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Garbacz, S. A., Jordan, P., Novotnak, T., Young, K., Zahn, M., & Markham, M. A. (2022). Parent, teacher, and student perceptions of conjoint behavioral consultation for middle school students. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 32(4), 454–485. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2022.2054422>

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The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R324B160026 to University of Wisconsin. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to obtain perspectives of parents, teachers, and students about the contextual fit of conjoint behavioral consultation for supporting middle school students with emotional and behavior concerns. Participants were eight parents of middle school students with elevated behavior risk, eight middle school students with elevated behavior risk, and four middle school general education teachers. Participants responded to questions during focus groups and interviews regarding their perspectives about conjoint behavioral consultation. Results were analyzed using thematic coding to identify the themes from participant responses. Results suggested that parents, teachers, and students viewed aspects of CBC as relevant and useful. In addition, participants identified potential barriers to CBC implementation during middle school. Findings suggest implications for possible modifications to enhance CBC implementation during middle school. Limitations and future research directions are discussed.

Keywords: conjoint behavioral consultation, family-school partnerships, social-emotional

**Parent, Teacher, and Student Perceptions of
Conjoint Behavioral Consultation for Middle School Students**

The prevalence and long-term implications of emotional and behavioral challenges in adolescence indicate the need for acceptable, efficient, and accessible prevention and intervention strategies. For example, 22% of adolescents who completed self-reports on the National Comorbidity Survey-Adolescent Supplement indicated that their mood, anxiety, and behavior concerns create significant impairment and distress (Merikangas et al., 2010). These emotional and behavior concerns have long-term implications, as estimates suggest that 50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin prior to the age of 14 (Kessler et al., 2005). Emotional and behavior concerns can cascade over time, becoming more significant as developmental events accumulate (Almy & Cicchetti, 2018). For example, adolescents who struggle with emotional and behavior concerns are at an increased risk of drug misuse and suicide attempts; they are also less likely to pursue education and are less likely to maintain employment after high school (Fergusson & Woodward, 2002). Behavior problems in adolescence are also negatively associated with academic achievement (Kremer et al., 2016). Thus, effective interventions are important to provide adolescents and the adults around them the skills necessary to counteract negative patterns and build a positive trajectory (Masten & Cicchetti, 2010).

Unfortunately, there is a lack of access to adequate services for these concerns (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). The school setting provides a useful point of access for families and adolescents who may benefit from additional support (Owens et al., 2008; Stormshak et al., 2005). The prevalence and severity of mental health concerns compounded with inadequate access to treatment suggests the need for accessible, targeted intervention in schools during the adolescent developmental period.

Family-School Partnership Interventions

Family-school partnership interventions may be among the most effective approach for adolescents with emotional and behavior concerns due to the contextual nature of emotional and behavior issues and the importance of cross-setting supports (Patterson, 1982; Sheridan et al., 2019). Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) suggests children develop within a set of nested systems that represent different contexts. Microsystems are most proximal to a child, such as home and school. The mesosystem includes interactions among microsystems, which is where family-school partnerships are contextualized. Neighborhoods and social services are among the contexts captured in the exosystem. The macrosystem includes the broader social, cultural, and political factors that permeate the exosystem and impact supports in the microsystems and mesosystems. Family-school interventions are grounded in ecological systems theory and incorporate the nested systems to guide the collaborative implementation of systems and practices within and across settings (Stormshak & Dishion, 2009).

Interventions to support adolescents' emotional and behavioral competencies and address concerns may be most effective when they include the family and school (Crowley et al., 2014). Prior research has demonstrated that when compared to parent and child training alone, interventions that also include a teacher training component yield larger reductions in behavior problems for children with behavior concerns (Webster-Stratton et al., 2004). Research on family-school interventions, such as the Family Check-Up, have shown youth of families who participated in the family-school intervention showed improvements in school engagement and reductions in behavior problems (Stormshak et al., 2009, 2011). These findings suggest that when the home and school contexts are considered, children experience more benefits.

In addition to findings from specific studies, a recent meta-analysis of 117 studies examining family-school interventions suggested that family-school interventions include relational (e.g., home-school communication, parent-teacher relationship) and structural elements (e.g., behavior support), which lead to improved outcomes for students (Sheridan et al., 2019). Despite these findings in support of family-school interventions, only 15% of studies that reported grade level examined students in middle school, indicating a need to examine family-school partnership interventions at the middle school level. Conjoint behavioral consultation is a family-school partnership intervention that shows improved outcomes for younger children and promise as an intervention during early adolescence.

