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 (Addington & Taylor, 1998).
- An interdisciplinary approach is necessary to meet the multiple needs of children across systems (Power, Shapiro, & DuPaul, 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 interagency collaboration (Power, DuPaul, Shapiro, & Kazak, 2003).
- Recently, pediatric school psychology training has been recommended to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and communication (Power, DuPaul, Shapiro, & Kazak, 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 consultants work collaboratively to meet a child’s developmental needs, address concerns, and achieve success by promoting the competencies of all parties (Sheridan & Kazak, 2003).

The goals of CBC are to effectively address the jointly identified needs of the child, as well as developing strong partnerships among systems.

The interdisciplinary training process covers a three year span. See table 2 for a description of the training elements and the following pie charts for a breakdown of how time is spent during each year of training.

Table 1: Overall Objectives of Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

<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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<tr>
<td>3. Improve the skills, knowledge, or behaviors of all parties (e.g., 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 further independent joint problem-solving between families and school personnel.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Description of Interdisciplinary Training Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Element</th>
<th>Didactic Instruction</th>
<th>Field-Based Experience</th>
<th>Supervision</th>
<th>Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Behavioral consultation</td>
<td>Consultation cases in educational settings</td>
<td>Weekly with advanced doctoral graduate students</td>
<td>CBC related research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention strategies</td>
<td>Partnership centered services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Public policy</td>
<td>Clinic observations</td>
<td>Weekly with discipline advisor</td>
<td>CBC related research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>Multicultural sensitivity</td>
<td>Consultation cases through Developmental Pediatrics Clinic</td>
<td>Weekly with interdisciplinary advisor</td>
<td>CBC related research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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).
- Health reimbursement systems may not support many of the activities outlined as best practices by the NIMH, APA, and NASP training guidelines (Power, DuPaul, Shapiro, & Kazak, 2003).
- Trained faculty needed to provide students with intensive training in both interdisciplinary intervention and health issues are lacking (Power, Shapiro, & DuPaul, 2003).

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.