



Whole Family Treatment Program: Family Characteristics of Pilot Project Participants

Introduction to the Whole Family Treatment Program

Located on the Wood's Homes Bowness Campus, the Whole Family Treatment (WFT) program is an intensive, short-term program for families from across the country. It is the first short-term preventative live-in family mental health service in Canada. The concept of Whole Family Treatment is not a new one, with many whole family treatment programs throughout the world, but only one other long term Canadian program located in Saskatchewan. The Whole Family Treatment program provides Eco-systemic and Trauma-Focused treatment to all members of the family over a nine month time period. The majority of treatment occurs in the family home prior to on-site residency and following residency to establish transition of parental skills building into the family context and home community. Families may be referred from Child and Family Services, Alberta Health Services, community organizations, self-referral or from within Wood's Homes programs. The pilot project funding was obtained through the Wood's Homes Foundation. The data represented within this research brief showcases families who provided funding themselves, utilized funds from the pilot project, and who received funding through Children's Services.

Methodology and Question for Analysis

Implemented between June 2015 and February 2016, the WFT Pilot Project was designed and led by Chloe Westelmajer. The purpose was to study the effectiveness of the WFT program to decrease distress and increase functioning for parents and children. Data was collected from families before and following admission to the program. For this initial pilot project phase, a total of 13 families were included in this analysis.

Following the initial pilot phase, it is critical to understand what families are using this service and for what reasons. This Research Brief will focus on family characteristics, specifically family composition, presenting concerns and household income of those families who participated in the Pilot Study between June, 2015 and February, 2016.

Findings

Table 1 shows the types of families that participated in the Pilot Study; 53% with both parents present, 30% consisted of foster parents and children, and 8% of families included grandparent(s) as the primary caregiver(s). Mental health concerns were common among all families in attendance, followed closely by “emotional well-being” and “family interaction”.

About half of the families (46%) who participated in the Pilot Study made over \$100,000 per year. On the other end of the income spectrum, 23% of families made less than \$40,000 per

year, 15% made between \$40 - \$60,000 per year, 8% made between \$60 – \$80,000 per year and 8% between \$80 and \$100,000 per year.

Family Composition	#	%
Two Bio-Parents	7	54%
Blended Family	4	31%
Foster Family	1	8%
Extended Family	1	8%
Subtotal	13	100%
Top Presenting Concerns *	#	%
Mental Health	13	100%
Emotional Well-being	12	92%
Family Interaction	12	92%
Relationship Issues	11	85%
Behavioral Concerns	10	77%
Parenting Capacity	10	77%
Subtotal	13	100%
Family Income Level	#	%
Less than \$40,000	3	23%
\$40,000 - \$60,000	2	15%
\$60,000 - \$80,000	1	8%
\$80,000 - \$100,000	1	8%
More than \$100,000	6	46%
Subtotal	13	100%

** Multiple Presenting Concerns Reported - Column Percentages Do Not Total 100%*

Conclusions and Considerations for Future Research

All types of families are using this innovative service including two-parent biological, blended, foster parents, and extended families. Families are presenting with multiple presenting concerns which may be an indicator of the need for this form of service. The range in family income supports the scaled funding for this service – from parents being supported with funding to those families who can fund their own treatment. Over time, family characteristics of WFT clients may change and ongoing analysis will aid service providers.

The WFT Pilot Study was implemented by Chloe Westelmajer for the University of Calgary, Faculty of Social Work. Research Brief Prepared by Athena Elton, Feb, 2017, Wood's Homes Research Department.

Suggested citation: Wood's Homes (2017), Whole Family Treatment Program: Family Characteristics of Pilot Project Participants. Wood's Homes Research Brief # 4. Calgary, AB: Wood's Homes.