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

Conjoint behavioral consultation (CBC; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008) is a strengths-based problem-solving approach that includes a collaborative team of parents, educators, and a behavioral consultant. Through the use of the family-school behavioral problem-solving model, the team works together to identify strengths and areas of need, develop and implement plans to support positive behavior across the home and school settings, and evaluate the plan and behavior change through the use of data-based decision making (Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2008). CBC has four stages as described by Sheridan and Kratochwill (2008). First is the needs identification stage in which the child's strengths are discussed, priorities are developed, and data collection begins. Second, in the needs analysis stage, data are reviewed, goals are set, and the behavior support plans are developed. Third is the plan implementation stage in which the consultant assists consultees with the delivery of the plan, monitors treatment integrity, and helps problem solve any challenges. The fourth stage is the plan evaluation stage where all team members come together and discuss whether goals were met, any changes that need to be made,

and plans for consultees to continue to collaborate. These stages are responsive to consultee and student priorities, which affords all parties flexibility to move between them as needed.

Research examining CBC has demonstrated positive effects on the social behavior of elementary school students, as well as improvements for their parents and teachers. Findings from randomized controlled trials suggest children randomized to the CBC condition outperformed children in a school-as-usual control condition on improvements in reported and observed social behavior (Sheridan et al., 2012, 2013; Sheridan, Witte, Holmes, Coutts, et al., 2017; Sheridan, Witte, Holmes, Wu, et al., 2017). Parents and teachers who participated in CBC during elementary school outperformed parents and teachers in a control condition on increases in home-school communication and the parent-teacher relationship (Sheridan et al., 2012, 2013; Sheridan, Witte, Holmes, Coutts, et al., 2017). In addition, parents reported improvements in their problem-solving competence and effective parenting strategies (Sheridan et al., 2013; Sheridan, Witte, Holmes, Wu, et al., 2017). Findings from CBC research during elementary school also suggest that the parent-teacher relationship (as rated by teachers) was found to partially mediate the effects of CBC on improvements in student social behavior (Sheridan et al., 2012; Sheridan, Witte, Holmes, Coutts, et al., 2017).

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation in Middle School

A small body of research has examined CBC during the middle school years. CBC has demonstrated promising and mixed findings for homework productivity (Schnoes, 2002) and homework completion and accuracy (Schemm, 2007; Weiner et al., 1998) for middle school students. Garbacz et al. (2020) examined CBC for classroom disruptive behavior for middle school students with externalizing behavior concerns. In this study, promising improvements were observed with students' disruptive behaviors, yet parent-teacher relationship data were

inconclusive. In addition, barriers with implementation were noted and implementation of behavior support plans were below 70% adherence for two out of the four participants. These findings suggest CBC may hold promise for middle school students, but that more research is needed to understand the implementation context and CBC fit during middle school for parents of middle school students and for students themselves.

Before additional implementation studies of CBC in middle school, investigation is needed to discern parent, teacher, and student perceptions about CBC and the context to support engagement. There are developmental, contextual, and structural reasons to investigate CBC before further testing in middle school. Adolescents must navigate a variety of biological, structural, and developmental changes that impact interactions with adults and peers (Eccles, 1999; Erikson, 1963). In addition, emotional and behavior concerns can amplify during adolescence and early adolescence (Dishion & Patterson, 2016). With the majority of CBC research conducted with children, parents, and teachers during elementary school, further investigation is necessary to understand perceptions of CBC to integrate adolescent development and the middle school context.

Need for Parent, Teacher, and Student Feedback during Intervention Adaptation

Findings from studies that have sought to scale-up efficacious interventions have noted challenges with alignment and integration in schools (Woodbridge et al., 2014). Implementation science offers guidance for how to promote uptake of efficacious interventions into practice (Eccles et al., 2006), and indeed notes gaps in the implementation process, such as competing demands of practitioners (Bauer et al., 2015). One area of particular need is careful integration of feedback throughout design and development (Spiel et al., 2018). Recent calls for engaged research during intervention development have demonstrated the need and impact of taking into

account the lived experiences parents, teachers, and students when designing, developing, and scaling interventions for school settings (Castillo, 2020) and for consultation specifically (Clare, 2020). Feedback from parents, teachers, and students about the implementation infrastructure may be helpful in illuminating those contextual features of the environments and identify important changes necessary to CBC for the middle school context.

