

Annual Research Review: interparental conflict and youth psychopathology: an evidence review and practice focused update

Article (Supplemental Material)

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Supplementary Table 1a: Synopsis of intervention evidence with programs targeting the inter-parental relationship, and parenting programs with a couple component in the context of (1): intact households (partners/couples); (2) Divorce; (3) Domestic violence

| 1. Intact Households (partners/couples) | | | | | | | |
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| (1a) Couple focused interventions in intact households (partners/ couples) | | | | | | | |
| Intervention | Type of intervention | Intervention details | Sample size | Study design | Findings (including effect sizes where available) | Identified evidence base | Country of origin |
| Bringing baby home (BBH) Shapiro & Gottman (2005) | Psycho-education | 2-day workshop to strengthen couple relationship & prepare for new parenthood. <i>Prenatal</i> | 38 (18 intervention; 20 wait-list control) | Randomly assigned to intervention or waitlist control. Couples expecting 1st baby or had a baby within last 3 months. | Maintained relationship quality. Associated with reduced postpartum depression, & hostility. Strong effect sizes evident for reducing competitive parenting | Shapiro et al. (2011) | US |
| Promoting fathers' engagement with children Cowan et al (2009) | Psycho-education | Aim to strengthen father relationship with children, in part by strengthening relationship with mother. Intervention either (1) couples group (2) fathers group or (3) single-session control group. Meetings 2-hours a week for 16 weeks. <i>Child age from 0 to 7 years (M=2 years)</i> | 371 (132 assigned to control group; 130 assigned to fathers group; 143 assigned to couples group) | RCT. Groups were 6-8 fathers or 4-6 couples. Child care provided during meeting. Pre-test, post-intervention 9 months after study | Both intervention groups showed positive effects with fathers' engagement with children, couple relationship quality, & child problem behaviors. Participants in couples' group showed more consistent longer term positive effects than father-only group. Results equivalent to Cohen's d statistic ranging between .40-.79. <i>Note: Intervention relevant to context divorce</i> | Cowan et al (2007) ; Pruett et al (2009) ; Pruett et al., (2012); Epstein et al (2016); Cowan et al (2014) | US (Mexican American & European American families) |
| Happy Couples Happy Kids (HCHK) Cummings et al. (2008) | Psycho-education | Intervention for improving inter-parental conflict in community families. 4-session psycho-education program about marital conflict. <i>Children age 4 – 8 years.</i> | Couples randomly blocked into 1 of 3 groups: (1) parent only group (n = 24); (2) parent–child group (n = 33); (3) self- | Random assignment to intervention groups; pre-post assessments. Pre- and post-test & 6-month and 1-year follow-up. | Improving parent knowledge about inter-parental conflict was effective across all assessments: greater constructive & less destructive inter-parental conflict was observed in all assessments for treatment groups. Couples also | Faircloth et al. (2011); Faircloth & Cummings (2008) | US |

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| | | | study group (n = 33). | | reported less hostility in front of children and improved conflict tactics. Changes linked to improvements in other family processes. Effect sizes ranged from $d = 0.72$ to 1.72 . Longer-term efficacy evident from a 2-year follow-up: treatment groups demonstrated improvements in constructive conflict ($d = 1.06$), including problem-solving behaviours ($d = .78$). | | |
| <p>Promoting strong African American Families (ProSAAF)</p> <p>Beach et al (2014)</p> | skills training/ Psycho-education | A culturally sensitive universal prevention program developed for African American communities. 6 weekly sessions with facilitator in family home. <i>Child aged 9-17 years</i> | 331 African American couples with children | RCT; Pre-post follow-up. Assigned (1) ProSAAF or (b) an information-only control (couples receive self-help materials). | Short -term program effects on couple communication ($\beta=.15-.27$). Long-term effects on self-reported arguing in front of children ($\beta=.10-.13$). Associated with changes in adolescent mental health including depression symptoms, substance misuse (odds 89% lower for ProSAAF group), and conduct problems (44% lower). | Barton et al ; McNeil Smith et al (2015) | US (African American Communities) |
| <p>Couple Relationship Education (CRE)</p> <p>Wilde & Doherty (2013)</p> | Psycho-education | For parents interested in staying together to raise child(ren) with marriage as a possible future consideration. Consisted of: in-home education & support, group education, social service referrals. Structured format. Focus: help couples increase knowledge about relationships, gain skills for relationship maintenance and improvements. Optional group education workshops (topics | 96 couples with a well-matched control group | Quasi-experimental design with matched control group. Couples recruited via social services, health clinics, and by mail to unmarried couples who had recently established paternity | CRE can help families achieve marriage if that is their goal. A meta-analysis of RE suggests medium effects in terms of improvements in couple communication ($d=.44$) & small increases in relationship satisfaction, ($d=.36$) immediately after RE. At 3-6 months follow-up there were medium effect | Hawkins & Erickson (2015); Bradford, Hawkins & Acker (2015); Halford et al. (2010); Blanchard et al. (2009); Bradley et al. (2011); Hawkins et al. (2008); Halford et al (2003); | US |

