CPDiscoveryLab

Exploring strengths and challenges of a group cognitive behavioral pain management program for children and youth with CP.

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Background & Rationale

 Children with cerebral palsy (CP) often experience chronic pain, with parental responses impacting children's coping mechanisms



"(My son) came to

the realization that

dealing with wasn't

children." - Parent

the **pain** he was

normal for all

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a psychological intervention used to treat chronic pain
- No previous studies have explored CBT for chronic pain in children with CP
- This is a qualitative piece of a feasibility study for a CBT pain management program for children with CP and their parents

Research Question

What are the strengths and challenges of a group CBT program for children with CP who experience chronic pain and their parents, as informed by experiences of participants and therapists in the program?

Methods

Intervention

- Six sessions of a CBT for chronic pain program
- 6 children, aged 9-18, with CP and chronic pain and their parents

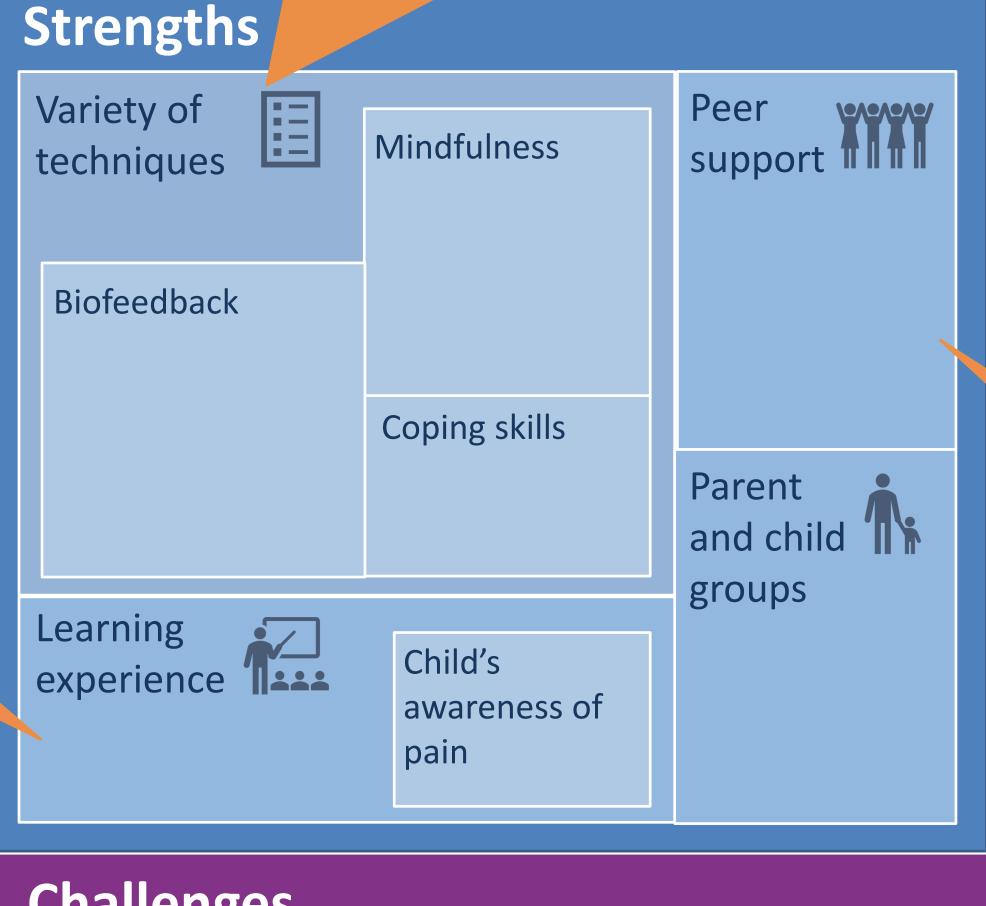
Interviews

- Participant experiences, program barriers and facilitators
- 3 children, 5 parents and 2 therapists

Qualitative analysis

- Thematic analysis using NVivo software
- First coded separately by two coders then compared themes

"Different things work for different people so I think your tool bag needs to be pretty full, so you have different things to go to" - Parent



Challenges

Group Variability Logistics (1) Session Number of Time of Age range length sessions day Variation in cognitive level Pain experience

"Six weeks would have been more perfect... at the end of the day I was tired... because you have the longer sessions, I just felt like sometimes I was finding it hard to focus"- Parent

Figure 1: Themes identified in qualitative interviews using thematic analysis. Area of each rectangle corresponds with the number of participants that mentioned the given theme.



"There's so much

fine tune and

approach for

individualize the

variability... it would

be ideal to be able to

everybody. But at the

same time I like the

group format. So it's

- Therapist

a bit of a catch 22."

Conclusions

Based on participant experiences, it is feasible to run a CBT pain management program for children with CP and their parents.



Impact

- Offers strategies to **better manage chronic** pain among children with CP
- Better management of chronic pain may improve quality of life

Next Steps

- Results from this study will inform a larger multi-site study.
- **Stop**: Non-stratified randomization
- Modify: Groups based on age, cognitive abilities and pain experience
- **Continue**: Group intervention, parent and child groups and teaching a variety of strategies



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