



# Predicting engagement of evidence-based interventions for at-risk youth with differential mental health needs.



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## BACKGROUND

- Youth from high-risk communities lack access to traditional care from clinical providers. <sup>[1]</sup>
- Emotional health needs of youth from high-risk communities have been addressed by non-mental health specialists delivering evidence-based interventions. <sup>[2]</sup>
- The Thoughts, Emotions, and Behaviors (TEB) skills are 5 evidence-based emotion regulation interventions adapted specifically to be delivered by non-mental health specialists <sup>[3]</sup>
- Youth with differing levels of emotional health needs may require different dosages of evidence-based strategies to adequately address them. <sup>[2]</sup>

**Study Aim:** To examine whether youth with higher emotional health challenges are provided with more evidence-based intervention encounters from non-mental health specialists than those with less challenges.

## METHODS

### Participants

- Youth from a community organization (N=50)
  - Considered disengaged and disconnected
  - Mean GAD-7 score: 8.00 (± 5.65)
  - Mean DERS-SF score: 41.00 (± 14.72)

### Data Collection

- Organization staff recorded encounters with youth that included the TEB Skills using their programming platform.

### Measures

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7)
  - Total score: Higher scores indicate higher levels of anxiety
- Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale-Short Form (DERS-SF)
  - Total score: higher scores indicate higher levels of emotion dysregulation
- DERS-SF subscales (higher scores indicate higher levels of dysregulation in each of the subscale domains)
  - Awareness: lack of emotional awareness
  - Clarity: lack of emotional clarity
  - Goals: difficulty engaging in goal-directed thinking and behaviors when distressed
  - Impulse: difficulty regulating behavior when distressed
  - Non-acceptance: unwillingness to accept certain emotional responses
  - Strategies: lack of access to strategies for feeling better when distressed

## METHODS Cont.

### Measures cont.

- Total number of TEB Skill encounters: A total number of encounters with TEB skills was calculated for each youth.

### Data Analysis

- Multiple linear regression
  - used to determine the relationship between total anxiety scores, total emotion dysregulation scores, and total number of TEB skill encounters.
  - used to determine the relationship between total anxiety scores, emotion dysregulation subscale scores, and total number of TEB skill encounters.

## RESULTS

### Regression Coefficients for predicting Total TEB Skill Encounters in youth

Variable	B	95% CI (LB)	95% CI (UB)	β	t	p
Total Generalized Anxiety Score	-.214	-.767	.338	-.146	-.780	.439
Total Emotion Dysregulation Score	.079	-.133	.291	.105	.746	.459

Note: R<sup>2</sup>=.015 (N=50, p=.701)

### Regression Coefficients for predicting Total TEB Skill Encounters in youth

Variable	B	95% CI (LB)	95% CI (UB)	β	t	p
Total Generalized Anxiety Score	-.037	-.669	.596	-.025	-.117	.908
Emotion Dysregulation Subscale: Awareness	.347	-.561	1.254	.113	.771	.445
Emotion Dysregulation Subscale: Clarity	.403	-.832	1.637	.134	.658	.514
Emotion Dysregulation Subscale: Goals	-.911	-1.897	.075	-.418	-1.865	.069
Emotion Dysregulation Subscale: Impulse	1.107	.173	2.041	.522	2.392	.021*
Emotion Dysregulation Subscale: Nonacceptance	.015	-1.014	1.044	.976	.030	.976
Emotion Dysregulation Subscale: Strategies	-.441	-1.720	.838	.490	-.696	.490

Note: R<sup>2</sup>=.15 (N=50, p=.408) \*p<.05

## RESULTS Cont.

- No significant relation between youth total anxiety scores, total emotion dysregulation scores, and total number of TEB encounters
- Youth with greater difficulties in regulating behavior when distressed (Impulse subscale) at baseline had more TEB skill encounters
  - No significant relationships between Total number of TEB skills encounters and the other DERS-SF subscales

## CONCLUSIONS

- Non-mental health specialists are having more TEB skill encounters with youth with baseline higher impulsivity.
- These staff may identify at-risk youth more easily through externalizing behavior, such as impulsivity, compared to internal markers of emotional health issues.
- Consideration for future investigations:
  - Explore whether different types of mental health challenges (eg., anxiety, depression, trauma) differentially predict more or less encounters of TEB skills, and whether it affects impact/effectiveness
  - Explore whether youth level characteristics, such as youth willingness to engage with the TEB skills, impact the number of encounters with TEB skills

## REFERENCES

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