



CALIFORNIA LEADERSHIP  
EDUCATION IN  
NEURODEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES



USC University of  
Southern California



USC UNIVERSITY CENTER  
FOR EXCELLENCE IN  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES

## Co-treating in a Mental Health Setting Psychology & Occupational Therapy

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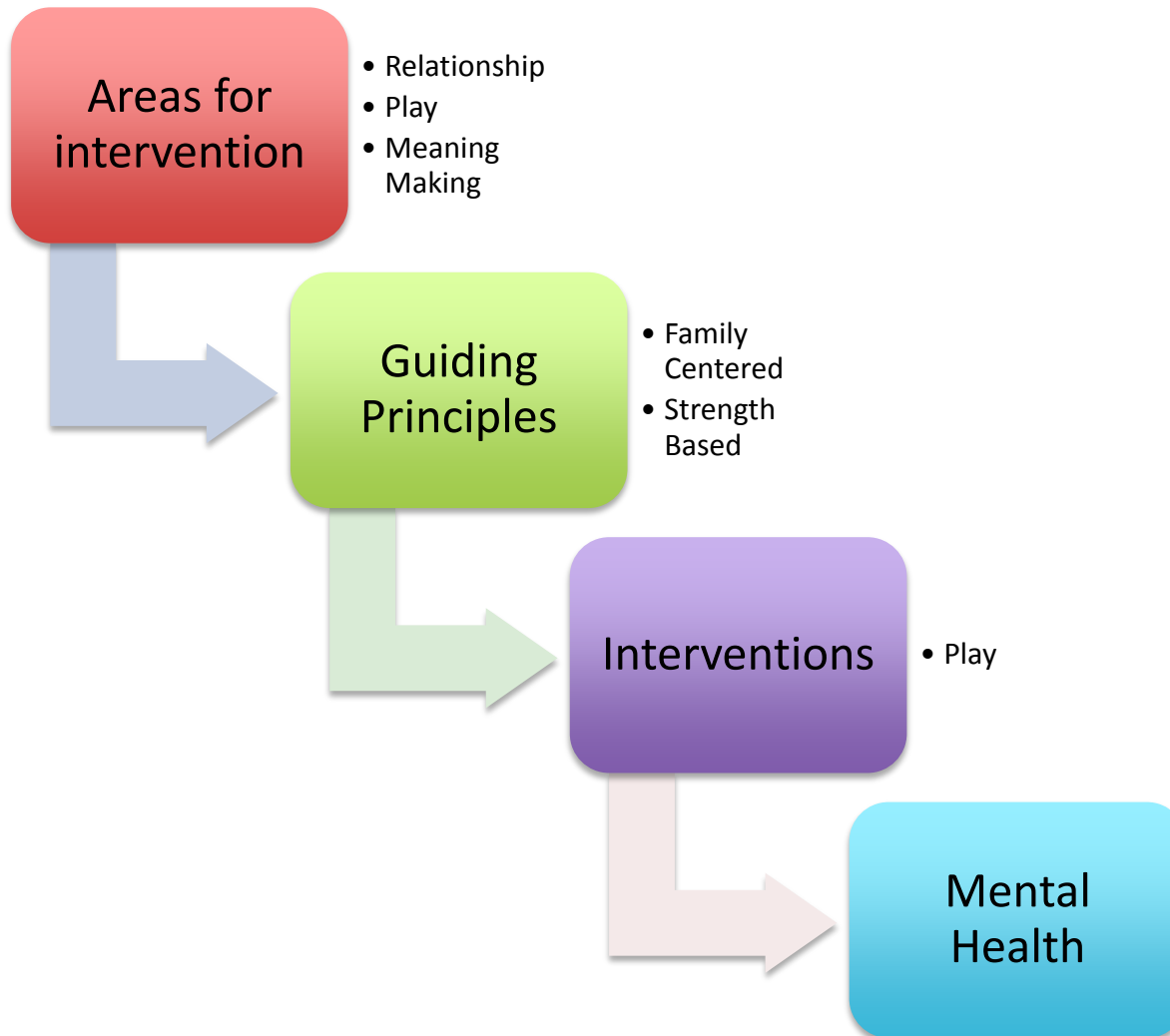
## Who We Are and Where We Come From

- Our CA-LEND is housed at University of Southern California
  - University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disability
  - Department of Pediatrics at Children's Hospital Los Angeles

