Externalizing Disorders and “Normal Development”

- High frequency or intensity of behavior
- Repetitiveness and chronicity of behavior
  - Not isolated events
  - Not transitory responses to external influences
- Breadth of behavior
  - Usually a cluster of behaviors that occur together

Characteristics of Externalizing Disorders

Central
- Antisocial Behaviors
- Aggressive Behaviors
- Defiant Behaviors

Associated
- Hyperactivity
- Academic problems
- Poor interpersonal relationships
- Problem-solving deficiencies
- Resentment
- Suspiciousness
- Irritability

Externalizing Behavior

Social Learning Analysis
- Behavioral Skills Deficits
- Inappropriate Attitudinal Responses
- Negative Interactions

Behavioral Skill Issues

- Problem-solving skills
- Granting independence
- Communication Skills
  - Assertive requests
  - Adequate assurances of responsible behavior
  - Avoiding Coercion
    - putdowns
    - threats
    - commands
    - overgeneralizations

Inappropriate Attitudinal Responses

Parents
- Ruination
- Obedience
- Perfectionism
- Malice
- Love /Approval
- Self-Blame

Adolescents
- Injustice
- Ruination
- Unfairness
- Autonomy
- Malice
- Love/Approval
Negative Interaction Patterns

- Reciprocity - there is equity in the giving of positive and negative consequences in most social interactions.
- Coercion - when one person makes an aversive demand of another and he or she complies with the demand, the aversive demanding behavior is positively reinforced and the compliance is negatively reinforced.

Problem Solving Communication Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four Phases</th>
<th>Four Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>engagement</td>
<td>problem solving skill training;</td>
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<tr>
<td>skill building</td>
<td>communication training;</td>
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<tr>
<td>resolution of intense problems</td>
<td>cognitive restructuring;</td>
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<tr>
<td>disengagement</td>
<td>functional/structural interventions.</td>
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Training Phases

- Engagement
- Skill Building
- Resolution of Intense Problems
- Disengagement.

Training Components

- Problem Solving Skill Training;
- Communication Training;
- Cognitive Restructuring;
- Functional/Structural Interventions.

Concerns and Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Component to Emphasize</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Clients exhibit significant skills deficits in resolving disagreements or communicating</td>
<td>• Problem-Solving Skill Training;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Communication Training;</td>
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<td>2. Clients have skills in their repertoires, but fail to use them</td>
<td>• Cognitive Restructuring</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Clients have unrealistic beliefs and expectations about parent-adolescent relations</td>
<td>• Interventions to Change Functional/Structural Interactions</td>
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<td>4. Presence of overt functional/structural problems, and/or history of resistance to intervention</td>
<td>• Cognitive Restructuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Clients have other problems such as marital conflict, depression, ADHD, substance abuse</td>
<td>• Add appropriate interventions</td>
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Problem-Solving Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Good&quot; Initial Topics</th>
<th>&quot;Bad&quot; Initial Topics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curfew</td>
<td>Talking Back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chores</td>
<td>Smoking pot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedtime</td>
<td>Choice of friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing stereo loud.</td>
<td>Dating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Problem-Solving Training
- Defining the problem
- Generating alternative solutions
- Decision-making
- Planning solution implementation
- Report (and Renegotiation if needed)

### Defining the Problem
**Goals**
- Each person expresses clearly his/her perspective about the topic being considered
- Each person understands the others’ perspectives
- The topic under discussion is limited to one discrete topic

### Generating Alternative Solutions
- List as many ideas as possible; quantity, not quality, of ideas is desirable
- Defer judgment of ideas until later in the discussion
- Be creative, outrageous, and freewheeling; anything goes

### Decision Making
- Independently evaluate the ideas by projecting positive & negative consequences
- Independently rate on a worksheet whether the idea is positive or negative for them personally
- Negotiate an overall weight of plus (+) or minus (-) depending on whether its benefits outweigh its detriments

### Planning Solution Implementation
**Specifying**
- **Who** will do
- **What**
- **When**
- **Where**, and
- **How**

### Report and Renegotiation
- Clients report on the execution of the agreed-upon solution and its outcome
  - If the solution was seen to be effective, the clients are praised, the implementation is continued, and a new issue is selected for problem-solving
  - If the solution was seen as ineffective, the clients give detailed report of how it was or was not executed. The failure will be placed within a constructive, problem-solving framework, rather than a blaming framework
**Functional/Structural Interventions**

- Weak parental coalitions,
- Cross-generational coalitions,
- Triangulation,
- Adolescent misbehavior preventing parental conflict
- Overprotection-rebellion escalator

**Weak Parental Coalitions**

- "Omnipotent" adolescent manipulates two parents who cannot agree on discipline
- Two functions -
  - Coercion
  - Avoidance
- Parental skill deficits

**Weak Parental Coalitions Intervention**

- Help Parents to Agree on Rules & Consequences
- Set Aside Democratic Stance & Have Parents Alone Make Decisions
- Enhance Communication between Parents & Mutual Support

**Cross-Generational Coalitions**

- A pattern where one parent sides with an adolescent against another parent.
- In single-parent families, these may develop across three generations, usually when a grandparent sides with the adolescent against the parent.

**Triangulation**

- Two clients disagree and each tries to enlist the support of a third. The third client vacillates between supporting each of the others and does not consistently take either side (otherwise it would be a coalition).

**Adolescent Misbehavior Preventing Parental Conflict**

- Misbehavior may serve the function of helping the parents and the child avoid marital conflict.
- Marital conflict tends to be aversive to all family members, so behaviors that reduce these conflicts are often negatively reinforced.
- Reduction of adolescent misbehavior may result in the marital couple experiencing increased conflict, resulting in resistance or sabotage.
Functions of Behavior

- Intimacy
- Distance
- Regulation

Two Step Functional Intervention

- Cognitive restructuring and reframing
- Problem-solving, communication, and contracting

Overprotection/Rebellion Escalator

- Parent(s) panic at the first sign of adolescent rebellion and tighten up the rules in an authoritarian manner.
- The adolescent escalates the rebellious behavior which leads to further parental restrictions which leads to further rebellion and so on.

Usual Outcomes

- Adolescent commits an antisocial act which leads to the involvement of a social control agency.
- The parents "give in" to the teenager's coercive behavior and relax their restrictions.
- The teenager "gives in" to the parents demands.

Generalization Programming

- At the beginning and end of a meeting, homework tasks are reviewed and/or assigned to rehearse use of skills in the natural environment.
- Three types of tasks are assigned:
  - Implement solutions to specific problems negotiated during problem-solving discussions
  - Conduct additional problem-solving sessions at home.
  - Apply problem-solving communication skills in daily interchanges with each other.