

Parents Interview and Family Assessment

Rebecca Carr-Hopkins

Andrea Landini

DMM assessments

- CARE-Index: Infancy
- CARE-Index Toddlers with Frustration & Repair task: Toddlerhood
- Strange Situation: Infancy
- Preschool Assessment of Attachment (PAA): 2-5 years
- School-Age Assessment of Attachment (SAA): 6-13 years
- Transition to Adulthood Attachment Interview (TAAI): 16-25 years
- DMM-Adult Attachment Interview (DMM-AAI): adulthood
- Parents' Interview ←

Parents Interview (Crittenden, 1981)

- Focuses on how a whole family processes implicit and explicit information
- Assesses the array of family attachments and how they function together
- Moves to the family level

Parents Interview (Crittenden, 1981)

- An overall look at how the parental subsystem organizes to protect the whole family.

Parents Interview

- 1-hour semi-structured interview
- Given to parents (or primary caregivers) of a child in the presence of the children
- Questions about:
 - their childhood experience
 - their functioning together
 - how they work together to raise the child(ren)

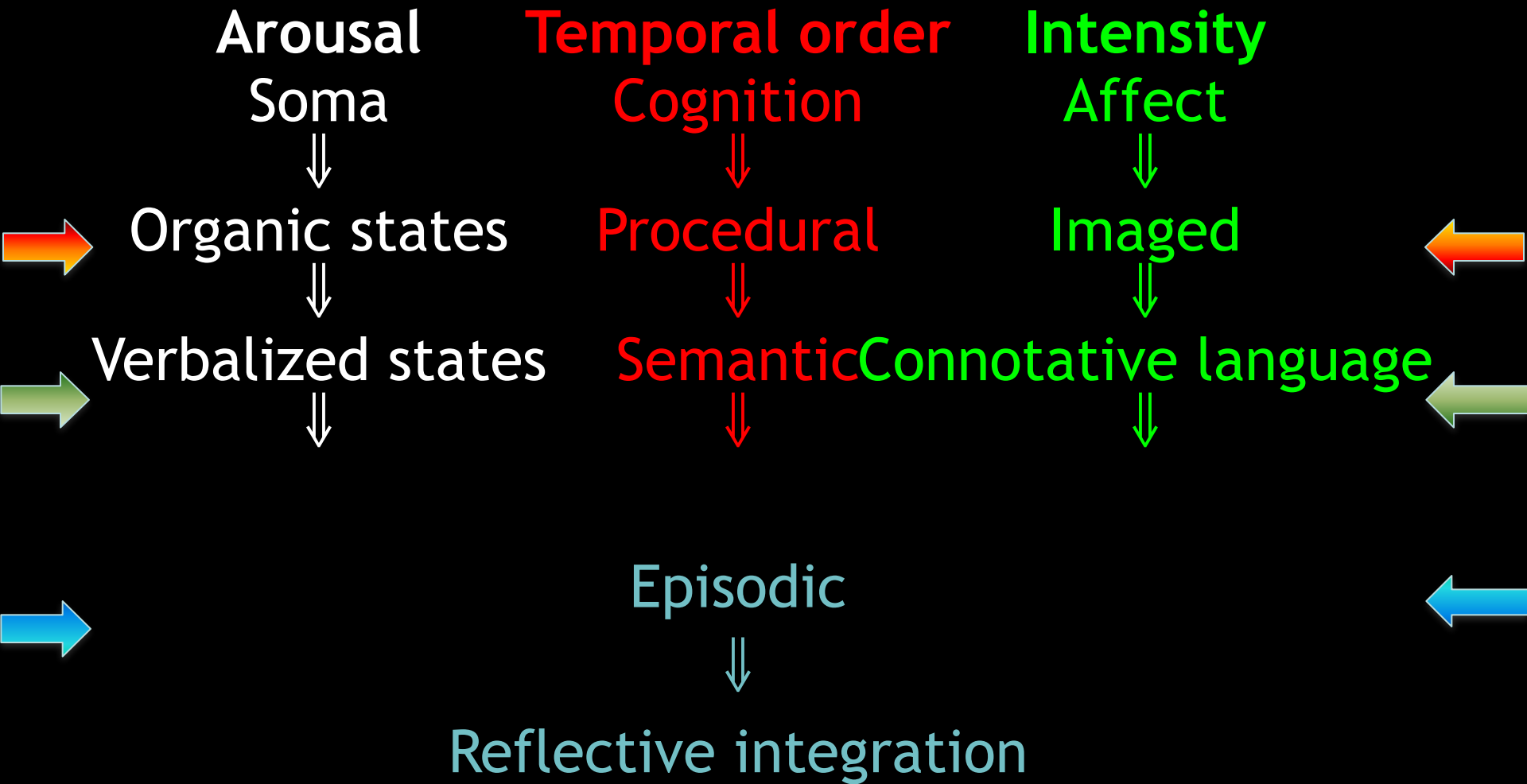
Managing multiple simultaneous stressors

- The PI simulates conditions that elicit parenting problems
- The parents are asked to manage *both* the interview and the children
- Do parents attend to questions or use children to distract from uncomfortable topics?

Representing information in multiple ways

- The PI probes multiple memory systems about the same topic
- This allows exploration of conflicting ideas that could motivate incompatible behaviors
- Individuals with less integration of thoughts and feelings are more likely to behave in unexpected and unacceptable ways (less aware of their motivations)

Multiple dispositional representations



Couple relationship functioning

- The questions are asked of the parents (not of a specific individual)
- Parents work together to answer the questions
- Power structure, synergy.

