

## THE PSYCHOTERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS: THE INCREDIBLE YEARS TREATMENT PROGRAM

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### ABSTRACT

*The psychotherapeutic interventions disposable and considered the key role in behavioral therapy are the Incredible Years, the evidence-based parenting support.*

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### Introduction

#### ***Psychotherapeutic interventions***

The psychotherapeutic interventions disposable and considered the key role in behavioral therapy are the Incredible Years, the evidence-based parenting support.

#### **Incredible years treatment program**

The types of intervention known as the Incredible Years (IY) series include the development of three complementary treatment routes for parents, teachers and children (0 to 12 years old) with the aim of intervening on parent, family, indi-

vidual risk factors and schoolchildren cooperating in the development of behavioral disorders<sup>(1-25)</sup>.

#### ***Intervention on parents***

Parents' interventions are distinguished on the basis of children's age, in fact there are programs for parents of small children (from six weeks to three years), preschool children (from three years) and school children (from six to twelve years). Program goals are tailored to the needs and evolutionary needs typical of each stage of development and include:

- Promoting parenting skills and strengthening families through the stimulation of positive parenting, the attachment relationship between child and

parent, and the perceived effectiveness of the parent in performing his / her role;

- Raising parents' ability to play gaming interactions with the child to train their socio-emotional, school, verbal, and adjustment skills;
- Reducing inadequate and physically violent disciplines by increasing effective educational strategies, such as ignoring less serious behaviors, giving rise to disadvantageous behavior, time-out, and the use of problem solving;
- Improving the parents' self-control and frustrations management;
- Increasing social and family support networks;
- Strengthening the school-family strategies and parent involvement in school activities<sup>(26-50)</sup>.

Several studies have highlighted that the BASIC parent program increases parents' use of positive attention to their children (i.e. praise, social interaction guide, descriptive comments) and positive disciplinary strategies, while reducing rigid disciplinary strategies, critical and coercive. Children reduce behavioral disorders or their outsourcing problems to their parents, while increasing their positive affects, adapting to the demands of the environment, and collaborative behavior. In studies where parents have been offered a more extensive program focusing on interpersonal communication, problem solving and stress management, improvements in conjugal relationships, problem solving skills, and stress reduction and parental depression have been observed. The program has proved effective in several populations of the United States, including Latin, Asian, African American and Caucasian and other countries such as Denmark, The Netherlands, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United Kingdom<sup>(51-60)</sup>.

### ***Teacher training intervention***

Accessing into school, children with behavioral problems with aggressive and destructive behavior, tend to be excluded and rejected by their peers. This isolation from companions tends to strengthen the disadvantaged behavior of these children; on the other hand, it can push them to join other diverted companions, increasing the risk of developing antisocial behavior. A very important role is played by the way the teacher handles the class, in particular low praise behaviors, high critical discipline and severe discipline, ineffective class management strategies, poor ability in teaching emotional and social skills. Together with the

presence of numerous classes, high level of classroom for children with special needs and absence of a school policy aimed at disciplinary tolerance, are associated with an increase in aggression, delinquency and poor school performance.

Responsive responses and poor support from teachers give rise to further exacerbation of the problems of these aggressive children. Incredible Years - Teacher Classroom Management (IY-TCM), lasting six days (42 hours), aims to promote teacher skills and strengthen communication between parents and school through:

Improving classroom management skills, including a proactive teaching approach and effective discipline;

- Increase of support communication skills to learning by the teacher;
- Improving the relationship between teacher and student;
- Increasing the ability of the teacher to transmit social skills, digestion of anger, and problem solving skills in the classroom.

The results of studies conducted on this program show that teachers who followed the training used more proactive classroom management strategies, praised their students, used less disciplinary or criticism-based strategies, and focused more on student support in solving problems. The classes that had benefited from the intervention highlighted greater collaboration among peers, an increase in social skills in children, in school preparation, and a lower level of aggressive behavior<sup>(60-70)</sup>.

### ***Children's intervention (Dinosaur school)***

The child treatment program is organized in small groups focusing on learning social-emotional skills and preventing children's deficits with a diagnosis of provocative opposition disorder or behavioral problems that arise in Starting at 4 years. This 22-week action consists of a series of DVD-based exemplifies (over 180 films/cartoons) that teach children the skills of problem solving, emotional regulation, and various social skills. The Dinosaur program rotates its activities around seven thematic areas: group rules definitions, empathy and emotions, problem solving, anger control, skills in amicable relationships, communicative abilities, school abilities. Children meet weekly in groups of six for two hours

A preventive version of this program has also been developed, which can be used with pre-school children and early elementary school classes, where

class sessions are scheduled twice a week during the school year, which can be repeated For more than a school year. Short films suggest conflicting situations of everyday life at home, at school, at the playground, such as being teased, being refused or having a rage of anger.

The program aims to promote the skills of children and to reduce aggressive and inappropriate behavior:

- Strengthening social skills (giving up, being able to wait, ask, share, help, and congratulate);
- Promote the use of self-control and emotional self-regulation strategies; Increasing your emotional awareness, giving a name to your feelings, recognizing your own and others' different perspectives and improving the assumption of different perspectives;
- Promote the ability of children to work closely with difficult tasks; Improving reading skills and organizing the task;
- Reducing behaviors challenges, aggression, refusing companions, and promoting greater obedience to teachers and peers;
- Reducing the attribute style and their sensitivity to the threat of the other; Increasing self-esteem and self-confidence.

After watching movies, children are stimulated to share the emotions that emerged and try to provide solutions to the problem situations that emerged through role play. In addition to watching movies, you can use grand-sized puppets that help children implement a decentralization process through fantastic processing. In smaller children, more easily distracted and therefore less capable of organizing their thoughts and memories, different strategies can be used to help them store concepts such as the Copy Cat game to review the learned abilities, to reproduce the same concept with several videos, encompassing them in different situations and environments, or even the use of special cartoons and stickers to recall key concepts, role play with puppets or other children.

Practical exercise of the different skills with the support and guidance of the therapist. Assigning homework also encourages children to practice their parenting skills, but also to provide parents and teachers with letters that explain the key concepts of the program and ask them to strengthen their learned abilities. Children who participated in the Dinosaur School program highlighted more positive interactions with peers, improved emotional regulation and emotion tagging skills, improved

problem solving skills, amicable relationships, and improved schooling.

All IY programs, for parents, teachers and children, take place in group setting and rely on Practical and interactive rapprochements: video modeling techniques, role playing, guided gaming activities, homeworks on home or school experiences, which are then verified by the therapist along with other members of the group. The video and sample scenarios that are being proposed promote a better generalization of learned skills and thus better retention of long-term results through learning through different codes (visual, verbal, procedural). Movies act as a stimulus to activate the discussion and to push the various members of the group to self-reflection, also solving the problem-solving and coping skills learning (active handling of critical situations).

Furthermore, thanks to the group setting, it is possible to build support networks through which parents or teachers help each other, and also the frequent feelings of isolation in teachers are attenuated<sup>(71-100)</sup>.

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