Washington State Institute for Public Policy

Benefit-Cost Results

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) for adolescent self-harming behavior

Children's Mental Health: Other

Benefit-cost estimates updated December 2018. Literature review updated August 2017.

Current estimates replace old estimates. Numbers will change over time as a result of model inputs and monetization methods.

The WSIPP benefit-cost analysis examines, on an apples-to-apples basis, the monetary value of programs or policies to determine whether the benefits from the program exceed its costs. WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies has three main steps. First, we determine "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using a statistical technique called meta-analysis. Second, we calculate whether the benefits of a program exceed its costs. Third, we estimate the risk of investing in a program by testing the sensitivity of our results. For more detail on our methods, see our Technical Documentation.

Program Description: Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is a cognitive behavioral treatment originally developed for chronically parasuicidal adults. DBT involves both group skills training and individual psychotherapy and focuses on mindfulness, interpersonal, emotion-regulating, and self-management skills. In studies included in this meta-analysis, DBT was modified to treat adolescents by shortening the treatment length, streamlining and simplifying some lessons, and including parents in some sessions. Studies in this analysis include adolescents in both inpatient and outpatient treatment settings presenting with suicidal ideation, non-suicidal self-harm, and/or prior suicide attempts. Treatment duration ranges from 2-19 weeks, with multiple sessions per week.

Benefit-Cost Summary Statistics Per Participant

Benefits to:

Taxpayers	$590
Participants	($16)
Others	$130
Indirect	$388
Total benefits	$1,091
Net program cost	($154)
Benefits minus cost	$937

Benefit to cost ratio	$7.10
Benefits minus costs	$937
Chance the program will produce benefits greater than the costs	50 %

The estimates shown are present value, life cycle benefits and costs. All dollars are expressed in the base year chosen for this analysis (2017). The chance the benefits exceed the costs are derived from a Monte Carlo risk analysis. The details on this, as well as the economic discount rates and other relevant parameters are described in our Technical Documentation.

Detailed Monetary Benefit Estimates Per Participant

Benefits from changes to:[1]	Benefits to:				
	Participants	Taxpayers	Others[2]	Indirect[3]	Total
K-12 grade repetition	$0	$24	$0	$12	$36
Labor market earnings associated with major depression	($43)	($19)	$0	$0	($62)
Health care associated with psychiatric hospitalization	$8	$577	$130	$322	$1,036
Mortality associated with depression	$19	$8	$0	$131	$158
Adjustment for deadweight cost of program	$0	$0	$0	($77)	($77)
Totals	($16)	$590	$130	$388	$1,091

[1]In addition to the outcomes measured in the meta-analysis table, WSIPP measures benefits and costs estimated from other outcomes associated with those reported in the evaluation literature. For example, empirical research demonstrates that high school graduation leads to reduced crime. These associated measures provide a more complete picture of the detailed costs and benefits of the program.

[2]"Others" includes benefits to people other than taxpayers and participants. Depending on the program, it could include reductions in crime victimization, the economic benefits from a more educated workforce, and the benefits from employer-paid health insurance.

[3]"Indirect benefits" includes estimates of the net changes in the value of a statistical life and net changes in the deadweight costs of taxation.

