



# Help and Hope: Combining PBS and Optimism Training For Families of Young Children with Challenging Behavior

**Mara “Shelley” Clarke**, *University of South Florida*

**Lise Fox**, *University of South Florida*

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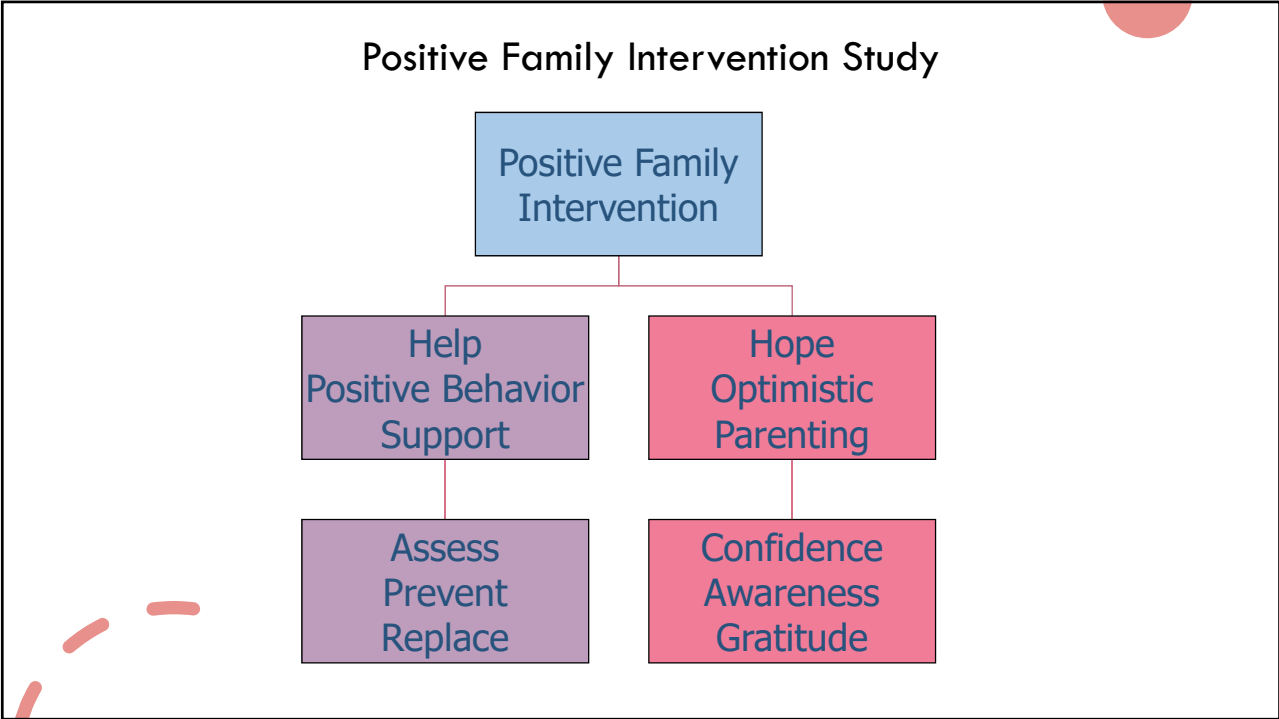
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## Help and Hope: Combining PBS and Optimism Training For Families of Young Children with Challenging Behavior

Mara “Shelley” Clarke, M.A., BCBA  
Faculty Research Associate  
Florida Center for Inclusive Communities  
CBCS/University of South Florida





