

Strengthening Families Program: The Evidence Base for Effective Intervention and Prevention

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Overview

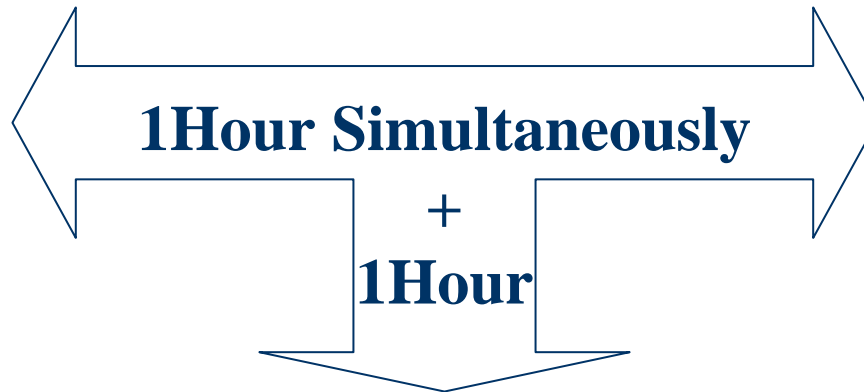
- SFP is discussed as an example of how family-based interventions can both reduce the individual parent's own substance abuse problems AND prevent future substance abuse in children from substance abusing families
 - Provide description of Strengthening Families Program (SFP) content
 - Review the empirical evidence on the effectiveness of SFP

SFP Treatment Overview

- **SFP is a group-based parenting program that combines parent training with family communication skills training and child social skills training**
- **Originally used with parents of school-aged children (6-11)**
- **Group sessions take place weekly for 14 weeks, with a six month booster session**
- **Each session last approximately three hours**
 - A Parent group and a Child group first run simultaneously but separately. Then parents and children reconvene for a Family group

SFP Intervention Model

CHILD
GROUP
Childcare



PARENT
GROUP
Transportation

FAMILY
GROUP

SFP Treatment-Parent Group

- **Techniques used in the parent group are largely cognitive-behavioral and include topics such as behavioral contracting, positive communication skills, use of family meetings, problem-solving, limit setting and how to prevent child alcohol and drug use.**
- **Homework is given so that parents practice skills**
- **Parents may be of either gender; partners can attend**

SFP Treatment-Children's and Family Group

- Topics for the children's group include active listening skills, positive communication, problem-solving, anger management and alcohol/drug refusal skills
- Children's group topics parallel the Parent's group topics so that complimentary home-work assignments can be given
- Skills are rehearsed/ practiced in Family group

SFP Treatment- Other

- Family Meal provided
 - Practice skills, such as noticing good behavior
 - Group cohesion
 - Retention
- Childcare and transportation provided
- Attendance incentives, homework incentives provided

SFP: The Empirical Base



National Institute On Drug Abuse Original SFP Research Results (Kumpfer & DeMarsh, 1985; DeMarsh & Kumpfer, 1985)

- **Used an experimental dismantling group design with parents in community substance abuse treatment clinics and their school-aged children**
- **Improvements in Children's Behavior (Parent Group)**
 - Improved children's behaviors: less inattention, stubbornness, rudeness, impulsivity, arguing with other kids and parents, vindictive behaviors, failure to complete chores, stealing and truancy
 - Parent's reported feeling more satisfied and having better knowledge
- **Improvements in Children's Social Skills (Children's Group)**
 - More resistance to peer pressure
 - Increased number of friends
 - Improved problem solving
 - Improved sibling relationships

National Institute On Drug Abuse Original SFP Research Results (cont'd)

- **Improvements in Family Relationships (Family Group)**
 - Increased family cohesion and adaptability, improved communication
 - Increased feelings of youth of being liked by parents Improved children's school attitude Increased obedience
 - Increased children's ethical behaviors
 - Decreased parent's depression and dissatisfaction
 - Decreased pro-drug values
 - Decreased the number of youth's friends who used drugs
 - Decreased youth's use of alcohol and drugs
- **Decreases in parental alcohol use only with combined SFP**

