Implementing a Family-Based Treatment for Youth Depression

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PRESENTATION GOALS: TO DESCRIBE...

• Attributes of preadolescents
• Characteristics of preadolescent depression
• How our Family Focused Treatment (FFT) addresses these factors
• The FFT model and give examples
• Review the design of our RCT!
WHAT’S DIFFERENT ABOUT PRE-ADOLESCENTS?

- Dependency on Parents
- Primacy of the Family
- Cognitive Developmental Limitations
  - Metacognition
  - Abstract thinking
- Need for active learning
What do we know about pre-adolescent depression?

- Less common than depression in adolescence.
- Frequently severe, persistent, recurrent.
- Often presents with irritability and social withdrawal.
- Can lead to more criticism toward parents.
- Parental criticism can predict worse course.
- High degree of familiality.
How did we design a Family Treatment for Preadolescents?

- Individual psychoeducation.
- Inclusion of parents in most sessions.
- Focus on interpersonal coping.
- Activities in small “digestible” pieces.
- Fun, active, engaging.
- Opportunity to practice.
- A CLEAR AND SIMPLE RATIONALE.
Mood

Interpersonal Relationships
Really Good Mood

She Says “Yes”

Ask Mom to do Something Fun

Feel Even Better

Says “Thanks”

Volunteer to Help Mom Set the Table

Good Mood

Upward Spirals in Families
Feeling Irritable
Snap at Child
Child gets mad
Feel worse
Yell at Child
Child cries and goes to room
Feel terrible

Downward

Spirals in

Families
Rationale and Major Goals

- To “Stop downward spirals”
- To “Start upward spirals” and “keep them going”
What does our FFT look like?

- Individual Feedback to Parents and Child
- Interpersonal Model of Depression
- Identifying Interpersonal Processes
  - Upward Spirals
  - Downward Spirals
- Skills Building
  - Communication Skills
  - Increasing Positives
  - Problem-Solving Skills
### Catching Upward Spirals Exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Person who did something nice</th>
<th>What they did</th>
<th>How it made you feel</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
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**Examples:**
- Looking Good
- Cooking Meals
- Having a Chat
- Offering to Help
- Being Considerate
- Being on Time
- Work in Yard
- Smiling
- Making a suggestion
- Going Out
- Helping at Home
- Coming to session
- Going to Work
- Doing Homework
- Taking Medicine
Saying What You Liked

- Look at the Person
- Say Exactly what they did that you liked
- Tell them how it made you feel
Saying What You Didn’t Like

- Look ‘em in the eye
- Tell exactly what bothered you
- Tell how it made you feel
- What they can do in the future
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>WHO DID WHAT YOU DIDN’T LIKE</th>
<th>WHAT DIDN’T YOU LIKE</th>
<th>DID YOU?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Mom</td>
<td>She let my brother play my Gameboy</td>
<td><img src="checkmark.png" alt="Check" /> <img src="checkmark.png" alt="Check" /> <img src="checkmark.png" alt="Check" /> <img src="checkmark.png" alt="Check" /></td>
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<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>WHO’S INCLUDED?</td>
<td>WHEN DO WE DO THIS?</td>
<td>DID IT HAPPEN?</td>
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**HOW MUCH FUN WAS IT?**

1. Boring
2. A little fun
3. Pretty fun
4. Really fun
Case Example: Emily

- 9 year old girl
- Intact family
- Middle of three siblings
- Mother works part-time
- Father travels frequently

- Dysthymic Disorder
- Prominent Symptoms:
  - Frequent irritability – “grumpy”
  - Withdrawal from family members
  - Sad mood
  - Low energy

Mother: Very frustrated and hopeless about the relationship, feels child “hates” her.
Early and Middle Treatment

- Giving one another positive feedback
- Active listening skills
- Communication “games”.
- Planning fun activities
- Relationship enhancement

- Identifying positive interactions
- Upward Spirals
- Identifying negative interactions
  - Downward Spirals
- Normalizing conflict
Figure 3. Emily’s Downward Spiral

### Randomized Clinical Trial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Randomization</th>
<th>Post-TX</th>
<th>4 Months</th>
<th>9 months</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UCLA:</strong> N = 73</td>
<td>FFT (n = 38)</td>
<td>Follow-up</td>
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<td>IP (n = 35)</td>
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<td><strong>BU:</strong> N = 65</td>
<td>FFT (n = 33)</td>
<td>Follow-up</td>
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Thank you!

Questions?