

# Connections

The Newsletter of the Connections Program

A Partnership between the Health District of Northern Larimer County and the Larimer Center for Mental Health

## Parent-Child Interaction Therapy: A Treatment Model for Children with Disruptive Behaviors

By: Sarah T. Carlson, MFT

### Disruptive Behaviors Defined

Disruptive Behaviors in children can be defined broadly as based upon the symptoms of Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder as specified in the *DSM-IV*. These symptoms might be aggression, non-compliance, disruptive classroom behaviors, or delinquency. Research indicates that Disruptive Behaviors emerge from a combination of many child and family factors. Child factors such as temperament or hyperactivity combine with family effects like poverty, stress, anger, or single-parent status, to reinforce child Disruptive Behaviors. Furthermore, Social-Learning Theory asserts that child behavior problems are inadvertently established and maintained by dysfunctional parent-child interactions.



### Breaking the Coercive Cycle

Through this cycle of reinforcement, the negative behaviors of these children often increase, as does the escalation of the parent's discipline strategies. The strong relationship between certain familial situations and child Disruptive Behaviors suggests that a successful treatment should focus on changing parent-child interactions. **Parent-Child Interaction Therapy** (PCIT) is a short-term treatment for children ages 2-12 that places that emphasis on improving the quality of the parent-child relationship.

### Structure of PCIT

PCIT takes place with the parent in a playroom with their child and the therapist behind a one-way mirror communicating to the parent through an earpiece. In

the first phase of PCIT, parents are taught specific skills to re-structure their relationship with their child while decreasing any Disruptive Behaviors. Parents are coached to recognize their children's many positive qualities. When there are behavioral concerns, as parents grow to appreciate their children more, they tend to pay more attention to their positive characteristics, and in turn children become more eager to please and seek negative attention less often. This first phase is particularly appropriate when there has been a separation of child and parent, such as is found when a child is placed into protective custody, foster care, adoption, and in custody disputes.

In the second phase of treatment parents learn to use specific behavior management techniques as they play with their child. This phase is introduced only after families have successfully mastered the first phase of treatment. The clinician works with the parent on managing specific behaviors by using effective time-out procedures, redirection, rewards and consequences.

Several questionnaires are used at the beginning, middle, and end of the family's program to gauge improvement in the areas identified by the parent. Each session is also "coded" to graph the parent's use of the five primary skills and the time-out method taught in PCIT. The program can be conducted in the family's home, as well as with or without siblings.

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We encourage you to submit short articles (50-500 words) on therapeutic approaches, mental health topics, case studies, or therapeutic book/movie reviews, etc., & will publish them as space allows. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

## Connections

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*Connections* is published 6 times/year. The purpose of *Connections* is to offer information on current therapy groups and services in the community; provide updates on services available through the Connections Program; and offer a place where information on community happenings of interest to mental health and human services providers can be shared.

Submissions are welcome. E-mail them to [chusted@healthdistrict.org](mailto:chusted@healthdistrict.org) by the following deadlines:

**NEXT EDITION:** January/February  
**Article Deadline:** December 15, 2008

Submissions printed in *Connections* do not necessarily reflect the views of the Connections Program. Our editorial staff do not check the credentials of individuals wishing to submit groups or other listings. If you have concerns regarding credentials or other issues, please contact the group leader or author of the article directly. Thank you.

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## Outcome Research

Research has shown that families who have completed PCIT have significant improvements in the parent-child interactions and behavioral problems of children at home and in school. Parents also report a high level of satisfaction with the PCIT treatment program, less personal distress, and more confidence in their ability to manage their child's behaviors.

## Implications for Practitioners

In today's climate of managed care, clinicians are challenged to utilize short-term, evidenced-based treatment models. After approximately 4 therapy hours, marked improvements can be seen in several areas of family interaction. An average family can expect to invest about 10-16 therapy hours before graduating from the program.