Other SFP research trials with substance abusing populations

- Aktan, Kumpfer & Turner (1996) implemented SFP intervention in a methadone maintenance clinic using a pre-post design
 - Participants were low-income African-American clients and their children
- Significant reductions were found in child externalizing and internalizing behavior problems and parental drug use
- Significant improvements were found in family outcome variables such as amount of time spent together and amount of conflict

Other SFP research trials with substance abusing populations (cont'd)

- **Randomized clinical trial of SFP with parents entering treatment for alcohol abuse/dependence and their children (SUNY-Buffalo)**
 - **Control group received minimal attention intervention (i.e. parenting handouts)**
 - **SFP group demonstrated significant reductions in child behavior problems and significant improvements in general family functioning at follow-up**

SFP Prevention Research Trials

- **Strengthening Families Program has been implemented as general prevention program through the public schools (Kumpfer, Alvarado, Tait, Tuner & Alder, 2002)**
 - SFP was compared to an individual social skills training program for children (I Can Problem-Solve) alone as well as to SFP and ICPS in combination
 - Parents participating in SFP alone reported the highest levels of improvement in parenting skills

SFP Prevention Research Trials (cont'd)

- Together with Karol Kumpfer, the Molgaard and Spoth group at Iowa State University has adapted SFP as a universal prevention program for older children (SFP 10-14)
 - Seven sessions plus four booster sessions
 - Videotaped
 - Implemented through schools
- Compared in a randomized clinical trial to Catalano & Hawkins ' Preparing for the Drug Free Years' intervention

ISFP Outcomes-Immediate Results

- **Parent and Family Behavioral Improvements**
 - Increased parenting skills in 98% of parents attending
 - Improved parent-child relationships in 93% of families attending
 - 92% of attending families holding family meetings at least monthly
 - 84% of attending families holding family meetings at least weekly
 - Reduced family conflict in 75% of families
 - Decreased excessive physical punishment in 82% of families
 - Decreased tobacco, alcohol, and drug use in 84% of parents attending

