Assessment of Parenting Stress and the PSI™-4

Overview

- What is Parenting Stress (PS)?

- Causes and Effects: Theories of Parenting Stress

- Perception, Cognition, Emotion, and Physiology

- Parenting Stress and the Parent

- Parenting Stress and the Child

- Parenting Behavior and the Parent–Child Relationship

- Parent and Child Effects

- Family, Culture, Community

- Coping and Intervention

- Why is Assessment of PS Important?

- Resources: The PSI-4 and PSI-4 Short Form

- Validity and Research

What is Parenting Stress?

- A set of processes that lead to aversive psychological and physiological reactions arising from attempts to adapt to the demands of parenthood

Parent–Child-Relationship (P-C-R) Stress

- P = those aspects of parenting stress that arise from within the parent

- C = those aspects of parenting stress that arise from the child's behavior

- R = those aspects of parenting stress that arise between the parent and child during interactions

Causes and Effects: Theories of Parenting Stress

Daily Hassles (DH) Theory

- Complements and extends P-C-R theory

- Cumulative effect of daily stressors

- Effects are serious in more extreme forms

- Creates potential threat to parent's identity or role

Causes and Effects: Theories of Parenting Stress

Stability and Change

- External stressors (e.g., loss of a job)

- Individual differences (e.g., strict vs. lenient)

- Stability vs. change (e.g., stable home situation vs. constant moves)

Perception, Cognition, Emotion, and Physiology

Four Components of Parenting Stress

1. External causal event or agent–stressor

2. Cognitive appraisal

3. Coping mechanisms

4. Stress reaction

Perception, Cognition, Emotion, and Physiology

The Child and the Parenting Role as Causes of Stress

- What makes parenting stress different from other types of stress?
  - Chronic daily hassles
  - Dependency
  - Attributes of the parent
  - Parenting role
  - Societal expectations

Perception, Cognition, Emotion, and Physiology

Appraisal

- Valence
  (intrinsic attractiveness or averseness)

- Controllability
  (exercising control of emotions)

- Changeability
  (ability to alter methods)

- Ambiguity
  (lack of clearly defined parental boundaries)

- Attributions
  (interpretations of child's behavior and motives)

Perception, Cognition, Emotion, and Physiology

Coping

- Emotion-focused
  (e.g., finding methods to alleviate anger)

- Problem-focused
  (e.g., addressing unwanted behavior)

- Perception of control
  (e.g., focusing on areas of influence)

Perception, Cognition, Emotion, and Physiology

Information-Processing Model of Coping

- Gathering and accumulation of resources
  - Objects (material goods)
  - Conditions (status, social capital)
  - Personal attributes (personality)
  - Energy (money, knowledge)

- Threats to resources
  - Conscious and unconscious
  - Approach and avoidance

Perception, Cognition, Emotion, and Physiology

Information-Processing Model of Coping

- Initial appraisal formulation

- Secondary appraisal

- Feedback

- Forethought

- Intentional behavior

- Self-reflection

The Stress Reaction

- Parenting behaviors (e.g., parental discipline, maltreatment, and abuse)

- Social cognitions (attitudes about and feelings toward the child)

- Psychopathology (e.g., depression, anxiety)

- Biological mechanisms of stress

Parenting Stress and the Parent

- Transition to parenthood

- Age of parent

- Gender of parent

- Individual differences

  - Depression and psychopathology

  - Temperament and personality

  - Self-referent social cognitions

Parenting Stress and the Parent

- Prematurity and low birth weight

- Child illness

- Developmental disabilities and disorders

- Behavioral and emotional problems
  - Externalizing problems
  - Internalizing problems

- Diagnosis, stigma, and blame

Family, Culture, Community

Family

- Parents as partners

- Parent gender

- Family structures and types
  - Single parents
  - Step-parent families
  - LGBTQI2-S families
  - Adoptive and foster families
  - Grandparents as parents

Coping and Intervention

Coping Strategies

- Problem-focused coping

- Emotion-focused coping

- Approach coping

- Avoidance coping

- Relationship-focused coping

  - Emotional support

  - Normalizing

  - Instrumental support

  - Empathy

- Goals, planning, assessment, and evaluation

- Individual differences

- Preemptive coping

- Ongoing process

Coping and Intervention

Intervening to Reduce Parenting Stress

- Expanding repertoire of child-rearing behaviors

- Clinical interventions
  (e.g., counseling, teaching, individual, family)

- Targets
  (e.g., family situation, parental functioning, child behavior)

Why is Assessment of PS Important?

