

2012

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Eowyn T. Gatlin

Minnesota State University Mankato

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Gatlin, Eowyn T., "Headway Emotional Health Services: A Parent Satisfaction Survey and Needs Assessment" (2012). *All Theses, Dissertations, and Other Capstone Projects*. Paper 554.

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Headway Emotional Health Services: A Parent Satisfaction Survey and Needs Assessment

Éowyn T. Gatlin

Agency Supervisor Susan Dannen, MSW, LICSW

Field Liaison Carol Goodeman

Academic Advisor David Beimers PhD.

Department of Social Work

Minnesota State University, Mankato



Introduction

Headway Emotional Health Services seeks to transform lives and restore families by providing a variety of quality mental health services to children and families in the Twin Cities Metro Area.

The Vision Program is a partnership between Headway and the Bloomington Public School system. The Vision Program serves K-12 students who qualify for level 3 Emotional and/or Behavioral Disability (EBD) services. All students are in a classroom at their mainstream school and receive daily support from the Vision Mental Health Specialist, a special education classroom teacher, and a paraprofessional. Many students are able to participate in some mainstream programming through the support they receive from the Vision team. Parental participation in therapeutic support services is a required component of Vision.

Purpose

To learn about the perceptions of parents of the Vision Program's therapeutic support services by answering the following questions.

- 1) Are parents satisfied with the Vision Program's Therapeutic Support Services?
- 2) Do parents perceive their child as improving or maintaining her/his level of functioning?
- 3) What other service needs do parents and families have, that are not currently being met by the Vision Program?
- 4) How can Headway improve services?

Literature Review Highlights:

Children who receive EBD service are often dealing with a myriad of emotional disturbances such as depression, anxiety, oppositional defiant disorder, and PTSD (Bath, 2008; Simpson, Peterson & Smith, 2012).

Children with EBD often have difficulty relating to peers, a hard time following rules at home and school, and often struggle in academic settings (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2002; Simpson, Peterson & Smith, 2012).

Many children who receive EBD services have experienced trauma such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, exposure to domestic violence, and neglect (Bath, 2008; Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2002).

Support for parents and parental involvement are essential components of effective interventions (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2002; Simpson, Peterson & Smith, 2012).

The SDQ is a widely used, brief assessment instrument that is shown to be effective at assessing children's level of functioning (Goodman, 1997.)

