

The Impact of a Parent Education Workshop on Parental Sense of Competence

Introduction

- Children with sensory processing differences (SPDs) have difficulty receiving and responding to sensory information that can result in behaviours (e.g., disruptive, inattentive) that are difficult for parents to manage, often leading to reduced parental sense of competence (PSOC)¹
- PSOC refers to parents' judgements regarding their capacity to successfully address the responsibilities of parenthood²
- Previous research has shown that providing educational workshop on SPDs can increase PSOC of parents of children with SPDs associated with clinically diagnosed Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)²
- Children identified as potentially experiencing SPDs may be referred for a neurodevelopmental assessment but may or may not receive a formal diagnosis (e.g., ASD)
- Yet, their parents may still benefit from education about SPDs to support their parenting and increase PSOC
- To increase parent knowledge about SPDs and PSOC, a workshop about SPDs and strategies for supporting children with SPDs was created by an occupational therapist (OT) as an education intervention for parents of children identified as having SPDs

Objectives

- Objective #1:** to examine the impact of an OT-led parent education workshop on PSOC of parents of children with SPDs on the neurodevelopmental assessment waitlist.
- Objective #2:** to gain insight into parents' perspectives regarding workshop content and delivery, both in terms of how it influenced their PSOC, as well as its utility for parents' day-to-day management of their children's SPDs while on the waitlist.

Methods

Study Design: A mixed-methods, randomized, waitlist-control pilot design

Participants:

- Parents of children with SPDs who were also on waitlist for a neurodevelopmental assessment at Holland Bloorview
- Randomly assigned to experimental group (attend the workshop) or a waitlist-control group (attended identical workshop two weeks later)

Intervention: 2-hour education workshop conducted by an OT specializing in sensory processing

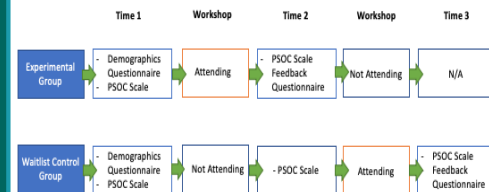
- 1-hour didactic component, to provide education on SPDs and strategies to mediate children's SPDs
- 1-hour interactive component, to share parenting experiences and ask questions

Data Collection Measures:

- Demographic questionnaire (Pre-workshop attendance)
- PSOC Scale³ (Pre and post-workshop attendance)
 - Self-report measure of parental self-efficacy, with higher scores indicating higher PSOC
- Follow-Up Feedback Questionnaire (Post-workshop attendance)

Data Analysis

- Quantitative: Descriptive Statistics of demographic questionnaire and PSOC Scale items
- Qualitative: Content Analysis of Follow-Up Feedback Questionnaire



Results

Participants:

- 9 parents attended the workshops on their assigned dates ($n_{exp} = 6$, $n_{cont} = 3$)

Descriptive statistics:

- Parents' age range: 31 – 45+ years
- Children's age range: 3.5 – 16 years ($m_{exp} = 7.5$ years, $m_{cont} = 5.17$ years)

Quantitative Results (PSOC Scores):

- Between pre and post-(experimental group) workshop attendance, average increase in PSOC scores was 6.1 points greater for experimental group than control group
- Average PSOC of the experimental group increased from 62.3 to 70.7 (8.4 points), whereas the average PSOC of the control group increased from 58.7 to 61 (2.3 points).
- One control group participant completed the PSOC Scale at Time 3, which increased by 8 points

Qualitative Results (Follow-Up Feedback Questionnaire):

3 themes emerged from analysis:

1) Reframing Children's Behaviour

- Workshop helps to change parents' perspectives regarding child's behaviour (from "misbehaving" to sensory related)
- Parents reported this as chief reason for enhanced PSOC

2) Learning Specific Strategies

- Reported as most helpful part of workshop for daily management of child's SPDs
- Parents reported desire to learn more about enabling child's occupational performance in specific domains of life (i.e. school)

3) Receiving Peer Support

- Reported as chief benefit to parents on the waitlist
- Provided validation and catharsis

Conclusions

- This parent education workshop may enhance PSOC of parents of children with SPDs
- The education workshop showed promise for enhancing PSOC by (1) reframing parents' understanding of their child's behaviour, (2) providing specific strategies, and (3) receiving peer support
- Future workshops can include specific strategies related to SPDs, and enabling occupation in other areas of daily living (e.g. daily management at school)
- Future researchers may consider using a more robust, long-term research design with larger sample size

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References

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