



Vietnamese American Children's Mental Health: Culturally Responsive Approach to Parent Child Interaction Therapy to Combat Stigma

Nancy Hiếu Nguyễn, PhD., LMFT

Ashley Lê Nguyễn, MA, Mental Health Worker

Carrie Axline-White, LMFT, PCIT Clinical Supervisor

API Mental Health Empowerment Conference

October 6, 2017

Disclosure

We do not have relevant relationships with commercial interests.

Objectives

- I. History of Vietnamese immigration and refugee status
- II. Mental health concerns unique to Vietnamese American children, parents, and families
- III. Description of what is PCIT and how it works
- IV. Discussion of past research on PCIT with ethnic minority children and community mental health
- V. Information on cultural adaptation/tailoring to Vietnamese Americans and in-home/community support to generalize
- VI. Discussion on the outcomes of Vietnamese American families in PCIT- ECBI, PSI, DPICS
- VII. Considerations for sustainability

Vietnamese Children and Families

- Historical context: Fall of Saigon in 1975 to communist government
- Mass immigration: Mostly as refugees (Leung, Boehnlein, & Kinzie, 1997).
- Boatpeople: Fled country by boat to countries such as Philippines, Laos & Singapore
- Experienced piracy, starvation, thirst, loss of life, sexual assault and cannibalism (Kaplan & Huynh, 2008)
- Sponsored to different host countries: Majority to U.S. (Little Saigon, Orange County: Largest Vietnamese Population outside of Vietnam (Nguyen, 2015))
- Subsequent waves: **Orderly Departure Program (ODP)**, **Humanitarian Operation Program (HO)** for political prisoners and their families, and **Amerasian Homecoming** act for children of Vietnamese women and U.S. personnel (Kaplan & Huynh, 2008)
- Considered contemporary immigrants due to recent immigration and generally less education, less affluent background due to primarily refugee status (Pyke, 2000)



Vietnamese American Parents

Many parents coping with trauma of war, refugee experience, and postwar adjustment (Kaplan & Huynh, 2008)

Research has shown that Vietnamese parental mental health concerns can adversely affect family dynamics including parent-child relationships (Leung, et al., 1997)



Vietnamese American Parents



- Includes trauma, PTSD, depression and anxiety (Kaplan & Huynh, 2008), suicide (Ida & Yang, 2003)

Mental Health Needs of Vietnamese American Children



Vietnamese parents viewing discipline and physical punishment as intertwined, alerting of child protective services (Rho & Rho, 2007)

Acculturation and adjustment issues: identity formation, language barriers (Chun & Sue, 1998)

Mental Health Needs of Vietnamese American Children

Acculturation and adjustment Model
minority myth (Iida & Yang, 2003),
pressure to perform lead to
internalizing disorders such as
depression and anxiety

Mental health concerns related to
war and refugee experience
transmitted through parents/family:
depression, anxiety, family grief
over loss of life, attachment
problems (insecure, ambivalent,
disorganized) (Wahmanholm &
Westermeyer, 1996; Wiese, 2010)



Vietnamese American Children and Parents

(Leung et al., 1997; O'Connor, 2005; Pyke, 2000)

- Vietnamese families have different role definitions, familial expectations, hierarchal relations, caution in emotional expressiveness and collectivistic values than mainstream US culture (Pyke, 2000)
- Important to balance (O'Connor, 2005):
 - Dominant culture
 - Family's culture of origin
 - Acculturation of child



Vietnamese American Children and Parents

(Leung et al., 1997; O'Connor, 2005; Pyke, 2000)

- Intergenerational gap between parents and children when children try to integrate American values and standards with those from traditional Vietnamese culture (Pyke, 2000).
- Difficulties in communication in parent-child relationship and parental concerns about child social behaviors, school performance, personal behaviors and anti-social behaviors (Leung et al., 1997)



Counseling: Barriers for Vietnamese Americans'

(Kaplan & Huynh, 2008; Leung, et al., 1997; Thai, 2002)

- Higher prevalence of mental health issues, yet underuse mainstream mental health services
- Barriers to counseling:
 - Language
 - Reluctance to disclose personal history
 - Cultural values
 - Lack of knowledge about mental health services
 - Culturally insensitive practices
 - Differences in how minorities process learning
 - Difficulty distinguishing between mental and physical health
 - Stigmas attached to counseling
 - Conflicts among generations of Vietnamese families

What is PCIT and how can it help?

