


Psychological interventions by primary health care staff

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- # Health care staff is in “front line”
 - # Staff observes problems first hand
 - # Staff already performs psychological and behavioral interventions in the primary setting
 - # Need of training to recognize and deal with common concerns and problems by infants and parents
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Role of primary health care staff

- # OBSERVATION
 - # DETECTION OF PROBLEMS
 - # PROVIDING INFORMATION
 - # GIVE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT
 - # PRACTICAL HEALTH
 - # ADVICE AND PRACTICAL INTERVENTIONS
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Role of primary health care staff

- # ESTABLISHING A LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP
 - # ESTABLISH A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP
 - # SEEKING ADDITIONAL HELP: REFERRAL, CONSULTATION, CO-PARTICIPATION
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Observation

- # Alert to behavior while in the waiting room
 - # Observation of actual interactions between parents and infant in waiting room and in office
 - # Infant's mood and general demeanor
 - # Infant's relatedness
 - # If “partnership” between baby and caretakers
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Observation

- # Of parent's mood,
 - # Psychological involvement by parent
 - # Emotional involvement with baby
 - # Pre-viewing behavior of the infant
 - # Buffering behavior and sculpting activity
vis a vis baby
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Detection of problems

Search for Alarm Signs

- In infant
 - In Parent
 - In Relationship
 - In the context or in family situation
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Main alarm signs

- # Maternal depression. Postpartum depression
- # Substance addiction in caregiver
- # Domestic Violence

(Highly frequent problems)

Alarm signs in infant

- # Excessive crying or irritability
 - # Feeding difficulties, not gaining weight
 - # Failure to thrive
 - # Sleeping difficulties
 - # Communication and relatedness
 - # Effects of trauma or high anxiety
 - # Depression and hypo-reactivity in the baby
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Providing Information

- # Young parents. Not witnessed parenting or taking care of a baby
 - # Inexperienced in practical care of an infant
 - # Questions by caregiver
 - # Provide if context is adequate
 - # How receptive caregiver is to information
 - # Interest in changing and learning
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Information on developmental issues

- # Examples
 - # Physiology of eating
 - # Techniques of breastfeeding
 - # Caloric needs of infant
 - # Introduction of new flavors, textures
 - # Maturation of ability to process foods
 - # Weight gain and stature gain
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Information on development

- # Sleeping issues
 - # Bedtime rituals and emotional needs at bedtime, and at separation
 - # Importance of routines and markers
 - # Physiology of sleep
 - # Nature of parasomnias
 - # Dealing with wakings
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Information on crying

- # Crying as communication
 - # Reasons for crying
 - # What crying might mean
 - # Concerns about “spoiling the infant”
 - # Signaling equipment by infant
 - # Ways of dealing with crying
 - # Importance of baby developing trust
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Information on communication and language development

- # Importance of non-verbal language and communication
 - # Gestural communications
 - # Early "conversations"
 - # Issue of "*motherese*"
 - # Importance of language input
 - # Role of parents in language development
 - # Turn taking
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Information. Relatedness and attachment

- # Importance of trust by the infant
 - # Sensitivity in the parent is appropriate
 - # Openness to emotions in infant and parent
 - # Compassionate responses are “permissible”
 - # Importance of internal security in infant
 - # Role of parent’s own childhood
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Information

- # On brain and cortical development during the first year of life
 - # On cognitive development of the baby
 - # On social development
 - # On emotional development
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Information

- # Different types of infants
- # Sensory variances and nature of input vs

Coping with stimuli

Visual

Auditory

Tactile

Proprioceptive

Vestibular

Olfactory

Gustatory

Emotional support

- # Importance of psychosocial support during the perinatal period
 - # Role of health care providers for nuclear families or single mothers
 - # Absence of extended family
 - # Importance of long term relationship with few caregivers
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Emotional support

- # Importance of Listening
 - # Listening to details of history
 - # Listening to details of problem
 - # Containing the information
 - # Containing the emotions
 - # Accepting negative feelings and ambivalence by parents
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Emotional support

- # Relief by discharging emotions
 - # Psychological support by “being there”
 - # Sharing of anxieties and fears
 - # Health care staff in role of experts, experienced, supportive figures
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Emotional support

- # Reflect on parent's feelings
 - # Validate parent's feelings and perceptions
 - # Normalization of a range of feelings
 - # Acknowledgment of anger, sadness
 - # Containing without criticizing
 - # Staff's need for support
 - # Attention to one's own reactions
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Practical help

- # In dealing with health care system
 - # In providing guidance on dealing with problems
 - # In reducing stress factors (telephone, power in the house, heating)
 - # Access to health care system
 - # Housing issues
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Advice and suggestions to deal with problems

- # Acknowledge variations in child-rearing practices
 - # Be aware of cultural variations and values
 - # What is the parent wanting to promote in the child?
 - # What are the resources available to parent and infant, i.e strengths
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Suggestions to deal with “no”

- # Importance of empathy
 - # Speaking for the baby
 - # Acknowledging baby’s intentionality
 - # Recognize baby’s need for autonomy and respect
 - # Importance of tone of voice
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Suggestions to deal with “no”

- # Importance of tone of voice
 - # Importance of sculpting and close proximity
 - # Need to focus on positive
 - # Re-direction, re-engagement, re-direction
 - # Offering alternatives to the infant
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Suggestions on “discipline”

- # Discipline as teaching and modeling, rather than as punishment
 - # Focus on the positive behavior by child
 - # Catch child doing the right thing
 - # Limit setting vs. punishment
 - # Engaging techniques, vs. distancing techniques (like time out or send child to room or corner)
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Dealing with “discipline”

- # Fears of parents regarding discipline
 - # Importance of long term time perspective
 - # Emphasis on relationship vs. each behavior at a time
 - # Importance of positive emotional climate
 - # Importance of emotional field and acceptance, vs. intense emotional reactions
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Dealing with tantrums

- # Wait , Watch and Wonder technique
 - # Tantrums are developmentally normal
 - # Excessive tantrums may signal distress, inability to cope, rather than purposeful manipulation
 - # Contain the child and be available emotionally
 - # Prevent rather than deal with tantrums.
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Dealing with tantrums

- # Find situations where tantrums are likely
 - # Is child getting enough attention indeed?
 - # Issues of “irreducible needs of children”
 - # Child’s need for contact and engagement
 - # Child’s need for control
 - # Help parent give child sense of control
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Advice on play

- # Importance of pleasurable interactions between parent and infant
 - # Need to make a space where mutual enjoyment
 - # Parent's ability to relax, play and enjoy the child
 - # Priority of infant's needs
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