

DIR® at Home and School

<http://www.momsfightingautism.com/teleseminar/>

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Disclosures

ICDL Faculty – minimal - review of clinical write ups, travel and room for conferences where I teach

NIMH/ Duke University – minimal – administrative time for pharmacogenetic research



**The Interdisciplinary Council on
Developmental and Learning Disorders**

Warning: this will go fast

All the slides will be posted on
www.circlestretch.blogspot.com

Since we have limited time I will skim over slides
marked with an orange dot





circlestretch

Help the child be...

- Calm enough to interact
- Truly connected to others
- In a continuous expanding balanced back and forth flow of interaction

“Go for that gleam in the eye!”

<http://www.circlestretch.blogspot.com>

Taking Notes?

- One word: **ENGAGEMENT**
 - One phrase: Engagement goes beyond compliance.

What is DIR®?

- Developmental
- Individual Differences
- Relationship Based
- Not to be confused with RDI....

Where it comes from:

- Infant Mental Health
- Parent-child relationship
- Greenspan, and Wieder

● Empirical Support

- Biopsychosocial medical model: the basis for current medical thinking from about 1970's to present – George Engel
- GxE – a better outcome despite Genetics, when we work with the Environment
- Child Development Research – co-regulation, engagement, learning through relating (dual-coding)
- Mathematical analysis of neurologic processes, including learning – vigilance – Stephen Grossberg (Boston U)
- Hundreds of treatment reports – review of 200 cases and follow up on that group – Stanley Greenspan, Serena Wieder, et. al.
- Rick Solomon, et. al. – The Play Project
- Brain Imaging studies – John Stieben (York U)

Definition of **Developmental, Individual Differences, Relationship Based Intervention:**

Developmental, Individual Differences, Relationship Based intervention is the use of ongoing affective connected interaction to promote developmental progress, focusing on co-regulation, engagement, and social reciprocity. This is done in a context of a well rounded biopsychosocial understanding of the person, and carried out throughout the day by caregivers who are guided and supported as they develop growth producing relationships.

**WE USE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION TO FOSTER THE CHILD'S
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, COGNITIVE AND COMMUNICATION
DEVELOPMENT –**

**WE WORK WITHIN THE CHILD'S PROFILE OF INDIVIDUAL
STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES WHILE WORKING TO
IMPROVE THAT PROFILE**

**EMOTIONAL CONNECTION, i.e., *AFFECT*, IS THE GLUE THAT
HOLDS EVERYTHING TOGETHER AND MAKES EVERYTHING
POSSIBLE. WE WORK WITH FAMILY AND OTHERS TO MAKE
THIS HAPPEN ALL THE TIME**

So, how does DIR® help?

- We can take a hard wired disorder and change it.
- What is the best way to change things?
- Behavioral tradition is clear: surface behavior can be changed, and lots of things can be learned (e.g., manding) to teach a person to do and say what we want the person to do or say.
- By contrast, DIR® helps her become more connected with her world, learn to think for herself and adapt to her world.

Contrast of DIR® vs. Behavioral Approaches

- Prompt vs woo – top down vs. building relationships and learning together
- Compliance vs. engagement
- Imitation, limits, facts vs. autonomous thinking, negotiation, & exploration



Comparison of DIR® with behavioral approaches – I


- Goals of a behavioral programs: appropriate behaviors, learning facts, learning ‘what to do’ in a top-down approach (we teach, child learns and complies).
- Goals of a relationship based interventions: connect with others to promote social and cognitive development and problem solving with flexible adaptation to a changing world. This is a ‘bottom up’ approach.
- NB: RDI is a social–cognitive behavioral program whose aim is to create the ability to have relationships by training the child in ‘what to do’ with ideas that reflect natural relating but with methods that are top-down and do not reflect natural relating.



Comparison of DIR® with behavioral approaches - II

Prompt vs. Woo

Prompt	Woo
Greater power difference between people	Humility – more equality
Control	Respect for ideas of other person
Specific expectation	Open ended, hopeful for growth
Belief in the material	Belief in the process



Comparison of DIR® with behavioral approaches – III

Compliance vs. Engagement


Compliance	Engagement
Do/think what I want you to do/think	Think for yourself and with me
Drills will create skills	Shared emotional signaling creates a relationship that inspires learning and problem solving
Schemes to cover new situations	Relationships, available and internalized, give self-assurance to respond to new situations
Limited sense of competence, self-esteem: “I can do it. I learned how.”	More full sense of competence, self-esteem: “I can figure it out.”



