

**CONNECTING WITH CAREGIVERS: USING ADLERIAN  
PLAY THERAPY SKILLS TO ENHANCE CAREGIVER  
CONSULTATIONS**

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STAKE IN THE GROUND

AGENDA

Introductions/Fostering Self-Care

Understanding Parents with the Brain in Mind

Understanding IPNB to Support Work with Caregivers

Engaging in Caregiver Consultations Across the AdPT Process

**! CAUTION**

Avoid a Reductionist View

Theoretical Intentionality

You're NOT a Brain Expert (most likely)

Be Consistent with Science, Not Constrained By It



SUCCESS = SELF CARE

## INCREASE AWARENESS

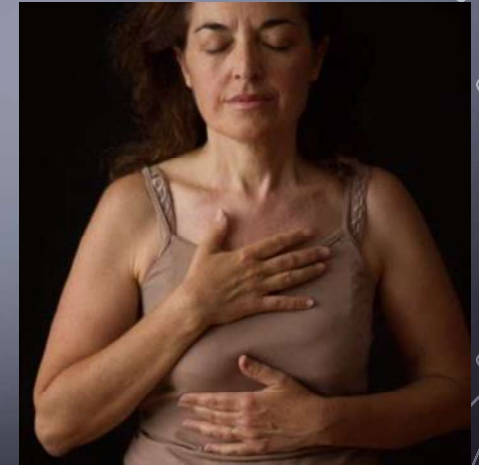
Monitor and Modify State to Increase Receptivity to Others

Reactive vs Receptive

Focus on body sensation can loosen up connection to emotions

Increase body awareness to connect messages from gut, heart, lungs, brain

"We don't just think something, we feel it too."



## UNDERSTANDING PARENTS



- Their experiences
- Possible triggers/boiling points
- Presentation
- Age of Child

## THINK OF A CAREGIVER YOU STRUGGLE WITH

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION FIRST, THEN IN PAIRS, DISCUSS:

- a) THE CAREGIVER
- b) WHERE YOU ARE STUCK?
- c) FEELINGS THAT EMERGE WHEN YOU THINK OF THIS PERSON?
- d) CAREGIVERS EXPERIENCES?
- e) POSSIBLE TRIGGERS FOR THAT CAREGIVER?
- f) AGE OF THEIR CHILD OF FOCUS?



## ENGAGING WITH PARENTS

- Create** • a common language
- Provide** • core conditions
- Model** • imperfections
- Honor** • parent's knowledge



## BASIC STRUCTURE OF CAREGIVER CONSULTATIONS

- check-in** CHECK IN
- CONNECT TO PLAY THEMES**
- TEACH** PRACTICE/TEACH CAREGIVER SOMETHING TANGIBLE

## EXAMPLE CAREGIVER CONSULTATION:

- Scenario: Child client is 9 years old and referred for peer issues (has trouble making friends/keeping friends). Client has attended 7 sessions (in AdPT Phase II – gathering information)
- Step 1: Check-in – Caregiver report of the week: consistent trouble on the playground
- Step 2: Play themes: control, safety
- Step 3: Teach something – Choice-giving for developmentally appropriate shared power

## TAILORING CAREGIVER CONSULTATIONS

- Caregiver need
- Phase of therapy
- Strength of therapist-caregiver relationship
- Parental awareness of own “stuff”
- Age (Chronological/Developmental) of Child



BREAK

**BETWEEN MINDS**  
AN ONGOING TAXONOMY OF TEAM DYNAMICS

**LEFT BRAIN VS RIGHT BRAIN**

- INFO PROCESSING
- PERCEPTUAL ENGAGEMENT
- WORKFLOW
- PROBLEM SOLVING

Mindjet & QES30

WHY CONSIDER THE BRAIN IN PARENT CONSULTATIONS?

### INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY (IPNB)

Neural Integration:

- Influences health
- Can be helped or hindered through relationships
- Is a constant process of information interpretation and interaction
- Nine domains, each can be addressed in therapeutic intervention.

