Triple P and Complex Cases: Enhancing Outcomes with Vulnerable Families

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At a glance

Strategies for improving outcomes

The many faces of complexity

Strategies for improving retention

Strategies for improving engagement
Why we need a multilevel system

Breadth of reach

- Intensive family Intervention
- Broad focused parenting skills training
- Narrow focus parenting skills training
- Brief parenting advice
- Media and communication strategy

Intensity of intervention

- Level 5
- Level 4
- Level 3
- Level 2
- Level 1
Five Key Principles of Positive Parenting

- Positive learning environment
- Consistent assertive discipline
- Reasonable expectations
- A safe and engaging environment
- Taking care of oneself
How Triple P can change lives
Many different ways cases can be complex
Characterising the families we serve

So who participates in Triple P?

**What child?**
- Developmental level
- Genetic vulnerability
- Prematurity
- Low birth weight
- Developmental disability
- Type and severity of behavior or emotional problem

**What parent?**
- Depression/anxiety
- High stress
- Couple discord
- Abusive parent
- Substance abuse
- Minority parents
- Indigenous
- Grandparent
- Foster

**What Family?**
- Unhappy couples
- Separated/divorced
- Incarcerated
- Step/blended family
- Single parent
- Teen parent
Change occurs within the family system
Parenting can facilitate treatment of co-occurring adult problems
How do we characterising providers

Who delivers Triple P?

What provider?
- Discipline
- Experience
- Training
- Specialist
- Non-specialist

In what setting?
- Clinic (inpatient, outpatient)
- Home
- School
- Child care
- Work
- Over the phone
- Web based

In what service delivery context?
- Mental health service
- Public health sector
- Welfare sector
- Education sector
- NGO/not for profit
How do we characterise interventions?

What intervention?

What level of intensity?
- Universal
- Selected
- Primary care
- Standard
- Enhanced

What mode of delivery?
- Individual
- Group
- Over the Phone
- Media based
- Web based
- Self directed

What variant?
- 0-12
- Teen
- Stepping Stones
- Lifestyle
- Family Transitions
- etc
The ultimate intervention question is becoming more complex.

**What intervention** by delivered by whom, in what context via which delivery modality is effective with what child problem, at what age in what family, cultural and community context? ...and how to the intervention effects come about?

Adapted from Gordon Paul (1969)
At a glance

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Why we need to improve participation

Parents with lower participation rates in universally offered programs

- Fathers in general, single parents, teen parents, minorities, refugees, parents living in extreme poverty, and indigenous parents
- Foster parents, step-parents, adoptive parents, kinship carers
- Parent with serious mental health or substance abuse problems
- Parents of children with chronic health problems
- Parents with disabilities and chronic health conditions
How do we promoting movement along the commitment trajectory?

- **Precontemplative**
  - Becomes aware of Triple P

- **Contemplative**
  - Intends to participate
  - Enrolls or registers

- **Ready for action**
  - Attends first session

- **Start**
  - Participates fully in program activities

- **Finish**
  - Completes all sessions

Movement along program completion trajectory
We need an ecological perspective to tackle complex problems.
Modifiable enablers & barriers

Outcomes

Motivational variables
- Perceived need
- Anticipated benefits/costs
- Incentives/disincentives
- Competing demands

Cognitive/Affective variables
- Expectancies of benefit
- Parental self efficacy
- Access to models
- Parental attributions

Program variables
- Crafting the message
- Providers-ethnicity, experience, skills
- Program format
- Cultural acceptability of parenting advice

Social influence Variables
- In home support
- Extended family support
- Community and neighborhood support

Parental anxiety about child’s behavior
- Perceived vulnerability
- Severity of child problem
- Level of parental distress or anxiety
Strategies for improving participation

Normalize participation

• “Stay Positive”
• Peer to peer testimonials
• Professional/opinion leader advocacy

Target normative developmental transition

• Transition to school/high school
• Establish participation targets
• Incentives for practitioners for recruitment efforts

Increase consumer engagement

• Focus groups
• Consumer preference data
• Link participation to other valued outcomes
Normalising participation
Strong advocacy
P2P advocacy
Strategies for improving outcomes

The challenges ahead

Strategies for improving retention

Strategies for improving engagement
Parents discontinue for many different reasons

- **Family factors**
  - Family crises—e.g., health problems, housing, suicide
  - Competing priorities (housing, employment problems)
  - Family violence/relationship problems

- **Personal factors**
  - Timing poor
  - Mental health/substance abuse problems
  - Lack of support
  - Low level of concern
  - Parents attributions

- **Program factors**
  - Got what they wanted
  - Parents unsure of commitment
  - Program poorly delivered
  - Literacy level demands
  - Cultural appropriateness
Within session strategies for improving retention

Enhance engagement
- Relevant examples
- Prompt/reinforce engagement
- Emotionally connect the parent to valued outcomes

Improve teamwork
- Encourage teamwork
- Be inclusive of extended family
- Teach conflict management strategies

Enhance social connectedness
- Build social momentum
- Encourage parents to share
- Engage consumers to help recruit other parents

Better outcomes for families
Strategies for improving outcomes

The challenges ahead

Strategies for improving retention

Strategies for improving engagement
Successful management of resistance is important

