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Conjoint Behavioral Consultation and Diversity: Research Findings and Directions

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Why Partner with Families?

✧ The research is unequivocal…

➥ When parents are actively engaged in their child's development and learning, there are important benefits for children, families, and schools

➥ Parent-professional (home-school) partnerships are predictive of increased academic performance, socioemotional benefits, better work habits, more consistent school attendance, school completion, and greater connections between home and school

Diversity as Lack of Congruence

✧ Challenges are posed when diversity presents a lack of synchrony (or congruence) among systems, vs. conceptions of diversity as deficits within child/family/school

✧ Continuity across environments is important to support effective learning transitions

✧ Students who experience congruent worlds (similar values, expectations, ways of behaving) make smooth and easy transitions

Diversity as Lack of Congruence

✧ Sociocultural "borders" exist when certain cultural experiences, expectations, or norms are *valued* more than others, not only when differences exist

✧ Borders contribute to extreme difficulties for children and adolescents in their attempts to transition across contexts

Diversity as Lack of Congruence

✧ The goal of services should be to encourage continuity across systems, to make equal the value placed on different norms, values, etc.

✧ When differences are equally valued, transitions become easier

Diversity as Lack of Congruence

✧ Valuation of cultural differences is possible when we:
  ⇨ Develop awareness of cultural differences
  ⇨ Allow time to develop relationships and trust
  ⇨ Help families and teachers understand differences in home and school cultures
  ⇨ Communicate frequently
  ⇨ Discuss perspectives
  ⇨ Clarify roles, responsibilities, resources
  ⇨ Make shared decisions

✧ Intervention efforts are necessary that enhance continuities/congruities and address borders among systems

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

✧ Conjoint behavioral consultation (CBC; Sheridan, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1996) is a structured, indirect model of service delivery wherein parents, teachers, and other service providers are brought together to address social, behavioral, or academic concerns of a student.

✧ CBC is an organized, data-based approach that uses a structured four-stage process (i.e., problem/needs identification, problem/needs analysis, plan development, and plan evaluation; Sheridan et al., 1996).

✧ Combines perspectives and resources across home and school systems; parents and teachers serve as joint consultees in cooperative, constructive decision making

✧ Focuses not only on child, but on the relationships forged across systems

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

✧ From an ecological perspective, the coordination and interconnectedness among primary systems promotes continuity and provides a "safety net"

✧ Promotes a partnership model; creates opportunities for families and schools to work together around common interests

✧ Enhances communication, understanding, and continuity across home and school, especially when borders exist

Research Support for CBC

✧ Many empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of CBC in addressing academic, behavioral, and social concerns

✧ In a four year investigation, average effect sizes of 1.08 and 1.11 were reported across home and school settings, respectively

✧ Indices of social validity (acceptability, goal attainment, satisfaction), as reported by parents and teachers, are routinely high

✧ A review of research on family-based services (Bates, in preparation) has documented the strength of CBC as an evidence-based model; however, calls for attention to its effects with culturally diverse samples

The Cultural Validity of CBC

✧ Cultural Validity:

  ⮡ The degree to which problem identification and problem solving are acceptable to the client in respect to the client's beliefs and value systems, as these are associated with the client's ethnic/cultural group (Barnett et al., 1995)

✧ Empirically-based investigation of the cultural validity of consultation and CBC lags far behind other areas of consultation research

✧ Partnerships, coordination, connections between systems are not possible when one system is more valued than the other

Within a Multicultural Framework…

✧ CBC can be considered "a home-school consultation relationship wherein important individual differences are present among two or more participants (i.e., parent, teacher, student, school psychologist-consultant) with respect to associations with distinct cultural group(s)" (Sheridan, 2000, p. 345).

✧ Thought to be an effective model to work within a multicultural framework by its very design:
  - Interactive and collaborative problem solving
  - Distributed decision making
  - Appreciation for unique values, perspectives across systems
  - Relationship building as a primary focus

✧ However, no comprehensive research exists evaluating the effects of CBC in culturally diverse samples, and the cultural validity of the model

Need for Research!

✧ Investigating the efficacy of CBC with diverse samples

✧ Identifying CBC as a culturally valid model of service delivery, including:
  - *Outcome variables* – the effects of CBC on diverse students
  - *Relationship variables* – the effects of CBC on culturally diverse families and educators, and their ability to work as partners in relationship to each other and over time
  - *Social validity* – the acceptability of CBC, satisfaction with services, perceptions of goal attainment and outcomes
  - *Process variables* -- the essential elements that may be important when interacting with culturally diverse consultees

Exploratory Study

✧ Data were collected on the effects of CBC over the course of 8 years, over 2 geographic regions
✧ Diversity was defined in sociodemographic terms (i.e., ethnicity, SES, language, number of adults in home, maternal educational level)
✧ *Degree* to which participants experienced diversity (i.e., number of diversity variables experienced by child), rather than mere presence of diversity, represented the primary variable of interest

