

Optimistic Parenting: Hope and Help for the Challenging Child

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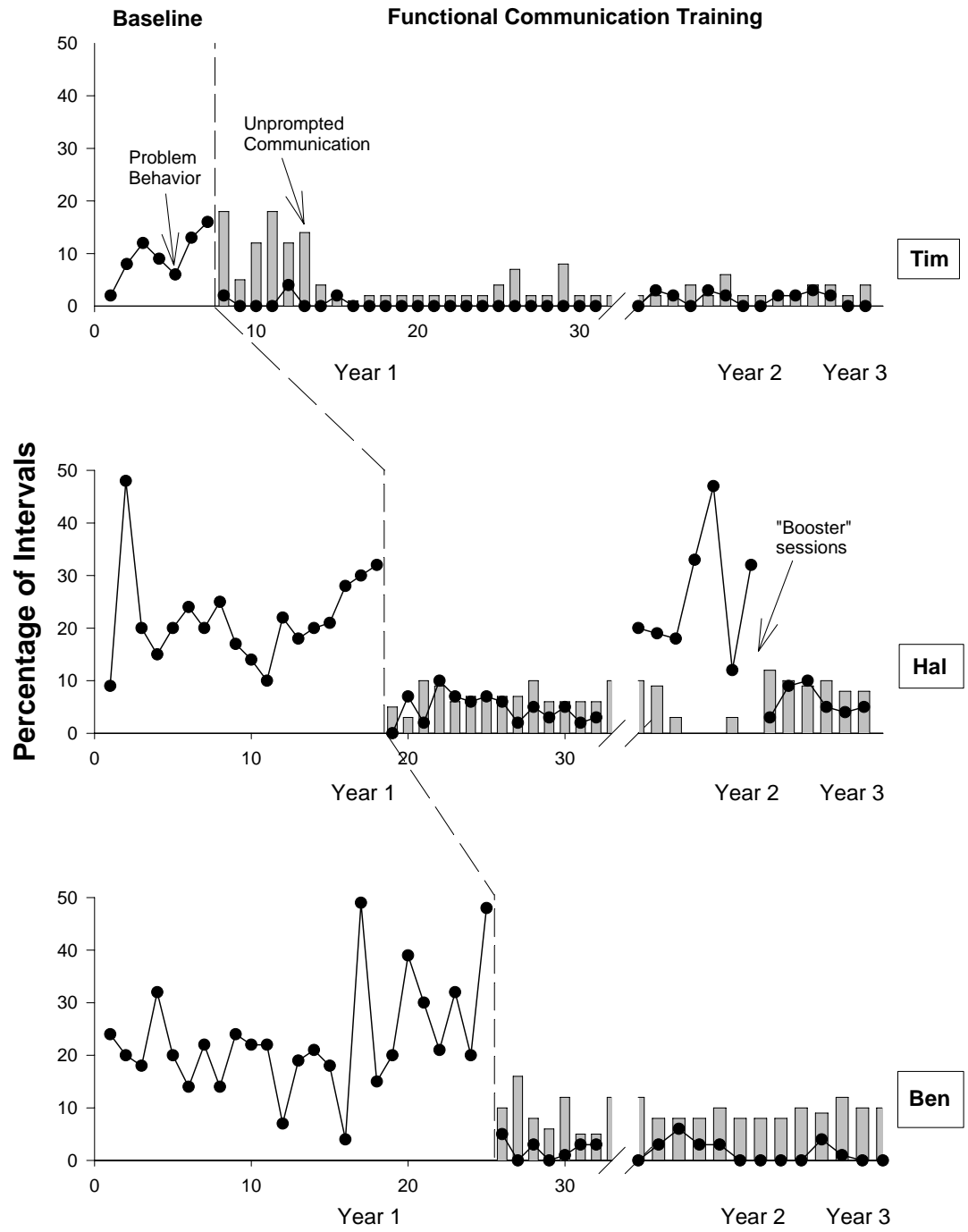
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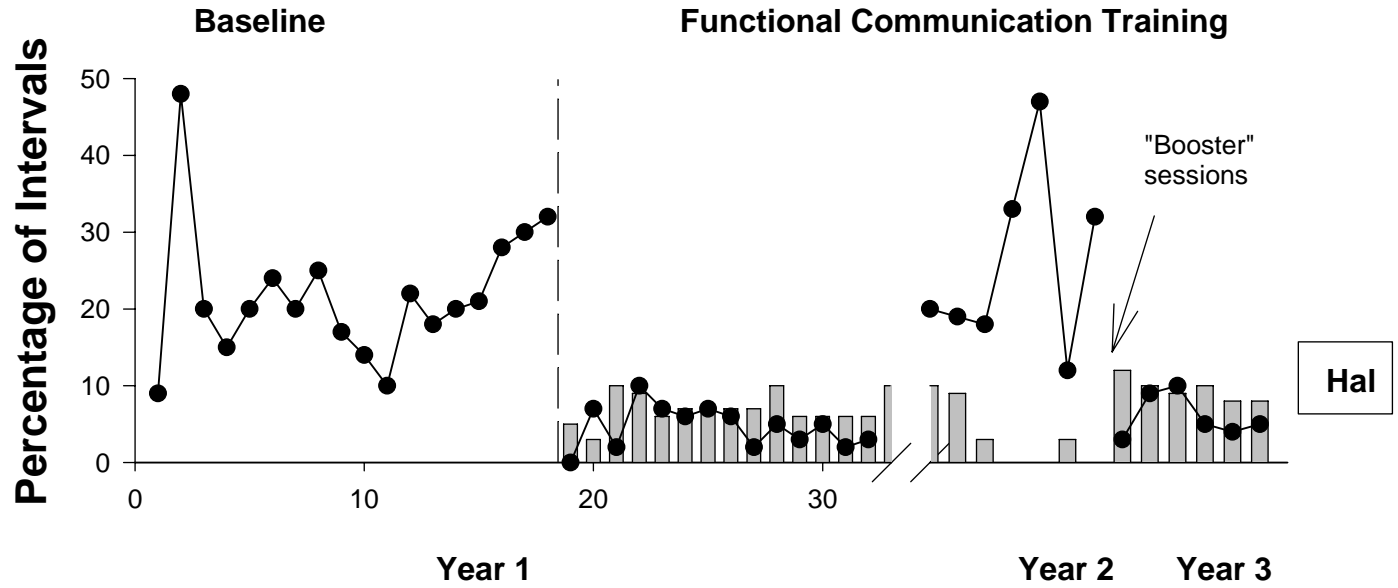
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Individual Interventions