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| | | included money, intimacy, parenting together, commitment). | | | size improvements in couple communication (d= .45) & relationship satisfaction (d= .31). | Williamson et al (2016); Rauer et al (2014); Hawkins et al (2017) | |
| Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy Baucom et al. (2015a) | Cognitive behavioral therapy | 2 therapies: traditional behavioral couple therapy (TBCT) & Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy (IBCT). Randomly assigned to 8 months of TBCT or IBCT | 104 couples in randomized clinical trial of 2 behaviorally based couple therapies. Targeted at chronically & stably distressed married couples. | RCT; pre-post assessments. | Emotional arousal declined for all couples (ES of .86 for dyadic adjustment, & .85 for global distress). 2-year follow-up suggests IBCT superior to TBCT in terms of relationship satisfaction. At 5-year follow-up effect sizes more similar (IBCT d=1.03; TBCT d=.92). Has recently been trialed as an online version 'OurRelationship' (Doss et al., 2016) | Baucom et al (2015b); Christensen et al. (2004, 2006, 2010); Sevier et al. (2008); Jacobson et al. (2000); Morrill et al (2016); Roddy et al (2016); Barraca et al (2015); Doss et al (2014); Christensen & Doss (2017) | US |
| (1b) Parenting focused interventions with a couple conflict component in the context of intact households (partners/couples) | | | | | | | |
| Incredible years Hutchings et al (2009) | Psycho-education | 17/18 week 2-hour sessions. Advanced program includes dealing with adult relationship difficulties & problems solving <i>Child aged 8-16 years</i> | 299 families | BASIC & ADVANCED program delivered to parents of children at risk of conduct problems & antisocial behavior. Pre-post assessments. | At follow-up, improvements in parent depression & parenting skills (positive parenting d= .57). Also improvements observed in child behavior (d= .63 -.89). Meta-analysis (Menting et al., 2013) suggests for disruptive behaviors d=.27 (-.42, 1.01) & prosocial behavior d=.23 (-.46, .57). <i>Note: This intervention has relevance to context of domestic violence (Hurlburt et al., 2013)</i> | Webster-Stratton & Herman (2010); Webster-Stratton & Reid (2010); Reid, Webster-Stratton, Hammond (2003); Webster-Stratton (1999); (Hurlburt et al., 2013); Weeland et al. (2017); Hutchings et al (2017); | US; UK |

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| | | | | | | Gardner & Leijten (2017) | |
| Enhanced Triple P Sanders et al. (2000) | Psycho-education with skills training | Triple P focuses on core child management strategies. Enhanced triple P additionally includes topics on family dysfunction & includes home visits to enhance parenting & coping skills. Enhanced group triple P intervention involves 5 group sessions & 4 telephone consultations. <i>Child aged 3 years</i> | 305 families with children at increased risk of developing conduct problems | Random assignment to intervention groups (Standard; self-directed; enhanced) or waitlist control. Pre-post assessments. | Parents in enhanced group reported less dysfunctional parenting practices & greater sense of competence. Each intervention showed decreases in negative child behavior at follow-up with gains largely maintained at 1-year follow-up. ES available for less intensive triple p suggesting effect sizes for child outcomes = .42 post intervention and .37 at follow-up (de Graaf et al. 2008) | Au et al (2014) ; Sanders et al (2004, 2007) ; Ireland et al (2003); Hoath & Sanders (2002, 1999); Spijkers et al (2010); Frank et al (2015); Freedman et al (2002) | Australia; China |
| Cultural adaptation of Strong Foundation (adapted from Family Foundations) Lewin et al (2015) | Psycho-education | Co-parenting focused intervention. Intervention modified to be developmentally & culturally appropriate, acceptable, & feasible for use with urban, low-income, minority expectant teen mothers and their male partners. | 32 couples (Expectant mothers & fathers average age 17-18 years) | Pilot group pre-post design. | Pilot testing has shown that this model is both acceptable and feasible in this traditionally hard to reach population. Although recruitment and engagement in this population present specific challenges, young, urban minority parents are deeply interested in being effective co-parents, and were open to learning skills to support this goal. Effect Sizes not available. | Feinberg (2014); Feinberg & Kan (2008); Feinberg, Kan & Goslin (2009); Feinberg et al (2010); Solmeyer et al (2014) (all for Family Foundations) | US |
| 2. Divorce | | | | | | | |
| (2a) Couple focused interventions in the context of divorce | | | | | | | |
| Kids in Divorce & Separation (K.I.D.S) | Psycho-education | 4-hour parent-focused sessions to help parents improve management of conflict & inform them about impact of divorce on children. | 39 parents (17 intervention; 10 waitlist control; 12 | Random assignment to intervention group; | Increased knowledge about conflict/divorce issues. Decrease in destructive conflict. Reduced child | Pelleboer-Gunnink et al (2015) | US |

