



CBT For Anxiety Disorders in Young Children

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Disclosures

“My spouse/partner and I have the following relevant financial relationship with a commercial interest to disclose:

Oxford University Press (royalties)

Rationale for Using CBT in Youth with Anxiety Disorders

- Anxiety disorders are very common in children
- Adults with anxiety disorders report onset in childhood
- Children with anxiety often exhibit distorted cognitions “What ifs...”
- Avoidance behaviors reinforce anxiety sx
- Parents may need active coaching themselves around skills to manage anxiety

Kendall's “Coping Cat” Program

- **Treatment Overview**
 - **Sessions 1-8**
 - Affective Education (recognizing and labeling anxious feelings)
 - Relaxation Training (deep breathing and PMR)
 - Basic Cognitive Restructuring (identifying thoughts and changing self-talk)
 - **Sessions 9-16**
 - Graduated Situational Exposure, aided by role play, modeling, take-home practice, and reward

Skills Training

- Feeling frightened?
 - What clues is my body giving me that I am anxious?
 - How can I use relaxation to address physical symptoms?



Skills Training

- Expecting Bad Things to Happen?
 - What are my anxious thoughts?
 - What is in my thought bubble?
 - What's another way to look at the situation? What's my coping thought?

Skills Training

- Actions and Attitudes that can help
 - What is my coping plan?
 - Cognitive Restructuring
 - Problem-solving



Skills Training

- Results and Rewards



- How did I do? Did I attempt to cope?
- How can I reward myself for trying?

Session 8: Generating a FEAR plan (a.k.a., coping plan)

Acronym Used to Remind Child of Skills:

- **F**eeling Frightened?
- **E**xpecting Bad Things to Happen?
- **A**ctions and Attitudes that Can Help
- **R**esults and Rewards

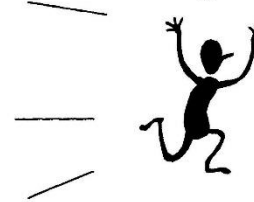


How to be a Coping Kid:

Feeling
scared or
nervous?



Wanting to
run away?



I can use
my Coping
Plan



And then be
proud and
say,

"Hooray!"
"Way to go!"
"I did it!"
"Yay!"

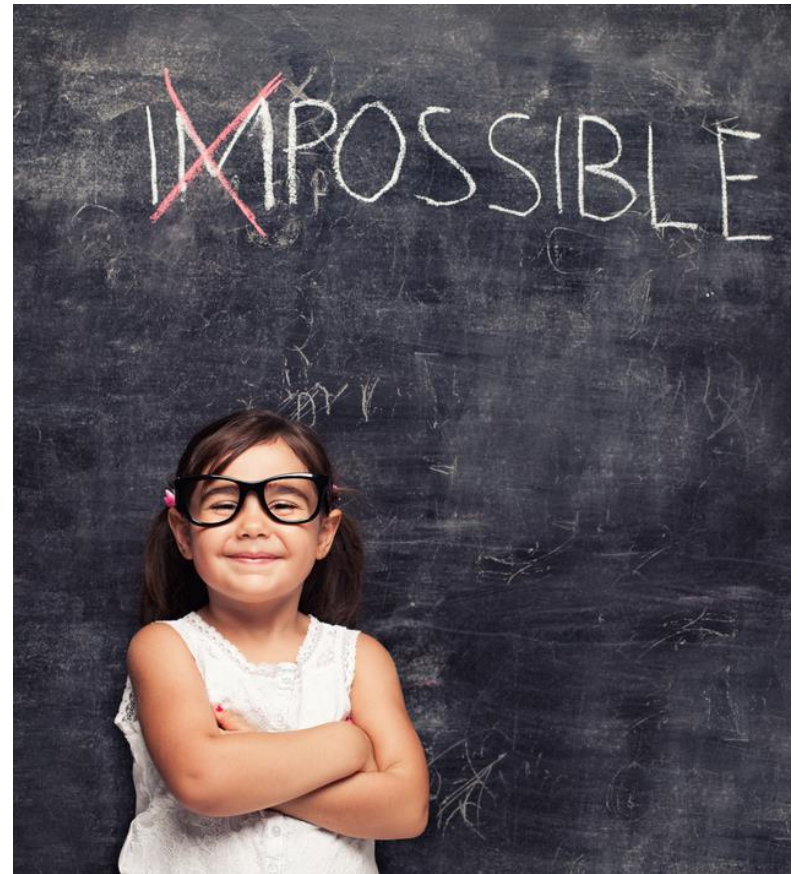


“Coping Cat” (Kendall, 1990)

