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Diane C. Marti

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Jennifer D. Burt

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Susan M. Sheridan

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, ssheridan2@unl.edu

Brandy L. Clarke

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Ashley M. Rolke

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

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Culturally Sensitive Services Using CBC: A Case Illustration

Diane C. Marti, Ed.S., Jennifer D. Burt, M.Ed., Susan M. Sheridan, Ph.D., Brandy L. Clarke, M.A., & Ashley M. Rohlk, B.S.
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

INTRODUCTION

Multicultural Contexts:

- The United States is becoming an increasingly diverse nation. In 2000, 38% of the US population under the age of 18 was non-Anglo whites and nonwhites. It has been estimated that by the year 2030, the number of Latino children, African American children, and children of other races will increase by 5.5, 2.6 and 1.5 million, respectively (Children's Defense Fund, 1989).
- Diversity factors have been identified as "social boundaries" that challenge attempts to build collaborative relationships across home and school systems (Giles, 2002).
- Strong, positive relationships between the home and school systems have been shown to improve a child's educational experience (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001), and this positive relationship is critical in addressing the needs of diverse families and children (Sheridan, 2000).
- School psychologists are in a unique position to take the lead in identifying effective methods for working with families of diverse cultural backgrounds to break down these boundaries, and to strengthen relationships among homes and schools.

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation:

- Conjoint behavioral consultation* (CBC; Sheridan, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1996) is an indirect, structured model of service-delivery whereby parents, teachers, and support staff are joined to work together to address the academic, social, or behavioral needs of an individual child for whom all parties share some responsibility. CBC is operationalized via four stages: problem identification, problem analysis, plan implementation, plan evaluation.
- CBC emphasizes home-school partnerships and parental involvement (Sheridan et al., 1996), and is particularly effective in including the parents as equal members of the consultative process (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001).
- CBC incorporates fundamental structural and relational features thought to be important when working with culturally diverse families. Awareness and sensitivity of the consultant, and the ability to consider and communicate all frames of references can be utilized via an empirically validated CBC model (Sheridan, 2000).
- CBC has been noted to be an effective model to work within a multicultural framework by its very design (Sheridan, 2000); however, there is a dearth of empirical studies attesting to the effectiveness of the model with diverse clients (Guli, in preparation).

PURPOSE OF STUDY

- The purpose of this case study is to demonstrate the effectiveness of CBC within a multicultural context.

METHODS

Participants:

- Four-year old Chinese male (Dylan)
- First year in a Head Start program
- Consultees were Dylan's parents and classroom teacher
- Referral concerns were compliance and impulsive behavior

Outcome Measures:

- Objective Measures:**
Direct Observations conducted at home and school and related effect sizes.
- Subjective Measures:**
Perceptions of effectiveness (BIRS-Effectiveness factor; GAS), acceptability (BIRS-Acceptability factor), and consumer satisfaction (CEF).

Procedures:

- CBC was conducted in Dylan's home setting with parents, teacher, and consultant present.
- Target Behavior: Compliance with adult directives
- Direct observations of Dylan's compliance were conducted by parents, teacher and independent observers using data collection forms.
- Interventions
Precision commands
Positive reinforcement
Preplanned consequences
Home/school communication
Classwide reinforcement system (Phase 2)

RESULTS

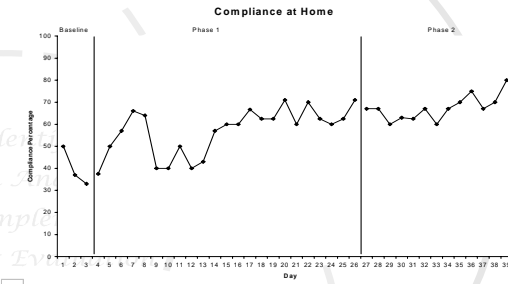
Behavior Outcomes:

- Home – Compliance with adult directives
Baseline - average 40%
After intervention - average 68.4%
Effect Size – 2.44
- School – Compliance with adult directives
Baseline – 32.6%
After intervention - average 89.6%
Effect Size – 7.38

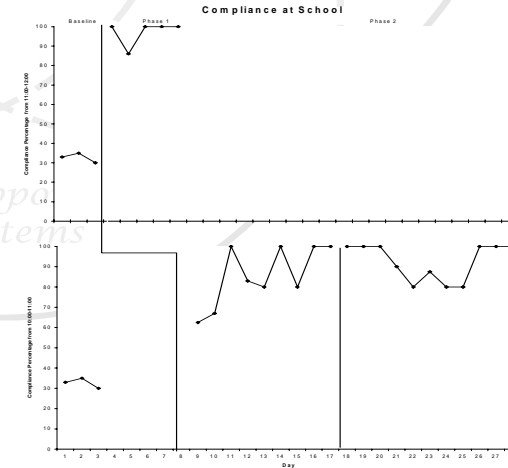
Subjective Measures:

- BIRS-Eff – 5.71 (T), highly effective; 5.14 (P), highly effective
- BIRS-Acc – 5.92 (T), highly effective; 5.04 (P), highly acceptable
- GAS – 5.0 (T), goal completely met; 4.0 (P), goal partially met
- CEF – 7.0 (T), completely satisfied; 6.0 (P), highly satisfied

Dylan's Compliance at Home



Dylan's Compliance Across Two Target Settings at School



DISCUSSION

- This case study illustrated how CBC can be an effective, culturally sensitive consultation model.
- The consultant utilized several key strategies to address participation and partnership goals: (a) recognized unique family characteristics, (b) tailored goals that were consistent with the conceptions of parenting roles and culture, and (c) avoided defining cultural differences as a "problem," rather, established solutions.
- The consultant adhered to a validated, data-based problem-solving model while utilizing data collection and plan development procedures that were sensitive to the families' ideas, beliefs and practices.
- CBC provided an essential link between school and home to provide an effective, easy to implement intervention plan, and improved relationships and communication within a multicultural framework. School psychologists working with multicultural families would benefit from the structural and relational features of CBC.

LIMITATIONS

- Ability to generalize results of a single-subject case study is limited.
- Lack of maintenance or follow-up data during first intervention series at school.
- Staggered baseline data in second series at school are lacking.
- Data acquired fails to elucidate certain qualitative aspects of the case study (e.g., personal experiences of Chinese parents).

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

- Future research should continue to explore the use of CBC as a model of culturally sensitive consultation services.
- Systematic, empirical investigations are needed to identify specific procedural aspects of the model that are most effective with diverse families.
- Use of mixed-methods may be helpful to further understand relational features that may be essential when working within a multicultural framework.