

Executive Summary

CornerHouse Family Services Evaluation 2016

Support Groups and Home Visiting Program with Mind-Body Skills

Compiled by Kirsten L. Anderson, L.L.C., February 2017

Home Visit and Support Group programs

In 2016, 29 families (79 children and 40 adult caregivers) have participated in the Home Visiting Program with CornerHouse Family Services and six families have completed the six-month program as of January 31st, 2017. Five support group cohorts (two in Spanish and three in English) with a total of 31 caregiver and 18 child participants have been served by CornerHouse Family Services in 2016. The mind-body skills aspects of these programs have been incorporated in 2016 through assistance from George Family Foundation grant funding.

Evaluation Methods

Surveys

Paper surveys were used during the last session of Support Groups in 2016. A newer version of the support group survey received 17 responses, eight in English, nine in Spanish. In addition, five responses were received to the earlier version of the survey that was similar but not identical. Home Visit clients (n=5) were surveyed by phone in either English or Spanish by an external evaluator following program exit.

All survey instruments were translated from English to Spanish by an independent translator / interpreter and reviewed by program staff at CornerHouse and a bilingual Family Services client for clarity and meaning. Responses from all Spanish language surveys were translated and compiled with the English survey results.

Group Interviews

External evaluators completed four group interviews in 2016 with Family Services clients. The groups were composed of:

- Spanish speaking home visit clients (n=6)
- English speaking home visit clients (n=3)
- Spanish speaking support group participants (n=3)
- English speaking support group participants (n=4)

Partial transcripts and notes were compiled for all of these groups in English (a bi-lingual facilitator conducting the Spanish group translated responses into English).

Parental Stress Index – Short Form (PSI-SF)

This scientifically validated instrument is used for Support Group and Home Visiting clients as a pre- and post- measure of parental stress in three domains (Difficult Child, Parent-Child Dysfunctional Interaction, and Parental Distress) which are combined to measure total stress.

Parental Assessment of Protective Factors (PAPF)

This scientifically validated instrument is used for Home Visiting clients as a pre- and post- measure of four Protective Factors (Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Social-Emotional Competence of Children, and Concrete Support) present in a family.

Key Findings

Support Groups

“At first, it was very hard for me to talk about my problem because I told myself ‘how are they going to understand my problem?’ But then, you realize that there are other people going through the same thing and they are having the same thoughts as you. I realized that this is something that happens to families more frequently than one would imagine. You start to feel better just being here in the group talking.”

The following preliminary findings indicate very positive experiences of support group participants:

- Support group clients indicated that they were all using mind-body skills exercises they learned in group (of 17 respondents). 53% said they were using them “every day”, while 24% said they were using them “a few times a week” and another 24% said they were using them “sometimes.”
- Open-ended responses indicated that support group clients most often found most valuable about group: the ability to express their emotion in a non-judgmental environment, learning coping skills for themselves and their children, and most frequently, the feeling that they were not so isolated or alone in their situation.
- 71% of support group clients (of 17 respondents) said that “all” of the information provided by facilitators was relevant to their families’ situations, while another 18% said that “most” of the information was.
- Parental Stress declined on average for support group participants in all domains and total Parental Stress (an average decrease of 9.1 points). The Difficult Child domain showed the greatest decrease in stress (4.8 points on average).

Home Visiting Program

“Everybody’s situation is so unique and so dynamic but it’s really cool that CornerHouse and [my family services worker] can just do whatever they can for whatever the needs might be. They’re adaptable...it helps me see that, I need to be more adaptable and changeable to my kids’ needs...I did learn that I need to be a little bit more adaptable because the situations have changed, life is not the same as it used to be, its different now, so you have to do things differently to be effective.”

The following preliminary findings from five program participants indicate also very positive experiences:

- Home Visit program clients decreased an average of 8.8 points in total stress on the PSI-SF assessment. Four of five caregivers had decreased in total stress from intake to exit.
- Home Visit clients also increased in Protective Factors present during the course of the program. The largest increase was in the domain of Concrete Support. (.44 increase on a four point scale)
- Four of five respondents said their culture and values were respected “all of the time” by their Family Services worker and that it was “always easy” to communicate with their family services worker, while the one other respondent said it was “mostly easy.”
- One respondent said that “all” of the information their family services worker provided was relevant to their situation, while the four other respondent said “most” of the information was.
- Open-ended responses indicate that clients felt their Family Services worker often went above and beyond what was required to connect them with other services and listen to their thoughts and emotions, even when it was not part of their job or convenient.