

Family Behavior Therapy (FBT) Substance Use Disorders: Treatment for Adults

Literature review updated May 2014.

As part of WSIPP’s research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies, WSIPP determines “what works” (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using an approach called meta-analysis. For detail on our methods, see our [Technical Documentation](#). At this time, WSIPP has not yet calculated benefits and costs for this topic.

Program Description: Family Behavior Therapy is a standalone behavioral treatment based on the Community Reinforcement Approach aimed at reducing substance use. Participants attend sessions with at least one family member, typically a parent or cohabitating partner. The treatment consists of several parts including behavioral contracting, skills to reduce interaction with individuals and situations related to drug use, impulse and urge control, communication skills, and vocational or educational training. Treatment in the included studies occurred over a 6- to 12-month period. Our findings reflect only adults treated in the program and exclude results for adolescents.

Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Adjusted effect size and standard error			Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)	
			ES	SE	Age	ES	p-value
Illicit drug use disorder	1	38	-0.670	0.251	30	-0.670	0.008

Meta-analysis is a statistical method to combine the results from separate studies on a program, policy, or topic in order to estimate its effect on an outcome. WSIPP systematically evaluates all credible evaluations we can locate on each topic. The outcomes measured are the types of program impacts that were measured in the research literature (for example, crime or educational attainment). Treatment N represents the total number of individuals or units in the treatment group across the included studies.

An effect size (ES) is a standard metric that summarizes the degree to which a program or policy affects a measured outcome. If the effect size is positive, the outcome increases. If the effect size is negative, the outcome decreases.

Adjusted effect sizes are used to calculate the benefits from our benefit cost model. WSIPP may adjust effect sizes based on methodological characteristics of the study. For example, we may adjust effect sizes when a study has a weak research design or when the program developer is involved in the research. The magnitude of these adjustments varies depending on the topic area.

WSIPP may also adjust the second ES measurement. Research shows the magnitude of some effect sizes decrease over time. For those effect sizes, we estimate outcome-based adjustments which we apply between the first time ES is estimated and the second time ES is estimated. We also report the unadjusted effect size to show the effect sizes before any adjustments have been made. More details about these adjustments can be found in our [Technical Documentation](#).

Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

Azrin, N.H., McMahon, P.T., Donahue, B., Besalel, V., Lapinski, K.J., Kogan, E.S., Acierno, R.E., & Galloway, E. (1994). Behavior Therapy for Drug Abuse: A Controlled Treatment Outcome Study. *Behavioral Research and Therapy*, 32(8), 857-866.

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Printed on 03-28-2024



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