

U

Practical and innovative “third wave” practitioner tools for engaging and supporting **troubled families**

Dr Mark Donovan | Lecturer | Clinical Psychologist | Supervisor | Trainer



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA



Confident Carers
Cooperative Kids



Overview

- Share an understanding of **troubled families**
- Introduce practical and innovative tools from a **third wave solution**:
Confident Carers Cooperative Kids
(CCCK)
- Do some **Experiential exercises** to understand

What gets in the way for 30+%?

Orrell-Valente, Pinderhughes, Valente & Laird, 1999; Reyno & McGrath, 2006 Reid, Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 2003; Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 1990; Scott & Dadds, 2009

Hard to Change

- Low family income
- Parents' level of education or occupation
- One-parent family status
- Marital discord

Can Change

- Critical parenting style (**behaviours**)
- Parental psychological processes (**thoughts & emotions**)
- Therapeutic **engagement**

Confident Carers Cooperative Kids

(Donovan & Konza, 2006-2026)

Improve parents' **emotional regulation** and **engagement**
and **persistence** with proven behavioural techniques

8-week **mindfulness** and **imagery enhanced** behavioural
program for parents/carers of 3-12 year-old children
showing emotional and behaviour difficulties



What **CCCK** does differently: **Mode of Delivery**

**Communicating with the ‘Right Brain’:
It’s the ‘**How**’ and ‘**Why**’ that matters**

What CCK does differently: Left v Right Brain Processing

Incorporates & Integrates:

- ACT/CBT
- Attachment theory
- Social learning theory
- Compassion-focused therapy
- Narrative therapy

Engages the Right Hemisphere:

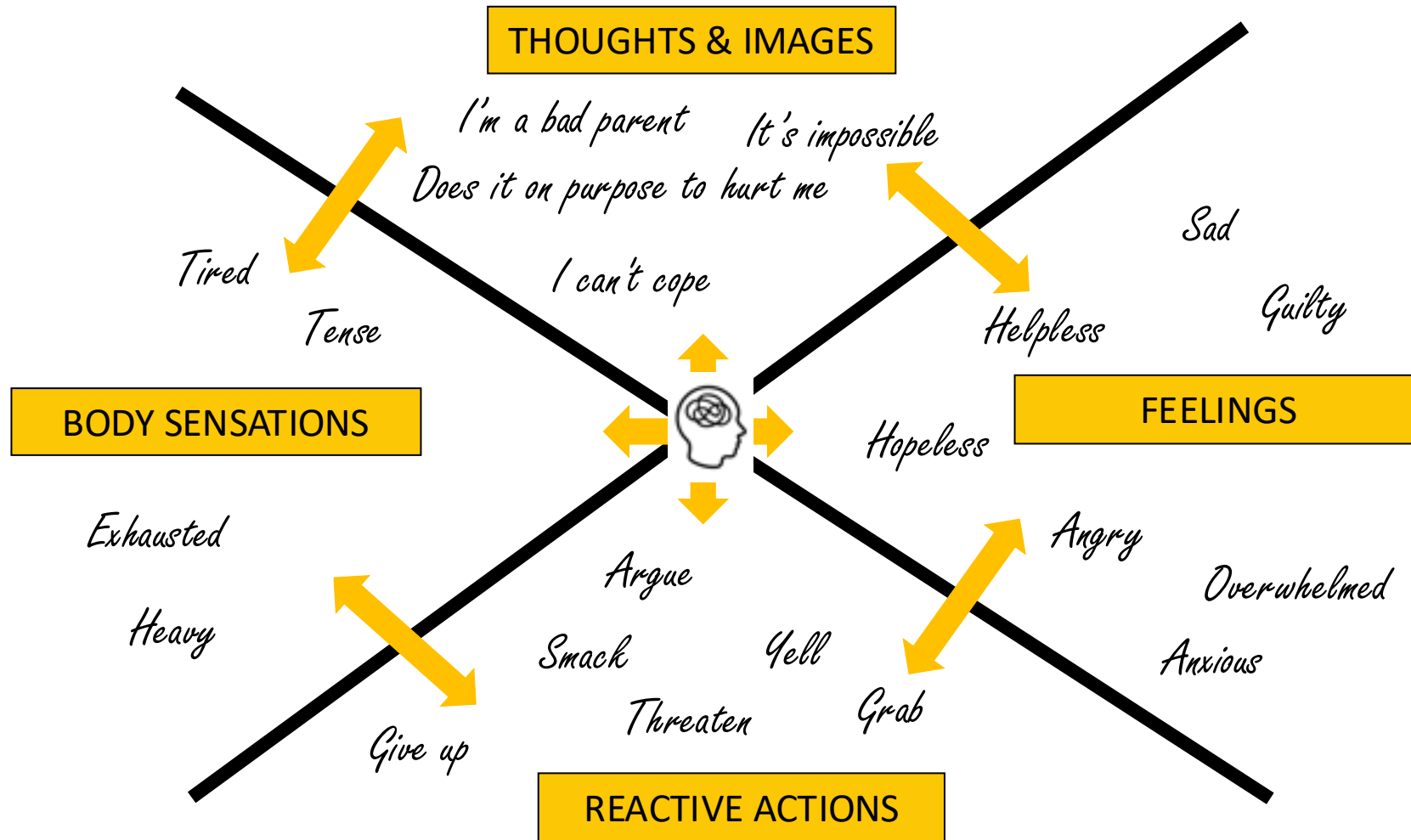
- Neurobiological processes
- Parent Values-led
- Metaphors
- Images
- Mindfulness
- Videos
- Role plays

Q1.

