

The Effective Child & Family – interventions: Family Talk Intervention

Early Prevention -classification:

Moderate intervention

Target group of the intervention:

Child families

Delivery of the intervention:

Individual-/family-based

Aim of the intervention:

The interventions aims to increase positive interaction and discussion in a situation, where a parent has a problem that affects the family. The intervention increases a common understanding between the parents and the children. The intervention strengthens the parents' ability to help their children.

Description of the intervention:

Family Talk –intervention emphasizes the process and is suitable for child families, where the child is at school age and the parent has mental health problems. Family Talk –intervention belongs to the Effective Child and Family –interventions. Research-based knowledge of the child development and the risk that parent's mental health problems impose on it have impacted on the development of the intervention (Beardslee & Podorefsky 1988; Beardslee et al. 1997). The Effective Child & Family –interventions are based on the theory of child development as a part of different development environments (Solantaus & Niemelä 2016). In the intervention, a professional who has received a Family Talk intervention training meets the family 6 to 8 times. The meetings are organized for the parents, children and the family. There are also follow-up meetings in the intervention. The intervention uses a manual. The intervention has been applied also in situations where a parent has a severe physical illness, experienced violence or in cases of custody and divorce.

Availability of the intervention

Training for the Family Talk –intervention is a part of the Effective Child and Family –method training. The training is targeted at those working with child families, but especially for the social and health care professionals. Material and Family Talk –intervention manual are included in the training. The intervention was originally developed in the USA as a method of family work. In Finland, the intervention has been used in the primary and secondary social and health care services.

Research- and evidence-based efficacy of the intervention:

An RCT has been conducted on the intervention in the USA (Beardslee et al. 1997; Beardslee et al. 2003), which studied the effectiveness of the Family Talk intervention compared to a lecture-based intervention in child families, where one of the parents has a depression. A long-term follow-up of the study indicated that the attitudes, behavior and ability to communicate with their children improved among parents in the Family Talk -intervention group as compared to the control group. The long-term follow-up also showed that the understanding of the parents' mental health problem among children increased in the Family Talk –intervention group as compared to the control group. In Finland, there is a study investigating the applicability of the intervention in the Finnish service system (Solantaus et al. 2009). There is moderate research-based evidence of effectiveness in Finland.

Literature:

Beardslee, W., Gladstone, T., Wright, E. & Cooper, A. (2003). A family-based approach to the prevention of depressive symptoms in children at risk: evidence of parental and child change. *Pediatrics*, 112(2), 119–131.

Beardslee, W. R. & Podorefsky, D. (1988). Resilient adolescents whose parents have serious affective and other psychiatric disorders: Importance of self-understanding and relationships. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 145, 63–69.

Beardslee W., Salt P., Versage E., Gladstone T., Wright E. & Rothberg P. (1997). Sustained change in parents receiving preventive interventions for families with depression. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 154, 510–515.

Solantaus, T. & Niemelä, M. (2016). Arki kantaa – kun se pannaan kantamaan. *Perheterapia*, 1, 21–33.

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