Youth Outcomes Following Family Centered Treatment® in Maryland

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Family Centered Treatment® (FCT) is among the practices used in Maryland to reduce out-of-home placements for youth involved with the juvenile justice system. FCT provides services in youths’ home communities, within their families. Previous research has supported the effectiveness of FCT, and it appears in three registries of promising or effective programs for youth and families. The current project represents a larger, independently led study of the intervention. The following report summarizes findings from an external evaluation of FCT, with a focus on outcomes, cost, and program elements.

Highlights from Findings

Utilization
- The study includes a total of 1,246 youth who started FCT between fiscal years 2009 and 2013.
- Most youth admitted to FCT during the study period were between the ages of 15 and 17 years old (75%), and the average age at admission just over 16 years old. The majority of youth were male and African American/Black.
- Fidelity to the FCT practice model was high, with average fidelity to specified treatment activities exceeding 75% in fiscal years 2011-2013 (the years in which fidelity data was consistently captured in client records). Over 85% of the sample met FCT’s definition of engaged in treatment (11 or more direct contacts).
- Fidelity and engagement in treatment were not significantly related to justice system outcomes, but dosage as measured by length of treatment was significant in most models of later outcomes. Longer FCT treatment spells were associated with decreased odds of juvenile adjudication, adult conviction, and adult incarceration.

Costs
- With shorter lengths of stay and a lower daily cost, the initial intervention cost for FCT was $30,170 less per youth than group home placement for a statistically equivalent comparison group, on average.
- Accounting for initial intervention costs and any additional residential placement costs during the first 12 months after the start of each intervention, FCT costs were an estimated $41,729 less per youth, on average, for the FCT group as compared with the control group, who were placed in group homes. From 12 to 24 months post-admission, costs were $20,339 lower on average for FCT youth.

Outcomes
- Relative to a statistically equivalent comparison group of youth who received group care, youth participating in FCT were significantly less likely to be committed in the juvenile justice system and to experience arrest resulting in conviction or sentences of incarceration in the criminal justice system.
- No significant difference was found between youth receiving FCT and group care on re-adjudication in the juvenile justice system.
- Among a matched subsample of youth ages 16 and over at initiation of treatment, FCT participants were significantly less likely to experience adult arrest leading to conviction or a sentence of incarceration than youth served in group care.
- Analysis of a matched female subsample showed non-significant differences between FCT participants and group care participants; relatively few female youth experienced the outcomes evaluated in the current research.