- Sessions 9-14
 - Developing a Fear and Avoidance Hierarchy of feared situations
 - Situational exposure, moving from role play of a scary situation to in vivo exposure to least to most threatening of the situations
 - Each exposure begins with describing the situation and expected thoughts, feelings, and physical symptoms, followed by developing a coping plan (Coping plans used to facilitate exposure)

Making it Fun: Exposure Games

- For social anxiety: Surveys, eye-color game
- For fear of being in a separate room: Treasure hunt
- For darkness fears: Treasure hunt with glow-in-dark items
- For worries about mistakes, criticisms, self-consciousness: “Mistakes” game, “Reprimands” game, “Silly game”
- **WHEN IT CAN’ T BE FUN, MAKE IT REWARDING (POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT)**

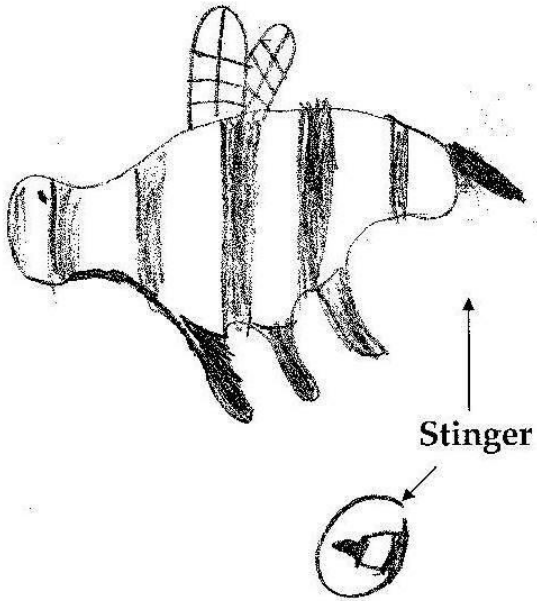


“Coping Cat” (Kendall, 1990)

- Sessions 15-16
 - Making an “ad” to help other children learn how to cope with anxiety
 - Reviewing skills learned during treatment and success in completing exposure practices



Part 1 Bees



If you're afraid of bees, use these tips:

1. Practice standing near a flower bush.
2. Play outside just before dinner in the yard.
3. Play outside in the afternoon.
4. Play outside first thing in the morning.
5. Practice working in your dad's garden.

Evidence for Efficacy of CBT

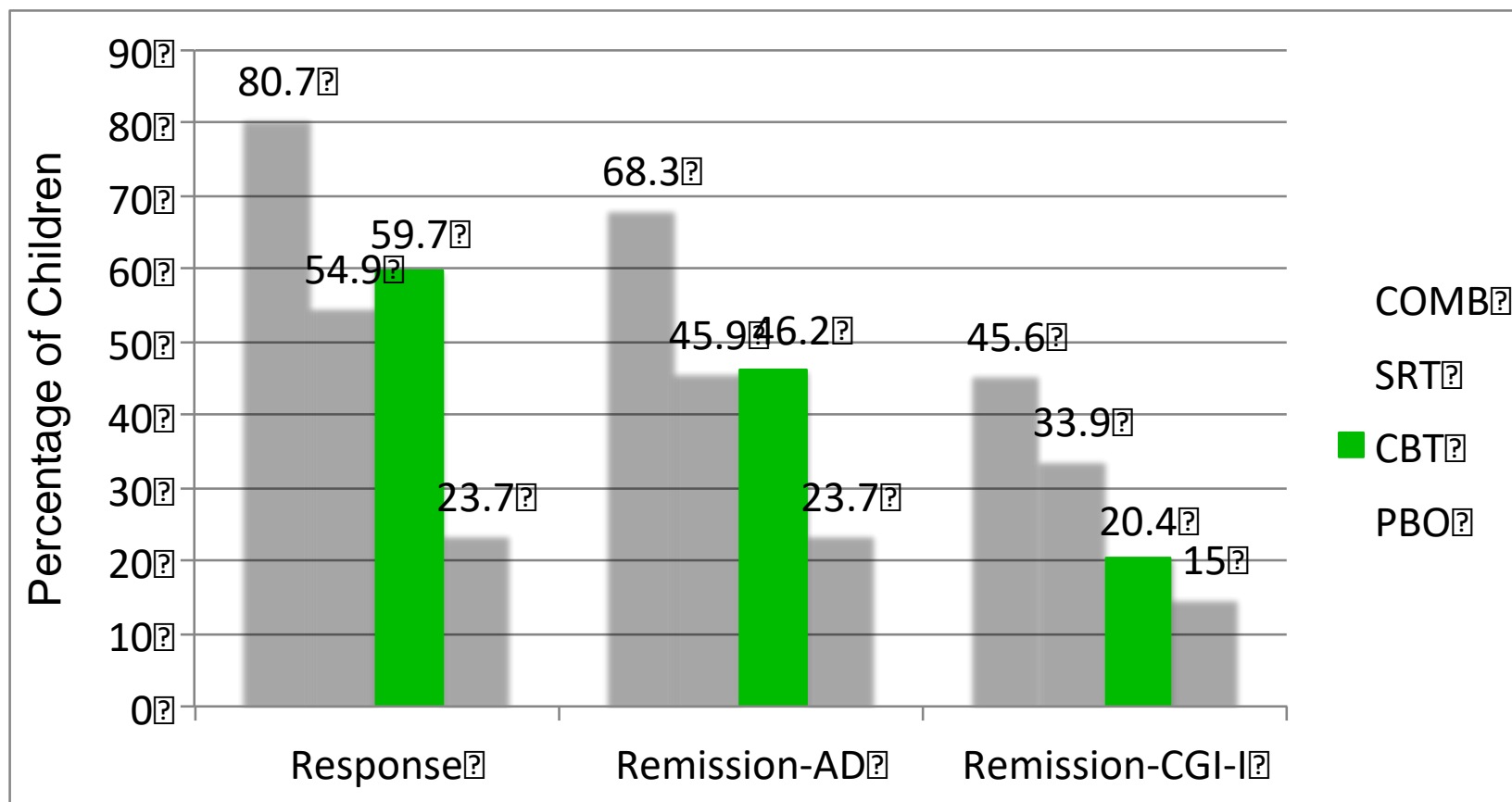
- Promising CBT interventions for major childhood anxiety disorders have been developed over the last 10-15 years.
- Over 20 randomized controlled trials of CBT for childhood anxiety disorders have been reported, with all but two showing efficacy for exposure-based protocols.

