

Positive influences on Children: Implementing CBT and Conflict Resolution skills

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Describing the client & problem**Client Background**

Fatoumata Diallo is a young girl, age 9, who has moved from Guinea, Africa to the Bronx, United States. She has been in the United States for no longer than 2 years. While she has a supportive family, the move has been quite of an adjustment. From learning a new language, to learning American culture. Fatoumata was placed in Heketi Community charter school. This school specifically sees more than just the student and focuses on the community that the child is a part of. This includes making sure that families have the tools necessary for the students to thrive. This means asking families if they have school supplies, food and shelter. If a family is missing a specific need, the school will step in as best as possible to resolve the situation.

Client Problem

In addition, the school helps students who speak English as a second language. This program allows for students like Fatoumata to take the learning process step by step while putting them in the classroom with children in their age range. While Fatoumata is getting the assistance from an educational standpoint, Fatoumata is struggling with a few aspects in her life. The aspects in which she seems to struggle includes anger outburst and poorly interacting with other students. As far as the anger outburst are, she gets mad very easily and tends to take it out on whoever is around her. This includes students, teachers and staff. This leads to the second issue which is poorly interacting with other students. Fatoumata has been seen yelling and fighting with students, for no reasons at all. The staff has been keeping an eye on her and many have reported that she is not able to resolve a situation without yelling, screaming, rolling eyes or even fighting. Other students have approached staff and have informed them that Fatoumata has fought or yelled at them for no reason. Since this behavior cannot continue without support and guidance, Fatoumata will be placed in therapy in order to help with her anger outburst and to work on how to better interact with students in a respectful, meaningful way.

Since Fatoumata struggles with anger outburst, it's to no surprise that she would have difficulty interacting with other children. She has a bad habit of yelling, screaming and being mean towards students, yet gets upset if they treat her the same way that she treats them. In order to best resolve interactions between students, they will be placed together to work it out. Prior to this, Fatoumata will be given the chance to talk about her negative interaction in therapy. This will allow her to see how she messed up and what she can do better. On the same hand, if the other child was the cause for the negative interaction, Fatoumata can learn what she can do to not escalate the situation.

After the conflict has been reviewed, it will be Fatoumata's turn to make things right. A meeting between the two children will occur with her therapist present. Fatoumata will be responsible for stating what she did wrong and apologize for said behavior. This conflict resolution will allow Fatoumata to feel supported as she works towards better interactions with her fellow classmates. This technique will allow both children to realize that mistakes can happen but with some talking and understanding, there can be a solution to their problems.

Client Intervention

The first meeting with Fatoumata prior to her therapy sessions was because she was extremely disrespectful with a teacher. A meeting was pulled together. The meeting consisted of a therapist, her teacher, her father and her. The presenting problem was discussed, and she apologized for what she did. The father apologized as well and he would take care of it, if it were to happen again but it kept on reoccurring. At this point staff of Heketi and her family, agreed that therapy was necessary in order for this bad habit to be broken. At this point the therapist collected a permission slip to begin CBT and the parents fully supported the idea. The time that it

took for the meeting to occur and coming up with a unanimous decision, was a period of three weeks. This gave sufficient time to evaluate Fatoumata to address her problematic areas.

In order to work on her anger outburst, CBT or cognitive behavior therapy will be used. According to *Kelty Mental Health*, “Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an evidence-based therapy for several disorders. It can help to reduce distress and improve your ability to function. CBT can be used with school-aged children and youth. If it is modified to have a stronger focus on behavior, CBT can be used with children as young as 4” (Kelty Mental Health Resource Center, n.d.). CBT would be the best treatment for Fatoumata since It is age appropriate, and targets children who are experiencing anger problems. CBT will allow Fatoumata to learn how to handle why she is upset and how to better control her out bursts.