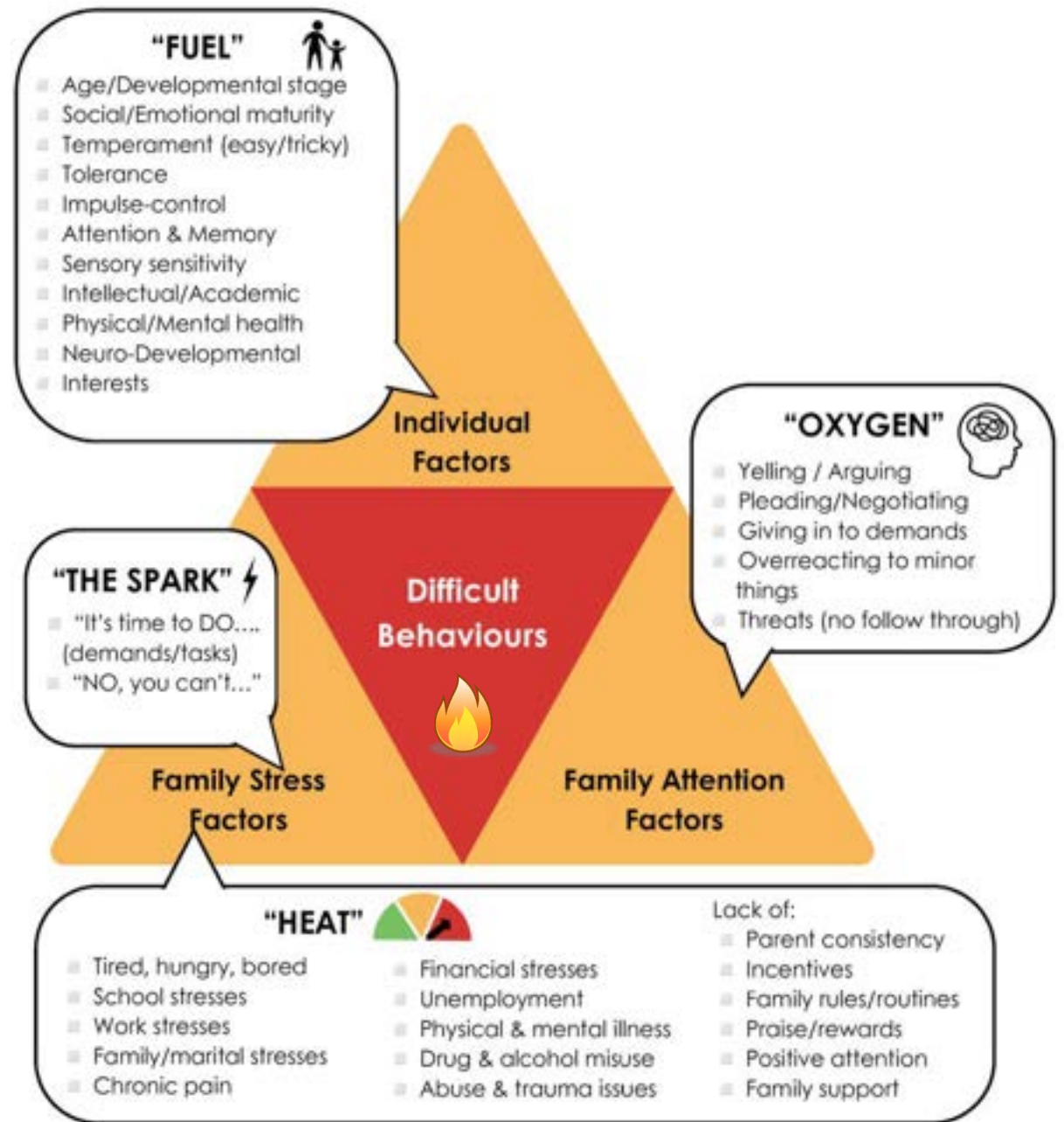
How can we **engage** with families who have complex lives and feel emotionally burdened?

...and **help parents to step back** from escalating coercive cycles that fuel behavioural problems?

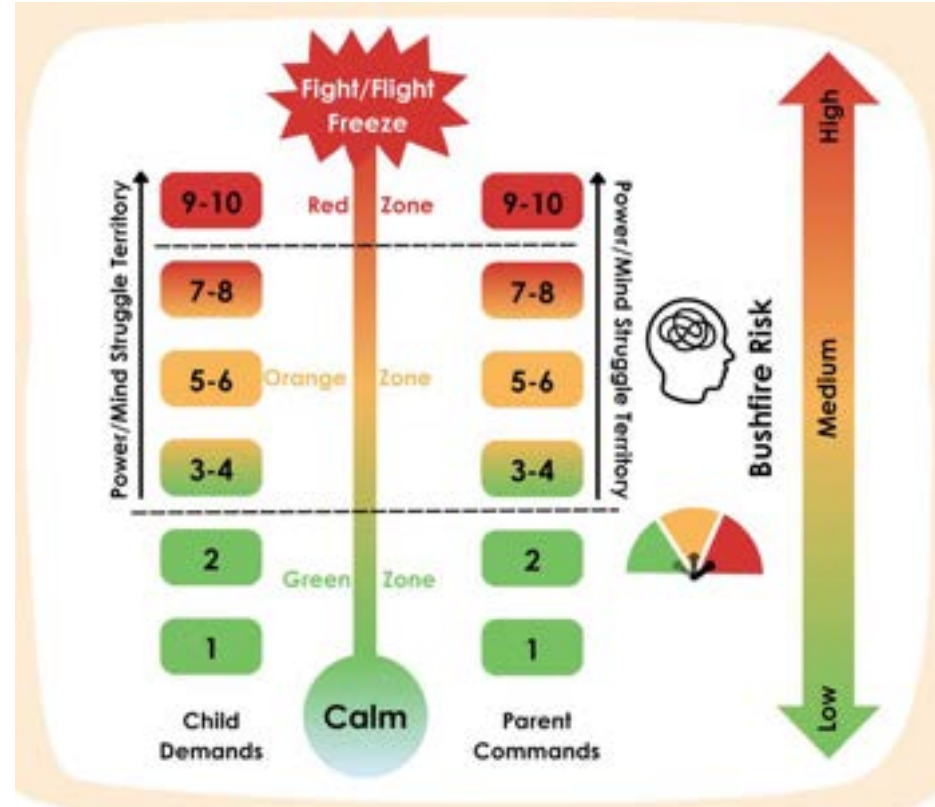
Noticing the *Mind Struggle*



Noticing the *Bushfire*



Noticing the *Power Struggle*



*"But the problem was, times I'd go and interrogate, I'd keep going back and fighting with fuel, going back and lighting him up some more, and lighting him up some more, **because I was frustrated.**"*