Efficacy of CBT and Medication

Child and Adolescent Multimodal Study:

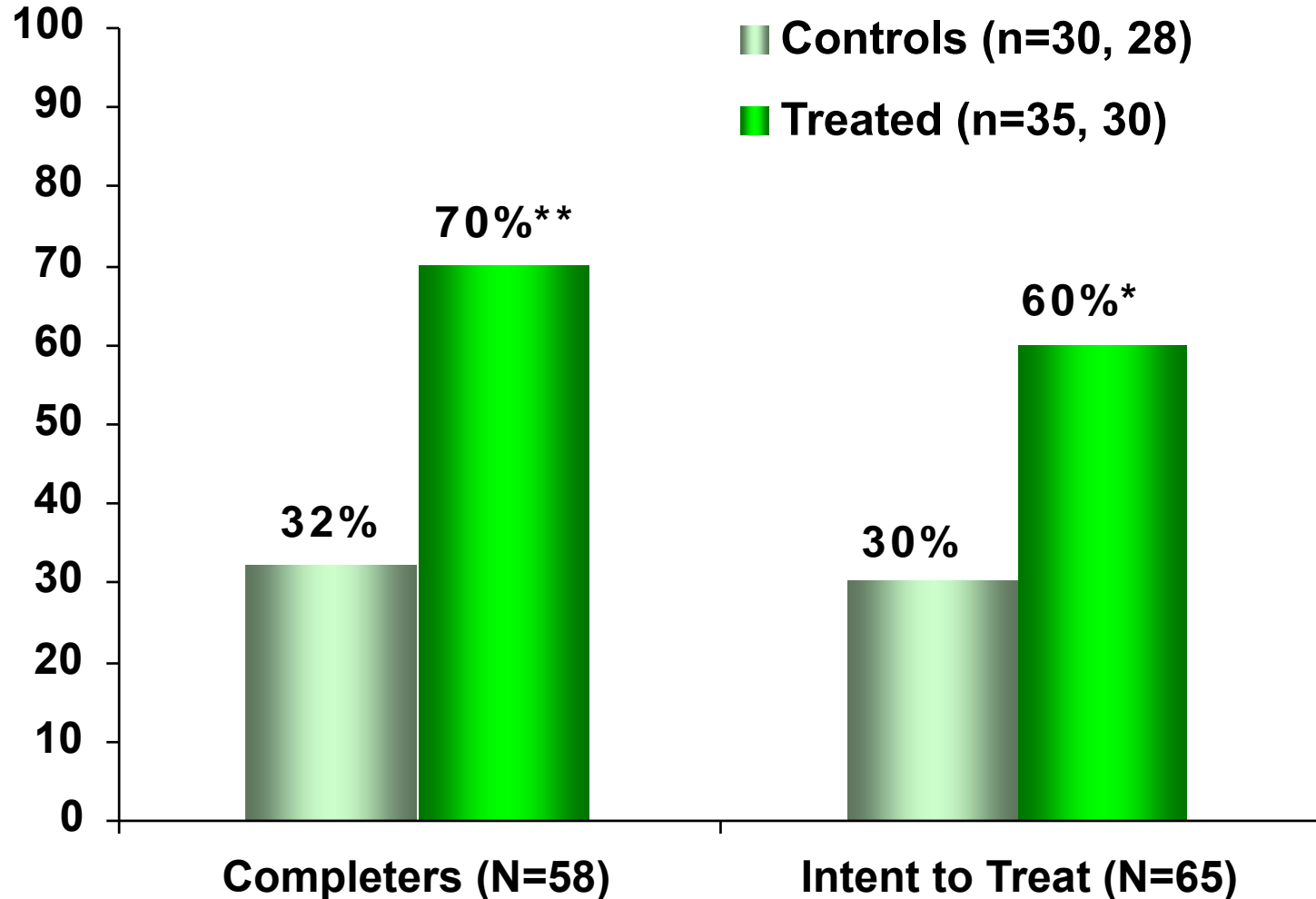
- 488 Children age 7-17 with SEP, GAD or SOC at six sites randomized to receive:
 - Sertraline (up to 200mg)
 - 14 weeks CBT
 - Sertraline + CBT
 - Pill Placebo