History of 10,000 defeats

Parental resistance
- “I won’t”
- “I can’t”
- Homework

Parent
- Depressed
- Anti-social
- High stress

Negatives emotion
- Anger
- Contempt
- Sadness
- Fear

Parents story about the history
- Attributions for child’s behavior
- Attributions about own behavior

LOW SES
- Low education
- Poverty

Practitioner behaviours that inadvertently support avoidance
Strategies for improving outcomes

- Use history and observation to decide which skills need work
- Address key “setting” events

Address key risk and protective factors

- Assess parental motivation to commit to requirement of a level
- Ensuring program offered meets expectation

Provide the right level of intervention

- Use SR framework
- SR has to be nurtured and developed gradually

Empower parents

Better outcomes for families
Focus on self-regulation capability

Self-regulation defined by Karoly (1993) as:
...those processes, internal and or transactional, that enable an individual to guide his/her goal directed activities over time and across changing circumstances (contexts). Regulation implies modulation of thought, affect, behaviour or attention via deliberate or automated use of specific mechanisms and supportive metaskills. (p.25).
Why is self regulation is important

Self regulation capacity

High

Positive life outcomes

• Better academic achievement
• Higher income, savings
• Better physical and mental health
• Better interpersonal relationships
• Higher happiness

Low

Negative life outcomes

• More aggression
• More criminal behaviour
• More depression
• More impulse control problems such as binge eating and alcohol abuse
Parents vary in self regulation capacity: Assess entry skills

- Has a clear sense of purpose
- Knows what behaviours, skills and values to promote as a parent
- Has realistic expectations
- Self-monitors automatically, rather than consciously or deliberately
- When personal standards/values are violated she brings her current behaviour under personal control
- Tunes into her own actions and searches for explanations
- Uses her knowledge to develop plans
- Carries out plan and revises as needed
- Expects to be successful and bring about good outcomes
- Is reflective, capable of identifying strengths and weaknesses, without being unhelpfully self critical
- Reflections increase her self efficacy
- Mostly enjoys the process
Using a self regulation framework to change behavior

Parental Self regulation

Self-management
Self-efficacy
Personal agency
Self-sufficiency

Minimally Sufficient Intervention

Reduced need for support
Practices that promote parental self-regulation

- Conveying respect in an emotionally supportive context
- Letting go of control through a “guided” model
- Challenging beliefs about clients needs to be rescued
- Avoid reinforcing self defeating behaviour and dependency
- Establishing expectancies that promote self regulation

Building a Collaborative Relationship
Techniques that promote parental self regulation

Using specific techniques

- Encouraging self determined goals
- Using prompts for self appraisal (“How did that go”?)
- Apply principles of the “minimally sufficient” intervention (decreasing praise/external reinforcers)
- Praise unprompted use of specific self regulatory skills
- Asking parents to share their reasons for decisions
- Reinforce appropriate generalization of parenting skills
Using program features that enhance outcomes

- Use flexible delivery
- Use preferred delivery format
- Use relevant examples
- Ensure advice is culturally acceptable
- Ensure program is no or low cost

Modifiable program variables
Using social influence to enhance outcomes

- Engage both parents (where relevant)
- Engage extended family (Grandparents)
- Involve friends and neighbors
- Provide program in a convenient location

Modifiable social support variables
Cognitive/affective strategies to enhance outcomes

Modifiable cognitive/affective variables

- Attribution retraining
- Ask parent to identify anticipated benefits of tasks
- Use peer models
- Prompt efficacy predictions
- Help develop appropriate expectations
Enhancing motivation

Motivational variables

- Speak to parents who have already completed
- Make parenting a priority
- Reduce competing demands
- Develop troubleshooting plan for dealing with barriers
Troubleshooting guide when parenting advice appears to fail

Things to check

- Poor implementation
- Competing influences/setting events
  - Sibling effects
  - Partner effects
  - Grandparent effects
- Additional parental stress
Ensure responsive delivery
Matching Triple P to clients needs

- Triple P works best when delivered with fidelity and as a multilevel system.
- Use of evidence-based practices does not mean inflexible, non-responsive delivery.
- Tailoring of process and content means responding to parents' needs.
- Doing Triple P well is skillful work, and experience matters.
Tailoring to meet needs of parents involves consulting with parents.
Responsive program delivery

Flexibility vs fidelity

Content variations
Low risk
High risk

Process variations
Low risk
High risk
## Content Variations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Risk</th>
<th>High Risk</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modify examples to make more relevant</td>
<td>Withholding information about certain strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modify steps from a tip sheet in a parenting plan</td>
<td>Suggesting parent stray from principles underlying the recommended parenting strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change focus of session from parenting to partner support to promote consistency</td>
<td>Combining a selection of Triple P strategies with other parenting programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Risk</td>
<td>High Risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More sessions</td>
<td>Advice to use or not to use specific strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session length</td>
<td>No agenda or session structuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session location</td>
<td>No review of homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School contact</td>
<td>Repeated abandoning of agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switch to briefer version</td>
<td>Always providing answers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual prep before group</td>
<td>Giving feedback without opportunity for parent self evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>More emphasis on practice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>and use of DVD</td>
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<td>Less emphasis on workbook</td>
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Take home messages

• A diverse range of parents and children with complex problems can benefit from Triple P
• There is real potential to improve engagement, participation, and outcomes for vulnerable families
• Don’t forget to become really good at delivering Triple P takes time and experience
Thank you for your attention

Q and A