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Abstract Information

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A Pilot RCT Exploring the Effectiveness of the DPEW in Decreasing the Potential Risk of IPV

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Abstract:

Despite the gravity of the consequences of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), there are few, if any, primary prevention strategies developed for IPV. A potentially promising intervention for preventing relational violence is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT; Linehan, 1993), which has demonstrated effectiveness in the treatment of individuals with borderline personality disorder (BDP), who share many of the qualities inherent in potentially violent men (Fruzzetti & Levensky, 2000; Waltz, 2002). The Dialectical Psychoeducational Workshop (DPEW), a manualized, preventative intervention based on DBT, consists of two parts: 1) A psychotherapeutic approach in which a particular problematic behavior that may trigger anger and/or violence is examined in detail and alternative solutions for change are explored; and, 2) A psychoeducational approach, teaching a range of interpersonal, cognitive, and emotion regulation/anger management skills, within a supportive atmosphere of respect for the individual and a commitment for positive change. A pilot, randomized controlled trial (RCT) of the DPEW, and a control condition, an anger management workshop (AMW) was utilized to examine to what extent the DPEW influenced the following: 1) anger management skills (i.e., emotion regulation); 2) coping with feelings of anger; 3) empathy (i.e., validation); and 4) the potential for risk and acts of IPV. The pilot study sample consisted of fifty-five adult males between the ages of eighteen and fifty of varying race, class, and ethnic groups, who had enrolled to attend anger management counseling. Given the current paucity of theory-driven IPV interventions, the pilot RCT draws upon extensive research in primary prevention of violence from related fields. This randomized study is a first step in an iterative process toward examining a preventative intervention that may provide males at risk for violence toward their partners the necessary skills to decrease their potential risk of utilizing violence and thus help to improve the health and safety of at risk women and children.
