

D & E COUNSELING CENTER

CAMP CHALLENGE SUMMER PROGRAM

2011 OUTCOMES EVALUATION

The Camp Challenge summer program offers children between the ages of 6 through 12 the opportunity to participate in a social skills training program. Children are referred through the Youngstown and Mahoning County Schools. Goals of the program are aimed at improving children's social emotional and behavioral development and readiness for academic instruction using the Project Achieve "Stop and Think" program. To assess program effectiveness, three pre-test measures of social and emotional capacity were administered. In addition, as family engagement was believed to be an additional domain of social functioning, a measurement of positive family interaction was also administered. Post-test results indicate that significant improvement occurred in parent's perception of the child's disruptive behavior and positive family interaction.

Program Goals:

- 1. Increase participant's social emotional and behavioral development.**
 - A. *Social and emotional skills*-related to identification of emotions from social cues, goal setting, perspective taking, interpersonal problem-solving, conflict resolution, and decision making.
 - B. *Attitudes toward self and others*-feeling about self, school, peers, and parents.
 - C. *Positive social behavior*-interaction with peers, teachers, parents.
 - D. *Conduct problems*-reduction in disruptiveness during program activities and in school as evidenced by non-compliance, aggression, bullying, school suspensions, and delinquent acts.

- 2. Increase participant's readiness to benefit from school academic instruction.**

Reduce social and emotional deficits that are obstacles to academic success.

Program Theory for Change:

The enhancing of a child's resiliency through building assets and protective factors contribute to his/her engaging in positive ready to learn classroom behaviors which increase ability to benefit from classroom instruction and grow their academic skills.

Program Foundation: The involvement of the child in various activities which reinforce resiliency protective factors.

Targeted Participants: Academically underachieving/behavioral disordered students attending Youngstown and Campbell school systems ages 6-12. Program capacity 40 children.

Best Practices:

1. Professionally guided experiential therapies (provided by a licensed counselor and 2 assistants per group of 12 children)
2. Token economy based behavioral modification
3. Group social skill education
4. Parent training in behavior management (provided by a licensed counselor as a family liaison to include bi-weekly group instruction)

The program applied the *Project Achieve: Stop and Think Social Skills Program*. This program is widely used to improve social skills of behaviorally disruptive children. The program is intended to increase social skills, academic performance, and appropriate behavior.

Program Evaluation Questions

1. **Did the children's engagement in the Camp Challenge Summer Program contribute to improvements in children's social skills and a diminution of disruptive behavior?**
2. **Did the children's engagement in the Camp Challenge Summer Program contribute to an increase in positive family interaction of the children?**

Measurement Instruments

Beck Youth Inventory: Disruptive Behavior Inventory Scale

This is one of the five sub-scales of this standardize instrument. It contains 20 items

requiring Likert responses ranging from “never” to “always” on a 4 point scale. Scores were normed based upon the age and gender of the child. The Beck Youth Inventory is an established assessment tool with demonstrated reliability (above criterion .80 using Chronbach’s coefficient alpha method) and validity (content and criterion). It identifies thoughts and behaviors associated with conduct disorders and oppositional-defiant behavior. This assessment was completed in a pre-test/post-test fashion by each program child participant. The Chronbach’s coefficient alpha for the study sample was .83 indicating a high degree of reliability.

Ohio Mental Health Consumer Outcomes System Ohio Youth Problem, Functioning, and Satisfaction Scales, Parent Rating-Short Form

To assess a range of child problems as perceived by parents of program participants a 20 item instrument was applied. Parents indicated the degree to which their child has experienced problems on a 6 point Likert scale ranging from “not at all” to “all of the time.” The standardized reliability and validity of this instrument is unknown. This scale was completed in a pre-test/post-test fashion by parents of program participants. The Chronbach’s coefficient alpha for the study sample was .93 indicating an exceptionally high degree of reliability.

Social Skills Survey

To assess social skills specifically addressed in the *Project Achieve “Stop and Think” program* of the Camp Challenge Summer Program a 24 item proprietary measurement tool was developed for this program evaluation. Each of the items included on this instrument parallel the content of the “*Stop and Think*” program. The evaluators desired to include an assessment of these areas to insure the specific social skills of the program matched the other measures of disruptive behavior. It was presumed that this scale would have higher content validity than the other measures in this evaluation. Likert responses ranged from “never” to “always” on a 5 point scale. This survey was completed in a pre-test/post-test fashion by the parents of program participants. The Chronbach’s coefficient alpha for the study sample was .92 which indicates an exceptionally high degree of reliability.

Family Interaction Inventory

To assess the extent to which family members interact positively with each other, a standardized 18 item instrument was used. This scale measured the degree to which family members spend time together, the child’s interaction/contribution to the home environment, and relationships with siblings. This scale was completed in a pre-test/post-test fashion by parents of program participants. An initial Chronbach’s coefficient alpha was .51 indicating a marginal level of reliability. In examination of

inter-item correlations, two items were eliminated resulting in a final Chronbach's coefficient alpha of .57 indicating a marginally acceptable level of reliability.