- From pcit.org:

“An evidence-based treatment for young children with emotional and behavioral disorders that places emphasis on improving the quality of the parent-child relationship and changing parent-child interaction patterns. Children and their caregivers are seen together in PCIT. Most of the session time is spent coaching caregivers in the application of specific therapy skills. Therapist typically coach from an observation room with a one-way mirror into the playroom, using a “bug-in-the-ear” system for communicating to the the parents as they play with their child. Concluding each session, therapist and caregiver together decide which skills to focus on most during daily 5 minute home practice sessions for the following week.”

What is PCIT and how can it help?

2 Phases of Treatment

1. Child Directed Interaction: Establish warmth in the relationship with child through learning and applying skills proven to help children feel calm, secure in relationships with the caregiver, and good about themselves.
2. Parent Directed Interaction: Equip to manage most challenging of child's behaviors while remaining confident, calm and consistent with approach to discipline. Learns proven strategies for child to accept limits, comply with directions, respect house rules and demonstrate appropriate behavior in public.
3. Graduation: Completed within 12 to 20 sessions, but not time limited. Complete when both sets of skills are mastered, and child's behavior is within normal limits on behavior rating scale.

From pcit.org

What does it look like?



Picture Courtesy of <https://eedp.wustl.edu/research/parent-child-therapy-study/treatment/>

Literature Review:

PCIT Effectiveness & Use with Minorities

(Lyon and Budd, 2010)

- The use of PCIT is found to be effective with underserved communities.
- The most influential factor to success is remaining in treatment, but the limitation to success is early drop-out/attrition.
- Additional research is required in order to establish that PCIT as an empirically supported treatment across ethnic minority groups.

(Leung, Tsang, Sin and Choi, 2015)

- The intervention group participants were able to maintain change 3 months after completion of PCIT, providing evidence that PCIT was effective with Chinese parents and children. These findings add to the literature that PCIT is effective across cultures (i.e. Latin Americans and African Americans).
- In Asian cultures extended family members are part of providing child care, therefore it would be beneficial to conduct surveys and gather data from extended family members that are part of providing care for the child.

(Matos, Torres, Santiago, Jurado and Rodriguez, 2006)

- Similar to other studies, this research concluded that using culturally sensitive methods and modifications are effective for PCIT treatment. More specifically, the study compared 3 groups: PCIT Treatment, GANA treatment (PCIT in Spanish) and Treatment as Usual. Researchers found that PCIT treatment was most superior and effective compared to other treatments.

Literature Review:

PCIT generalization into the home

(Ware, McNeil, Masse, and Stevens, 2008)

- A single subject A/B design study looking at how teaching PCIT completely in the home suggests that this may be a feasible option
 - Observed were decreases in caregiver use of negative behaviors, increases in child compliance, caregiver use of positive behaviors and contingent praise

(Timmer, Zebell, Culver, and Urquiza, 2010)

- Compared additional PCIT support through use of : in-home social support and with in-home PCIT coaching – found no significant differences between both in-home social support and in-home PCIT coaching but did see shifts in parents attitudes and tolerance for difficult behaviors in both cases
 - These findings suggest that increased exposure to PCIT may help to shift parents' attitudes and beliefs about their children's difficult behaviors

(Naik-Polan & Budd, 2008)

- Examined generalization of PCIT into the home. Findings reflected that some skills were transferred spontaneously. A transfer training protocol showed improved generalization skills across all participants

