

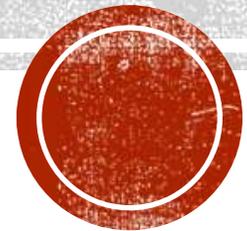
# **MINDFULNESS IN PARENTING, INFANT TEMPERAMENT AND PARENTING STRESS**

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# TEMPERAMENT

- **Temperament**: “Constitutionally based individual differences in reactivity and self-regulation” (Rothbart & Derryberry, 1981)
  - Negative Emotionality
  - Surgency/Extraversion
  - Effortful Control/Regulatory Capacity
- Temperament directly predicts children’s adjustment problems above other factors (Nigg, 2006; Rothbart & Bates, 2006)
- “**goodness-of-fit**”: compatibility between child’s temperament and their environment (Thomas & Chess, 1986)



# PARENTING STRESS

- **Parenting stress** consistently shown to impact quality of parent-child interactions.
- Can interfere with parent's ability to respond appropriately to child in difficult situations (e.g., Belsky, 1984; Roberts, 1989)
- Under stress, parents at risk of becoming (e.g., Belsky, 1984; Crnic et al., 2005):
  - More rejecting
  - More controlling
  - More reactive
  - Less warm
- Leads to a poorer quality parent-child exchanges and relational fit.



# MINDFULNESS IN A PARENTING CONTEXT

- Parenting behaviors characterized by **intentionality** in parent-child interactions (Duncan, Coatsworth, & Greensberg, 2009; Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn, 1998)
  - Careful listening and attention
  - Low reactivity
  - Non-judgmental toward parenting choices
  - Non-judgmental of child
  - Emotional awareness
  - Compassion for the self and child
- Mindful parenting is linked with more adaptive parenting practices (Parent et al., 2015)
  - Indirectly related to lower internalizing and externalizing problems in children



# THE INTERSECTION

- Interplay between parents and children is **complex**
- **Temperament influences parenting** (e.g., Lipscomb et al., 2011), **and vice versa** (Bridgett, Laake, Gartstein, & Dorn, 2013; Gartstein, Crawford, & Robertson, 2008)
- **Mindfulness can lower parenting stress** (e.g., Singh et al., 2007)
- **Mindfulness can impact temperament development** (van den Heuvel, Johannes, Henrichs, & Van den Bergh, 2014)
  - Higher mindfulness during pregnancy associated with less infant self-regulation problems and less infant Negative Emotionality
  - Maternal anxiety mediated this association



# GOALS OF THE PROJECT

- Parent-child interactions are complex, and influenced by all of the factors described previously
- Interested in examining relationship between **parenting mindfulness, temperament, and parenting stress** in infancy
  - Parenting in infancy critical for the development of attachment (Ainsworth et al., 1978), regulation/executive functioning skills (Bernier, Carlson, & Whipple, 2010), and other cognitive and social outcomes (Smith, Landry, & Swank, 2010)
- Create a scale that evaluates mindfulness in the context parenting infants



# WHY CREATE A NEW SCALE?

- Mindful parenting scales for older children include multiple items that do not apply in infancy
  - “I listen carefully to my child’s ideas, even when I disagree with them” (The Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting Scale; Duncan, 2007)
  - “Did you ask your child’s opinion?” (Mindfulness in Parenting Questionnaire; McCaffrey, Reitman, & Black, 2015)
- Some studies utilize dispositional or general mindfulness (Duncan & Bardacke, 2010; Parent et al., 2016)
  - Not considering mindfulness directly in parenting contexts



# THE SCALE

- Parenting Mindfulness Scale (PMS)
- Developed to evaluate mindfulness specifically in context of parenting in infancy
- Utilized the Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting Scale (Duncan, 2007) for parenting older children as a guide
  1. Present-centered attention and emotional awareness during parenting interactions
  2. Openness and non-judgmental receptivity to child
  3. Regulation of reactivity to child's behavior
- Obtained feedback concerning items from:
  - Individuals who do infancy work
  - Individuals who study mindfulness



# PARENTING MINDFULNESS SCALE (PMS)

**7 point Likert Scale (Never to Always)**

1. I find myself not being as attentive as I could be to my child, because my mind is preoccupied with other things.
2. When I'm upset with my child, I notice how I am feeling before I take action.
3. I notice how changes in my child's mood affect my mood.
4. I always do what is best for my child, even if it inconveniences me.
5. I often react too quickly to what my child does.
6. I am aware of how my moods affect the way I treat my child.
7. Even though it sometimes makes me uncomfortable, I allow my child to express him/herself.
8. When I become upset with my child, I am able to calm down and not have it affect my mood or the way in which I care for my child.
9. I rush through activities with my child without being really attentive to him/her.
10. I have difficulty accepting my child's growing independence.



# PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- Very early on in data collection (N = 34)
- So far, good internal consistency!
  - Cronbach's Alpha: .80
- **Mindfulness** and **Parenting Stress**
  - Overall parenting stress (PSI; Abidin, 1995)
  - Significant correlation: ( **$r = -.588$ ;  $p < .05$** )



# PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- **Mindfulness** and **Temperament**
  - Broad temperament scales (IBQ-R; Gartstein & Rothbart, 2003)
    - Surgency/Positive Affectivity, Negative Affectivity, Regulatory Capacity/Orienting
  - Significant correlations:
    - Mindfulness and Surgency/Positive Affectivity ( $r = .429$ ;  $p < .05$ )
    - Mindfulness and Regulatory Capacity/Orienting ( $r = .497$ ;  $p < .01$ )



# PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- Hierarchical regression to evaluate mindfulness and temperament as predictors of parenting stress
  - Step 1: Three temperament factors (Surgency/Positive Affectivity, Negative Affectivity, Regulatory Capacity/Orienting)
  - Step 2: Mindfulness
- Results:
  - ( $F = 3.82; p < .05$ )
  - Mindfulness accounted for additional **16.1%** of the variance in parenting stress above the contribution of temperament



# CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Results support importance of considering mindfulness as protective with respect to parenting stress
  - Interventions promoting mindful parenting targeting mothers of infants
- Temperament based intervention for mothers of infants
  - Improving parenting mindfulness and parenting stress by teaching about temperament
  - Improving understanding of infant and their characteristics



# QUESTIONS?



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