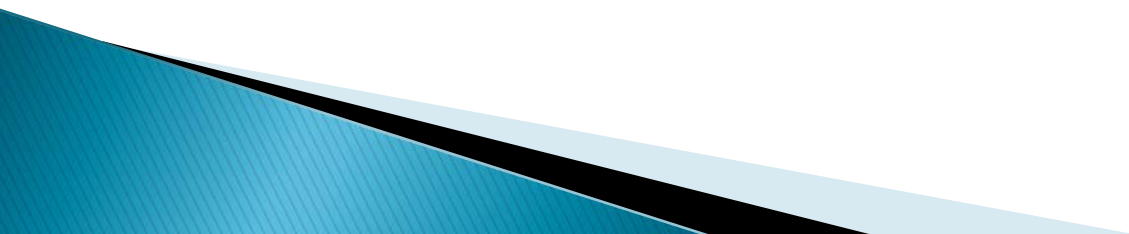


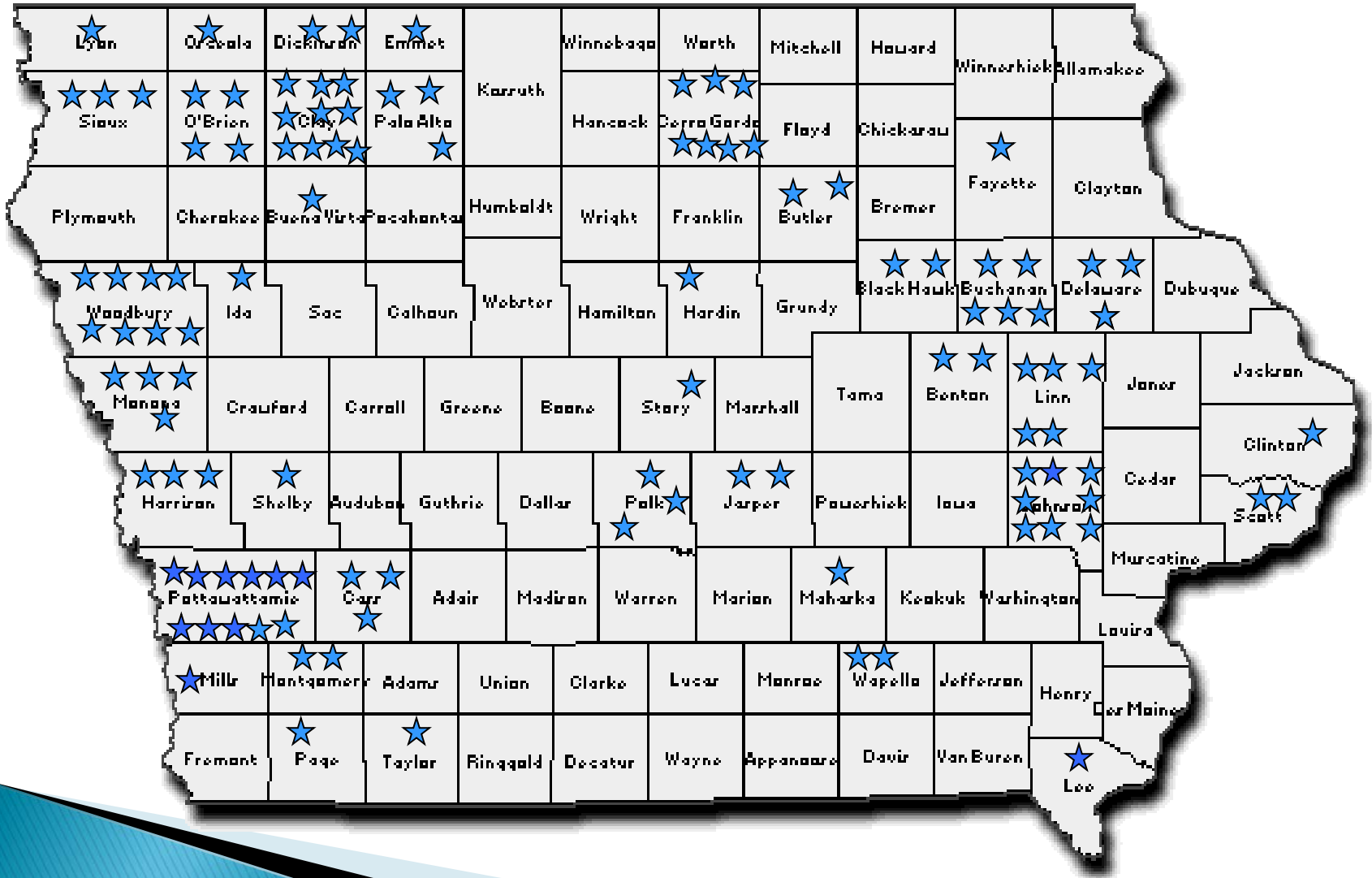
# Using Research on Attachment Theory to Inform PCIT Coaching

March 6, 2015

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Department of Psychiatry  
University of Iowa Carver  
College of Medicine