(Naik-Polan & Anjali, 2005)

- Examined spontaneous generalization of CDI skills to the home and the effects of a 1-session Transfer Training intervention of low-income single mothers
 - Greatest generalization occurred for praise, not reflections and behavioral descriptions. Transfer training resulted in further increased in skills in all participants

Cultural Adaptation/Tailoring to Vietnamese Americans

Barriers	Comparison	Outcome
Language	No materials	Translate CDI portion
Praise not norm	Abstract versus Action	Action focused praise
Perceptions of play as non-purposeful	Behavior focused versus action focused	Solution Focused Play Therapy
Use of “ha” with reflections that sounds ?	Cultural norm for “ha”	Work with parents on removal, count as reflection
Perception as lack of generalization towards school	Mental health stigma in VA culture, more accepted if school related	Tie to school based incentives (sitting in chair, use of rules, clean up as parallel to classroom)



Cultural Adaptation/Tailoring to Vietnamese Americans

Barriers	Comparison	Outcome
Lack of familiarity with positive reinforcement, rewards/incentives	Authoritarian shame based parenting with corporal punishment in Vietnam	Collateral sessions with parents, information on alternatives to physical punishment, psychoeducation on child abuse laws in US/CA
Lack of familiarity with certain pretend play toys	Food kit, plates/utensils, dolls, furniture (mainstream based)	Inclusion of ethnic specific food, utensils (noodles, chopsticks), Asian dolls with extended family members, clothing

Generalizing PCIT into home for Vietnamese Americans

Barriers	Comparison	Outcome
Reflections in CDI	Language barrier	Model and explain client's language
Time-out	Cultural norms	Tailor it to VA parenting styles
Motivation to generalize	Understanding practicality and use	Tying skills to how it would increase compliance
Collectivist society	Tendency for multiple family members to help raise one child	Include other adults into sessions as necessary to teach basic skills
Perception as lack of generalization towards school	Mental health stigma in VA culture, more accepted if school related	Incorporate school based activities (homework, reading, drawing)