Rates of Response and Remission (N=488)

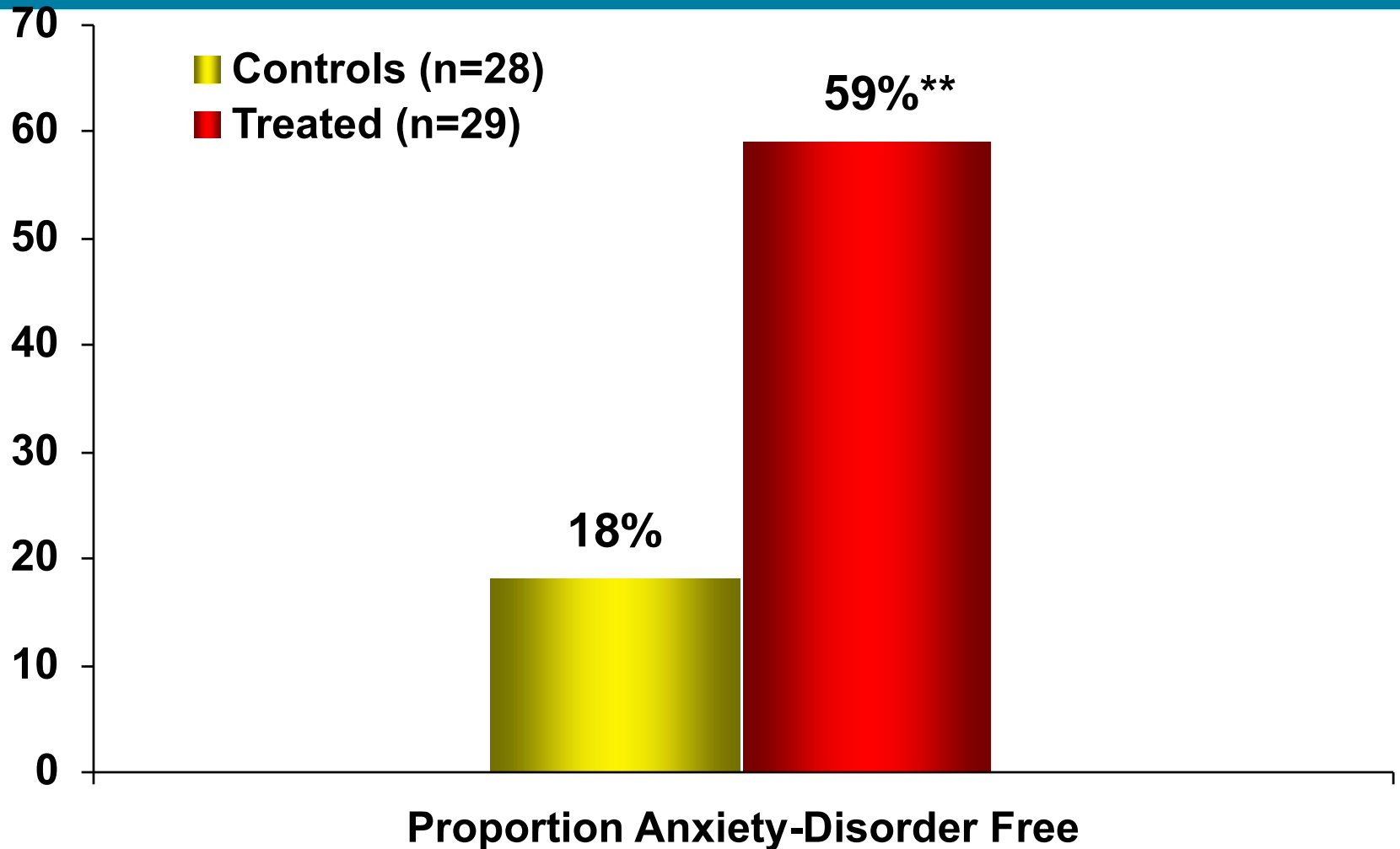


Ginsburg et al. 2011. J Consult Clin Psychol; 79: 806-15

