

Biological Mothers and Fathers Attending a Parenting Intervention Alone Versus Together: An Investigation of the Effectiveness of Connect

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BACKGROUND

- » Studies on the effectiveness of parenting programs have traditionally failed to disaggregate the effect of these programs for fathers and mothers.¹
- » Little is known about the effectiveness of parenting programs for fathers or how the effectiveness of parenting programs differ between mothers and fathers.
- » Furthermore, there is a void in the literature regarding the effect of parental co-participation on parenting programs.
- » The effectiveness of an attachment-based parenting program has not been tested independently for fathers and co-participating parents.

CONNECT^{®2}

- » Manualized attachment-based parenting program.
- » 10 sessions.
- » Teaches attachment principles in order to enhance secure parent-child attachment.
- » Uses experiential exercises (e.g., role-plays, reflective exercises).
- » Effective in reducing externalizing and internalizing behaviours, affect dysregulation, and levels of anxious and avoidant attachment.²

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is Connect independently effective for bio. mothers and fathers attending together or alone?
2. Do bio. mothers and fathers attending alone or together benefit differentially from participating in Connect?

PARTICIPANTS

- » Bio. mothers attending alone (N= 553).
- » Bio. fathers attending alone (N= 72).
- » Bio. mothers attending with bio. father (N= 77).
- » Bio. father attending with bio. mother (N= 77).

MEASURES

- » Youth and parental outcomes were collected from parental reports at pre- and post-treatment.
- » Measures used:
 - › Brief child and family phone interview (BCFPI).³
 - › The affect dysregulation checklist (ARC).⁴
 - › Comprehensive adolescent-parent attachment inventory (CAPAI).⁵
 - › Parental sense of competence scale (PSOC).⁶
 - › Conflict tactics scale (CTS).⁷

DISCUSSION

- » All groups of parents, regardless of gender or co-participation status, benefited from Connect.
- » Mothers attending alone reported more significant benefits across youth and parental outcomes than any other group.
- » Mothers, regardless of co-participation status, reported significant reductions in anxious and attachment avoidance.
- » Fathers and co-participating parents benefitted from Connect.
- » No evidence for differential effectiveness was found in this study.

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RESULTS

	Attending Alone		Attending Together	
	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers
BCFPI				
Ext. Beh.	0.48**	0.41	0.61	0.53
Int. Beh	0.35**	0.42	0.34	0.39
ARC				
Dysregulation	0.42***	0.46***	0.52***	0.53***
Suppression	0.17***	0.01	0.19	0.41***
Reflection	0.26***	0.26	0.44***	0.19
CAPAI				
Anxiety	0.18***	0.13	0.33*	0.08
Avoidance	0.28***	0.26	0.34*	0.48***
CTS				
Aggression	0.47***	0.42*	0.50***	0.41**

TABLE 1. Effect sizes and significance levels for youth outcomes.

	Attending Alone		Attending Together	
	Mothers	Fathers	Mothers	Fathers
BCFPI				
Mood	0.23	0.29	0.16	0.23
PSOC				
Satisfaction	0.48***	0.35*	0.48***	0.28*
Efficacy	0.49***	0.42***	0.53***	0.35**
ARC				
Dysregulation	0.36***	0.37*	0.48***	0.20**
Suppression	0.10	0.08	0.24	0.13
Reflection	0.15***	0.21	0.21	0.36***
CTS				
Aggression	0.57***	0.47***	0.59***	0.61***

TABLE 2. Effect sizes and significance levels for parental outcomes.

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