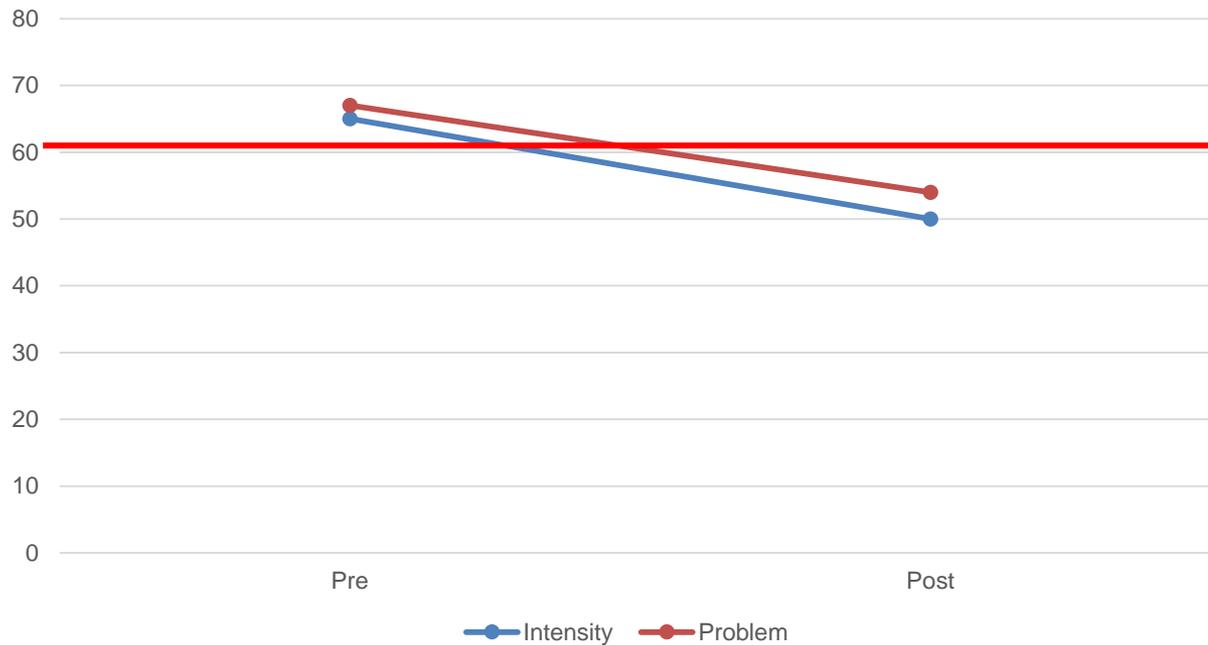
Culture Specific Toy Examples



Download from Dreamstime.com
50915532
Yulia Yursova | Dreamstime.com

PCIT Outcome Measure- Eyberg Childhood Behavior Inventory (ECBI)

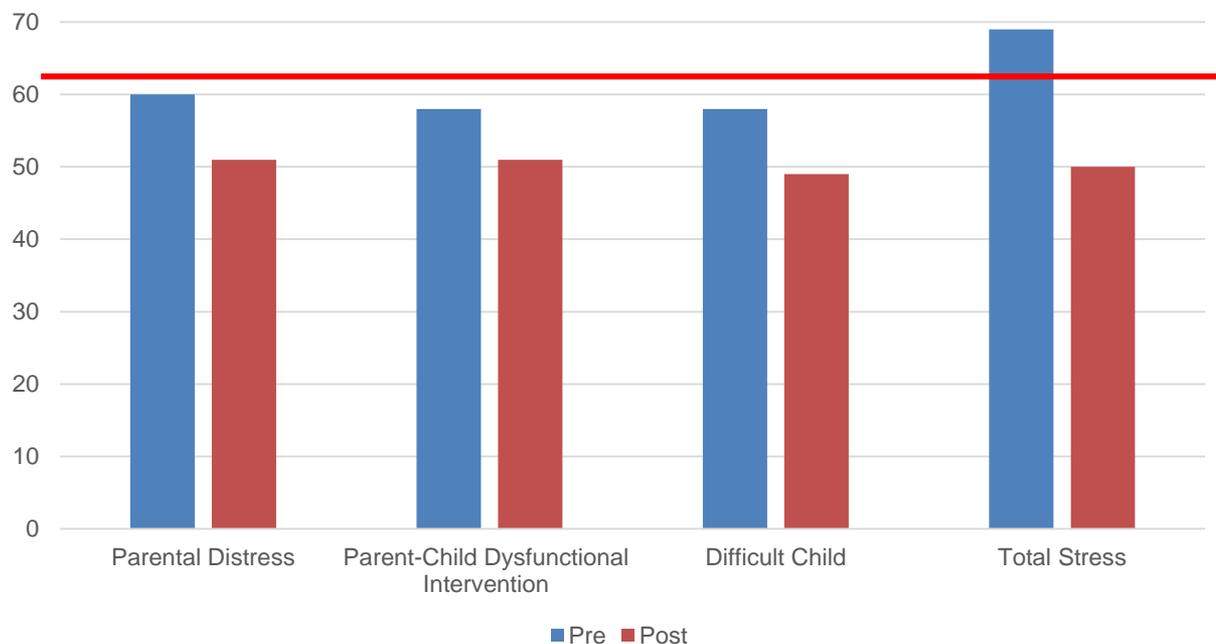
ECBI Pre and Post Intervention



	Pre	Post
Intensity	65	50
Problem	67	54

PCIT Outcome Measures- Parenting Stress Index (PSI)