Siegel (2009)

### IPNB NINE LEVELS OF BRAIN INTEGRATION (SIEGEL, 2009)

- Consciousness
- Vertical
- Horizontal
- Memory
- Narrative
- State
- Temporal
- Interpersonal
- Transpersonal

## NEURAL INTEGRATION

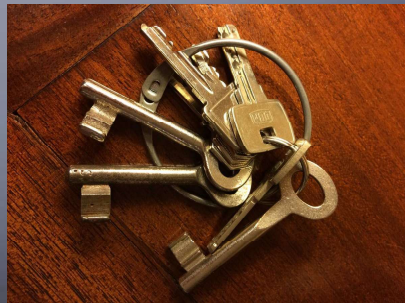
- Promoted by healthy minds
- Linking differentiated parts within and between
- Integration =
  - F – Flexible
  - A – Adaptive
  - C – Coherent
  - E – Energized
  - S – Stable
- Disintegration = chaos, rigidity



ADPT + IPNB

## KEY ELEMENTS OF OVERLAP

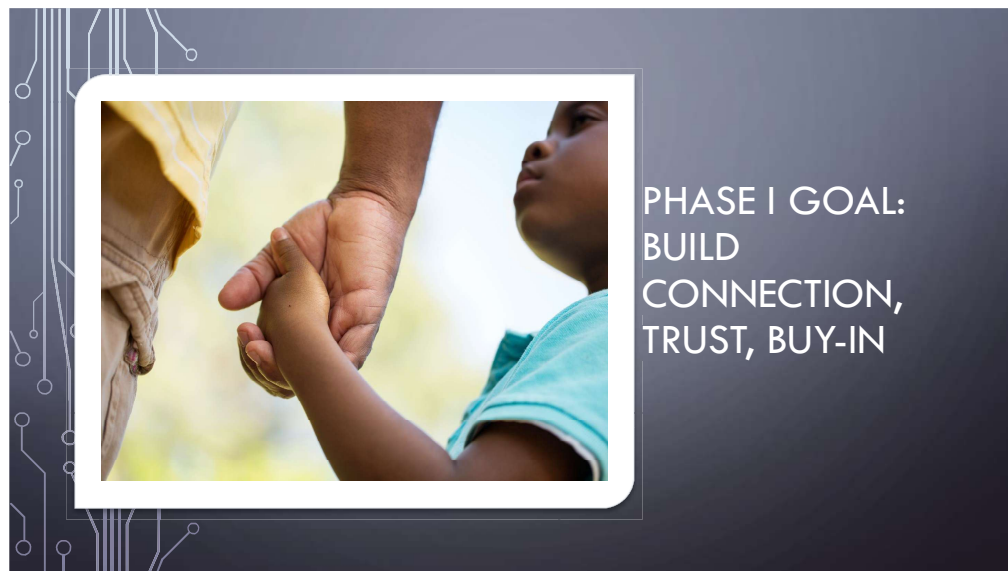
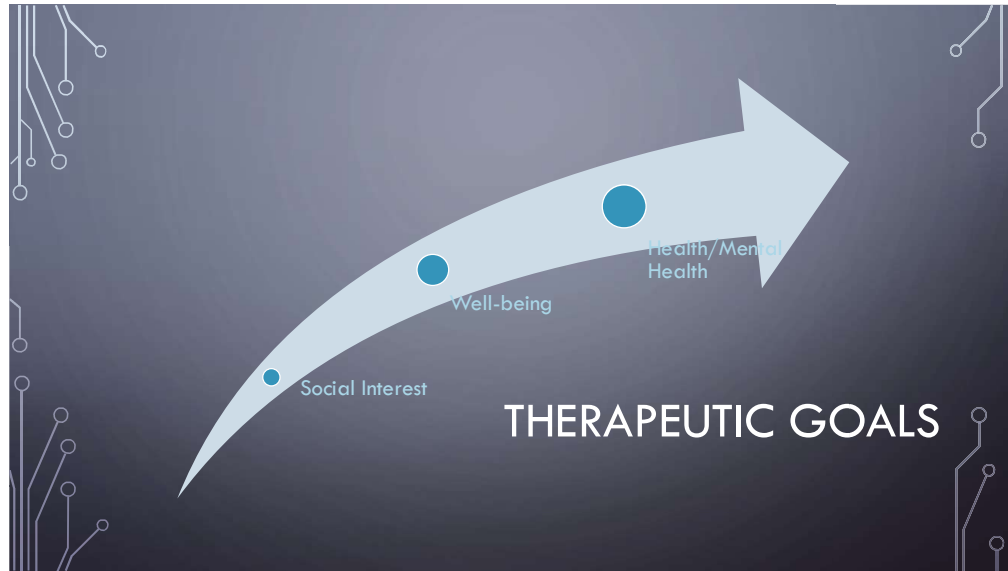
- Social Embeddedness
  - Social Interest
  - Role of Early Experiences
  - Therapeutic Relationship
- Purposefulness of Behavior
  - Goal Directed Behavior
  - Development of Life style