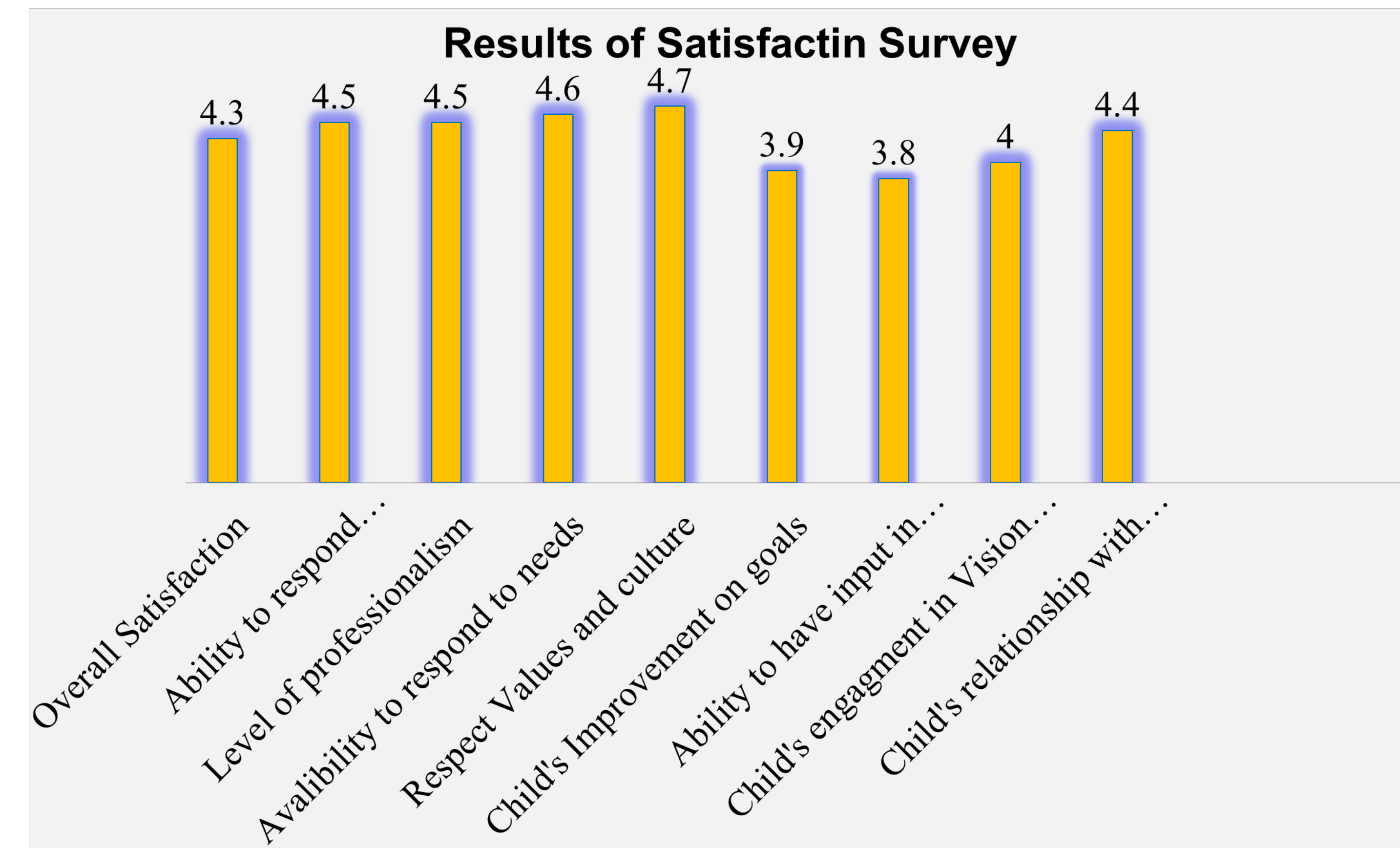
Methodology

The survey used three assessment measures to examine parental satisfaction.

Satisfaction Survey- Based on survey used in case management to enable assessment between programs. Consisted of 9 Likert-type questions and 2 qualitative questions. Likert scored between 1 (Poor) and 5 (Excelent)

Needs assessment- Contains 6 Likert- type questions and 2 qualitative questions. Likert scored 1(would *not* participate) to 3 (*would* participate)

SDQ- Used to assess parents perceptions of child's level of functioning. Results analyzed using Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet to establish mean scores and create graphs.