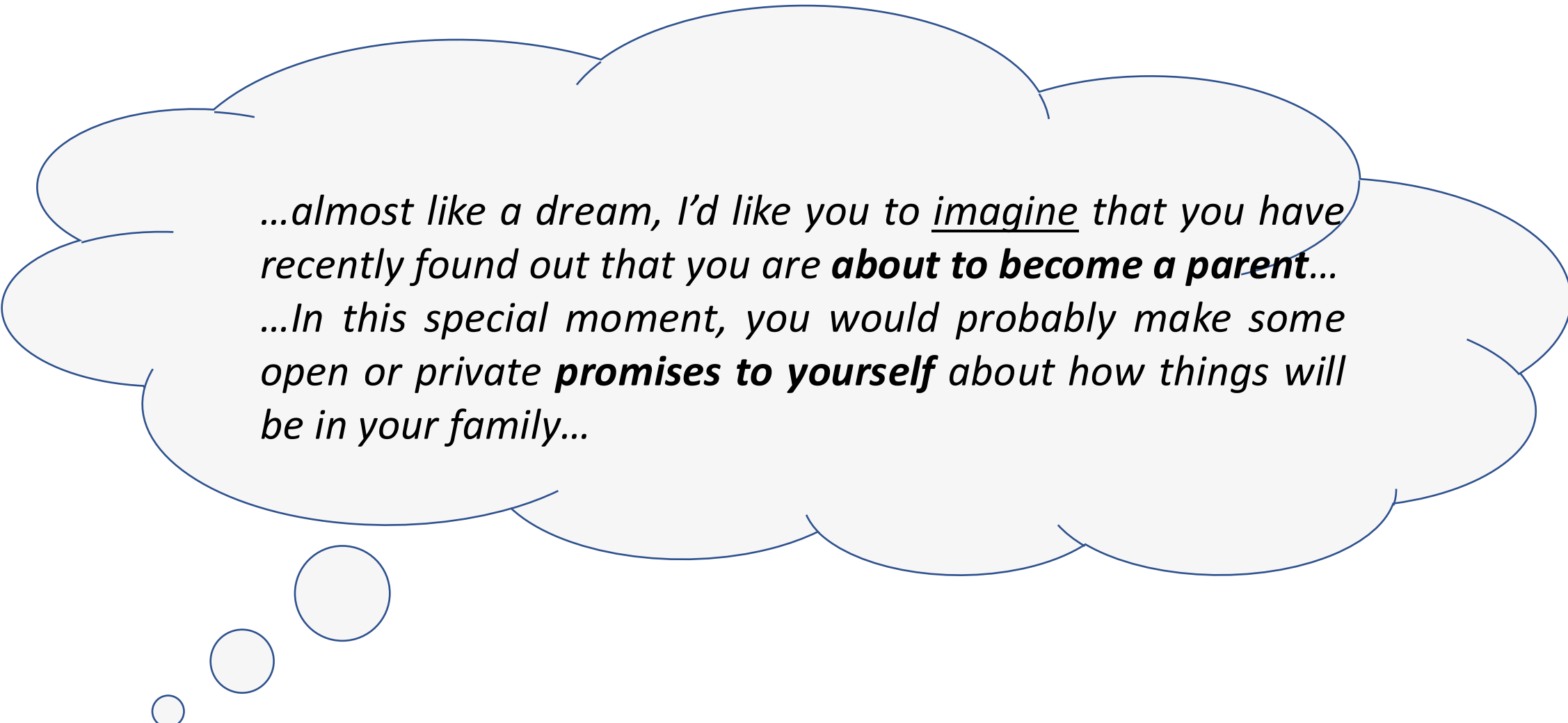
28yo single mother of 8yo son

Q2.

How can we help parents to **re-discover** the
parent they want to be?

...and to **re-connect** with their child?

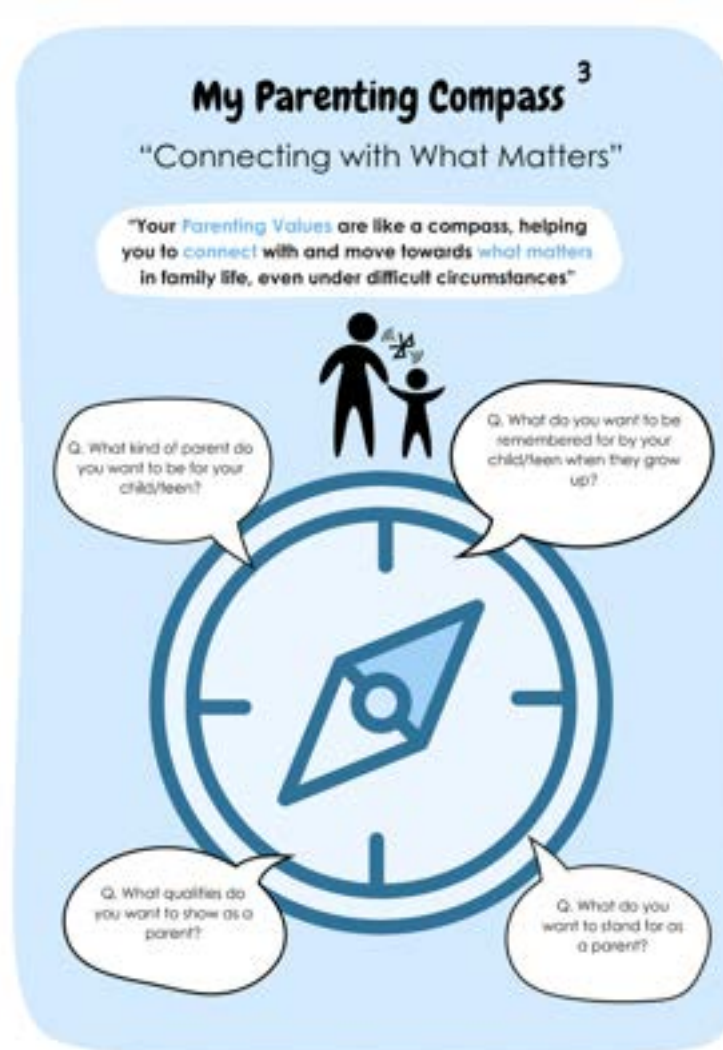
Guided Mindfulness Exercise



*...almost like a dream, I'd like you to imagine that you have recently found out that you are **about to become a parent**...
...In this special moment, you would probably make some open or private **promises to yourself** about how things will be in your family...*

Becoming Aware of *Parenting Values*

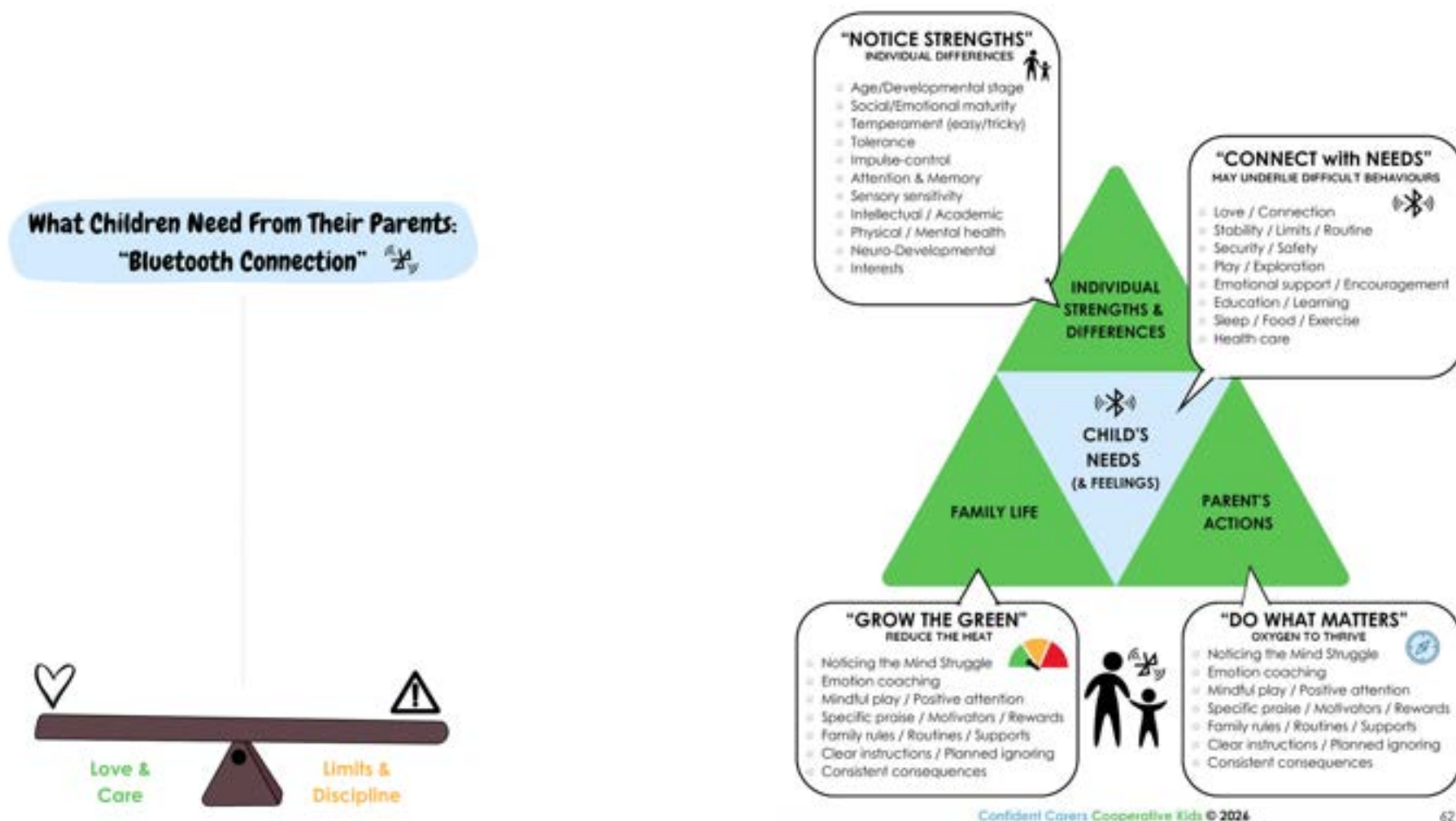
“My Parenting Compass – What Matters”



"I thought about them [values] a lot. But during the program, we had to write them down ...the writing stuff down, it just, it adds another level of like, it sinks in. It goes in deeper."

