

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy: Case Study of Application to a Parentally Bereaved Child

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Abstract

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is an empirically supported therapy used to treat young children with behavior problems. The literature on parentally bereaved children indicates that they are at an increased risk for behavior problems and psychopathology. There is minimal literature to describe the efficacy of current intervention programs in reducing this risk for children under the age of 6 years. PCIT is designed to improve the quality of the parent child relationship and increase the parents' use of effective discipline; two factors which are strongly correlated with decreased risk for psychopathology. This article presents a case study describing the use of PCIT with a parentally bereaved preschool child experiencing behavioral problems and symptoms of depression. At the end of treatment the child's behavior had significantly improved and symptoms of depression were no longer observed. These findings suggest that PCIT may be an effective therapy for reducing the risk of behavior problems and psychopathology in young children.

Keywords: Therapy; Child; Behaviors; Anxiety; Autism

Introduction

Parent Child Interactional Therapy (PCIT) is an empirically supported treatment for children with oppositional defiant disorder and disruptive behaviors [1-6]. Additional applications of this therapy with children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and comorbid anxiety disorders have been reported [7-10].

During the CDI phase of treatment the parents were taught to apply differential social attention, avoid questions, criticism and commands,

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