Intervening to Reduce Parenting Stress

- Supports an interactional family system (vs. a child- or parent-focused approach)

- Assessments can help identify
  - Counseling needs
  - Dysfunctional cognitions
  - Targets for intervention
  - Parents who may not participate or support interventions

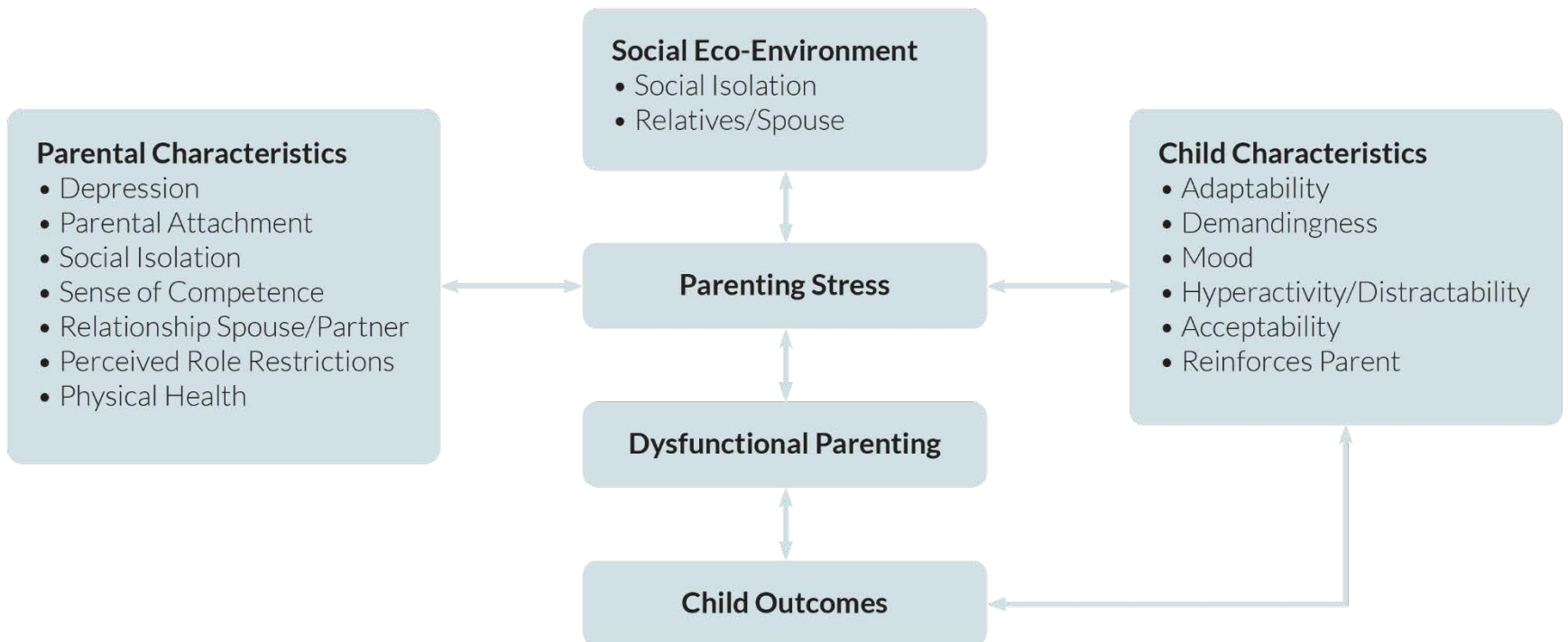# Resources: The PSI-4 and the PSI-4 Short Form

Uses of the PSI-4

- Screening/triage

- Assessment planning/focus

- Treatment planning and evaluation

- Research

Resources: The PSI-4 and the PSI-4 Short Form

Parenting Stress Model

Social Eco-Environment
- Social Isolation
- Relatives/Spouse

Parental Characteristics
- Depression
- Parental Attachment
- Social Isolation
- Sense of Competence
- Relationship Spouse/Partner
- Perceived Role Restrictions
- Physical Health

Parenting Stress

Child Characteristics
- Adaptability
- Demandingness
- Mood
- Hyperactivity/Distractability
- Acceptability
- Reinforces Parent

Dysfunctional Parenting

Child Outcomes

Resources:
The PSI-4

Domains and Subscales (101 items)

Child Characteristics

- Adaptability
- Demandingness
- Mood
- Distractibility/hyperactivity
- Acceptability—child to parent
- Child's reinforcement of parent

Adult Characteristics

- Depression/guilt
- Attachment to child
- Social isolation
- Sense competence as a parent
- Relationship spouse/partner
- Role restrictions
- Parental health

