



AND



Domestic Violence Intervention Study (DVIS)

Technical Report
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Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS) Parenting Program

Program Evaluation

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The Mission of DVIS

DVIS/Call Rape's mission is to rebuild lives affected by domestic violence and sexual assault through advocacy, shelter, counseling and education.

Program Information

The Parent Program being evaluated is run by Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS). The Parent Program is a court-ordered program for mothers who have had a child or children taken away for abuse, neglect, or domestic violence. Most of these women were required to participate in this program to regain custody of their children. The women attended the program once a week for 16 weeks. Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes. This evaluation was completed in order to provide DVIS with 1) information on areas to improve or modify the program as well as 2) evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

At a broader level, the Domestic Violence Intervention Services parenting group attempts to help women not only feel better about their ability to parent, but it also strives to improve their perception of self-worth, educating them on their personal rights and responsibilities as human beings.

Program Summary

- Week 1:** ACE/Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
- Week 2:** Hidden Victims
- Week 3:** Dealing With Grief, Loss, and Anger
- Week 4:** First Impressions
- Week 5:** Coping with Trauma – Trauma Egg I
- Week 6:** Coping with Trauma – Trauma Egg II
- Week 7:** Loving Myself (Self-Esteem)
- Week 8:** IALAC & The Impact of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault on Children – Trauma Checklist for Children
- Week 9:** The Empowered Parent – Raising Healthy Children
- Week 10:** The Empowered Parent – Raising Healthy Children PRIDE Skills II
(Photographs of Children)
- Week 11:** Self-Regulation Skills
- Week 12:** Identifying My Needs
(Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs – Identity and Values)
- Week 13:** Effective Communication & Assertiveness
- Week 14:** Love Legacy I
- Week 15:** Love Legacy II
- Week 16:** How Have I Changed? (Self-Advocacy)

Evaluation Approach

Data Collection

Upon entering the Parenting Program, all women were asked if they would participate in the program evaluation. This included filling out questionnaires at the start of the program as well as at the completion. Those who participated were given a five-dollar gift card upon completion of the first and last session. The data packet included (1) a demographic information form, (2) the Parenting Practices Questionnaire (PPQ), and (3) the Tool to Measure Parent Self-Efficacy (TOPSE). The University of Tulsa Institutional Review Board approved all procedures.

Measures

The PPQ is a 62-item measure where the individual rates on a scale how they endorse a specific behavior with their child, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Certain items correspond with different parenting styles taken from Baumrind's model of parenting. The different parenting styles assessed in this instrument are authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, which are described in Table 1 below.

Baumrind's Parenting Styles	
Authoritative	Attempts to direct the child's activities in a rational manner by encouraging verbal give and take, as well as sharing the reasoning behind decisions with the child
Authoritarian	Attempts to shape the behavior of the child with an absolute standard of what is acceptable and values obedience as a virtue and takes forceful measures to make the child see what the parent believes is right

<h2>Permissive</h2>	<p>Attempts to behave in a nonpunitive and acceptant manner toward what the child is wanting, as well as making few demands on the child in regards to responsibility and orderly behavior</p>
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Table 1: Baumrind's Parenting Styles

The TOPSE is a 42-item questionnaire where the individual rates on a scale how much she agrees with a statement. This questionnaire is used to measure a change in parenting self-efficacy. It is used to help evaluate the effectiveness of parenting programs as well as identifying specific problem areas that individual parents may be encountering. The TOPSE evaluates not only total parental self-efficacy, but also has scales within the measure that can be evaluated to identify specific problems. There are 8 scales within the TOPSE: (1) emotion and affection, (2) play and enjoyment, (3) empathy and understanding, (4) control, (5) discipline and setting boundaries, (6) pressures, (7) self-acceptance, and (8) learning and knowledge. Sample items from each of the eight subscales are shown below in Table 2.

TOPSE Sample Items	
Emotion & Affection	"I feel calm."
Play & Enjoyment	"I am presently worrying over possible misfortunes."
Empathy & Understanding	"I am worried."
Control	"I feel satisfied with myself."
Discipline & Setting Boundaries	"I feel like a failure."
Pressures	"I feel inadequate."
Self-Acceptance	"I am a steady person."
Learning & Knowledge	"I can overcome most problems with a bit of advice."

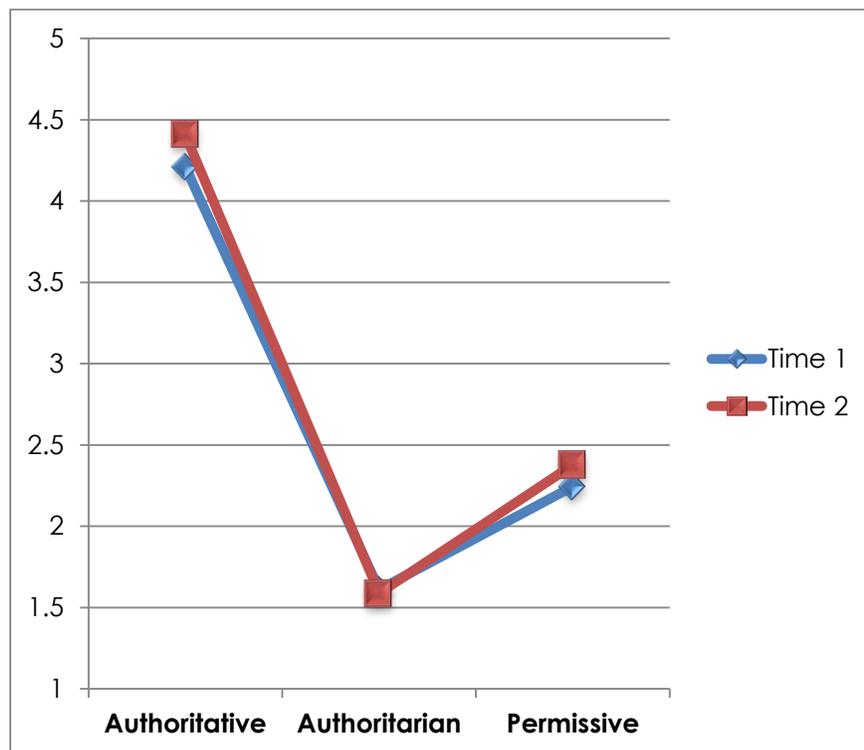
Table 2: TOPSE Sample Items

Analysis

Statistics were conducted for pre- and post- measures with a method called a *t*-test. This analysis looks at the change in the average scores from time 1 (start of the program) to time 2 (completion of the program).

