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Relationship Development Intervention (RDI®) Information and Services for In Home Consulting

Beginning Relationship Development Intervention (RDI®)

Thank you for your request for information about Relationship Development Intervention®. RDI® is a highly effective, parent-based clinical treatment program that focuses on improving the cognitive development, information processing, and quality of relationships in children on the autism spectrum. This approach empowers parents to effectively guide their child's development, and you can expect to see significant improvements in the quality of your child's interactions with you.

Your success in learning to implement this approach depends on several factors. First of all, it is essential that you become familiar with RDI® principles and methods, and that you feel comfortable with the appropriateness of this approach for you and your child. If you have not yet attended one of Dr. Steven Gutstein's workshops, this would be the best place to start. Introductory workshops are held at various locations, usually in the United States. If this is impractical for you, other ways to learn about RDI® include viewing Dr. Gutstein's 5-hour introductory DVD, [Going to the Heart of Autism: Relationship Development Intervention](#), reading his book, [Autism/Asperger's: Solving the Relationship Puzzle](#), and visiting the Connections Center website at: www.rdicconnect.com. This website provides a wealth of information about RDI, including clinical research on its effectiveness and ongoing discussion among parents currently using these methods. In addition, the RDIos, available to parents, allows for many of the pre-assessment education requirements to be met online.

Once you are confident that you have a basic understanding of the RDI® Program, have met the parent training objectives, and are willing to make the commitment to integrating RDI® into your family's lifestyle, the next step is to complete a Relationship Development Assessment (RDA) with your child. This assessment will result in an RDI® home program tailored to meet your child's specific needs, and an improved understanding of how to work effectively with your child on building more meaningful connections with others.

The results you will see in your child are dependent on your understanding of the objectives, your ability to integrate the plan into your lifestyle, your consistency in following through with the treatment plan, and your child's individual response to RDI. Ongoing support is necessary in

order to remain focused on using RDI methods effectively, to make adjustments to accommodate rapid growth, and to overcome obstacles to progress.

Before Your Assessment

Prior to your assessment, it is required that in addition to having attended an RDI parent training session or viewing the RDI® Program DVD, you prepare a 10-20 minute video of your child interacting with family members. Acceptable video formats include any U.S. compatible MiniDV (DVC), European PAL DVC, 8mm (digital, non-digital or hi-8), VHS or DVD. Please note that in general, any video cameras purchased outside North America record in a format incompatible with U.S. equipment and, unfortunately, may need to be transferred to CD or DVD in order to be viewed within the U.S. Alternatively, you may upload video to be sent via the internet. Please ask for specific instructions if not posted on my website. Sending video clips in advance of your assessment, along with copies of any reports or evaluations that will help me to understand your child, will assist me in planning for your child's RDA and will help familiarize me with your child's interactive style. This will allow me to bring appropriate materials and plan for effective use of our time together.

If for some reason I do not feel I would be the best match as an RDI® Program Consultant, this will also give me an opportunity to identify a more ideal match for you, prior to your making the financial investment in my services.

Reports that are most useful are those that include information about the following: your child's developmental history, descriptions of any treatment your child is currently receiving, and diagnoses and recommendations from any professionals who have evaluated your child (such as neurologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, developmental pediatricians). It is often helpful to include a current educational plan, if your child has one, particularly if you are considering incorporating RDI objectives into your child's school program.

Once you have decided to take the next step and commit to an assessment for your child, you will be given an information packet that will help you to identify your degree of readiness to enter into this program, prepare for your assessment, and focus on some useful RDI® Program objectives while you are waiting for your RDA appointment.

The Relationship Development Assessment (RDA)

The RDA consists of 30 or more hours of service, as follows (all times are approximate):

Day 1: 1 hour, parents only

Gather background information, discuss current goals for your child, and determine readiness for RDI® Program. If you have specific requests for the type of program you would like designed for your child, this is the time when we would discuss what you are looking for. Examples include observation of your child's routines, or special activities, in order to make suggestions for implementation of RDI objectives into those particular areas of your lifestyle.

1-2 hours, one parent and child (other parent may observe or alternate in working with child) Administration of the RDA-1. This involves parent and child being guided through a series of playful activities. You will be instructed in advance as to how to set up the room in which the RDA will take place, and what materials you may need to provide. The RDA-1 is videotaped, and the analysis and scoring of the RDA-1 may take the remainder of Day 1 to complete (about 6 hours of review, planning and preparation). This is the first step in formulating a treatment plan for your child's RDI® home program.

Day 2: 1 hour, child only

Using ideas generated from the RDA-1, I work alone with your child, experimenting with various activities, interactive styles and approaches that I believe may be effective in addressing your child's specific RDI® objectives. This session, referred to as the RDA-2, is videotaped and later reviewed, to assist in the continuing process of evaluating your child's strengths and areas of difficulty. After reviewing what I have learned about your child in the RDA-2, the end of Day 2 includes you and your child for an hour or two in the beginning phase of feedback and training in the RDI® Program, specifically tailored to meet your child's needs. You will be given assignments to work on during the times that we are not working directly together.