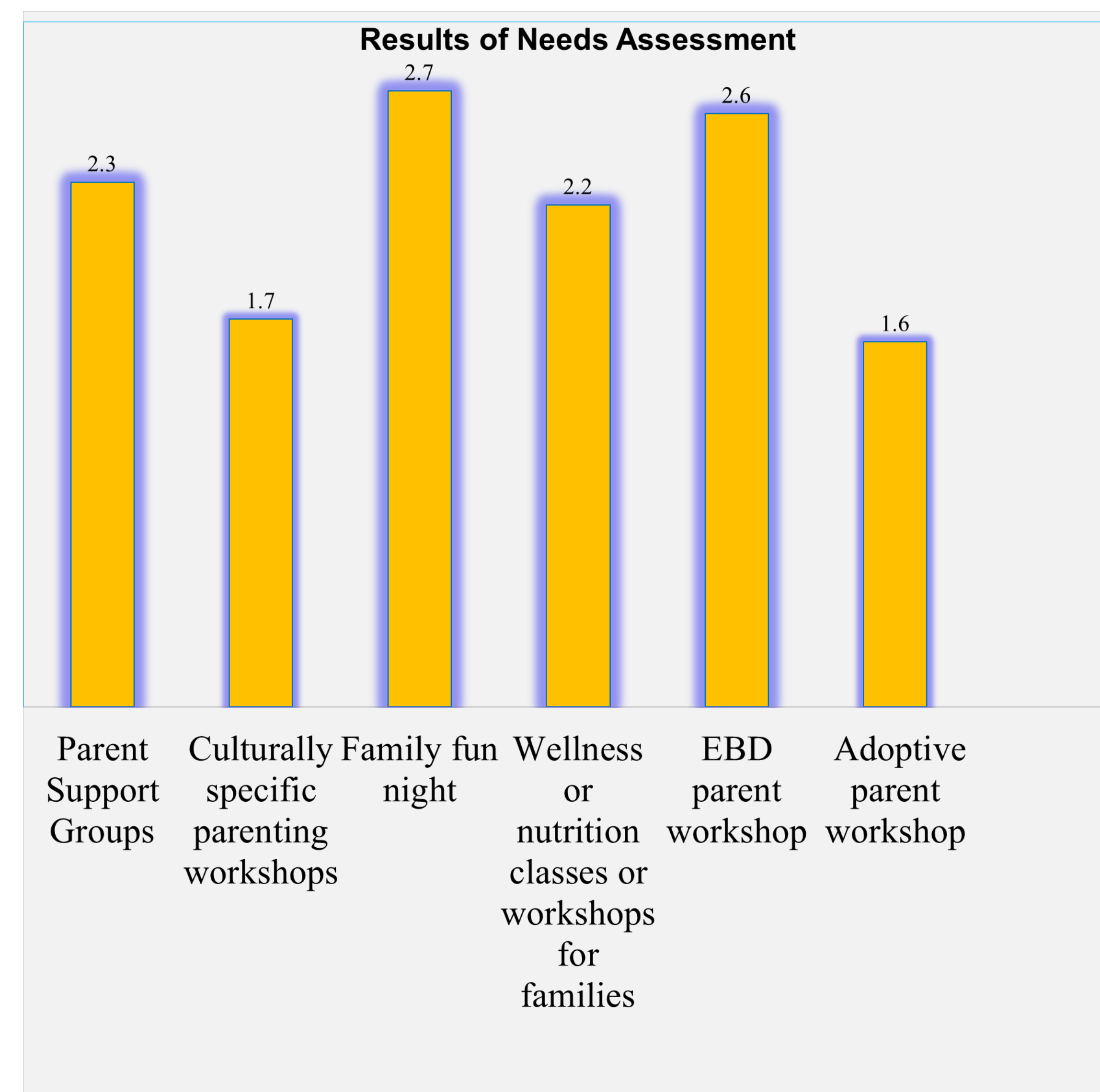
Respondent Quotes

What is working...

"The support Love Caring and Guidance that has been shown"
 "Learning coping skills"
 "Very Practical for day to day living"
 "The patience of a saint..."
 " I Always felt they were genuinely concerned..."
 "Thanks you...made an incredible difference in our lives"

How we can improve...

"More therapy time with my child would be beneficial"
 "A father/son group"
 "Family group and fun time"
 " Focus more on academics"
 "Help with respite care"



Key Findings

- 12 out of 24 parents returned the survey & 26 parents completed SDQ.
- All parents report scored in the good to excellent range for all questions on satisfaction survey. Highest -MHS ability to respect values and culture (m= 4.66) Lowest- Improvement on child's goals (m=3.91)
- Most likely to participate in Family fun night (2.66) Also likely to participate in parent support groups (2.53) and parenting class specific to EBD students (2.31)
- 66% of parents report their child improved or maintained their level functioning based on SDQ score. Over 90% of students improved or maintained level of school attendance.
- Families identified strength of relationship with MHS, specific skills learned, and convenience as the most beneficial components of the Vision Program therapeutic support services .

Conclusions

- 1) Parents are satisfied with the Vision Program's therapeutic support services and their relationship with their mental health specialist.
- 2) Most parents (66%) view their child as improving or maintaining level of functioning
- 3) Parents would like additional services specific to meeting the needs of students who receive EBD services, such as more family fun nights, parenting classes, and parent support groups.
- 4) Headway could improve services by helping parent access services identified on the needs assessment.

Recommendations:

- 1) Continue with current therapeutic support services as these are valued and helpful to clients.
- 2) Future surveys could have few qualitative questions and examine parents perceptions of academic services.
- 3) Headway should look into the service needs of parents in other programs such as day treatment, case management, and truancy to explore is EBD based parent support is needed by more families . If it is headway should consider developing program to meet these needs.

Strengths

Survey and Needs assessment can be used by other Headway programs. Needs assessment found several services all respondents expressed interest in. Report for Headway has a broad range of uses including: educating potential stakeholders, educating current stakeholders, guiding future research.

Limitations

Response rate of 50% could indicate a response bias. 3 of the qualitative questions had low response rates. Survey only asked about therapeutic component.

Implications for Practice

Based on the results of this project the Vision program seems to be successful and providing therapeutic support services to students in the Bloomington public school. It is possible, but more research is needed, that this type of program could be use by other districts to meet the needs of EBD students.

References available upon request.