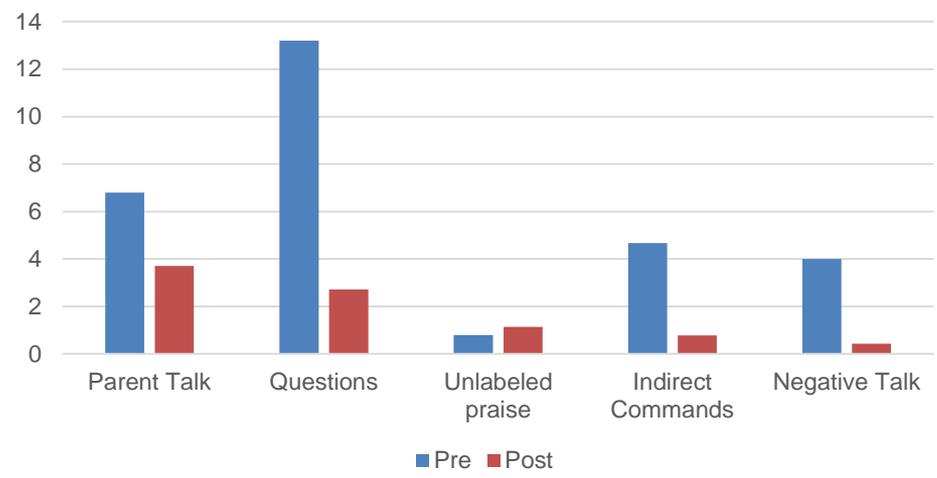
PSI Pre and Post Intervention



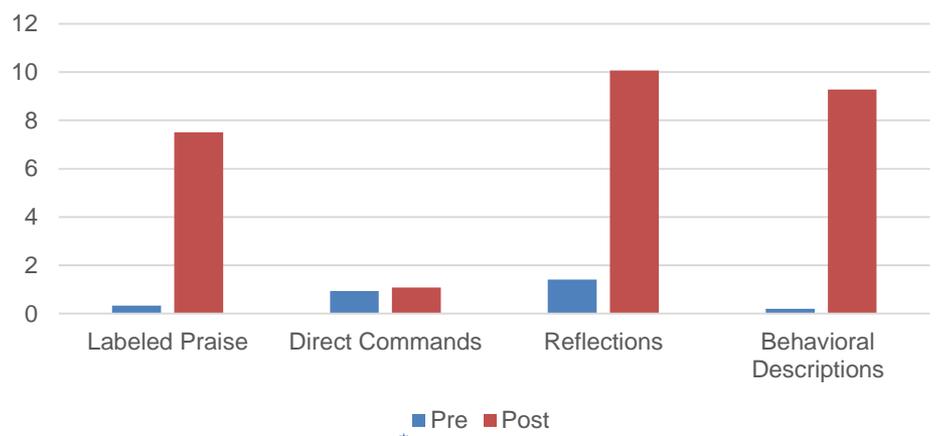
	Pre	Post
Parental Distress	60	51
P-C Dysfunctional	58	51
Difficult Child	58	49
Total Stress	69	50

Dyadic Parent-Child Interaction Coding System (DPICS)- Change at Opening and Closing of Treatment

Discouraged Communication



Encouraged Relationship Strengthening Communication Skills



For Consideration- Sustainability

Micro

- Group of MSW/MFT trainees, Clinical Staff, Psychology Interns, bachelor's level mental health workers of Vietnamese American background/language capabilities
- Teach key “buzzwords” during training of trainees

Macro

- Grant and funding for protocol refinement and further studies- Outcome based
- Collaborate and provide training on culturally sensitive services to Vietnamese American population
- Training in overall basics of PCIT- Further more accurate translation of CDI and PDI
- Introducing families to skills in less stigmatized setting- Such as Workshops/Seminars

References

Butler, A. M., & Eyberg, S. M. (2006). Parent–child interaction therapy and ethnic minority children. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 1(3), 246-25

Chun, C., & Sue, S. (1998). Mental health issues concerning Asian Pacific American children. In V. Pang & L. Cheng (Eds.), *Struggling to heard, the unmet needs of Asian Pacific American children* (pp. 75-87). Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Ida, D., & Yang, P. (2003). Southeast Asian refugee children and adolescents. In J. T. Gibbs & L.N. Huang (Eds.), *Children of color: Psychological interventions with culturally diverse youth* (pp. 265-295). San Francisco: Jossey: Bass.