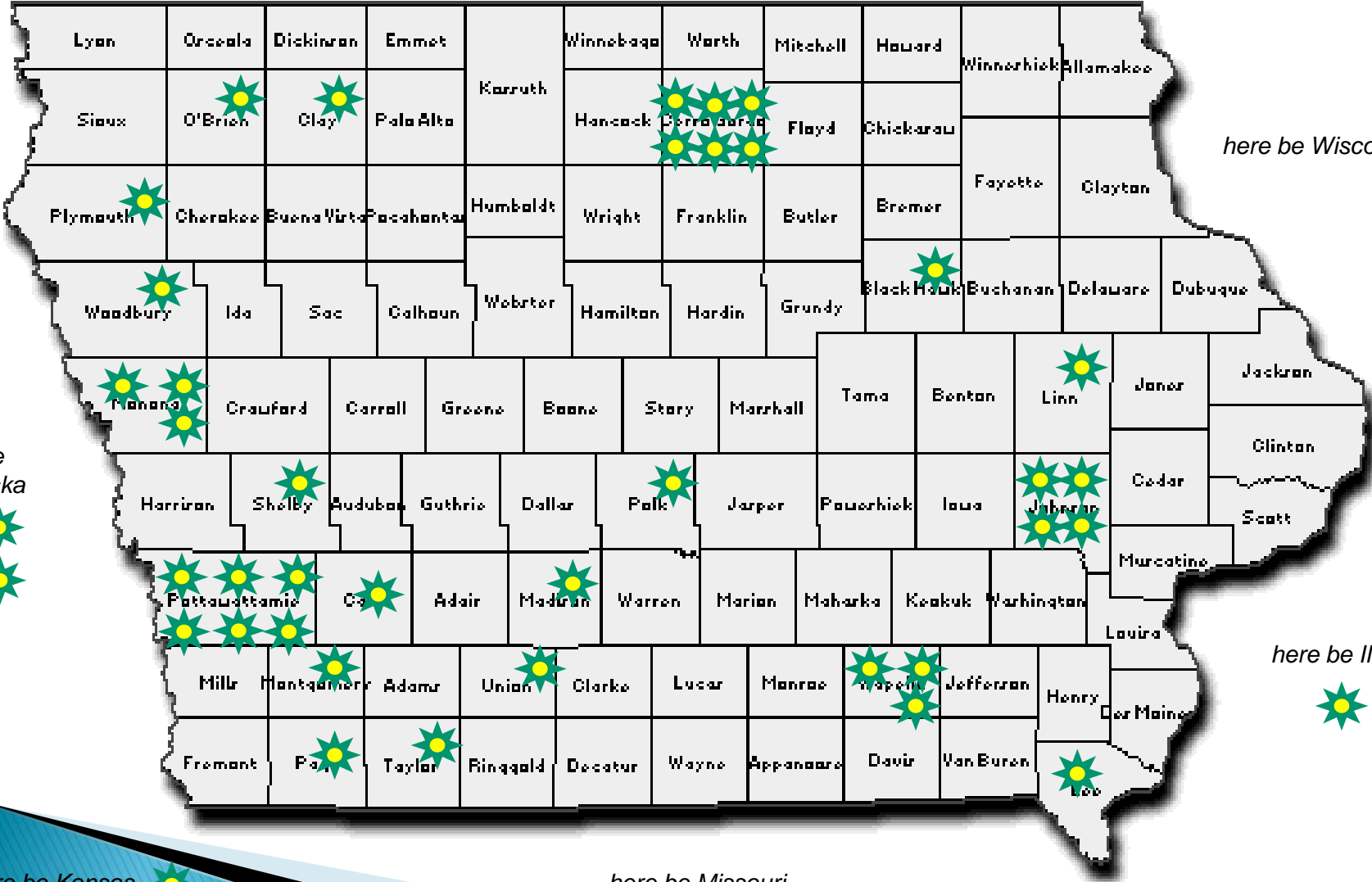
Location by County of Therapists Trained in Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) - March 2014



# Location of PCIT Therapists Completing 30 Hours of Training on Integration of Working Models of Attachment into PCIT coaching

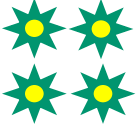
February, 2015

here be Minnesota 



here be Wisconsin

here be Nebraska



here be Illinois



here be Kansas 

here be Missouri

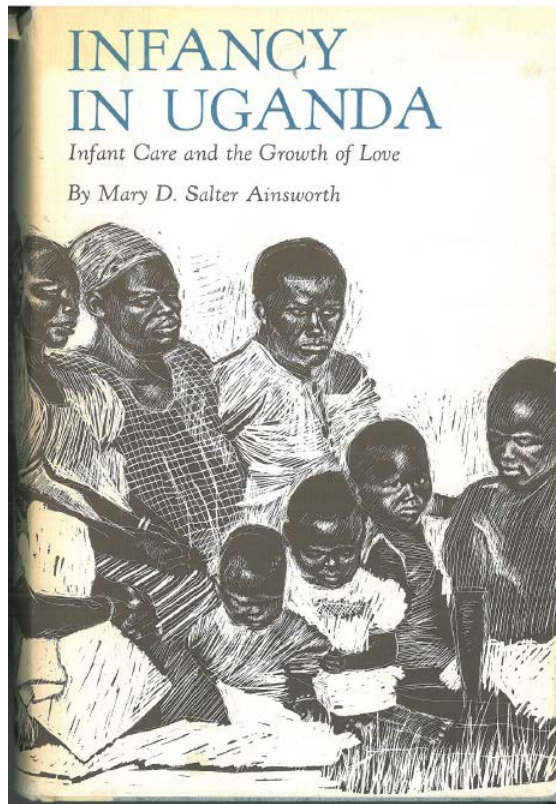


There is nothing  
more practical  
than a good  
theory.