**Acknowledgements**

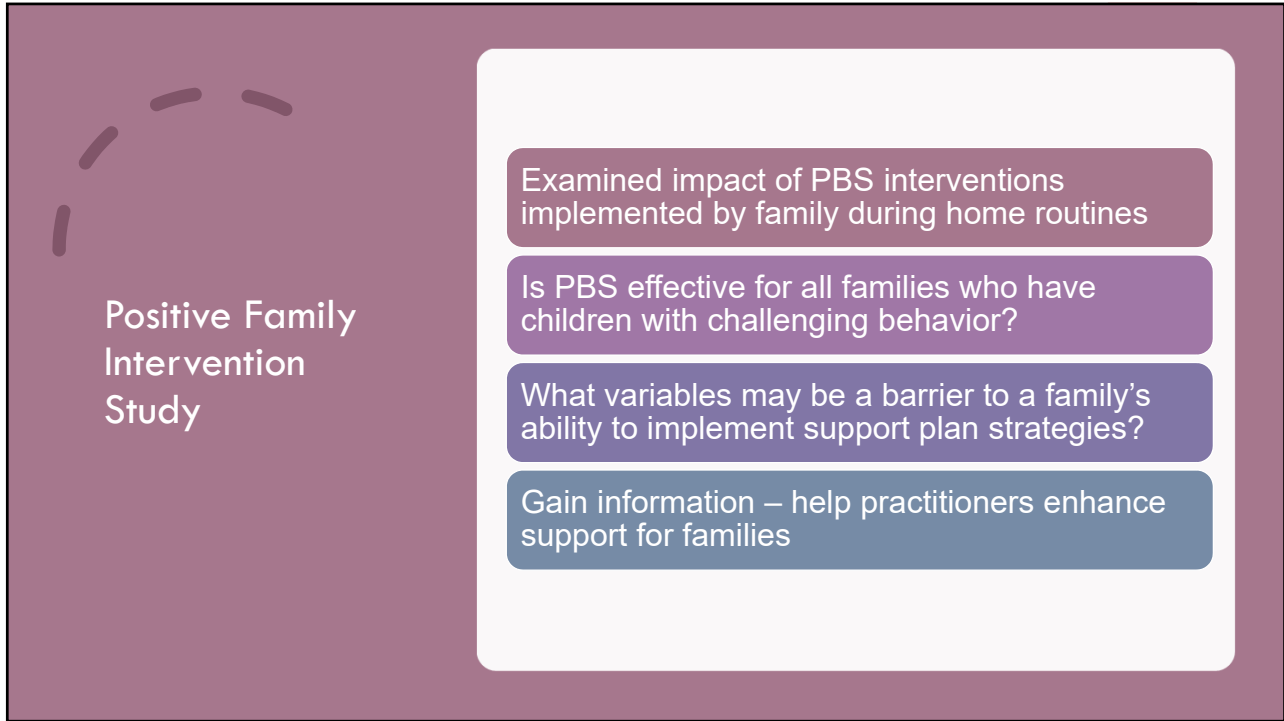
**Positive Family Intervention Study**

**Principal Investigator**  
V. Mark Durand, Ph.D.

**Project Director**  
Meme Hieneman, Ph.D

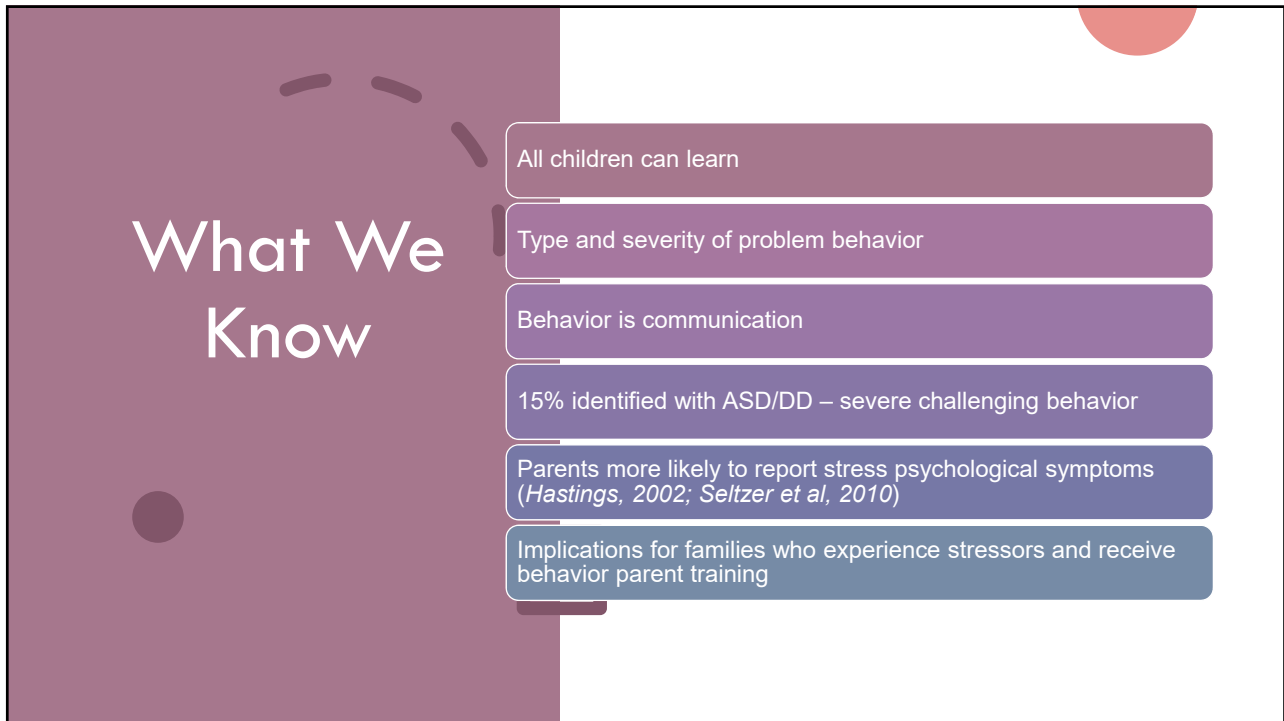
**PBS Coaches/Researchers**  
Kristin Christodulu, Ph.D.  
Laura Caspar, M.A., Ph.D.  
Melissa Zona, M.A.

**Research Sites**  
State University of New York, Albany  
University of South Florida-St. Petersburg



Positive Family Intervention Study

- Examined impact of PBS interventions implemented by family during home routines
- Is PBS effective for all families who have children with challenging behavior?
- What variables may be a barrier to a family's ability to implement support plan strategies?
- Gain information – help practitioners enhance support for families



What We Know

- All children can learn
- Type and severity of problem behavior
- Behavior is communication
- 15% identified with ASD/DD – severe challenging behavior
- Parents more likely to report stress psychological symptoms (*Hastings, 2002; Seltzer et al, 2010*)
- Implications for families who experience stressors and receive behavior parent training

## What Are We Still Learning?

- The reasons or factors associated with family failure to engage and follow through
- How to best address barriers to engagement and implementation
- How to adapt our collaborative approach to better meet the needs of families
- Additional skills and tools that are needed



## How Do We Increase Our Ability to Support Families?

- Is our approach only successful with highly motivated families/professionals?
- Can we adapt our approach to better meet the needs of this segment of families/professionals who don't experience improvement?
- Where are we failing and what do we need to learn?
- Take responsibility as practitioners to determine additional skills and tools to promote successful facilitation
- Reflect on our own perceptions

## Parent Attributional Style

One, often acknowledged, but under investigated barrier to effective behavior support outcomes may be parental belief systems

Parental Perceptions of:

Self-Efficacy – Parent perception of their own ability to change their child’s behavior

Child Efficacy - Parent perception of their child’s ability to change



## Predicting Later Problem Behavior



Not Severity of Disability

Not Severity of Behavior Problems

Best Predictor of Future Problem Behavior?