Comparison of DIR® with behavioral approaches – IV

A Complementary Relationship

Behavioral based contributes...	Relationship-based expands...
Imitation	Autonomous thinking
Limits	Negotiation
Facts	Exploration



DIR® is, by definition,
the broadest of possible interventions

- Biopsychosocial
- Individual differences
- Developmental
- Family characteristics
- Allows for other interventions within its umbrella

What does DIR® Look Like?

- Floortime sessions
- Floortime all the time: always engaging the child in a flow of interaction
- DIR® is for all ages and all levels of challenge
- Always includes time away from the situation for thinking and reflecting with others about what works and what to try next.

Breaking Down the D-I-R

Developmental

- Functional Emotional Developmental Levels
- Condense many (most) other developmental theories down to a fundamental set of foundational skills.
- WE ARE ALWAYS MOST CONCERNED WITH THE CONNECTION OF THE CHILD TO OTHERS AND HOW THE CHILD GROWS, LEARNS AND ADAPTS USING THAT ALL-IMPORTANT CONNECTION WITH OTHERS .
- Remember: this is about social problem solving, and ‘there is always a social problem in the room’

Functional Emotional Developmental Levels:

- I. Co-regulation – calm enough to interact / alert enough to interact
- II. Engagement – a warm, bright, trusting connection
- III. Circles of interaction
- III. Flow of interaction that leads to figuring out how to manage the situation
- V. Symbolic thinking in social problem solving
- VI. Logical thinking in the context of relating
- VII. Multi-causal thinking
- VIII. Grey area thinking
- IX. Reflective thinking

● Likert Scale for Each Level

1. Not doing it
2. Barely able to do it
3. Islands of time where the child can do it
4. Can expand those islands with our help
5. Comes back for more with little or no support
6. Pretty normal unless under stress
7. Age appropriate



Sample FEDL

	1 (not there)	2 (barely)	3 (islands)	4 (ok w/ support)	5 (comes back)	6 (ok unless stress)	7 (ok)
Regulate		11/05	11/06	11/07	11/08		
Engage		11/05	11/06	11/07	11/08		
Circles		11/05, 11/06	11/07	11/08			
Flow	11/05	11/06, 11/07	11/08				
Symbols	11/05	11/06, 11/07	11/08				
Logic	11/05, 11/06	11/07, 11/08					



Calm enough: (Co-regulation)

- Know the **individual** person: Sensory sensitivities, motor tone, understanding communication signals, giving signals to others, visual-spatial ability, body in space, movement, and ability to plan, sequence, do a plan (incl. motor ability), & adapt the plan.
- Co-regulation means we do this together – not a ‘sensory break’ (escape without learning anything) – meet the person 80% to where s/he is in intensity or lack of intensity to help the person settle down *with you*.
- ‘Calm enough’ might mean active enough.
- Think about what works and what doesn’t work



Truly Connected to Others (Engagement)

- The gleam we keep talking about...mostly this is fun and feels good for everyone
- It's the reason, the 'buy-in', the bond, that will lead to compliance.
- Joint attention, but more than that.
- Joining whatever the person is doing, to start (not an end in itself).



Circles

- The ‘back and forth’ of an interaction
- The child is always doing something
- Join in, make yourself a part of the activity
- Or if you can’t just join in, you can gently and playfully get in the way
- Maybe be the person with the stuff the child wants – has to get it from you



FLOW

- The fourth ‘level’ in the social-emotional developmental process
- The ‘engine’ of relating you need to be able to expand
- It might look like ‘baby games’, but it is what we all do every day, constantly, with each other



Symbols

- Words, when they really say something – more than labels
- Play, when it really ‘says’ something – more than trained actions or turn taking
- Gestures, when they ‘talk’ about things or ideas that can replace actions – more than pointing
- *Try to treat everything as having meaning – you might be wrong and that’s ok, the person will correct you*