Kurt Lewin

Social Learning Theory

# Attachment Theory

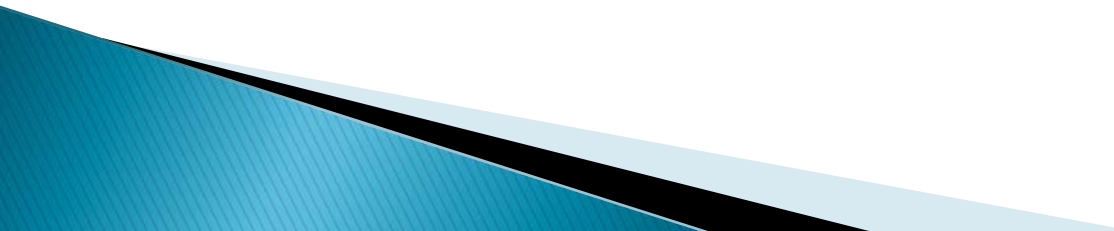


Ainsworth, 1967



Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978

# Research-based assessments of attachment

- ▶ Strange Situation Procedure (12 to 18 months)
  - ▶ Modified Strange Situation Procedure for Preschoolers (2 to 5)
  - ▶ Child Separation Reunion Procedure (5 to 7)
  - ▶ Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) (17 +)
  - ▶ Disturbances of Attachment Interview (DAI)
- 

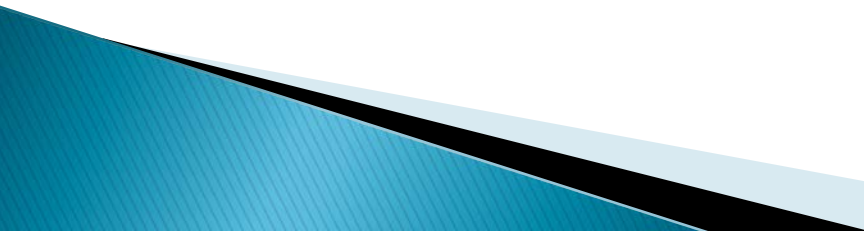
# ATTACHMENT



# “Red Herrings”

- ▶ Focusing on whether child is attached to primary caregiver
- ▶ Focusing on whether child has Reactive Attachment Disorder



- ▶ “Almost every infant will develop an attachment relationship with a caregiver, and will endeavor to use that caregiver as a source of comfort and reassurance in the face of challenges or threats from the environment”
  - ▶ Weinfield, Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 2008
  - ▶ Handbook of Attachment, Second Edition
- 

## Rate of DSM–V Reactive Attachment Disorder in Children Aged 6 – 30 Months *Living in Orphanage* in Romania

- ▶ Baseline (21 months): 5%
- ▶ 30 months: 3%
- ▶ 42 months: 2%
- ▶ 54 months: 4%

Gleason, Fox, Drury, Smyke, Egger, Nelson, Gregas, & Zeanah (2011) AACAP

# Attachment theory

- ▶ Infants have an *innate need* for responsive care from a small number of consistent caregivers
- ▶ By the end of the first year, the child has developed behavior *patterns* that promote proximity to attachment figures

# Research-based assessments of attachment in infants and young children assesses

- ▶ Behavior *pattern* that promotes proximity to attachment figure

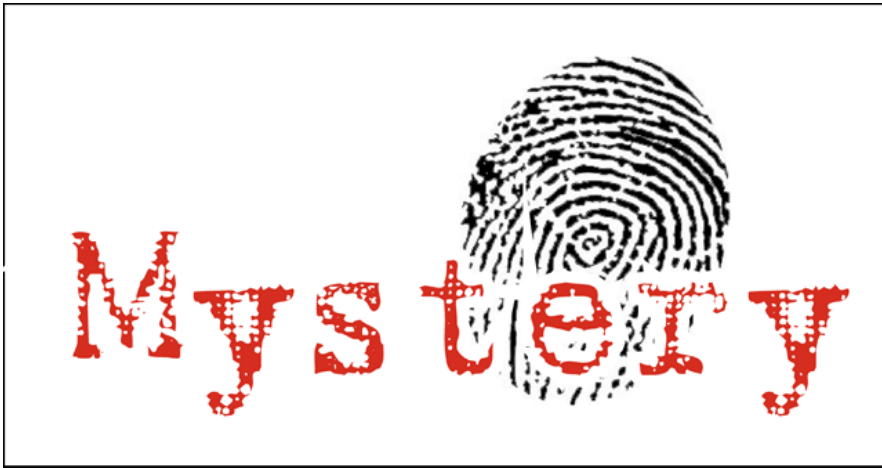
- ▶ *“When you hear hoofbeats, think of horses not zebras.”*
  - Theodore Woodward

# Strange Situation Procedure for Infants and Modified Strange Situation Procedure for Preschoolers

- ▶ Series of separations and reunions designed to activate exploratory system and attachment system
- ▶ Evaluation of dyad's pattern of attachment
  - How child uses relationship with parent as
    - Secure base
    - Safe haven

# Patterns of Attachment

- ▶ Organized patterns of attachment
  - Secure (B)
  - Ambivalent/resistant (C)
  - Avoidant (A)
- ▶ Disorganized pattern of attachment (D)



- ▶ HANDOUT

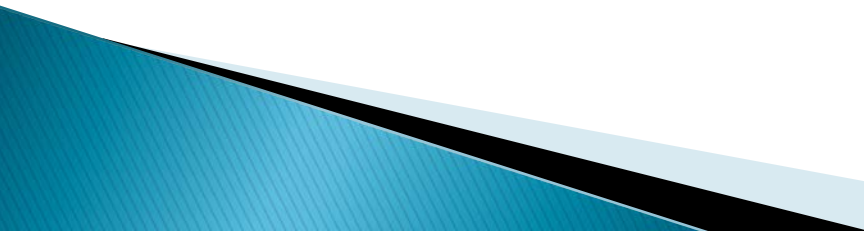
- ▶ Do you think this is a secure child-caregiver attachment?      YES                      NO
- ▶                      What clues led you to this conclusion?