**PARENTAL PESSIMISM**

## The Three P's of Pessimistic Thinking

1. **Personalization:** Locus of Control  
A tendency to blame yourself despite the existence of other possible factors and contributors
2. **Permanence:** Length of impact  
Catastrophize by resigning themselves of how events will always stay the same with no end in sight
3. **Pervasiveness:** Generality  
Catastrophize and extend specific situation and the fact that problem is unsolvable

Murray Seligman (2006). *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*

## Who is Responsible for a Problem Situation?

Pessimistic Thought	Responsibility	Optimistic Thought
<i>It is my fault that things are going wrong.</i>	<b>Self</b>	<i>I am doing the best that I can under the circumstances.</i>
<i>My child is doing this on purpose.</i>	<b>Child</b>	<i>My child is not intentionally being disruptive.</i>
<i>Others are looking at my child's behavior and judging me. Others think I am a bad parent.</i>	<b>Others</b>	<i>Everyone is doing their best under the circumstances.</i>

## Negative Self-Talk

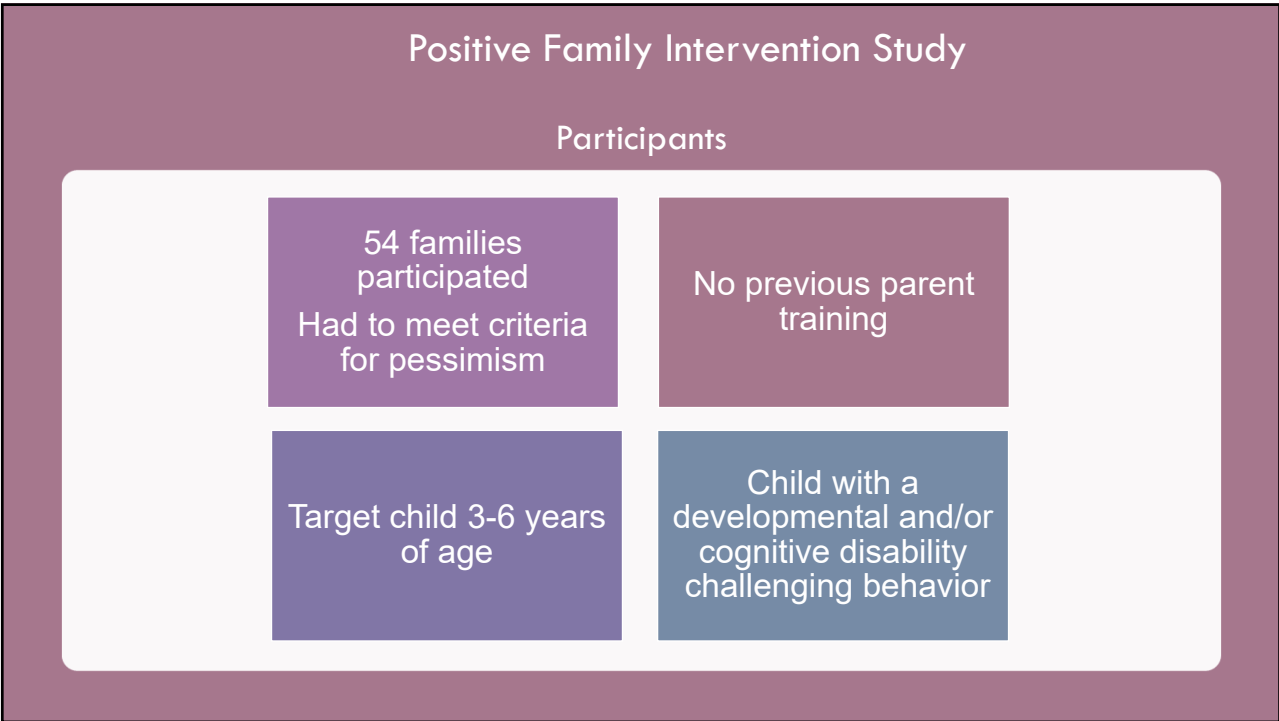
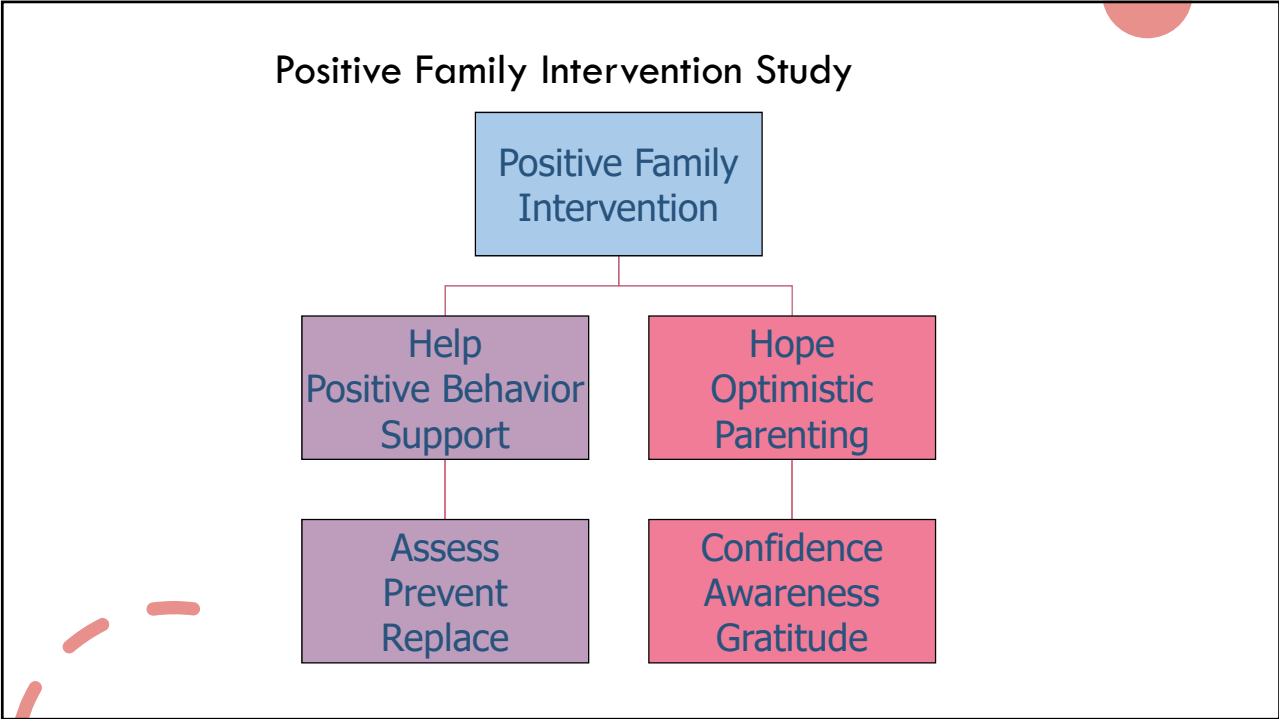
- My child's problem behavior is inevitable, unpredictable and uncontrollable
- My child is incapable of learning or changing (e.g., because of her disability)
- My child misbehaves because she is bad or mean
- My child's behavior is beyond my control – I lack the capacity to change it

