

Problems and Goals Identified by Primary Caregivers of Children with Mental Health Problems During A Problem - Solving Intervention

Janis Gerkenmeyer, PhD, RN, Associate Professor & Ukamaka M. Oruche PhD, RN, Assistant Professor

BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE

- About 1 out of 5 children in the US have mental health problems, and mothers are usually their primary caregivers (National Institute of Mental Health, 2001).
- Services for these children have been decreased in an effort to reduce costs.
- Consequently, parents are faced with the increased responsibility to care for children with very severe mental health problems at home.
- Few studies have addressed the well-being of caregivers of children with mental health problems.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report was to describe the problems and goals identified by primary caregivers of children with mental health problems during a feasibility study to test the efficacy of Building Our Solutions and Connections (BOSC), a cognitive behavioral problem solving intervention for these caregivers (Gerkenmeyer et al., in press).

METHODS

BOSC intervention focused on enhancing problem-solving skills of primary caregivers of children with mental health problems.

Participants were recruited over 11 months from community mental health centers, response to ads, and calls to the research team from information on fliers.

Problems and goals were identified by individual caregivers during a nine week problem-solving intervention that included a face-to-face one-hour intervention followed by eight half-hour telephone interventions.

Counted the number of times problem were identified.

RESULTS



Sample Characteristics

Total number. 44 caregivers

Gender. 42 females and 2 males

Age: Ranged from 26-69 years with mean age of 43 years

Race: 57% Caucasian (n = 35), 39% African American (n = 24), 1% each Pacific Islander (n = 1), and 1% (n = 1) biracial

Next, a summary of the problems and goals selected by these primary caregivers is described in table 1 and figure 1.



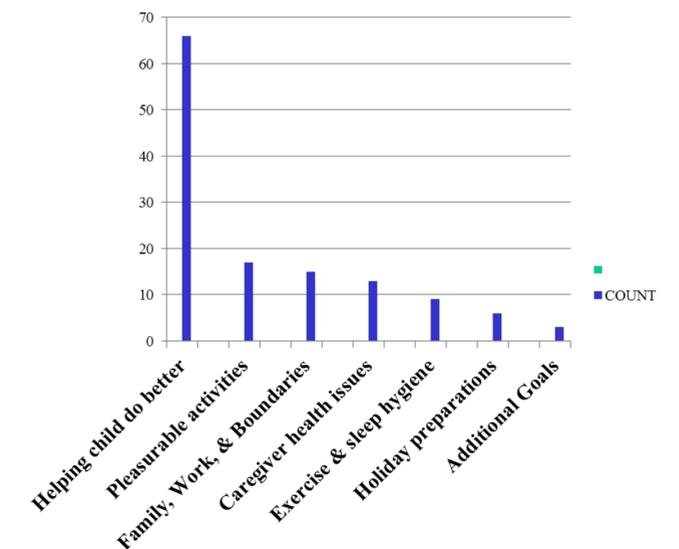
RESULTS

Table 1. Problems Identified by Primary Caregivers

PROBLEMS	COUNT
Child Behavior	43
• Not doing chores	
• Not following directions	
• Arguing	
Caregivers' Emotional Health	30
<i>Emotional Health</i>	
• Stress/Depression/Depletion	
• No time for themselves	
• Limited or no pleasurable activities	
• No identify beyond that of mother of mentally ill child	
• Need to spend more time with other children in the family & spouses	
• Overwhelmed by household needs & personal responsibilities	
Caregivers' Physical Health	11
<i>Physical Health</i>	
• Not exercising enough	
• Diabetes management	
• Interrupted sleep	
• Weight gain	
• Anxiety	
Family-Related	26
<i>Family-Related</i>	
• Stress with partner over child	
• Needing more help from father	
• Not enough help from kids	
• Lack of trust of significant other	
• Not enough time with partner	
• Family not getting along	
• Strained relationship with mother -in- law	
Financial	22
<i>Financial</i>	
• Needing money to pay bills	
• No Budget	
• Being out of food	
• Medicaid issues/cut off	
• Need to fix things in house	
• Wanting to move to new neighborhood	
• Transportation-related issues	
Childs' School	8
<i>Childs' School</i>	
• Issues related to bullying	
• Wanting child in a different school	
• Child needs help with keeping focus and busy academically; firm behavior plan; information about colleges & universities	

RESULTS

Figure 1. Goals Identified by Primary Caregivers



CONCLUSIONS

- Caregivers need additional support and resources.
- Mental health professionals need to assess for problems and identify goals of primary caregivers of children with mental health needs at intake and throughout treatment duration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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