# Participants

✧ 125 child participants (representing 135 cases)
✧ Mean age = 8.74 (range = 3 – 15)
✧ Mean grade = 3.5 (range = Preschool – 9th)
✧ 74% males; 26% females
✧ 44% culturally diverse on one or more variables
✧ 143 parents (75% female; mean age = 38.75)
✧ 127 teachers (83% female; mean age = 38.91)
✧ 48 graduate student consultants (88% female; mean age = 27.89)

Percent of Child Participants Representing Types of Diversity
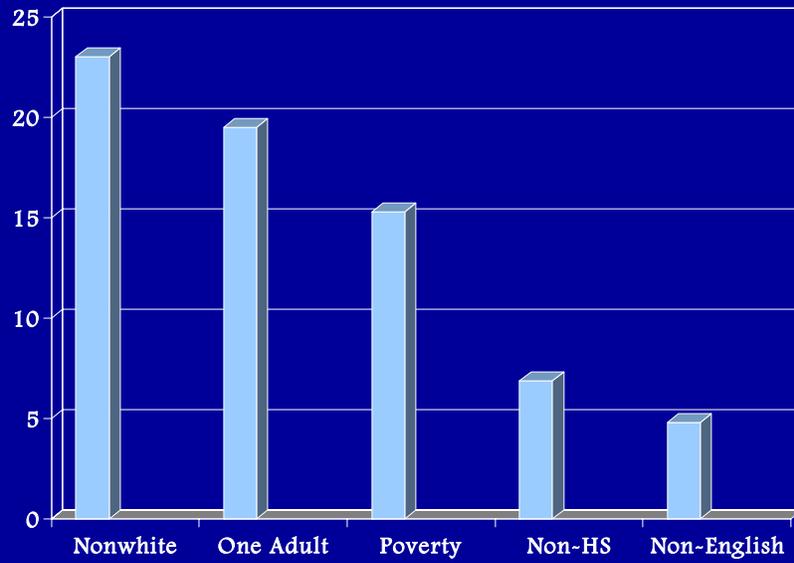
Percent of Child Participants Representing Various Degrees of Diversity
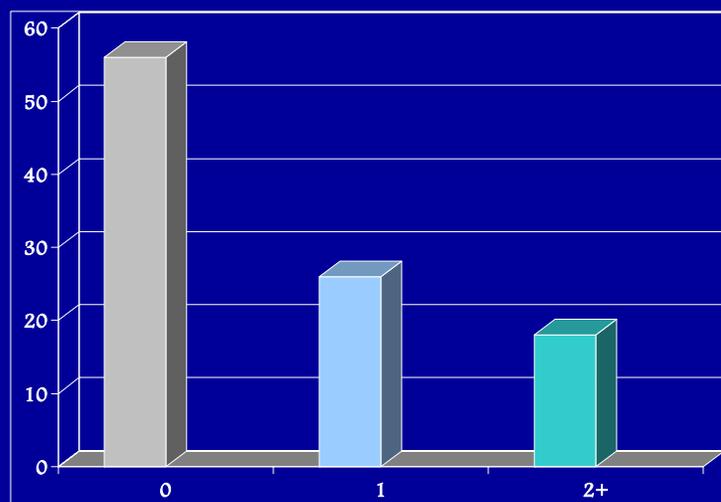
Outcome Variables

✧ Clients' behaviors or academic performance measured by direct observation or permanent products

✧ Social validity of outcomes (i.e., subjective evaluations; perceptions of goal attainment) and process (i.e., ratings of acceptability and satisfaction)

Measures

✧ Data collection forms provided to standardize observations, increase reliability of data collection, provide permanent product

✧ Behavior Intervention Rating Scale-Revised (Von Brock & Elliott, 1987) used to assess acceptability and perceived efficacy of CBC

✧ Goal Attainment Scaling (Sladeczek et al., 2001) used to assess degree to which clients met goals

✧ Consultant Evaluation Form (Erchul, 1987) used to assess satisfaction with consultant

✧ Process integrity assessed using CBC Objectives Checklist (Sheridan et al., 2001); consultants met on average 89% of CBC objectives across all cases and interviews

Procedures

✧ Graduate students participated in an intensive, competency-based practicum to learn the processes and procedures of CBC, and placed in school settings to serve as CBC consultant

✧ Referrals for CBC were made by school psychology practitioners, administrators, and teachers

✧ Pre-consultation meetings were held to review roles and procedures, and to begin relationship building

✧ CBC followed four stage model (problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, and plan evaluation), including structured interviews

✧ All interviews were conducted in classrooms or home settings, and were audiotaped for data collection and supervision purposes

Data Analysis

✧ Single subject effect sizes were computed for each intervention outcome, using a "no assumptions" approach (Busk & Serlin, 1992)

✧ Differences in phase means are divided by SD of baseline, which yields a quantitative index of effect interpreted in SD units

✧ Effect sizes of .5 is considered medium; .80 is high

✧ A total of 192 single subject ESs are included in data set (81 home; 111 school)