CBT has a focus on involving the family through the process, this ideology is very similar to the beliefs of Heketi. Working together from both school and home in order to correct the anger outburst. While Fatoumata’s dad has shown up to a behavior meeting, he has insisted that Fatoumata does not behave in such ways at home. Although he has informed staff that behaviors differ from home and school, he said to call him if Fatoumata needs redirection or does something that is not appropriate. Mr. Diallo is very much involved and looks forward to seeing behavior change from his daughter.

In order to stabilize her anger outburst, CBT will allow Fatoumata to see why she is angry, and the stem of her anger. Books like *Effective Anger Management For Children And Youth: The Manual And The Workbook* will allow the individual leading the CBT sessions, to have Fatoumata explore her anger in a healthy way. The book contains age appropriate material that will allow Fatoumata to understand her anger, even with limited English. The book has charts where she will be able to show how mad/ angry she was for a certain situation and learn

how to react differently. In addition, “children are taught the following steps: (1) feeling angry? (2) do not react first; (3) Generate Solutions; (4) Evaluation Solutions; and (5) Reflect and Reward (Yoon, 2014). This workbook is a fantastic addition to CBT because it provides hands on material that Fatoumata can use in her journey to anger management.

For her problems interacting with other children, Fatoumata will work on Conflict resolution skills for better social interaction with other children. This will provide her a safe space to correct her wrong doings. This will also allow both children to learn how to better interact with others. In addition, conflict resolution skills will provide “Redirecting conflict with the proper skills, however, can help individuals address these challenges and achieve greater well-being as well as resolution” (Team, 2020).

Intervention Hypothesis

With CBT and conflict resolution being implemented, the hypothesis is that Fatoumata will be able to better control her behavior as well as interact on a positive note with those around her. This is a task that can be done because CBT will teach her how to manage her behavior before it gets to an un acceptable level, and will assist her in realizing that the way she treats students is how they will reciprocate that action. So, if she treats them mean and with an attitude, most likely they will do the same to her. The goal of therapy will be to eliminate a majority of all anger outburst. In addition, therapy will teach her how to make friends and better yet how to treat in a respectable way. Hypothesis one is if CBT is provided, then her outburst levels will decrease and improve. Hypothesis two is if Fatoumata learns conflict resolution she will have fewer negative experiences with other children.

Client Goals

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Upon having the client intervention, Fatoumata did realize that she was “feeling hot” a lot lately after talking to people. She also expressed that her “chest felt icky” before she would yell. After Fatoumata’s therapist helped her to realize that her friends feel “icky” when she would yell at them. Fatoumata then said, “I don’t want to yell any more, I am just sad, I miss home”. At this point the root of the issue was discovered. *American Psychological Association* states “Use the Wheel of Feelings* to help your child learn about the different feelings and situations that cause them. Help your children find out what changes in their bodies when they are angry. Tell your children to always use words to show what they are feeling about people or a situation. Invent a situation where there is a fight or a conflict. Use dolls or stuffed animals to talk to your children about the situation and their feelings.” (APA, 2020). Although anger is an extreme emotion, children still will experience it. By giving them the tools necessary they will learn how to express it in a healthy way that they can experience it but be able to move on.

Intervention Goals and Objectives

While it was mentioned that CBT would be the best beneficial form of therapy for her, it must be consistent. In order for the therapy to be functional for her the sessions must last for 45 minutes per session, and she must complete a total 18 sessions. The amount of sessions will account for the school schedule as holidays and voting days occur. This will also give her leeway if she is absent because she is sick or unable to go to school for the day. In addition to therapy, Fatoumata will be responsible for keeping a diary/Journal to track her emotions.

While the sessions are being implemented, the goal for the client will be to communicate better with children instead of yelling and being nicer. This was established after she realized that she was angry because she missed home. In addition, since the root of the issue was discovered, conversations about how this is her new normal will be a part of the sessions. The

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book *Effective Anger Management For Children And Youth* will be used as a guide for the therapist during the sessions. The book will serve as an interactive guide, suitable for children that will help Fatoumata realize when she is angry, and other methods that can be done instead of yelling and having anger outbursts.

