

Evidence-Based Psychosocial Treatments for Children and Adolescents with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

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What is the study about? This review critically evaluates empirical literature from 2012 to 2016 from the *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, which sought to (1) determine levels of psychosocial evidence for youth with ADHD and, (2) identify and evaluation factors that may influence the outcomes of psychosocial treatment research. The literature was selected based on the efficacy of child-focused and evidence-based outcomes.

Interventions Reviewed for Adolescents by Type & Efficacy

- **Behavior management interventions:** *Parent training, classroom interventions, and peer-based interventions* – Highly supported for children, but mixed results yielded for adolescents
- **Training interventions:** *Cognitive training, neurofeedback, and organization* - Remains experimental at this point in time
- **Cognitive behavioral therapy:** *Addressing cognitive restructuring, automatic thoughts, and irrational beliefs* – Studied often with relatively minimal effective results
- **Combination approaches:** *Cognitive behavioral methods and organization techniques (to do lists, daily planners, breaking tasks into parts)* – Mixed and probably efficacious results
- **Physiological interventions:** *Physical activity and supplements* - No beneficial effects noted

What did they find? Results of this systematic review were nuanced and varied by ages of the children or adolescents and the characteristics of the treatment. Behavior management interventions are the most highly supported by research for children but are recommended with caution for adolescents. High doses of treatment are required to see organizational or executive functioning improvements in adolescents. Parent coaching and contracting can reinforce skills learned in school at home.

Why is this Study Important?

- Adolescents with ADHD experience impairment in social and academic functioning which can make them more likely to drop out of school, experience family conflict or teacher stress, and obtain less post-secondary education than their peers.
- Combinations of pharmacological treatments with psychosocial ones are well-established, evidence-based interventions for children and adolescents with ADHD diagnoses.
- Recommended interventions for ADHD are multimodal and varying. This study sought to distinguish the efficacy among the many interventions available for children and adolescents with ADHD that school social workers can apply in their settings.

What can School Social Workers Do?

- Teach organizational, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills with adolescents through paraprofessional coaching sessions
- Include parents in at least 2 individual treatment sessions or run small parenting groups focused on homework issues and/or create adolescent and parent contracts around behavior
- Reinforce behaviors and practice skills daily through daily report cards or other tools
- Hold after school programs to give higher amounts of executive functioning or organizational support to teenagers with ADHD
- See students with ADHD individually rather than in small group settings