

# Parenting Wisely News

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## Use of Parenting Wisely in group format is growing

Agencies are discovering that after parents complete PW individually, they are much more likely to attend group sessions where PW is presented again, with the benefit of expanded group discussion and homework assignments to further develop skills. Although some agencies have experimented with brief 3-4 sessions groups, we have no evidence that such a format is effective.

An Australian study showed that individual use of PW provided more benefits than a group use consisting of 3 sessions. Bob Pushak, whose group curricula are as detailed and thorough as anyone would want, has data showing that using his 10 session group curricula results in significant benefits *beyond individual use*. Bob has been conducting trainings for those who want to be certified as PW group instructors. This involves a two to three day workshop, and later Bob views videotapes of group sessions and provides feedback to the trainees conducting the groups.

For the purchasers of PW programs who do not have the group curricula (these come with the cdrom kits on a floppy disc), email us and we will send you the curricula. These curricula, which Bob regularly updates based upon the latest research and his and others experiences, are available for the UK teenagers program, Young Children's version, and the Foster and Residential Care version.

## New Products

The Young Children's Version of PW, for parents of children ages 3-9, is now available in a Spanish language translation (VHS now, CD-ROM in spring, 2006). Recent research on the English version of this program by Bob Pushak has found substantial improvements in child problem behavior similar to that found with the teen version of PW. Bob finds moderate to large effect sizes.

Family Works Inc, will make all the PW programs currently in VHS and PAL videocassette versions, available in DVD format during the spring of 2006. This includes the American and UK Teenager versions, Young Children's Version, Foster and Residential Care version, and Spanish language versions of the American Teen and the Young Children.

# Using PW in the Field

In Las Vegas, two large projects have been underway to reduce family violence and teen pregnancy. Sherri Sullivan, director of the Family Development Foundation, has organized an ambitious project that targets inner city families at risk for violence. Her staff offers the PW program individually and in groups (using Pushak's group curriculum) to families with children attending the Andre Agassi Academy serving at-risk families, some local Boys and Girls clubs, and some area elementary schools. Hispanic families are a significant part of the target population, and Imelda Perez heads this effort. Imelda worked in conjunction with Mary Rosenthal and Southern Nevada Area Health Education Cooperative and has helped develop supplementary materials and procedures for engaging Latino families. Rosenthal's group is using PW with families at-risk for teen pregnancy.



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In Baton Rouge, LA LSU is combating truancy, where LA has the highest rate in the country, has added PW to their approaches. County extension agents statewide are offering PW to parents of truant children.

In Penticton, BC, at a community mental health center, PW is used in a triage fashion, a trend that is increasing in locations in the US. When parents come in reporting problem child behavior issues, all of them receive PW. Approximately a third no longer need services after using the PW program. For the remaining two thirds, they receive PW in groups for 10 sessions. Of these, two thirds need no further services. For the remainder, family interventions or other services are offered. In this way, the most labor intensive services are reserved for those who do not respond fully to briefer intervention.

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In Sidney, MT, Vernetta Torgerson is using PW in conjunction with Dr. Gordon's Home Based Behavioral Systems Family Therapy to serve rural families with delinquents and substance abuse problems. This combined approach is being used at sites in MT, RI, and OR. Vernetta has found that the normal course of 14 sessions of family therapy is reduced to 6-8 sessions when the family uses PW. Since Vernetta has to drive hours to get to many of the families, she really appreciates this reduction. She also finds, as do the other sites combining PW and family interventions, that families are much more open to family therapy after they use PW.

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In Salem, MA, Ruth Budelmann in the Essex County District Attorney's office is focusing on prevention of delinquency and prosecution by offering PW to families of teens in their diversion program. PW is offered in either individual or group formats. They are also testing a shortened offering of PW in a 90-minute workshop format offered at all the area's schools. →

## Using PW in the Field

Three to four scenarios are shown to parents in a group format, and parents receive skill practice exercises to take home. We await the results of this shortened format, which we hope will entice more families to use the entire PW program.

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In Eugene, OR, the Lane County Juvenile Department is using PW in conjunction with Dr. Gordon’s Home-Based Behavioral Systems Family Therapy ( an adaptation of Functional Family Therapy) to treat delinquency. Lower risk cases will receive only the PW program, while medium to high risk cases will be randomly assigned to either PW or family therapy. The research design is fairly elaborate and ably overseen by Linda Wagner. We will learn what if any incremental benefit for reducing recidivism occurs when PW is added to family therapy, as well as the impact of PW alone on recidivism.

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In Elkins, WV, Youth Health Services is using PW in individual and group formats to target families with teens with disruptive behavior disorders, depression, substance abuse in a psychoeducational approach. Case managers are the primary deliverers of the program, as well as some therapists. They recently received expanded funding from WV’s OJJDP formula grants program, and feedback that with PW, compared to other family strengthening Model Programs, they had annually **treated over four times the number (250) of families at less cost than other agencies.** They are confident of continued funding with these results.



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In Great Britain, Liz Rafferty (EWS/ Devon) & Jane Warren (Meadow Community Centre) write:\* “The most positive aspects of these programmes are the flexibility and interactive possibilities, which enable parents to use the resource in their own home, accompanied or not by a facilitator. As a practitioner, I can take my laptop into any venue agreed with a parent, engaging both parent and child/adolescent in viewing and using the programme. Adolescents in particular have commented on how interesting the scenes are to watch; two young people were impressed that the visual scenes depicted real situations, with which they and parents could identify. “That’s just like you, when you shout at me”. Our group indicated that the scenarios were “true to form”, and “easy to relate to”. One parent felt that viewing the programme together led to greater mutual understanding between herself and daughter.

Generally, those parents who used this programme believe it has made a 50% difference in their relationships with their adolescents, and feel more empowered to “have a voice”, where they might previously have given up.”

\*Trust for the Study of Adolescence (www.tsa.uk.com) online newsletter January 2006.

## Outcome Evaluations Wanted!

We need to hear from agencies that have completed or are nearing completion of evaluations of the impact of the PW program. Usually when a grant monies fund the purchase of the Parenting Wisely program, an evaluation is required. The evaluation outcomes we would like to see are those involving at least 40 parents/families and utilizing a pre-test, and post-test or follow-up format, measuring child problem behavior, family relationships, substance use, violence, school behavior, or comparable.

Please contact us if you know of such evaluations in your area. We will put these reports in their entirety on our website. As an incentive, we'll send you 20 Parenting Wisely parent workbooks of your choice at no charge (\$175 value)!



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