Present Study

The goal of the present study was to obtain perspectives from parents, teachers, and students about the contextual fit of CBC for supporting middle school students with emotional and behavior concerns. A goal of this broader line of work is to determine the extent to which CBC may be appropriate for supporting students in middle school with emotional and behavior concerns, and what modifications should be considered. With these key goals in mind, we used ecological systems theory, relativist ontology, implementation science, and an exploratory approach to focus groups and interviews. Ecological systems theory guided an examination of how parents, teachers, and students act and interact within and across systems in ways that can promote or inhibit development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A relativist ontology guided our consideration of the subjective experiences of parents, teachers, and students (Levers, 2013). With an implementation science framework, we sought to understand parent, teacher, and student perspectives prior to their participation in CBC to consider appropriate modifications so that their ideas and experiences could be considered in the design and delivery of CBC during middle school for students with emotional and behavior concerns. Using implementation science, we specifically focused on factors that might impede or promote use of or engagement in CBC. Based on this stage of intervention development (Basch, 1987), we designed a qualitative descriptive study (Kim et al., 2017) that used an exploratory approach to focus groups and

interviews to generate parent, teacher, and student ideas about CBC and its contextual fit for middle school students with emotional and behavior concerns.

Method

Participants and Setting

Participants for this study were drawn from seven middle schools across three school districts in a Midwestern state. Based on National Center for Education Statistics data, two school districts were classified as suburban large and one district was classified as city large (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018–2019). Information describing the research project was shared with parents of students at middle schools within the participating districts or included in a school newsletter. Due to the nature of this recruitment method, it is not possible to calculate a response rate. Indeed, this is a convenience sample of volunteers. It is estimated that recruitment material had the possibility of reaching more than 3,000 students, of whom approximately 600 may have been eligible. Interested parents provided consent and completed the Behavior Assessment System for Children (3rd ed.) Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BASC 3 BESS; Kamphaus & Reynolds, 2015) to identify emotional and behavior concerns their students may have. More than one parent was allowed to participate. Additionally, parents identified focal teachers with whom their child worked at school. If more than one teacher was identified, teachers were contacted in order of those who parents recommended. These middle school teachers were contacted; interested teachers provided consent and completed the BASC 3 BESS. Parents, teachers, and students were eligible if the Behavioral and Emotional Risk Index on either the parent- or teacher-completed BASC 3 BESS fell within the elevated or extremely elevated range, suggesting behavior concerns for the student at home or school. After a student was identified as eligible, their assent was sought. All eligible parents and

teachers were invited to participate in focus groups; eligible students were invited to participate in individual interviews. Parent, teacher, and student participants did not explicitly report whether they had previously been exposed to CBC, though through the course of our discussions with participants, they did not appear to have prior knowledge of CBC. We started each interview or focus group with a description of CBC and offered to answer questions.

Eight students in grades 5–7 participated in individual interviews; one student was in 5th grade, three students were in 7th grade, and the remaining four students were in 6th grade. Students ranged from age 10 to 13 ($M = 12.11$, $SD = 0.82$) and all participating students were identified by their parents as male. All participating students were rated by their parents as having elevated or extremely elevated risk as measured by T scores on the BASC 3 BESS Behavioral and Emotional Risk index ($M = 75.13$, $SD = 6.24$).

Eight parents of students in grades 5–7 participated in one of two focus groups. All parents self-reported as female. One parent indicated her relationship to her child as “step-mother” while the remaining identified as “mother” of the child they rated. Four middle school teachers participated in a single teacher focus group. All participating teachers identified themselves as a “regular-education teacher” and taught sixth and/or seventh grades. These teachers provided ratings on the BASC 3 BESS. For four of the eight participating students, teacher ratings did not fall in the elevated or extremely elevated risk range as measured by the BASC 3 BESS ($M = 54.50$, $SD = 1.73$).

Positionality

To understand potential sources of bias in this study, researchers’ identities are important to address. The research team included the Principal Investigator, and six research assistants who were doctoral students in a School Psychology program. The Principal Investigator is a White

male, who has a line of research focused on family-school partnerships that includes Conjoint Behavioral Consultation. The Principal Investigator provided oversight for the project and trained doctoral student research assistants in CBC and qualitative analysis. The doctoral research assistants included one male and five female doctoral students, all of whom were White. Research assistants had knowledge about evidence-based interventions, consultation, and family-school partnerships. The research team had professional connections to the school districts included in the sample, but did not have established relationships with any participants prior to the present study. Interactions among participants and research team members were limited to those described herein. The research team regularly debriefed during the coding and analysis process to maintain consistency and objectivity, which included discussions about positionality.