## Addressing Parental Pessimism

Parents feel more capable-increased levels of persistence, follow through, confidence:

- helps parents hang in there
- helps parents recognize that child can understand expectations
- helps reframe to believe they are a good, loving parent
- gratitude/mindfulness to learn to be aware of the good things that happen

*80% of time statements "no control" over a situation – not accurate, reinforces doubts about being able to help their child*





## PBS Behavior Parent Training



- Teach PBS: presentation, examples, application, and practice
- Review homework (e.g., information gathered; strategies attempted)
- Complete the FBA process
- Develop and implement PBS package intervention

## Steps of Optimism Training

- Situation: Triggers to negative thinking
- Belief: Unproductive thought patterns
- Consequences: Results of negative thinking
- Disputation: Accuracy/Usefulness of beliefs
- Distraction: Thought stopping
- Substitution: More productive self-talk  
*Reorientation: New overall perspective*

Seligman, M. E. P. (1998). *Learned Optimism: How to change your mind and your life*. New York: Pocket Books.

### Self-Talk Journal Identifying Situations and Beliefs

<b>Situation</b> What happened (success or difficulty)?	<b>Beliefs</b> What did you think or feel (self-talk)?	<b>Consequences</b> What happened as a result (actions)?	<b>Disputation</b> Was this a useful or accurate belief?	<b>Substitution</b> What is a more positive belief (affirmation)?	<b>Comments</b>

### Steps for Analyzing Self Talk

<b>Situation</b>	<b>Beliefs</b>	<b>Consequences</b>	<b>Disputation</b>	<b>Substitution</b>
<b>What happened (success or difficulty?)</b>	<b>What did you think or feel (self-talk)?</b>	<b>What happened as a result (actions)?</b>	<b>Was this a useful or accurate belief?</b>	<b>What is a more positive belief (affirmation)?</b>
The family takes Teddy to a relative's birthday party. Before all the guests arrive, Teddy sees the cake and starts whining and trying to grab at it, demanding a piece now.	"Teddy has a disability and therefore doesn't understand and can't help misbehaving. We should just let him have what he wants".	Teddy's father talks the host into cutting him a small piece of the cake before he gets really out of control. Although he apologizes, his father still thinks it was the best thing it was the best thing to do.	Teddy's disability does affect his understanding of situations, however he could learn to respond to limits. Getting what he wants only makes his behavior worse.	Teddy is capable of learning limits. We will do our best to anticipate problems when we can and avoid giving in to unreasonable demands.

## Session 1: Identifying Situations and Beliefs

- Identify situations that provide triggers to negative thinking.