All Kinds of Symbols

From playing with dollies when the child really means it
or crashing cars when it really expresses something

to

Fantastical stories of castles and kings, princes, armies,
unicorns, spies, heroines and every kind of complex
human motivation

(think of the 7 virtues and 7 vices)

Individual Differences

- Sensory sensitivities and processing
- Postural control and motor planning
- Receptive communication
- Expressive communication
- Visual-spatial communication
- Praxis: knowing how to do things to solve the social problem of the moment

Individual Differences - Sample

<i>Sensory</i>	<i>Postural</i>	<i>Response to Communication</i>	<i>Intent to Communicate</i>	<i>Visual Exploration</i>	<i>Praxis -</i>
Sensory seeking... Auditory Visual Tactile Vestibular Proprio-ceptive Taste Odor	A relative strength; A bit clumsy - impedes rapid reciprocity in the moment 1 indicate desires 2. mirror gestures 3. imitate gesture 4. Imitate with purpose. 5. Obtain desires 6. interact: - exploration - purposeful - self help -interactions	Trouble managing more than one thing at a time Can barely tell 'why' we fight or what we fight about Can't track conceptual discussion of the reasoning behind events and play 1. Orient 2. key tones 3. key gestures 4. key words 5. Switch auditory attention back and forth 6. Follow directions 7. Understand W ?'s 8.abstract conversation.	Dysarthric – unintelligible Logical discourse is difficult (e.g. at best hedonistic: cheating gets you disqualified) 1. Mirror vocalizations 2.. Mirror gestures 3. gestures 4. sounds 5.words 6. two –word 7. sentences 8. logical flow.	A relative strength; Frustrated looking for things Some ability to work with shapes and objects to solve problems in play. 1. focus on object 2. Alternate gaze 3. Follow another's gaze to determine intent. 3. Switch visual attention 4. visual figure ground 5. search for object 6. search two areas of room 7. assess space, shape and materials.	Ideas becoming more complex with support Adapting to problems that come up (e.g. when my character is injured, faints, etc.) Ideation Planning (including sensory knowledge to do this) Sequencing Execution Adaptation

The Child's Individual Profile

- Where are you now?
- What works?
- What are the details?
- How do you help the child do better in these areas? (Relationships that are therapeutic, with family, therapists, teachers, *everyone*)

The Relationship Part

- Family circumstances and styles
- Teacher's style and class circumstances
- Support to families, therapists, and school
- Importance of time to think about how it is working
- The rest of this is about how we work on better engagement and supporting the child's development

DIR® at Home

- Focused time
- Attention to the FEDL levels
- Whenever you are doing anything
- Going with the child's idea
- Expanding on that idea
- Playing confused
- Gentle obstruction
- Working gently but persistently toward more complexity

General Examples

- Child wants something – even something perseverative
- Gently leveraging that desire
- Limits, e.g., bed time – negotiating

Communication

- Non-verbal is critical
- Wooing vs. prompting eye contact
- Not getting caught in verbal interactions that have little real connection

Things to Avoid

- Avoid quizzing for facts
- Avoid directing games, conversations, and play
- Avoid saying 'No': every idea is interesting to work with, even if it is impossible to give the child what s/he wants
- Avoid merely entertaining the child
- Avoid following without joining and shaping an interaction

Avoid Questions!

- Top-down,
- Child more likely to shut down or tantrum
- Doesn't help the child learn to think
- This is hard to do!

Talk about what's happening

- Talk about the situation, 'here and now'
- Puts the child (other person) just a bit above you, so that the child does the thinking
- You play Sancho to the child's Don Quixote: state the situation and allow the child to come up with the solution.

DIR® at School

- What we usually ‘want’: sit and work independently, learn, play well (take turns, share)
- Compliance: why do typical kids comply?
- Engagement vs. compliance

DIR® in the IEP:

- Present levels of co-regulation, engagement, reciprocity
- What works, what doesn't, and why
- Individual differences: strengths and challenges
- Goals for these
- Intervention: whole team focus on engagement, and the rest falls into place
- Tracking forms
- Reflective feedback!