- Replacing behavior problems
- Teach functionally equivalent alternatives
 - for example, communication

Durand, V.M., & Carr, E.G. (1991). Functional communication training to reduce challenging behavior: Maintenance and application in new settings. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 24*, 251-264.





Positive Behavioral Support

- One-half to two-thirds of the outcomes are successful when carried out completely, under controlled conditions.

Carr, E.G., Horner, R.H., Turnbull, A.P., Marquis, J.G., McLaughlin, D.M., McAtee, M.L., Smith, C.E., Ryan, K.A., Rief, M.B., & Doolabh, A. (1999). *Positive behavior support for people with developmental disabilities: A research synthesis*. Washington, D.C.: American Association on Mental Retardation.

Evidence for Clinical Utility

- Does Positive Behavioral Support “work” for everyone?
- Example – sleep problems

Selection Bias and Attrition

- *JABA* – 149 studies surveyed
- Selection
 - 74% make no mention of selection procedures
 - None address potential selection bias
- Attrition
 - 97% make no mention of attrition
 - None address attrition analysis

Durand, V.M., & Rost, N. (2005). Does it matter who participates in our studies? A caution when interpreting the research on positive behavioral support. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 7, 186-188.

Research Dilemma

- Are we helping all families or just the ones who fully participate in our interventions?

Prevention Project

- Prospective longitudinal study
 - N=128
 - Age 3 to age 6

Durand, V.M. (2001). Future directions for children and adolescents with mental retardation. *Behavior Therapy*, 32, 633-650.