Miller & Dillman Taylor, 2016

## NATURE OF PEOPLE





INTEGRATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

- Here-and-now awareness
  - Senses
  - Thoughts
  - Feelings
  - Connection to Others
- Can be practiced
- Can be taught as a skill
- Accessible when SNS is calm

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[http://www.drDansiegel.com/resources/wheel\\_of\\_awareness/](http://www.drDansiegel.com/resources/wheel_of_awareness/)

## CONSCIOUSNESS IN CAREGIVER CONSULTATIONS



### Therapist ability to respond from our center, our hub

Equal empathy for both parent and child  
Assess parent-child capacity for empathy for one another



### Reflect on what is taking place in body during child's misbehaviors



## INTERPERSONAL INTEGRATION

- Related to attachment style
- Conflict Repair
- Mirror Neurons
- "Kindness to others is interpersonal integration made visible."

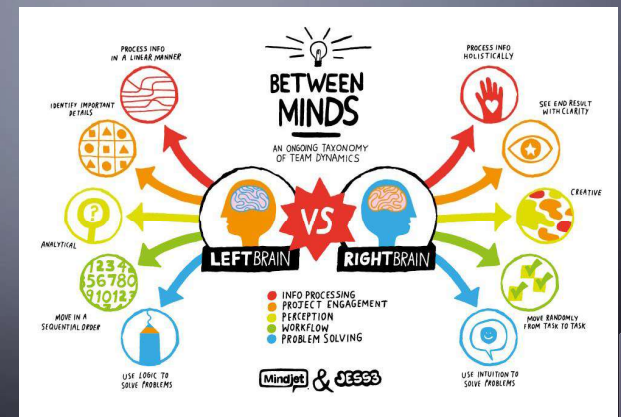


## INTERPERSONAL INTEGRATION IN CAREGIVER CONSULTATIONS

- Parents feel vulnerable, inadequate
  - Regulate, relate, reason (Winfrey & Perry, 2020)
- Options in PC:
  - Encourage connection
  - Develop understand in parent's own attachment
  - Use of modeling
    - Connection/reconnection
    - Vulnerability
    - Imperfection
    - Skills

## BILATERAL OR HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION

Left and Right hemispheres perform similar functions; however, from a more simplistic level



## AVOIDANT – LEFT- DOMINATED

- Wheel of Awareness – review 6<sup>th</sup> sense: Bodily sensations
  - [http://www.drdansiegel.com/resources/wheel\\_of\\_awareness/](http://www.drdansiegel.com/resources/wheel_of_awareness/)
- Become aware of non-verbal signals
- Learn to use non-verbal expressions
- Develop your autobiographical memory (more to come on this)
- Practice sending and receiving differing emotions
- Increase use of context
- Try tuning in to any inner hints (i.e., feelings, sensations)

## AMBIVALENCE – RIGHT- DOMINATED

Name it to Tame it

Journal Writing

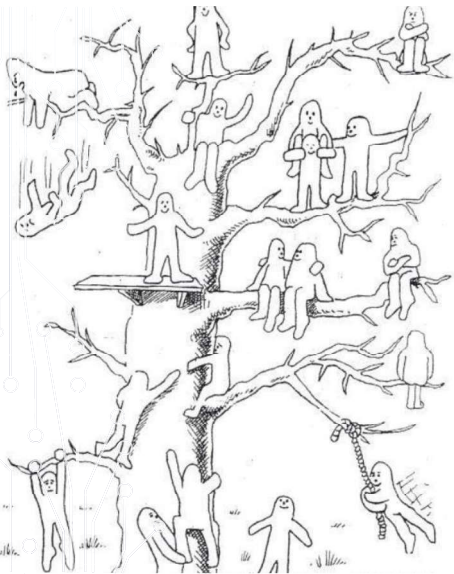
Practice Wheel of Awareness

Know your Emotions

Practice connecting in relationships that benefits all parties

Recognize feelings of insecurity and acknowledge those

Strengthen your internal observer



INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY: GOAL TO  
CONNECT

[WWW.BLOBTREE.COM](http://WWW.BLOBTREE.COM)



