

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Civilian

Impact of Parent Training on Family Functioning

Adams, J. F. (2001). Impact of parent training on family functioning. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy*, 23(1), 29-42.
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SUMMARY: Parent training programs can be beneficial to improving family functioning. Two groups of parents whose children were receiving mental health treatment participated in the study. The experimental group completed the eight-week parent training program, whereas the control group did not. Results revealed that parents who received parent training were more likely to report improvement in their family functioning.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Parents in the training group reported significantly better results in family functioning such as problem solving, affective responsiveness, communication, and behavior control compared to the control group.
- Significantly more families in the parent training group moved from problematic to healthy functioning compared to the control group.
- For both the training and control groups, parents of children over 10 years old reported more family distress than parents of children under 10 years old.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS:

Military professionals could:

- Collaborate with civilian parent education programs to make the service more accessible for military families
- Teach military families about strategies that they can use to improve family functioning

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Disseminate information to military families regarding available parent training programs
- Offer support groups to military parents whose children are experiencing mental health issues

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Promote the development of parent training programs that are tailored to the special needs of military families
- Recommend education for providers working with military families regarding parenting strategies they can teach these families

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METHODS

- Families were recruited from two outpatient mental health clinics serving a working class population.
- Parents were randomly assigned to two groups: the parent training group that lasted for eight weeks (four hours per week), and the control group; the retention rates for the two groups were 78% and 70%, respectively.
- All participants completed pre-tests and post-tests that measured six domains of family functioning: problem solving, communication, roles, affective responsiveness, affective involvement, and behavior control.
- The target child was defined as the child living at home with the most severe behavior problems.

PARTICIPANTS

- The parent training group included 39 parents (mean age = 32.66 years, SD = 6.35, 77% female), whereas the control group included 35 parents (mean age = 34.95 years, SD = 9.42, 62% female).
- The average ages of the target children in the parent training and control groups were 9.78 years (SD = 3.95, 38% female), and 9.95 years (SD = 3.07, 48% female), respectively.
- The race/ethnicity of the participants were not indicated in the article.

LIMITATIONS

- The race/ethnicity of the participants were not indicated in the article, therefore the generalizability of the study is unclear.
- The article did not indicate for what reasons the children were receiving mental health treatments, and how severe their problems were, therefore the results may not be applied to the general population.
- Children in the study were all receiving mental health services, so the results cannot be generalized to children who are not receiving mental health treatment.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Recruit parents whose children are not receiving mental health treatment, so the results may be applicable to the general population
- Assess both parents' and children's perceptions of the parenting-treatment program
- Design different parenting treatment programs that are suitable for children of different ages

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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