*What was exactly happening?*

*Where were you?*

*What did your child and others do?*

- Identify beliefs associated with the event

*What were you feeling and thinking while this was occurring?*

*What did you say to yourself?*

Identifying  
Situations and  
Beliefs

## Session 2: The Relationship Between Thoughts and Behavior

### *Why are thoughts and feelings important?*

How we interpret situations around us influences how we perceive life, and how we react and behave

## **What we think changes what we do**

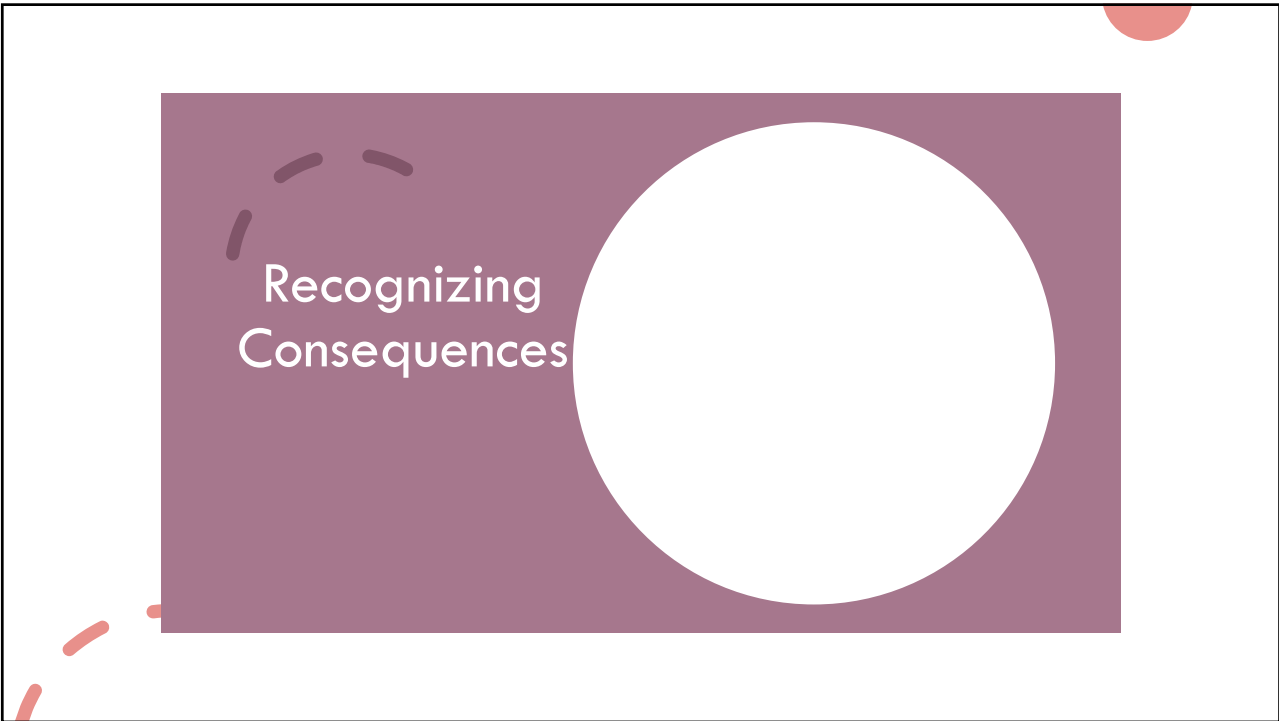
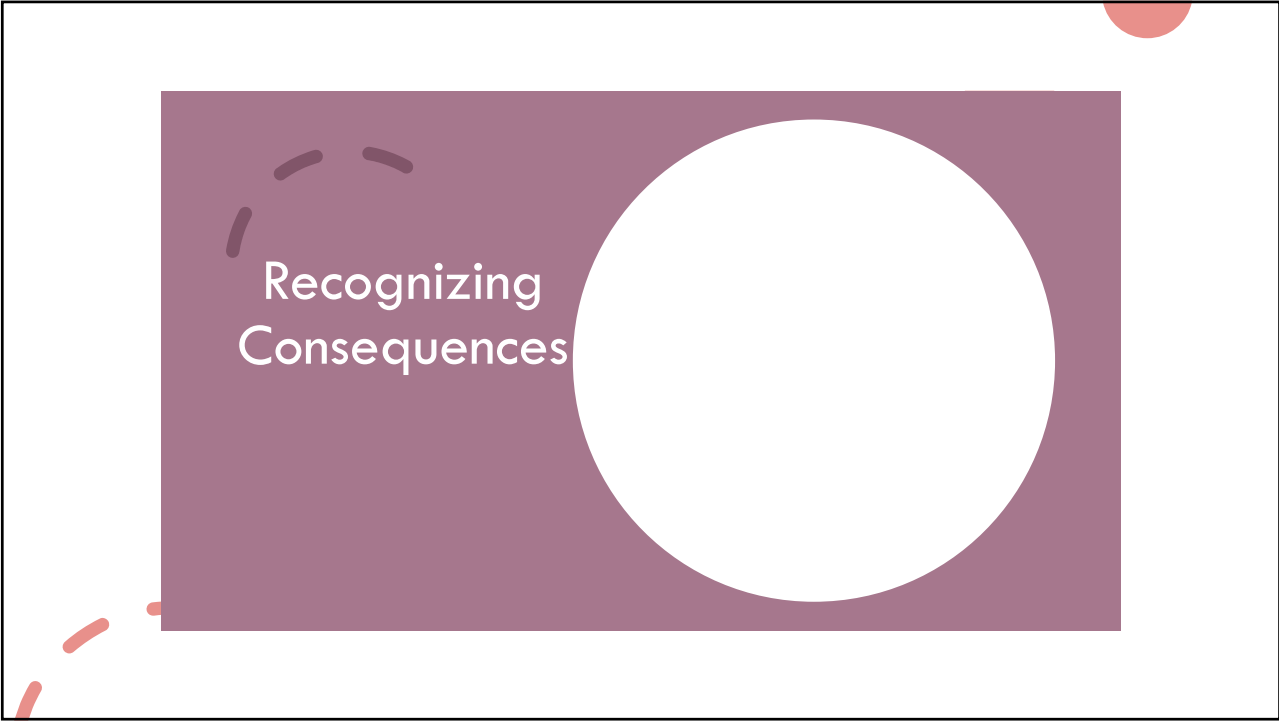
*Consequences (behavior and their results) serve a purpose or function for the person: Get/Obtain - Escape/Avoid*

