

Tolan, Patrick H., & McKay, Mary McKernan. (1996). Preventing serious antisocial behavior in inner-city children. Family Relations 45: 148-155.

Literature:

Crime rates are four to ten times higher in urban areas than the national average with highest in inner city African American and Latino men. Family factors most powerful predictors. Programs are less successful when involving families with low socioeconomic status, have more stressors, and/or fewer social resources. Intervention process relates to emergence of childhood behavioral difficulties, factors that enhance participation, and common impediments to family-oriented prevention.

Purpose:

To evaluate intensive and complex interventions designed to increase pro-social behaviors and problem-solving skills, decrease the use of aggression linked to delinquency and dropout.

Methods:

The Metropolitan Area Child Study relied on previous tests dealing with functional, sequential, structural-strategic, and psycho-educational approaches. Functional approach means trying to maintain the stability of the family, sequential approach is seeing what types of sequence different families use to solve a problem, structural-strategic approach uses two techniques:

In session and out-of-session change while family members are practicing new ways of solving problems, and psycho-educational approach is where the program leader of the group gives out valuable information on how to help enhance overall family functioning.

Intervention phases equal:

finding high risk children with aggressive behavior; building a relationship with the individual family members. Members of the family describe their goals and describe role of each family member in certain situations, five units of intervention:

- 1) monitoring,
- 2) family rules,
- 3) reframing,
- 4) accenting the positive, and
- 5) parental listening skills.

The final phase is the end results.

The overall total for this study was 4,125 children, but a total of 387 were identified for participation. Of the 387 at risk children, 345 of the kids and their families could be located. Due to moving or other circumstances, 327 out of the 345 located at-risk children and families agreed to participate. Out of the 327 families, 281 attended some portion of the study (81%) while 235 families completed the full intervention, 46% children resided within an inner-city community, 54% were drawn from a suburban, low-income community. Forty-one percent were African American, 38% Latino, and 21% White.

Conclusion:

Program designed for families who had inner-city children with elevated risk for later serious antisocial behavior. Take in mind the consideration of prevention, social and economic, training, service delivery, and evaluation issues. Years after the intervention is over can someone measure preventive effects? This program used existing research that related to family processes and antisocial behavior to develop targets for the intervention used in the study. A program such as this one is a great start to solving a serious problem.