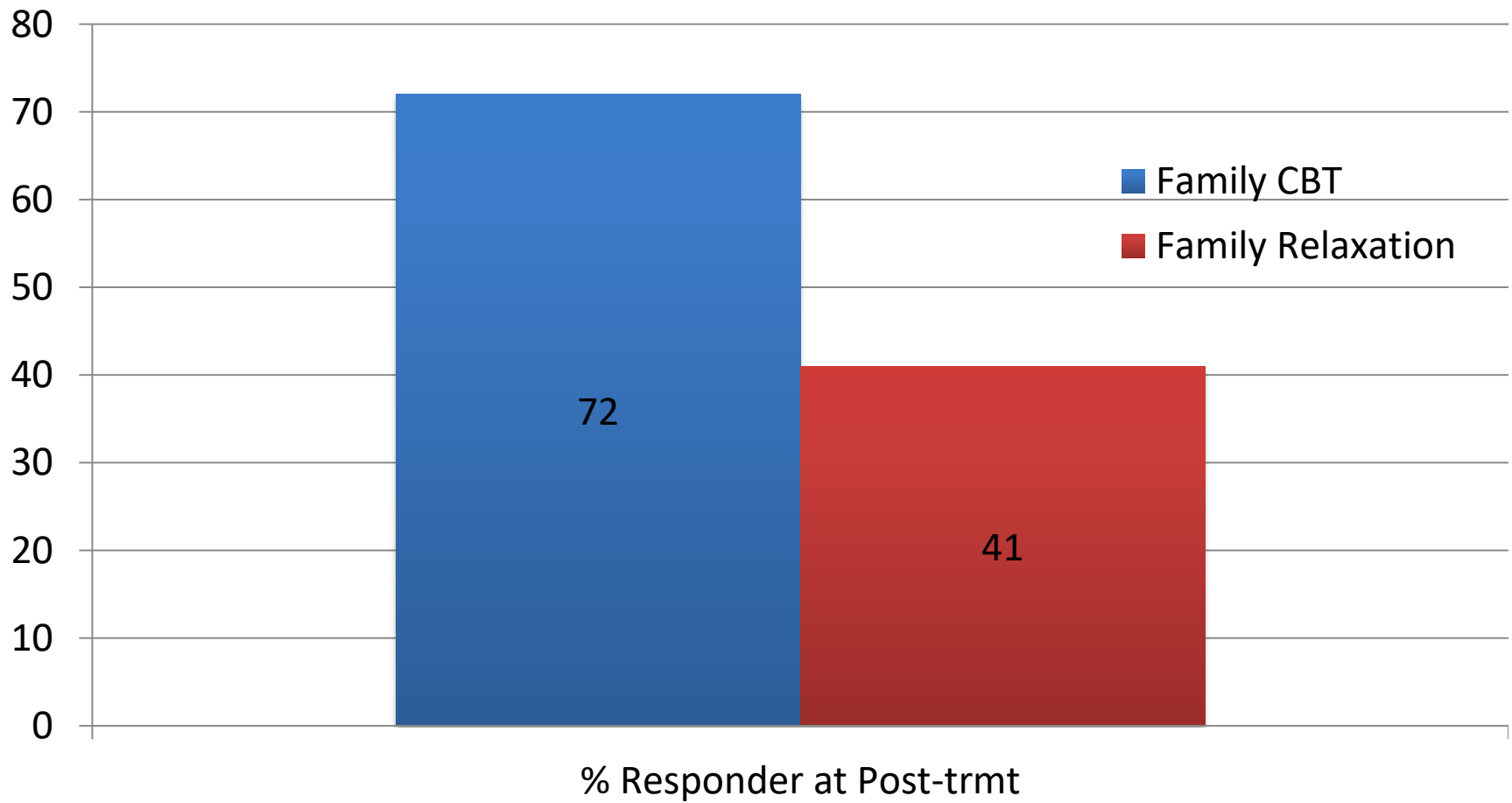
CBT for Preschoolers: Outcomes--CGI Ratings of Much or Very Much Improved



