TRAINING FOSTER PARENTS IN POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT:
A PILOT IMPLEMENTATION

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Acknowledgments

- Greenfield Foundation
- Together Facing the Challenge developers
- Devereux foundation leadership
- Philadelphia foster care office
  - Case managers
  - Trainers
  - Office staff
- Philadelphia foster care families
Learning Objectives

Identify the relevance of PBS for treatment foster care.

Describe PBS strategies within the evidence-based TFC foster parent training curriculum, *Together Facing the Challenge*.

Discuss preliminary information on a project aimed at training treatment foster parents in PBS.
Background on Treatment Foster Care (TFC)
Foster Parents

- Viewed as “front line” therapeutic agents
- Work with other professionals to implement comprehensive treatment plans
- Employ strategies to:
  - Decrease problematic behaviors
  - Develop prosocial behaviors

- Reimbursed for “board” and “care”
- No expectation of intervention for mental health concerns
Typical Training for TFC Parents

**MAPP** (Child Welfare Institute, 1987)

- Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting

Create well-informed foster/adoptive parents who “know what they are getting into” & “how to work with child-serving system”

**PRIDE** (Child Welfare League of America, 2003)

- Foster Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education

Provide broad coverage of knowledge/skills required to meet needs of foster children, how to share resources among child-serving agencies, general values and importance of families
EVIDENCE-BASED MODELS OF TFC
Treatment Foster Care Oregon (TFC-O)

Reinforce and Encourage Youth

- Point system (3 levels)
- School monitoring
- Weekly meetings with case manager or therapist
- Earn home visits at level 2

6-9 months

6-9 months
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors/Year</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chamberlain &amp; Reid, 1991</td>
<td>MTFC and residential treatment or relatives home</td>
<td>Children with severe emotional disturbance</td>
<td>Children in MTFC placed outside hospital more quickly and were more successful in maintaining community setting</td>
</tr>
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<td>Chamberlain &amp; Reid, 1998</td>
<td>Group care and MTFC</td>
<td>79 male adolescents with chronic delinquency</td>
<td>Fewer criminal referrals, returned to live with relatives more often</td>
</tr>
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<td>Leve, Chamberlain, &amp; Reid, 2007</td>
<td>Group care and MTFC</td>
<td>81 female adolescents with chronic delinquency</td>
<td>Fewer days in locked settings, reduced caregiver reports of delinquency, 42% fewer criminal referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher et al., 2011</td>
<td>Foster care and MTFC</td>
<td>Children ages 3-6 with problem behavior</td>
<td>MTFC predicted fewer placement disruptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Built on TFC-O model and reality of “usual care”

- Avoids use of technical aspects (point/level system)

- Enhance TFC in “usual care”
  - Enhance staff ability to support TFC parent
  - Increase parenting skills and competence in behavior management
  - Case manager support and follow-up
  - Strengthen relationships between agency and TFC parent
  - 7 modules

EVIDENCE-BASED MODELS OF TFC
Together Facing the Challenge
<table>
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<tr>
<td>Farmer et al., 2010</td>
<td>Examining effects of training in TFTC versus “usual care”</td>
<td>Youths in TFC and their foster parents across 14 agencies</td>
<td>Youths in TFTC homes showed improvements in symptoms, behaviors and strengths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evidence-Based Models: Common Features

- Direct training for TFC parents in skills designed to impact youth behavior
- Skills selected from evidence-based models of parent training:
  - Parent Management Training
  - Parent-Child Interaction Therapy
  - Teaching Family
  - Triple P
- In-training practice via role play
- In-home coaching of parents
- Increased training and consultation for supervisors, therapists, case managers
How is PBS relevant for TFC?
Positive Behavior Support

Emerged in the 1980’s: A collision of movements

De-institutionalization

Treatment of Severe Behavior Disorders

PROBLEM

How could these (aversive) practices be transferred to community settings where they may be considered abusive?
Positive Behavior Support

- A new technology of behavior change
  - The “essential” foundation of PBS:
    - Functional Analysis: Under what conditions does problem behavior occur?
    - Behavioral Ecology: In what way do the behavior and the environment interact?
Function-Based Approach

- Training Parents in Function-Based Thinking
  - Coaching support required
  - Parent skill and experience

- Coaches need training in function-based behavior management

- Source of most problem behavior is non-compliance (Patterson, 1986)
  - “Keystone behavior”
Positive Behavior Support

- Practical approach for decreasing problem behaviors and improving the quality of life for families and children.