Kaplan, A., & Huynh, U. (2008). Working with Vietnamese Americans in disasters. *Ethnocultural Perspectives on Disaster and Trauma International and Cultural Psychology*, 2, 321-349.

Leung, P., Boehnlien, J., & Kinzie, J. (1997). Vietnamese American families. In E. Lee (Ed.) *Working with Asian American families: A guide for clinicians* (pp. 153-162). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Leung, C., Tsang, S., Sin, T. C., & Choi, S. Y. (2015). The Efficacy of Parent–Child Interaction Therapy With Chinese Families Randomized Controlled Trial. *Research on social work practice*, 25(1), 117-128.

References

- Lyon, A. R., & Budd, K. S. (2010). A community mental health implementation of parent–child interaction therapy (PCIT). *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 19(5), 654-668.
- Matos, M., Torres, R., Santiago, R., Jurado, M., & Rodriguez, I. (2006). Adaptation of parent–child interaction therapy for Puerto Rican families: A preliminary study. *Family Process*, 45(2), 205-222.
- McCabe, K., & Yeh, M. (2009). Parent–child interaction therapy for Mexican Americans: A randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 38(5), 753-759.
- Naik-Polan, A. T. (2005). The effectiveness of a dyadic parent training intervention with high-risk families: Generalization to the home. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 66, 567
- Naik-Polan, A. T., & Budd, K. S. (2008). Stimulus generalization of parenting skills during parent-child interaction therapy. *Journal Of Early And Intensive Behavior Intervention*, 5(3), 71-92. doi:10.1037/h0100424
- Nguyen, P. (2015). Vietnamese American in Little Saigon California. *American History Oxford Journal of Asian American History*. DOI:10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.013.19
- O'Connor, K. (2005). Addressing Diversity Issues in Play Therapy, *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 36, 566-573. Retrieved Sunday, January 28, 2007 from the PsycARTICLES database.
- Pyke, K. (2000). “The normal family” as an interpretive structure of family life among grown children of Korean and Vietnamese immigrants. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(1), 240-255.

References

Rho, Y., & Rho, K. (2009). Clinical considerations when working with Asian American children and adolescents. In N.H. Trinh et al. (Eds.), *Handbook of Mental Health and Acculturation in Asian American Families*, Current Clinical Psychiatry.

Thai, H. (2002). Formation of ethnic identity among second-generation Vietnamese Americans. In P. Min (Ed.), *The second generation: ethnic identity among Asian Americans* (pp. 53-83).

Timmer, S. G., Zebell, N. M., Culver, M. A., & Urquiza, A. J. (2010). Efficacy of adjunct in-home coaching to improve outcomes in parent-child interaction therapy. *Research On Social Work Practice*, 20(1), 36-45. doi:10.1177/1049731509332842

Ware, L. M., McNeil, C. B., Masse, J., & Stevens, S. (2008). Efficacy of in-home parent-child interaction therapy. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy*, 30(2), 99-126. doi 10.1080/07317100802060302

Wahmanholm, K., & Westermeyer, J. (1996). Refugee children. In R. Apfel & B. Simon (Eds.) *Minefields in their hearts: the mental health of children in war and communal violence*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Wiese, E. (2010). Culture and migration: Psychological trauma in children and adolescents. *Traumatology*, 16(4), 142-152.

Discussion: Questions/Comments??



Contact Information

Nancy Hiếu Nguyễn

nhnguyen@fullerton.edu

Ashley Lê Nguyễn

Ashley.Nguyen@westernyouthservices.org

Carrie Axline-White

Carrie.AxlineWhite@westernyouthservices.org