THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF TRIALS TO TRANSLATION: CBC AS A CASE IN POINT

Susan M. Sheridan, PhD
Nebraska Center for Research on CYFS

September 21, 2010
Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

**A Definition:**

A strength-based, cross-system problem-solving and decision-making model wherein parents, teachers, and other caregivers work as *partners* and *share responsibility* for promoting positive and consistent outcomes related to a child’s academic, behavioral, and social-emotional development (Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008, p. 25)
Children develop optimally when they are part of healthy systems, and when there are healthy relationships among those systems.

Continuities and consistencies across systems ease transitions for children and provide mutually supportive contexts for development and learning.
CBC: The Basics

Promotes and supports *home-school partnerships* in the context of cooperative and collegial problem-solving

A process by which constructive, goal directed, solution-oriented services are provided for children
Dual Goals of CBC

- To address the specific needs that parents and teachers co-identify for a child
  - Increase parents’ and teachers’ knowledge, skills, and practices for promoting positive behaviors and social/adaptive skills

- To strengthen the roles and responsibilities of parents and teachers as partners in educational decision making
  - Increase parent and teacher engagement in a child’s learning, and in the partnership
  - Create context for shared responsibility for problem solving
CBC: How It Looks

Stages of CBC

- Problem/Needs Identification
- Problem/Needs Analysis
- Plan Implementation
- Plan Evaluation

Structure is helpful for facilitating:

- Clear communication between parties/systems
- Joint, collaborative problem solving and decision making
- Identification of shared goals for child
- Agreed upon targets for intervention
- Supported implementation of evidence-based strategies across home and school
Early Outcome Research

CBC has been shown to be effective:

- in addressing behavioral, academic, and social-emotional problems (Guli, 2005; Sheridan et al., 2001)
- across unique practice contexts, including Head Start classrooms (Sheridan et al., 2006) and pediatric/medical settings (Lasecki et al., 2008; Sheridan et al., 2009);
- with culturally diverse clients (Sheridan et al., 2006);
- for addressing concerns of children with developmental disabilities (Ray et al., 1999; Wilkinson 2005).
Early Process Research

- CBC establishes a collaborative context for joint planning, decision making and problem solving (Erchul et al., 1999; Sheridan et al., 2002).
- Bidirectional communication and reciprocal relationships exist in CBC (Grissom et al., 2003), and its collaborative nature (Sheridan et al., 2002).
- CBC is acceptable to parents, teachers, school psychologists (including relative to other approaches) (Freer & Watson, 1999; Sheridan & Steck, 1995).
- Perceptions of goal attainment within CBC are high (Sladeczek et al., 2001)
Most Recent Work:
RCTs on Partnership Models

- **CBC in the Early Grades**: 4-cohort randomized trial testing the efficacy of CBC for ameliorating externalizing problems and strengthening social and adaptive skills (funded by IES, 2005 – 2010).

- **Getting Ready**: A parent engagement/partnership trial (including triadic, collaborative consultation) testing the efficacy of a school readiness intervention (funded by ISRC, 2004 – 2010).
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Sample**               | 207 students, grades K-3  
207 parents  
82 teachers  
Randomization occurred at classroom level | 217 preschool children  
211 parents  
29 Head Start teachers  
Randomization occurred at classroom level |
| **Aims**                 | 1. Efficacy of CBC at increasing adaptive/social skills, decreasing externalizing behaviors  
2. Efficacy re: parent involvement, FSP, motivations, teacher beliefs  
3. Mediation: Relationship | 1. Efficacy of GR at enhancing cognitive, behavioral, soc-emotional  
2. Efficacy for parents’ sensitivity, support for autonomy, participation in learning  
3. Mediation: Engagement |
| **Context**              | CBC delivered in small group format  
Primary setting: Elementary  
CBC consultant provided services to parents and teachers  
Co-constructed, co-delivered interventions based on evidence-based behavioral strategies | GR intervention implemented via “collaborative planning”  
Broader parent engagement/collaboration study; elements of CBC provided the framework for services  
Primary setting: Home visits ~5x year  
Teachers interacted with parents to build their competence & confidence  
CBC provided for challenging cases |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Measures (Selected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Outcomes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASC, SSRS, Classroom Obs, PDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIQ, PTRS, PPPS, Hoover-Dempsey scales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant group * time effects on externalizing behaviors, adaptive skills, social skills, P-T relationship</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significant group * time effects on total problem behaviors at home; some classroom behaviors (nonphys aggression, phys aggression, engaged time), all in favor of the treatment group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P-T relationship appears to mediate the effects of CBC on teachers’ reports of certain child outcomes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent interactions with child moderated by child and parent risk. GR intervention most effective at enhancing various parent interaction behaviors when children display social-emotional problems and parents report problems with depression.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF TRANSLATION
Common Culprits

- **Recruitment** (for nonacademic study)
- **Attrition** (child, parent, teacher, dyad)
- **Mobility** within conditions (new partners)/across conditions (switchers)
- **Doer’s** (“We already do parents”)
- **Drifters** (resulting in “infidelity”)
Issues Unique to Partnership Research

- Multidimensional nature of partnership interventions
  - RCTs do not allow for the identification of operative elements
  - Adoption of full model in translation efforts may be overwhelming to partner sites

- Controlled nature of trial settings
  - There will be degrees of “mismatch” between trial and replication sites
  - Natural variations in participants, school/community settings, cultures, targets
Partnerships research exists in relational contexts

- Schools and families are always in a relationship with one another
- Requires attention to the (collaborative) relationship between researchers and site-based partners
- Distinctive goals between researchers and professional partners (e.g., teachers)
- Systemic realities (e.g., ‘quick fix’) may conflict with requirements for research (e.g., standardization, rigor)
  - What works? vs What fits?
Translational Research
Needs & Questions

**Need:** Increased precision in identifying critical/operative elements that should be translated in the first place, and their unique contributions

- What are the necessary and/or sufficient conditions? What is nice but not necessary?
- What effects do certain elements produce or predict? What aspects of a partnership create certain outcomes? Can we match needs/elements/outcomes so as not to overwhelm systems with multidimensional complex...
Translational Research Needs & Questions

- **Need:** Method for defining/specifying the context of partnerships interventions and its impact
  - (How closely) Does the controlled environment typify ‘real life?’
  - What is the impact of variations in participants, systems, contexts as we try to generalize intervention effects?
  - How do we know? How do we measure?

- **Need:** Systematic attention to fidelity & possible saturation
  - How do we measure “fidelity” of a partnership or a relationship?
  - How do the various dimensions of fidelity operate together to define implementation/impact of the partnership intervention?
  - How much is enough to produce desired outcomes? When can we expect partnerships to “take effect?” Is there a point of saturation?
THANK YOU