

Determining the effectiveness of interventions for NIP-YFV

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Abstract

Youth to family violence or Non-Intimate – Partner Violence (NIP-YFV) is a serious issue affecting youth, families, and communities (Sainato, 2018). NIP-YFV is any physical or psychological harm committed by the youth against a family member. This article is a follow-up to Sainato's (2018) study which was one of the first to analyze NIP-YFV interventions for effectiveness with violent youth. Four factors were identified as pivotal to the intervention/treatment success. This article further explores these identified factors to conceptually understand why they are effective in addressing violent youth. This article also explores how social work professionals can effectively address violent youth through a practitioner, policymaker, and researcher lens while meeting ethical guidelines of the profession. Implications and recommendations are further discussed to build on this study to take a step towards reducing and eliminating NIP-YFV.

Keywords: non-intimate partner violence; family violence; youth violence; youth to parent violence; youth violence interventions

Introduction

Youth to family violence or Non-Intimate – Partner Violence (NIP-YFV) is a serious issue affecting youth, families, and communities (Sainato, 2018). Non-Intimate Partner – Youth Family Violence (NIP-YFV) is "any act by a child that intimidates the parent to gain power and control and is aimed at causing them physical, psychological, or financial harm" (Cottrell, 2001, p.107). NIP-YFV is a serious issue as evidenced by the report from The National Center of Juvenile Justice reporting over "100,000 violent acts committed by youth against a family member in 2013 alone with most of these acts consisting of physical assault (80.7%) and intimidation (11.1%)" (Puzzanchera, Smith, & Kang, 2015, para 2). Understanding why interventions are effective for youth to parent violence is critical for social workers because they have an ethical obligation to "monitor and evaluate policies, the implementation of programs, and practice interventions" (National Association of Social Workers, 2017, 5.02A). social

workers work with youth and families in a variety of settings including child protective services, foster care and mental health agencies. This article aims to aid social workers to meet their ethical guidelines by implementing effective evidence-based interventions with violent youth. In order to implement “best practices”, this study identifies and explains why certain factors are important for treatment success and the strong and weak methods studies implement to address these factors. Last, the implications for social work practitioners, policymakers, and researchers are discussed.

Identified Factors of Treatment Success for NIP-YFV

Identifying the reason a treatment is or is not successful is important for social work practitioners as they work with their clients. Sainato (2018) identified four factors related to treatment success with NIP-YFV including intervention/treatment, participants, research methodology, and measurement. The following sections define and provide examples of each factor, explain and provide strong and weak methods to address the factors.

Intervention/Treatment Factor

The intervention/treatment factor consists of any family, individual or combination utilized in NIP-YFV interventions. Also, any training for the therapists as required as part of the therapeutic intervention. For example, therapists being trained in Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) as the therapeutic modality chosen to address violent youth.

Beyond defining the intervention/treatment factor, this section describes strong and weak methods studies use to address this factor. Studies that utilize a combination of both individual and family therapy is a stronger method to address the intervention/treatment factor than studies that utilized one or neither therapy (Borduin et al., 1995; Chamberlain & Reid, 1998; Sexton & Turner, 2011). A search of the literature found several studies (Scherer et al., 1994; Eddy et al., 2004; Jordan et al., 2013) that utilize strong methods (both individual and family therapy) as well as several studies that did not (Caspi et al., 2008; Patterson, 2002; Portwood et al. 2011). Within the intervention/treatment component, training is a critical component. Training of the therapists adds strength to the study and because “the perceived and declarative knowledge increases and holds true across treatment modalities and therapists” (Beidas & Kendall, 2010, p.20). Based on this evidence, several studies (Henggeler et al., 1992; Leve & Chamberlain, 2005; Caldwell & Van Rybroek, 2001) used this strong method whereas other studies (Rybski, 1998; Hogue et al., 2002; Caspi et al., 2008) did not. Utilizing both types of therapies (family, individual) as well as training for the therapists provides a strong method studies can use to address the intervention/treatment component. The next section discusses the participant factor.

Participants

The individuals who take part in NIP-YFV interventions play a vital role in the success the intervention has on violent youth. Participants include any individuals (youth, parent, siblings) who take part in the treatment. Participation consists of being part of the therapy or other methods including parent interview or observation reports of the violent youth. Involvement of both the youth and parent are key because “parents have a significant impact on the lives of their children and this if the parents are actively working in treatment, it is more likely that they will be making changes that will result in an environment more conducive to positive youth outcomes” (Karver et al., 2006, p.59). Another review of the literature shows several studies (Borduin et al., 1995; Ogden & Halliday-Boykins, 2004; Dekovic et al., 2012)

included both youth and families in the treatment process whereas other studies (Caldwell et al., 2006; Nowakowski & Mattern, 2014; Santisteban et al., 2003) did not. Involving both the youth and parents in the treatment brings strength to the study and increases the likelihood of treatment success. The next section discusses the factor of research methodology is important to treatment success for NIP-YFV.

Table 1.1 Hierarchy of Evidence (Higgins & Green, 2011)

Level	Description
1	Experimental studies (e.g., RCT with concealed allocation)
2	Quasi-experimental studies (e.g., studies without randomization)
3	Controlled observational studies
3 A	Cohort studies
3 B	Case-control studies
4	Observational studies without control groups
5	Expert opinion based on theory, laboratory research or consensus

*Level 3 is separated into A and B to distinguish with cohort studies being a higher level of evidence than case-control studies

Based on the table, Level 1 (RCTs) is the highest level of evidence and Level 5 (Expert opinion) is the lower level of evidence. There is another evidentiary support that shows the strength of RCTs "is the best evidence" (Petrisor & Bhandari, 2007, p.12) when analyzing interventions. According to this evidence, several strong and several weak studies were identified through a review of the literature. Studies that used a strong research methodology (RCTs) include Wagner et al., (2014); Ogden & Hagen, (2006); Caldwell (2011) and weaker research methodologies (Case-control) were used in Jordan et al., (2013); White et al., (2013); and Butler et al., (2011). The research methodology factor is another way to help determine the effectiveness of the interventions as they address NIP-YFV. The following section defines and describes measurement as the last factor for treatment success.