Day 3: 4-6 hours, child and both parents

The RDA-3 involves you, your child, and me, playing and interacting together, and practicing some of the important components that will likely become part of your child's RDI® home program. The purpose of this session is to demonstrate some of the RDI methods you may be using, and to continue to refine strategies for working with your child on his/her specific RDI objectives. There will be ample time to discuss goals, objectives, strategies, and to answer all of your questions about your child's home program. You will be shown multiple ways to address the objectives in your child's RDI program. There will be significant portions of the day that exclude your child, in order to discuss parent training.

Please note that breaks are taken for lunch and to tend to the comfort needs of all concerned, so that the assessment can proceed in an optimally beneficial manner.

After the Assessment:

You will be receiving DVDs of the feedback and work sessions of the RDA within a few weeks, in addition to a report and treatment plan. You are welcome to contact me with any questions that arise after the assessment via telephone or email for clarification. It is highly recommended that you schedule your first consultation upon completion of your RDA, and begin the process of implementing your RDI program immediately. Three sessions are included in the cost of the basic package. You will need additional consultation sessions in order to guide you through your 6 month program, and a 6 month consultation package is recommended as an alternative to paying individually for sessions.

Follow Up Sessions:

The follow up sessions included in your RDA package involve three 30-minute telephone or internet conversations (or email contact if you prefer) to discuss progress toward RDI® Program goals, review of your RDI journal, and/or review of video tapes/DVDs you have sent me. This is how you will be receiving feedback from me regarding your implementation of the RDI® Program. For best results, continued support beyond these three sessions is essential. During our third session, if you have not yet opted for a six month consultation package, we will discuss an

alternate plan for your receiving ongoing support. My fees for ongoing consultation and individual services are listed below, and you are free to select the plan that best fits your needs.

Support for your RDI Program after the RDA

One of the best indicators of a successful RDI® program is how well the family is able to incorporate RDI into their daily lives. **Follow-up with a certified RDI® consultant is essential to maintaining the effectiveness of your home program and making the most of your investment.** Following the completion of the RDA as described above, most families require additional support in order to feel comfortable implementing their RDI® program at home. Some options for families living far from a consultant include:

- Join an online RDI parent group, such as a Yahoo group
- Subscribe to the RDI operating system, for access to their extensive training program and video library
- Visit the Connections Center website frequently and subscribe to their free newsletters
- Find other RDI families in your area to share ideas with
- Keep a journal of your RDI sessions with your child, to track progress and collect data regarding results of your “lab time”
- Videotape yourself on a regular basis and evaluate your progress, providing video clips to your consultant for review
- Sign up for a 6 month consultation package with an RDI® Program Certified Consultant to keep your commitment current

At a minimum, it is recommended that families keep in touch with their consultant once per month, and ideally twice per month, in order to update goals, ensure effective use of RDI methods, and re-energize their home program. This includes sending in video tapes of their RDI work with their child for review and feedback, sending journal entries of RDI work and/or telephone consultation. It is recommended that the RDA be repeated every 6 months in order to update objectives and accelerate progress.

Fees

The Relationship Development Assessment (RDA) package fee is \$4,195, payable in U.S. funds, plus a flat, pre-negotiated travel expense fee, to be determined based on current cost of accommodations and travel to your area. This package fee includes:

- 3 full days of in home RDI assessment and training services
- A specially designed RDI home program for your child
- Parent training in RDI methods, customized for you and your child
- Report and treatment plan
- DVDs or tapes of RDI training sessions with you and your child
- 3 follow up consultations (via telephone, video tape, and/or email) to review your progress after the home visit

Payment may be made by credit card (Visa or MasterCard), money transfer (payable in USD), cash (USD or other if pre-arranged) or money order in US funds. A nonrefundable deposit will be requested at the time that travel arrangements are made, and the remaining balance is due on

Day 2 of the assessment, unless other arrangements are made in advance. Most U.S. health insurance plans will pay for portions of the RDA. Please ask for details if this applies to you.

As a follow-up to the RDA, an optional six month consultation package is available for \$990 (USD), offered at a savings of \$180 (over the individually purchased hourly rate) to families that have completed the RDA. This extends the Basic Package to 12 consults over a six month period. A consult is one of the following: a) a 15- to 20-minute video review and a 30- to 40-minute discussion (or written review) of the video; b) a 50- to 60-minute telephone (or online) consultation without tape review; or c) an email consult/ review of your RDI journal. Individual consultations, as well as some other RDI related services, may be obtained without purchasing a package, at the rate of \$130 per hour (USD).