46yo father of 11yo daughter

“Bluetooth Connection” with *Child Needs*



Q3.

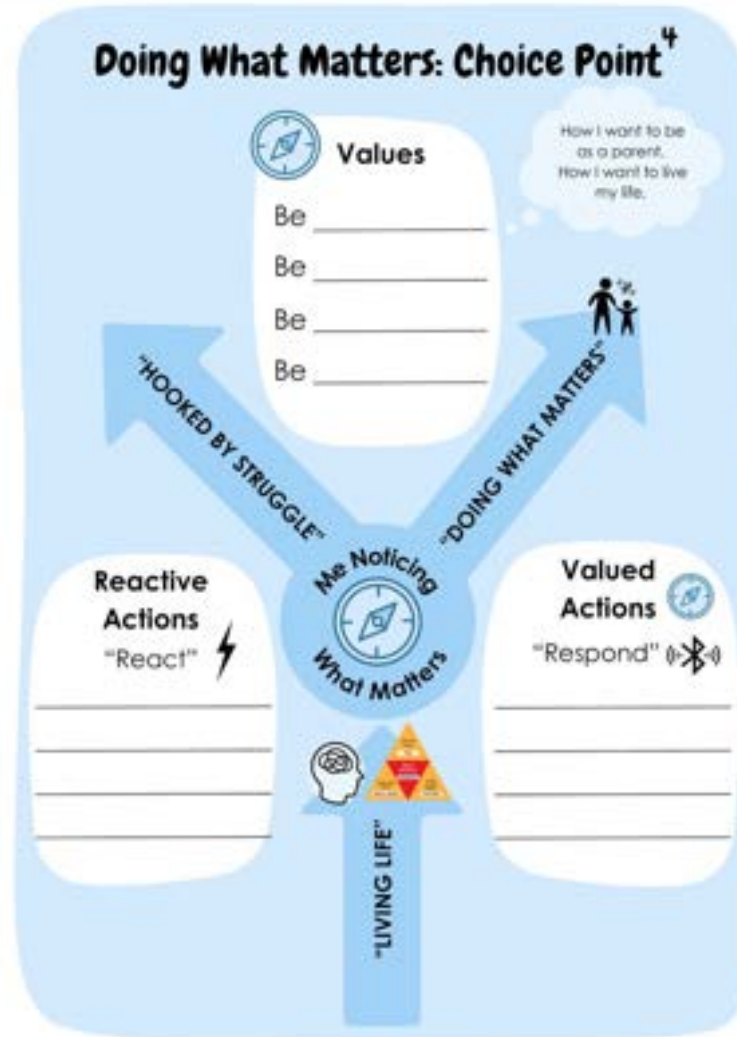
How can we help parents to
engage and persist
with well-proven behavioural
strategies?

*“Practice of paying non-judgemental,
present-moment attention to your child
and your own parenting behaviours,
allowing for more compassionate,
sensitive, intentional responding to your
child’s needs”*

(Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn, 1997).

Doing What Matters *Choice Point* (Sessions 2-8)

(Ciarrochi, Bailey & Harris, 2013)





Mindful Parent Training for Parents of Children Aged 3–12 Years with Behavioral Problems: a Scoping Review

Mark O. Donovan¹ · Judith A. Pickard¹ · Jane S. Herbert¹ · Emma Barkus²

Accepted: 22 November 2021 / Published online: 8 January 2022

© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2021

Abstract

Objectives While mindfulness-based parenting programs (MPPs) are increasingly popular for reducing child behavior problems, the evidence for the advantages of MPP over existing behavioral parent training is unclear. Existing systematic reviews have largely excluded the breadth of MPP protocols, including those that integrate behavioral skills components. Therefore, a scoping review was conducted to map the nature and extent of research on MPPs for parents of children aged 3 to 12 years with behavioral problems.

Methods PRISMA-ScR guidelines were used to conduct an encompassing peer literature review of cross-disciplinary databases. Studies were included if they reported mindfulness interventions for parents of children aged between 3 and 12 years with externalizing behavior problems and had an outcome measure of child behavioral problems that could be represented as an effect size. Randomized controlled trials as well as quasi-experimental, pre-post studies and unpublished dissertations were included.

Results Sixteen studies met the inclusion criteria ($N = 1362$). The majority of MPPs delivered mindfulness adapted to parenting based on the Bögels' protocol within clinical settings. There was a dearth of fully integrated mindfulness and behavioral programs. MPPs generally produced pre-to-post-intervention improvements with small effect sizes across child behavior and parent style, stress, and mindfulness measures. Examining longer follow-up periods compared to pre-intervention, effects reached a moderate size across most outcome measures.

Conclusions MPPs continue to show promise in improving child behavior and parental mindfulness, well-being, and style. Further research is needed to determine how to best leverage the advantages of mindfulness in augmenting the well-established effectiveness of behavioral programs.

Keywords Mindfulness · Parenting · Scoping review · Behavior · Effectiveness

The *Social Learning Theory* Stuff: (*done differently*)

Session 3: “Playing for keeps”

- Mindful **Play** & Describing

Session 4: “Making things stick”

- **Praise & Rewards**

Session 5: “Firming things up”

- Household **Rules**, Clear **Instructions**, Ignore-Distract-Praise

Session 6: “When things get too hot”

- Natural **Consequences**, Removal Privileges, Time-out

Session 7: “Staying one step ahead”

- Behaviour Action **Plans**

Session 8: “Being the parent you want to be”

- Consolidation, Celebration

Playing for Keeps (Session 3)