Measures

Focus Group and Interview Protocols

A parent and teacher focus group protocol, and a student interview protocol were created to guide focus groups and interviews. Questions on the protocol were adapted from the Quality Implementation Framework (Meyers et al., 2012) and were modified to match participant roles (i.e., parent, teacher, student). The Quality Implementation Framework was used to develop questions because this study was focused on understanding the implementation infrastructure and related contextual considerations for parents, teachers, and students in middle school who have emotional and behavior concerns. These questions asked participants to describe their perceptions about CBC in several areas, such as feasibility (e.g., “How do you envision conjoint consultation working for you and your child?”), barriers (e.g., “What barriers to participating in conjoint consultation do you envision?”), and contextual fit (e.g., “How does conjoint consultation fit your needs and preferences?”). Questions also addressed the different aspects of

the CBC process, such as function-based procedures, teaching appropriate behaviors, and creating home-school communication systems, with questions such as “How do you envision this approach working for you and your family?”. Please see Appendix A for the parent focus group protocol, Appendix B for the teacher focus group protocol, and Appendix C for the student interview protocol.

Assessment of Emotional and Behavioral Strengths and Areas of Need

The BASC 3 BESS is a brief assessment of children’s and adolescents’ emotional and behavioral strengths and areas of need from kindergarten to 12th grade. The teacher version includes 20 items, and the parent version includes 29 items. Teachers and parents rate the frequency (*never, sometimes, often, always*) with which a child or adolescent exhibits certain emotions or behaviors (e.g., “gets into trouble”, “is nervous”). The Behavioral and Emotional Risk Index was used to determine eligibility. Students were eligible if their Behavioral and Emotional Risk Index was in the elevated or extremely elevated risk range based on parent- or teacher-report. The parent and teacher form Behavioral and Emotional Risk Index demonstrates good internal consistency (.90s), test-retest reliability (.80s), and validity with the BASC 3 (.90s; Kamphaus & Reynolds, 2015).

Procedures

The present study received approval from the appropriate Institutional Review Board, as well as from participating schools and districts. Focus groups and interviews were conducted in person and co-facilitated by the Principal Investigator and a research assistant. The research assistant co-facilitator was a doctoral school psychology student who received training in CBC and focus group procedures. Focus groups and interviews were conducted at locations convenient for participants, which included participant homes, middle schools, district offices, or

university meeting spaces. The duration of focus groups ranged from 45 minutes to one hour; the duration of interviews ranged from 20 to 30 minutes. Focus groups and interviews started with the facilitators describing CBC and answering any questions participants had about CBC. Then, the facilitators asked questions as noted on the protocols. Facilitators continued to answer clarification questions from participants as they arose during the focus groups or interviews. All focus groups and interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. After audio files were transcribed, qualitative analyses were conducted to understand the perspectives of the participants (Creswell, 2013).

Data Analysis

A thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to code, analyze, and interpret participant responses and identify themes within parent, teacher, and student perceptions of CBC. Strategies outlined by Trainor and Graue (2014) were used to establish credibility in the analysis, such as: explicitly positioning the researchers in relation to the data and methodology (e.g., reflexive practice) and credibility checks (e.g., independent coding of participant responses, explicit definition of the coding and analysis process using manuals, and inter-coder reliability assessment).

Validity checks occurred throughout the coding and analysis process. Four research assistants (primary coders) worked in two pairs to code the data; two other research assistants (secondary coders) independently coded at each of these steps to establish agreement. Researchers debriefed regularly through research meetings, which included the first author. The primary coders also created manuals to describe the coding process and define the themes that the secondary coders then used to code for the agreement checks. These strategies created an audit trail by which the methodology of this study can be traced. All units, codes, and themes

were subject to the same procedures. The research team made a concerted effort to reflect on and discuss units, codes, and themes as a team to consider the knowledge shared by participants.

Researchers discussed openly units, codes, and themes that may have been misunderstood based on individuals' positionality, ensuing discussion considered possible areas of bias and promoted centering on participants and their experiences and knowledge. For example, team members' prior beliefs about home-school collaboration were addressed openly when reviewing responses that may support home-school collaboration or suggestion collaboration among parents and teachers may not be as useful. The emphasis was on team members' centering participants and the knowledge participants were sharing.

Units, Codes, and Themes

The analysis of the focus group and interview data was conducted in three main stages and was done separately for each group. Analysis began with the unitization of responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2013). One pair of primary coders reviewed the responses from focus groups with parents and teachers and the other pair of primary coders reviewed the student interview responses. The primary coders created unitization manuals to describe the process and rules by which individual units were identified. Units were defined as separate ideas or concepts related to CBC or its implementation in middle school based on questions posed by facilitators. To assess inter-coder agreement, after all responses were unitized by the primary coders, the secondary coders—who were kept unaware of the original coding—utilized the unitization manual to identify units. Point-by-point agreement on student, parent, and teacher responses was 80.0%, 85.1%, and 84.5%, respectively. All disagreements were discussed, and final units were agreed upon through group consensus, resulting in 100% agreement for all participant groups.

