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Relationship Development Intervention (RDI®) Information and Services

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 across 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.

Once you are confident that you have a basic understanding of the RDI® Program, 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 First Visit

Prior to your assessment, you must have attended an RDI parent training (weekend or 4 day parent training with Dr. Gutstein) or viewed the RDI® Program DVD. In addition, it is required that you prepare a 10-20 minute video of your child interacting with family members if you are participating in an intensive three day RDA, and highly recommended for the standard RDA of five or more sessions.

Acceptable video formats include any MiniDV (DVC), European PAL (DVC), 8mm (digital, non-digital or hi-8), VHS or DVD. Other videos will need to be transferred to an accepted format or be uploaded online. Please contact my office for instructions on transfer of video via internet, if you do not find this posted on my website. It is useful to send your video in advance of your first appointment, along with copies of any reports or evaluations that will help me to understand your child, so that I can determine some areas of focus for the RDA and familiarize myself with your child's interactive style. Reports that are most useful are those that include information about the following: your child's developmental history, descriptions of any care your child is currently receiving, and diagnoses and recommendations from any professionals who have evaluated your child, such as neurologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, developmental pediatricians, and/or from any therapists with whom your child has recently been working. It is sometimes helpful to include a current IEP (Individualized Education Plan) if your child has one, particularly if you are considering incorporating RDI® objectives into your child's school program. While these documents and the home video are not a requirement for participation in the standard 8-session RDA, it is highly beneficial to the assessment process, and the cost of reviewing these materials is included in the fee whether you take the opportunity to use this service or not.

The Relationship Development Assessment (RDA) Basic Package

This package is recommended for families who live within commuting distance from my office (in the greater Seattle area), without requiring overnight accommodations. This is considered a starter package, and additional follow up services are recommended once these services have been completed. Several options are available upon completion of this package.

The RDA Basic Package fee is \$3,295, and the package consists of 8 or more sessions, and approximately 30 or more hours of service, as follows:

Session 1: 1 hour, parents only

Gather background information, discuss current goals for your child, and determine readiness to begin the RDI® Program. Most parents receive from me a collection of materials to study at home, in order to understand RDI concepts more thoroughly. Please note that the Basic Package is for parents who, for the most part, have already met parent objectives, through prior RDI training or completion of the pre-RDA package. If additional parent sessions are needed in order to promote readiness, the assessment sessions may be delayed in order to meet these pre-RDA objectives.

Session 2: 1-2 hours, both parents and child. Administration of the RDA-1. One parent serves as the primary participant with the child; the other parent participates for the first 10-minutes only, and may either observe for the remainder of the session or may leave. This involves parent and child being guided through a series of playful activities. It is videotaped from behind a one way mirror, and the video will be reviewed prior to the next session. The analysis and scoring of the RDA-1 is the first step in formulating a treatment plan for your child's RDI® home program. If one parent is unable to attend this session, s/he may opt to provide a video tape as a substitute. Please ask about this option in advance of scheduling the RDA-1.

Session 3: 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.

Session 4: 1-2 hours, child and both parents

The RDA-3 involves your child, both parents and me, 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.

Session 5: 1-2 hours, parents only

Feedback session. Discuss goals, objectives and strategies for your child's home program, discuss how to implement RDI goals at home as well as any modifications needed, address any obstacles your child presents to benefiting from RDI, and identify strategies to overcome these obstacles.

Session 6: 1-2 hours, child and both parents

Practice session. This final RDA session may take place either in the office or in your home. This gives us an opportunity to practice some of the strategies identified in your RDI home treatment plan, make revisions to your plan, and focus on any particular areas that need more work or explanation, in order for you to feel comfortable implementing the 6-month plan as outlined for you. You will receive a treatment plan at this point, or if modifications are made during the session, you will receive a final copy shortly thereafter.

After the Assessment:

You will be receiving DVDs of sessions 4, 5 & 6 of the RDA within a few weeks, in addition to a report. 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. An exception is for families who plan to attend consult sessions in person and use health insurance benefits to cover the cost of follow up sessions.

Follow Up Sessions:

The follow up sessions included in your RDA package involve three sessions of your choice. Options for sessions are as follows: a) an in person (50 minutes) or telephone review (30 minutes) of a video tape/DVD you have brought or sent me for review; b) an office visit (50 minutes) to practice RDI with your family; c) an office visit or telephone consult (50-60 minutes) to discuss progress toward RDI® Program goals, review your RDI journal, and/or review any related RDI issue.

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.

The Relationship Development Assessment (RDA) Intensive 3-Day Package, with brief follow-up

This package is recommended for families that travel from distances that require overnight accommodations in the Seattle area. **For residents of Alaska, Hawaii, some parts of Canada and all other countries, it may be advantageous to consider an in home assessment. Please ask for details regarding in home assessment packages.** The Intensive 3-Day RDA consists of 30 or more hours of service, as follows (all times are approximate) at a fee of \$3,295:

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.

1-2 hours, one parent and child (other parent may observe or may alternate in play room) Administration of the RDA-1. This involves parent and child being guided through a series of playful activities. 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). If time permits, the RDA-2 may be scheduled on Day 1. 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 for 1-2 hours for 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 breaks for your child, during which parent training will take place. Depending on your child's and/or your family's needs, we may design activities that take us outside the office and into settings that are more natural for you to interact in, so that our practice time together will be more meaningful.