Parents Interview

- Video-recorded
- Transcribed verbatim
- Each individual's speech analyzed with the DMM method of discourse analysis
(Crittenden & Landini, 2011)
- Relationship between the parents
- Relationship between parents and interviewer

Parents Interview

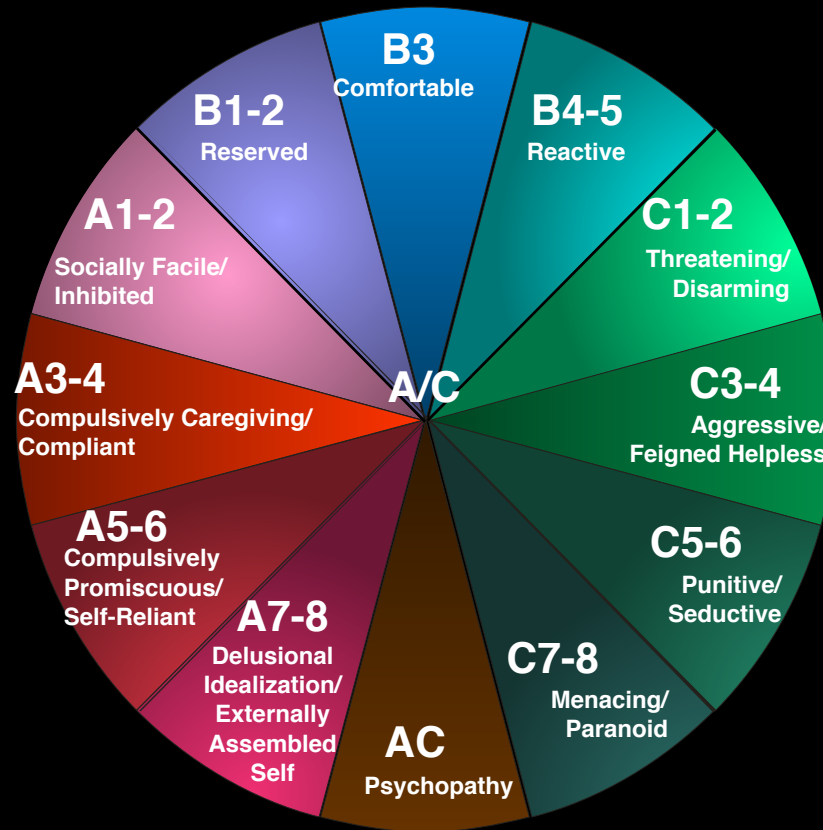
- It can differentiate four groups of parents:
 - abusing
 - neglecting
 - marginally maltreating
 - adequate.

Crittenden, PM, Partridge, MF & Claussen, AH (1991). Family patterns of relationship in normative and dysfunctional families. *Development and Psychopathology*, 3, 491-512.

Outcomes of a Parents Interview

1. An approximation of a self-protective strategy

DMM self-protective strategies in Adulthood



Outcomes of a Parents Interview

1. An approximation of a self-protective strategy
2. An over-riding distortion of the strategy, i.e. a modifier (e.g. depression, reorganization)
3. A brief developmental history of each speaker (from both explicit content and implicit discourse)
4. Levels of parental reasoning

Levels of Parental Reasoning

How does the parent think about making caregiving decisions for the children?

How flexible and sensitive will the parent be in interpreting and responding to the child's behavior?

Levels of Parental Reasoning

Abdication

Level 0: Parent doesn't know why they do what they do or is incoherent.

Level 0.5: Parent defers to others or echoes their views.

Egoistic reasoning

Level 1: Parent makes decisions based on self-interest (self-state).

Level 1.5: Parent tries to behave the way they would have wanted if they were the child.

Conformist reasoning

Level 2: Parent's decisions are based on normative standards.

Level 2.5: Parent modifies normative standards on the basis of some characteristic of the child (e.g., age, sex).

Individualistic reasoning

Level 3: Parent selects their own behavior in response to unique aspects of the child.

Level 3.5: Parent's reasoning includes more than one level, but is not fully individualized to child, self, and present circumstances.

Integrative reasoning

Level 4: Parent's reasoning is based on the integration of information from lower levels, including the unique characteristics of the child, the self, the immediate situation, and long-term experience and consequences.

Modified from: Crittenden, P. M., Lang, C., Claussen, A.H., & Partridge, M. F. (2000). Relations among mothers' procedural, semantic, and episodic internal representational models of parenting. In P. M. Crittenden and A. H. Claussen (Eds). *The organization of attachment relationships: Maturation, culture, and context* (pp. 214-233). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Levels of Parental Reasoning

Abdication

Level 0: Parent doesn't know why they do what they do or is incoherent.

Level 0.5: Parent defers to others or echoes their views.

Levels of Parental Reasoning

Egoistic reasoning

Level 1: Parent makes decisions based on self-interest (self-state).

Level 1.5: Parent tries to behave the way they would have wanted if they were the child.

Levels of Parental Reasoning

Conformist reasoning

Level 2: Parent's decisions are based on normative standards.

Level 2.5: Parent modifies normative standards on the basis of some characteristic of the child (e.g., age, sex).

Levels of Parental Reasoning

Individualistic reasoning

Level 3: Parent selects their own behavior in response to unique aspects of the child.

Level 3.5: Parent's reasoning includes more than one level, but is not fully individualized to child, self, and present circumstances.

Levels of Parental Reasoning

Integrative reasoning

Level 4: Parent's reasoning is based on the integration of information from lower levels, including the unique characteristics of the child, the self, the immediate situation, and long-term experience and consequences.

Using the PI in a Family Functional Formulation

- Family functional formulation: integration of family members' strategies
 - With each other in a system for family protection and reproduction
 - With previous history of danger and protection
 - With contextual current dangers and protective resources
- FFF: Critical danger & critical cause of change
 - Conflicts of interest or common interests within the family
 - Settings for treatment accordingly