After agreement was obtained during unitization, the primary coders again worked in pairs to combine units with similar meanings into codes. To be a viable code, the code category needed to have at least 3% of the total units (Patton, 2002). Primary coders created manuals to define the codes, and secondary coders unaware of the original coding, used the theme categorization manual to categorize a randomly selected 25% of units to codes. Inter-coder agreement for student, parent, and teacher responses was 80%, 89.5%, and 87.5%, respectively. All disagreements were discussed, and final codes of the randomly selected 25% of units were agreed upon through group consensus, resulting in 100% agreement in all participant groups. The research team worked together to combine codes into themes for each group using group consensus. These themes represented broad areas across responses which reflected parent, teacher, and student perceptions of CBC in middle school. As a final step, the team identified common themes across parent, teacher, and student responses to reflect areas of overlap in parent, teacher, and student responses.

Findings

Parent Perceptions of CBC

Table 1 presents themes, codes, and representative quotations for parent focus group participants. We identified 6 themes and 24 codes. In order of the number of units ($N = 319$) participants (a) noted different aspects of the consultation procedures ($n = 106$ [33%]; e.g., a formal intervention process, outside of the school day), (b) described the importance of communication and collaboration ($n = 85$ [27%]; e.g., having consistent communication between teachers and parents, connecting school and home), (c) described participants necessary to include in CBC ($n = 45$ [14%]; e.g., teachers that the students spends the most time with), (d) described characteristics relevant for middle school students ($n = 37$ [12%]; e.g., adolescence is a

difficult time period), (e) identified barriers or challenges ($n = 31$ [10%]; e.g., lack of resources, time), and (f) made positive statements about CBC ($n = 15$ [5%]; e.g., students would appreciate this). Themes are described in detail below.

Consultation Procedures

The theme with the most units was consultation procedures ($n = 106$ [33%]), defined as responses that indicated some preference about the format and components of the consultation procedures. Parents suggested that above all, it was important to involve a school professional who was “knowledgeable about typical behaviors,” and that CBC should be focused on solutions and “less of a labeling process.” Parents noted the importance of social validity in choosing focus behaviors and “setting small [goals].” Homework was also frequently mentioned by parents as an important target for intervention.

Communication and Collaboration

The theme with the second most units included in parent responses about their perceptions of CBC was communication and collaboration ($n = 85$ [27%]), defined as parents stating that the frequency and focus of communication and partnership in CBC would be beneficial. Parents noted that CBC could facilitate more effective communication between home and school, which they perceived as lacking at the middle school level: “[my student is] telling me one thing, I’m kind of getting another.” Parents also expressed the importance of collaboration between these two settings and having “everyone on board.” Additionally, parents felt that CBC could be useful for holding both parents and teachers “accountable,” and increasing “follow-through” in home-school collaboration. Parents reported that “[students] need consistency,” and that CBC could reinforce consistency in behavior support across settings. They also suggested that CBC could facilitate “resource[s] outside of school.”

Participant Selection

Participant selection ($n = 45$ [14%]) was another theme from parent responses, defined as parents suggesting the careful selection of consultees and partners for the CBC consultation procedures. Parents discussed the importance of considering all types of professionals who could be consultees, especially those who know the student well, and highlighted the value that students could bring to consultation. Parents also noted that teachers should be carefully selected, and might be the best fit for teachers who know the student and their work.

Characteristics of Middle School Students

From the parent perspective, characteristics of middle school students ($n = 37$ [12%]) is another important theme to consider within CBC. This theme is defined as parents describing unique considerations for the adolescent middle school period. Parents described the transition into middle school and adolescence in general as “very difficult.” Due to these ubiquitous challenges, parents shared that many students could be a good fit for CBC.

Barriers and Challenges

Parents shared that there may be many barriers and challenges ($n = 31$ [10%]) when implementing CBC during middle school, including limited time and money. This theme is defined as parents expressing concern about potential systemic and individual challenges that would influence the CBC process. In responses included in this theme, parents discussed that some parents may not want to work with an additional person (i.e., consultant), which may impact buy-in to the CBC process in middle school. The transition between plans at home and school may also be a barrier to implementing CBC in middle school. Regarding teachers and consultants, one parent stated concerns about aligning because “they [teachers] don’t know me [parent].” In addition, parents reported that finding time to meet could be challenging.

Positive Statements about CBC

Another theme included parents' positive statements about CBC ($n = 15$ [5%]). This theme is defined as parents sharing positive, hopeful, and/or optimistic impressions of CBC. For example, one parent noted "I can't think of one kid that wouldn't gain from this program."