- Data-based assessment
- Evidence-based intervention
- Systems change
- Responsiveness to families and youth
Positive Behavior Support in TFC: Added Benefit

Emphasis on:
- Prevention
- Teaching
- Reinforcement

Benefit:
- Reduce reliance on consequences to change behavior (i.e., punishment)
- Increase salience of small consequences to change behavior
Together Facing the Challenge (TFTC)
Project Description

- **Partners**
  - Institute of Clinical/Professional Training & Research
    - Center for Effective Schools (CES)
  - Devereux Community Services of Philadelphia

- **Funding from the Greenfield Foundation**
  - Began in 2015
  - 3-year project
  - Urban TFC families

- **Objective**: Implement PBS treatment model in Philadelphia foster care program
Project Description

- Reviewed literature and several programs
  - Selected TFTC as the best fit of EBPs
- Approximately 15 staff trained by TFTC developers
- CES and Philadelphia office commitment
  - Monthly implementation team meetings
  - Consultation with TFTC developers
- PBS modifications developed by Devereux CES team and reviewed with trainers
- CES and Philadelphia TFC staff collaborated to deliver training to first 2 cohorts
TFTC Curriculum

- **TFTC**
  - Increase TFC parent skills, knowledge, and competence in behavior management
  - Agency staff provide coaching to FC parents
  - Strengthen relationships between agency & parents; parents & child

- **Training Methods**
  - Lecture
  - Group activities
  - Role-plays
  - Home practice
  - Follow-up coaching and performance feedback on specific intervention skills in the home

(Murray, Dorsey, Farmer, Burns, & Ballentine, 2015)
TFTC Modules

1. Building Therapeutic Relationships and Teaching Cooperation
2. Setting Expectations
3. Using Effective Parenting Tools to Enhance Cooperation
4. Implementing Effective Consequences
5. Cultural Sensitivity
6. Taking Care of Self
7. Assisting in Transition to Adulthood

(Murray et al., 2015)
PBS Module Additions

Introduction to PBS

• Assumptions about problem behavior
• Understanding triggers
• Teaching behavior

Problem Solving

• Communication during problem solving
• Problem solving steps and practice
• Integrating into situations in the home

(Hieneman, Childs, & Sergay, 2006; Patterson & Forgatch, 1987)
## PBS Framework for All TFTC Modules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevent</th>
<th>Teach</th>
<th>Reinforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change triggers</td>
<td>Teach communication skills</td>
<td>“Have to” activities then “want to”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize prior experiences (e.g., culture)</td>
<td>Model skills for children</td>
<td>Establish incentives for prosocial behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily check-in &amp; family forum meetings</td>
<td>Teach connection between school success &amp; future</td>
<td>Daily feedback on behavior (discuss solutions to problems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify limits &amp; timelines</td>
<td>Teach coping strategies</td>
<td>Catch problems when small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear, positively-stated expectations for behavior</td>
<td>Teach life skills (e.g., transition to independence)</td>
<td>Reward positive behavior 3 times as often as correct problem behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household routines to support expectations</td>
<td>Set goals &amp; action plan to transition to independence</td>
<td>Reinforce positive behavior immediately with labeled praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have fun together</td>
<td>Behavior, not the child, is the problem</td>
<td>Be consistent &amp; follow through (e.g., behavior contracts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relax &amp; destress</td>
<td>Teach problem solving skills</td>
<td>Use logical &amp; effective consequences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prevention Skills

- **Prevent/change triggers for problem behaviors**
  - Fast Triggers (i.e., giving child a task)
  - Slow triggers (i.e., bad day at school)

- **Recognize prior experiences**
  - Culture
  - Learned behavior

- **Arrange household and create routines to support positive behaviors**
  - Clarify limits and timelines
  - Avoid difficult situations or make them more enjoyable
  - Family Forum

- **Daily check-in with child**

- **Establish and review clear positively stated expectations**
  - “Start” vs. “stop” behaviors
  - House rules
  - Behavior contracts

- **Plan regular family activities**

- **Relax and de-stress as a parent**

(Hieneman et al., 2006; Murray et al., 2015)
Teaching Skills

- Teach child appropriate communication to express needs, including:
  - Attention/social interaction
  - Permission for activities/items
  - Assistance or breaks from frustrating tasks/situations

- Model positive skills for child; teach behavior

- Teach child how to cope with negative feelings; plan enjoyable activities
  - Feelings thermometer/Emotion monitoring

- Model and role play skills for independence and transition to adulthood

- Teach and model for child personal goal setting and action planning
  - Explain connection between school success and future opportunities

- Teach Problem Solving steps for difficult situations
  - Identify a problem and set a goal for improvement
  - Brainstorm solutions
  - Evaluation solution & make an agreement
  - Evaluate outcomes

(Hieneman et al., 2006; Murray et al., 2015; Patterson & Forgatch, 1987)
Reinforcement Skills