Results: Effect Sizes

	n	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	95% Confidence Interval
School Effect Sizes					
Diversity = 0	58	1.12	0.74	1.64	0.69 - 1.55
Diversity = 1	33	1.25	1.19	1.41	0.75 – 1.75
Diversity ≥ 2	20	1.38	1.20	1.21	0.65 - 2.11
Home Effect Sizes					
Diversity = 0	44	1.74	1.21	2.52	0.97 – 2.51
Diversity = 1	20	1.07	1.06	1.15	0.53 - 1.61
Diversity ≥ 2	17	1.45	1.13	1.82	0.52 – 2.39
Overall Effect Sizes					
Diversity = 0	76	1.35	1.05	2.18	0.85 - 1.85
Diversity = 1	35	1.21	1.08	1.12	0.83 – 1.60
Diversity > 2	24	1.51	1.28	1.52	0.87 – 2.15

Average Effect Sizes Across Home and School Settings by Degree of Diversity
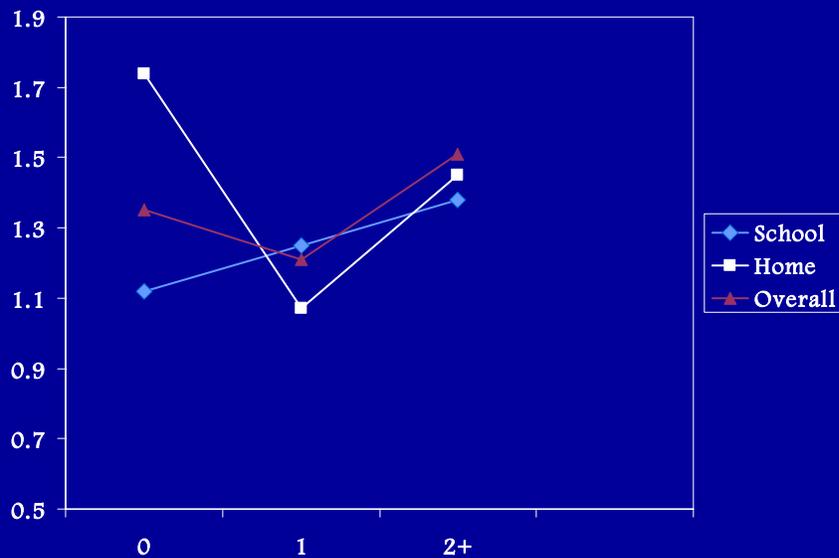
Results: Social Validity Indices

	Diversity = 0	Diversity = 1	Diversity ≥ 2
BIRS-Eff			
Parent	4.36 (1.11)	4.57 (1.06)	4.99 (.80)
Teacher	3.98 (1.20)	3.95 (1.27)	4.70 (0.74)
GAS			
Parent	4.40 (.58)	4.29 (.62)	4.41 (.51)
Teacher	4.19 (.80)	4.17 (.70)	4.5 (.51)
BIRS-Acc			
Parent	5.36 (.54)	5.29 (.63)	5.48 (.55)
Teacher	5.22 (.74)	5.28 (.73)	5.53 (.57)
CEF			
Parent	6.15 (.87)	6.22 (.62)	6.52 (.61)
Teacher	6.21 (.72)	6.27 (.79)	6.54 (.58)

From Research to Practice…

✧ Knowing that a model is effective does little to communicate why it is effective

✧ The research-practice link must identify the effective components that lead to outcomes

✧ Hypotheses can be formed, but they need to be tested

From Research to Practice…

✧ "Best practices" in CBC may be those that are concerned with both content and process
  - ✤ The *"what?"* – Technical expertise and utilization of evidence-based interventions to address shared concerns
  - ✤ The *"how?"* – Processes and relational skills used by consultants to use consultee strengths and differences, build competencies, and foster cross-system collaboration, mutual decision making, and shared roles and responsibilities
✧ The "what" has received much research attention and support, but…
✧ What about the how??

Reconceptualizing CBC from a *Strengths-based* Perspective

✧ Strengths-based services are family- (and school-) centered, which strive to help family members (and teachers) "become better able to solve problems, meet needs, or achieve aspirations by promoting the acquisition of competencies that support and strengthen functioning in a way that permits a greater sense of individual or group control over its developmental course" (Dunst, Trivette, Davis, & Cornwell, 1994, p. 162).
✧ CBC extends family centered approaches by acknowledging that children and families do not exist in a vacuum, and that children function *within and across systems*, which exert bidirectional and reciprocal influences over each other.

Strengths-based CBC

✧ As a strengths-based model, CBC may be "a framework for working with families and schools that promotes strengths and capacity building within individuals and systems, rather than focusing [only] on the resolution of problems or remediation of deficiencies" (Sheridan et al., 2004).

✧ When embracing a "partnership-centered" philosophy, CBC is well-positioned to be responsive to individual family and school differences; address child needs as identified by parents and teachers; build skills and competencies within families and schools; and promote participation and collaboration among systems.

Thank You!
Mahalo!