## BREAK



## PHASE II GOAL: GATHER INFORMATION

## PHASE II CONCEPTS

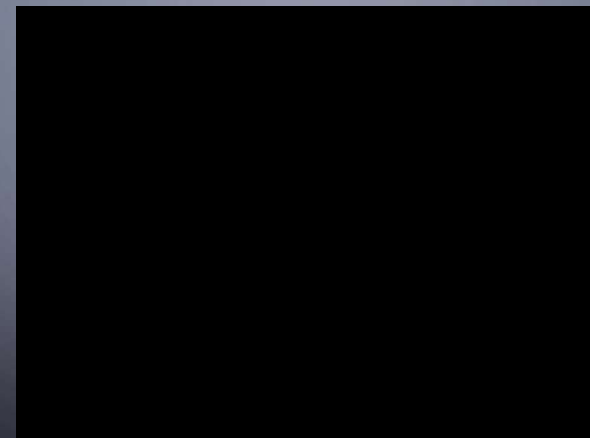


## MEMORY INTEGRATION

- Forgetting is an important part of remembering
- Implicit/Non-declarative Memory = unconscious; priming, conditioning, procedural
  - Amygdala (Fight, flight, freeze)
- Explicit/Declarative Memory = conscious; episodic (events and context), semantic (general knowledge)
  - Hippocampal system



## AMY AND FLO



PREP, Inc. (2011).  
Anger and stress:  
Letting Flo drive.

## MEMORY INTEGRATION AND PC



HELP PARENTS UNLOCK  
MEMORIES THAT ARE STORED  
EMOTIONALLY



ENGAGE IN EXPRESSIVE ARTS  
WITHIN PC



ACTIVITY: FOCUSED EARLY  
RECOLLECTIONS

## FOCUSED EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

(AMY LEW AND BETTY LOU BETTNER)



Designed to use a single ER to gather information about a specific topic, like conflict, power, communication, money, responsibility, holidays, etc.



Give the client a specific topic the therapist wants to explore

Example: a time when the parent got in trouble for something in their own childhood



Transcribe the description as close to word-for-word as possible because there might be important nuances in the words the client/parent uses to describe the memory.



Ask the parent to draw, paint, act out the story with puppets/dolls, or use the sand to show/tell the story



## FOCUSED EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

DESIGNED TO USE A SINGLE ER TO  
GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT  
YOUR FIRST MEMORY IN GRADUATE  
SCHOOL

## NARRATIVE INTEGRATION

- Meaning is made of our experiences through the story we keep and share
- Occur when expectations are violated
  - We have no reason to tell what we already know or expect





## NARRATIVE AND PC

MEANING IS MADE THROUGH RETELLING OF OUR STORIES  
CONNECT THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES TO UNDERSTAND INFLUENCE OF THOSE EVENTS ON THEIR PARENTING  
EXAMPLE FOR CAREGIVER CONSULTATIONS: MY LIFE STORY PICTURE



DAY 2



## QUESTIONS

CHECK IN



PHASE III GOAL: GAINING INSIGHT

## VERTICAL INTEGRATION

- Upstairs functions are integrated with Downstairs functions
- Primary emotional circuits are situated in the subcortical region
- Sensory input vs Perceptual Reality
- Sequential Process



## VERTICAL AND PC

- Develop understand around child's "meltdowns"
  - Flipping Lid
  - Wise Owl
  - H.A.L.T.
- Thermostat v. Thermometer
- Metaphoric Techniques



Siegel, 2010

## ADVANCING INTEGRATION

### Memory

- Early childhood memories
- Make Implicit Explicit

### Narrative

- Schemas about self, others, and the world

## DESIGNING CHANGE METAPHORS

(KOTTMAN, N.D.)

