

## **Huggy-Puppy Intervention (HPI & HPI-r)** **Sadeh A. et al (2007)., Kushnir J. & Sadeh A. (2012)**

*leaflet created by SIPE, EMDR Slovakia*

### **Introduction**

This intervention was designed to „offer young children a brief intervention that could empower them and facilitate their active coping with stressful situations in general and with their war experiences in particular.“<sup>1</sup> It is aimed at reducing children’s stress and trauma related difficulties, such as anxiety, fears, startle response, nightmares, associated somatic problems etc. It’s directed at children cca 2-7 years old – the age when they can develop an attachment to a huggy-puppy doll.

It’s very simple and can be used by any willing helping person (from psychologists to volunteers). Only one session is required to present the huggy-puppy toy with a short explanation. The support of parents or other carers is helpful and welcome, yet not necessary. If the parents do cooperate, they can be present at the intervention together with the child. If possible, a session with basic assessment and psychoeducation can be provided prior to seeing the child.

The parents are then instructed to encourage and support the child in using the huggy-puppy and not forget it.

This intervention can be used in two different versions which proved to be similarly efficient.

### **Intervention, HPI<sup>1</sup>**

„During the intervention, each child is introduced to a little Huggy-Puppy doll, which looks like a cocker spaniel with long legs and Velcro strips that enable one to place the doll in different hugging positions on the child. The child is told the following story. *“This is my friend Huggy. Huggy is usually a very happy puppy. Right now, he looks a little sad and scared. Can you guess why he might be sad?”* After the child replies, the story continues. *“He is sad because he is very far away from his home and he does not have any good friends. He likes to be hugged a lot but he has no one to take care of him. Do you think you can be his good buddy, take care of him, hug him a lot, and take him to bed with you when you go to sleep?”* Once the child agrees, the doll is given to him or her, with some demonstrations regarding how to hug and to be hugged by the doll. After this presentation to the child, the parent is encouraged to maintain the child’s interest in the doll and to remind the child about his or her responsibility in caring for the puppy.

### **Revised version of the Intervention, HPI-r<sup>2</sup>**

„The revised version (HPI-r) ... is based on providing the same doll with a different cover story that is based on the notion that the doll would be the child’s friend and companion at night and would help the child in overcoming fears.“

### **Group Intervention**

The intervention can also be provided in a group setting, where all children in a circle receive huggy - puppy toys and discuss taking care of them...

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The Huggy-Puppy Intervention was first developed and used by the authors during the second Israel-Lebanon war in 2006 for children 2-7 years old in a sheltered camp (1). The revised version was compared with the original one in a study of reducing nighttime fears in 2011 (2).

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<sup>1</sup> Sadeh, A. et al. (2007): *Young Children’s Reactions to War-Related Stress: A Survey and Assessment of an Innovative Intervention*. PEDIATRICS, 121(1).

<sup>2</sup> Kushnir J., Sadeh, A. (2012): *Assessment of brief intervention for nighttime fears in preschool children*. Eur J Pediatr, 171.