Measurement

The factor of measurement consists of any instruments or methods the intervention used to measure characteristics related to youth violence. For example, a study may use an anger scale to measure the anger or aggression in the youth. In the study conducted by Jordan et., (2013), the measurement, Navaco Anger Scale and Provocation Inventory (NASPI) was utilized. NASPI measures arousal, cognition, provocation, anger regulation, and behavior. Other measurement methods may include interviews of the youth or parent and observation reports completed by the parent to measure any violent acts by the youth. These are just a few of the ways interventions can measure violence in youth. According to Rubin and Babbie (2005), a strong measurement must include high reliability/validity, use triangulation, and address both the interpersonal and personal factors related to NIP-YFV. Reliability is important because it demonstrates the consistency in findings and the ability to replicate the study. Validity is also important because it determines the overall accuracy to show if the measure is actually measuring the factors it is targeting. Triangulation helps increase the reliability and validity of the findings because it uses multiple methods to measure a certain factor. For example, if the study wanted to measure recidivism in the youth, they can use a measure such as arrest reports, interview the youth, and obtain observations reports by the parent. Each of these helps determine if violence as reduced and does not rely on one single measure to determine effectiveness. Once again, a review of the literature was completed to identify studies that used strong and weak methods of measurement in addressing NIP-YFV.

Results found multiple studies used strong methods including Ogden & Halliday-Boykins, 2004; Henggeler et al., 1997; Scherer et al., 1994 and other studies (Caldwell & Van Rybroek, 2001; Sexton & Turner, 2011; Portwood et al., 2011) used weaker methods.

Discussion

This paper described the serious issue of NIP-YFV along with four identified factors (intervention/treatment, participants, research methodology, measurement) for treatment success. Each factor was described, the importance it has for treatment success, and studies that used strong and weak methods to address each factor. It is important to note that studies that use a strong method to address one factor (e.g. participants) do not guarantee effectiveness. This study demonstrated the need to address all four factors. Studies that implement strong methods in all four factors have a higher likelihood of success than studies that do not. The next section discusses the implications of this study has on social work practitioners, policymakers, and researchers.

Study Implications

This study's aim was to demonstrate effective methods in addressing NIP-YFV, and provide evidentiary support for social work practitioners, policymakers, and researchers working with violent youth.

Practice Implications

There are several practice implications social work practitioners should consider. First, based on the evidentiary support of utilizing both family and individual therapy as the strongest method in working with youth (Borduin et al., 1995; Chamberlain & Reid, 1998; Sexton & Turner, 2011). Social work practitioners should strive to provide or ensure violent youth are using both therapies. Second, based on the findings that youth and parents participating in treatment produce better results (Karver et al., 2006) than only youth or parents in the intervention. social workers should involve the parents in some direct or indirect method such as therapy, interview, or observation. Third, social workers who work with violent youth should be encouraged to use multiple methods to measure violence. This will help ensure the accuracy and an overall reduction in violence.

Policy Implications

Along with the practice implications, there are several implications for social work policymakers. First, based on the evidence presented of the strong methods to address these factors, social workers should be advocates for their clients. As policymakers, social workers can create or support policies that mandate any intervention with violent youth include strong methods for addressing the factors. For example, social work policymakers should encourage the inclusion of both youth and family therapy as part of the treatment protocol based on evidentiary support. Second, social workers can again create or support a policy that uses strong research methodologies such as RCTs as it has shown to be the best evidence" (Petrisor & Bhandari, 2007, p.12). Third, juvenile courts can examine what punishment they give NIP_YFV youth. For example, instead of jail time, court can mandate therapy for the client and family. Last, another policy could reflect on how police officers address this situation when they arrive. By educating police officers, they can provide support and resources to the family instead of arresting and

removing the youth from the home. Policymakers can be advocates and help create changes interventions can utilize to effectively address NIP-YFV

Research Implications

The previous sections discussed the practice and policy implications social workers should consider. Along with these implications, this section discusses several implications social work researchers can implement. First, this study is among the first to analyze the effectiveness for interventions for NIP-YFV. Due to this fact, more research is needed to identify and analyze other studies' interventions for effectiveness. Second, Sainato (2018) was the first to analyze the NIP-YFV interventions using a systematic review and narrative synthesis. Future research can implement new methods such as a meta-analysis to evaluate the interventions. Last, this study discussed the four factors related to treatment success with NIP-YFV. Future research can evaluate if other factors should be included and help determine if the four factors (intervention/treatment, participants, research methodology, measurement) should be given different weight in determining effectiveness.

Conclusion

Determining the effectiveness and evaluating interventions is an important part of social work as they work with clients to provide "best practices" and meet their ethical obligations. This study provides an evidence base social workers can use in any NIP-YFV area (practice, policy, research). In addition to this evidence base, this study provides some recommendations for social work practitioners, policymakers, and research can implement as they work with violent youth. This was a first step in addressing NIP-YFV, but more is needed to help reduce and eliminate youth to parent violence.

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