Developmental Progression

Child Temperament

Family Stress

Child Skills

Parenting Style

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graph TD; A[Child Temperament] --> D[Behavior Problem]; B[Family Stress] --> D; C[Child Skills] --> D; E[Parenting Style] --> D;
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Behavior Problem

Predicting Later Problems

- Not severity of disability
- Not severity of behavior problem

Predicting Later Problems

- Best Predictor?
- Parental pessimism

Common Pessimistic Statements

- My child's behavior is inevitable, unpredictable and uncontrollable
- My child is incapable of learning or changing
- My child misbehaves because she is bad or mean
- My child's behavior is beyond my control – I lack the capacity to change it
- My child's behavior problems are my punishment – I must just accept my fate

Pessimistic or Optimistic?

Pessimistic

- My child is disabled
- Shopping with my child is a disaster
- I will never have my own life

Optimistic

- My child needs help learning new skills
- My child is not ready yet for long shopping trips
- I am working toward more time to myself

Pessimistic or Optimistic?

Pessimistic

- That won't work with my child!
- I tried that already and it didn't work!
- Oh, no. Here we go again.

Optimistic

- I'll try it.
- I'm willing to try it again.
- OK, I'm ready for this.

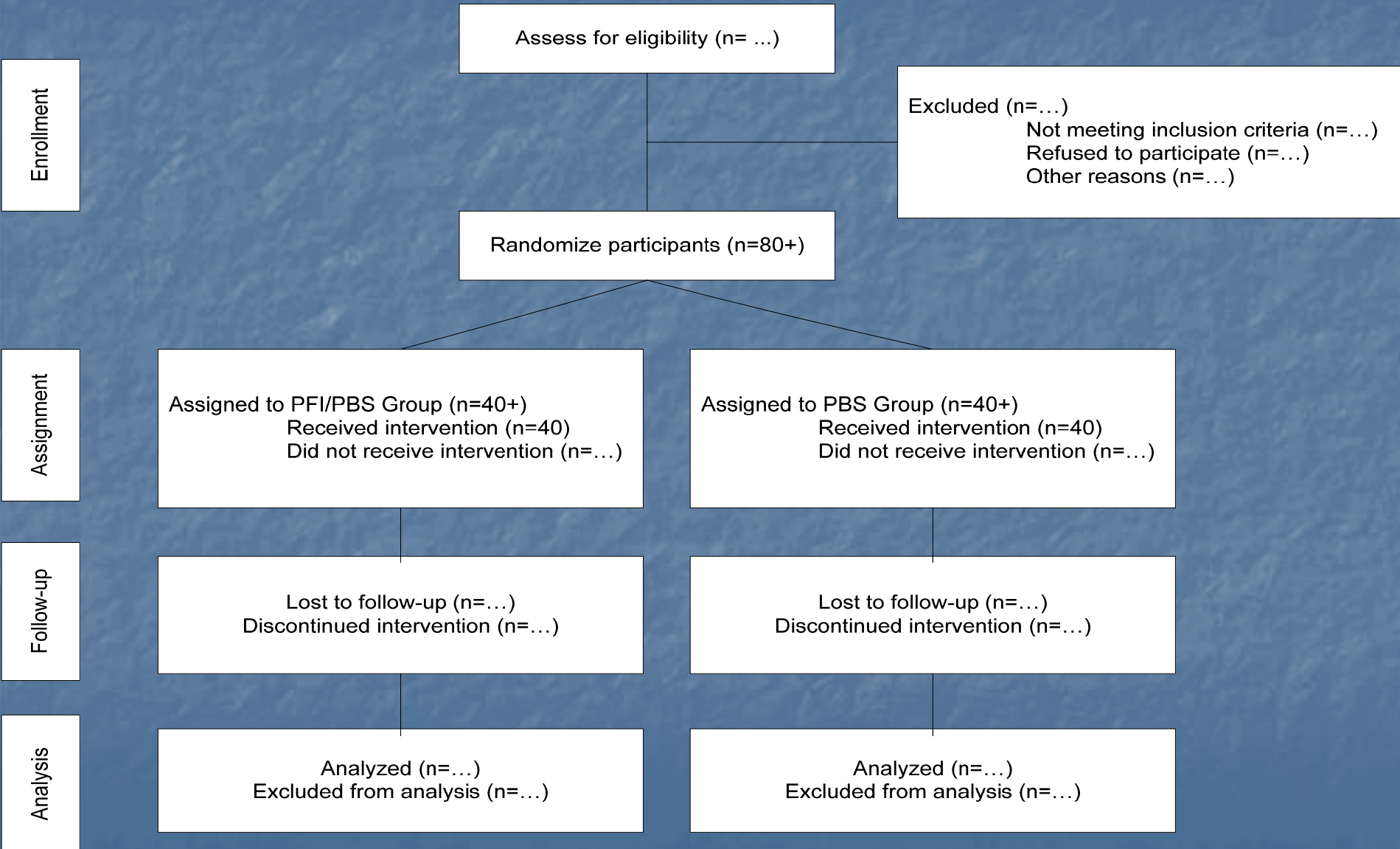
Current Approaches

- Providing Intervention Strategies
- General Family Support

Positive Family Intervention

- Can we make pessimistic families more optimistic?
- Integrating *cognitive-behavioral intervention* with *positive behavioral support*

Randomized Clinical Trial



Study Measures

Pre/Post/1-year/2-year

- Scales of Independent Behavior – Revised (SIB-R) Maladaptive Behavior Index
- Questionnaire on Resources and Stress (Pessimism Scale)
- Videotaped Child Behavior Samples - % of intervals with disruptive behavior
- Other Instruments: Barriers to Treatment; Parental Satisfaction; CCBL

Positive Family Intervention

- Standard treatment protocol
- 8 weeks (attendance procedures)
- 1 ½ hours per individual session
- Monitoring of procedural fidelity