- Tend to be shorter and less elaborate than the other format for therapeutic metaphors
- Different Types of Change Metaphors:
  - Self-Image Thinking
  - Behavior
  - Affect
  - Attitude

## INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

DESIGN YOUR OWN METAPHOR FOR THE CAREGIVER YOU SELECTED  
SHARE WITH YOUR GROUP



# BREAK



## PHASE IV GOAL: FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

REORIENT/REEDUCATE

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## STATE INTEGRATION

- Similar to narrative integration; our early attachment needs don't go away. "We are onions" and develop layers over time.
- State of Mind is responsible for:
  - Perceptual bias
  - Emotional tone and regulation
  - Memory processes
  - Mental models
  - Behavioral response patterns





## STATE AND PC

- Increase awareness of states
- Provide neuroeducation to move past patterns of perception expressed as personality
- Teach neuroplasticity to provide/gain hope
- Work with parents to resolve conflictual parts of the self
- Teach parents simple activities to practice with their child
  - Bubbles
  - Stuffedies
  - Growing flower (Dillman Taylor & Wheeler, 2021)
  - 30-second burst of attention



## INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

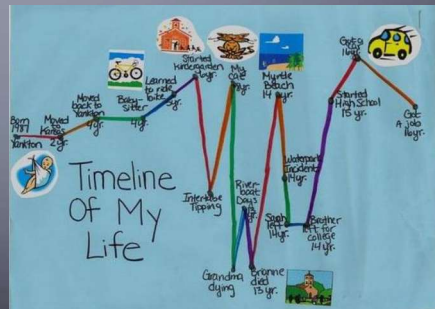
GROWING FLOWER

BUBBLES

30-SECOND BURST OF ATTENTION

## TEMPORAL INTEGRATION AND PC

- Facilitative responses
- Process and integrate life events into life story
  - Example: Life Story sticker picture
- Ground parent in session
  - Breathing exercises
  - Here and now activities
- Extending work to home
  - Neuroeducation
  - Practice activities for homework



## TEMPORAL INTEGRATION

- Organizing time between past, present, future
- Embracing the duality of existence and resolving tension about the human paradox

### Longing For:

Certainty  
Permanence  
Immortality

### Accepting:

Uncertainty  
Transience  
Mortality

- Scanning for danger, Alerting system of threats, Motivate action



## REVISITING THE "CHALLENGING" PARENT

WHERE ARE THEY IN THE PROCESS?  
WHAT INSIGHTS DID YOU GAIN?  
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO IMPLEMENT MOVING FORWARD?



## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RESISTANT CAREGIVERS

WHAT THE PURPOSE BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR?



## PERSONALITY PRIORITIES

UNDERSTANDING SELF FIRST – APPA

## CONSIDER CAREGIVER'S PRESENTATION STYLE

- Control
- Comfort
- Superiority
- Pleasing

## CONTROL (DILLMAN TAYLOR & RAY, 2012)

Persons with a control priority may seek to control self or others, including situations.

They are considered to be leaders, organized, and productive.

They are assertive in their interactions and follow rules.

Those with a control priority may feel less creative or lacking in spontaneity.

They sometimes complain of feeling distanced from others or wanting to feel closer to others.

Others may feel challenged, tense, or resistant when interacting with persons with a control priority.

## COMFORT (DILLMAN TAYLOR & RAY, 2012)

Persons with a comfort priority seek to avoid discomfort or stress.

They are generally considered easy-going, making few demands on others, peacemakers, and mellow.

They are fairly predictable, mind their own business and show empathy toward others.

Those with a comfort priority may feel they are not as productive as they would like to be or that they are not successfully using their talents.

Others typically like persons with a comfort personality, yet they may be irritated or bored by the comfort personality's avoidance of situations.

## SUPERIORITY (DILLMAN TAYLOR & RAY, 2012)

Persons with a superiority priority seek to be more competent, useful, or better than others.

They are considered to be knowledgeable, idealistic, and perfectionistic.

Those with a superiority priority may feel overburdened, over-responsible, and over-involved.

They typically complain of being overloaded and having a lack of time, as well as uncertain of their relationships with others.

Others may feel inadequate, inferior, or guilty when interacting with persons with a superiority priority.

## PLEASEING (DILLMAN TAYLOR & RAY, 2012)

Persons with a pleasing personality priority seek to please others.

They are generally considered friendly, non-aggressive, and compromising.

They are likely to volunteer for tasks and meet others' expectations.

Those with a pleasing priority may feel that others do not respect them and possibly that they do not respect themselves.

Others typically feel pleased around persons with a pleasing priority especially at first, but may become frustrated or exasperated by constant demands for approval.



# PERSONALITY PRIORITY DEBRIEF

IN PARTNERS



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