

FILIAL THERAPY: A COMPARISON OF CHILD-PARENT RELATIONSHIP
THERAPY AND PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION THERAPY

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Abstract

Filial therapy, originally developed by Bernard Guerney (1964), is a form of parent child therapy utilizing child-centered skills and limit setting strategies to improve the parent child relationship and to increase positive child behaviors. Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), developed by Sheila Eyberg (1988), is an empirically supported treatment for improving parenting skills and decreasing negative externalizing behavior with children. Child Parent Relationship Therapy (CPRT), developed by Garry Landreth (2002), is an up and coming form of Filial therapy, supported in the literature for improving the parent child relationship and improving the child's general functioning. Children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) often present with deficits in their socialization and communication abilities. These deficiencies can cause strain on the parent child relationship because of the challenges inherent to the maladaptive interactions common among families with a child diagnosed with ASD. Therefore, there is a need for effective interventions to improve the functioning between the parent and child. However, a review of the literature discovered a lack of research using Filial therapy with children diagnosed with ASD and no research comparing different forms of Filial therapy. In order to better inform practitioners, the current study utilized qualitative analysis through a deconstructing evidence approach to examine the experience of four participants in either the PCIT or CPRT group. Participants completed pre and post assessments measuring changes in the parent child relationship and their child's adaptive functioning. The counselors of the group also recorded the parents' reactions to the group through their weekly progress notes. The results yielded little support for one approach over the other. One participant in the CPRT had a very

successful experience overall, reporting improvement in the parent child relationship and her child's adaptive functioning. Furthermore, the counselors recorded a more positive reaction from the parents in the CPRT group as compared to the largely neutral or negative reactions from the parents in the PCIT group. However, overall, the study concluded that more research is needed on identifying a clearly superior Filial therapy approach for children diagnosed with ASD.