

WHO IS LEADING? CHILD CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR

Attachment Perspective

- Disorganized attachment, child abuse and controlling behavior have been linked.
- Controlling behavior begins as coping strategy for fear
- Controlling behavior emerges during preschool years
- Punitive and Caregiving subtypes first identified



ROLE REVERSALS

Child controlling behavior at more severe levels results in parent-child role reversal and parental surrender of power and authority.

- Child controls play
- Child assumes parent role
- Parent accepts role shift

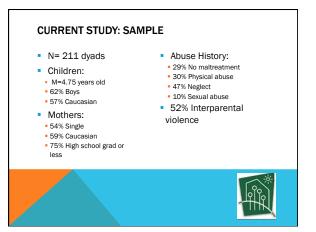


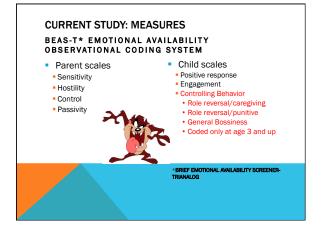
CAARE CENTER RESEARCH ON CHILD CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR

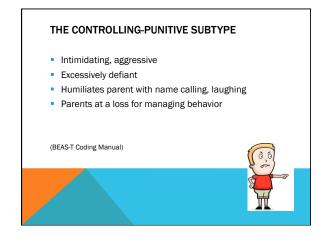
- Controlling behavior tends to be present during times of transition (e.g., CDI to PDI) especially in younger children
- Controlling behavior is related to parent passivity (but not intrusiveness)
- Role reversal behavior seen in children with history of interparental violence and child abuse.

(Thompson, Timmer & Urquiza, 2010; Timmer et al, in press)









CONTROLLING-PUNITIVE, CURRENT STUDY

- 49% of children show some controlling-punitive behavior
- 26% show role reversed controlling-punitive behavior
- Children who show more controlling-punitive behavior...
 have multiple types of maltreatment
 - have multiple other risk factors
 - are less responsive and involved during interactions
 - have parents who show less sensitivity, more hostility, more intrusiveness & more passivity during interactions

THE CONTROLLING-CAREGIVING SUBTYPE

- Overly bright, solicitous, engaging, helpful
- Vigilant to parent's negativity, "checks in"
- Attempts to reduce negativity and solve problems
- Helplessness to elicit parent involvement

(BEAS-T Coding Manual)



CONTROLLING-CAREGIVING, CURRENT STUDY

- 64% of children show some controlling-caregiving
- 12% show role reversed controlling-caregiving
- Children who show more controlling-caregiving ...
 tend to be older
- show more optimal affect, are more responsive & involved during interaction
- have parents who are less intrusive during interactions

GENERAL BOSSINESS

- Directs parent
- Decides what the dyad will do in play
- Corrects parent but is not parentified



(BEAS-T Coding Manual)



GENERAL BOSSINESS, CURRENT STUDY

- 62% of children show some bossy behavior
- 26% show role reversed bossy behavior
- Children who show more bossiness seem to have lower rates of specific risk factors, but show an accumulation of multiple risk factors, e.g., parental mental health and/or criminal history,

IMPLICATIONS FOR TREATMENT

- Clinical significance of child controlling behavior is not yet known; however,
- Potential areas for intervention include: Attending to balance of power within the dyad, e.g., reducing parental passivity to prevent role reversals
- Improving parent's confidence so child feels secure in parent's ability to take care of her/him.
- Helping parent anticipate transitions with child and provide reassurance to reduce fear and anxiety



NEXT STEPS

- Continue exploration of child controlling behavior and its meaning/function.
- Examine treatment outcomes of controlling children.
- Determine PCIT elements most successful in treating controllingness.

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