Table 1*Parent Focus Group Responses*

Themes	Codes	Quotations from respondents
Consultation procedures (106)	CBC consultants should have educational and psychological competencies (30)	"somebody that as a role model...that's not necessarily a teacher"
	CBC should focus on behaviors that consultees think are important (28)	"goals have to be realistic"
	Procedural and descriptive aspects of intervention or consultation (26)	"break it [behavior] down with the specialist to figure out those tools"
	Parent preferences should be integrated throughout the CBC process (22)	"Parents don't need to leave work to participate in this"
Communication and collaboration (85)	CBC could promote more effective communication (46)	"there are some things that the school would gain from knowing about my kid...that doesn't really get addressed at the level of parent-teacher conferences"
	CBC requires collaboration (20)	"it can't be one-sided"
	CBC participants have to be held accountable (8)	"if you drop the ball on one end, the other end's gonna find out"
	CBC plans should promote consistency across systems (8)	"even teacher-to-teacher I mean the standards need to be the same"
	Coordination with outside agencies (3)	"a community group... or a particular clinic where they specialize in this type of behavior"
Participant selection (45)	Many different school personnel can serve as consultees (18)	"At least the three...people that he [student] spends the most

		amount of his time with during the day”
	There is a range of appropriate student involvement (16)	“shouldn't underestimate the knowledge that these kids have”
	Criteria for selecting participants should be carefully considered (7)	“The tough thing about middle school is you suddenly have a lot more teachers to deal with”
	It is important to set appropriate teachers (4)	“not every single teacher”
Characteristics of middle school students (37)	Middle school transitions have implications for CBC (11)	“the transition itself was just very difficult”
	CBC can be helpful for many types of students (9)	“kid that hasn't had any behavior problems in the past and hasn't had any for an IEP suddenly might need one in sixth grade”
	CBC can help students and consultees develop awareness of behaviors (9)	“understand yourself and your own body, and how kinda you react to things”
	The developmental period has implications for CBC (6)	“adolescence is a little bit of a rough time”
Barriers and challenges (31)	Consider the history of the problem (2)	“we've been fighting over this since third or fourth grade”
	There are challenges and barriers involving teachers and staff (11)	“They're [teachers] expected to do so many extra things”
	CBC could improve existing systems (10)	“there just isn't the time or the ability to...wrap our heads around it [behavior] at that level”
	There are financial concerns with CBC implementation (5)	“how is this gonna be paid for”
	Buy-in is important (3)	‘you're going to get some parents that are like "you-rah-rah," and you're gonna get some that are like, "what, now I have another person I have to deal with?"’

	Differences between home and school present challenges for consultees (2)	“the transition from school to home, on my end, would be the hardest”
Positive statements about CBC (15)	Positive Statements about CBC (15)	“I can't think of one kid that wouldn't gain from this program”

Teacher Perceptions of CBC

Table 2 presents themes, codes, and representative quotations for the teacher focus group participants. We identified six themes and 13 codes. In order of number of units ($N = 143$), participants described (a) aspects of the consultation procedures to be considered ($n = 48$ [34%]; e.g. using positive reinforcement strategies, when to schedule meetings), (b) barriers and challenges related to implementation of CBC ($n = 33$ [23%]; e.g. cultural differences, lack of time), (c) communication and collaboration ($n = 33$ [23%]; e.g. home-school communication, importance of trust), (d) teacher perceptions of family engagement ($n = 20$ [14%]; e.g. teacher perceptions of parents’ desire for privacy), (e) positive statements about CBC ($n = 5$ [3%]; e.g. ways that CBC would fill a need at school), and (f) timing of the intervention ($n = 4$ [3%]; e.g. importance of intervening early). Themes are described in detail below.

Aspects of the Consultation Procedures

The theme with the most units from teacher responses was aspects of the consultation procedures ($n = 48$ [34%]), which included four codes. This theme is defined as teachers reporting the embedded components of the CBC process that would be beneficial and suggestions for additional components that they would value. Within this theme, teachers reported that it is necessary to think about when and how often meetings would occur and that there are established expectations for frequency of contact. Teachers also identified the consultant as an important team member within the CBC process, noting that “it might be easier to take [feedback] from a different source.”

Barriers and Challenges Related to Implementation of CBC

The next largest theme in terms of the number of units identified from teacher responses was barriers and challenges related to implementation of CBC ($n = 33$ [23%]), which only included one code of the same name. This theme is defined as teachers sharing the structural and personal challenges that may impact the effectiveness or feasibility of CBC. Teachers identified a variety of barriers related to structural factors (e.g., “no time ever for teachers”) and interpersonal factors (e.g., “distrust,” “cultural differences”). Teachers also acknowledged that school systems may have failed parents in the past.

