

The Impact of Trusting Relationships for Youth Struggling with Depression



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Study Overview

Depression is a serious concern affecting the social, academic, and health outcomes of 3 million American adolescents. Low-income and minority adolescents are more likely to forego treatment for depression. Our previous work showed lower levels of interpersonal trust were related to higher levels of depressive symptoms and riskier health behaviors among low-income adolescents. Depressive symptoms among adolescents are affected by health behaviors such as sleep, stress management, medication adherence, and appointment keeping, as well as quality of relationship with parents. Family focused interventions are well established for reducing emotional and behavior problems in adolescents. The purpose of our study was to test an adolescent/parent trust-building depression management intervention among adolescents with moderate depressive symptoms. Our premise was that adolescent/parent trust can be learned, that increasing trust will improve self-regulation, improved self-regulation will influence depression management behaviors, which will decrease depressive symptoms and increase quality of life. We collaborated with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District school nurses to address health disparities in depression management among 30 low-income and/or minority adolescents and a parent in a 2-group clinical trial.

Community Partner

(click below to visit their site)



Study Outcomes

To test a Trust-building depression Self-Management Together (TRUST) intervention youth with depressive symptoms. With this project, we have worked with our community partner, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District school nurses to reach families of youth with depressive symptoms. We have also engaged new community partners (Wade Oval festivals, Fatherhood Initiative, youth summer camp programs) in reaching families.

Implications to Community

Depressive symptoms are a serious concern affecting the social, academic, and health outcomes of at least 37% of Cleveland adolescents. We know that there are disparities related to race and socioeconomic status with who is affected the most by depression, and who may be least able to seek treatment. This study is a first step in coming up with interventions that students and parents could utilize to help manage depressive symptoms.

- Our study taught depression management skills to 16 adolescents and their parents. Twelve adolescents with moderate depressive symptoms have reported reduced depressive symptoms, increases in quality of life, improvements in stress management, sleep, appointment keeping, medication adherence, and reduced loneliness.
- In discussions with adolescents, parents, and youth workers, we realized there is also a need for depressive symptoms intervention with preteens. We have revised our materials for a preteen audience and have submitted three new grants to address depressive symptoms in youth ages 10-13 years old. We are currently recruiting those aged 10-13.