Evaluation Results

Program Participants:

The summer program included a total of 38 children.

Thirty-one were male (82 percent) seven were female (18 percent).

Twenty-one of the participants were African-American (55 percent) nine were white (24 percent), seven did not indicate a race (18 percent), and one child was Hispanic (3 percent).

The ages of the children range from 6 to 12 years. Twenty-two children ranged in age 6-9, sixteen children were aged 10-12 years.

Beck Youth Inventory: Disruptive Behavior Inventory Scale

This measure was completed by the children participants of the summer program prior to and following the child's engagement in the program. Raw scores were converted to t scores which take into account the child's age and sex. The pre-test mean score on the Beck Youth Inventory: Disruptive Behavior Inventory Scale was 52.5 (std. deviation = 8.33). The post-test score yielded a mean of 50.57 (std. deviation = 12.14). The lower mean score on the post-program measurement indicates a reduction in problem behaviors as perceived by the children. To determine the statistical significance of the difference in mean scores, a paired samples t-test was conducted. The results of this test indicated a correlation of .135 ($p = .65$). The results of this statistical test indicate that the difference between the pre and post test scores on the social skills inventory are due to chance and not significant at the $p = .05$ level.

Ohio Mental Health Consumer Outcomes System Ohio Youth Problem, Functioning, and Satisfaction Scales, Parent Rating-Short Form

This measure was completed by parents of summer program participants prior to and following their child's engagement in the program. The pre-test mean score on this instrument for program participants was 1.50 (std. deviation = .82). The post-test score yielded a mean of 1.0 (std. deviation = .77). The lower mean score on the post-program measurement indicates a reduction in problem behaviors as perceived by parents. To determine the statistical significance of the difference in mean scores, a paired samples t-test was conducted. The results of this test indicated a correlation of .73 ($p = .00$). This is a statistically significant finding at the $p = .05$ level.

Social Skills Survey

This measure was also completed by parents of summer program participants prior to and following their child's engagement in the program. The pre-test mean score on this instrument for program participants was 2.39 (std. deviation = .90). The post-test score yielded a mean of 3.07 (std. deviation = .50). The higher mean score on the post-program measurement indicates an increase in the child's demonstration of program-relevant social skills as perceived by parents. To determine the statistical significance of the difference in mean scores, a paired samples t-test was conducted. The results of this test indicated a correlation of -.009 ($p = .97$). The results of this statistical test indicate that the difference between the pre and post test scores on the social skills inventory are due to chance and not significant at the $p = .05$ level.

Family Interaction Inventory

This measure was completed by parents of summer program participants prior to and following their child's engagement in the program. The pre-test mean score on this instrument for program participants was 1.19 (std. deviation = .31). The post-test score yielded a mean of .92 (std. deviation = .30). The lower mean score on the post-program measurement indicates an increase in positive family interaction by the child as perceived by parents. To determine the statistical significance of the difference in mean scores, a paired samples t-test was conducted. The results of this test indicated a correlation of .42 ($p = .03$). This is a statistically significant finding at the $p = .05$ level.

Interpretation of Results

Evaluation Question 1:

Did the children's engagement in the Camp Challenge Summer Program contribute to improvements in children's social skills and a diminution of disruptive behavior?

The merit of the D & E Summer Program is evident in the reduction of socially disruptive behavior of children. Parents reported significantly less incidents of disruptive behaviors following the child's involvement in the program as indicated on the Ohio Scales measurement tool.

Reductions in disruptive behavior as self-reported by children in the program on the post measure of the Beck Youth Inventory could not be demonstrated. Similarly, improvements in the demonstration of increased social skills by participants in the program could not be demonstrated.

Discussion:

It is evident through this evaluation effort that parents perceive their child as having improved through the child's engagement in the Summer Program. Socially inappropriate behavior of the children diminished. Since parents perceptions of these

changes occurred in the fluid environment of the child's home environment, it may be reasonable to expect that these changes generalize to the school and other environments outside the family home. However, while socially inappropriate behavior diminished, the findings do not indicate that positive social skills have become any more evident as a result of the child's involvement in the program. This finding may be of some benefit to the program staff and planners in consideration of future social skills training programming for children. The finding that the children themselves perceived no change in their perception of their social skills may also be of benefit to program staff. One interpretation of this result may be that while parents were able to detect changes in the child's disruptive behavior, the children themselves have not altered their social identities as socially disruptive individuals. Planning for future programming may examine ways in which positive social skills are reinforced and methods through which changes to diminish disruptive behavior can become more strongly linked to a child's perception of self.

Evaluation Question 2:

Did the children's engagement in the Camp Challenge Summer Program contribute to an increase in positive family interaction of the children?

The merit of the D & E Summer Program is also evident based on the increase of positive family interaction of the children. Parents reported significantly more positive interaction with the parents and child's siblings following involvement in the summer program. The Family Interaction Inventory measured the frequency of positive social interaction between and among family members. This finding is of value as the improvements in the frequency of positive social interaction with family members reveal the child's capacity for improvements in social interaction that can potentially be generalized to school and peer relationships with others outside the family environment.