PFI Protocol

- Review homework (e.g., information gathered; strategies attempted)
- Share a difficulty and a success and thoughts/feelings associated with the event; introduce strategies
- Teach PBS: presentation, examples, application, and practice
- Analyze self-talk throughout session

Positive Behavior Support

- Session 1: Establishing Goals
- Session 2: Gathering Information
- Session 3: Analysis and Plan Design
- Session 4: Preventing Problems
- Session 5: Managing Consequences
- Session 6: Replacing Behavior
- Session 7: Putting Plan in Place
- Session 8: Monitoring Results

Optimism Training

- Situation: Triggers to negative thinking
- Belief: Unproductive thought patterns
- Consequences: Results of negative thinking
- Disputation: Accuracy/Usefulness of beliefs
(Distraction: Thought stopping)
- Substitution: More productive self-talk
- Reorientation: New overall perspective

Seligman, M. E. P. (1998). Learned Optimism: How to change your mind and your life. New York: Pocket Books.

Situations & Beliefs

- Identify situations that provide triggers to negative thinking (e.g., What was exactly happening? Where were you? What did your child and others do?)
- Identify beliefs associated with the event (e.g., What were you feeling and thinking while this was going on? What did you say to yourself?)

Identifying Situations & Beliefs

Video Segment

Consequences

- Identify the consequences or results of the negative (and positive) thinking (e.g., When you were thinking _____, how did that affect what you did? What were the results of your actions – both immediate and long-term?)

Recognizing Consequences Video Segment

Disputation

A Strategy for arguing or challenging beliefs.

- Step 1: Identify the negative belief (e.g., What exactly do you say to yourself that is pessimistic?).
- Step 2: List evidence that supports the belief. (e.g., What makes you believe that to be true?)

Disputation

- Step 3: Find alternative explanations for the problem (e.g., Are there other possible reasons/motives?).
- Step 4: Evaluate the usefulness of maintaining the belief. (e.g., In what ways does that belief benefit you/ others or improve the situation?)