CBT for Preschoolers: Outcomes

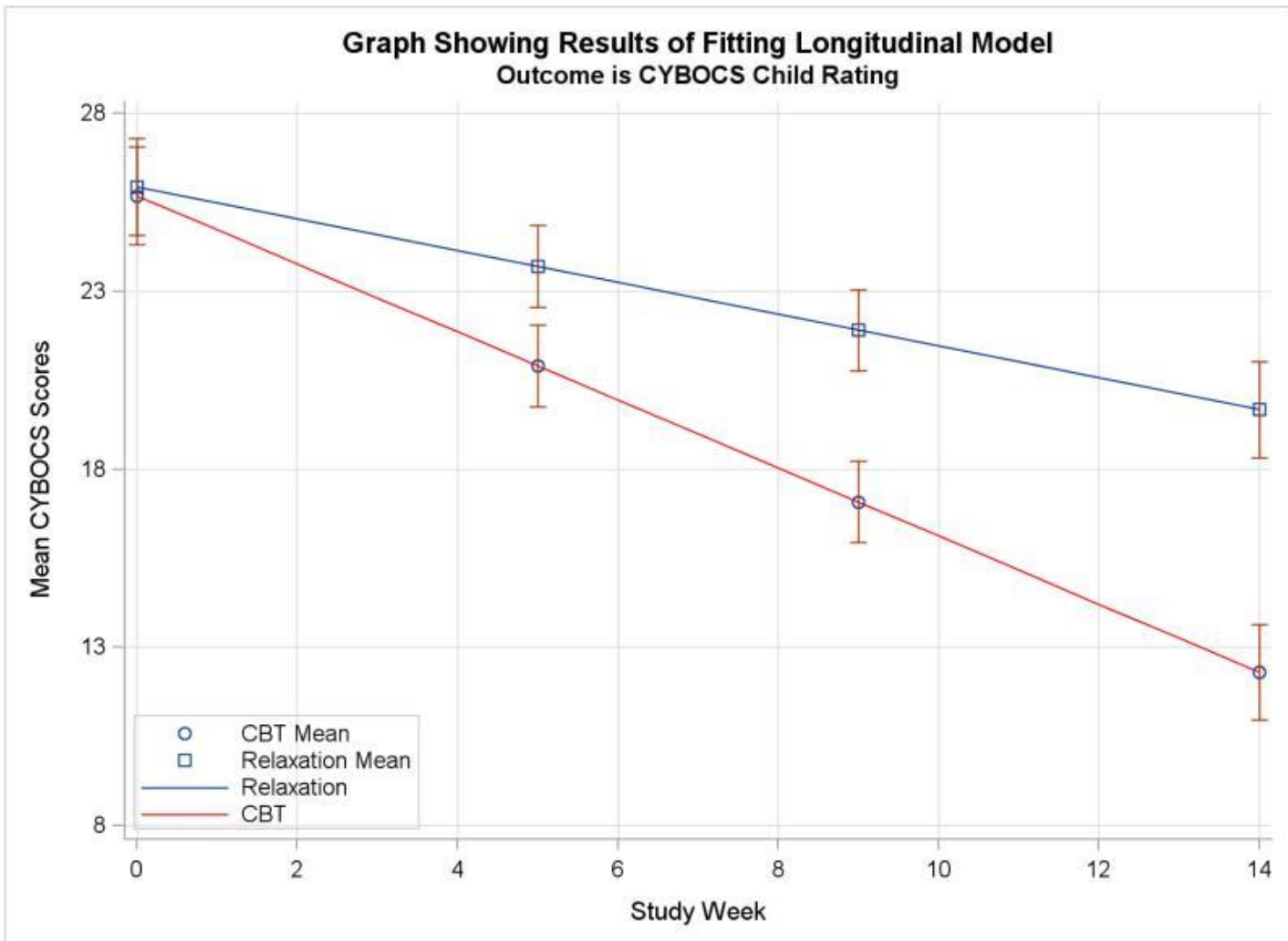


Family-Based CBT for OCD in young Children (ages 5-8)



Freeman et al., 2014. JAMA Psychiatry; 71(6): 689–698

Graph Showing Results of Fitting Longitudinal Model
Outcome is CYBOCS Child Rating





Working with Parents of Young Children with Anxiety



Rationale for Involving Parents

- Parents influence the triggers and contingency and may need to assist with engineering exposure opportunities.
- Parental behaviors may inadvertently reinforce child's anxious behavior, and guidance in anxiety management can be helpful.
- Parents of children presenting clinically with anxiety disorders have a 50% rate of anxiety disorders themselves (Last, 1987, 1991).