Resources:
The PSI-4

Table 1 – PSI Domain and Subscale Descriptions

Domain/Subscale	Description
Total Stress	Assesses overall parental experience of stress and risk for dysfunctional parenting and child behavior problems.
Child Domain	Assesses child characteristics that may be contributing to overall stress.
Distractibility/Hyperactivity (DI)	Assesses behavioral characteristics of the child that reflect symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.
Adaptability (AD)	Assesses the child's ability to adjust to change in the social or physical environment.
Reinforces Parent (RE)	Assesses the parent's experience of interactions with his or her child as positively reinforcing.
Demandingness (DE)	Assesses the parent's experience of the child as placing demands on him or her.
Mood (MO)	Assesses the child's affective status.
Acceptability (AC)	Assesses the extent to which child characteristics meet expectations of the parent.
Parent Domain	Assesses parent characteristics that may be contributing to overall stress.
Competence (CO)	Assesses the extent to which the parent feels comfortable and actually is capable in the parenting role.
Isolation (IS)	Assesses the parent's degree of social support.
Attachment (AT)	Assesses the parent's sense of closeness with the child and his or her ability to observe and effectively respond to the child's needs.
Health (HE)	Assesses the extent to which the parent's health contributes to overall parenting stress.
Role Restriction (RO)	Assesses the parent's sense of limited freedom and constrained personal identity as a result of thte parenting role.
Depression (DP)	Assesses the parent's affective status.
Spouse/Parenting Partner Relationship (SP)	Assesses the parent's perception of emotional and physical support from the parenting partner.

PSI-4 Short Form

- Total Score (36 items)
  - Parental Distress (12)
  - Parent–Child Dysfunctional Interaction (12)
  - Difficult Child (12)

Resources:
The PSI-4 Short Form

Table 2 – PSI-SF Scale Descriptions

Scale	Description
Total Stress	Assesses the overall level of parenting stress experienced by the respondent.
Parental Distress (PD)	Assesses the level of stress a parent reports as a function of personal factors directly related to parenting.
Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction (P-CDI)	Assesses the extent to which the parent perceives the child as not meeting expectations and finds that interactions with the child are not reinforcing his or her parenting role.
Difficult Child (DC)	Assesses the temperament or behavioral characteristics of the child that influence the parent-child relationship.

Resources:
The PSI-4 Short Form

Total Stress Score

- Designed to provide an indication of the overall level of parenting stress that an individual is experiencing

Parental Distress (PD) Subscale

- Determines the level of distress a parent is experiencing in his or her role as a parent as a function of personal factors that are directly related to parenting.

Parent–Child Dysfunctional Interaction (P-CDI) Subscale

- Focuses on the parent's perception that the child does not meet his or her expectations and that his or her interactions with the child are not reinforcing to him or her as a parent.

Resources:
The PSI-4 Short Form

Difficult Child (DC) Subscale

- Focuses on some of the basic behavioral characteristics of children that make them either easy or difficult to manage.

Defensive Responding Scale

- Assesses the extent to which the respondent approaches the questionnaire with a strong bias to present the most favorable impression of himself or herself or to minimize indications of problems or stress in the parent–child relationship.

Interpretation

- Literal

- Clinical cutoff (90th percentile)

- Profiles—relative elevations

- Computer-generated interpretive reports

Validity and Research

Validity

- <u>Long form</u>: A valid and well-researched instrument; manual refers to >250 studies documented on the PAR website

- <u>Short form</u>: Taken from the long form; manual uses the correlations between the PSI-4 and PSI-4-SF to support validity

Validity

- Observed parenting behavior
- Physical health of the parent
- Child academic functioning
- Parent compliance with prescribed behavioral and medical care
- Quality of the parent–child relationship
- Marital relationship

Free Play vs. Task Study

- Study by Mash and Johnston, 1983
- Parents' and children's behavior in free play and task situations was video taped and coded
- Included abused and nonabused children
- Conclusion: No changes in behavior of abused or nonabused children across situations

PSI Clinical Cut Offs and Parent Behavior

- Study by Lafrenier, P., Dumas, J., Brigas, M., 1995
- Observed behaviors associated with child abuse
  - Command
  - Compliance or noncompliance
  - Contingent approval or disapproval

- High PS scores associated with less approval, less contingent parent behavior
- PS was systematically associated with a list of known abuse risk factors

Validity and Research

Observed Family Interactions

- Study by Tripp, G., et al., 2007
- Coded behaviors:
  - Engagement
  - Communication
  - Warmth

- Beck Depression scale vs. PSI
  - Beck Depression score in regression analysis was not predictive of any of the parenting behaviors
  - Conclusion: This could reflect that PS and depression share considerable amount of variance

Human Bonding and Stress

- Study by Feldman, Ruth, et al., 2011

- Oxytocin attenuates stress, facilitates bonding

- Parenting Stress and interactive dysfunction

- Asynchronous parent–infant interaction

- Conclusion: PS predicts Oxytocin level in mothers but not fathers

Validity With Different Cultures

- Translated into 42 languages

- Normed and published in 10 countries

- Multiple replications of factor structure

- Replications of predictive studies

Validity and Research

Intervention Studies

- Early termination of treatment

- Treatment outcomes

- Non-adherence to medical treatments

PSI References (1982–2019)

https://www.mendeley.com/community/parenting-stress-inventory-(psi)/