Child prevention and group-based parenting programs
Effectiveness and implementation

av

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Abstract


Approximately 10–25% of children and youth suffer from mental health problems, such as depression, emotional difficulties, and disruptive behaviors. The evidence base of the effectiveness of preventive interventions targeting youth mental health currently delivered in regular care is weak. Also, little is known about what is needed for continued delivery of preventive programs in regular care. Hence, there is an evident need of effectiveness evaluations of preventive interventions and their implementation in regular care. In childhood, parenting is an important risk or protective factor for child development, and many programs to improve parents’ parenting has been developed used as preventive interventions. Using an ecological approach to prevention and the prevention research cycle as the theoretical framework this dissertation aim to investigate: 1) the long-term effectiveness of four parenting programs (Cope, Comet, Connect, and the Incredible Years); 2) whether the programs work better for some compared to others; 3) if it matters where parents attend the programs; 4) the field of implementation research regarding group based parenting programs ; and 5) implementation challenges specifically related to such parenting programs. Overall, the long-term results reveal that there are no significant difference in effectiveness across the programs over time. Also, the programs does not seem work better for some compared to others, and neither does it seem as if program effectiveness is much influenced by the sectors delivering the programs (child and adolescent psychiatry, social care, or school). Concerning the implementation of preventive interventions the research base is small, and conclusive evidence concerning implementation aspects of group based parenting programs are non-existing. Thus, it was not possible to draw firm conclusions about their implementation. Nonetheless, existing research clearly suggest that program specific challenges can influence the implementation of group based parenting programs. Implications for practice and research are discussed, for instance, adaptations to the prevention research cycle.

Keywords: Prevention, child, mental health, parenting programs, effectiveness, implementation, follow-up, sectors.

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