## Services we provide

### Community Mental Health Center

- Assessment
- Individual therapy
- Group therapy
- Interdisciplinary clinic



# Commonalities and Differences

**Making Meaning  
of Behavior  
(Aggression)**

**Occupational  
Therapy**

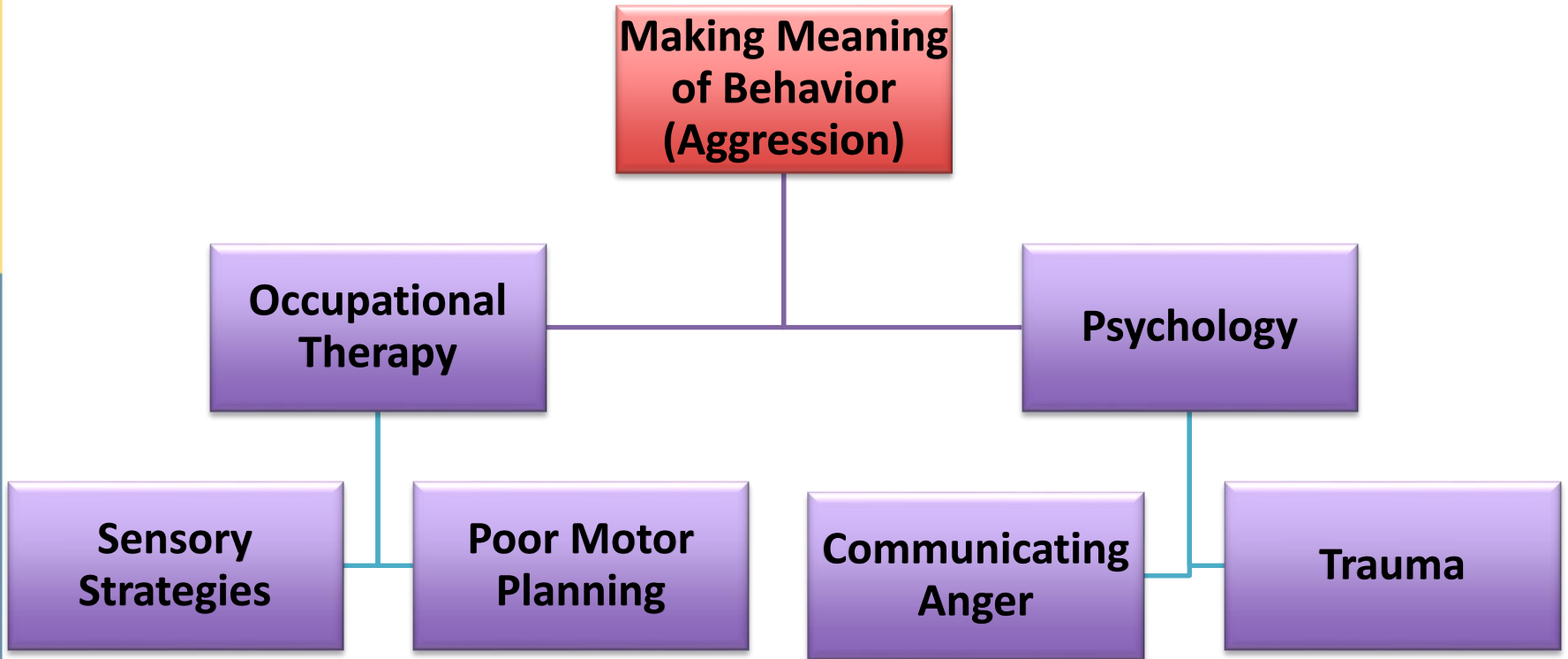
**Psychology**

**Sensory  
Strategies**

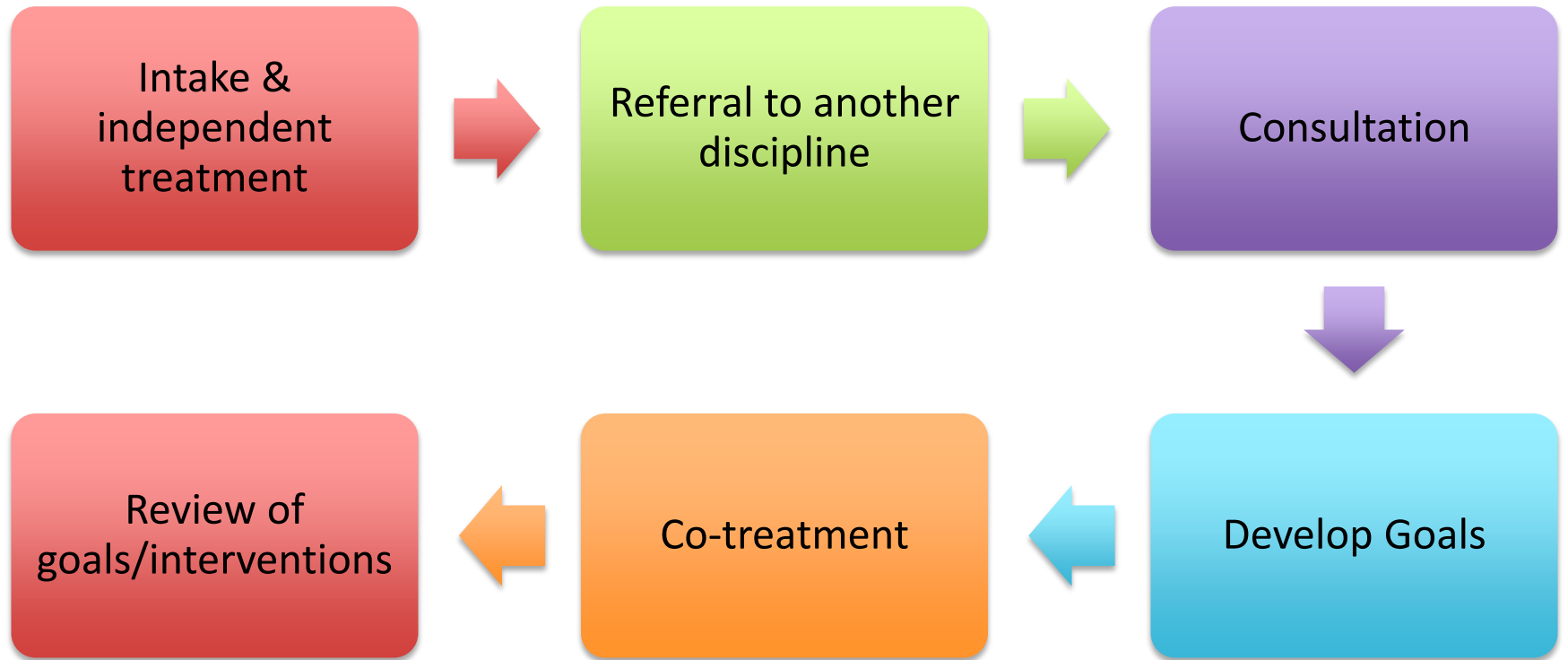
**Poor Motor  
Planning**

**Communicating  
Anger**

**Trauma**



# The steps to co-treatment



# Intake

## - Grandma

- Spoke for the family, memory keeper
- Seemed to be in charge of caregiving decisions.
- Primary participant in early intervention services.

## Mom

- Very quiet and disconnected.
- Self-reported diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome.
- Little participation in early intervention services

## Nicky

- Concerns for autism
- Significant safety concerns
- No engagement with family members or therapists
- Sensory Seeking
- Global Delays

## Extended Family

- Two uncles with severe Autism
- Multiple generations of global delays.