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| Shifflett & Cummings (1999) | | <i>Child age 7-13 years.</i> | control from existing parenting class) | pre-post assessments | emotional problems & enhanced mother- & father-child communication (ES ranged from .30-.63). | | |
| Mentalization Hertzmann et al (2016) | Psychotherapy | Aims to improve mentalization, the awareness of attachment and emotions impacts on relationships | 30 parents randomized to mentalization or a psycho-education program | Random assignment to intervention; pre-post assessments | Preliminary evidence of reductions in child-related conflict (ES= .13-.21) and parenting stress (ES= .17-.44). Reductions in parent depression (ES= .14-.41). Reductions in child mental health (ES = .03- 1.45). | Hertzmann et al (2017); Asen et al., (2010); Nyberg & Hertzmann (2014) | US; UK |
| (2b) Parenting focused interventions with a couple conflict component in the context of divorce | | | | | | | |
| Parent Management Training Oregon (PMTO) Bullard et al (2010) | Psycho-education with skills training | Manualized 13-session program. Sessions delivered in an individual family format. PMTO relates to 5 core parenting practices: skills encouragement, discipline, monitoring, problem solving & positive involvement. Additional areas include step-family specific issues (e.g. the role of stepparents). A brief marital enhancement component addressing issues such as communication & problems solving <i>Chil2016d age 5 – 10 years.</i> | 110 married biological mother & stepfather families. Focal child had to reside with step family at least 50% of the time & display 5+ conduct problem symptoms | Randomized experimental design. ITT analyses | PMTO group showed a mean increase in positive relationship processes (0.74, $p < .01$), but there was no such change in the control group (-0.15), and the group difference in change was significant ($Z = -2.60, p < .05$). The. There was no significant change in maternal relationship satisfaction in the PMTO group (-2.7) but a decrease in the control group (-9.6, $p < .05$). This group difference was significant ($Z = -1.97, p < .05$). There was no significant change in teacher-reported child behavior problems (5.0) in the PMTO group, but a significant increase in the control group (19.4, $p < .001$), a significant group | DeGarmo & Forgatch (2007); Forgatch, Patterson & DeGarmo (2005); Ogden & Amlund-Hagen (2008); Ogden et al. (2005); Wachlarowicz et al. (2012); Forgatch & DeGarmo (2011); Baumann et al. (2014); Sigmarisdóttir & Guðmundsdóttir (2013); Thijssen et al (2017); Forgatch & Kjølbi (2016); Maaskant et al (2016); Bekkema et al (2008) | US; Norway; Iceland |