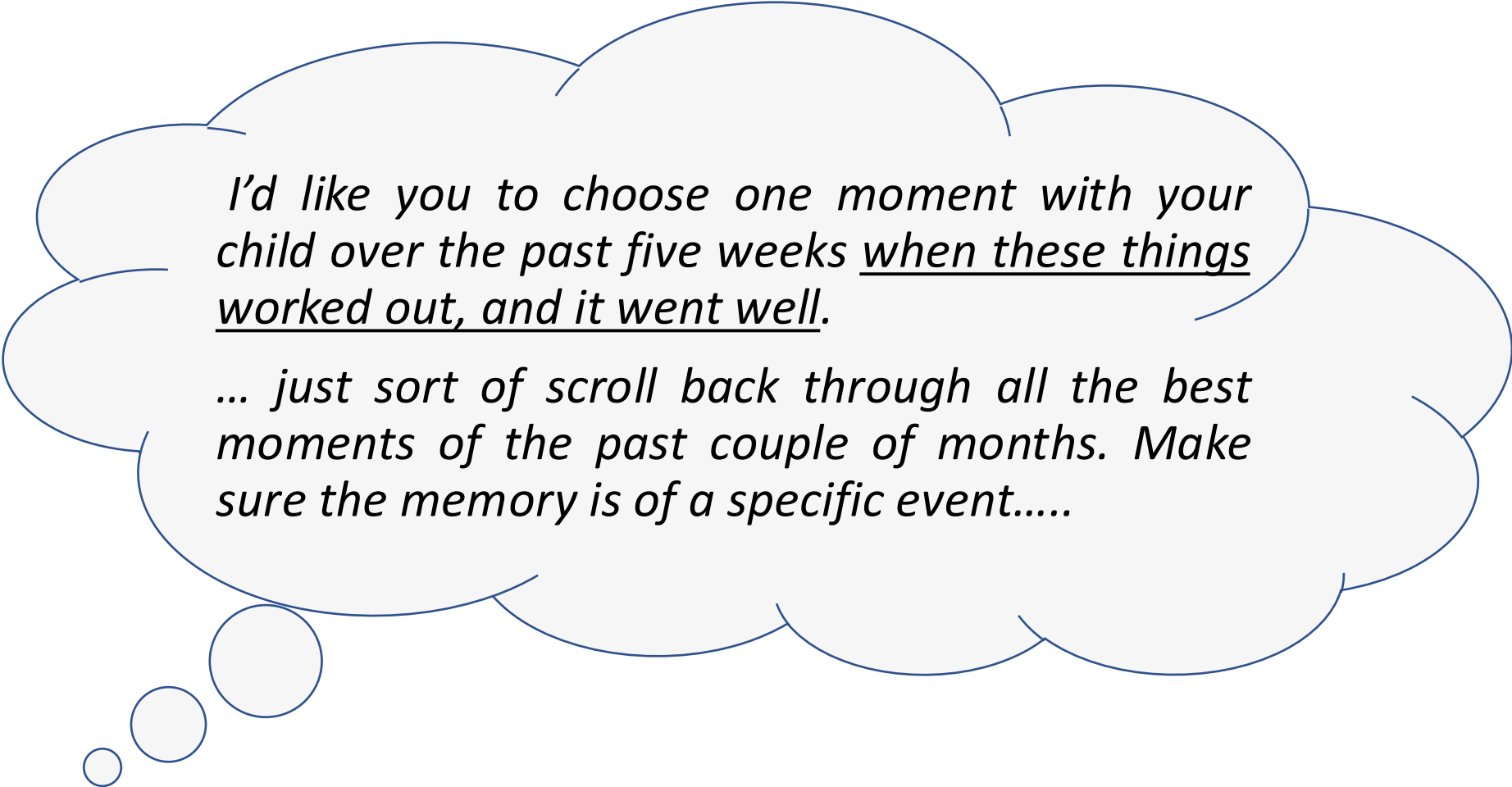
Intention
+
Attention
+
Attitude
=
Mindfulness

Follow your Child's
lead
+
Describe & Praise
their Actions
=
Mindful Play

*"I just try to make sure I spend
like a minimum like, you know, 10-15
minutes every day, and do that
undivided attention."*

44yo mother of 9yo son

Guided Mindfulness Exercise (Session 8): Being the Parent you Want to Be



I'd like you to choose one moment with your child over the past five weeks when these things worked out, and it went well.

... just sort of scroll back through all the best moments of the past couple of months. Make sure the memory is of a specific event.....

“Naturalistic” Research

Samples:

- **Pilot:** At-Risk families v University Clinic (N=34)
- **Acceptability, Outcomes & Predictors:** Parents attending CCK groups at University Clinic between 2009-2019 (N=338; mothers $n=223$, fathers $n=115$)

Measures:

Pre- and post-intervention

- Eyberg Child Behaviour Inventory (ECBI)
- Parenting Scale (PS)
- Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS21)
- Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting (IM-P)

Post-intervention parent satisfaction ratings & feedback

Session Attendance

Predictors of improvement

Pilot Study

N = 34

Journal of Child and Family Studies
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-022-02502-y>

ORIGINAL PAPER

Mindfulness and Imagery Enhanced Behavioral Parenting: Effectiveness Pilot of the Confident Carers Cooperative Kids Program

Mark O. Donovan¹ · Kathryn Briscoe-Hough¹ · Emma Barkus² · Jane S. Herbert¹ · Leonie Miller¹ · Greg Konza³ · Judy A. Pickard¹

Accepted: 23 November 2022

© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2022

Abstract

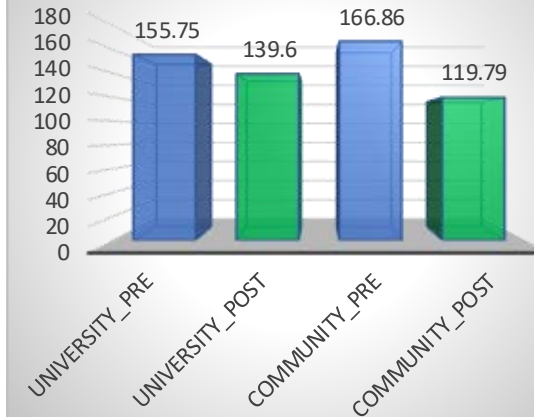
Mindfulness is increasingly offered to parents of children presenting with behavioral problems, either as a stand-alone intervention, or integrated within existing behavioral parenting interventions. There is relatively modest support for mindful parenting, with small to medium effect size improvements demonstrated across child and parent outcome measures. Here we introduce a mindfulness and imagery enhanced behavioral parenting program. We argue blending mindfulness, imagery and behavioral skills could produce improved parenting engagement and perseverance, leading to stronger outcomes. Pilot data is presented from two contrasting real world clinical settings. Parents attending the 8-week Confident Carers Cooperative Kids (CCCK) group program in a university clinic setting were invited to be included in the study ($n = 20$). Permission was also gained to use archival data from a community organisation offering CCCK groups to parents who were at risk of child welfare involvement ($n = 14$). Pre- and post-intervention measures were completed across both groups on parent-reported child behavior, parent wellbeing, adaptive parenting, and mindful parenting. Parents from both groups achieved significant pre- to post-intervention improvements in child behavior problems, parent wellbeing, adaptive parenting, and mindful parenting, with large effect sizes. Larger improvements in child behavior problems were reported by parents from the community group compared with the university group. The CCCK intervention appears beneficial across child and parent outcomes, including for families most in need. A larger sample is required to replicate and extend these promising findings.

Keywords Parenting · Mindfulness · Imagery · Child behavior · Real-world effectiveness

Highlights

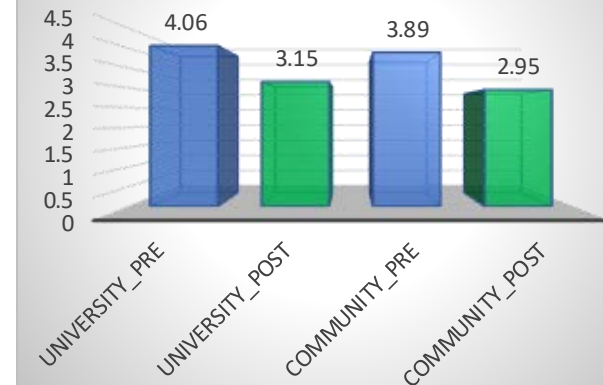
- Mindfulness and imagery have potential to improve behavioral parent training outcomes.
- Mindfulness and imagery enhanced behavioral parenting group found large effect size pre-post intervention improvements.
- Improvements in child behavior greater for higher need community participants compared with university clinic participants.
- Improvements in parent wellbeing, adaptive and mindful parenting similar across community and university participants.

