

Abstract

Understanding Department of Juvenile Justice stakeholders' attitudes toward a yoga intervention for justice-involved youth with a history of trauma

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Objective: Numerous interventions attempt to reduce recidivism among youth in the juvenile justice (JJ) system, with limited evidence of effectiveness. Previous interventions have not addressed a key predictor of recidivism, trauma-related symptoms, despite evidence that trauma history and exposure to traumatic events are prevalent in this population. To address this gap, the present study develops, implements, and evaluates a trauma-informed, mindfulness-based yoga ("TIMBY") intervention. TIMBY is specifically designed to enhance self-regulation among youth in the Georgia Department of JJ (DJJ) system. Interviews with DJJ stakeholders to formally identify the barriers and facilitators to implementation for the present study and for a future, the larger-scale trial is currently in-progress.

Methods: DJJ stakeholders (1 behavioral health provider, 1 security staff, 1 educator, and 1 case manager at each of the 5 study sites, N=20) are being asked about whether they have received feedback from youth about the yoga classes, whether they have observed any changes in participants over the course of their participation, what challenges/barriers they might anticipate if the intervention were to be implemented on a larger scale (e.g., in more facilities, held more frequently, enrolled more youth, etc.) and what factors might increase the likelihood of success for a larger trial. Interview recordings will be transcribed verbatim and standard qualitative content analysis techniques will be used to analyze the transcript text using NVivo text-analysis software. Multiple coders, trained to proficiency to demonstrate high intra-rater reliability, will meet regularly to identify and discuss the qualitative categories and themes emerging from the data, discuss the interpretation of the findings, and discuss and resolve the disagreement.

Findings/Conclusions: Interview data will provide critical information about the barriers and facilitators to aid in the planning of a future pragmatic cluster randomized trial examining the effect of the intervention compared to usual care on psychosocial and behavioral outcomes for JJ-involved youth statewide in the Georgia DJJ system. Findings can also aid other justice systems with implementing similar programs in their facilities.