# “Pink Herrings”

- ▶ Placing too much emphasis on separation and not enough emphasis on reunion

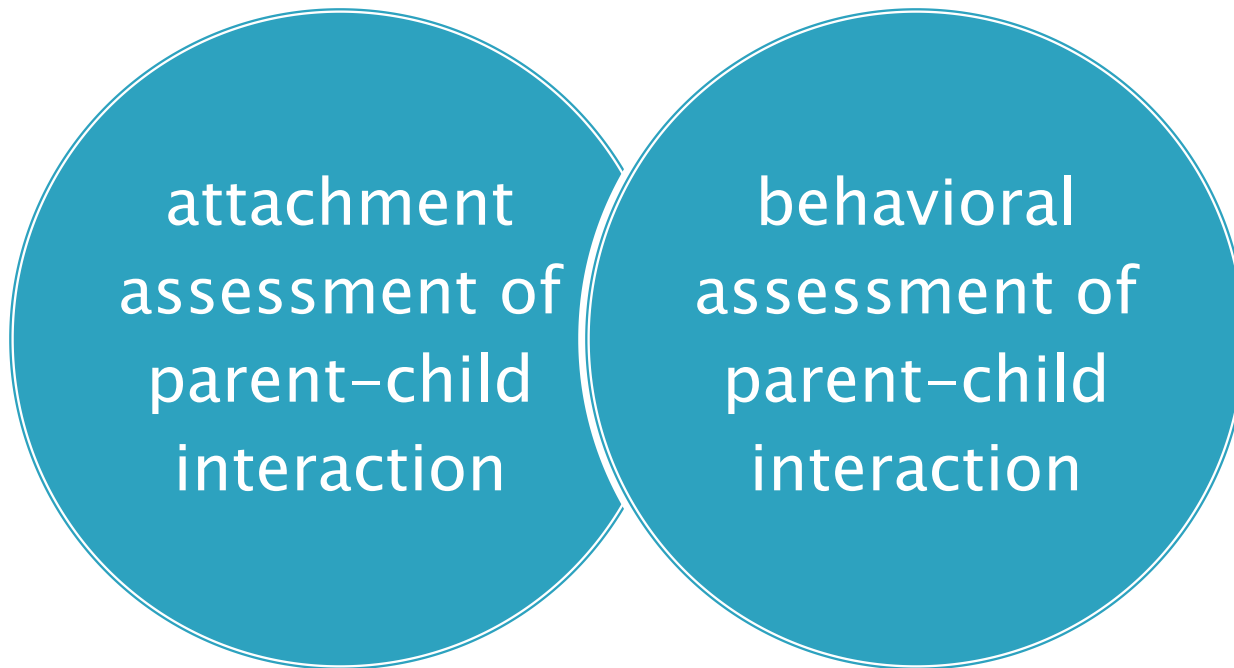
# “Pink Herrings”

- ▶ Not taking developmental differences between infants and preschoolers into account
    - Majority of securely attached infants become distressed during separation
    - Majority of securely attached preschoolers do not become distressed during separation
- 

# “Pink Herrings”

- ▶ Using behavioral assessments of interactions such as DPICS to assess attachment

Surprisingly little overlap between assessments based on attachment theory and assessments based on social learning theory



# Maternal Criticism and Attachment – concurrent assessments @ 3 to 5

maternal  
criticism  
(child led  
play)



insecure  
attachment

# Maternal Criticism and Attachment – concurrent assessments @ 3 to 5

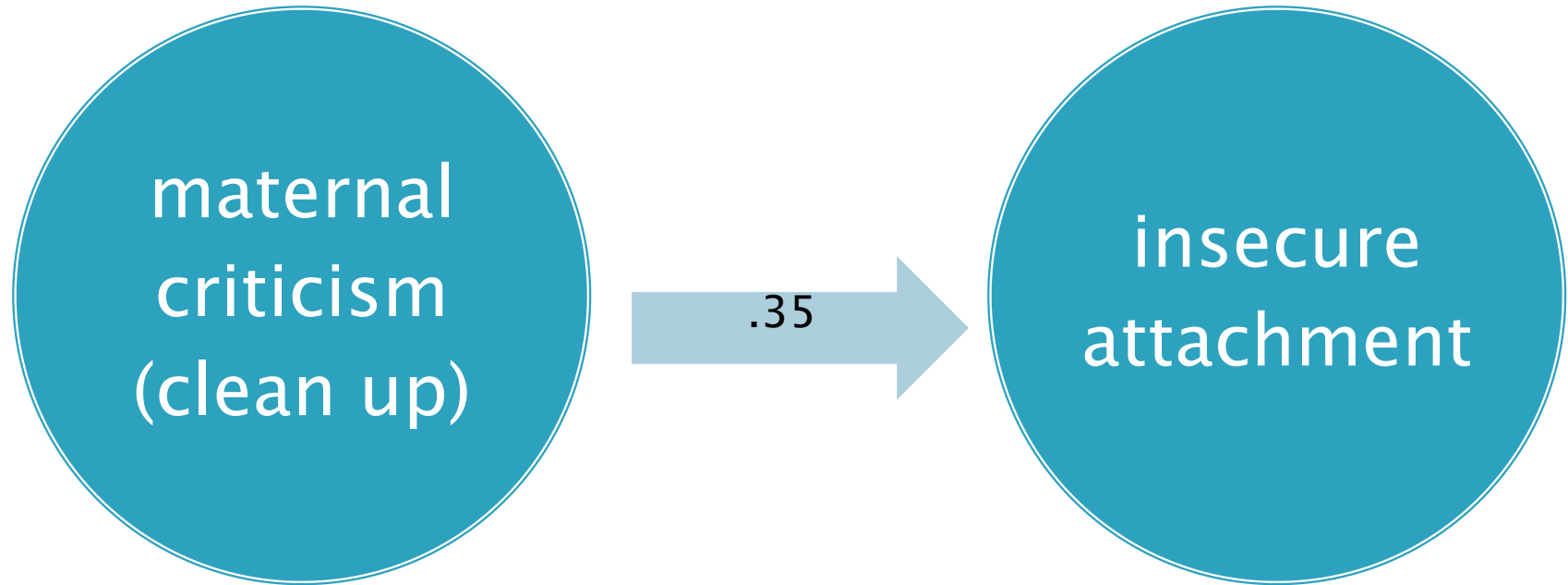
maternal  
criticism  
(parent led  
play)