ECBI Intensity



(Pre & Post - Means)

Parenting Scale: Over-reactivity



Time: $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .596/.608$ (very large effect size)

Acceptability & Outcomes

N = 338

CHILD & FAMILY BEHAVIOR THERAPY
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07317107.2022.2137715>

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group

 Check for updates

Mind the Family: Acceptability and Outcomes for a Mindfulness- and Imagery-Enhanced Behavioral Parenting Program

Mark O. Donovan^a , Emma Barkus^b , Judy A. Pickard^a , Greg Konza^c,
and Jane S. Herbert^a 

^aSchool of Psychology, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, Australia; ^bDepartment of Psychology, Northumbria University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK; ^cPrivate Practice, Wollongong, Australia

ABSTRACT

Enhanced parenting programs aim to meet broader family needs. Past research shows mixed effects for standard programs across differing family characteristics. We evaluate pre- to post-intervention improvements for fathers ($n = 115$) and mothers ($n = 223$) of children aged 3 to 12 years with externalizing behaviors who participated in an 8-week mindfulness- and imagery-enhanced behavioral parenting group program. Parents reported high acceptability and significant pre- to post-intervention improvements, with large effect sizes, in parent well-being, parenting approach, mindful parenting, and child behavior. Fathers attended the same number of sessions as mothers and demonstrated similar improvements. Blending imagery and mindfulness with behavioral skills appears helpful, including for fathers.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 15 June 2022
Revised 14 September 2022
Accepted 22 September 2022

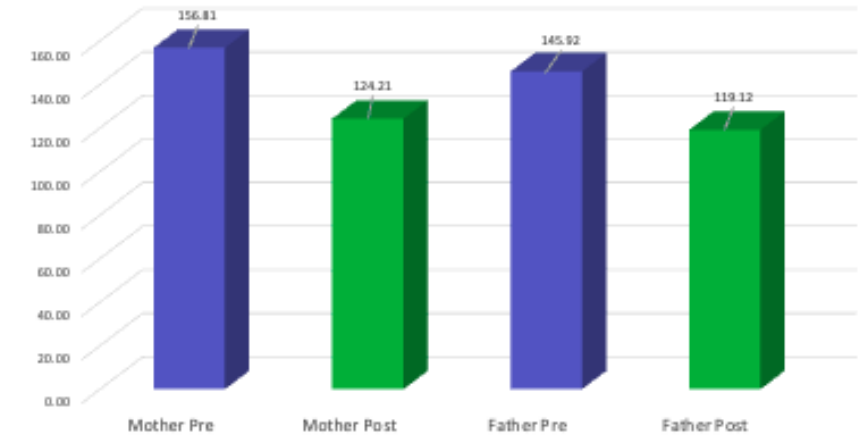
KEYWORDS

Child behavior; fathers; imagery; mindfulness; parenting

SUBJECT

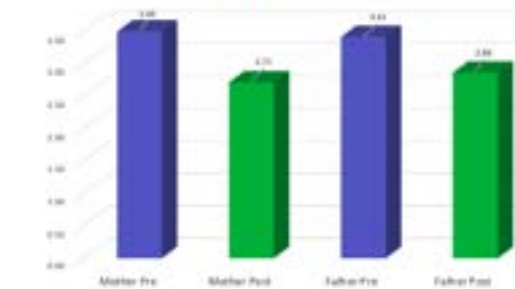
CLASSIFICATION CODES
3311; 3312; 3313

Results – Child Behavioural Difficulties - Intensity (ECBI-I) (Pre & Post - Means)



Time: $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .55$ (very large pre-post ES)

Results – Parenting Approach (Parenting Scale) (Pre & Post - Means)



Time: $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .48$ (very large pre-post ES)

Results – Mindful Parenting (IM-P) (Pre & Post - Means)



Time: $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .40$ (very large pre-post ES)

