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CREATIVE APPLICATIONS OF EXPOSURE THERAPY AND HABIT REVERSAL TRAINING FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Overview of exposure and habit reversal therapies
- Common challenges associated with these treatments
 - Understanding treatment
 - Motivational issues
 - Logistical barriers
- Creative approaches to overcome these challenges

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OVERVIEW OF EXPOSURE THERAPY

Exposure therapy: a set of techniques to help patients learn that their fear is unrealistic or exaggerated by gradually confronting the feared stimulus or situation



In Vivo Exposure:
Confronting feared objects or situations in real life

Imaginal Exposure:
Imagining feared situations/negative consequences

Interoceptive Exposure:
Confronting feared bodily sensations

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OVERVIEW OF HABIT REVERSAL THERAPY FOR TICS AND TRICHOTILLOMANIA

Habit reversal training: a set of techniques to help patients increase awareness of urges, prevent urges and pulling/tics, and utilize strategies to resist urges and tics

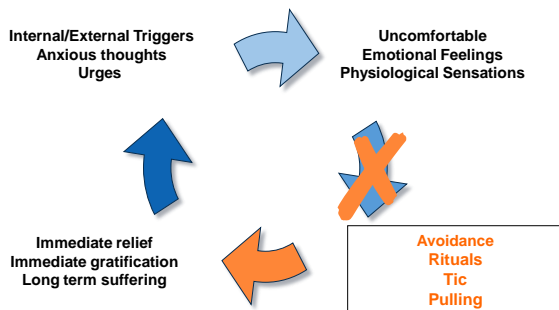
Treatment components:

- Psychoeducation
- Awareness training
- Minimizing triggers
- Using competing responses to reduce behaviors



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WHY EXPOSURE AND HABIT REVERSAL THERAPY?



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SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Compulsivity/Avoidance
Anxiety, OCD, Tics, Trich

- Attempt to alleviate discomfort, anxiety
- may become impulsive (reinforced habits)

Impulsivity
Trichotillomania

- May be to obtain pleasure, arousal, or gratification.
- may become compulsive (driven behaviors without arousal)

Inability to inhibit or delay behaviors.
Both features may present at the same or different times during the same illness.

Response to compulsive and impulsive thoughts and urges is most important factor in maintenance and worsening of symptoms

Heather A. Berlin, PhD, MPH and Eric Hollander, MD



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PRINCIPLES OF TREATMENT

- **Voluntary**
- Collaborative
- Hierarchy-driven
- Focus on accomplishments, not failures
- Promotes mastery of anxiety
- Manage and face fears, urges rather than running away or giving into them
- Based on assessment of behaviors

- “Tic/Trich-neutral” environments



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LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

- Anxiety and urges are transient
- Avoidance, pulling, ticing strengthens fear and urges; exposure, resistance to urges weakens it
- Accept initial thought, feeling, urge; change response
- Short term discomfort leads to long term functioning
- You can manage feeling the anxiety, urges
- “Ceiling fan analogy:” letting your anxiety make noise while you go about your business

- Anxiety in anticipation of exposure may be higher than anxiety during actual exposure



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CONTEXT AND SETTINGS

Parent, Teacher, Therapist

All

- Join, Empathize
- Collaborate
- Guide yet follow child’s lead
- Tic/Trich neutral environment
- Be part of the team

Teachers

- Minimize social embarrassment and stigma
- General concepts

Parent

- Connect, empathize, make sure child is heard
- Help child follow through on daily therapy practices



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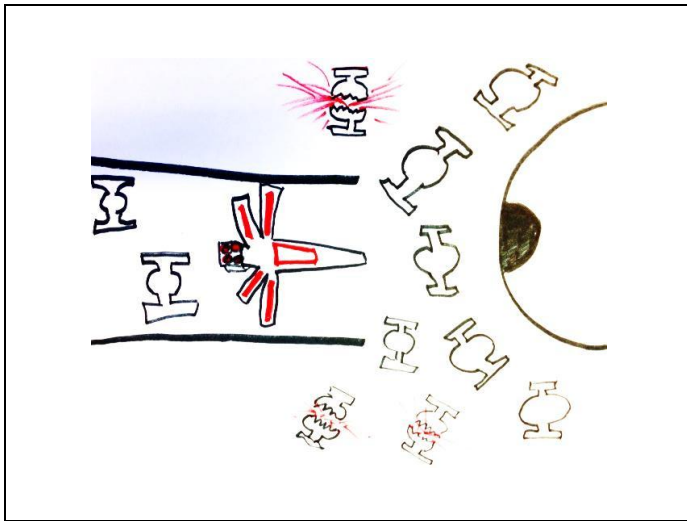
Common Challenge 1: UNDERSTANDING TREATMENT