insecure  
attachment  
@ 3 to 5  
years

# Maternal Criticism and Attachment

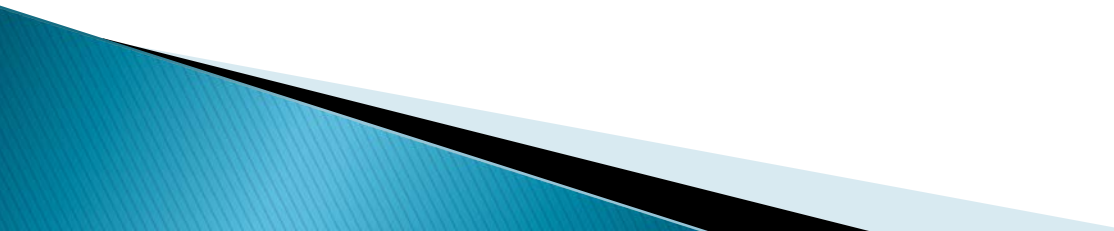
– concurrent assessments @ 3 to 5  
Speltz, DeKlyen, Greenberg, & Dryden, 1995



# Coaching CDI with an attachment theory lens



# Sensitive Responsiveness

- ▶ Response to attachment signals is
    - ▶ Prompt
    - ▶ Consistent
    - ▶ Appropriate
- 

# Attachment signals

- ▶ Positive signals – e.g. smiling, reaching
- ▶ Negative signals – e.g. crying, fussing

- ▶ Maternal response to *negative* signals (i.e. *distress*) is especially important in development of secure attachment

# Coaching ignoring with an attachment theory lens

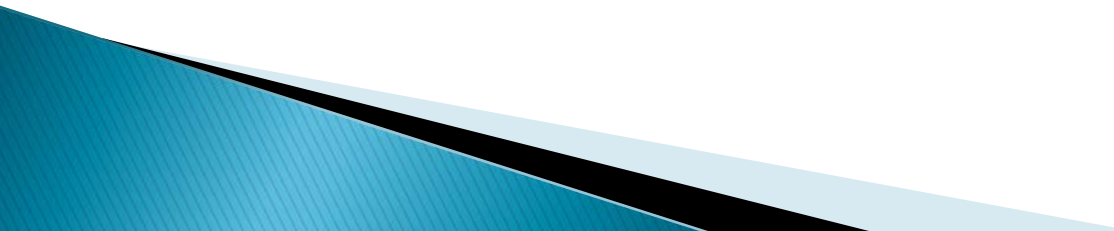
- ▶ “Attention-seeking” evokes
  - negative idea about children’s attachment needs
  - defensiveness in parents as implies they are not giving their child enough attention

# Coaching CDI with an attachment theory lens

- ▶ Focus on importance of parent's attention to child without describing behavior as "attention-seeking"

- ▶ “The most precious gift we can offer anyone is our attention. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers.”
  - Thich Nhat Hanh

# Coaching ignoring with an attachment theory lens

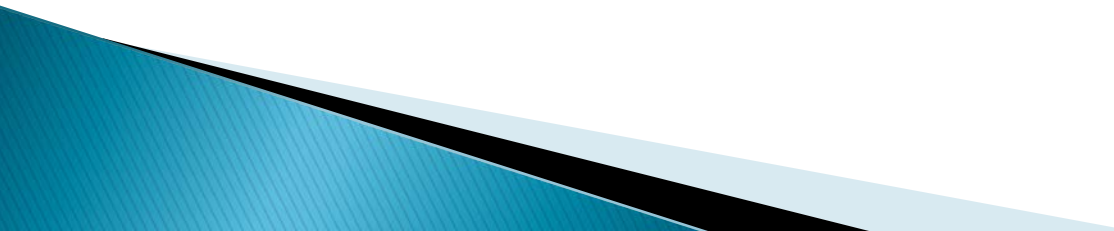
- ▶ Careful attention to defining specific child behaviors that will be ignored
  - ▶ I do not coach parents to ignore crying
- 

# Coaching ignoring with an attachment theory lens

- ▶ Limit the number of behaviors parents ignore
  - ignoring should occur rarely during CDI
- ▶ Focus on shaping – successive approximations rather than perfection
  - “I knew how to ignore. You taught me when to stop ignoring and pay attention again.”



# Coaching PDI with an attachment theory lens

- ▶ Is time-out, as used in PCIT, aversive?
  - ▶ Does time-out, as used in PCIT, cause distress?
- 

## IS TIME-OUT FROM POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT AN AVERSIVE EVENT?

### A REVIEW OF THE EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE<sup>1</sup>

HAROLD LEITENBERG<sup>2</sup>

*Indiana University*

Experiments concerning the aversive properties of time-out (TO) from positive reinforcement are reviewed. A discussion of experimental designs employed and problems encountered in defining aversive stimuli precedes the review. The major topics covered are: avoidance of TO, escape from TO, escape from stimuli which previously signalled TO, punishment with TO, effects on ongoing behavior of pre-TO stimuli, escape from conditions of positive reinforcement into TO. In general, TO satisfied sufficient criteria to conclude that it belongs to the class of stimuli called "aversive." However, since some differences between the effects of shock and TO were found; since some experiments allow other interpretations than that TO is aversive; and since so much research remains to be done, this conclusion is only tentative.