Communication and Collaboration

The communication and collaboration theme included 33 units (23%) based on teacher responses and included four codes. This theme is defined as teachers indicating how, with whom, and in what ways communication and collaboration could enhance the CBC process. One participant noted that CBC could “make that bridge for the school to home connection.” Teachers also identified communication and collaboration as important components of the CBC process, stating “it would do a lot to have us all work together and develop a trust” and that “communication between school and home” is an important element of the process.

Teacher Perceptions of Family Engagement

In another theme, teachers expressed considerations for family engagement ($n = 20$ [14%]). This theme is defined as teachers expressing doubt, buy-in, or the types of family engagement that can be expected in the CBC process. Teachers shared several challenges in engaging family members in the CBC process, such as lacking a shared vision between the teachers and family. Additionally, teachers indicated that parents may be hesitant to engage with the school, stating “[parents might say] I don’t want your help”. Despite some of these

challenges, teachers noted that there is value in families engaging in a process like CBC and discussed how consultants might receive parental buy-in.

Positive Statements about CBC

Another theme we identified from teacher responses was positive statements teachers made about CBC (n = 5 [3%]). Positive statements about CBC is defined as teachers expressing positive, hopeful, and/or optimistic impressions of the CBC process. For example, one teacher noted that “there's definitely kids who could benefit from this.”

Intervention Timing

One other theme was intervention timing (n = 4 [3%]). Intervention timing is defined as teachers indicating the relevance and importance of identifying the right time to engage in the CBC process. Within responses in this theme, teachers discussed in what ways the middle school period is a critical point for intervention. For example, one teacher noted, “there's shifts that happen at the middle school time.”

Table 2

Teacher Focus Group Responses

Themes	Codes	Quotations from respondents
Aspects of the consultation procedures (48)	There are a variety of scheduling issues to consider (18)	“it could work like a conference”
	CBC promotes a focus on goals (12)	“identifying specific targets and intervention plans”
	A parent support component could promote the effectiveness of CBC (11)	“if [parent group] occurred concurrently, I think it would be a huge benefit”
	Working with a consultant is a benefit of CBC (7)	“you're [the consultant is] outside the system...that might actually be a way in for people”

Barriers and challenges (33)	Barriers and challenges (33)	" it would be very difficult as a parent to welcome you into my home"
Communication and collaboration (33)	CBC can promote home-school connection (16)	"you get a lot of like home school disconnect just 'cause people are afraid to reach out"
	CBC can engage outside agencies and resources (9)	"not just including people from the school and home, but including the community"
	Communication will be important for CBC (5)	"communicate with home, like what it is they are doing at school, in a positive way"
	Participants must collaborate (3)	"a working relationship between everybody that's involved"
Teacher perceptions of family engagement (20)	Challenges related to shared understanding between parents and teachers (15)	"sometimes parents don't want us to know exactly what their problems are"
	Teachers value family engagement in the process (5)	"how do we get buy in from those families"
Positive statements about CBC (5)	Positive statements about CBC (5)	"there's definitely kids who could benefit from this"
Intervention timing (4)	Intervention timing (4)	"there's shifts that happen at the middle school time"

Student Perceptions of CBC

Table 3 presents themes, codes, and representative quotations from student participants. Based on student interview responses, we identified nine themes and 21 codes. In order of the number of units ($N = 168$), student participants identified: (a) participants who could be involved ($n = 39$ [23%]; e.g., parents, teachers, other school personnel), (b) benefits to students ($n = 36$ [21%]; e.g., CBC sounds helpful), (c) potential participant roles ($n = 29$ [17%]; e.g., consider how consultees will be involved), (d) comments on the problem-solving approach ($n = 26$ [15%]; e.g., orientations to problem identification and analysis), (e) the importance of positive relationships ($n = 10$ [6%]; e.g., relationship building in CBC), (f) barriers to process and content

($n = 10$ [6%]; e.g., time constraints), (g) communication considerations ($n = 7$ [4%]; e.g., CBC facilitates communication), (h) positive qualities of potential participants ($n = 6$ [4%]; e.g., teachers provide positive interactions with school), and (i) a lack of need for adaptations and modifications ($n = 5$ [3%]; e.g., CBC would be helpful as-is). Themes are described in detail below.

Participants Involved

The largest theme in order of number of units identified from student responses was participants involved ($n = 39$ [23%]), which included five codes. This theme is defined as students indicating the people they hope to be involved in the CBC process. One respondent noted, “people who you trust from home” should be involved. Others provided specific examples, such as “my mom,” “my dad,” or “a parent.” For potential consultees in the school setting, several students gave examples of individuals they would want to include such as “my homeroom teacher,” “math teacher,” “guidance counselor,” “behavior support person,” and “support teacher.” Regarding their own participation, one student indicated that the consultant and consultees could “talk to [the student] and say why they think [the problem behavior is] happening.” Another student stated, “a lot of the kids didn’t feel like they were listened to.” Several students indicated that peers could be involved in the process. For example, one student said “friends” when asked who should be involved and another indicated that “kids work as teams” in schools.