Disputing Negative Beliefs Video Segment

Disputing Negative Beliefs Video Segment

Substitution

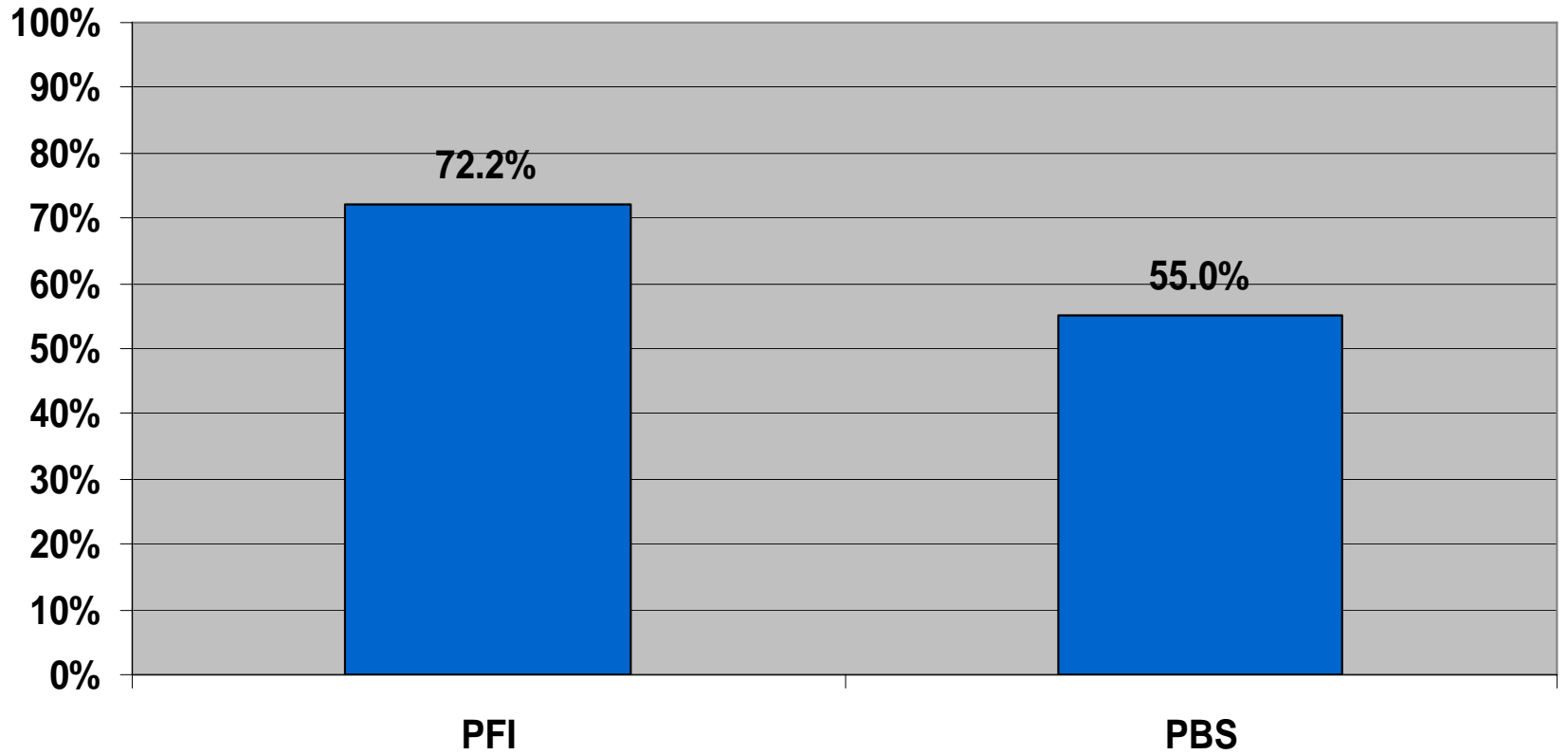
- Replace the pessimistic ideas with positive thoughts or affirmations (e.g., "This is a difficult situation and I am handling it well. I am a committed, loving parent. If I can follow through with my plan, things will get better.")