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| | | | | | difference ($Z = 2.79, p < .01$). | | |
| Family Transitions Triple P (FTTP) Stallman & Sanders (2014) | Psycho-education with skills training | 12 week group-delivered positive parenting program. Focus on enhancing parental coping, communication, & conflict management skills, reducing dysfunctional parenting styles & parental adjustment issues. <i>Child age 2-14 years.</i> | 204 parents who had been divorced less than 2 years | RCT. Parents randomized to 1 of 3 conditions: FTTP-E with enhanced engagement; FTTP-S with standard engagement; waitlist control. | Parents in FTTP reported greater reductions in child behavior problems ($d=.03 - .43$) & coercive parenting ($d= .27-.29$) compared to waitlist controls. Sustained improvements in parental depression ($d=.22$), stress ($d=.29$), & anger ($d=.19-.34$), & improvements in co-parent communication ($d=.19$) and parenting ($d= .50-.78$) as well as sustained effects on child behavior ($d=.44-.56$). | Stallman & Sanders 2007 | Australia |
| New Beginnings Program (NBP) Sigal et al (2012) | Psycho-education with skills training | The Mother Program (MP) focused on improving mother-child quality and effective discipline, increasing father's access to the child, and reducing inter-parental conflict. The MPCP (mother and child program) also focused on improving effective coping, reducing negative thoughts about divorce stressors, and improving mother-child relationship quality. <i>Child age from 8 years</i> | 240 families | RCT of 2 prevention programs, a program for custodial mothers, mother program (MP), & dual-component program: mother plus child program (MPCP), for custodial mothers & their children. | Positive effects of the program on mother-child relationship quality ($d = .20 - .50$) & maternal discipline ($d=.10 - .20$). Associated impacts on child mental health ($d= .20 - .60$), risky behaviors & academic outcomes. Effects evident particularly for those at high-risk for developing problems at program entry. | Mahrer et al (2014); Zhou et al 2008; Herman et al (2015); Wolchik et al (2002; 2009a; 2009b; 2013; 2016; 1993); Leucken et al (2016); McClain et al (2010); Maurico et al (2017); Sandler et al (2017) | US |
| 3. Domestic Violence | | | | | | | |
| (3a) Adult focused interventions in the context of domestic violence | | | | | | | |
| Strengthening Relationships Toews & Yazedjian (2010) | Psycho-education & skills training | To support adolescent parents (primarily mothers) develop & maintain health relationships. Weekly group (n=10-30) meetings for 12 weeks. Topics: realistic relationship expectations; | 148 adolescent mothers | Post-intervention focus group interviews | Perceived program as effective in changing communication skill & promoting effective conflict resolution strategies. Focus | Toews et al (2011) | US |

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| | | improving communication & conflict resolution strategies | | | groups & narratives – ES not available | | |
| Young Parenthood Program (YPP) Florsheim et al. (2012) | Counselling administered to couples | 10-week co-parenting and intimate partner violence prevention program for young couples (first-time mothers aged 14-18 years & their partners). Assist in developing positive relationship skills & co-parenting skills; conflict management; communication skills; parenting | 105 pregnant adolescents & the biological father of their children recruited via prenatal clinics & schools | Random assignment to YPP (n=53) or control group (standard prenatal & social services provision). Assessments before birth, then 12 weeks & 18 months after birth | Impacts post-intervention: development of positive relationship skills ($\beta=.12-.29$), reduced paternal disengagement ($\beta=.25$). Improved co-parenting quality ($\beta=.25$). Also indirect effects of parental interpersonal skills on reduced abuse potential ($\beta=-.25$) and improved parenting ($\beta=.21-.28$) Evidence more effective for fathers (effects of intervention for mothers at follow-up n.s.). | Florsheim et al. (2011; 2012) | US |
| Couples Therapy for Intimate Partner Violence Karakurt et al (2016; meta-analysis) | Counselling administered to couples | Couple therapy aiming to end violence behaviors, decrease substance abuse, increase quality of inter-parental relationship, improve co-parenting & parenting skills. Focuses on communication & conflict resolution | meta-analysis of 6 studies | pre-post assessments | Reduction in perpetrator violence however caution needed given small number of studies with limited sample diversity. Meta-analysis results suggest can reduce IPV compared to active or no treatment groups (weighted mean difference = $-.84$, 95% CI $-1.37, -.30$). | Stith et al., (2011); Stith et al. (2004) Mendez et al (2014) | US |
| (3b) Parenting focused interventions with a couple conflict component in the context of domestic violence | | | | | | | |
| Caring Dads Scott et al (2005) | Psycho-education | Intervention aimed at fathers who have been abusive to their children &/or exposed their children to domestic violence. 17 week group intervention. Groups consist of 8-12 participants. | 45 men | Pre-post assessments. Clinical interviews. Approximately 1/3 lived with target child | Improvements in fathers' over-reactivity to children's misbehavior ($d=.31$), ability to co-parent ($d=.30-.40$), improve parenting ($d=.28$), | Scott & Crooks (2007); Scott & Lishak et al. (2012); Scott et al. (2003) | Canada |

