

Bounce Back & Thrive!

Summary – Ongoing Evaluation Study #2 (Fall 2013 - Fall 2014)

Background

Bounce Back & Thrive! (BBT) is an evolving evidence-based 10-session resiliency skills training program based on the **Reaching IN...Reaching OUT Resiliency Skills Training** for service providers working with young children. BBT helps parents help their children build the resilience necessary to handle life's inevitable bumps in the road. The program focuses on families with children from birth to 8 years.

BBT was piloted in 2010-12 by **Reaching IN...Reaching OUT (RIRO)** in partnership with family-serving organizations with 161 parents (119 completed the full evaluation) in 18 groups in 16 diverse communities in Ontario, Canada. **Parents attended because they were experiencing significant challenges** such as poverty, low literacy, family violence, teen parenting, children with special needs or were living in communities experiencing violence or in First Nations or remote areas. (Demographics: 93% females, 7% males; mean age = 29.1 years; 48% single parents; 41% less than Grade 12; 349 children)



Parents in the BBT pilot groups rated the skills training program very highly and experienced a statistically significant positive change in attitudes associated with resilience, as well as reporting:

- Using the resiliency skills regularly and modeling them with their children
- Experiencing a greater sense of calmness and control in their lives
- Being more positive about their children and hopeful about life
- Seeing their children calmer as well as more patient, confident and perseverant.

Ongoing evaluation

This summary report covers the **second formal evaluation study** of parents attending BBT groups from Fall 2013 to Fall 2014. The first evaluation study covered 18 parent groups from 17 family-serving partner organizations between September 2012 and June 2013 (see www.reachinginreachingout.com/effectiveness-bb&t.htm) for details).

Participants

234 parents experiencing challenges attended 27 groups offered by 19 partnering organizations in diverse settings in Canada [Demographics: 89% females, 11% males; median age = 31.1 years; 32% single parents; 32% less than Grade 12; 485 children & median 2.3 children/family; all families have children under 8 years]. 153 parents completed the full evaluation.

Measures

Parents completed **four measures** that examined the impact of the BBT resiliency skills training groups on themselves and their children.

To measure change in parental attitudes, depression and stress, three subscales were administered at the beginning and end of the training.



The **"Bounce Back Subscale" (BBSS)** (included in the original pilot project) is a 15-item Likert-type self-report measure with ratings on a 5-point scale. It was developed to look at parents' beliefs and attitudes affecting their own resilience and parenting. Four factors emerged for the original 14 items: 1) optimism-pessimism; 2) attitudes about their children and parenting; 3) attitudes related to self-efficacy and self-regulation; and 4) attitudes about set-backs and challenges. The 15th item is the one used to measure 'resilience' in the *2009 European Social Survey (ESS)*, i.e., *"When things go wrong in my life it generally takes me a long time to get back to normal."*

Also administered were the **"Depression Subscale" (DASS-D)** and **"Stress Subscale" (DASS-S)** from the 21-item version of the *Depression, Stress and Anxiety Scale (DASS-21)*; S. H. Lovibond & P. F. Lovibond, 1995). The *DASS-21* subscales are self-report measures each containing seven items and rated on a 4-point scale.

At the end of the program, parents completed a 69-item parent self-report survey (also included in the original pilot). The **"Post-Training Survey"** was designed to gather information about knowledge gain, use of the resiliency skills, impact on parent and child behaviour as well as overall parent satisfaction.

As part of the process evaluation, parents also completed “Parent Feedback Forms” rating the usefulness of the content and effectiveness of the delivery each session. They were asked about content they found most important, their success in using it and suggestions for improvement of the program. Results of the process evaluation will not be presented here.

Results

Attitudes related to resilience and parenting, signs of depression and stress

- **Parents showed a significant positive change in attitudes** associated with greater resilience as well as more positive attitudes about their children and parenting (*mean change BBSS = 3.75, t = 5.27, p<.001*).
- **Parents with the least ‘resilient’ attitudes to start** (lowest BBSS scores) **showed the greatest positive change** in attitudes related to resilience and parenting by the end of the skills training program (*BBSS, Pearson’s r = -.53, p<.001*).
- **Parents showed significant positive change in ratings of their ability to “return to normal after things go wrong”** (i.e., capacity for resilience) (*mean change on ESS resilience item = .34, t = 2.71, p<.01*).
- **Parents showed an improvement in depression scores over time** (*Mean change DASS-D = -.69, t = -2.09, p<.025*).
- **Parents who scored most poorly on the Depression Subscale to start showed the greatest improvement** (*DASS-D, Pearson’s r = -.45, p<.001*).
- **Parents reported a decrease in stress-related indicators over time** (*Mean change DASS-S = -1.20, t = -4.34, p<.001*).
- **Parents who reported the most stress-related indicators to start showed the greatest improvement** (*DASS-S, Pearson’s r = -.70, p<.001*).
- **When the mean improvement on each subscale is combined to create a global change score, parents who initially scored most poorly improved the most, and conversely, those who scored the best to start gained the least** (*Pearson’s r = -.50, p<.001*).



Use and impact of the skills training

Some of the highlights of findings from the “*Post-Training Survey*” include:

- Parents rated **their knowledge** about supporting resilience in themselves and their children as being **significantly higher** at the end of the program as compared to the beginning (*based on a 5-point scale; parent resilience, mean difference = 1.8, t = 18.1, p<.001; child resilience, mean difference = 1.9, t = 18.5, p<.001*).

Parents’ attitudes became more ‘resilient’ and positive toward their children and parenting. Those with the least ‘resilient’ attitudes to start gained the most by the end of the program.

