STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAMME FOR PARENTS AND YOUTH 10-14 (UK)

Evidence Rating: 3

Assessed By: Blueprints; Commissioning Toolkit; CAYT; NREPP

Intended Outcomes: Improved parenting
Improved child behaviour
Improved child mental health & wellbeing

The Strengthening Families Programme 10-14 (SFP 10-14) is for families who wish to support their teenage child’s development. Parents and a child between the ages of ten and 14 attend seven weekly group sessions where they learn how to communicate effectively, set appropriate limits and resist peer pressure to use drugs and alcohol.

SFP 10-14 has initial evidence of improving young people’s school achievement and reducing their behavioural problems and substance misuse.

Where has it been implemented?
The UK, the USA and internationally

Settings
Family home, Children’s centre, School, Community centre/faith-based centre, Clinic/Health centre

Who is it for?
Age: Families with any children between the ages of ten and 14
Classification: Universal
Need: Low; Moderate

Who can deliver it?
Lead practitioner: QCF Level 4/5
Co-practitioner: QCF Level 3

Contact Info
Debby Allen - dallen@brookes.ac.uk
Cathy Hockaday - hockaday@iastate.edu
How it works

What is the theory of change?

- Young people’s behavioural problems and substance misuse is linked to risk and protective factors within the family system. Key risks include poor family communication and ineffective parenting strategies. Key protective processes include improved family problem solving skills and strengthened family bonds.
- Parents and young people learn strategies for identifying and reducing the risks within their family system, while at the same time increasing the protective factors. These strategies include more effective parenting practices (including limit setting) and communication.
- In the short term, parenting practices, family communication and young people’s attitudes improve.
- In the longer term, young people are less likely to be involved in substance misuse or antisocial behaviour and are more likely to do better in school.
- More about SFP 10-14’s logic model can be found here.

Delivery

How is it delivered?

- SFP 10-14 is delivered by three trained facilitators (one lead practitioner and two co-practitioners) to family groups of between eight and 12 families.
- The programme consists of seven weekly sessions lasting two hours each.

What happens during the intervention?

- During the first hour, the parents and children attend separate sessions on a related family skill (e.g. family communication, peer-refusal skills for substance misuse)
- These sessions make use of an instructional video that provides the basis for a group discussion and practice activities
- During the second hour the parents and children are reunited to review and practice skills and competencies together.
Implementation

Who can deliver it?

- Lead practitioners should have a minimum of a QCF Level 4/5.
- Co-practitioners should have a minimum of a QCF Level 3.
- It is also expected that practitioners should have previous experience of working with families.

What are the training requirements?

Initial practitioner training involves attending a three- to four-day course covering the ‘how’ and ‘what’ of programme delivery. This includes information about SFP 10-14’s theoretical basis, its evidence, strategies for recruiting families and methods for delivering the intervention.

Four levels of certification are available for practitioners:

- Level 1 is awarded after attendance at the three- to four-day initial training
- Level 2 is awarded after Level 1 accredited trainers have undergone supervision delivering an entire SFP 10-14 programme
- Level 3 is awarded to practitioners who are trained as SFP 10-14 trainers. Practitioners can apply to become trained as trainers in their area and for the organisation employing them.
- Level 4 is a bespoke academic award from the School of Health and Social Care at Oxford Brookes University, provided to practitioners wishing to use their SFP 10-14 training towards a higher educational degree.

How are the practitioners supervised?

- Practitioners should be supervised in three sessions (one pre, one during, and one post intervention), where practice is observed, and recorded Strengthening Families sessions are reviewed and discussed.

What are the systems for maintaining fidelity?

- A comprehensive manual with detailed lesson plans
- Fidelity checklists.

Projected Costs and Benefits

- Please click [here](#) for cost-benefit information.
Evidence

This programme has initial evidence from a single randomised controlled trial demonstrating short and long term improvements in young people’s substance misuse, antisocial behaviour and school achievement.


- Improved parenting competencies (parent reported and coded observation)
- Reduced & prevented substance use at 4 year follow-up (parent and child reported and video observations)
- Reduced aggression at 4 year follow up (parent reported)
- Improved school success at a five year follow-up (parent reported).