

Outcome Evaluation – Highlights

September 2006

Background

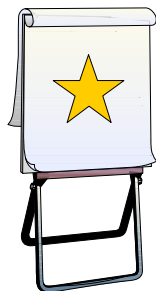
Strengthening Families for the Future program (SFF) is a prevention program for families with children between the ages of 7 and 11 who may be at risk for substance use problems, depression, violence, delinquency and school failure. SFF is modeled on a successful program, developed in 1988 by Dr. Karol Kumpfer of the University of Utah. The original program has been evaluated extensively in the United States as well as in Sweden, the Netherlands, Britain and Australia. SFF has been cited as one of the best interventions of its kind by many notable organizations including the Cochrane Collaboration, the US National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The original program was updated for a Canadian context and underwent extensive evaluation starting in 2000 with a NIAAA grant. Following are some highlights:

The Study

- Five -year multi-site randomized control trial
- 674 families struggling with an alcohol problem were randomly assigned to either SFF or a control group. Approximately half of the families were in Ontario and half in Buffalo NY
- SFF participants attended a 14-week program, once a week and also attended a 2-hour booster session
- The control group was provided with material on family life skills, effective parenting and how to talk to their children about drugs and alcohol
- Assessments were administered at pre-test, post-test (4-month) and 8 and 16 month follow-up

Program Attendance

- ★ Of the 14 sessions, families attended a median of 10 and an average of 8.6
- ★ Just over 10% attended all 14 sessions and 8% did not attend any
- ★ Only 15% attended less than 5 sessions



Family Satisfaction

- ☺ 93% of parents like the program and 88% felt their child liked the program
- ☺ 74% credited the program for positive changes in interactions with their child
- ☺ 84% expressed a feeling of belonging to the group and 85% felt comfort in participating in the discussions with other group members
- ☺ 94% felt the facilitators encouraged family participation and helped provide an understanding of the program material
- ☺ 96% said they would recommend the program to other parents

SFF Effectiveness

Using a variety of techniques for analyzing change, positive SFF effects were found for several family and child psychosocial outcomes. Effects were both immediate and sustained over time and included:

- ✓ improved family functioning (role performance, control, affective involvement, affective expression (appropriate expression and communication of feelings), values and norms)
- ✓ more effective parenting techniques (consistent parenting, parent monitoring of child's whereabouts, parental support and warmth, less use of punitive measures)
- ✓ reduced parental hostility and aggression
- ✓ reduced symptoms of parent depression
- ✓ reductions in children's externalizing behaviour problems (conduct and oppositional-defiant symptoms)
- ✓ better child social skills (self-control, cooperation, responsibility, assertiveness)
- ✓ better child coping skills (assistance seeking)
- ✓ SFF children also displayed a 37% reduction in alcohol sipping relative to their counterparts in the control group