

INTRODUCTION

EFFECTIVE FAMILY-BASED PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS

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This monograph on effective family-based prevention interventions is a collection of papers on socio-educational prevention programmes concerning behavioural problems, drug abuse, and other problem behaviour that can compromise evolutionary development in childhood and in adolescence. These are interventions based on evidence from research, in relation to the practice of positive parenting, fundamentally within the family context. And also in other contexts in which the family is not present in the everyday life of children and adolescents temporarily, as is the case of the professional parenting practised in children's homes. The importance of taking into account the family as an objective in drug prevention programmes began to gain significant support in the 90s, as explained by Israelashvil in this monograph.

The development and implementation of the contents of positive parenting programmes has gone hand in hand with other important matters that have contributed to the development of current family-based prevention programmes. The incorporation of both children and parents - in the same programme - is one of the most important ones. Both learn and practise together the parenting skills and skills for adolescents provided for in the prevention programme, within the natural framework of the family relationship. In this respect, it is important to highlight the contributions of professor K.L. Kumpfer, whose programme, the

Strengthening Families Programme (SFP) (Kumpfer & Alvarado, 2003), is an international benchmark in the field of family-based drug prevention. It is a programme dating back over thirty years with versions for different age groups (childhood and adolescence) and was designed in the modalities of selective prevention and universal prevention. Empirical evidence regarding the selective modality identifies it as a programme of undeniable reference due to its effectiveness (Kumpfer & Magalhaes, 2018). In the universal prevention modality, developed from the original SFP (Molgaard & Spoth, 2001), there are meta-analyses that confirm it as the most effective family-based programme in terms of drug prevention (Foxcroft & Tsertsvadze, 2011). The Social and Educational Training and Research Group (GIFES) carried out the Spanish validation of the selective modality, developed and tested in Spain between 2003 and 2005, namely the Family Competence Program (PCF). The appraisal of the assessment of the process and results (including longitudinal assessment at 24 months) over fifteen years of implementation of the PCF, in both its version for children (7-12) and for adolescents (12-16), can be seen in Orte and Ballester (2018).

The family is, therefore, a priority context for abuse prevention from a socio-educational perspective. This approach is developed, on the understanding that problem consumption of alcohol and other drugs, as well as addictive behaviours

in childhood and adolescence, can also be considered a family problem and, as such, the goal must be family empowerment (Kumpfer, Alvarado & Whiteside, 2003; Orte, Ballester, March, 2013). Specifically, family relationships, positive parenting, emotional communication skills, focus on the future, parental supervision, positive affective interactions, and training in parenting skills appear to be important components in effective family-based prevention interventions (Fosco, et al.; 2012; Foxcroft & Tsertsvadze, 2011; Wyatt Kaminski, Valle, Filene & Boyle, 2008; Van-Ryzin et al.; 2016; Vermeulen-Smit et al.; 2015; Valero et al.; 2017).

It is along these lines that institutions of international reference in the field of prevention such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) recommend the implementation of recruitment programmes aimed at the family for the prevention of drug abuse¹. With regard to this matter, in the implementation of family competence programs it is important for interventions to provide a detailed list of the contents and procedures, to perform a systematic assessment of the processes and results, and to ensure specific, adequate training of the trainers (Kumpfer & Alvarado, 2003; Orte, Ballester & March, 2013). The first paper in this monograph explains a universal prevention programme and its effects. In the article entitled, *Prevención universal. Evaluación de los efectos del programa de competencia familiar universal en centros educativos de primaria y secundaria (PCF-U, 11-14)* [Universal prevention. Assessment of the effects of the universal family competence program in primary and secondary schools], a presentation is made of the process and results of the validation phase of the Universal Family Competence Program (PCF-U 11-14), which is evidence-based and applicable in educational contexts (primary and secondary schools).

Throughout these years of research and implementation of evidence-based family-based drug prevention programmes, different issues have arisen that must be taken into account in order to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. Some of the most important ones can be found in this monograph and one of them is train-the-trainers as a basic resource that enables recruitment and motivation of families, their active participation, and retention in the programme.

Training of professionals is a necessary condition for the application of a family-based prevention programme. We refer to both specialised training in issues related to the prevention of substance abuse², and to prior training in the contents of the specific programme to be applied. This training is fundamental in order to grasp and apply the

preventive programme in the family context. The second article in the monograph explores the following component of prevention programmes: the professional profiles and competences of the trainers. In the paper entitled, *La formación para la prevención en el ámbito socioeducativo: un análisis de los perfiles profesionales* [Training for prevention in the socio-educational field: an analysis of professional profiles], a presentation is made of a research study that aims to define the professional profiles of trainers in the Family Competence Program (PCF). Since it is an Evidence-Based Programme (EBP), professionals need to address the components and apply them adequately, maintain motivation, and encourage the participation of the families. The aim of the study is to assess what levels of competences the professionals who apply the (PCF) have, especially with regard to intrapersonal and interpersonal areas.

Other questions that we propose for the improvement of the effectiveness of the intervention are the following: How to improve family participation? How to achieve a balance between the generic principles of positive parenting and the forms of adaptation and implementation? What is the most appropriate time for the participation of parents in the drug abuse preventive process in young boys, girls, and youths? These are some of the issues dealt with in the third article in the monograph entitled, *Parentalidad y prevención de consumo de drogas: Estado de la cuestión y retos de future* [Parenting and prevention of drug abuse: current status and future challenges].

The challenge of family engagement leads us to propose the most appropriate strategies in order to foment parents' participation. In fact, one of the main difficulties in evidence-based family interventions is that of achieving participation. The two next papers in the monograph go further into this difficulty, one of them in relation to family-based prevention programmes, and the other from the perspective of educational centres. In the article entitled, *Una revisión sistemática de la participación en los programas de prevención familia* [A systematic review of participation in family-based prevention programmes], an analysis is conducted of the predictive factors of parental participation and the strategies for improving participation in parental prevention programmes. The most effective strategies identified include the use of different extrinsic incentives, adjustment of the expectations and motivations of parents during the intervention, as well as the role of the trainer. Meanwhile, the next article, *El entorno del proceso de implicación familiar: bases empíricas para el diseño de un programa de intervención* [The setting of the family involvement process:

empirical bases for the design of an intervention programme], presents a research study addressing the effects of family involvement on the motivation of pupils, the influence of teaching staff on family involvement, the pupil's perception of the styles of involvement, and the relationship of these styles to the pupil's motivation. The study is carried out with teaching staff, families, and pupils in 5th and 6th grade of Primary Education.

Lastly, the sixth article provides a necessary reflexion on the difficulties of children and teenagers under guardianship (in care in children's homes) and the potential professionals offer as a professional parental figure and their functions of

protection, stimulation of development, as a restorative affective bond, and guide in processes of resilience. The article entitled, *Parentalidad profesional en el acogimiento institucional: propuesta para mejorar la atención a los niños acogidos en centros de protección* [Professional parenting in institutional care: proposal to improve the care of children looked after in children's homes] poses a reconceptualisation of the role of social educator as a professional parental figure in order to overcome some of the limitations associated with institutional care. Through a narrative review, the most relevant contributions supporting this proposal are reviewed.

Notes

¹ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/prevention/familyskillstraining.html>

² Nowadays it is beginning to be an important strategic issue to be able to have evidence-based curricular contents, in the field of training professionals in substance abuse prevention.

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