

# Parent Perceptions of Child Mental Health: A Review of Research

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# Presentation Overview

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# Background Information

- 1/3 of U.S. residents are ethnic minorities
- Hispanics accounted for almost half of the national population growth in 2005
- Black and Asian populations increased by 1.3% and 2.3% respectively
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander reached 1 million mark
- Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007
- Stigma associated with mental health (Alvidrez, 1999)
- Risk Factors (U.S. DHHS, 1999)
  - Poverty; abuse/neglect; low birth weight
- Disproportionate number of minority children in special education (Obiakor, 2007)
- More students receiving diagnoses of ADHD, autism, and other related mental health disorders (Mandell & Novak, 2005)



# Cultural Competence

- The delivery of psychological interventions should be based on knowledge and understanding of cultural heritage, values, and behaviors, along with the recognition that levels of acculturation affect service delivery (APA, 2000; NASP, 2002)



## Ortiz and Flanagan (2002)

“The family group, nevertheless, plays a significant role in cultivating the growth, development, and psychological well-being of its children...development of a knowledge based that serves as the foundation for understanding the manner in which family systems work and how they represent cultural entities and transmit culture across generations is crucial to the proper selection and design of education services by school psychologists”



# Purpose

- To survey literature on parental perceptions of their child's mental health, specifically ethnic minority parents
- Areas of Focus
  - Beliefs about causes
  - Coping mechanisms
  - Treatments and services used
- Main goal
  - To suggest best practices in collaborating with parents to create and implement effective treatment services for culturally and ethnically diverse children with mental health exceptionalities

# Methodology of Review

- PsycInfo Database
  - Peer-reviewed journal articles
  - Published within last 20 years
  - Key search terms: parent perceptions; culture; mental illness; developmental disabilities; multicultural parents; culturally diverse parents
- 15 articles
- Culture
  - A sociopsychological construct reflecting a set of attitudes, beliefs, ideals, and behaviors shared by a group of people (Mandell & Novak, 2005)

# Beliefs about Causes

- Three main themes
  - Biological/natural problems (i.e., physical health problems, personality traits)
  - Environmental/social causes (i.e., family issues, economic problems)
  - Religious/metaphysical causes
- Compared to Non-Hispanic White parents, ethnic minority parents were generally less likely to endorse biological causes; more likely to endorse environmental and/or spiritual causes

(McKelvey et al.,1999;Yeh et al.,2004;Shaked & Bilu, 2006; Edman &Johnson, 1999; Schnittker, Freese & Powell, 2000)



# Beliefs about Causes

- Results inconclusive; differences were not consistently significant across studies
- Typically endorsed more than one cause
  - duality of beliefs: “traversing between two sets of cultural beliefs and norms ” (Danseco, 1997)

(McKelvey et al.,1999;Yeh et al.,2004;Shaked & Bilu, 2006; Edman &Johnson, 1999; Schnittker, Freese & Powell, 2000)

# Coping

- Not as much specific research; however more conclusive
- Overwhelmingly seek support from family before other sources
  - Disconnect with professionals
- Cultural values may serve as a protective factor

Bailey, et al 1999a; Bailey, et al 1999b; Ow, Tiong & Goh, 2004; Magana & Smith, 2006; Blacher & McIntyre, 2006; Shaked & Bilu, 2006

# Treatment Expectations and Use of Services

- Ethnic minority parents utilize mental health services less than White parents; more likely to seek help from variety of sources, formal and informal
- Factors affecting use of traditional mental health services
  - Perceived cause of child's disability and availability of alternative treatments
    - Duality of beliefs ➡ multiple types of interventions
    - In general, those who endorsed physical causes more likely to use traditional mental health services

(Bailey et al, 1999a; Bailey et al., 1999b; Yeh et al, 2005; Zions et al, 2003; Lynch & Stein, 1987; Parette, Shu-Ju & Huer, 2004; Delgado & Ford, 1998; Danseco, 1997)



# Treatment Expectations and Use of Services

- **Programmatic factors**
  - Lack of involvement from school
  - Perceived negativity or disrespect; lack of cultural awareness
  - Lack of available knowledge
- **Interventions**
  - Valued flexibility; integration of therapies
  - Different preferences

(Bailey et al, 1999a; Bailey et al., 1999b; Yeh et al, 2005; Zions et al, 2003; Lynch & Stein, 1987; Parette, Shu-Ju & Huer, 2004; Delgado & Ford, 1998; Danseco, 1997)

# Achieving Cultural Competence

- Research is limited but informative and useful
- Ethnic minority parents have same values and goals for children as other parents
  - Knowledge about disorder
  - Ability to cope
  - Effective interventions
  - Respectful interactions with professionals
- Cultural beliefs and values provide an extra means for parents to reach these goals, beyond traditional services
  - Cultural competence develops through knowledge and understanding of alternative means



# Implications for School Psychologists

- Parent Collaboration
- Assessment
- In-service Training
- Intervention Development
- Cultural Competence
  - New perspectives
  - Knowledge of community resources and alternative treatments

# Limitations and Future Research

- Small samples
  - Hard to generalize
- Lack of detailed research in specific areas
  - One study expressly examined parent beliefs
  - Parent perceptions based on type of disorder
- Methodologies of studies
  - Current focus on interviews; need to expand
    - Fantuzzo & Mohr (2000): partnership approach
    - Yeh et al. (2004): Beliefs About Child Problems-Parent Version
- Development of empirically based curriculum or program for in-service trainings
  - Current focus on best practices; need to integrate

Questions or Comments?

Thank you!