Substituting Positive Thoughts Video Segment

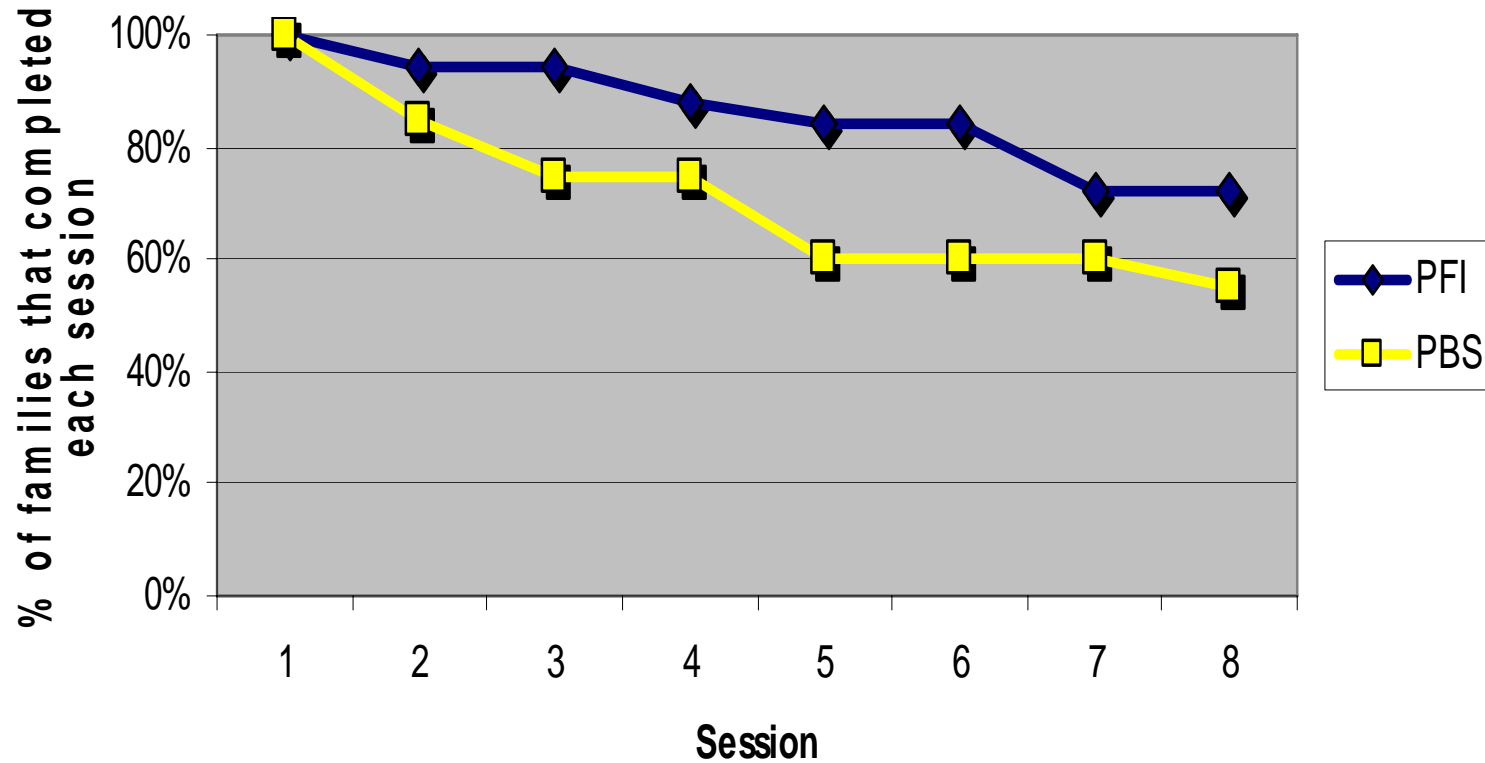
Positive Family Intervention

- Pilot data suggest differences in attrition.
- Without cognitive behavioral intervention – only 55% complete training.
- With cognitive behavioral intervention – 72.2% complete training.
- All children improve if families complete training.

