

Functional improvements of children referred to a school-based preventive mental health intervention: CAFAS outcomes at six months

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Study context

- State sponsored comprehensive school-based preventive mental health intervention
- Focus - amelioration of behavioral and social problems through:
 - Social skill development
 - Problems solving training
 - Individual and class wide behavior management components
 - Parent skills training and support

Background

- Range of functional problems exist
- May lead to varying degrees of successful outcome
- Could children with higher levels of impairment improve?
- Two groups
 - Those with moderate to severe functional impairment in two or more domains
 - Those without

Primary research questions

- Do children with multiple domain impairments improve functioning at six months?
- Do children without multiple domain impairments improve functioning at six months?

Methods

- Participants
 - Children referred by teachers for general behavioral and/or emotional problems
 - 418 children K-6
 - Children with moderate (20) to severe (30) functional impairment in two or more domains (n = 129)
 - Those without (n = 289)
- Data collection method
 - CAFAS completed at **intake** at **6 months**

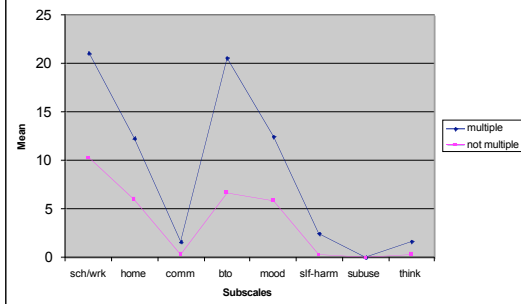
Sample characteristics

Gender	
Male	71%
Average age	7.9 years
Race/ethnicity	
African American	50%
Caucasian	45%
Hispanic	4%
Family structure	
Single parent household	42%
Two parent household	26%
Academically at-risk or failing in reading	55%
Academically at-risk or failing in math	49%

Results

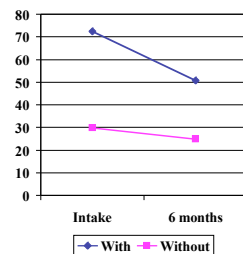
- Significant differences between two groups at intake
 - Children with multiple domain impairments: M = 72.50
 - 13.3% with scores > 100
 - 89.1% moderate to severe in School/Work
 - 34.9% moderate to severe in Home
 - 93.7% moderate to severe in BTO
 - 43.4% moderate to severe in Mood/Emotion
 - Children without: M = 29.76

Figure 1. Children's CAFAS scores at intake



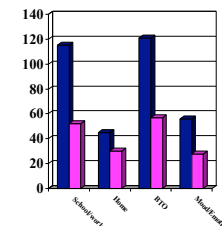
Results (cont.)

- Both groups reduced functional impairment over 6 month period
 - Children with multiple domain impairments
 - $t(127) = 7.79, p < .001, d = .80$
 - ▼ Children without
 - $t(288) = 4.27, p < .001, d = .26$



Results (cont.)

- Reduction to no (0) or mild (10) impairment
 - 43% in School/work
 - 66.6% in Home
 - 47.1% in BTO
 - 50% in Moods/emotions



Discussion

- Children with multiple domain impairments experienced improvement in day-to-day functioning over a six-month period
- Between 47.1% and 66.6% achieved no or mild impairment outcome indicator in school, home, interaction, and mood domains
- Absence of functional impairment in caregiver domains – may contribute to success
- Children lacked high-risk behaviors, such as runaway behavior or harm to self or others

Limitations

- Children in sample were young – could potentially outgrow problems
- No formal interrater reliability assessment
- Not an assessment of intervention effectiveness, per se
- Only two measurement points; more would be optimal

Implications

- Children with multiple domain impairments could be supported within the school setting
- Clear differences in functioning at intake - caution in how services are delivered
- Review of subscales could be used to screen for specific problems
- Quickly identify and target intervention to children with functional impairments in multiple domains