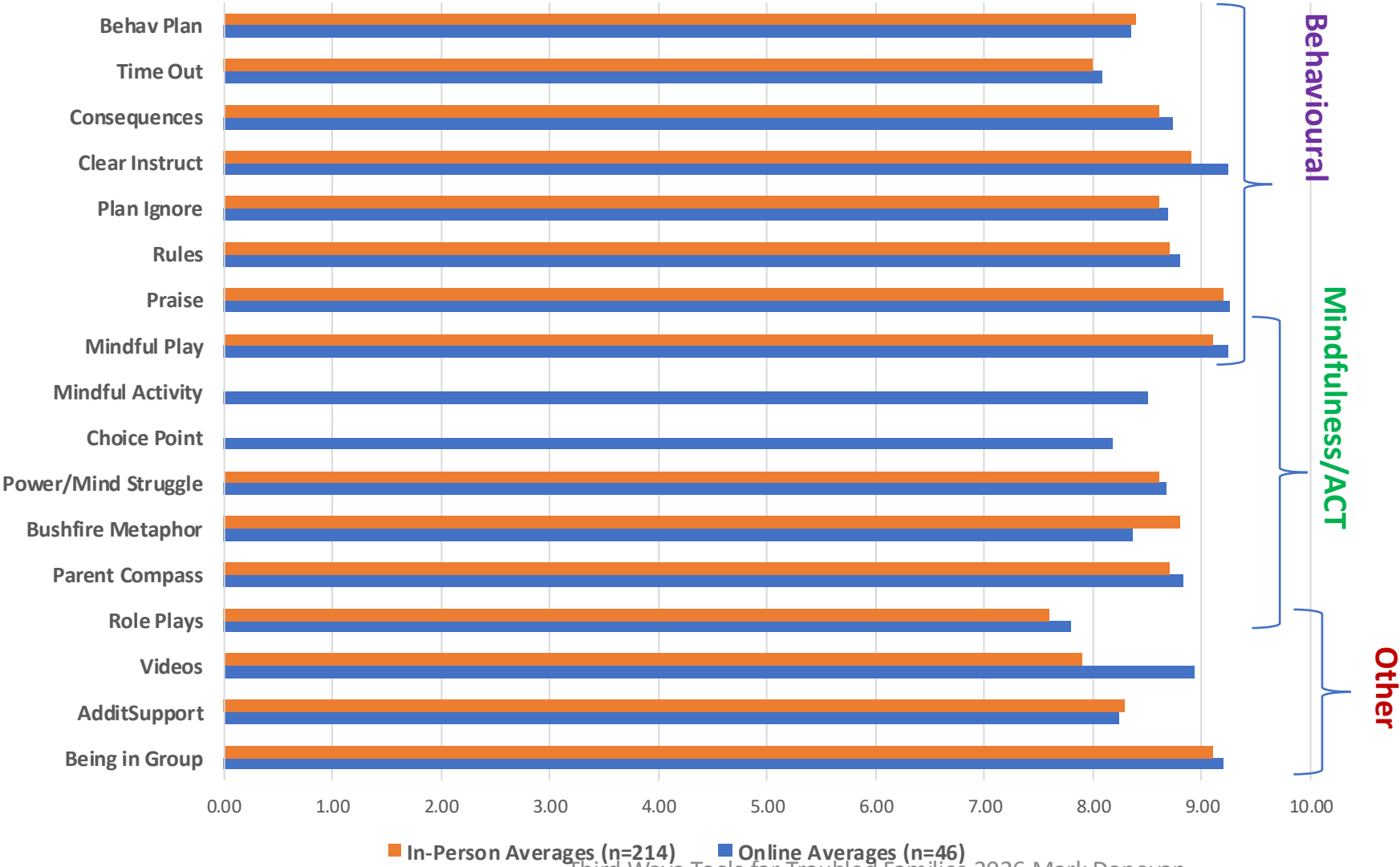
Acceptability: Session Attendance

86% parents attended 6+ / 8 sessions

Mothers ($n = 223$) attended 6.73 / 8 sessions

Fathers ($n = 115$) attended: 6.79 / 8 sessions

Parent Evaluation of Program Components



Average rating for
Behavioural Components:
8.75 / 10

Average rating for
Cognitive/Mindfulness
Components:
8.65 / 10

Average **in-person** delivery
8.59 / 10
Average **online** delivery
8.62 / 10

Predictors of Outcome & Attendance

Mindfulness (2024) 15:857–871
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-024-02328-3>

ORIGINAL PAPER



Room to Improve: Predictors of Attendance and Outcomes Within Mindfulness-Enhanced Behavioral Parent Training

Mark O. Donovan¹ · Emma Barkus² · Jane S. Herbert¹ · Judy A. Pickard¹

Accepted: 24 February 2024 / Published online: 3 April 2024
© The Author(s) 2024

Abstract

Objectives Parents across a broad sociodemographic spectrum struggle with their children's difficult behaviors and need effective and engaging interventions. We developed a mindfulness-enhanced behavioral parent training group program (MeBPT) aiming to be more inclusive and enable positive outcomes. This study investigated whether MeBPT can meet diverse needs across child, parent, family, and program-delivery factors, and explored whether improvements in parent-rated child behavior are predicted by changes in mindful parenting, parenting approach, or both.

Method Participants were 338 parents of 3- to 12-year-old children presenting with externalizing problems to a university clinic in regional Australia. Factors that significantly correlated with improvements in parent and child outcomes or attendance were included in regression analyses.

Results Improved parent-rated child behavior was predicted by change in mindful parenting ($p = 0.019$) but not parenting approach ($p = 0.305$). Attendance was high across all factors, and particularly for older parents. Improvements in parent well-being, approach, mindfulness, and child behavior were similarly large for families across child and family characteristics. Low-income families exhibited less improvement in parental well-being ($p = 0.012$), although demonstrated similar improvements in child behavior, parenting approach, and mindful parenting. Families with more severe problems at baseline showed largest gains ($p < 0.002$). Parental self-awareness and acceptance were important change agents.

Conclusions MeBPT appears effective across various sociodemographic backgrounds and is particularly beneficial for families presenting with more severe behavioral problems. Controlled research with ethnically diverse families is needed to confirm the benefits of MeBPT and to allow examination of mediators and moderators.

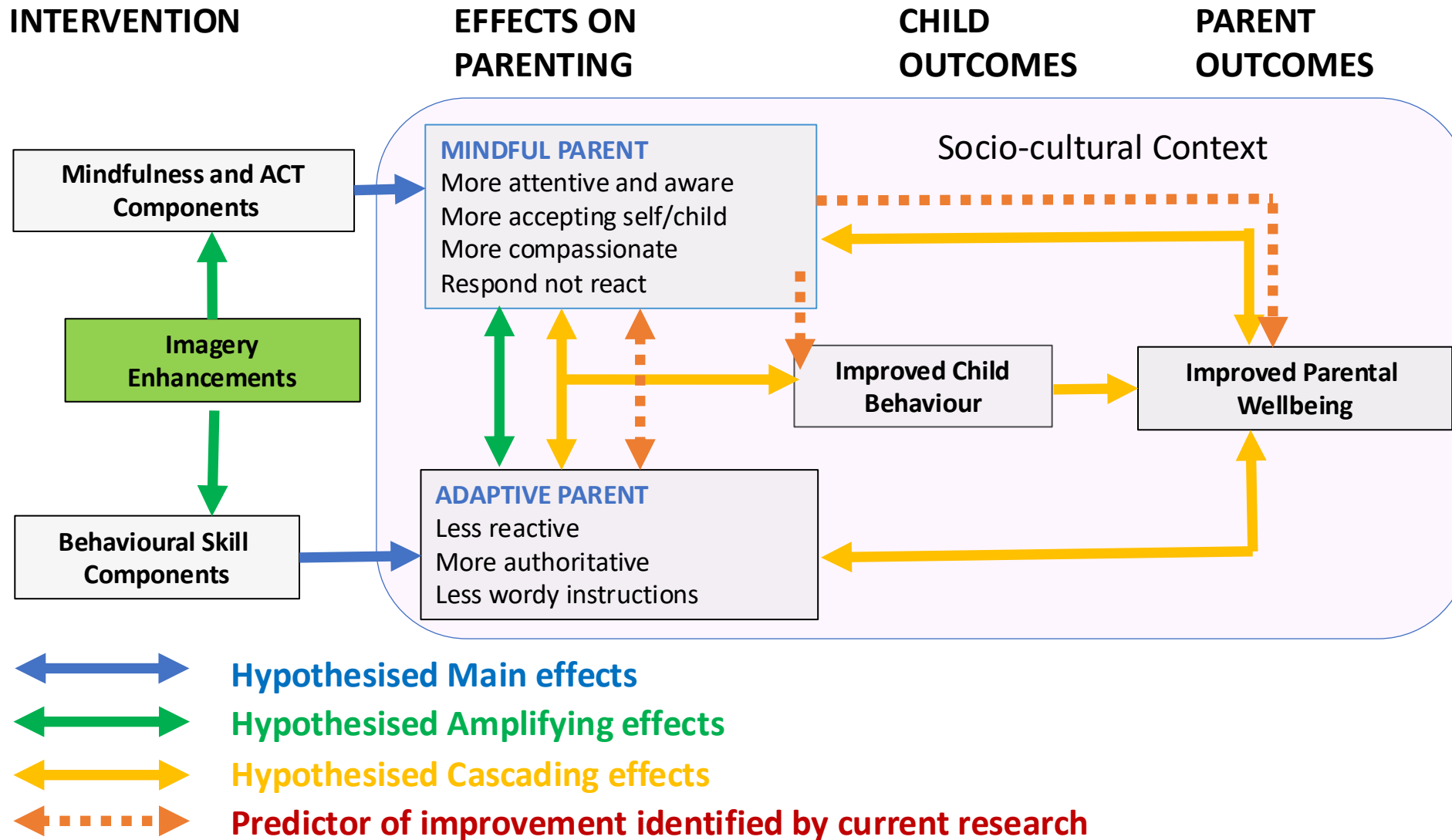
Keywords Parenting · Child behavior · Mindfulness · Predictors · Attendance · Outcomes

Predictors of Outcome & Attendance *(Mindfulness)*

	Child	Parent / Family	Program Delivery	Change Score
PREDICTORS	Age Sex Age-onset Medication Previous professionals Baseline ECBI-I/P	Age Sex Education Family income Family structure Ethnicity Employment Concession-card Baseline DASS, PS, IM-P	Session attendance Attend alone/team Program maturity	(Change Baseline – Post) Δ ECBI-I/P Δ DASS Δ PS Δ IM-P (Clinically-signif.) CS ECBI-I/P CS DASS CS PS CS IM-P
SIGNIF.	Baseline $\uparrow \cong \Delta$ / CS $\uparrow$	Baseline $\uparrow \cong \Delta$ / CS $\uparrow$ Older parents $\cong$ attendance $\uparrow$ Lower income $\cong \Delta$ DASS $\downarrow$	Program mat. $\cong \Delta$ ECBI-P $\uparrow$	Δ IM-P $\cong \Delta$ ECBI $\uparrow$ Δ IM-P $\cong \Delta$ PS $\uparrow$ Δ IM-P $\cong \Delta$ DASS $\uparrow$

Δ = change baseline to post / CS = clinical significance

Predictors / Mechanisms of Change



Research Wrap Up...