# Independent Treatment → Referral



## Developing Goals

### Occupational Therapy

- Regulation
- Attention

### Psychology

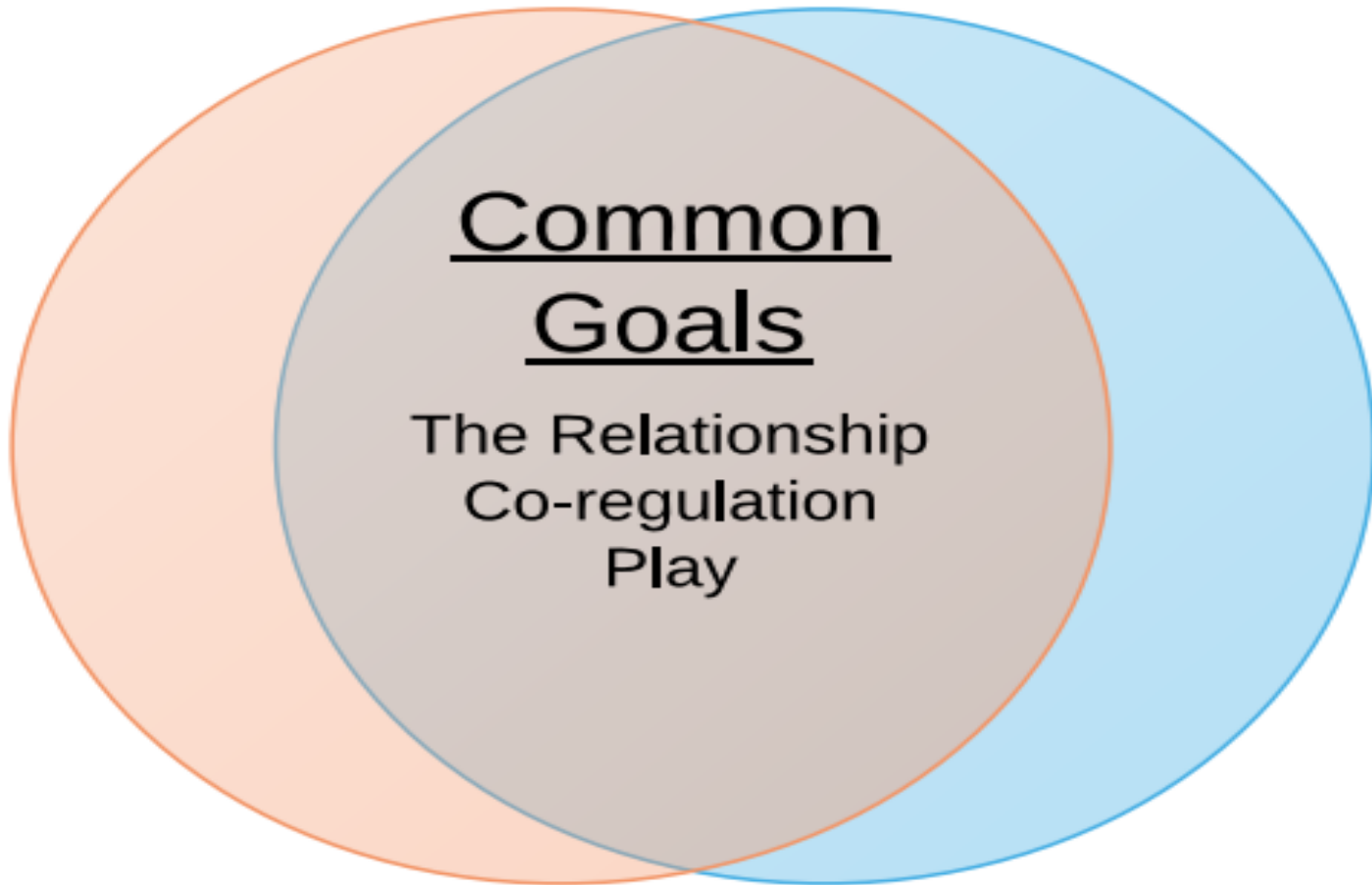
- Attachment
- Regulation

# Co-treatment or something like it

We began co-treatment...but not really

- Sessions felt aimless, confusing, and unproductive.
- Parallel play instead of cooperative play
- We knew we needed something to change.

# A united front



# Co-treatment: Finding OUR Way In session

- Testing Hypotheses:
  - Giving space for each to test their hypotheses about the behavior.
- Ebb & Flow
  - Acknowledging there will be an ebb & flow in the moment to each of your roles in session.
- Getting Clear on your common goals and how to work together towards those goals.



# Co-treatment: FINDING OUR WAY

## FINDING OUR WAY: What happens in sessions should not stay in sessions

- Debrief together
  - I saw, you saw
- Reflect together
  - what could the behavior mean
  - What does it mean for our treatment and how does it connect to the goals
- Plan together
  - Make a concrete plan of what each will do and focus on in the next session.



CA-LEND



# FINDING OUR WAY: Putting it all together

# Progress

- Mom becoming MOM
  - Taking a trip, just the two of them.
  - Participating more in other services/systems
- Improvement in the relationship
  - Cuddling and hugging, referencing mom, and going to her for comfort.
- Mark's improved engagement, regulation and play



# Attachment Goal: Mark gets an owwie

# Co-regulation Goal: Mommy help

## In Summary

- Benefits of Co-treating- Each discipline has their own role and perspective and working as a team allows exponential growth for both clinician and client
- Steps to aid in co-treatment
  - Discuss common goals at outset
  - Each week
    - Debrief
    - Reflect
    - Plan
  - Celebrate the exponential progress you can make co-treating.