

Choice Theory/Reality Therapy for children with disruptive behavior

Children's Mental Health: Disruptive Behavior

Literature review updated July 2018.

As part of WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies, WSIPP determines "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using an approach called meta-analysis. For detail on our methods, see our [Technical Documentation](#). At this time, WSIPP has not yet calculated benefits and costs for this topic.

Program Description: Choice Theory/Reality Therapy (CT/RT) is a program for parents of elementary students with repeated disciplinary referrals, typically three or more referrals during one school year. These referrals were due to a child's defiance and/or physical or verbal abuse towards others. The program is delivered by a trained therapist in nine 90-minute weekly parent training group lessons. CT/RT provides both instructional handouts and homework for the parents. The program focuses on responding to the child's needs, teaching self-control by example, and parenting in an authoritative way (rather than an authoritarian or a permissive way). Authoritative parenting sets limits in keeping with the child's development and creates a supportive environment in the home.

Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Adjusted effect size and standard error			Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)	
			ES	SE	Age	ES	p-value
Disruptive behavior disorder symptoms	1	15	-0.110	0.372	9	-0.479	0.212
Internalizing symptoms	1	15	-0.101	0.372	9	-0.441	0.248
Office discipline referrals	1	15	-0.215	0.373	9	-0.938	0.017

Meta-analysis is a statistical method to combine the results from separate studies on a program, policy, or topic in order to estimate its effect on an outcome. WSIPP systematically evaluates all credible evaluations we can locate on each topic. The outcomes measured are the types of program impacts that were measured in the research literature (for example, crime or educational attainment). Treatment N represents the total number of individuals or units in the treatment group across the included studies.

An effect size (ES) is a standard metric that summarizes the degree to which a program or policy affects a measured outcome. If the effect size is positive, the outcome increases. If the effect size is negative, the outcome decreases.

Adjusted effect sizes are used to calculate the benefits from our benefit cost model. WSIPP may adjust effect sizes based on methodological characteristics of the study. For example, we may adjust effect sizes when a study has a weak research design or when the program developer is involved in the research. The magnitude of these adjustments varies depending on the topic area.

WSIPP may also adjust the second ES measurement. Research shows the magnitude of some effect sizes decrease over time. For those effect sizes, we estimate outcome-based adjustments which we apply between the first time ES is estimated and the second time ES is estimated. We also report the unadjusted effect size to show the effect sizes before any adjustments have been made. More details about these adjustments can be found in our [Technical Documentation](#).

Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

Petra, J.R. (2000). *The effects of a choice theory and reality therapy parenting program on children's behavior*. (Doctoral Dissertation). The Union Institute Graduate College.

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