The main intervention goal is to see Fatoumata have control of her anger and interact with children in a respectful way. Cognitive behavioral therapy will allow Fatoumata to “think, act and feel” which can “reduce distress and improve your ability to function” (Kelty Mental Health Resource Center, n.d.). In addition to the stress that occurs because of anger, the body could be affected as well. This is seen when Fatoumata states “I feel icky”. According to Anger-Reduction Treatment Reduces Negative Affect Reactivity to Daily Stressors, “Chronic anger and negative reactions to stress can increase health risks. This study suggests that a commonly used psychotherapy treatment to help decrease persistent feelings of anger is also associated with lower negative feelings (including irritation, anxiety, and sadness) when a person encounters a stressful event in his or her daily life” (Mcintire, Mogle, Scodes, et all, 2019). By working on her anger outburst, her body can heal not only mentally but physically as well.

Problem areas and Target Problems	Client Goals	Client Objectives	Interventions
Anger Outburst	Instead of yelling at others, finding better ways to communicate with them. Fatoumata will learn how to manage anger when she learns how to interact with students	The client will receive CBT for 45 minutes for 18 weeks. A Diary will also be kept.	CBT Diary/ Journal
Negative interaction with students yelling and screaming when	Being Nice to other children Conflict resolution	The client will receive conflict resolution with other students	Conflict resolution skills

something doesn't go her way.	will decrease negative interaction with other students (e.g., yelling, screaming,)	with the therapist present.	
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Research Design

In order to make sure that the therapy is functional, it will be followed using a SSRD, specifically A-B design. The target problem is Fatoumata's angry outbursts and reduction of negative interaction with other students. By using Single subject research design, it "encourages practitioners to access the case as objectively as possible, and to monitor changes in the client targets and or situation over time. With the ongoing monitoring, you can make informed decisions that may help more events towards client goals including changes" (Bloom, Pg. 264, 2009). A-B design is works best for this particular situation because "A-B design provides information to the practitioner and to the client about outcome and also provides information to the agency and to society at large" (Bloom, Pg. 313, 2009). Since A-B design tracks her behavior before and after therapy, it can show/ prove if therapy and treatment is working accordingly.

While A-B design helps to strengthen the findings in the study, one concern to the internal validity when conducting Single Subject Research Design is "A-B design does not let you rule out alternative explanations for why the results occurred as they did. In addition, a fundamental limitation on any design that has a baseline concerns the question of whether intervention has already begun once the practitioner begins to ask questions to the client" (Bloom, Pg. 314, 2009)