- Puppets
- Pretend play with characters
- Paper in shoe, paper airplanes/balls
- Bird on shoulder
- Something vs. nothing

- Metaphors
- Visual
- Narrative storytelling
- Normalize & inspire



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What I took back when I faced my fear/was flexible/ignored urges:

What I thought to help me face my fear/be flexible/ignore urges:

The Boss!

What I did to be face my fear/be flexible/ignore urges:

What my mom and dad did to help me face my fear/be flexible/ ignore urges:

How I felt before I faced my fear/was flexible/ignored urges:
How I felt 15 minutes later:
How I felt 30 minutes later:

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Once I was at the rides and I heard a noise and I kept hearing the noise and I started to get used to it. When I first heard the noise, the goblin thought said, "it's scary, you should leave".

But I said, "No way. I don't want to miss out on the rides." I stayed and the goblin thought was hungry, but I didn't feed it. It got so weak and it shrunk. I was happy the rest of the night. Soon I didn't even notice the noise anymore and just had fun!"

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NORMALIZE, INSPIRE



E + R = O

an event + your response
= the outcome

You can't change the event, but you
can change your response which
will change the outcome.

www.takeheldoff.blogspot.com

- Ohio State Football
- Michael Jordan
- Tim Howard
- Howie Mandell

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Anxious Thought + Response = Outcome

Discomfort + Response = Outcome

Urge + Response = Outcome

Anxious Feeling + Response = Outcome

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COMMON CHALLENGE 2 - MOTIVATION

- Kids are often not the ones seeking treatment!
- May not recognize need
- Anxiety may interfere with motivation
- Kids live in the present
- Disorder may impact others more than child



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ADDRESSING MOTIVATION FOR EXPOSURE WORK THROUGH GAMES AND PLAY

Therapy does not have to be boring!

- Scavenger hunts
- Treasure hunts
- Go Fish
- Sport of choice
- Create a fortune teller



Should not overshadow treatment or provide TOO much distraction



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SOCIAL ANXIETY EXPOSURE GAMES

BRAVERY BINGO!			
 Order something at a restaurant	Ask the receptionist a question	Ask someone for directions	Call a friend
Make a mistake when you talk to someone	Ask someone if you can borrow a pencil	Ask someone in the waiting room to play tic-tac-toe	Start a conversation with another kid your age
Answer a questions incorrectly on purpose	Ask 3 people what their favorite show is	Get directions to the vending machine & get a treat!	Call a store and ask how late they are open



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EXPOSURE GAMES FOR FEARED IMAGES

- Make a puzzle with feared image on it
- Memory Match with feared images
- Go Fish
- Pin the _____ on the _____
- Slap it
- Hidden objects



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ADDRESSING MOTIVATION BY TAPPING AN INTEREST...



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USE HUMOR



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GAMES & PLAY AS COMPETING RESPONSES

- Fidget toys
- Attention absorbing activities
- Be social
- Game with parent or friend -
- Mood pencils in school
- Imaginal with urge

- Tic and Trich neutral environment
- Teacher cues



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TECHNOLOGY: FRIEND OR FOE?

- Lots of downsides, but positives, too
- For teenagers in particular, often omnipresent
- Motivated to use them
- Fits lifestyle
- There's an app for EVERYTHING!
- If you can't beat 'em, join 'em...



