



NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION CENTRE

BANYAN COMMUNITY SERVICES SNAP™ UNDER 12 OUTREACH PROJECT

The Banyan Community Services SNAP™ Under-12 Outreach Project (BCS SNAP™ ORP) is an ongoing program that started in 2003 in Hamilton, Ontario. It is aimed at reducing offending behaviour and increasing social competence in boys aged 6 to 12 years. The project focuses on boys who have already committed offences and who are at risk of re-offending.

The BCS SNAP™ ORP was the first full replication of the Child Development Institute's very successful Under 12 Outreach Project. It employs the Institute's trademarked therapy-based approach, known as SNAP™. This approach teaches boys self-control skills in a group setting. The same SNAP™ group approach is also used to teach child management techniques to the boys' parents.



In addition to the SNAP™ group sessions, there are several program activities that families can access such as individual befriending, academic tutoring, clinical services, sibling groups, parent befriending, school advocacy and school support.

Project assessment

The project evaluation consisted of a process and outcome evaluation and a cost analysis. The aim of assessment was to determine if the project SNAP™ prevents and reduces boys' antisocial behaviours and adequately supports families.

Data was collected from boys and their families, community partners, teachers and from the Project's staff. A variety of methods were used to collect information, including questionnaires, interviews, police and court records and BCS SNAP™ ORP documentation.

Outcome measures included standardized tests administered to parents and teachers pre- and post- group, with the longest follow-up occurring 36 months from the beginning of the group. The comparison group was constituted from families on the waiting list.

Evaluation findings reported on 299 boys enrolled in the program, and a comparison group of 116 boys not enrolled in the program. However, the sample size varied depending on the phases of the project.

Key findings

The process evaluation revealed that:

- Satisfaction levels with the program were high for the boys and their families. Parents stated that they found the skills they learned helpful and that the Project's staff members were extremely supportive. The boys felt that the concepts they learned were useful and would help them make good choices.
- Community partners revealed a comparably high level of satisfaction in their working relationship with the Project's staff. Community partners were also pleased with the program overall and reported numerous benefits to their organizations as a result of their partnership.
- Attendance at the SNAP™ group for boys was consistently high, with 12 of the 14 sessions recording an average attendance of 8.6 sessions out of 12 (boys had to attend a minimum of eight sessions to graduate).
- Despite a two-year waiting list, staff has adapted and now offer pre-support services for families on the waiting list. In fact, staff members have not turned away any families seeking services.



The outcome evaluation revealed that:

- Between the pre-program and six-month post-program evaluations, all parent-rated offending behaviour and social competence outcomes demonstrated significant improvements.
 - Significant positive changes in outcome between pre- and post-program evaluations persisted for almost all parent-rated outcomes, even when other control factors were included in the assessment.
 - Teacher-rated behaviour and social competence outcomes did not improve significantly between pre- and post-program evaluations.
- A longitudinal analysis demonstrated significant positive association between group participation and improvement for all parent-rated outcomes over time.
 - All teacher-rated outcomes, except for aggressive behaviour, showed evidence of significant improvement over time.
 - The size of the effect was larger for parent-rated outcomes than the teacher-rated outcomes.

Lessons learned

Lessons learned included:

- Increasing staff size is necessary in order to meet the growing demand for the program and to maintain the requirements of ongoing evaluation.
- Boys who participate in the program require other services, particularly mental health assistance.
- Program replications and associated evaluations should involve evaluators early in the planning for better data collection and management.
- All program evaluations should consider inclusion of a comparison group and longitudinal follow-up.
- Future evaluations may want to consider tracking individual use of all program components.
- Project evaluations requiring access to police and court data should initiate the process early in the evaluation, in order to obtain the necessary consent from families, and establish ways of tracking participants over time.

Conclusion

The evaluation findings suggest that participation in the SNAP™ Under 12 Outreach Program for 6-11 year old boys resulted in better self-control and problem solving skills. Parents were also found to be better equipped to effectively monitor and guide their child's behaviour.

The SNAP™ Under 12 Outreach Program of the Banyan Community Services of Hamilton provides a sound basis for early intervention and prevention programming for children under the age of 12 who have either come into contact with the police or who are engaging in anti-social behaviours.

For more information or to receive a copy of the final evaluation report please contact the National Crime Prevention Centre at 1-877-302-6272 or visit our website at: www.publicsafety.gc.ca/ncpc

It is also possible to visit the Child Development Institute web site at: www.childdevelop.ca