Please note that breaks are taken when needed to tend to the comfort needs of all concerned, so that the assessment can be optimally productive.

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 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. 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. It is recommended that families continue with consultation one or more times per month, in order to ensure effective use of RDI methods. **Follow-up with an RDI® Program Certified Consultant is essential to maintaining the effectiveness of your home program and making the most of your investment.**

Ongoing consultation fees: Consultation can be accomplished through office visits, telephone sessions, online consults, review of your home videos, emails and discussion of your RDI journaling. The RDI consultation fee is \$130 per hour; however, you may purchase a package along with your RDA, or at the end of your RDA, of 9 consultations for \$990. This increases your post RDA consultation from 3 sessions to 12 sessions over a six month period. The package fee is set lower intentionally to encourage families to make the commitment to follow through, as this is what we know to be most effective in producing optimal results. For those using insurance benefits, most of the fees for in person consultation services are covered. Each date of service is billed individually, and all co-pays and deductibles will apply.

A consultation session consists of one of the following: a) a 15- to 20-minute video review and a 30- to 40- minute telephone discussion (or written review) of the video; b) a 50- to 60- minute telephone (or online) consultation without tape review; c) a 50 minute office visit (with or without your child) to practice RDI, to review a tape together or to discuss any RDI related issue; or d) an email consult/ review of your RDI journal. Individual consultations, as well as most other RDI related services, may be obtained without purchasing a package, at the rate of \$130 per hour (USD).

In addition to utilizing consultant support, other ways to keep your knowledge of RDI current include:

- Joining an online RDI parent group, such as a Yahoo group
- Visiting the Connections Center website to read newsletters, view video clips, participate in chats
- Finding other RDI families in your area to share ideas with
- Keeping a journal of your RDI sessions with your child, to track progress and collect data regarding results of your “lab time” sessions
- Videotaping yourself on a regular basis and evaluating your progress, providing video clips to your consultant for review

It is recommended that the RDA be repeated every 6-12 months in order to update objectives and accelerate progress.

Verifying Your Insurance Coverage in Advance

Many private health insurance companies will cover my services through the mental health benefit portion of their health plans. Many will not cover RDI as a specialty, if mentioned specifically, but will cover most of the services listed here as part of an overall mental health assessment and treatment regimen. It is up to you to call your company to verify your coverage and obtain any mental health pre-authorizations (if required by your plan) in advance of your first session. It is suggested that you inquire about all of the procedure codes listed below, in order to be informed in advance regarding the costs you will be responsible for. It is also important to make sure that I am a covered provider on your plan (I may be listed as either Carrie or Caroline Sheppard), and if I am not, please let me know so that I can assist you in requesting coverage for this assessment. Once I receive your insurance billing information and pre-authorization (if required) is obtained, I will bill your insurance company directly for the services listed in the RDA package on the dates the services are delivered, for each family member involved. We will only bill your insurance company one hour of service per family member present per day. If any family member is currently seeing another mental health provider, please check if your plan will cover multiple providers in advance of your first visit. You will be responsible for your co-payments, deductibles, and/or any services listed below that are not covered by your plan.

Fees and Insurance Billing

The Relationship Development Assessment (RDA) package fee is \$3,295, and is billable to insurance as follows:

First session: \$130 per hour
(1 hour/day/person) Insurance billing code: 90801

Other sessions: \$110 per hour
(1 hour/day/person) Insurance billing code: 90806

One hour per day of direct service is submitted to your insurance company per person involved in the RDA; however, a significant portion of the RDA is not reimbursable by insurance plans.

For those using health insurance, the average out-of-pocket costs (fees and co-payments) of a RDA totals about \$2,000 depending on your plan's co-pay/ coinsurance and the number of family members participating in the RDA. \$1,650 is due at the first date of service. Insurance co-payments are expected at the time each of service. Payments may be made by check, cash, money order or major credit card (MasterCard or Visa). ***The***

RDA fee is due in full prior to the last RDA session, unless other payment arrangements are made in advance. You are responsible for any unpaid balance after your insurance company has been billed.

Cancellations and Missed Appointments

If you must cancel an appointment, 24 hours' notice is required in order to avoid the \$40 missed appointment fee for a one or two hour appointment (this fee is higher for canceling an intensive RDA session, as indicated below). If you discover that your child is having difficulty on the day of the appointment that may interfere with the assessment process, please call to discuss this with me at your earliest opportunity.

Tips for Preparing for Your Visit

- If you choose to bring your other children with you, it may be useful to bring an additional adult so as not to distract you from getting the most out of your child's evaluation. There is ample space available for siblings and others to wait if they are able to remain quiet without your supervision for up to an hour.
- 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 bring 2-5 family photos that are meaningful to your child* to the first appointment your child attends. It is suggested to bring snacks and any comfort items 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 call to discuss this with me.
- You will receive copies of the RDA-3 and feedback session portions of your RDA in a DVD format. If you would like copies of these sessions in any of the following formats: 8mm, Digital 8mm, Hi-8, VHS, or mini-DV, please let me know in advance. There will be a copying fee of \$15 per tape for any non-DVD format; however, you are welcome to bring your own video camera to tape the RDA-3 and feedback session.

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

Carrie Sheppard, M.Ed., LMHC
RDI® Program Certified Consultant