## Consequences

Identify the consequences or results of negative (and positive) thoughts

***When you were thinking \_\_\_\_\_, how did that affect what you did?***

***What were the results of your actions – both immediate and long-term?***



### Session 3: Using the Process of Disputation

- Inaccurate or unproductive thoughts can have a detrimental effect on actions and outcomes
- Often, we accept thoughts at face value, even though those beliefs may have little or no foundation
- Disputation allows parents to assess the truth and value of existing thoughts

### Disputation-*A strategy for challenging beliefs*

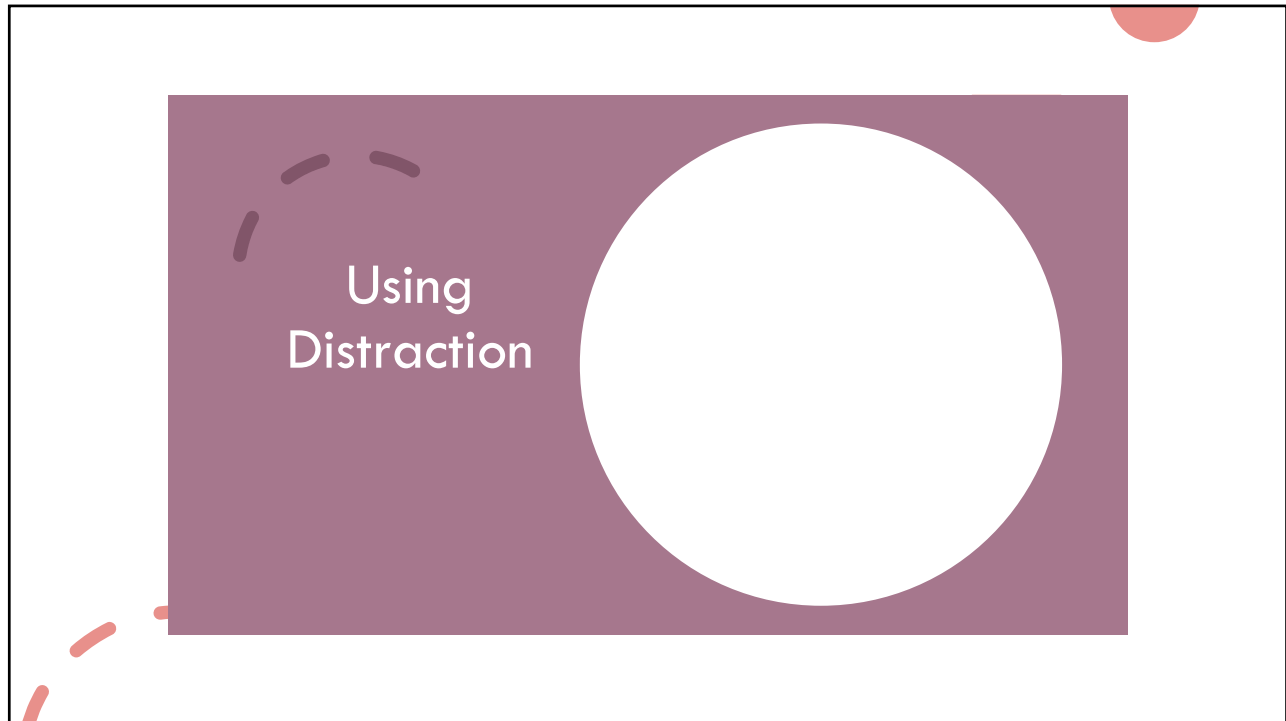
Steps	Probe Questions
Step 1. Identify the negative belief	<i>What exactly did you say to yourself that is pessimistic?</i>
Step 2. List evidence that supports the belief or improves the situation	<i>What makes you believe that to be true?</i>
Step 3. Find alternative explanations for the problem	<i>Are there other possible reasons/motives?</i>
Step 4. Evaluate the usefulness of maintaining the belief	<i>In what ways does that belief benefit you/others or improve the situation?</i>



## Disputing Negative Beliefs

### Session 4: Using Distraction to deal with unproductive self-talk

- Parenting “in the moment”
- Strategy to help with pessimistic beliefs
- Distracting oneself from the pessimistic thoughts



### Session 5: Process of Substitution Replacing Negative Beliefs

Replace pessimistic perceptions with positive thoughts or affirmations

*“This is a difficult situation, and I am handling it well.”*

*“I am a committed, loving parent. I follow through with my plan, things will get better.”*