- Plan less desirable, “have to,” activities before desired, “want to,” activities
- Establish incentives for behavior you want to increase and be consistent
  - Behavior contract
  - Praise positive behavior
  - Immediately label exact behavior
- Reward behavior at least three times more often than correction
- Use logical and effective consequences
  - Avoid power struggles
  - Effective use of intervention, such as time out, privilege removal, restitution, and work chores

(Hieneman et al., 2006; Murray et al., 2015)
Implementing the Model

TFTC in Philadelphia
Philadelphia Foster Care

- 6,400 children in foster/kinship care in the city of Philadelphia

- Devereux’s Community Services of Philadelphia provides care for ~148 youth across ~92 foster/kinship homes
**Shift in Clinical Model**

**Previous Model:** Services provided primarily to the child

- Reliance on reactive strategies to address child problem behaviors and respond to crises
- Case managers observe and interact primarily with the child
- Supervision of case managers focuses on procedural issues (e.g., paperwork)

**Current Model:** Services provided to the whole family

- Use of preventive and positive strategies to encourage desired child behavior
- Case managers observe and provide performance feedback to parents
- Supervision of case managers focuses on performance feedback related to support of foster parent
## Training Foster Parents in Philadelphia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort 1</th>
<th>Foster Families</th>
<th>Case Managers</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/2016 – 4/2016</td>
<td>Recruited: 20</td>
<td>5 case managers</td>
<td>1 supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participated: 17</td>
<td>• 4 – 7 families per caseload</td>
<td>• Individual supervision of case managers (bi-weekly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% Sessions</td>
<td>• Coach parents on Home Practice skills weekly</td>
<td>• Group supervision of all 5 case managers (bi-weekly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attended: 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort 2</th>
<th>Foster Families</th>
<th>Case Managers</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/2016 – 11/2016</td>
<td>Recruited: 20</td>
<td>5 case managers</td>
<td>1 supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participated: 19</td>
<td>• 4 – 7 families per caseload</td>
<td>• Individual supervision of case managers (bi-weekly)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% Sessions</td>
<td>• Coach parents on Home Practice skills weekly</td>
<td>• Group supervision of all 5 case managers (bi-weekly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attended: 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategies to Increase Foster Parent Attendance at Initial Training

- Accommodations & Incentives
  - Child care
    - Child care workers
    - Purchasing snacks & toys
  - Meals for parents & children
  - Raffles
  - Repeated reminders

- Commitment from entire Foster Care team

- Key to maintenance
  - Ensure training sessions are fun
  - Foster parents feel they are valuable
Making TFTC Part of our Culture

Together Facing The Challenge  
Foster Parent Training

Building Blocks of Behavior
Behaviors happen because they allow a person to get their needs met

There are 2 types of triggers:
Fast  Happen right before the behavior
Slow   Happen long before the behavior takes place
Maintaining Case Manager Skill in TFTC

- How can case managers practice skills from TFTC after the initial TFTC training?
  - Co-leading training for foster parents
  - Group supervision discussion
  - Individual supervision discussion
  - “Skill blitz” practice

- Participate in the implementation team adoption of the model
Role and Supervision of Case Managers
Coaching: Key Component to TFTC

Case managers are critical to the success of the training.

- Shift from traditional case manager role to coach
- Commit to applying TFTC skills in working with families
Why Coach Foster Parents?

- “Train and hope” is ineffective (Joyce & Showers, 2002)
  - Parents need opportunities for practice with ongoing feedback

- Evidence-based models of TFC include regular coaching for foster parents (Smith & Chamberlain, 2010; Farmer, Burns, Wagner, Murray, & Southerland, 2010)
  - Modeling, role play, and practice in the home
  - Problem solving with parents to address problem behaviors and acknowledge prosocial behaviors
Supporting Case Managers as Coaches

Consistent Supervision
- Individual
- Group

Training in TFTC Skills
- Co-leading training sessions
- Skill blitz

Training in Effective Feedback
- Individual, weekly training sessions
- 7-step model for providing feedback
- Practice through modeling & role-play
- Analog assessments & performance feedback
The TFTC Project

Outcomes: Pilot Study
TFTC Outcome Study

- **Purpose:**
  - Examine the impact of training the TFTC curriculum on outcomes for youth and foster parents

- **Research Questions:**
  - Was there a significant change in child behavior from pre- to post-training?
  - Did parent or child variables impact child behavior?
  - Did parent knowledge of TFTC skills increase from pre- to post-training?
Assessment

Dependent Variables

- Foster Parent Outcomes
  - Satisfaction
  - Knowledge
- Child Outcomes
  - Positive Behaviors
  - Problem Behaviors
Procedure

