

Preventing Emotional and Behavioral Problems in Children Living in Poverty

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Children at Risk

- Poverty toxic to children's health and well-being
- Higher rates of psychopathology
- Stable physiological impairments by age 5



Family Processes

- Poverty's stress damages families
 - Inter-parental conflict
 - Depression & substance abuse
 - Marital instability
 - ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
 - Parenting: parent-centered
 - ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
 - Child emotional/behavioral problems



Prevention

- Past efforts focus on proximal factors:
 - Parenting
 - Children's skills
- Current focus on more distal factors:
 - Inter-parental relationship
 - Parental coping



Fatherhood, Relationship, and Marriage Education (F.R.A.M.E.)

- 16-hour psychoeducation program
 - Based on PREP, CoPES, FaCES
- Strengthen inter-parental relationship
- Primary outcome: children's psychological health



Fatherhood, Relationship, and Marriage Education (F.R.A.M.E.)

- Targets (delivered to couples)
 - Conflict resolution
 - Positive communication
 - Coping with stress
 - Improving inter-parental support
 - Child-centered parenting
 - Parenting alliance



FRAME – Efficacy Study

- 300 two-parent families
- Incomes \leq 200% poverty line
- Co-parenting \geq 1 child
- Random assignment:
 - Control
 - Couples group
 - Dads group
 - Moms group



FRAME - Sample

- 104 families have complete post assessments

Ethnicity	Parents (N=208)	Children (N=104)
African American	38%	31%
Euro-American	36%	25%
Latino	17%	29%
Native American	7%	8%

- $M_{\text{child age}} = 8.3$ (range 2-18)
- $M_{\text{parent age}} = 36.3$ (range 19-62)



FRAME - Sample

- Parents:
 - 67% married
 - 13% co-habiting
 - 20% engaged
- Children:

CBCL - Raw	M _{Time 1}	M _{Time 2}	t(93)
Internalizing	6.9	6.4	ns
Externalizing	9.7	7.2	2.4, p<.02

Results – pre-post (parent) improvements

Parent conflict	m	f
Communication withdrawal	m	f
Escalation	m	f
Invalidation	m	f
Negative Communication	m	f
Parenting alliance	m	f
Parent-child warmth	m	f
Parent-child conflict	m	f
Alcohol use	m	f
Parent depression	m	f
Stress	m	f
Primary control coping	m	f

Results – Children's Symptoms

- Repeated measures GLM
 - DV: pre, post CBCL Internalizing & Externalizing
 - IV: parent pre-post difference scores
 - Covariates: parent gender, intervention group



	Internalizing	Externalizing
Parent conflict	7.4**	4.2*
Communication withdrawal	7.9**	4.9*
Escalation	7.7**	5.2*
Invalidation	7.3**	6.5*
Negative Communication	13.1***	8.8**
Parenting alliance	2.3	1.9
Parent-child warmth	0.4	0.1
Parent-child conflict	1.4	0.9
Alcohol use	1.8	0.7
Parent depression	11.0**	5.2*
Stress	0.4	1.9
Primary control coping	7.9**	3.2

Discussion

- Improvements on distal factors (**conflict resolution, depression, and coping**) → early child changes
- Proximal parenting → later child change?
- Supports focus on distal factors
- No differences according to intervention group or parent gender
- Spanish FRAME

