

BPT on Emotional and Social Concerns for Children with ADHD

Amanda K. Nelson, M.Ed., Alicia Chunta, M.Ed., Sara Franklin-Gillette, M.Ed., George J. DuPaul, Ph.D., & Lee Kern, Ph.D.



Introduction

- Children with ADHD experience heightened emotional and social concerns, including emotional lability (EL), lower-quality friendships, and antisocial behavior (Shaw et al., 2014; Normand et al., 2010; Thorell et al., 2017).
- When emotional and social concerns are left untreated, children with ADHD are at risk for harmful social and academic outcomes (Burnford et al., 2018; Calkins & Marcovitch, 2010).
- **Study Aim:** to investigate the impact of a behavioral parenting training (BPT) program on EL and social functioning (SF) of 3- to 5-year-olds at risk for ADHD.

Participants

- Data from project Promoting Engagement for ADHD pre-Kindergartners (PEAK) randomized controlled trial.
- $N = 37$ children ($M_{\text{age}} = 3.84$ years; 70.3% male; 75% White/non-Hispanic).
- Random assignment to face-to-face (F2F) BPT ($n = 12$), online BPT ($n = 11$), or waitlist control ($n = 14$).

Analytic Plan

- Two 3 (group) x 2 (time) repeated-measures ANOVAs were conducted.

Behavioral Parent Training alone did not cultivate meaningful improvements in the emotional and social functioning of young children with ADHD, suggesting examination of supplemental treatment components is warranted.

Figure 1: Emotional Lability T-Scores at Pre-Treatment and Posttreatment for All Three Groups

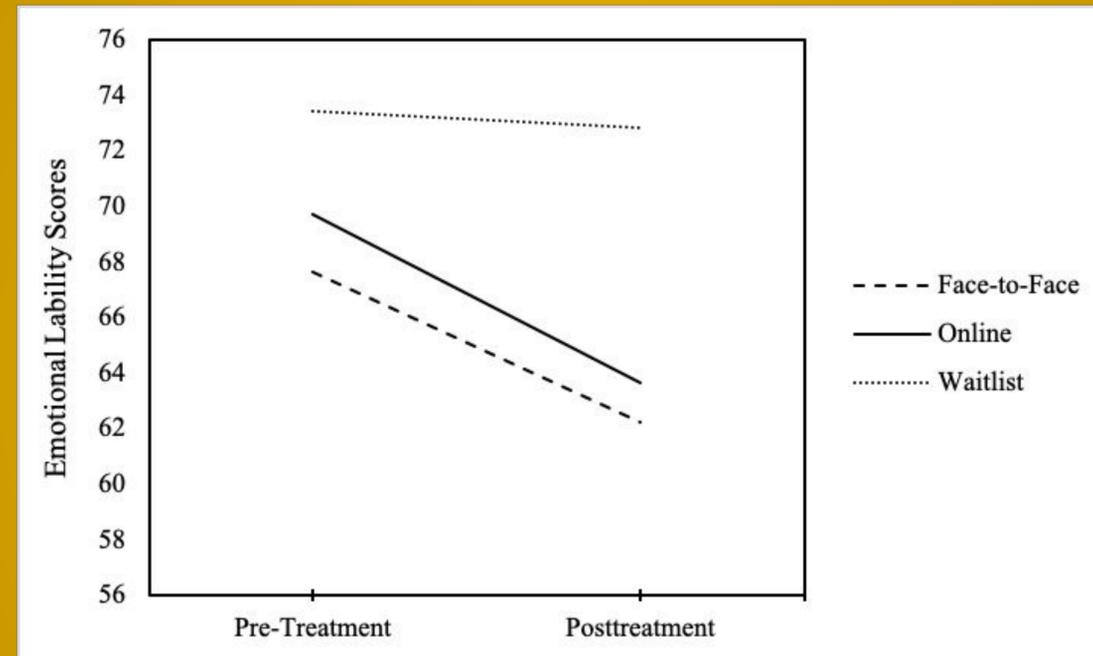
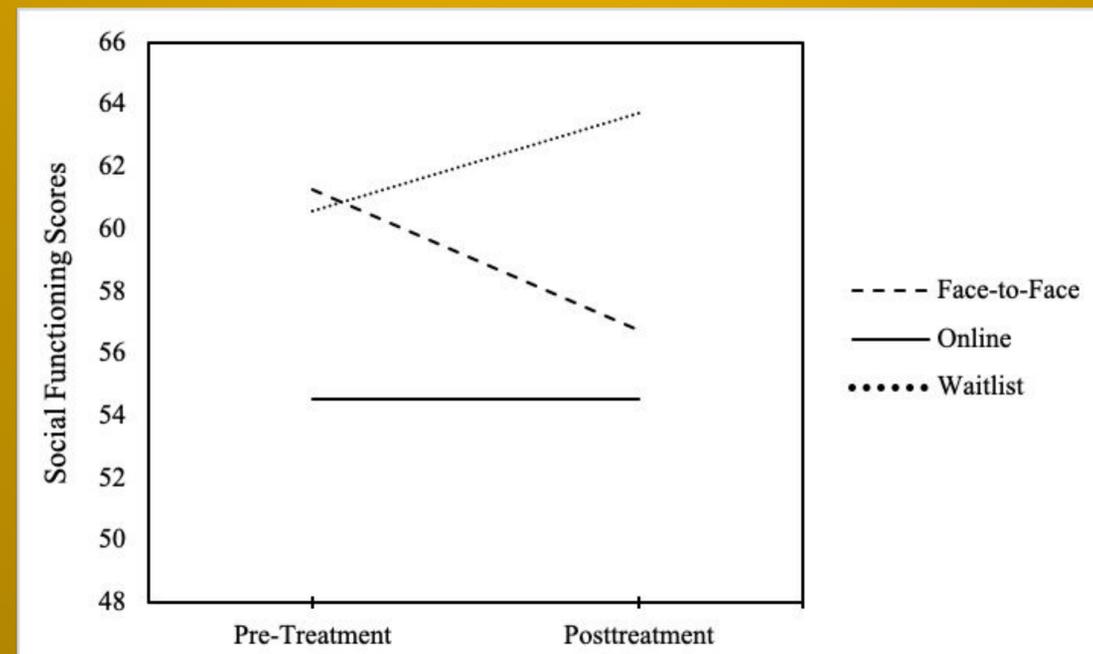