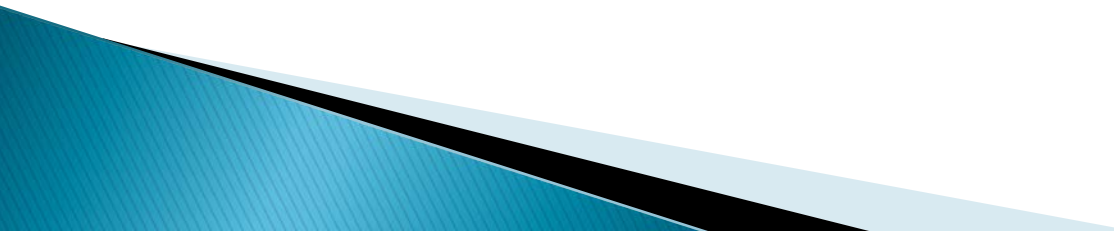
# PDI roll-out

- ▶ Designed to *limit* the use of time-out from positive reinforcement
  - Play commands
  - 2 to 4 real commands
  - Running commands

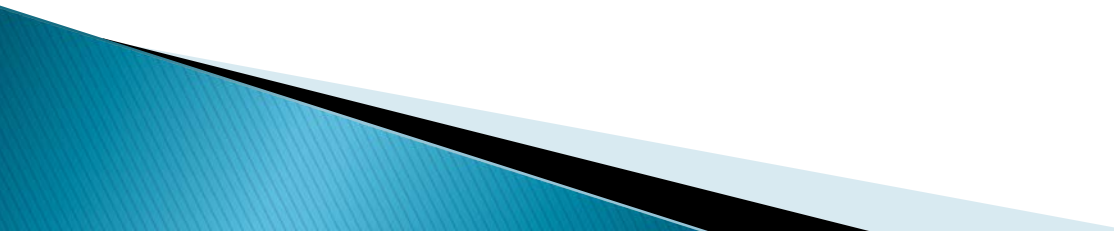
# Coaching PDI with an attachment lens

- ▶ Acknowledge distress associated with PDI for
  - Child
  - Parents
  - Therapist
  - Office neighbors

# Questions I ask *parents* during PDI teach

- ▶ “What will be the hardest thing for you to hear your child say on the time-out chair?”
  - ▶ “What will be the hardest thing for you to see your child do on the time-out chair?”
- 

# Questions I ask *therapists* during PCIT training

- ▶ What will be the hardest thing for you to hear a child say on the time-out chair?
  - ▶ What will be the hardest thing for you to see a child do on the time-out chair?
- 

# Disruption and Repair

- ▶ Importance of CDI following PDI



# Secure Pattern of Attachment (B)

## Ordinary Magic

What began as a quest to understand the extraordinary has revealed the power of the ordinary.

Anne Masten, 2001



# Secure base

- ▶ Support for exploration



# Safe haven

- Support for seeking proximity and comfort when distressed



# Coaching Attachment

# Resistant/Ambivalent Pattern of Attachment (C)

- Emphasis on attachment needs and relationship
  - Hyperactivation of attachment
- “Love, hate” relationship
- Dyad struggles with child exploring or acting independently

## Resistant/Ambivalent (C)

Can't Live With Her,  
Can't Live Without Her

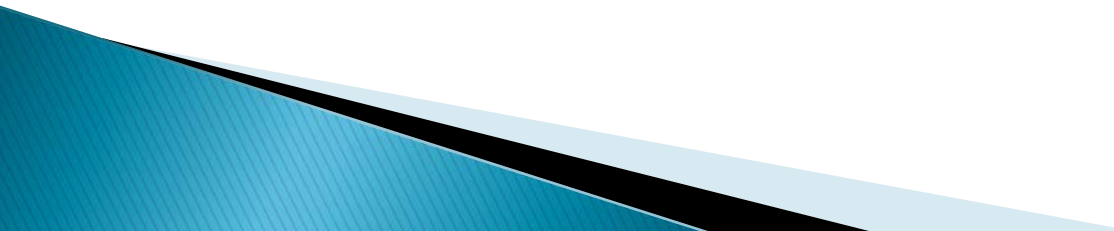
*“As you move in, I  
move away; as I move  
away, you move in...  
No matter where I  
move in relation to you,  
I cannot get  
comfortable.”*

*Beebe, Jaffe, Markese,  
Chen, Cohen, Bahrnick,  
Andrews, & Feldstein,  
2010*

# Resistant/Ambivalent (C)

- *“At the same time, I wanna hug you*
- *I wanna wrap my hands around your neck”*
  - *Pink (True Love)*

# How Resistant/Ambivalent (C) Dyad May Present in PCIT

- Separation anxiety and aggression towards parent
  - Whining for parent to play with them but criticizing how parent plays
  - Parent hovering over child
- 



# Common Countertransference Responses to Child in Resistant/Ambivalent (C) Dyad

- Child viewed as
  - “too attached”
  - “spoiled”
  - “needy”
  - “immature”

# Caregiver Behavior Associated with Resistant/Ambivalent (C) Pattern of Attachment

- Inconsistent response to attachment signals
- Chase and dodge

# Avoidant Pattern of Attachment (A)

- Emphasis on self-reliance and exploration
- Dyad struggles with child going to caregiver for comfort

# Avoidant Pattern of Attachment (A)

*“What does not kill me  
makes me stronger.”*

*Nietzsche*



# What you might see in CDI

- ▶ Child does not want to do CDI
- ▶ Engages in misbehavior right after parent praises the opposite

