

Critical review of a social service program – Positive Parenting Program (Triple P Parenting)

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The Positive Parenting Program, also known as Triple P, is a program that aids parents, and carers alike to develop the necessary skills and strategies to parent effectively and positively. The program aims to promote ways for parents and carers to build and nurture positive relationships with their children. This is done by providing each parent with a toolbox of ideas from which everyone can pick and choose the strategies that best suit them and their child. The program can be completed online or face to face by an accredited practitioner. The online mode of delivery consists of 8 modules each taking 30 minutes to an hour to complete, consisting of worksheets, videos, and activities. For the most part, this mode of delivery is free with some organisations implementing fees from 80 dollars onwards. Fees for face-to-face delivery vary and are at the discretion of the institution providing the course. The course is targeted at parents and carers of children of all ages with two courses available for two age groups. Triple P Online for parents and carers of children aged between 0 and 11, and Teen Triple P for those who have children from 12 to 16. Allowing all parents and children to benefit. Below we will discuss why this program is successful and how it improves rates of child-developmental problems more so than other programs.

The Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) has been shown to be successful amongst different family types. In a meta-analysis conducted by de Graaf et al. (2008) previous research was discussed in which Triple P had been documented as being successful in several different family types who had children with varying degrees of behavioural problems. Therefore, de Graaf et al. (2008) tested this by reviewing and dissecting previous studies. It was determined that across these studies involving families of different types a reduction in behavioural problems occurred with a

moderate to large effect size ($d=0.88$). Moreover, this effect size was still found to be significant when a long-term follow up was completed ($d=1.00$). Furthermore, since few significant moderators were found demonstrating that Triple P was effective across different family types, behavioural issues, and across different formats (de Graaf et al. 2008). However, the studies analysed were often very small with only 10-50 participants. Moreover, the studies used in the postintervention analysis and long-term analysis were not always the same, making the findings less reliable (de Graaf et al. 2008). Therefore, more research is warranted. For example, the program was found to be successful across different family types, however it would be helpful to determine if some types of families still fared better than others and if so why. This would then enable us to tailor the program further to make it even more beneficial. Yet, the literature and research conducted by peers has determined that for the most part Triple P is effective across different types of families, making it a fantastic option for all families.

Furthermore, the Triple P program has expanded over time and is now far more accessible than other parenting programs. A meta-analysis was conducted by Pickering and Saunders (2016) in which it was revealed that many parents find it too difficult or inconvenient to attend parenting classes. This was shown in a survey that was conducted on 4,010 Australian parents who had children under the age of 12. Of those surveyed, 75 percent of these parents who had a child with a behavioural problem had never attended a parenting class (Pickering & Saunders, 2016). Therefore, these other parenting programs often consisted of small groups. Although, these programs are still effective and valuable, they are unlikely to have a major impact on reducing rates of developmental problems in children resulting from inadequate parenting (Pickering & Sanders,

2016). However, the 75 percent of parents who had a child with a behavioural problem were deemed to have that behavioural problem by the parent themselves. Although, in most instances the parent would be the best source of such information, it does not allow for independent observation. Moreover, Indigenous parents were underrepresented in the study (Pickering & Sanders, 2016). Therefore, it would be beneficial to include parents from all backgrounds in future studies. Unlike many other parenting programs, Triple P has aimed to make its courses accessible and affordable for all. With many classes available online, in person or simply self-guided (Sanders et al. 2014) Allowing each parent to choose a format that works best for them.

Triple P has demonstrated that its parenting techniques are effective across different cultures. In a study conducted by Matsumoto, Sofronoff and Sanders (2007), Japanese parents were allocated to one of two groups, an intervention group (applied Triple P) or the control group. The intervention group recorded a significant interaction between group and time with a p value of $< .0005$ (Matsumoto, Sofronoff & Sanders, 2007). This means that over time those in the intervention group were recording a greater reduction in problematic child behaviour compared to the control group. From this we seem to be able to determine that the Triple P Program was effective in reducing behavioural problems even in families of a different cultural background, in this case Japanese families. However, even though all families used were Japanese, they were often bicultural, meaning that one parent was of Japanese descent while the other was Australian (Sanders et al. 2007). Therefore, the results cannot be generalised to families where both parents are Japanese. Furthermore, no measures were taken to determine the extent to which acculturation had occurred, perhaps these Japanese parents had lived in Australia for decades, this had not been

accounted for (Sanders et al. 2007). Thus, the study could be improved by conducting the experiment outside of Australia and ensuring the pre-tests prior to testing were completed to eliminate possible extraneous variables like acculturation.

In conclusion, the Positive Parenting Program is an internationally recognised parenting program that has benefited many families across the world including Australia. Some of the factors that make it so successful and possibly more effective in reducing problematic behaviour in children, is that the program is suitable for all family types with children with varying behavioural issues. Additionally, Triple P has endeavoured to make itself more accessible by choosing to operate on multiple formats. Finally, because Triple P has been shown to be successful in families of different cultures, making it a program that can be implemented across the world. Despite the limitations discussed, which are of importance, there is strong evidence to suggest that Triple P is a successful program with room for further research and understanding.

References

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