Introduction

Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs) are stressful experiences occurring during childhood that directly hurt a child or affect them through the environment in which they live. Parents and caregivers that have high levels of trauma in childhood are ill-equipped to parent their own children because of these ACEs.

In the last 40 years El Salvador has experienced multiple national-level traumatic events. In 2018, the homicide rate in El Salvador (including the disappeared) was 101 per 100,000 people, a death toll higher than that of Syria. The impact of violence is pervasive in El Salvador, with nearly every person having directly experienced multiple traumatic experiences during their lifetime simply by living in the country.

Objective

To 1) improve positive parenting practices and 2) reduce parental perception of stress of the parents in four communities with high incidence of violence in El Salvador through a parenting intervention that incorporates support for parents and their wellbeing.

Literature Review of Successful Interventions

Features of Process

Process related to caregiving and parenting interventions refers to “what”—what topics are included, what information is shared. Four main areas of information were consistently identified as critical to success: 1) improving parental sensitivity in communication; 2) developing a family structure related to caregiver and parenting interventions; 3) increasing parental perception of stress of the parents in four communities with high incidence of violence in El Salvador through a parenting intervention that incorporates support for parents and their wellbeing.

Methods

Sample: N=33 parents of children ages 0-6 located in 4 communities with high incidence of violence in El Salvador.

Setting: Four urban and peri-urban communities in El Salvador with high incidence of violence and active gang presence, included in “Plan for a Safe El Salvador” (PES;S) and identified through multidimensional poverty analysis by UNICEF as communities with high incidence of violence and active gang presence, included in “Plan for a Safe El Salvador” (PES;S) and identified through multidimensional poverty analysis by UNICEF as communities experiencing an ongoing conflict with high incidence of violence.

Understanding the concept of ACEs is shared. Four main areas of information were consistently identified as critical to success: 1) improving parental sensitivity in communication; 2) developing a family structure related to caregiver and parenting interventions; 3) increasing parental perception of stress of the parents in four communities with high incidence of violence in El Salvador through a parenting intervention that incorporates support for parents and their wellbeing.

Measures: Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Related to Outcomes (PICCOLO); Parenting Stress Scale (PSS)

Intervention

Three main intervention days (one a week for three weeks):

• Each day focuses on a core topic:
  - Communication
  - Development
  - Positive Discipline
  - Test new skills with children while guided by mentor

Results

Improvement of parenting skills was assessed using the PICCOLO at pre and post intervention using a paired-t test (Table 1). Each of the four PICCOLO categories were scored individually with a correlative category related to the numeric score. The PICCOLO competency areas are arranged in the order of complexity, the first skill being affect, followed by responsiveness, autonomy, and lastly, motivation.

The PICCOLO at pre and post intervention using a paired-t test was found to be statistically significant (p=0.003). The reduction of parental stress was assessed using the PSS inventory at five points: pre and post intervention, and each of the three days of intervention. While there was not statistical significance improvement in PSS between intervention day (Table 2). A repeated measures pre-test to 13.95 post-test was found to be statistically significant (p<0.005).

Discussion

Though pre-chosen communities, the characteristics were representative of El Salvador, as was having a caregiver group composed almost entirely of females demonstrating typical gender roles. The open definition of who was eligible or not limited to biological parent reflects the reality that children do not always live with their biological parents due to migration, economic opportunities, and other factors. There are no known studies to have assessed the level of ACEs on the Salvadoran population, so it is unknown whether a mean 6.6 ACE score is representative of the general population.

Limitations: A relatively small sample (N=33), no comparison group, either within the communities or with comparable communities; participants were self-selecting from four pre-chosen communities.

Conclusion

In summary, findings suggest that parent behaviors, specifically in the areas of affect and responsiveness, improved over the course of the intervention. These findings suggest that, while parents are confronting the same stressors, they may be able to manage those stressors more effectively.

Conclusions

In summary, findings suggest that parent behaviors, specifically in the areas of affect and responsiveness, improved over the course of the intervention. These findings suggest that, while parents are confronting the same stressors, they may be able to manage those stressors more effectively.

Setting up for Success to Break Transgenerational Violence: Supporting Positive Parenting Interventions for Caregivers with High Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Scores

MEGHAN E. LÓPEZ, DNP, FNP-BC, HEAD OF MISSION, INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, EL SALVADOR

FACTOR MENTOR: BRIGIT VANGRAAFEILAND DNP, CRNP, FAAN ~ SITE MENTOR: JIMMY VÁSQUEZ, MEC, POLICY SPECIALIST, UNICEF EL SALVADOR

Table 1: Results of PICCOLO pre- and post-intervention scores of parents-child dyads.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PICCOLO Category</th>
<th>Score Pre</th>
<th>Score Post</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>&lt;0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>&lt;0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>&lt;0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>&lt;0.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: PSS evaluation scores by categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Average Stress</th>
<th>Average Post</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-3.95</td>
<td>&lt;0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>-3.95</td>
<td>&lt;0.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

Nearly 70 years of population-level research shows that early and adverse childhood experiences, especially parental-child relationships, influence how children grow into adults and eventually parent their own children. While stressors of any kind impact parent-child relationships and children’s social-emotional development, high levels of parenting stress are particularly problematic because of their indirect influence on parenting behavior and, consequently, child outcomes. Providing parents with the tools to be able to manage stressful situations, as well as the ability to positively engage with their children is an essential first step to breaking the intergenerational transmission of ACEs.

Resilience is built through breaking transgenerational experience of ACEs, which translates to immediate and long-term positive impact on social-emotional and physical health. Efforts to provide parents with the tools to be able to manage stressful situations as well as the ability to positively engage with their children are essential to break community and family transgenerational experience of violence.