- Parent Training & Coaching in TFTC
  - 8 weeks
  - 2 rounds of training per cohort
  - 6 to 16 parents per session
  - Trainers
    - CES staff
    - Foster program supervisors
    - Case managers

### Assessment Time Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Training</th>
<th>Mid-Training</th>
<th>Post-Training</th>
<th>1-month Follow-up</th>
<th>3-month Follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Pilot Assessment
# Participants

- **Case Managers** ($N = 5$)
  - Female (100%)

| Parents ($N = 48$) | | Children ($N = 71$) |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| **Cohort 1** | 54% | **Cohort 1** | 38% |
| **Gender (Female)** | 63% | **Gender (Female)** | 45% |
| **Age (Years) ($M, SD$)** | 52.2 (10.1) | **Age (Years) ($M, SD$)** | 10.4 (5.4) |
| **Race/Ethnicity** | | **Race/Ethnicity** | |
| White | 2% | White | 7% |
| Black | 75% | Black | 72% |
| Hispanic | 2% | Hispanic | 11% |
| Mixed Race/Other | 6% | Mixed Race | 1% |
| **Years as Foster Parent ($M, SD$)** | 9.7 (8.9) | **Prior Placements ($M, SD$)** | 2.8 (3.2) |
| Foster Children in Home ($M, SD$) | 2.3 (1.2) |  |  |
Parent Satisfaction

Behavior Intervention Rating Scale Means

- Overall Mean: 4.4
- Acceptability: 4.6
- Effectiveness: 4.3
- Time: 4.2
## Training Evaluation

### Evaluation Items and Overall Mean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Information</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Learning Environment</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainer Knowledgeable</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainer Engaged the Group</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned Specific Skills</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Pace Appropriate</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Training Rating</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared to Implement TFTC</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Mean</strong></td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
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**Parent Rating**

- 0.00
- 1.00
- 2.00
- 3.00
- 4.00
Foster Parent Feedback

“I learned a lot in each session from the trainers as well as other resource parents. ALL parents could benefit from the training.”

“Very good training. In some instances, I would encourage this training for new foster care parents a little more as they are starting the process.”

“Thanks for your strategies.”

“This training helped me to better deal with some challenges I was facing in my home with my child.”

“I feel this was a training that could be taken at home. It took a lot of time from people’s schedules that wasn’t adequately remunerated...”
Was there a significant change in child behavior from pre-training to post-training?

Significant decrease in problem behavior as measured by the PDR

$t(27) = 5.49, p < .001$

No significant change in positive behavior as measured by the PDR
Did parent knowledge of TFTC skills increase from pre-training to post-training?

Parent knowledge of TFTC skills significantly increased from pre- to post-training: $t(46) = -1.88, p = .034$
Summary and Next Steps

TFTC
Summary

- Problem behaviors, as reported on the PDR, decreased
  - Similar to decreases in problem behavior 6- and 12-months post-training reported in original randomized controlled trial of TFTC (Farmer et al., 2010)

- Decrease in problem behaviors may be more effective for changing behavior of younger children
  - MTFC-O: Mixed age-based outcomes
    - Reductions in problem behavior for children aged 5-12 (Chamberlain et al., 2008)
    - Greater reductions in delinquency for older adolescents compared to younger adolescents (Chamberlain, Leve, & DeGarmo, 2007)

- Parent knowledge increased from pre-training to post-training
Next Steps

- New Staff
- New Foster Parent Orientation
- Sustaining Skills Taught During TFTC Trainings
- Case Manager Skills
- Ongoing Family Supports
## “Take Aways”

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<td><strong>Agency Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Create the structure for case managers to support parenting skills through clear expectations, guiding program materials, and regular supervision meetings.</td>
<td>Coach case managers to support parenting skills by directly observing interactions with families and providing both positive and corrective feedback.</td>
<td>Consistently implement methods of accountability that provide praise and other incentives for case managers who meet or exceed expectations.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Case Manager Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Offer parents concrete strategies and related materials to increase the use of effective parenting behaviors in the home.</td>
<td>Observe parent behavior and provide both positive and corrective feedback with a clear rationale to build parenting skills.</td>
<td>Support parents’ use of effective parenting strategies with frequent praise and other forms of recognition.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Foster Parent Strategies</strong></td>
<td>Look for patterns in child behavior and change the environment, routine, or parent behavior to encourage desired child behaviors.</td>
<td>Explicitly teach children how to meet expectations through direct instruction, modeling, and opportunities to practice and receive feedback.</td>
<td>Consistently and frequently reward children for appropriate behavior with praise and incentives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comments...

Questions...

Concerns...

Thoughts...
Thank You

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Together Facing the Challenge
https://sites.duke.edu/tftc/