

Rachel Lavery
Gwen R. Rempel
Jeff Chang
Gina Wong

PARENTAL PERCEPTIONS OF BEHAVIOUR CHANGE:

A CIRCLE OF SECURITY®
PARENTING PERSPECTIVE



From me to you and
back again



INTRODUCTION

Many parents mistake obedience for connection and miss the communication behind the behaviour - what is hidden in plain sight. When problems arise, they often turn to parent programs for support.

Circle of Security® is an example of a relationship-based program that has proven to be successful in helping parents grow in their ability to support and understand their children, as well as to grow in their own capacity for responsiveness, self-regulation, and reflective functioning¹

BACKGROUND

Circle of Security® – Parenting (COS-P) is the 8-week version of the original 20-week Circle of Security® intervention and offers the core components of the Circle of Security® protocol within a shorter time frame²

While behaviour change in children is not a focal point of Circle of Security® or COS-P, it is a consequence that has been found in Circle of Security®³

It is anticipated that caregivers participating in COS-P will experience similar changes in their perceptions of behaviour change to those experienced by caregivers participating in the full-length Circle of Security® protocol

PURPOSE

To gain a greater awareness of the experiences of parents who participated in COS-P in relation to changes in their perceptions regarding their child's and their own behaviour.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1 After parents have participated in COS-P, what is the parental perception of their own responses to their child's behaviour?

2 How has parental perception of their child's behaviour changed after participation in COS-P?

RESEARCH DESIGN

Social
Constructivism

Qualitative
Research
Perspective

Qualitative
Description

Ethics
&
Rigour

Criterion- based Sampling
Sample Characteristics

- N = 9 parent (7 mothers)
- 30 – 45 years of age
- One or more children between ages of 8 m and 12 y
- Participated in COS-P session
- Completion of pre and post measures

Data
Collection

Semi-structured in-depth
interviews

- 27 interviews in total
- > 16 audio interviews
 - ~60 min
 - 7 pre COS-P
 - 9 post COS-P
- > 11 brief video interviews
 - ~ 5 min
 - 5 pre COS-P
 - 6 post COS-P

Transcripts created,
checked for accuracy,
multiple times
Transcripts read, re-read
and coded
Identified potential codes
Reread and reexamined
themes, patterns
Developed code book

Data
Organization

Data
Analysis

Using code book reread
transcripts
Refined themes
Utilized qualitative
description approach
throughout
Final Analysis
Verbatim Quotes
Compile report

Ethical approval obtained from Athabasca
University Ethics Review Board.

Rigour

1. Transparency in describing the research
2. Ethical Validation – this inquiry addresses a “real-world” problem of discovery of a possible link between the relationship-building properties of COS-P and lessening of perceptions of troubling child behaviours.
3. Ensuring that data were presented fairly and accurately.

RESULTS

QUESTION 1

“I cannot expect him to be on all the time. And I think that that was part of my expectation of him, without realizing that that was part of my expectation of him.”

Theme: From Me To You And Back Again
Finding: Parental Responses More Measured

“I think it was something before that I would have thought, ‘Okay, that needs a timeout.’ Where I’m looking at it now and it doesn’t need a timeout; we can look at different ways of going about it.”

Theme: Bending Not Breaking
Finding: Parental Responses More Flexible

After parents have participated in COS-P, what is the parental perception of their own responses to their child’s behaviour?

After participation in COS-P, parents described their responses as more:

Measured
Flexible
Empathetic
Understanding

“If he’s doing something that seems irrational, [I now] say, ‘Okay, that’s maybe not what he’s actually upset about. There’s something else underlying that,’ and to help work through [it] with [him] to bring that out. So instead of getting angry at him or frustrated, it’s more what can I do to help him.”

Theme: To Know Is To Understand
Finding: Parental Responses More Empathetic

“I just feel like I have more understanding now that that’s what she needs as a [child].”

Theme: Seeing Differently
Finding: Parental Responses More Understanding

RESULTS

QUESTION 2

“I feel like I understand [the behaviour] more. So, I feel like he’s not doing much different, other than his own kind of pathway, his changes. But I feel like how I see what he’s doing is very different.”

Theme: Observed Behaviours
Finding: More Understandable

“So, she might need that emotional cup filled a lot more often than other kids. She’s not an adult, whereas I think sometimes before this, we were kind of, like, ‘Why doesn’t she get it? We’ve explained it,’ or ‘I’ve played with her for 10 minutes or an hour. I played with you all day and you’re still not...’ Well, maybe that just wasn’t enough for her today.”

Theme: To Know It Is To Understand It
Finding: Managed Differently

How has parental perception of their child’s behaviour changed after participation in COS-P?

After participation in COS-P, parents described their perceptions of their child’s behaviour as:

More understandable
Managed differently
Communicative in nature

“When he gets upset, it does not aggravate me. There’s still times where it does aggravate me, but it does not aggravate me to the same extent. I can see what he needs, and he might not need what he’s getting upset about.”

Theme: Seeing Differently
Finding: Communicative in Nature

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that for this sample COS-P participation changed both how parents perceived their child's behaviours and how they responded to those behaviours.

FUTURE RESEARCH

More studies with a larger and more diverse sample size would also add to this body of knowledge – in addition to follow-up studies that investigate perception change in the long-term.

LIMITATIONS

Size and demographic of the sample - a more balanced sample distribution in terms of gender, residence, and education

The usage of data not generated by the researcher. As the data was not collected to answer the research questions posed in this study, it is possible that potentially relevant data was left out. As this research study is a first step into further research regarding COS-P and parental perceptions, this limitation may be more of an advantage than a constraint.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The effects of COS-P participation have potential positive implications for both parenting and the field of counselling psychology. As seen in this study, a change in parental perception of child behaviour leads to a change in what is viewed as a troublesome or concerning behaviour in the child.

This knowledge is also valuable for clinical work as a step for further research into the long-term viability of results. Little research on the outcomes of COS-P and this study serves to add to the collective research regarding this program. It will also strengthen the available research regarding the parent-child dyad. Specifically, this research study serves as a platform from which further, more in-depth studies can be launched.

REFERENCES

¹Cooper, G., K., Hoffman, K., & Powell, B. (2009). COS-P Facilitator DVD manual.

²Circle of Security® International. (2016). Retrieved from <http://circleofsecurity.net/>

³Powell, B., Cooper, G., Hoffman, K., & Marvin, R. (2014) *The circle of security intervention: Enhancing attachment in early parent-child relationships* The Guilford Press.

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THANK YOU