Figure 2: Social Functioning T-Scores at Pre-Treatment and Posttreatment for All Three Groups



Measures

- **Conners Early Childhood-Parent (Conners, 2009):** Examined T-scores from the Social Functioning and Global Index Emotional Lability subscales.

Results

- **EL:** The main effect of time was significant ($F(1,34) = 6.39, p = .02, \eta^2_p = .16$). From pre-TX to post-TX EL scores were lower for F2F ($M = 67.67, SD = 17.46; M = 62.25, SD = 14.78; d = .34$), online ($M = 69.73, SD = 14.51; M = 63.64, SD = 13.73; d = .43$), and waitlist control ($M = 73.43, SD = 10.59; M = 72.86, SD = 12.48; d = .05$). The main effect of group assignment and the interaction between group assignment and time were non-significant.
- **SF:** There were no significant findings, though the data trend for F2F ($M = 61.25, SD = 15.00; M = 56.75, SD = 15.04; d = .30$) shows improvement, online scores were already in the normative range ($M = 54.55, SD = 10.63; M = 54.55, SD = 10.99; d = 0$), and waitlist control worsened ($M = 60.57, SD = 14.36; M = 63.71, SD = 15.04; d = .21$).

Discussion

- BPT does not provide enough support for emotional and social concerns in order to produce substantial improvements.
- Future research should identify interventions specifically targeting these concerns and integrate these with current BPT interventions.
- It may be beneficial for early interventionists to implement emotional and social training in ADHD interventions in addition to BPT, when designing school readiness programs.
- **Primary Limitation:** small participant sample, contributing to decreased power to detect small effect sizes.

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