- **Generally, parents who attended more frequently reported greater knowledge gain** about building their own and their children’s resilience than those with more absences although this trend did not reach statistical significance.
- The **greater their change in knowledge** of building resilience in their children, the **greater the positive change in their attitudes related to resilience** (*Pearson’s r = .18, p = .05*).
- **100% parents said they use the BBT content** with their children.
- **96% parents reported using the content they learned at least once a week (62% use it every day) with their children.** Here are some of the main ways they are using the training:
 - 99% model the resiliency skills with their children
 - 99% help their children look for positive things (excludes parents whose children are too young)
 - 92% help their children practice calming strategies
- **The top five strength areas parents developed,** comparing their ratings before and after the program, were (on a 5-point scale):
 - Controlling their impulses (*mean change = 1.5 points; t = 17.1, p<.001*)
 - Being in charge of their emotions (*mean change = 1.4 points; t = 16.5, p<.001*)
 - Reaching out for support (*mean change = 1.4 points; t = 14.8, p<.001*)
 - Believing in themselves & their abilities (*mean change = 1.3 points; t = 14.2, p<.001*)
 - Solving problems (using thinking skills) (*mean change = 1.1 points; t = 13.9, p<.001*)

- **Top rated ways the program specifically helped parents personally** (mean rating = 4.2-4.3 for all on a 5-point scale):
 - Understanding the link between their thoughts and reactions
 - Finding positive things to appreciate in their daily lives
 - Using more empathy with others during conflicts
 - Finding new ways to handle problems
 - Improving their ability to “respond” instead of “react” to challenges
 - Feeling more hopeful/optimistic about the future
- **Top rated ways the program helped parents with their children** (mean rating = 4.5 for all on 5-point scale):
 - Better understanding their children’s emotional needs
 - Looking more for the strengths and positive things to appreciate in their children
 - Having more patience with their child(ren)
 - Improving their relationship with their child(ren)

Parents said their children were calmer, more patient and handled frustrations better. And they were less afraid of making mistakes, so they were more confident and kept on trying instead of giving up. They were also observed using the skills with other children and adults.

- **98%** of parents reported using things they learning in BBT with their children including modeling resilience, calming and looking for positive things.
- **84% of parents reported they already saw positive changes in their children** (attributed to skills parents demonstrated to their children). Among these parents, the **top reported changes** were:
 - Calming down better (75%)
 - Persevering instead of giving up (66%)
 - Showing more patience (66%)
 - Handling frustrations better (61%)
 - Being more confident (59%)
 - Trying new things (58%)
 - Feeling better about making mistakes (56%)
 - Using empathy more (53%)
- **45% of parents reported observing their children already using resiliency skills** (that parent introduced to child) **with other children as well as adults (47%)**.

Satisfaction with the program

- Parents rated the overall **helpfulness** of the parent group and their **satisfaction** with it very highly (mean rating = 4.6 and 4.7 respectively on a 5-point scale).
- They also rated the **content** and **delivery** of their sessions very positively (mean rating = 6.4 and 6.5 respectively on 7-point scale for all sessions combined on Parent Feedback Forms).
- When asked whether they would recommend BBT skills training to other parents, **95% of the parents said “Yes”** (4% “Maybe”).

What parents said...

“BBT helped me have a happier, calmer relationship with my children and learn to deal with stressful situations better.”

“The group helped me see the child's perspective better. Taught me to calm down and think before reacting.”

“This group was a fantastic learning resource that needs to be shared with others. Great ideas and easy to implement in the home. We are now all more calm when the storm hits.”

“I would strongly recommend BBT to all parents since it not only helps you as a person to change some things. It also makes it possible for you to pass it on to others and that will definitely strengthen your relationship with your kids and family.”

Source: “Post-training Survey”



Summary

The results in this second ongoing evaluation study, as well as the first study, confirm key findings from the original BBT pilot project.*

Parents' attitudes became more 'resilient' and positive toward their children and parenting. Those with the least 'resilient' attitudes to start gained the most by the end of the program.

After attending BBT, parents reported **less stress and depression-related indicators**. And those with the highest levels to start experienced the greatest positive change.

Participants rated the skills training highly and **used the skills regularly in their own lives and modeled them with their children**. This was associated with greater **calmness** and **confidence** and the ability to **recognize more strengths in themselves and their children**.

Parents reported that after introducing the skills to their children, the children **used resiliency skills with other children and adults**. They said their children were **calming down** and **handling frustrations better**. And this helped them become **more patient** and **confident** and therefore **more willing to persevere** and try new things.

Increased empathy and patience led to **closer parent-child relationships**. Along with less reported stress and depression-related indicators, parents reported **more optimism** and **hopefulness** about the future.

What parents said...

"Lots of good resources and information. Develops more positive thinking skills like catching your thoughts. You realize you are not the only one who is facing challenges."

"There are so many people out there don't see that they are hurting their child. If they come to this group it will help them to get a new outlook on their parenting. With help they can build a better relationship with their child, partner and family members."

"I would recommend it because there are very good tips on how to think most positively about yourself, so you can be a better role model for your children."

Source: "Post-training Survey"



* The pilot project in which BBT was developed and tested was conducted by **Reaching IN...Reaching OUT (RIRO)** and its founding sponsor – the Child & Family Partnership (YMCA of Greater Toronto, Child Development Institute, University of Guelph and George Brown College) – and more than 30 partner organizations across Canada. Three-year project funding (2010-12) was provided by the Social Development Partnerships Program of the Government of Canada. Opinions expressed in this summary are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada. For details about BBT and the pilot project, go to <http://www.reachinginreachingout.com/programs-bb&t.htm>.

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