Supporting Engagement at School

- Requires co-regulation – what does that look like?
- Not ‘sensory breaks’ per se
- Engagement: getting the gleam – the connection – with few staff
- Circles of interaction: first with adults – same aged peers are toughest
- Importance of inclusion (Paula Kluth)

DIR® in everyday life at school

- Work on everyday problems
- Work on keeping the child engaged throughout the day
- Work on co-regulation, engagement and reciprocity
- Work on developing relationships between child and staff and between child and peers

Examples at School

- Seat work
- Playground facilitation – see ahead
- Social skills groups – see ahead
- Non-verbal child in class: how to have the child be part of the class?
- Highly verbal, rigid thinking, perfectionistic child

Facilitating interactions

- First start with well-supported adults
- 15-20 minute 'turns' for each person's ideas
- Persistence: stay with the person
- Every idea is a good idea

Facilitating with Kids

- All of the above and...
- Semi-structured activities with peers
- Limiting numbers of kids
- Mediating the process – often to slow it down
- Interpreting intent
- Statements more than questions
- Democratic decision making



Things a facilitating adult might say...

- “We need to do something...”
- “You’re good at that, and I need help with...”
- “So wait a second – I didn’t hear that rule...”
- “We need to vote on whether he was out..”
- “That’s *great* all you guys want to play too – I have more than *I* can handle now, but lets plan on having you join us next time if you still want to do it then.” (good idea, bad timing – be sure to make good on your offer next time if they still want to join)
- Semi-structured means that at times you will be a bit ‘top-down’, but work toward less of it.
- In free play, the thing is to facilitate joining by your joining first in a way that attracts other kids, then facilitate the mix

A General Plan for the Management of Difficult Moments *

- Have a plan ahead of time
- Adjust the environment
- Soothe – avoid physical restraint
- Talk with the child afterward
- Anticipate – plan with the child what to do next time

*reference:

A Bioethical Approach to Overcoming Problems with Aggression and Misbehavior in Schools,
Stanley Greenspan, M.D.

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Limitations and Challenges in implementing a relationship based approach

- Not didactic – must give up top-down control
- Not manual driven – it's in the moment, creative, a bottom up approach
- Training requires relating: coaching, coachability
- Boundaries must be tended
- We're not 'holding the baby' – we're coaching caregivers
- Need for reflective process
- Not so entrepreneurial – academic transparency hampers marketing
- Need for more practitioners



Summary: Why do this?

- It is BPS, and BPS is good.
- We can change outcomes despite genetics, etc.
- Affect **is** the key to growth and development, and this is affect based.
- We need to go beyond behavioral treatments.
- Medication can sometimes support treatment but cannot address core deficits nor make up for environment.
- There is reason and there is plenty of bench research and budding clinical research to support it.



ICDL Learning Opportunities

- Support Groups For Parents and Professionals –(Burgesen, Feder, et al) – announced on ValeriesList@aol.com and on circlestretch.blogspot.com.
- Online Basic Course – new cycle this spring: icdl.com
- Training DVDs
- Summer Institute for clinicians and others – intensive one week (2009 year July 8-12 at Asilomar) – requires Basic Course
- Monthly multidisciplinary internet and regional tutoring – ICDL faculty (Feder, others) – pre or post Summer Institute



More ICDL Learning Opportunities

- Online PhD Program in Infant Mental and Child Development and Early Intervention – educational degree program (not clinical, but requires a practicum).
- Adult Education for Parents and Clinicians - HOPE Infant Family Support Program (Burgesen) – for families enrolled in HOPE’s 0-3 autism program – program on track for ICDL certification.
- Streamlined for distribution – The Play Project (Solomon)
- Affect Based Language Curriculum - for parents of professionals to use (Lewis)



DIR® Schools

- Celebrate the Children – Wharton, NJ
- Rebecca School – Manhattan
- Imagine Academy – Brooklyn, NY
- The Community School – Atlanta, GA

Resources

- *Becoming More Matthew* in The Autism File, January 2009
- Circlestretch.blogspot.org – incl lots of forms and more detailed ppts
- ICDL.com – information and local and regional training, free downloads and podcasts

Your Questions:



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