# Common Countertransference Responses to Child in Avoidant (A) Dyad

- Child viewed as
  - “not attached”
  - “spoiled”
  - “mean”

# Caregiving Behavior Associated with Avoidant (A) Attachment

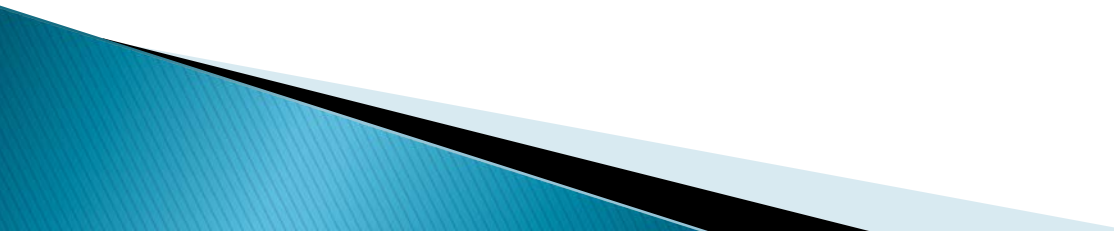
- ▶ Lack of responsiveness to distress

# Coaching Avoidant

- ▶ Cautious about use of ignore
- ▶ Praising parent about hanging in there where child rejects their use of CDI skills
- ▶ “Stealth CDI”



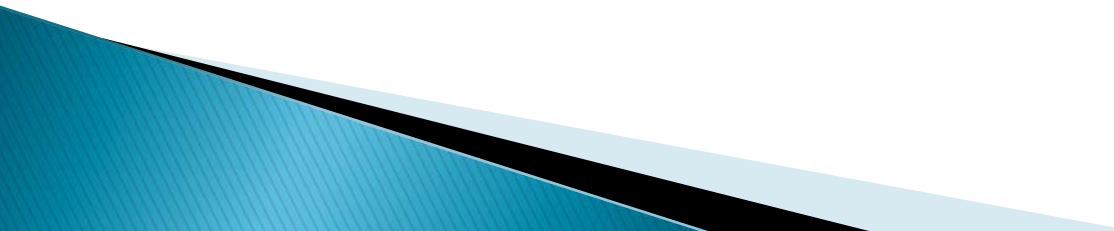
# Disorganized Attachment (D)

- ▶ Contradictory behaviors
  - ▶ Sudden changes in affect
  - ▶ Indicators of anxiety – especially when parent is present
- 

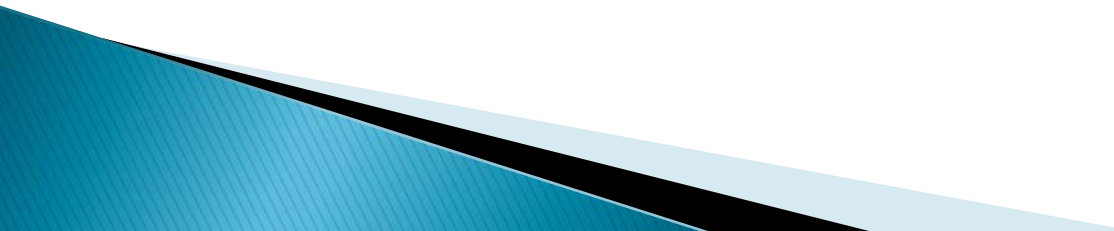
# Disorganized Attachment (infant)

- ▶ Contradictory behaviors
  - Seeking proximity by backing into parent
  - Crying while moving away from parent
  - Freezing

# Disorganized/Controlling Attachment (child)

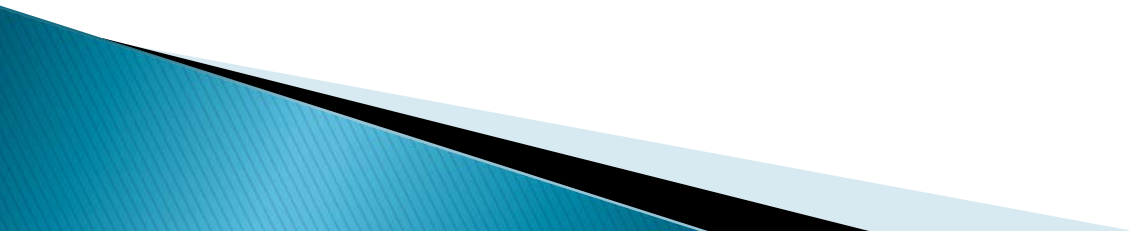
- ▶ Disorganized
  - ▶ Controlling caregiving
    - Entertaining parent
    - Overbright smile
  - ▶ Controlling punitive
    - Bossy
- 

# Caregiver Behavior Associated with Disorganized/Controlling Attachment

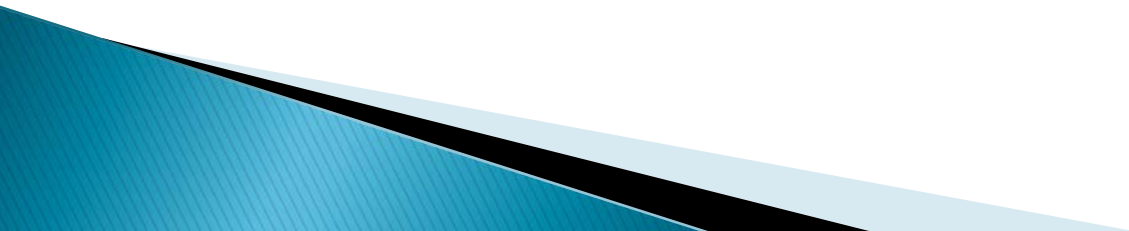
- ▶ Frightening behavior
  - ▶ Fearful behavior
  - ▶ Teasing child
  - ▶ Laughing at child's distress
  - ▶ Mixed communication
- 

