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Multisystemic conjoint behavioral consultation: Training leaders in interdisciplinary collaboration.

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Multisystemic Conjoint Behavioral Consultation: Training Leaders in Interdisciplinary Collaboration

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Background on Pediatric School Psychology

- Approximately 20% of children and adolescents are affected by a mental disorder (National Institute of Mental Health, 2005), 22% suffer from obesity, and an additional 10% suffer from asthma (Creer & Bender, 1995; Troiano, Flegal, Kuczmarski, Campbell, & Johnson, 1995).
- Educational reform emphasizes that schools must begin to address how such mental and physical health issues are potential barriers to learning (Adelman & Taylor, 1998).
- An interdisciplinary approach is necessary to meet the multiple needs of children across systems (Power, Shapiro, & Kazak, 2003).
- The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) have developed specific training guidelines for interdisciplinary collaboration (Power, Shapiro, & Kazak, 2003).
- Recently, pediatric school psychology training has been recommended to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and communication (Power, Shapiro, & Kazak, 2003; Grazovsky, 2003).
- To address this need, a collaborative partnership between the School Psychology program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and the Munroe Meyer Institute of the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) was developed to provide school psychology doctoral students with interdisciplinary leadership training.
- From this partnership, an interdisciplinary approach to working with children and families was developed called multisystemic conjoint behavioral consultation.

Multisystemic Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

- Conjoint Behavioral Consultation (CBC) is an interdisciplinary model of service delivery identified as "highly useful" to address the health needs of children and families across multiple systems (Power, Shapiro, & Kazak, 2003).
- CBC is a partnership-centered, indirect model of service delivery wherein parents, educators, health professionals, and counselors work collaboratively to meet a child’s developmental needs, address concerns, and achieve success by promoting the competencies of all parties (Sheridan & Kratochwill, in press).
- The goals of CBC are to effectively address the jointly identified needs of the child, as well as developing strong partnerships among systems.
- Table 1 outlines the specific outcome and process goals of CBC.
- Research has demonstrated that CBC is an effective and acceptable model for addressing the needs of children who are at risk for academic, behavioral, and/or social difficulties (Sheridan, Eagle, Crow, & Mecklenburg, 2001).
- Power, DuPaul, Shapiro, and Kazak (2003) stated, "The CBC model provides a framework for (1) aligning the family, school, and healthcare systems to facilitate the integration of children with health problems into school and (2) integrating systems of care into the problem-solving process" (p. 89).
- Preliminary research has demonstrated that CBC can be an effective model for addressing the multiple needs of children in a pedagogic setting (Sheridan et al., 2004).
- However, a more structured approach to training in interdisciplinary collaboration and multisystemic CBC is needed.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Obtain comprehensive and functional data over extended temporal and contextual bases.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Establish consistent treatment programs across settings.</td>
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<td>3. Improve the mental, knowledge, or behaviors of all parties (i.e., family members, school personnel, and the child-client).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Monitor behavioral contrast and side effects systematically via cross-setting treatment agents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Enhance generalization and maintenance of treatment effects via consistent programming across sources and settings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Develop skills and competencies to promote independent joint problem-solving between family and school partners.</td>
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</table>

Training in Multisystemic CBC

The goals of this interdisciplinary training effort are to prepare school psychology doctoral students for a leadership role in:

- (a) providing culturally-sensitive, partnership-centered interdisciplinary collaboration services to address the complex needs of students with physical and mental health needs.
- (b) delivering consultation services across medical, school, and family settings; and
- (c) conducting research related to interdisciplinary collaboration.

At the completion of the training, doctoral school psychology students will acquire a specialization in partnership-centered interdisciplinary collaboration with:

- (a) knowledge of medical/educational issues, roles of multiple service providers, systems supporting children with physical and mental health needs, and intervention options;
- (b) skills in interdisciplinary consultation and collaboration, culturally-sensitive, partnership-centered services, and intervention design and evaluation; and
- (c) leadership competencies related to research design, implementation, dissemination, systemic change, and capacity building.

Challenges for Pediatric School Psychology Training

- Educational, psychological and medical professionals have different goals, language, and approaches to working with children and families (Perrin, 1999).

Research/Future Directions

- Program evaluation research is needed to investigate the outcomes (e.g., knowledge and skill level, future employment) of this type of specialization training.
- Research evaluating the effectiveness and social validity of multisystemic CBC in addressing the needs of children and strengthening partnerships across settings is also needed.
- Identification of the role of specialized school psychologists in addressing cross-cutting issues for multiple systems (i.e., school reintegration, adherence to treatment programs, pharmacological management) is necessary.