adapted from L. E. Davis, Working with African American Males

Rapport... begins with the 1st phone call

- **Emphasis on the relationship**
 - Demonstrate a collaboration
 - Previous experiences w/ mental health systems
 - verbal and nonverbal interactions vs. focus on goals/objectives
- **Buy in**
 - Letting the caregiver know “what is in it for them” by participating in treatment.
- **Contact between sessions**
 - Supports development of consistency

Rapport via Story Telling

- **Get to know the families “Story”**
 - Actively listening and soliciting intake questions as a story
- **Connecting with their “Story”**
 - 1) Parsing out values that are salient for the family
 (obedience so they won't get beat by police)
 - 2) Using and reflecting the clients language
 - 3) Reflecting their expectations, hopes, dreams, difficulty of current undesirable behaviors, etc.

Identify Kinship Networks

- **Kinship Networks strongly influence the families dynamic, interactions, belief systems, etc.**
 - Who are the essential members in this families “story?”
 - Who are the caregivers, the nurturers, the power player, the elders, living or passed?

Pacing engagement

- Initially follow the families pacing
- Avoid moving to rapidly
 - Build in and allow for pauses
- Allow a natural rhythm to emerge
- Spend time reviewing and forecasting the process and typical course of tx
- Instill hope → sharing stories of others “families successes”

Therapist Self-Disclosure & Expanding Boundaries

Use of self-disclose as appropriate

WHY is Self Disclosure & Expanding Boundaries useful...

- Answering directly increases credibility & genuineness = promoting rapport
- Self disclosure → allows the clt to know that the therapist is invested in the relationship on a personal level = “I the client matters”
- Communicates respect → the clt is looking to the professional as one looks to an elder in the community for guidance and direction
- Expanding Boundaries is an interpersonal experiences that enables the caregiver to develop trust & positive attachment

Psychoeducation

- Put emphasis on how PCIT process /intervention develops new skills & behaviors to cope more effectively with the undesirable behaviors
- Focus on the use of rationales that emphasize behaviors related to the caregivers hopes/dreams and goals for their child

Support Introspection/Curiosity

- Encourage caregivers to think about the messages they are trying to teach their children and if their actions are congruent with their intent
 - Ex. I want to teach my child obedience, by telling them what to do.
 - Explore aloud “I wonder if constantly telling Johnny how to behave will help him when your not around?”
- Allows the caregiver to take notice of their actions in a non punitive, judgmental or threatening manner
- Primes Care giver to join in creating an alternative response (get’s their buy-in)

Spirituality

- Be prepared to process issues of personal meaning and spirituality that may come up
 - If you’re unprepared to talk about it in the moment, schedule a collateral session with the caregiver to discuss at a later time.
 - REMEMBER: You don’t need to have all or any of the answers, being present and curious is helpful.

Gender Considerations

“African American men must deal with thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that are triggered by what their skin color and physique uniquely mean to others. Negative responses to these visible attributes are the source of many conflicts, forming barriers to success for black males and triggering intrapsychic consequences”

(Anderson). Franklin)

Gender Considerations

- Invisibility: not being treated as a person of worth during interpersonal encounters
 - Ignored and unacknowledged
- Intentional and repeatedly Communicate respect & including both parents in treatment (ex. Mr. Armstrong.....)
- Less Directive until rapport is securely established
 - offer suggestions
 - You may want to try....
 - You can use....

Final Thoughts:

The most important property of humankind is the capacity to form and maintain relationships. These relationships are absolutely necessary for any of us to survive, learn, work, love...”

~Dr. Bruce Perry