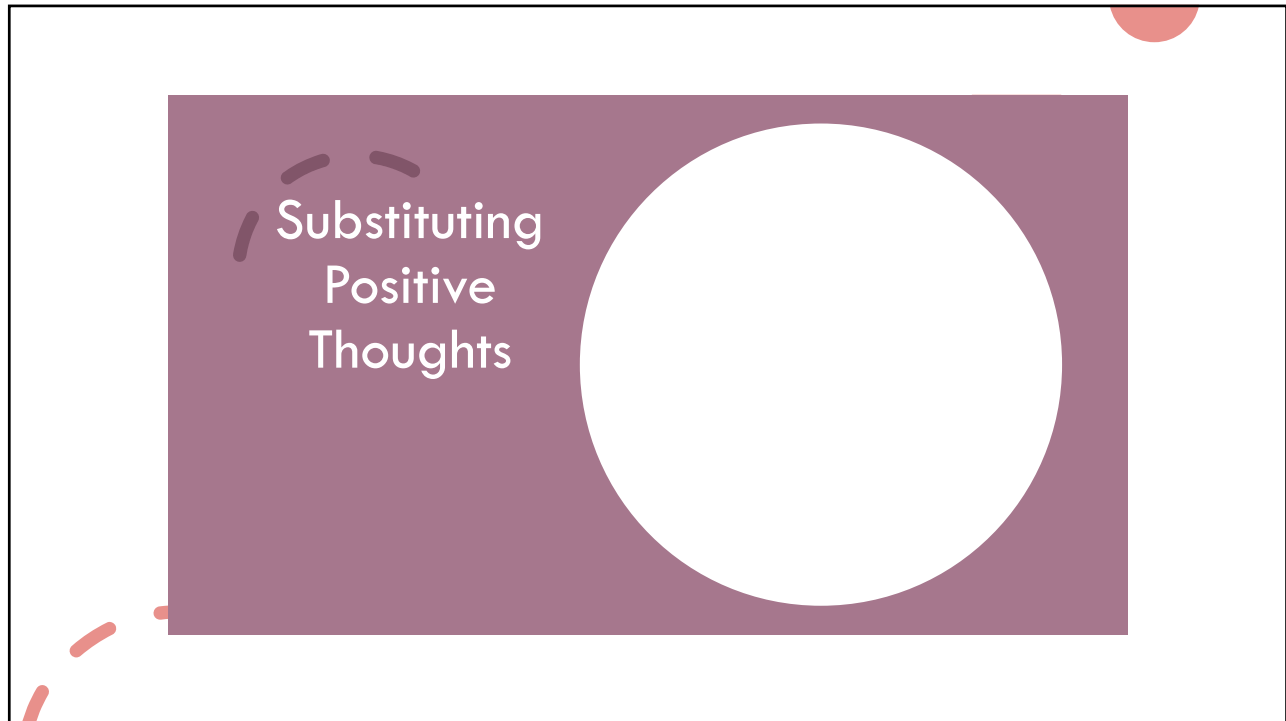
## The Substitution Process

*What could you say to yourself in this situation that would...*

- Make you feel better about yourself as a parent..
- Allow you to control your emotions and reactions..
- Manage your child's behavior more effectively..
- Perceive your child in a more positive light..
- Encourage you to follow through with your plan...
- Make you feel more empowered or accepting...

Select Positive Affirmations (substitutions) That Are:

- Stated in present tense
- Focus on solutions (not problems)
- Specific and practical



Session 6 and Session 7: Practice Steps and Cognitive Restructuring

- Practice optimism process for difficulties and successes
- Cognitive restructuring
- Help families with cognitive dissonance

## Session 8: Plan to Evaluate and Maintain Positive Self-Talk

- Review self talk
- Monitor self talk after optimism training sessions completed
- Optimistic or pessimistic thinking is habitual
- Parents need ways for continually evaluating and addressing their thinking
- Goal to establish a more positive orientation to life

## Evaluation and Maintenance

- Help parents to assess overall use and effectiveness of optimism training

***What are the common themes?***

***What is working and what isn't?***

***What do you plan to do next time?***

- Determine strategies for ongoing monitoring to sustain improvements (e.g., continue journal, debriefing sessions)

## Evaluating Self Talk and Outcomes

### Positive Family Intervention Study Outcomes

Both parent training groups - child behavior improved

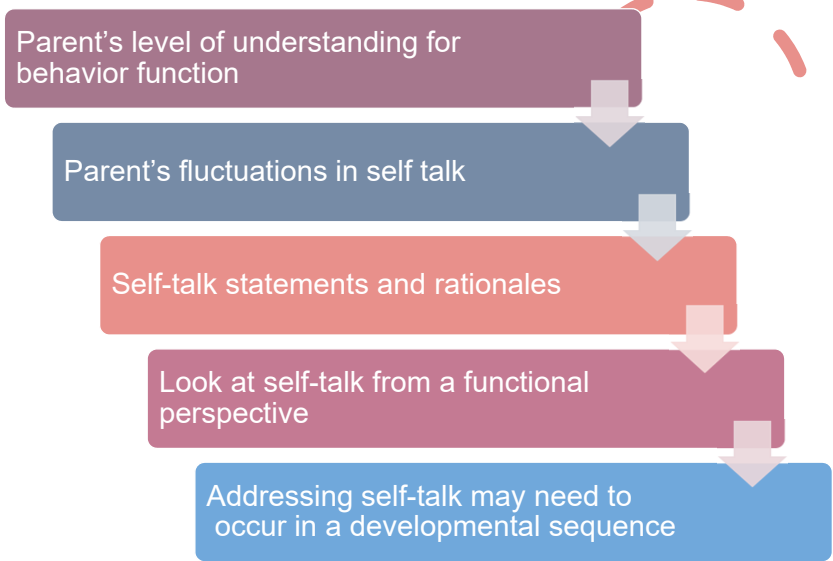
Families in PBS+OP group completed 8 sessions in a shorter number of weeks