Implications for Treatment

- Because parents of anxious children are often anxious themselves, they may be unskilled at helping children manage anxiety (and may foster avoidant coping).
- Helpful to teach parents anxiety management strategies that could be helpful to their children

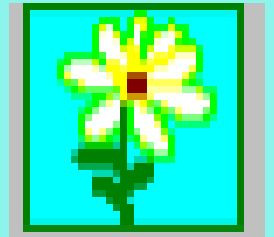
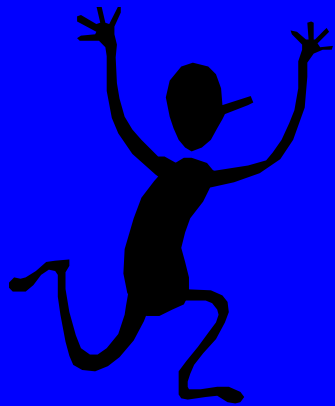
Psychoeducation About Anxiety

- Adaptive functions of anxiety (fight-or-flight, freezing response, attachment behaviors, worry)
- Anxiety disorders as maladaptive expressions of adaptive mechanisms
- CBT model of anxiety
- Rationale for each level of intervention
- Explain idea of skills learning followed by exposure.
- Prepare parents for slow or saw-toothed path to recovery
- Discuss contingent reinforcement

RESPONSES TO ANXIETY

Unhelpful Response:

“OHH NO!” reaction
Amplifies anxiety



Helpful Responses:

1) “Ho-hum” reaction

-Low-key, calm

-Reduces anxiety

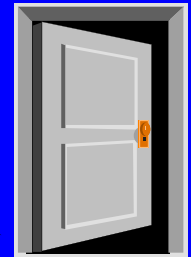
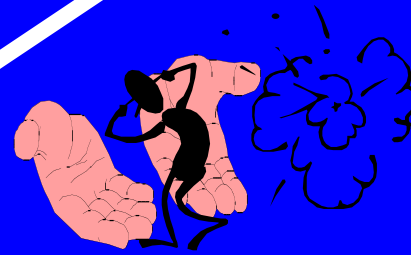
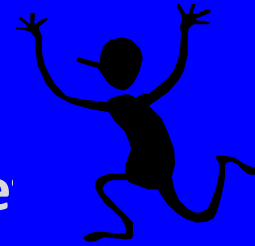
2) Model using anxiety
as a “cue-to-cope”

TWO UNHELPFUL RESPONSES TO FEARS

Unhelpful Response:

Allow or encourage avoidance

- Child keeps pairing situation with anxiety
- Child misses chance to prove catastrophic beliefs untrue
- Child misses chance to build coping skills



Unhelpful Response:

Force or pressure child to face fear before ready

- Can sensitize child to be more fearful

HELPFUL RESPONSE TO FEAR: CBT

GRADED EXPOSURE AS A WAY OF
TEACHING A CHILD TO FACE A
FEARED SITUATION



END GOAL

MOST-FEARED SITUATION

MUCH FEARED SITUATION

MODERATELY FEARED SITUATION

MILDLY FEARED SITUATION

SLIGHTLY FEARED SITUATION

STARTING POINT

• PRACTICE EACH STEP UNTIL
ANXIETY DECREASES

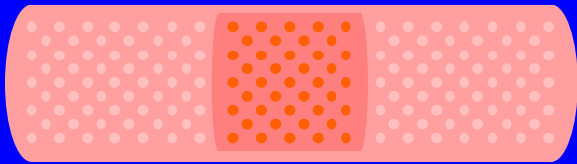
• USE CONTINGENT
REINFORCEMENT

RESPONSES TO ANXIETY

Unhelpful Response:

Repeated reassurances

- Only reduces anxiety in short-term
- Reinforces expressions of worry in long-term



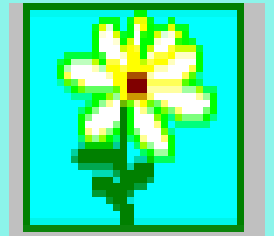
Helpful Responses:

- 1) Acknowledge anxiety and reassure once
- 2) Encourage child to use coping tools or plan