The presence of Disruptive Behaviors in preschoolers predicts anti-social behaviors in adolescence. Given the poor prognosis of untreated Disruptive Behaviors in young children, the utilization of PCIT, one of the only evidence-based and early intervention models, seems not only necessary, but best-practice for young children experiencing behavioral problems.

For more information contact Sarah Carlson, MFT or Lisa Andrews, LPC at (970) 472-1207 or visit [www.p-cic.com](http://www.p-cic.com).

## EMDR Training to be Offered in Fort Collins

In 2009, EMDR Trainings will be offered by Barb Maiberger in Boulder and Denver. Barb Maiberger is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the State of Colorado and has a Masters degree in Somatic Psychology. She is an EMDR practitioner and an EMDRIA Approved consultant and Certified therapist.

In March and July of 2009, she is planning on hosting an EMDR Training in Fort Collins. In order to host this training she will need 12-18 individuals to participate. The cost to become certified for EMDR Parts 1 and 2 are \$1100.00. Please check her website at [www.integratedcounseling.net](http://www.integratedcounseling.net) for more information on Barb, EMDR, and the total cost.

If anyone is interested in attending this training please contact Barb at [bmaiberger@mac.com](mailto:bmaiberger@mac.com). You can also contact Lisa Dionne at (303) 834-0515. The specific dates and location for the Fort Collins training, are list below:

**Part 1** - March 27, 28, and 29, 2009

**Part 2** - July 17, 18, and 19, 2009

**Location:** Jacob Center in Fort Collins

This information will posted on the web site listed above in the next week or two.

## Resources for the Community

### Group Supervision



This is an ongoing group providing supervision for people who need hours for licensure. This group has recently been formed. Space is limited. This group meets two times per month for an hour each time.

The cost is \$35.00 per session. The location is in Old Town, Fort Collins. There are two facilitators: Rachel Isenberg, LCSW, ACSW and Maggie Tibbitts, LCSW.

If you are interested in participating in this group, please call Rachel at (970) 490-6851 or Maggie at (970) 988-4173.

### Surviving the Holidays After the Death of a Loved One

Hospice of Larimer County is facilitating a presentation for bereaved persons providing ideas to navigate the holiday season. This presentation will be offered two times:

**November 20, 2008 (Thursday):** 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

**December 4, 2008 (Thursday):** 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

No fee or registration required. Location is 305 Carpenter Road, Fort Collins. Please contact Hospice of Larimer County at (970) 663-3500 or visit [www.hlchospice.org](http://www.hlchospice.org) for more information.

### Suicide Resource Center Support Groups

**The Depression/Bipolar Support Group** meets twice a month on Thursday evenings at the following locations and times:

#### Loveland

6:30-8:00 p.m.  
1st Thursday at  
Zion Lutheran Church  
815 E. 16th St.

#### Fort Collins

6:30-8:00 p.m.  
3rd Thursday at  
Harmony Presbyterian Church  
400 E. Boardwalk Dr.



These groups are sponsored by the Suicide Resource Center of Larimer County. They are peer facilitated, free of charge, and are for adults who have been diagnosed with depression or bipolar disorder. Drop-ins are welcome. These groups do not replace therapy.

## Resources for the Community

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**The Friends and Family Support Group** meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Harmony Presbyterian Church, 400 E. Boardwalk, in Fort Collins.

This is a free drop-in support group for people who have loved ones who struggle with depression and bipolar disorder. The support group is open to family members, partners and friends.

**The Heartbeat Grief Support Group** meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Pathways Building of Hospice of Larimer County at 305 Carpenter Road in Fort Collins.

The Heartbeat Support Group is open to anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide. This group is free of charge. Drop-ins are welcome. This group does not replace therapy.

For more information, call the Suicide Resource Center at (970) 635-9301. To learn about our other programs, please visit our website at

[www.suicideresourcecenter.org](http://www.suicideresourcecenter.org)



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mental health & substance abuse resources

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