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USING ELECTRONICS

YouTube, Google Images, & Apps are your friends
Settings

- Targeting specific fear: Spider Squish & Noise apps
- Perfectionism: Timed games like Heads Up app
- Waiting out urges: Patience Timer, Breathing/Meditation apps
- Social anxiety: Social networking sites
- Selective Mutism & Social Anxiety: Sound meter apps
- Conceptual and motivational clips: Video clips, commercials, popular media
- Helpful Websites: <http://youth.anxietybc.com/>



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ADDRESSING MOTIVATION THROUGH REWARDS

Rewards do not have to be tangible

- Privileges
- Control
- One-on-one time with parents
- Messy fun

Take advantage of natural consequences whenever possible

- Find the vending Machine
- Collect game pieces
- Order
- Go somewhere I want to
- Get something back from anxiety

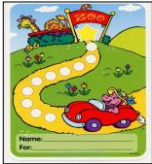


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IDEAS FOR TRACKING REWARDS



FOOD'S MENU	
FOODS	DRINKS



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IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT REWARDS

- Difference between an earned reward and a bribe
- The power of exclusivity
- Set up for success
- Reasonable reward for challenges
- Delivery
 - Consistency
 - Immediate vs. token system



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COMMON CHALLENGE 3: LOGISTICAL BARRIERS

- Even the most motivated client can have trouble maintaining that work out-of-session
- Changing behavior is HARD
- Busy, Busy, Busy!
- High levels of baseline stress
- Family dynamics



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USES OF PHONES FOR TRACKING THERAPY SKILLS AND PROGRESS

- Strategy reminders
- Tracking therapy homework completion
- Using videos of self for self-monitoring
- Reminders, reminders, reminders!!!
- Photo of tracking sheet and/or what they did.



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USING PHONE AS A REMINDER

- Set phone, computer, or tablet password to something that will jog memory, like “tics” or “brave”, HRT
- Set reminders to pop up at random times with tips that help
 - Pop ups
 - SMS/texts
 - Geolocation reminders
 - Random reminders

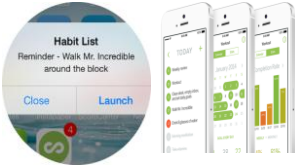


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VISUAL & EASY TRACKING OF BEHAVIORS AND PROGRESS

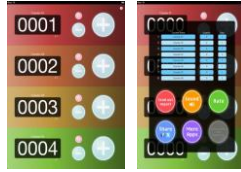
Habit Builders

Easy way to track progress,
give reminders, and
provide feedback



Click Counters

Simple way to track
behaviors using count
functions and get/send
feedback on progress



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MANAGING GENERAL STRESS

- Routines & good habits
 - Nutrition
 - Sleep
 - movement
- Nighttime
- Playtime
- Slow down



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MANAGING FAMILY DYNAMICS

- Conflict around dysfunction due to mental health issues
- Divergent approaches
- Conflict in Families
- Parent distress/similar anxieties



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Own it!



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SUMMARY

- Participation should be voluntary, can motivate, don't force/over focus
- Be creative, follow child's lead in creativity
- Ideas are everywhere
- Manuals are a guide
- Tailor to the needs of the child and family in front of you

Resources from presentation:

<http://www.pinterest.com/joellebemc/creative-applications-exposure-therapy-and-hrt/>

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Child and Adolescent OCD, Tic, Trich & Anxiety Group (COTTAGE)

- **Our staff has expertise in the treatment of anxiety and related disorders, including:**

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	Social Anxiety Disorder
Trichotillomania	Generalized Anxiety Disorder
Tic Disorders	Separation Anxiety Disorder
Panic Disorder/Agoraphobia	Specific Phobias
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	

- **We offer Clinical Services:**

Comprehensive diagnostic evaluations
Empirically-supported treatments for youth
Research studies on childhood OCD, Tic Disorders, and Trichotillomania

- **Additional Services:**

Parent Workshops	School Consultations
Teacher Workshops	Clinician Training

Contact Us: Child & Adolescent OCD, Tic, Trich & Anxiety Group (COTTAGE)

- Visit us online at:

<http://www.med.upenn.edu/cottage/>

- To refer a patient or to schedule an appointment, please call:

215 .746 . 1230

Thanks to the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders (NJCTS) for providing the Wednesday Webinar Series