Preliminary support for **mindfulness** and **imagery enhanced** behavioural program

Meets needs of **broad sociodemographic** of families, including those with more severe difficulties and fathers

Parental self-compassion and **calm responding** important to improvements

Confident Carers **Cooperative Kids**

"I'm getting it!":

How parents describe change following attendance at mindfulness-enhanced behavioral parent training

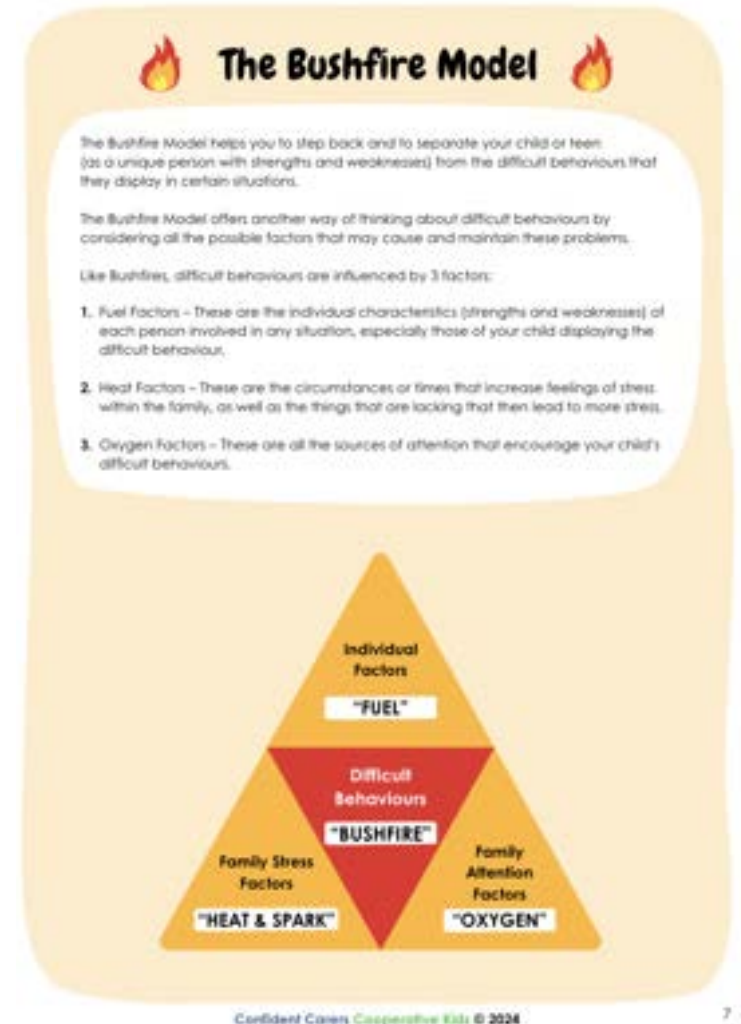


Parent / Carer Workbooks

Confident Carers
Cooperative Kids



Parent/Carer
Workbook



Practitioner Manuals

Confident Carers
Cooperative Kids



Group Program
Practitioner Manual

WEEK 1	UNDERSTANDING & PREVENTING PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS
1.01 10 mins	STARTING THE GROUP
	Poster or Graphics: ✓ Group Agreement ✓ Write on board: WEEK 1 – UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM ✓ Prepare Posters for: (1) Family Names; (2) Problem Behaviours; (3) Mind Struggle
	Facilitator Focus: - Welcome / Acknowledgement of Country - Welcome parents, provide acknowledgement of <u>Country</u> - Facilitator Introductions - Provide a brief introduction of your professional role & experience in working with children and families. - Overview / Create Hopefulness - Provide broad overview of today's session and the program. Create a sense of hopefulness for how CCCK program can change family life. - Housekeeping - Discuss toilets, breaks, fire exits <u>etc</u> - Group Agreement - Discuss the Group Agreement poster – “things to help us feel safe and keep us on track”. Go through each item to explain what is meant. Ask the group, “any additional rules required?”
1.02 20 min	FAMILY INTRODUCTIONS
	Poster or Graphic: ✓ Butchers Paper/Poster to record family names <u>Confident Carers</u> <u>Cooperative Kids</u>. ✓ Butchers Paper/Poster with Large Red Triangle (i.e., to write problem behaviours relating to the middle of the Bushfire Model).

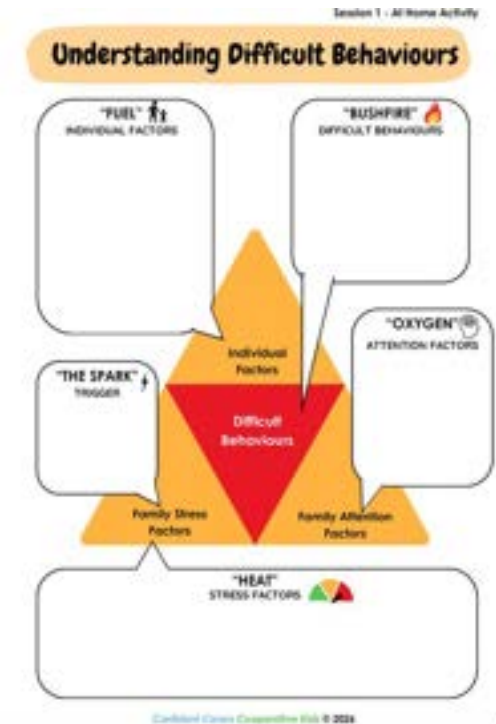
Practice Task 1: Noticing the Bushfire

***“I hear and I forget, I see and I remember,
I do and I understand”***

PAIRS EXERCISE

***Imagine it’s the end of your first session with
a parent who has described the Struggles in
their family...***

***Introduce the Bushfire Model as a way of
pulling together what they have described,
and providing them with how you can work as
a team to improve family life...***



Practice Task 2: Mind Struggle

*Bring to mind a recent time when you've **struggled** in your work with a family...*

***Take yourself back** to that moment... **Notice** what was happening...*

What was going through your mind? (**thoughts / images**)

How were you **feeling**?

How was your **body feeling**?

What did you notice yourself **doing in reaction** to your thoughts and feelings?

Can you think of a **word or phrase** that captures your Mind Struggle experience?

