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An Analysis of the Re-Education Philosophy and the Applicability to Individual and Group Therapy, Psychoeducation and Skills

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Abstract

An evaluation was conducted of the Re-Education philosophy, current practices of individual and group therapy, skills training, and psychoeducation for Level IV special education students diagnosed with an emotional behavioral disorder and/or mental health diagnosis. An assessment of current evidenced based practices for school-based mental health services was integrated. This provided the foundation for recommendations that are congruent with the Re-Education philosophy and for an evaluation tool to measure student success in learning and comprehending the skills curriculums.

Research Questions

How is the Re-EDucation theoretical framework used to inform the therapeutic milieu of the Stepping Stones program?

Literature Review

- Re-ED was developed by Nicholas Hobbs in 1962 (Cantrell and Cantrell, 2007)
- Defined as a strength-based theoretical framework for working with children diagnosed with EBD (emotional behavioral disorder) to be used in conjunction with an EBP (evidence-based practice) such as Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports or Life Space Crisis Intervention (Cantrell and Cantrell, 2007; Norton, 2009; Bradshaw, et. al, 2008 and <http://www.lsci.org>).
- Re-ED is a promising practice for work with children and youth who are diagnosed with an EBD (Cantrell and Cantrell, 2007).
- Project Re-ED was originally utilized in a short-term residential program and was tested in public schools in the Prevention Intervention Project. During a four year research project it was determined that fidelity to Re-ED could be upheld (Cantrell and Cantrell, 2007).

Methodology

A systematic literature review was completed. A table detailing the date researched, full citation, key word search, search engine used and brief summary of the literature was maintained. Key word searches on Re-Education, school-based mental health, evidence-based practices for working with EBD students, social skills curricula and social-emotional learning measurements were all researched, reviewed and analyzed.

References

References are available from the author upon request.



Twelve Principles of Re-EDucation

- Life is to be lived now, not in the past, and lived in the future only as a present challenge.
- Trust between child and adult is essential, the foundation on which all other principles rest, the glue that hold teaching and learning together, the beginning point for re-education.
- Competence makes a difference; children and adolescents should be helped to be good at something, and especially schoolwork.
- Time is an ally, working on the side of growth in a period of development when life has a tremendous forward thrust.
- Self-control can be taught and children and adolescents helped to manage their behavior without the development of psychodynamic insight; and symptoms can and should be controlled by direct address, not necessarily by an uncovering therapy.
- The cognitive competence of children and adolescents can be considerably enhanced; they can be taught generic skills in the management of their complex array of demands placed on them by family, school, community or job; in other words, intelligence can be taught.
- Feelings should be nurtured, shared spontaneously, controlled when necessary, expressed when too long repressed, and explored with trusted others.
- The group is very important to young people; it can be a major source of instruction in growing up.
- Ceremony and ritual give order, stability and confidence to troubled children and adolescents, whose lives are often in considerable disarray.
- The body is the armature of the self, the physical self around which the psychological self is constructed.
- Communities are important for children and youth, but the uses and benefits of the community must be experienced to be learned.
- In growing up, a child should know some joy in each day and look forward to some joyous event for the morrow.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths include a thorough multidimensional literature review, in school observations, personal communication with Re-ED experts, review of current practices and recommendations for the implementation of EBP's. Limitations include the analysis of this research being very analytical and subjective to opinion and interpretation and the information contained in this research is specific to the Stepping Stones Program and may not be applicable to other special education programs for children and youth with Emotional Behavioral Disorders (EBD).

Conclusions & Recommendations

Overall the Stepping Stones program utilizes and implement many aspects of the Re-ED strength-based theoretical framework. Recommendations include

- Additional training for the Stepping Stones on Re-ED.
- Clarify and train the evidence-based practice intervention being utilized in conjunction with Re-ED.
- Purchase and utilize the curricula identified in the Executive Summary that are determined to be in congruence with the Re-ED strength-based theoretical framework.
- Implement the Social Skills Improvement System Rating Scale three times per year (beginning, middle and end of each school year) to help determine skill deficits and skill acquisition over time.

Implications for Practice

The Stepping Stones program will have the opportunity to increase training for program staff and to improve programming to the students that is reinforced by the Full Value Contract and the Twelve Principles of Re-EDucation. The Stepping Stones program will have the ability to utilize the recommendations for therapeutic and skills curricula that are congruent to the Re-ED theoretical framework to help reinforce the values in a more holistic manner. If the program chooses to implement the Social Skills Improvement System Rating Scale, they will have the opportunity and ability to measure the success of the therapeutic and skills implementation.

To the children of our nation whose hope lies in our caring and whose futures are our trust.

~Nicholas Hobbs