Implications of Time Out Procedures Among Families with Trauma Histories

Roundtable Discussion
16th Annual Conference on Parent-Child Interaction Therapy for Traumatized Children
September 21, 2016

Cristal Martinez, LPC, NCC and Monica Garfias, LPC, NCC; El Paso Child Guidance Center.
Steven Kurtz, PhD, ABPP; Kurtz Psychology Consulting PC.
Objectives of Discussion

▪ Define trauma and give examples of traumatic experiences.

▪ Elaborate upon unique PCIT protocol experiences in treatment with these families.

▪ Explore Trauma Informed PDI and Time-Out.

▪ Introduce the group to our treatment environment, the therapists, and their clients and their trauma histories.
Defining Trauma

**Trauma** is the experience of an event that is emotionally painful or distressful that often results in significant lasting impact on the person's physical, social, mental, and spiritual well-being.
Defining Trauma

Examples of Traumatic Experiences

• Divorce
• Moving to a new school
• Separations from caregivers
• Natural disasters such as tornadoes, windstorms, and hurricanes
• Robbery or break-in
• Medical procedures or illnesses
• Death of a loved one
• War/acts of terrorism

• Witnessing domestic or community violence
• Chronic stress from work, home, or school
• Bullying
• Near death experiences
• Sexual Abuse
• Physical abuse
• Neglect
Purpose of PCIT

PCIT

- The purpose of the CDI phase is to “restructure the parent-child relationship and provide the child with a secure attachment to his or her parent” (Storch, 2005, p. 106).

- In the PDI phase, parents learn ways to provide consistent consequences for child appropriate behaviors as well as a systematic time-out procedure for child non-compliance (Brinkmeyer & Eyberg, 2003)
Possible impact of time-out on clients with trauma history

• “An individual's reaction to emotional trauma is complex and difficult to predict. A person's age, past exposure to trauma, social support, culture, family psychiatric history and general emotional functioning are some of the variables related to individual response to trauma.” (McFarlane & Yehuda, 1996).
### This May Look Like:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intolerable Stress</td>
<td>• Lack of follow through with coaching andor commands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Difficulty enjoying the play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>• Skipping appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Not competing homework (special time with child)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Child not engaging parent in play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>• Over reliance on Indirect Commands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of verbalizations during play sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Going “Off Script”</td>
<td>• “Extra talk” during Time out sequence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Re-traumatization

A person who is still suffering from the impact of a previous trauma has heightened vulnerability to stressful events that follow.
Trauma Triggers in PCIT

Trauma Trigger:
• A **trauma trigger** is an experience that causes someone to recall a previous **traumatic** memory, although the **trigger** itself need not be frightening or **traumatic** and can be indirectly or superficially reminiscent an earlier **traumatic** incident.
  • **EXAMPLES INCLUDE:**
    ➢ Warning that the child will be placed on the time out chair
    ➢ The child being directed physically towards the time out chair
    ➢ Parent having to ignore undesirable behavior
    ➢ Parent leaving the room utilizing the “swoop and go” technique
Tailoring PCIT to be trauma informed

TEACH SESSIONS/COACHING TARGETS

• Viewing family with a trauma informed lens
• Tailoring time out (swoop and go, Dutch door)
• Coaching to emphasize CDI after a time out
• Trauma Informed Psychoeducation during teach sessions
• Psychoeducation about corporal punishment
• Change parent’s perception of child (trauma informed parenting)
• Emphasize importance of predictability of PDI
• Parent’s affect management
• Affect and reinforcement of behaviors may treat some trauma symptoms (corrective emotional experience, exposure, or social referencing)
Deciding what to treat first:

- Externalizing behaviors only (ECBI, CBCL - Raw score of 95 and above, problem 7 and above, externalizing T score of 55 or above)
  - PCIT
  - Risk of placement loss due to externalized behaviors
  - Impaired parent child relationship

- Externalized Behaviors AND Trauma symptoms
  - UCLA PTSD Index Severity score = 22+ and/or TSCC/TSCYC T score = 60+
  - PCIT or TF-CBT
    - Hx of sexual abuse
    - Sexualized behavior
    - Competent caregiver
    - Externalized behaviors are manageable
      - PCIT

- Trauma symptoms only
  - TF-CBT

TF-CBT (Continued elevation of externalizing behaviors)

Post – PCIT treatment for trauma

- TFCBT
- Prolonged exposure
- Play therapy
- Individual therapy for caregiver
- Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)
Case Presentation: J.R.

• Four year old, Hispanic, male
• Starting ECBI score= 180
• History of witnessing domestic violence (toward mother from bio-father).
• Mom Hispanic, single, working part time, with PTSD and Depression history.
• Mom had preoccupation with time out/ swoop and go protocol
  • Worried she would “hurt” the child by leaving room
  • Worried about leaving him alone

• First and only time out sequence in treatment:
  • Lasted approximately 3 minutes
  • Coached mom through relaxation and reassured her that client was fine
  • Returned to CDI and normal play
  • Mom mentioned “time out” warning and client complied
  • Mom reported two time outs at home over last 4 four months after treatment ended.
Case Presentation: A.R.

- 6-year-old Hispanic-White male.
- Initial ECBI score: 178
- History of witnessing Domestic Violence (Father towards mother)
- Mom was diagnosed with PTSD, she was employed as a teacher’s assistant at the client’s elementary school.

Time-out sequences:
- Longest time out sequence lasted: 23 minutes, 20 seconds.
- Mother tended to exhibit a lot of extra talk, she expressed anxiety over triggering negative behavior in the client.
- Mother also expressed guilt when client would plead “don’t go” when engaging in the “swoop and go” portion of the sequence.
References