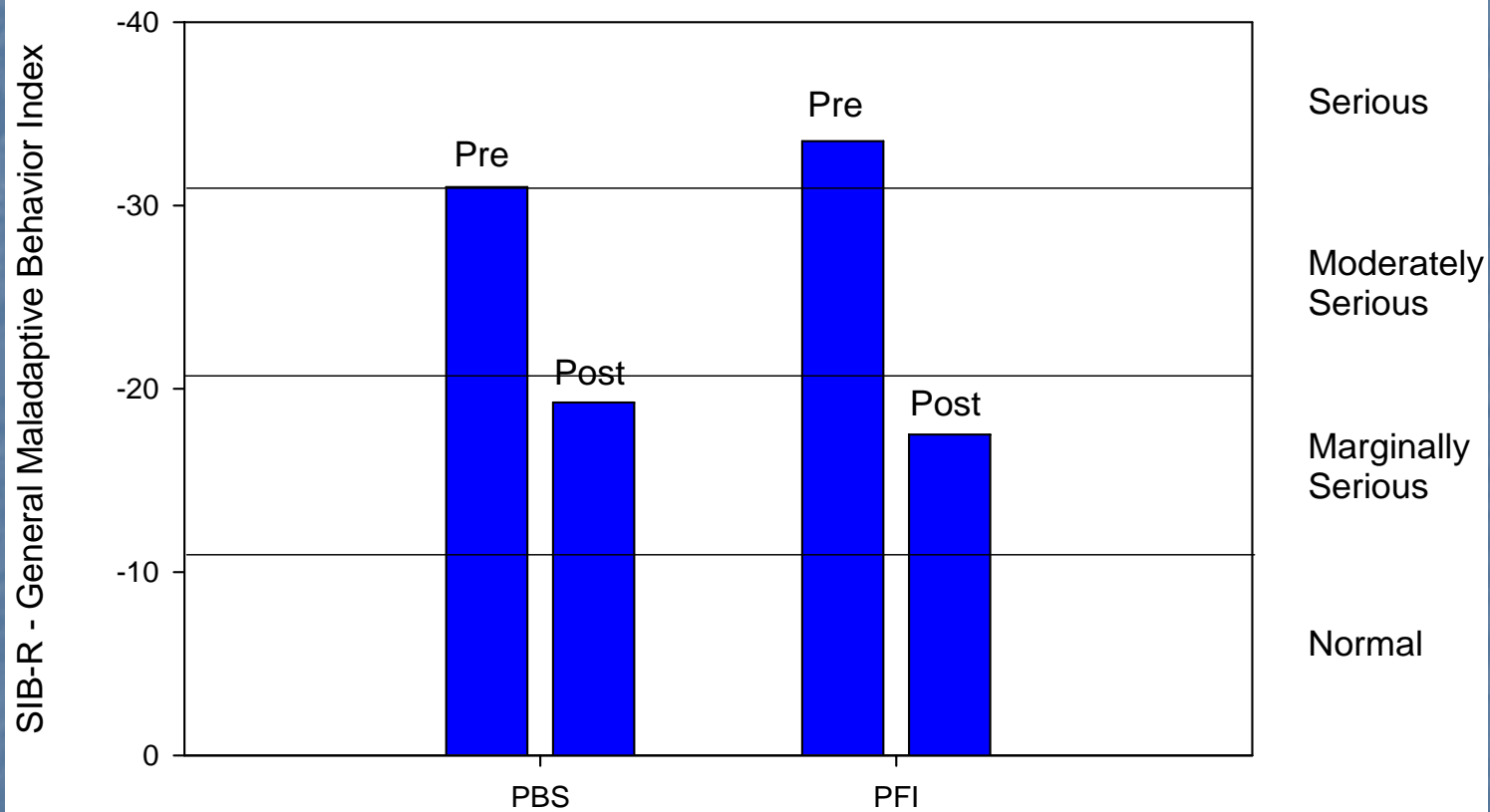
% Families Completing Intervention



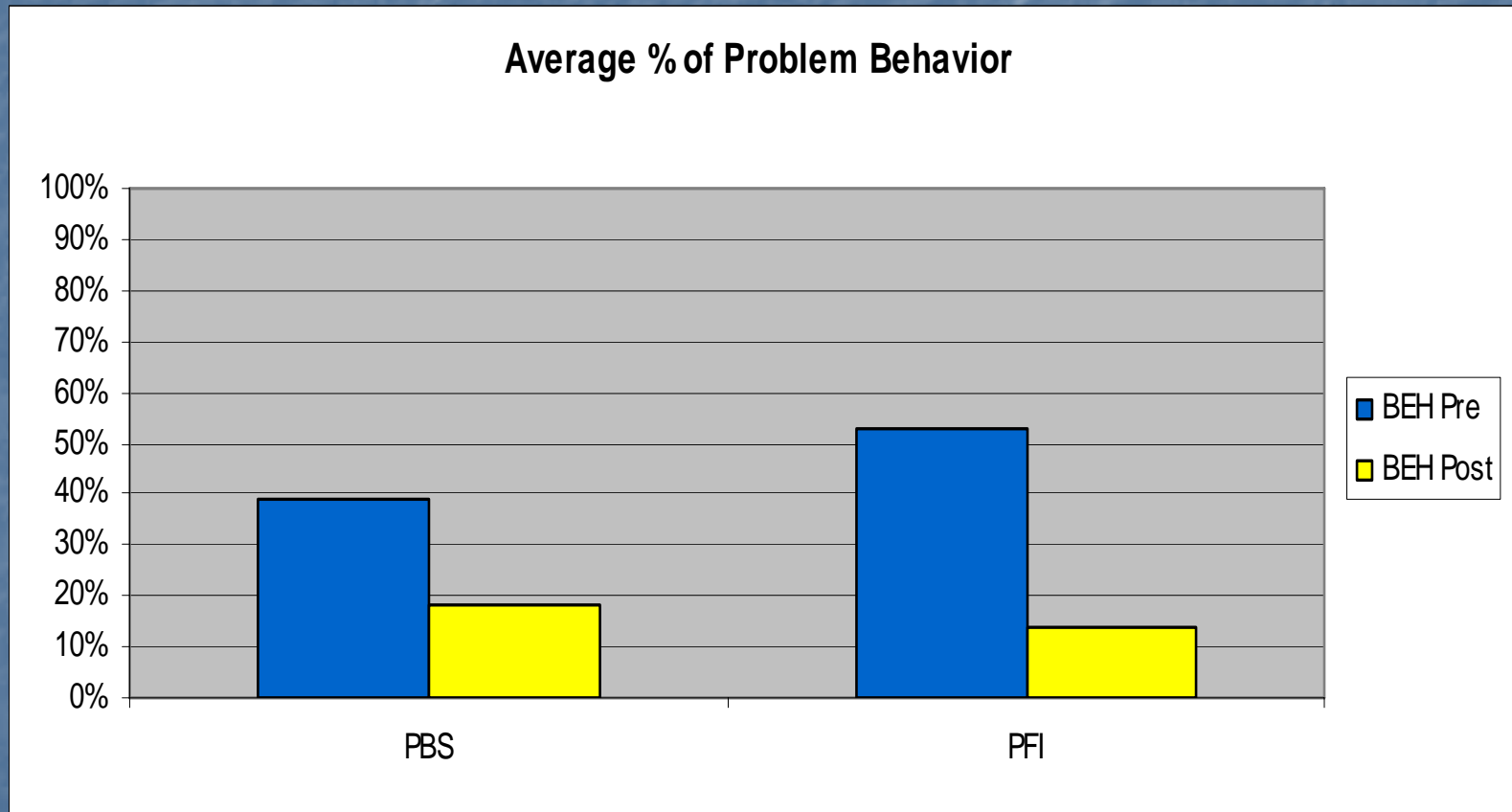
Sessions Completed by All Families



Standardized Behavior Change Data N=16



Preliminary Results (Problem Behavior)



How Effective Are We?

- Are our interventions only successful with highly motivated families/professionals?
- We need to begin to design our strategies to reach those families who need our help the most.

Additional Information

- Durand, V.M. & Hieneman, M. (2008). *Helping parents with challenging children: Positive family intervention, Facilitator's guide*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Durand, V.M. & Hieneman, M. (2008). *Helping parents with challenging children: Positive family intervention, Workbook*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Project Website

- <http://www.stpt.usf.edu/coas/pfi/Index.htm>