# Child's Dilemma in Disorganized Attachment

“Fright Without Solution”



# Common transference response: Disorganized spiral



- ▶ Rates of disorganized attachment are high in children who have been maltreated

- ▶ A number of recent PCIT studies have a maximum number of CDI sessions (3 to 8)
  - i.e. dyad moves to PDI even if the parent has not met CDI mastery criteria



# Several studies of PCIT in maltreatment populations do not require CDI mastery prior to PDI

Reference	Population	Amount of CDI Coaching
Chaffin et al., 2004	Physically abusive parent	5 to 6 CDI coaching sessions
McNeil et al., 2005	Children in foster care with disruptive behavior	Approximately 1 ½ hours
Chaffin et al., 2010	Physically abusive or neglectful parent	5 to 6 CDI coaching sessions

# Several studies of PCIT in maltreatment populations do not require CDI mastery prior to PDI

Reference	Population	Amount of CDI Coaching
Thomas & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2012	Families at risk of or engaged in child maltreatment	5 to 8 CDI coaching sessions
Nieter et al., 2014	Parents referred for maltreatment (54%) and/or child with disruptive behavior	3 CDI coaching sessions

# It can be difficult to get parents to CDI mastery in high risk populations

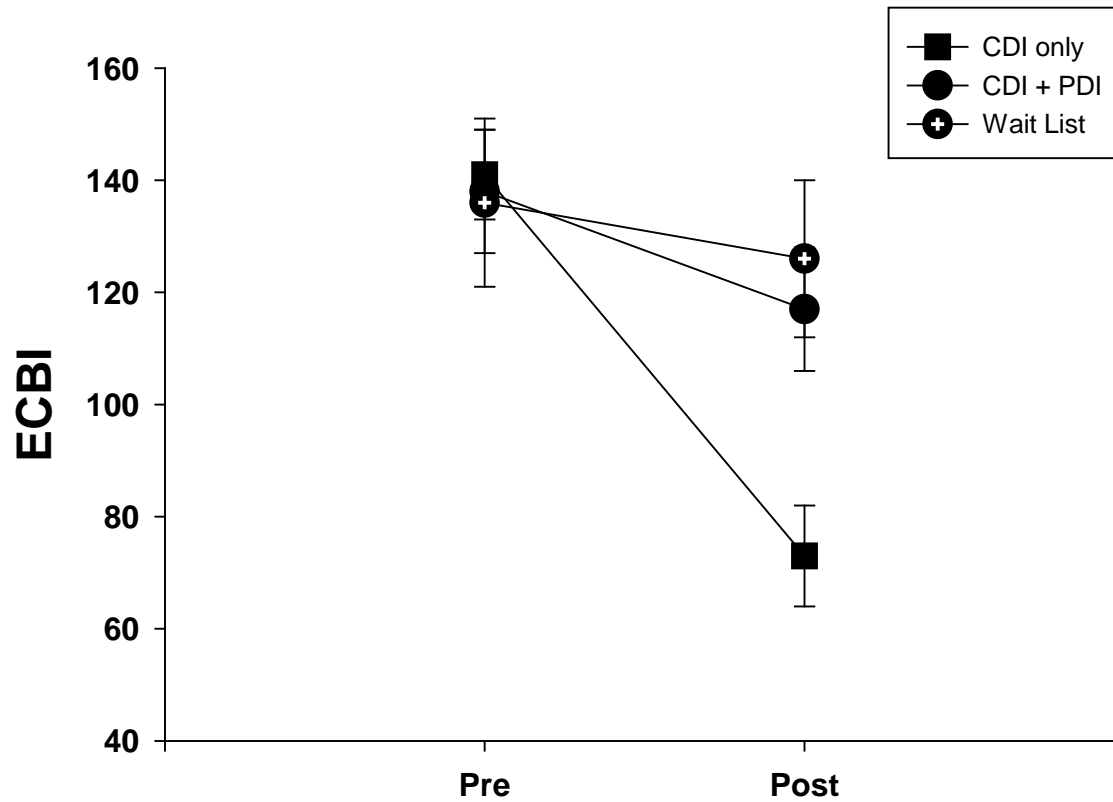
- ▶ Thomas & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2011 study of mothers with history of or at risk for maltreating their child
- ▶ Parents required to meet CDI mastery two sessions in a row before moving to PDI
- ▶ Among completers,
  - Mean # CDI coaching sessions: 11.8 (range = 4 to 25)

# Remember the purpose of CDI

- ▶ “Although some evidence suggests the child-directed interaction phase of PCIT may not be essential for decreasing the noncompliance of conduct-disordered young children, the *purpose of the child-directed interaction is to strengthen the parent-child relationship that in PCIT is considered the foundation for effective discipline.*”
- ▶ Harwood & Eyberg, 2006

# PCIT with Children in Foster Care

Danko, 2014



# More CDI

- ▶ CDI is a powerful intervention – especially for traumatized children and parents
- ▶ Take as long as needed in CDI to
  - Reach CDI mastery
  - Reduce anxiety and disorganized/controlling behavior
  - Reduce coercive interactions and disorganizing caregiving

# More PDI Too!

## ▶ Roll PDI out slowly

- Think in terms of systematic desensitization hierarchy for treatment of PTSD
  - Build on success
  - Gradual exposure to anxiety-producing situations
- SLOW DOWN ROLL OUT when you see disorganized caregiving or disorganized/controlling attachment



<http://www.medicine.uiowa.edu/psychiatry/parentchildinteractiontherapy/>

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