

Evaluating Responsive Caregiving: Validity of the Simple Interactions Tool

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Introduction

- Responsive caregiving has been shown to mitigate the effects of early childhood stress on socio-cognitive development
- The Simple Interactions (SI) Tool is a video-coding assessment used to evaluate the quality of caregiver-child interaction
- The underlying properties of the SI Tool are not well-defined
- This study aims to evaluate the validity of the SI Tool through correlational analyses

Study Sample & Methods

- Dyadic interactions (n = 138) were filmed at home using researcher-controlled toys/materials and evaluated across "book reading" and "freeplay" contexts
- Coders used a combination of glossaries and flowcharts as decisional tools to quantify interactions across two subscales
 - **Connection**: shared social & emotional connectedness
 - **Reciprocity**: balanced, back-and-forth interaction
- Correlational analyses evaluated shared variance between low (XX), medium (XY), and high (XZ) scores of each subscale

Video Coding Procedures

Figure 1.
Visual representations of CX, CY, and CZ Connection scores

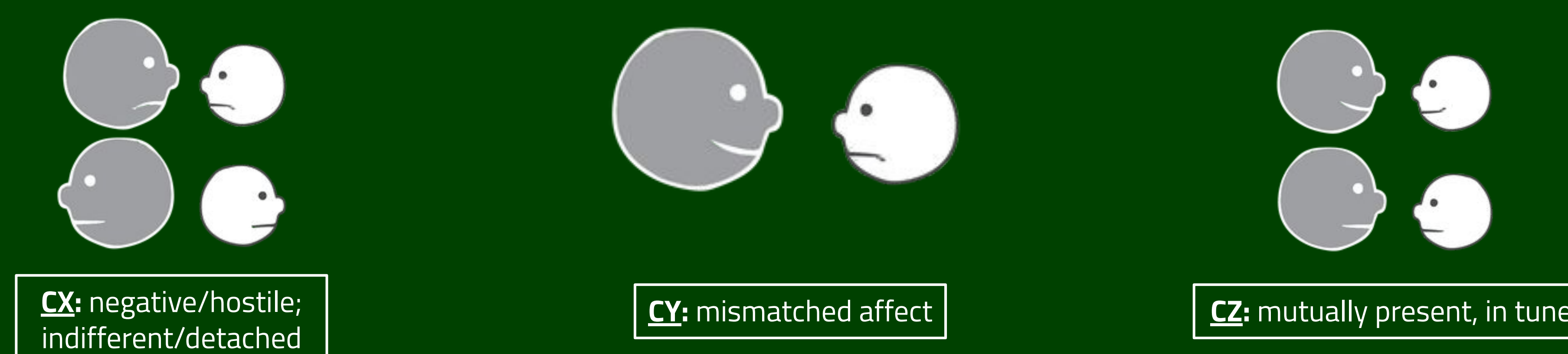
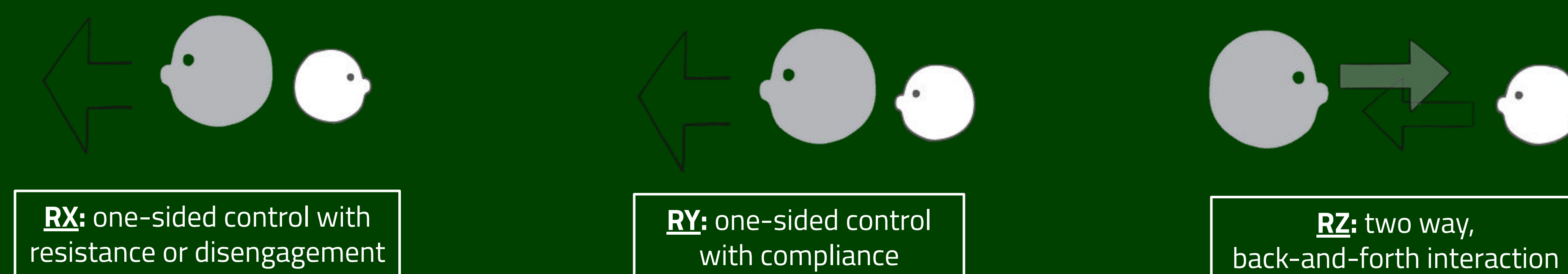


Figure 2.
Visual representations of RX, RY, and RZ Reciprocity scores



Results

Table 1.
Correlations between Reciprocity and Connection during Reading and Freeplay

Subscale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. CX Freeplay	-							
2. CX Reading	-.005	-						
3. CY Freeplay	.393**	.040	-					
4. CY Reading	.193	-.038	.182	-				
5. CZ Freeplay	-.669**	-.030	-.946	-.215*	-			
6. CZ Reading	-.176	-.405**	-.184	-.898**	.211*	-		
7. RX Freeplay	.774**	.057	.245*	.100	-.471**	-.116	-	
8. RY Freeplay	.130	.165	.010	.094	-.054	-.159	.088	-
9. RZ Freeplay	-.301**	-.170	-.065	-.112	.159	.177*	-.299**	-.977**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

- ★ Connection Freeplay scores are weakly correlated with Connection Reading scores
- ★ High scores of Connection are minimally correlated with high scores of Reciprocity

Summary

- Construct of Connection is not consistent across Reading and Freeplay tasks
- High scores of emotional connection are not necessarily indicative of reciprocal behavior within dyadic interaction

Discussion

- Emotional connection and reciprocal interaction exist in separate but parallel domains of responsive caregiving
- The constructs of Connection and Reciprocity are largely situational and will vary across interactive contexts
- The SI Tool cannot reliably predict the quality of dyadic interaction across domains of responsive caregiving
- Future research should examine the relations between the remaining "Opportunity to Grow" and "Inclusion" subscales of the SI Tool

References

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2. Vernon-Feagans, L. & Bratsch-Hines, M. E. (2013). Caregiver-child verbal interactions in child care: a buffer against poor language outcomes when maternal language input is less. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 28(4), 858-873.