

How Parents with Symptoms of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Experience the Parental Occupational Executive Training (POET) Intervention Process, Initial Impressions

Anat Aviran, Carmit Frisch, Suzana Berman, Sara Rosenblum

Anat Aviran, MSc, OT, Head of Occupational Therapy services, Child Development Center, Meuhedet HC, Central District, Kefar Saba, Israel. anat.aviran@gmail.com

Carmit Frisch, PhD, OT, Occupational therapist, private practice.

Suzana Berman, MD, Head of the ADHD Clinic, Maccabi Healthcare Services, Northern District, Haifa, Israel.

Sara Rosenblum, PhD, OT, Laboratory of Complex Human Activity and Participation (CHAP), Department of Occupational Therapy, Faculty of Social Welfare & Health Sciences, University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel.

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Background: Families with a child with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) often describe life as chaotic and stressful and report that coping with daily routines is very difficult. The Parental Occupational Executive Training Approach (POET) is a method developed to provide parents of young children with ADHD with the knowledge and skills needed to deal with their children's functional difficulties. **Purpose:** To examine the perception of parents with ADHD regarding their functioning and that of their children with ADHD and the impact of the parents' symptoms on their ability to implement the POET intervention program with their children. **Method:** The study utilized a mixed-methods design of which the current report describes the qualitative results. Participants included 35 parents of 4 to 7-year-old children with ADHD treated according to the POET approach within the context of a larger study on the treatment's feasibility and

efficacy. Two to ten months after the completion of the POET program, families in which at least one parent reported symptoms of ADHD were asked to answer two open-ended questions formulated according to the principles of qualitative research. The interviews were analyzed by three researchers to identify content categories and major themes. **Results:** Three major themes were identified of which the first two related to the parents' challenges in implementing the POET program. Specifically, the first theme describes parental characteristics that posed difficulty in program implementation, including memories from their past, their current executive functioning deficits and their feelings of empathy towards the child. The second theme relates to the parents' difficulty in implementing the various principles of the POET program that required them to change their familiar manner of conducting daily routines. The third theme describes the characteristics of the program that helped the parent implement the program, such as its structured nature, gradual progression, and the emotional support it provides. **Conclusion:** The unique characteristics of the POET program helped parents with ADHD implement the program and improve the functioning of their children with attention difficulties despite the challenges these parents experienced during the process.