Family Stress and Functioning in Clients of a Post-adoptive Service who were Referred for Attachment Therapy

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UCHC Adoption Assistance Program
University of Connecticut
Health Center
Adoption Assistance Program
http://aap.uchc.edu
Adoption Assistance Program (AAP)

• Funding through an MOU between UConn Health Center & DCF
• Utilizes adoption competent staff to provide an EAP model of assessment, counseling, and referral
• Provided funding in years 3-4 for an program evaluation component to identify the needs of families and evaluate service delivery
A family-friendly, family-focused model...

- Statewide, single point of entry
- 24 hour call back
- All AAP staff are direct service, licensed and have background and training in the area of adoption
- Family systems approach
- In-home or office appointments
- No wait list
- Operates independently of DCF
AAP Program Components

- Assessment
- Brief counseling/parent education
- Referral
- Community Case Management
- PPSP (in-home support program)
Evaluation
Intake

• Demographics
• Concerns that prompted contact with AAP
• Marital arguments
• Caregiver Strain Questionnaire (Brannan, Heflinger & Bickman, 1997)
Follow-up

3 months following intake:

• Marital arguments
• Caregiver Strain Questionnaire (Brannan, Heflinger & Bickman, 1997)
• Satisfaction with AAP
AAP Clients who were referred for Attachment Therapy

18 out of 105 families provided intake data as part of the evaluation.

14 out of 18 provided intake and follow-up data.

If more than 1 parent provided data, data from “contact” parent was used in analyses.
Respondents

• Adoptive Parent
  – Mother 86%
  – Father 14%

• Marital status
  – Married 71%
  – Divorced/separated 7%
  – Widowed 7%
  – Living w/ partner 7%
  – Civil union 7%
Respondents (Continued)

- **Age**
  - 30 - 39: 14%
  - 40 - 49: 29%
  - 50 – 59: 50%
  - 60+: 7%

- **Racial/ethnic self-identification**
  - White: 92%
  - Black: 0%
  - Hispanic: 8%
Respondents (Continued)

• Education
  – < High school 7%
  – High school grad 7%
  – Some college 7%
  – College degree and up 79%

• Employment
  – Full-time 14%
  – Part-time 36%
  – Homemaker 36%
  – Unemployed/Other 14%
Respondents (Continued)

• Difficulty paying bills
  – Not at all difficult 7%
  – Not very difficult 21%
  – Somewhat difficult 36%
  – Very difficult 36%

• Money problems on mind
  – Not at all 7%
  – Very little 28%
  – Good part of the time 36%
  – Almost always 29%
Decision to contact AAP
Reasons for contacting AAP

• For each reason, client indicated “how much it influenced [his/her] decision to contact” AAP:

• (1) Not at all
• (2) A little
• (3) Some
• (4) A lot
Top reasons that influenced decision to contact AAP (% a lot)

• My child’s behavioral and/or emotional problems (93%)
• Need in finding assistance or information (79%)
• Need for financial help to meet the needs of my child (57%)
• The health of my child (64%)
• My relationship with my child (50%)
Family Stress
Caregiver Strain Questionnaire

For 21 items:

• Please tell us how much of a problem each of the following situations is for you:
  • (1) Not at all
  • (2) A little
  • (3) Somewhat
  • (4) Quite a bit
  • (5) Very much
### Caregiver Strain Questionnaire (% endorsing “very much”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much of a problem is...</th>
<th>Intake</th>
<th>Follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling tired or strained as a result of your child’s needs?</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The toll your child’s needs have been on the family</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worrying about your child’s future?</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interruption of personal time resulting from your child’s needs?*</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marital issues
In the past month, how often have you and your spouse/partner had an unpleasant disagreement related to your child?

- I do not have a spouse/partner (excluded)
- Several times a week (8)
- About once a week (4)
- 2 or 3 times a month (2.5)
- About once a month (1)
- Less often (0.5)
- Never (0)
Comparison between AAP clients referred and not referred to Attachment Therapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At intake...</th>
<th>Referred (n=14)</th>
<th>Not Referred (n=54)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of arguments about child per month*</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for contact: “My spouse/partner’s relationship with child” *</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• * p < .05
Change in frequency of arguments about child per month

Mean = -1.1    SD = 1.7    n = 14

\[ p < .05 \]
Number of arguments about child per month

![Graph showing the number of arguments per month for couples. The graph compares intake and follow-up data.](image-url)
Satisfaction with AAP
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Satisfaction....</th>
<th>% Satisfied or Very Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>with the Adoption Assistance Program overall?</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that you were given prompt attention?</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that you were treated courteously and professionally?</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that your concerns were handled in a confidential manner?</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that the Adoption Assistance Program helped you find resources in the community that would assist your family?</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What was most helpful to you about the Adoption Assistance Program?

“...the referral to attachment therapy!”
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