RESPONSES TO ANXIETY

Unhelpful Response:

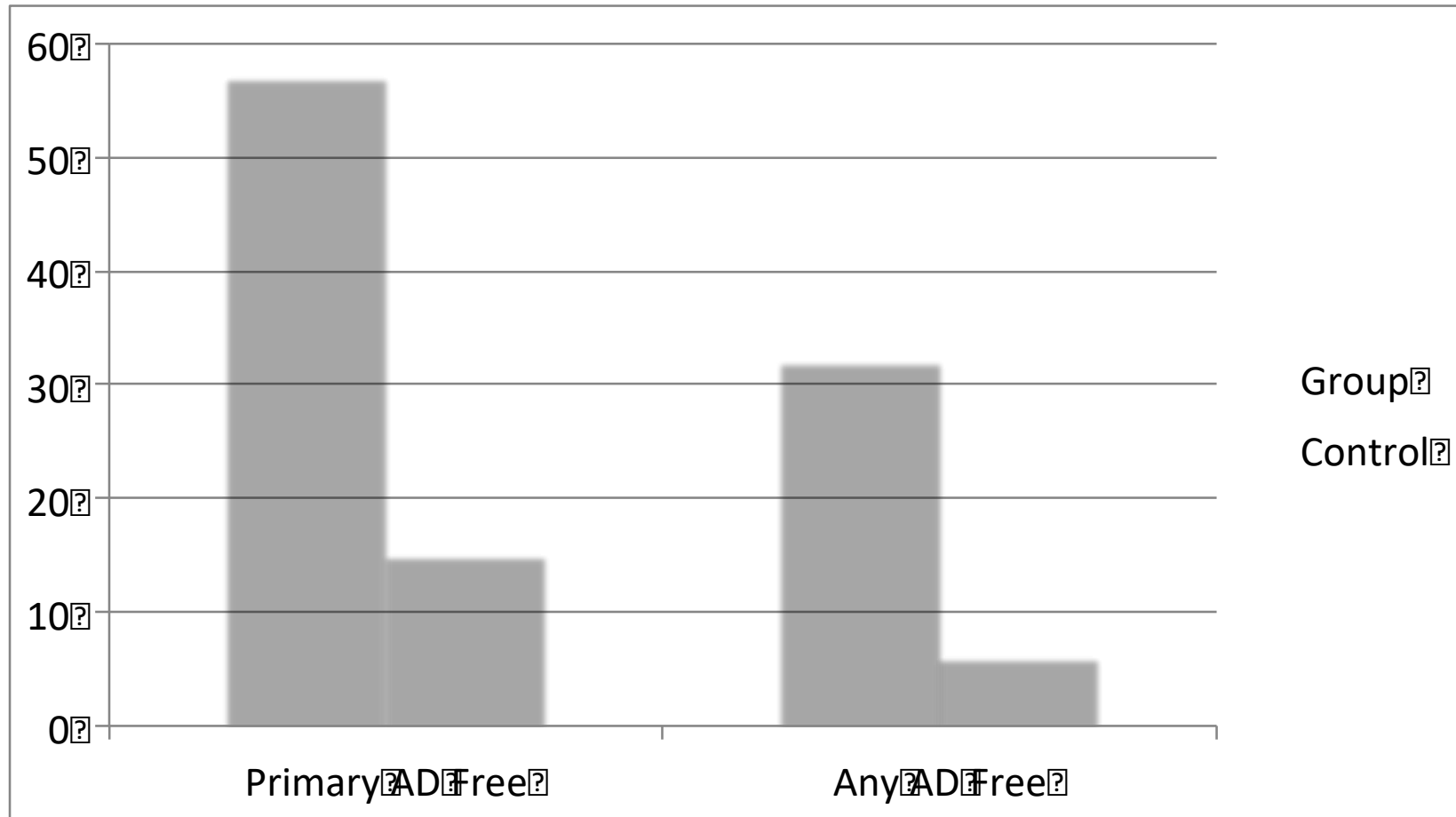
Perfectionistic expectations about child's performance



Helpful Response:

Reward approximations to desired outcome

Results of Parenting Group for Young Children with Anxiety Disorders



Resources for Parents

- Books:
 - Chansky, T. Freeing your child from OCD
 - Chansky, T. Freeing your child from anxiety
 - Eisen et al. Helping your child with separation anxiety
 - Rapee, R et al. Helping your anxious child
 - March, J. Talking back to OCD
- Websites:
 - www.adaa.org
 - www.childanxiety.net
 - www.ocfoundation.org
 - www.selectivemutism.org