Measurement

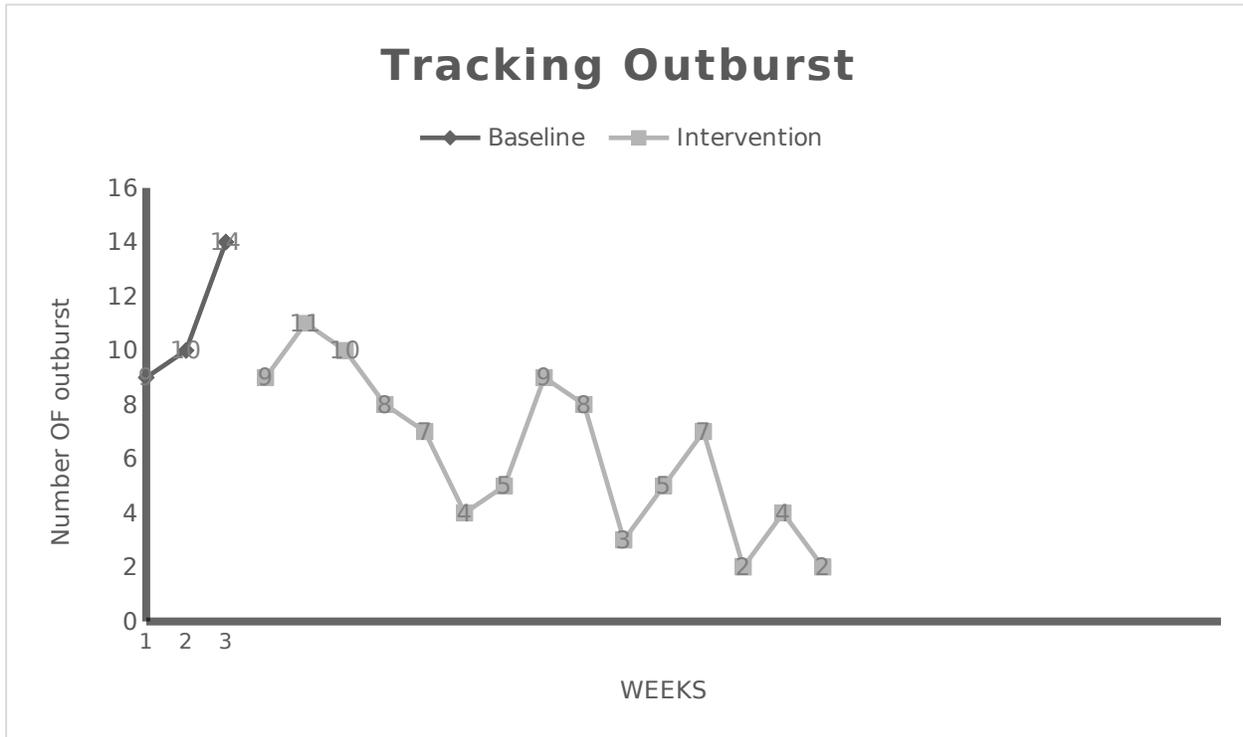
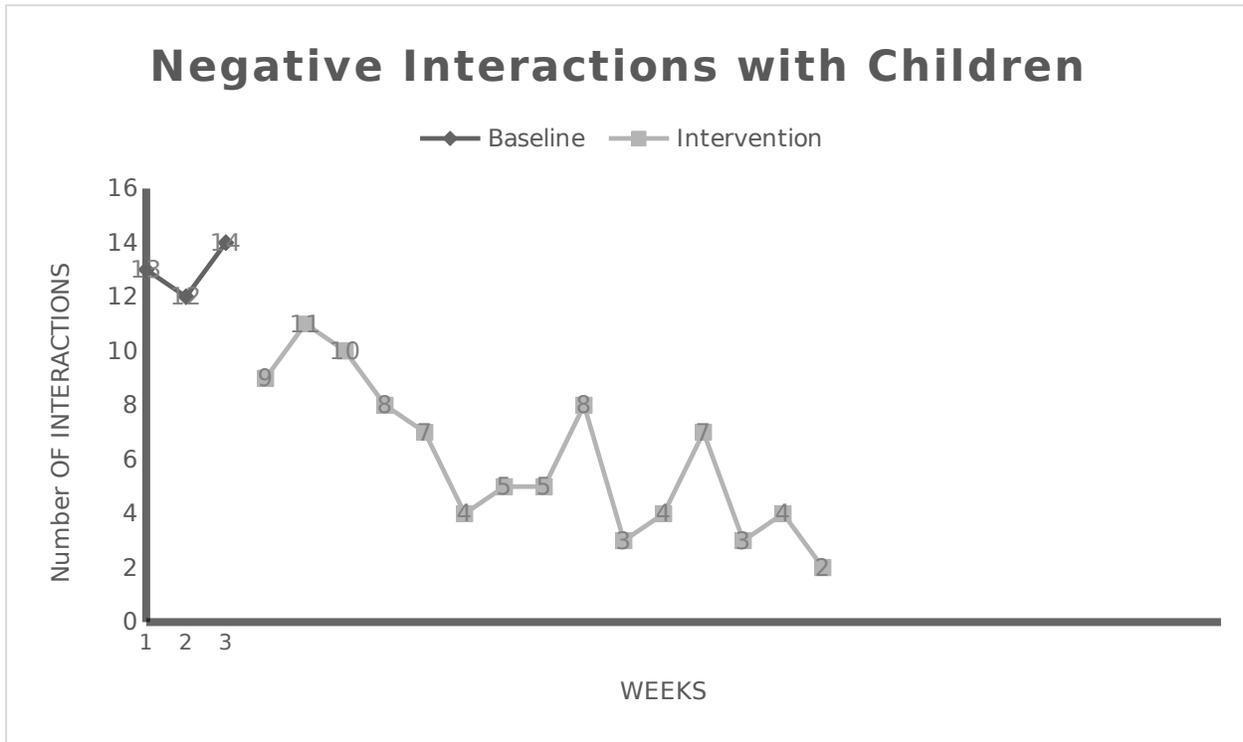
In order to track both growth and decline each week upon completing a session, the practitioner will ask and take note of the questions asked. The questions will measure how

