



# COGNITIVE-BEHAVIOURAL THERAPIES IN TREATMENT OF ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD): THE PARENT TRAINING

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**INTRODUCTION:** Cognitive-behavioral therapies are evidence-based interventions in the treatment of children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Among the behavioral therapies, the parent training (PT) is a well-established treatment, found to be effective in several areas of child and family functioning. The PT is psychoeducational and cognitive restructuring of parental cognitions about children's difficulties and it is a basic part of the multimodal treatment of ADHD.

Every phase of PT provides parents with skills and psychological issues aimed to:

- ❖ Structure children's the environment;
- ❖ Establish setting rules;
- ❖ Give child appropriate instructions;
- ❖ Anticipate misbehaviours;
- ❖ Reinforce positive behaviour (Time -in);
- ❖ Employ punishment (Time out);
- ❖ Ignore maladaptive behaviours;
- ❖ Implement token systems;
- ❖ Enhance parental and marital communication.

PT improves parental ratings of ADHD symptoms and associated problems.

Furthermore, PT aims to be effective in helping parents to distinguish marital problems from educational difficulties.

## PHASE 1: To structure child's environment

Child's environment should be structured in a routine to organize family's activities. Spaces and times must be established to allow family members to support child in acquiring new cognitive and emotional skills.

## PHASE 2: Establish setting rules

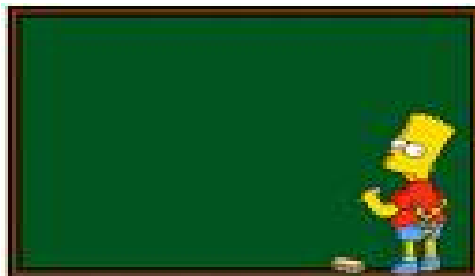
Setting rules are necessary to allow parents to focus their attention mainly on behavioural and relational aspects of ADHD and its correlates. Parents can achieve positive interaction abilities with their children if rules and rewards are fixed.

## PHASE 2: Give child appropriate instructions

Clear communication and instruction helps children in acquiring logical and sequential abilities: they learn to identify problems, individuate all the choices, gaining problem solving abilities

## PHASE 4: Anticipate misbehaviours

Parents should be helped achieve their abilities in anticipating maladaptive behaviours with new communicative and educational skills. The inhibition of negative behavioural sequelae helps parents to feel themselves more confident in child's care and education.



## PHASE 5: Reinforce positive behaviors/ employ punishment

Parents entice child to comply with their requests in exchange for small treats. The eventual goal is to get child to behave without the promise of a reward.

## PHASE 6: Ignore maladaptive behaviours

Maladaptive behaviours should be redefined and parents have to emphasize positive aspects and resources of child's personality. When child feels positive reinforcement instead of blame, he gains a better self-esteem.

## PHASE 7: Implement token system

Token economy is a reward system in which child earns points (or tokens) when he behaves and loses them when he misbehaves. For example, he may accumulate stars on a chart for accomplishments and lose stars for breaking rules. At the end of the week, he may receive a prize depending on the number of stars he has left.

## PHASE 8: Enhance parental and marital communication

Parents should be also guided through the expressions of their feelings and worries toward child. The reduction of parenting stress helps parents in developing a functional communication.

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