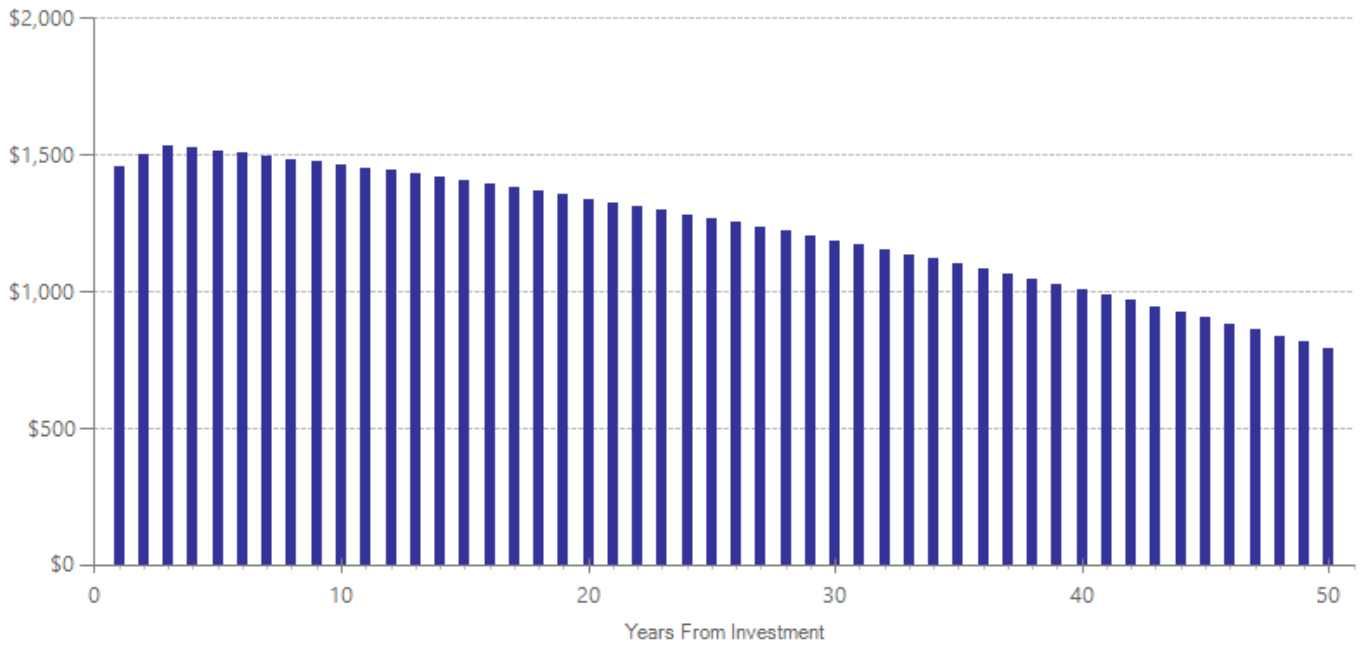
Detailed Annual Cost Estimates Per Participant

	Annual cost	Year dollars	Summary	
Program costs	$2,792	2016	Present value of net program costs (in 2017 dollars)	($154)
Comparison costs	$2,641	2016	Cost range (+ or -)	25 %

Per-participant costs are based on a weighted average for therapist time of 15.97 hours in individual sessions and 18.17 hours of group sessions, as reported in the treatment studies, multiplied by the hourly therapist cost is based on the 2016 actuarial estimates of reimbursement for individual therapy (Mercer, 2015, Behavioral Health Data Book for the State of Washington for Rates Effective January 1, 2016). Comparison costs are calculated in the same way from study reports of control group treatments.

The figures shown are estimates of the costs to implement programs in Washington. The comparison group costs reflect either no treatment or treatment as usual, depending on how effect sizes were calculated in the meta-analysis. The cost range reported above reflects potential variation or uncertainty in the cost estimate; more detail can be found in our Technical Documentation.

Detailed Annual Cost Estimates Per Participant



The graph above illustrates the estimated cumulative net benefits per-participant for the first fifty years beyond the initial investment in the program. We present these cash flows in non-discounted dollars to simplify the "break-even" point from a budgeting perspective. If the dollars are negative (bars below $0 line), the cumulative benefits do not outweigh the cost of the program up to that point in time. The program breaks even when the dollars reach $0. At this point, the total benefits to participants, taxpayers, and others, are equal to the cost of the program. If the dollars are above $0, the benefits of the program exceed the initial investment.

Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	Treatment age	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Adjusted effect sizes and standard errors used in the benefit-cost analysis						Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)	
				First time ES is estimated			Second time ES is estimated				
				ES	SE	Age	ES	SE	Age	ES	p-value
Hope^	16	2	71	0.493	0.181	16	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.493	0.006
Hospitalization (psychiatric)	16	2	55	-0.606	0.231	16	0.000	0.118	17	-0.606	0.009
Major depressive disorder	16	2	71	-0.445	0.180	16	0.000	0.310	18	-0.445	0.014
Self-harming behavior^	16	1	39	-0.531	0.253	16	n/a	n/a	n/a	-0.531	0.036
Suicidal ideation^	16	2	71	-0.434	0.321	16	n/a	n/a	n/a	-0.434	0.176
Suicide attempts^	16	2	55	-0.116	0.258	16	n/a	n/a	n/a	-0.116	0.652

^WSIPP's benefit-cost model does not monetize this outcome.

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

Katz, L.Y., Cox, B.J., Gunasekara, S., & Miller, A.L. (2004). Feasibility of dialectical behavior therapy for suicidal adolescent inpatients. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 43*(3), 276-282.

Mehlum, L., Tørmoen, A.J., Ramberg, M., Haga, E., Diep, L.M., Laberg, S., . . . Grøholt, B. (2014). Dialectical behavior therapy for adolescents with repeated suicidal and self-harming behavior: a randomized trial. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 53*(10), 1082-1091.

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Rathus, J.H., & Miller, A.L. (2002). Dialectical behavior therapy adapted for suicidal adolescents. *Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior, 32,* 146-157.

For further information, contact:
(360) 664-9800, institute@wsipp.wa.gov

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