Fatoumata is dealing with both negative social interactions and their parents' angry outburst. The measure for negative social interactions asks "(a) How often do they make too many demands on you? (b) How much do they criticize you? (c) How much do they let you down when you are counting on them? (d) How much do they get on your nerves? This scale is a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*a lot*) (Sneed, 2014). The second measure is for Parents angry outburst. The questions include "How do your parents react when you have done something they really don't like?" Becomes very angry and has an outburst. Has an outburst of anger and tells you off. Has a hard time controlling his/her irritation. Quarrels and complains loudly. Yells and argues with you" (Stattin, 2011). This scale is from 1 (never) to 3 (most often). The reason for testing the parents' anger is to see if maybe this is why Fatoumata is acting out in school. Also, since children learn from experience, this will reveal if anger was taught at home.

Quantitative measurement

Frequency of anger outburst will be observed and recoded by teachers and the staff at school. Fatoumata will also record the moment when she feels angry with her diary/journal. This will allow to keep track of her emotions throughout the week, even when she is not in the care of the practitioner. By tracking the amount of outburst that Fatoumata is experiencing, a chart can be created in which progress can be observed. The same can be said about negative interactions with children. The chart will show if therapy has made a change and or improvement. The chart for the amount of outburst and negative interactions can be found below.

Quantitative Data Analysis



Qualitative measurement/ Analysis

Interviews will be conducted to those who are in constant view of Fatoumata. This includes staff, teachers and family. The reason for this data collection is to keep an eye on Fatoumata in different environments in order to see if she has a specific outburst because of her environment or who is around. In doing so, we can find her trigger and help her to learn how to deal with it or how to best avoid it. The collection of data will be done by the therapist and this will occur on a weekly schedule. While a majority of the data will be from transcribing, the therapist will also observe while Fatoumata is in class to find ways not only to help her but how the teacher can best assist when Fatoumata has an outburst or negatively interacts with another students.

Findings

It has been found that implementing CBT to an individual who is experiencing anger and negative interactions with others is beneficial. The hypothesis was correct on both accounts, her outburst decreased and her negative interactions with students decreased as well. CBT allowed Fatoumata to work out inner emotions that were coming to the surface in form of anger. CBT was a huge factor in Fatoumata being able to talk out her feelings instead of having an anger outburst or having a negative interaction with other students. In addition to CBT conflict resolution has taught her how to better communicate with other students.

Implications

While therapy was able to change Fatoumata's behavior from negative to positive, another area of the child's life was affected. While not planned for, her outlook on life changed

as well. Fatoumata had a more positive outlook on life. She was displaying happier behavior as they attended therapy. While the study was to decrease negative behavior for the student, a result from all the therapy led to a happier child. This overall shows the resiliency of a child. They are able to learn and grow when a positive role model is present in their life. This finding also shows how therapy can be a positive influence for people experiencing certain difficulties.

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