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| | | | | | and ability to prioritize child's needs. | | |
| Early Start Fergusson et al (2005) | Psycho-education (Advisory support service) | Social Worker visited families to achieve a series of goals aimed at maximizing child & family health & well-being, & encouraging stable, positive partnerships (reduction of partner violence & partner conflict and improvements in partner relationships). <i>Child age from birth.</i> | 443 families (220 receive Early Start; 223 control group) | RCT. Families enrolled in program for up to 5years. Outcomes assessed 6 months, annually from year 1 to 6 years, and 9 years after trial entry. | Families showed reduced risk of hospital attendance for unintentional injury, lower harsh/ physical punishment, higher parenting competence scores, and more positive child behavioral adjustment scores (median effect size across all outcomes $d = .22$. range $-.03, .31$). | Fergusson, Boden & Horwood, 2013 | New Zealand |
| Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) Fennell & Fishel (1998) | Skills training | 8 week 1-hour group sessions. Groups for 5-11. An interdisciplinary team consisting of a nurse specialist (clinical pediatric nurse or public health nurse) or early childhood educator, a social worker, and a registered nutritionist. <i>Child age from birth. Has also been conducted with school children.</i> | 28 parents | Quasi-experimental design. Pre-post- test | After participating in STEP, abusive parents had significantly more positive perceptions of their children, positive effects on parenting styles & were significantly less potentially abusive. Effect sizes were moderate to high ($d = .38 - .95$) with the exception of maternal authoritative parenting ($d = .13$). Also decline in parenting stress ($d = .42$). Improvements in quality of family environment ($d = .26$) & parent-child interactions ($d = .45$). | Huebner (2002); Jonyniene et al (2015) | US |
| Colorado rethink parenting and anger management program (RETHINK) | Skills training | 6-week skill-enhancing workshops. Parents taught age-appropriate child development concepts. <i>Child age from birth to adolescence.</i> | 75 of 99 parents completed pretest and posttest assessments | A one-group pretest-posttest design with a convenience sample of parents was used for the study. | Family conflict levels dropped. Overall anger, violence & verbal aggression levels reduced. Partner violence, verbal aggression & physical aggression also reduced. Effect sizes from pre-test to follow-up were | Fetsch (1996); Fetsch et al (2008) | US |

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| Fetsch, Schultz & Wahler (1999) | | | | | small to medium (d=.20-.56). Participants reported increased knowledge (100% on self-reports), improved attitudes & behaviors (95% self-reports), & decreased unrealistic expectations of their children. | | |
| Steps Towards Effective, Enjoyable Parenting (STEEP) Suess et al. (2016) | Psycho-education | 8 sessions. Aim to enhance fathers' knowledge, skills & commitment to fatherhood role & increase mothers' support & expectations for fathers' involvement. <i>Child age 0-1 year.</i> | 78 mother-child infants. Control group n=29 mother-infant dyads | Pre-post assessments with control group | Mother-infants in intervention group showed more secure attachments with a medium effect size (d= .42). | Egeland & Erickson, 1993; Doherty et al (2006) | US; Germany |
| Fathers for Change Stover (2013) | Family Systems & CBT approach | 16 one-to-one or dyadic (father-child) 60-minute sessions over 4- to 6-months. Focus on parenting; co-parenting skills; improving family interactions; reduce aggression & substance misuse. Co-parent sessions include: Definitions, strengthening co-parenting, communication & problem solving skills. Offered individually with optional co-parent participation in a portion of sessions. <i>For fathers with children under 10 years.</i> | Pilot study of 10 fathers referred by Family Relations Counsellors from the court or Child Protection Services as a result of arrest for intimate partner violence | Pre-post assessments | All 10 fathers remained non-violence during program and reduced substance misuse. There was a significant reduction in total emotion regulation scores (d= .42) and all subscales (anger temperament, anger reaction and expression, (d= .34-.65). There were also significant reductions in negative affect, increases in anger control, and increases in co-parenting (d = .45) | Stover, 2015; Stover, Carlson & Patel, 2017 | US |
| Strong Fathers | Psycho-education, CBT & skills training | Referred by child welfare. 20 group sessions. Aim to help men learn how to relate in safe & caring way | 53 participants from first 6 groups | qualitative analyses & pre-post examination of | Preliminary evidence suggests children & mothers not endangered by partner | Pennell et al (2013); Pennell (2012) | US |

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| Pennell et al. (2014) | | with children, partners, former partners & other family members. Considered impact of violence on children. Learn about child development at different ages, positive parenting skills & how to co-parent with mother | | central registry databases | participation. Partner set goals were congruent with aims of program (almost 80% felt at least some goals had been achieved). Child protection data suggested decrease in family child protection findings & reduction in household domestic violence: at baseline 34/50 participants had at least 1 child on child protection register with 2 participants at post-intervention period. | | |
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