Cancellations

Once travel arrangements have been made, if you must cancel, any nonrefundable travel fees will become your expense, and you will receive a full refund for the remainder of your deposit as long as two weeks' notice or more is given. For less than two weeks' notice, a late cancellation fee of \$500, plus any nonrefundable travel fees that cannot be recovered, will be charged. Once I have arrived, if you discover that your child is having difficulty on the day of the assessment and you are concerned about his/her ability to comply with the assessment process, please discuss this with me at your earliest opportunity. Usually, there are ways to complete the assessment, even when the child has difficulty participating.

Confidentiality

Because my practice is located in the state of Washington, in the United States, I follow all state and federal laws, even while practicing abroad. Therefore, I am providing you with all information about my psychotherapy practice and your rights as my patient, just as if you were visiting me in my office. I am a licensed mental health counselor, and in addition to providing RDI services in my office, located in Covington, Washington. I treat individuals and families, some of whom are affected by autism spectrum disorders and some of who are not.

Your rights are explained in the Notice of Privacy Practices that you will be given when I visit. All issues discussed in the course of the assessment will remain in the strictest confidence except those for which you may choose to sign a release of confidential information (for example, for your child's medical doctor). Confidentiality has only a few exceptions, which are outlined in these materials.

Education, Training, Experience, and Approach to Therapy

Washington state law requires all licensed mental health counselors to disclose their training, education, experience, and approach to therapy to prospective clients. Please feel free to discuss this information with me if you have any questions. My complete resume is available upon request.

EDUCATION: University of Minnesota, B.A. in Psychology, 1982.
Boston University, M.Ed. in Counseling Psychology, 1985.
Boston Institute for Psychotherapy, Advanced Clinical Fellowship, 1990.
RDI® Certification, Connections Center, Houston, TX, 2004-Present.

LICENSE: State of Washington Licensed Mental Health Counselor #LH00003921
State of Washington Child Mental Health Specialist

EXPERIENCE: My experience as a child & family psychotherapist began in the Boston/Cambridge area of Massachusetts in 1985, where I worked in a variety of clinic and social service settings until 1991. Among my experiences was providing social skills groups for children and teens on the autism spectrum. In 1990, I completed an advanced clinical fellowship program, and then moved to the Seattle, Washington area, where in addition to working in private clinic settings, I began raising children of my own.

In 1996, one of my sons was diagnosed with pervasive developmental disorder (PDD-NOS), a form of autism, and as I attended trainings to better understand his needs, I began to serve more children and adults with autism in my psychotherapy practice. This became a much larger portion of my practice as time went on, and in 2002, I was introduced to RDI. As I realized how effective RDI was, both as an intervention with my own son and with individuals on my caseload, I entered the professional certification program at the end of 2002.

Autism related services now comprise about 90% of my caseload, at least half of which have active RDI home programs. I provide education to parents and professional groups through public speaking, and own a clinic in Covington, Washington that provides a variety of therapeutic services to children, adults and families.

Thus, my primary approach to therapy, when working with parents of children on the autism spectrum, is to use the RDI® Program as the main intervention when appropriate. When working with families, I draw from my entire knowledge base, and offer suggestions in areas such as anxiety reduction, self regulation, and managing difficult behaviors. I may also suggest other treatment modalities or other evaluations for your child, as may be fitting. When using methods other than RDI, I will discuss this with you first.

Your Agreement and Consent for Treatment

I have read and understand all of this information, including my rights as a patient. I agree to the policies and procedures outlined here. I authorize Caroline R. Sheppard, M.Ed., to render mental health/RDI services to myself and my child, _____. I have received a copy of this Office Policy Agreement, and Notice of Privacy Practices/Client Rights.

Client (13 or older) _____ Date _____

Parent _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

Caroline Sheppard, M.Ed., WA State License #LH00003921

Tips for Preparing for Your Visit

- If you have other children, it may be useful to arrange child care, so as not to distract you from getting the most out of your child's assessment. This is particularly important on Day 3. We will discuss your other child(ren) during the assessment process, and will decide how and when to include them in our activities, if appropriate.
- It is not advisable to invite other therapists and caregivers. Please check with me in advance before inviting anyone else to the assessment. Because RDI is a parent-based model, others play a peripheral role, and therefore it is typically not useful for them to be included in the initial phase of the RDA.
- As previously described, please send copies of your child's developmental evaluations and a 10-20 minute video of your child in advance of your first appointment. *Please also select 2-5 family photos that are meaningful to your child* for the first session your child attends.
- It is suggested to have snacks and any comfort items available, to insure the best representation of your child's interaction skills.
- To prepare your child for the first RDA session, you may wish to emphasize that the time will be spent primarily playing and interacting together, and that the therapist will be giving instructions for some activities you will do together. There is no need to worry about performance, because there is no right or wrong way to play.
- On the day of your child's appointment, if you have concerns about his or her ability to participate fully, due to illness, overwhelm, anxiety, or for any other reason, please discuss this with me.

Please call or email me for more information or to schedule an appointment. I look forward to working with your family.

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