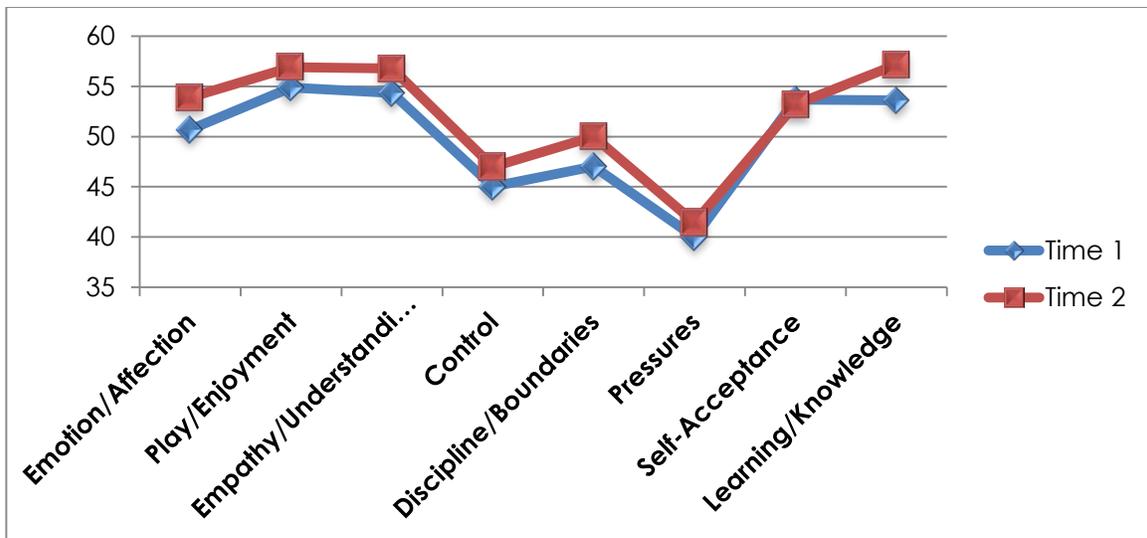
Parenting Practices Results

A total of 31 women (Mean age = 29.48, SD = 5.48) completed time 1 and time 2 measures and were included in the analyses. The PPQ data showed that, overall, mothers were endorsing items related to an authoritative parent more often than a permissive or authoritarian parent at both administrations of the questionnaire. This was a significant finding at $p < .01$. Changes in the endorsement of Authoritarian and Permissive parenting towards a more Authoritative parenting style was not significant.



Parenting Self-Efficacy Results

Results of the TOPSE data showed changes in the scores, however not all of these were significant changes. Total self-efficacy at time 1 averaged 399.3 and at time 2 averaged 450.1. This increase in total score shows a positive change in parenting self-efficacy, but this was not a significant finding. However, two of the scales from the TOPSE, (1) Emotion and Affection and (2) Learning and Knowledge, had a significant increase from time 1 to time 2 at $p < .05$.



Discussion

The overall purpose of the present study was to evaluate effectiveness of the group related to improving parenting skills. As our results demonstrate, the current parenting group appears to be having a positive impact on the parents who are completing the group. After group completion, there were significantly higher levels of emotion and affection (e.g., I feel calm), as well as learning and knowledge (e.g., I can overcome most problems with a bit of advice). These findings suggest that the parenting group offered through DVIS is making a difference in the self-efficacy, or belief, in participants' parenting skills. The overall goal in this program is to educate the women about positive parenting and lead them to believe in themselves, which appears to be occurring through group participation. Future studies need to further investigate the degree to which parenting beliefs and styles are effected by life experiences, as well as consider alternative variables.

Strengths

The present evaluation provides some insight into attempting to understand the relationship between group education and improving parenting styles. All measures that were used have been shown to have high levels of reliability and validity in previous studies. Another strength of this evaluation was the presence of researchers during survey administration, who were readily available if a participant had questions about an item on a survey. Another strength of the evaluation is that it provides potential for the university and community agencies to collaborate more successfully. This, in turn, could contribute to bridging the gap between scientists and practitioners.

Limitations

However, this evaluation is not without its limitations. Upon starting the program, the women appeared to be self-reporting a high endorsement of positive parenting behaviors (e.g., authoritative parenting). This makes it perhaps more difficult to detect how much change actually occurred if the women are rating themselves high initially on the self-report measure. As with any study with self-report measures, there is always the possibility of participants

attempting to appear socially desirable, and thus not answering the measures with complete accuracy.

Implications and Future Directions

The above data demonstrates that the program is increasing positive parenting and self-efficacy, in that parenting skills are improving from when the participants start the program to when they complete it. Significance levels might not be achieved in all parenting skills; however, the directionality of change was in a positive direction. Future studies should further investigate the effect of parenting groups such as this one, and the possible effects exposure to trauma which may have an impact on an individual's parenting skills and beliefs about parenting.