Parents in PBS+OP group reported that they felt:

- *more hopeful about child's future*
- *more in control*
- *less tense when taking child out in public*
- *less likely to avoid taking child out in public*
- *family now able to do the same kinds of things as other families*



## Helping Parents Recognize Self-Talk



### Can Optimism Training Benefit Collaborative Teams?

- Collaborative team approach with family and teacher
- Provide teaching on understanding behavior is communication
- Promote consensus and open reciprocal feedback
- All members are valued
- Get to know team members perspectives
- Incorporate aspects of mindfulness: gratitude, humility, self awareness

OPTIMISM TRAINING  
TECHNIQUES FOR  
TEAMING/COACHING

Starting point: practitioners increase self aware - self talk journal

Guide - recognize statements, thoughts, and feelings

Understand thoughts and impact on responses

Techniques to break negative thought patterns

Help reframe parent and teacher self perceptions

Help team be aware and recognize positive events

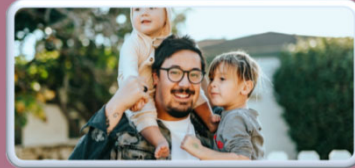
Validate and acknowledge families are in it for the long game

Unproductive for families to evaluate parenting by child behavior

*Don't give up - you are capable, and your child/student is capable!*

QUESTIONS?

COMMENTS?

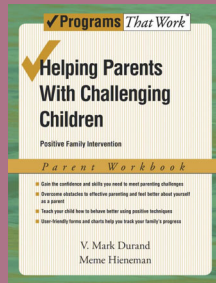


*WE WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK  
ALL THE FAMILIES WHO PARTICIPATED*

*THANK YOU!*

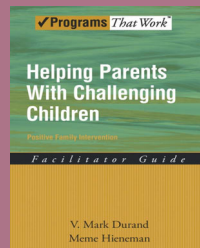
Mara "Shelley" Clarke, M.A., BCBA  
Contact: [mmc@usf.edu](mailto:mmc@usf.edu)



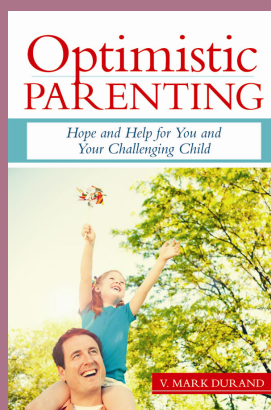


## Additional Information

Durand, V.M. & Hieneman, M. (2008). *Helping parents with challenging children: Positive family intervention, Facilitator's guide*. New York: Oxford University Press.



Durand, V.M. & Hieneman, M. (2008). *Helping parents with challenging children: Positive family intervention, Workbook*. New York: Oxford University Press.



## Additional Information

Durand, V.M. (2011). *Optimistic parenting: Help and hope for you and your challenging child*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

## Resources

Durand, V.M. & Hieneman, M. (2008). *Helping Parents with Challenging Children: Positive family intervention, Facilitator's guide*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Durand, V.M. & Hieneman, M. (2008). *Helping Parents with Challenging Children: Positive family intervention, Workbook*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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\* Protocols also available upon request

## Questions

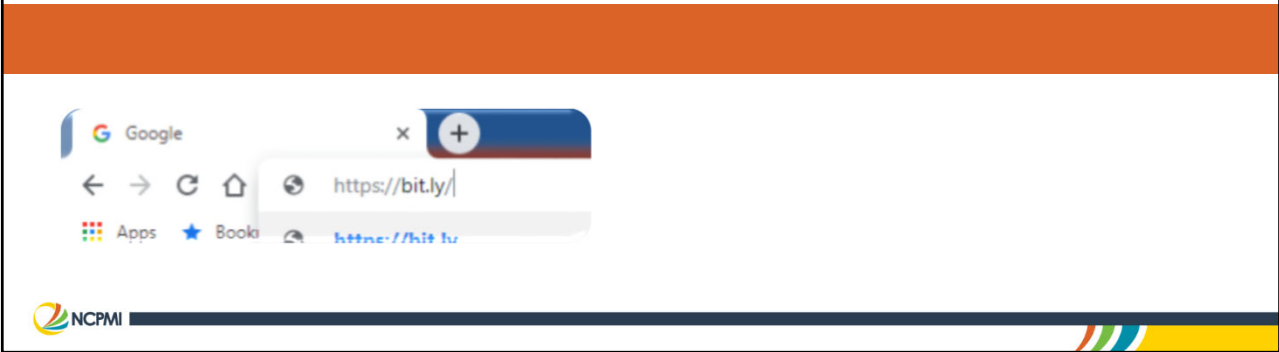




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