Multi-Family Group Therapy: 
Evaluation Using the AESED Scale

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Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Review how parents of youth with an eating disorder accommodate the eating disorder in their daily lives
- Gain an understanding of the components and purpose of Multi-Family Group therapy (MFGT) as a treatment modality
- Understand how parents cope with youth with an ED during MFGT at the Provincial Specialized Eating Disorders Program in Vancouver Canada
Aim of the study

- To describe how parents are coping with youth with an ED at the beginning and end of MFGT using the AESED scale and satisfaction surveys
- Current outcomes-based literature on MFGT is limited

MFGT Research Team L-R: Jadine Cairns, Kile Brokop, Marion Rom, Pei-Yoong Lam
Background:
Multi-Family Group Therapy (MFGT)

- Year-long therapeutic modality
- Team of therapists
- 6-7 families, **all** family members recruited for each session
- Initial intensive 4-day sessions followed by 4 to 6 one day follow-up sessions through the subsequent 12 months
- Experiential activities
- Mutual family support
What is the AESED?

- The Accommodation and Enabling Scale for Eating Disorders (AESED) is a validated scale developed at King’s College, London, which explores five factors related to accommodation of the ED (Sepulveda 2009) in the family.
- The maximum score is 132 (Higher number = more accommodation)
**MFGT in Vancouver (British Columbia, Canada)**

- Provincial Specialized Eating Disorder Program at BC Children’s Hospital started MFGT in 2009
- In our 4th year, starting 7th group this spring
- Evaluation has been integrated into MFGT for continuous quality improvement and research purposes

**MFGT Clinical Team.** L-R: Pat Roles, Marion Rom, Mandy Dhanda, Jadine Cairns, Tom Bauslaugh, Barbara Beach, Karen Dixon and Karina O’Brien
Parents were recruited from five MFGT groups from 2009-2012.
The AESED was administered at the launch (n=11) and at the final follow-up session (n=18) approximately one year later. Only data from complete AESEDS was included in the research data set.
Some parents declined to participate in research study.
Standard program evaluation measures on Likert-like scales assessing satisfaction with MFGT were also included.
Survey was administered after all MFGT sessions.
AESED Results

Reduction in AESED score

This indicates a reduction in parental accommodation of the ED in their daily lives post attendance at MFGT
Measuring Parent Satisfaction with MFGT

• 93% of parents felt that MFGT contributed to *increasing their confidence*

• 95% of parents felt that MFGT helped in *effectively dealing with the ED*

• 80% of parents would strongly *recommend MFGT to other families*
What parents said

Positive aspects of the group
• “we now eat together”
• “we took away the (weigh) scale”
• “I am more relaxed/accepting and prepared to deal with the challenges”

Opportunities for improvement
• “My own family members don’t participate as much as I like”
Conclusions

- The AESED scores, in conjunction with parents’ strong self-reported satisfaction with MFGT, demonstrate the benefits of this modality.

- Although this current research cannot draw a correlation between MFGT intervention and better clinical outcomes, it provides a platform for future research in this area.
Limitations

- small sample size
- cannot isolate the factor with greatest impact on satisfaction (i.e. degree of satisfaction might be influenced by unique circumstances of family member’s illness and family dynamics)
- Difficult to generalize findings to other treatment centres using MFGT as there is no standardized protocol for how MFGT is conducted (therapy is based on general guiding principles)
Next Steps

• Hope to implement some changes to MFGT content based on feedback from parents

• Next steps of evaluation: in order to further understand impact on parents and families and treatment outcomes post-MFGT, we hope to design a second study which will involve telephone based open ended interviews (minimum of 1 year post MFGT)

• Research Team is also hoping to design other research to investigate outcomes of families who have participated in MFGT
References and Resources Consulted