ISFP Outcomes-Immediate Results

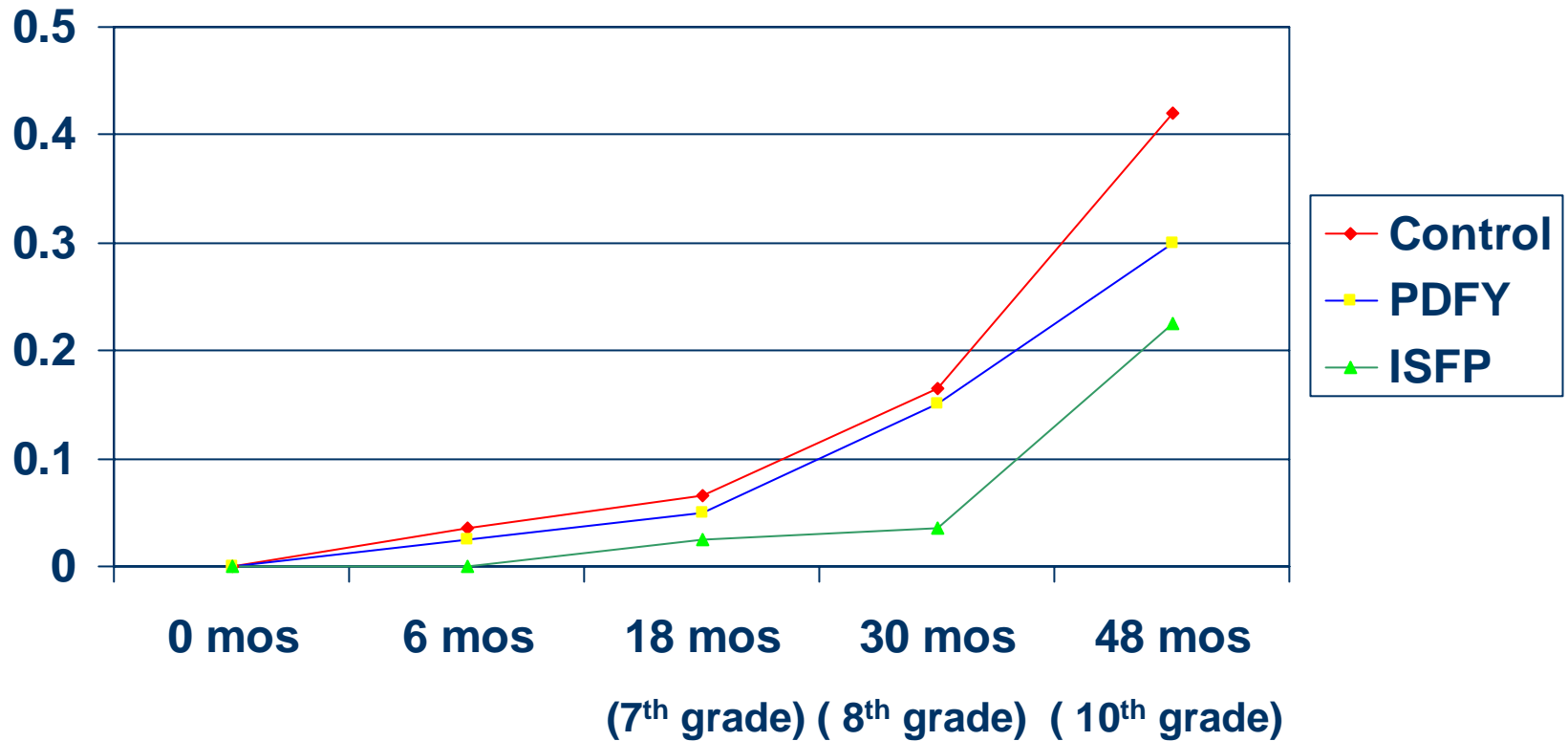
● Children's Behavioral Improvements

- Increased social and life skills in 98% of the children
- Increased pro-social behavior in 98% of children
- Improved academic performance and grades in 55% of children
- Improved school bonding and attachment in 65% of children
- Decreased emotional problems and child depression in 86% of children
- Decreased behavior problems, conduct disorders and aggressive behavior in 65% of children
- Decreased tobacco, alcohol, and drug use in 77% of children using

ISFP Outcomes- Long-term (Five Year) Follow-up Results

- Improved clear directions to children by 99% of parents
- Appropriate consequences and punishment by 95% of parents
- Improved problem solving with child by 84% of parents
- Increased enjoyment of child by 94% of parents
- Increased quality time spent with children by 97% of parents
- Improved family problem solving in 78% of families
- Increased effectiveness of family communication in 67% of families
- Reduced family stress and conflict in 75% of families
- 65% of families reported improved positive family feelings
- 62% of families reported improvements in having fun together
- 68% of families holding family meetings monthly
- 37% of families holding family meetings weekly

Proportions Since Pretest Reporting “Ever Drunk”



SFP Prevention Programs: Cost-Savings

- Spoth, Guyll & Day (2002) estimated that for every \$1.00 invested in implementing SFP, \$9.60 dollars were saved in avoidance of alcohol use disorders through delay of initiation use of alcohol

Conclusions

- **SFP has been used with a variety of populations of substance abusing parents and also as a general preventive intervention**
 - Results support the effectiveness of SFP to reduce parental substance use (even in the general population) as well as to reduce child behavior problems, and improve child social skills and family functioning
- **Demonstrates the increased value of family-based interventions**
 - Improves quality of life, reduces child risk AND
 - Cost effective