

*just  
for  
now*

WORKING WITH PARENTS  
VIRTUAL USE OF THE OAKLANDER MODEL  
IN A TIME OF CRISIS

Karen Fried, Psy.D., MFT  
[Oaklandertraining.org](http://Oaklandertraining.org)

# GLOBAL PANDEMIC

COVID-19 now spread worldwide

- 1.7M+ confirmed cases

Work and school online

- Massive unemployment

Distancing from older relatives / grandparents

# A WHOLE NEW LEXICON

Social distancing

Shelter-in-place

Essential activities

Flattening the curve

N95 masks

- Masks for health care workers
- Non-medical face masks for everyone else

Quarantine/Self-Isolation

Ventilators (not in enough supply!)

Viral shedding

WORK

SCHOOL

SOCIALIZING



SCREEN-TIME GOES FROM  
“NECESSARY EVIL” TO A “LIFELINE”

# THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS

I/Thou relationship – NOT just for now, always important

Unprecedented stress for parents, so may become

- Defensive
- Resistant
- Angry
- Guilty
- Overwhelmed
- Present for your sessions



THERAPISTS  
IN ITALY:  
THINKING  
OF PARENTS

BOMBA

LOVE

# TIPS FOR THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS

1. Balance between avoiding judgment/confrontation and making appropriate suggestions
2. Normalize and discuss anger and its "many faces" in the family
3. Family system is not the only system that affects children
4. Help parents set priorities
5. Take notes on your sessions, document legal and ethical issues
6. Emphasize importance of working as a team
7. Engage them to help strategize having private time with the child and/or the parents
8. Help process guilt feelings regarding what they can't do for their children

# PRIORITIZE TREATMENT GOALS

Evaluate plan that's been in place and make adjustments

Assess for present level of stress in the household regarding risk factors:

- Health – COVID-19 or other medical diagnoses, substance use/abuse, domestic abuse
- Finances, unemployment concerns
- Children/adolescent online education
- Impact of past issues on current situation
- Grief

Present virtual treatment plan – Just for Now



# LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES: LISTS ARE DIFFERENT FOR EVERY FAMILY

What must happen

Addresses health, safety, financial security

AND

“So what”

Depends upon age and developmental concerns

- What they wear
- Amount of screen time
- Optimal learning at school
- Feet on the couch

# LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES: KIDS CAN HELP

Regular, everyday chores and activities include:

- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Family games or movie-watching
- Time and space for being alone
- Activities with purpose, such as helping others
- Fun

# PARENTS JOINING IN THE TECHNOLOGY WORLD

## Parents Are Now Bored Enough To Learn TikTok Dances With Their Kids And It's Amazing

Social distancing, but together.



**Lauren Strapagiel**  
BuzzFeed News Reporter

Posted on March 25, 2020, at 11:05 a.m. ET

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/laurenstrapagiel/blinding-lights-tiktok-dance-challenge-parents>

# REMINDER FOR PARENTS

Children raise their voices when they want to be heard.

Anger and angry expressions are a child's way of expressing the self.



# PARENTING TIPS: DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS

Don't allow a child to hit you. If need be, hold their arms calmly.

Never hit or spank a child.

Allow tantrums, and stay with them.

Scream with the child, not at them.

Distracting very young children can be helpful.

# PARENTING TIPS FROM VIOLET

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# VIOLET'S PARENTING TIPS - COMMUNICATION

Don't waste time teaching or explaining when you need to be firm.  
Wait for a calm time.

Use metaphorical stories to help them understand something.

Be brief. Be honest. Tell the truth.

Have fun and laugh with your child.



# CONTACT

As with children, it may be more difficult to be in contact with parents.

- Might need shorter half-sessions for check-ins.

Private space may be limited for parents as well as for children.

- Consider postponing more private work.



# WORKING PARENTS CONCERNS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mh4f9AYRCZY>

# TELE-HEALTH CONCERNS

Take care of legal and ethical matters

- Session timing
- Secure online payment
- Consent forms
- Limits of confidentiality
- Geographical area your license covers

Consider a reduced fee

# PARENTS' REACTIONS TO CRISIS

Likely predicted by previous type of functioning:

- Anxiety – pervasive worry; discussing dire news and potential dire outcomes of COVID-19; excessive media exposure
- OCD – a need for sterile conditions that places stress on the family
- Depression – withdrawal from family life; excessive irritability/impatience
- Denial – minimizing and dismissing the news and current restrictions; going to work; ignoring social distancing; allowing children's social activities
- Anger – irritability; outbursts; emotionally or physically abusive behaviors

# TREATMENT PLAN: CASE #1 ONE ANXIOUS PARENT AND ONE ANGRY/MINIMIZING

1. Validate both reactions – everyone's anxious and the feeling of anger is appropriate.
2. Encourage a united front – Just for Now
  - Children benefit
3. Make a plan for logistics
  - Health and safety guidelines according to CDC (NOT WhatsApp parent groups)
  - Limits and boundaries about what gets discussed
4. Set aside previous relationship issues – Just for Now

# TREATMENT PLAN: CASE #2 SEPARATED CO- HABITING PARENTS, ONE CALM/ANGRY AND ONE DEPRESSED

1. Consider and address legal issues.
  - Obtain release to speak with attorney.
  - Consult regarding plan of co-habituating parent for safety and consistency for children.
  - Schedule time in common areas
2. Set Just for Now schedule.
  - Divide up time with children.
  - Limit any conversation to matters of health and safety only.
3. Make contingency plans.
  - Avoid conflict that could escalate.

TREATMENT  
PLAN: CASE #3  
CLOSE COUPLE, ONE  
RECOVERING FROM  
HEALTH CRISIS AND  
ONE CAREGIVER

1. Acknowledge year 2 of trauma
2. Virtual help for childcare
3. Safe space activity
4. Prioritize rest, self-care

# GENERAL TIPS JUST FOR NOW

## Manage stress

- We are ALL experiencing unprecedented levels of stress
- Children listen to how we say something more than what we say

## Relax academic expectations

- Children are learning virtually, but it's less effective

## Prioritize family time

- Go through old photo albums; make photo albums together
- Movie night or game night
- Bake cookies

## Assign chores in a spirit of fun

- Play music
- Work together
- Let the child(ren) make a chore chart

# GENERAL TIPS ON HOME-SCHOOLING

Parents are usually witnessing their children's school day for the first time.

- Helpful to be present to ensure materials are available, they're ready on time, have their meals, etc.

When possible, avoid being the “2<sup>nd</sup> teacher.”

- Difficult to watch lagging processing time, misunderstanding, careless errors, etc.



Today's materials will be posted online at  
<https://www.oaklandertraining.org/just-for-now>

(Chat transcripts are password-protected)

THANK YOU

Questions?

# IF YOU HAVE MORE QUESTIONS...

Email [karenfried@kandmcenter.com](mailto:karenfried@kandmcenter.com) to receive details on future Sunday Supervision/Consultation sessions

9:30-11:30 am PT

No charge for these sessions during this time