

Two generations thrive: Bidirectional collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and parents to promote culturally responsive trauma research, practice, and policy

Prolonged exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in the absence of protective relationships and systems contributes to toxic stress and can lead to numerous psychological and physical health consequences.

Disproportionate exposure to ACEs and lack of appropriate responses stemming from systemic racism contributes to racial inequities.

Culturally responsive practices and policies focused on early childhood are critical to prevent toxic stress and subsequent health inequities.

This paper describes a collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and parents of color with lived experiences of ACEs: Two Generations Thrive aims to prevent the intergenerational transmission of ACEs through improving practices and policies within the health care, education, and child welfare systems.

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Methods: Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) and cultural humility provided a framework and key principles for the collaboration, with an emphasis on critical reflection, mitigating power imbalances, and institutional accountability. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to evaluate outcomes. The authors describe the process of building an infrastructure for bidirectional collaboration and key lessons learned to offer a roadmap for researchers, clinicians, and advocates who seek to partner in preventing ACEs and subsequent health inequities.

Findings

- The importance of building and maintaining trust
- Consistently working to mitigate power imbalances
- The power of bidirectional collaboration to maximize the benefit of research and action for communities traditionally marginalized in research and practice

PARENTS PARTICIPATION IN MINDFULNESS-BASED SKILLS

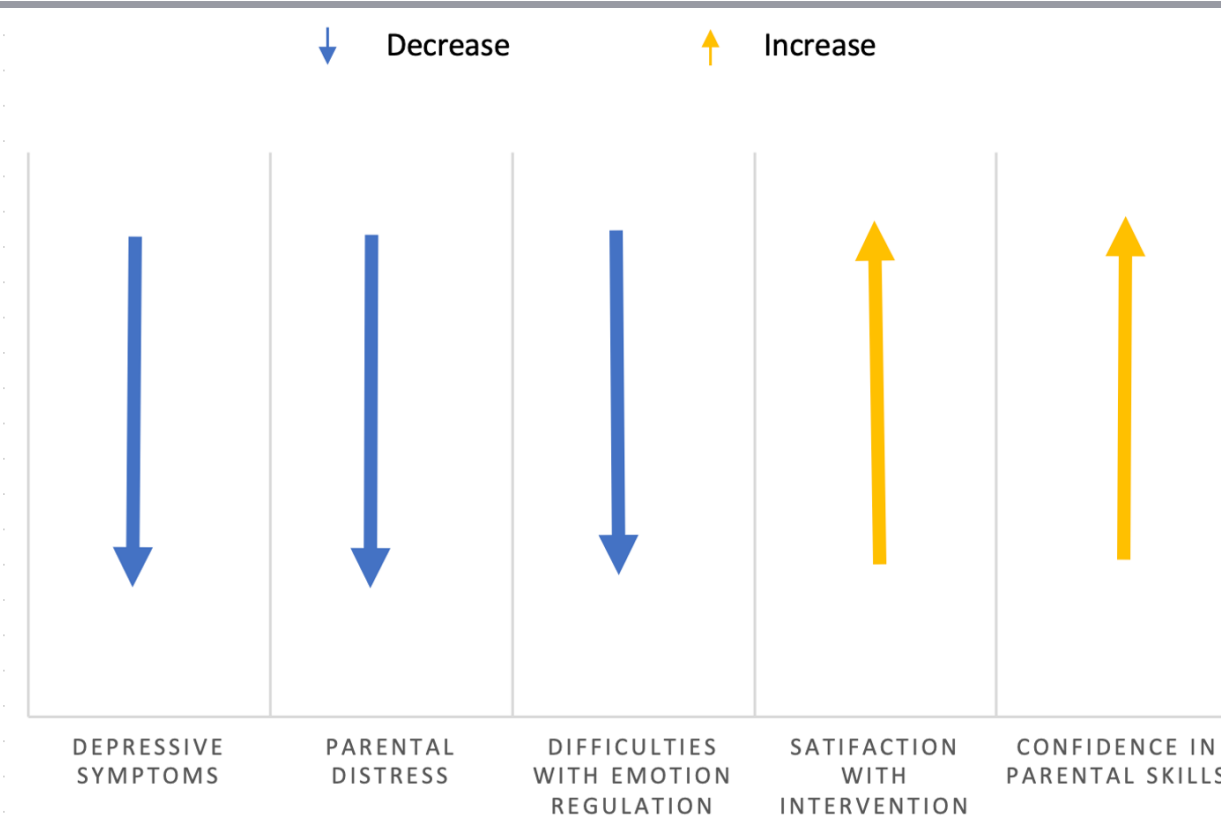


Fig.1 The report from parents who participated in the mindfulness-based skills group

Discussion

Consistent with the literature, the authors found high-levels of ACE exposure among parents of color living in poverty. In particular, community-level ACEs such as community violence, poverty, and racism (Cronholm et al., 2015) were highly prevalent. The study also demonstrated the strong resolve and commitment of parents of color living in poverty to provide better opportunities for their children and break the intergenerational cycle of ACEs.

Prioritizing parent-identified priorities of (a) raising awareness about ACEs in the community; (b) building and nurturing a supportive community; and (c) providing accessible parenting education and support that includes mental health promotion for parents resulted in developing and piloting successful collaborative interventions.

This study evolved to address systemic racism. Cultural humility became a bedrock of the 2Gen Thrive partnership. It was essential for improving system transparency and accountability and shaping future policies and practices. Cultural humility promotes ongoing learning and self-reflection, mitigating traditional power imbalances, and engaging in institutional advocacy to address health inequities.