Benefits to Students

The second largest theme identified was that students perceived CBC as offering benefits to students ($n = 36$ [21%]). This theme is defined by students expressing positive, hopeful, and/or optimistic impressions of the CBC process. Students identified a range of benefits,

including that CBC could “help me like do things that need to do when I need to do it;” CBC would be “helpful with like learning new things in school;” and CBC could “give me many good resources.” Several students indicated that CBC could help with specific areas of need, such as “I don't really like math so it would help me do better” and “if someone could help me with concentrating that would be really good.”

Participant Roles

In another theme, students discussed the importance of defining participant roles (n = 29 [17%]) in the CBC process. This theme is defined as students indicating the roles that different individuals might have in the CBC process as well as the mechanisms for participants to communicate a shared vision for participation. Students provided feedback about how parents and teachers might participate in consultation and suggested that students also have a clear role in the CBC process in middle school. For example, one student stated: “students should probably name what they think they need help in.”

Problem-Solving Approach

In the theme, problem-solving approach, students shared important considerations for implementing a problem-solving approach in middle school (n = 26 [15%]). This theme is defined as students expressing their perceptions of the format, individuals, and time periods associated with the CBC problem-solving approach. Students discussed the importance of individualizing intervention approaches. Students also shared some challenges with identifying the problem behavior, such as CBC participants “might not know how the problem is starting.”

Importance of Positive Relationships

Utilizing and establishing positive relationships (n = 10 [6%]) is another theme we identified from middle school student responses. This theme is defined as student participants

indicating that strong positive relationships with CBC consultants and consultees would be important to the intervention. Students shared that CBC might be a way that they could engage with preferred adults, such as “people who you [student] trust” or “people that sort of know you the best”. Students also reported that the relationship between consultees might determine the outcomes of the CBC process, and the outcomes of CBC would depend on “how the family works with other people.”

Barriers to Process and Content

In another theme, students described potential barriers to engaging in the CBC process in middle school (n = 10 [6%]). This theme, comprised of two codes, is defined as students sharing the structural and personal challenges that may impact the effectiveness or feasibility of CBC. For example, one student shared concerns that there “isn’t any like real time to communicate” and another shared that CBC could be challenging with a student “doesn’t do much in class.”

Communication

In the communication theme (n = 7 [4%]), students shared that CBC might foster communication between parents and teachers. This theme is defined as students outlining the frequency, types, and process of communicating effectively in CBC. For example, one student noted that CBC might be “a way for...everybody to kind of...talk to each other you know about kind of what's going on at home and what's going on at school.”

Positive Qualities of Participants

In another theme, students discussed several positive qualities of consultees (n = 6 [4%]). Positive qualities of participants included one code by the same name. This theme is defined as students sharing the qualities that would make an individual a positive contributor to the CBC

process. For example, one student noted “teacher kind of like knows what to do in different situations.”

Lack of Need for Adaptations/Modifications

In the theme, lack of need for adaptations/modifications, students provided feedback that suggested CBC does not require adaptations or modifications to be effective for middle school students (n = 5 [3%]). One student said they “can’t really think of a good replacement [for CBC]” and other students provided no substantive responses when asked if there were any changes they think CBC would need (e.g., “is there anything you think could be used instead of these strategies or along with these strategies?” “not really.”)

Table 3
Student Interview Responses

Themes	Codes	Quotations from Respondents
Participants involved (39)	Caregivers should be involved (13)	“student would have to get along with people/parents at home so they can trust them”
	Teachers should be involved (8)	“homeroom teacher that knows you”
	Students should be involved (8)	“students should be involved”
	Consider involving peers in the CBC process (6)	“kids work as teams”
	Many different school personnel can serve as consultees (4)	“guidance counselor”
Benefits to students (36)	General affirmations (22)	“it’s a good idea”
	CBC should consider individual needs of students (8)	“if someone could help me with concentrating that would be really good”
	CBC is perceived as beneficial to students (6)	“helpful with like learning new things in school”

Participant roles (29)	Consider a variety of consultation activities for parents and teachers (21)	“teachers could talk to their parents”
	Consider ways students can be involved (8)	“students should probably name what they think they need help in”
Problem solving approach (26)	Intervention strategies should be individualized (11)	“the student can go to the library or another place that is really quiet...so they don't get distracted”
	Need to improve awareness of problems (8)	“having the teacher be aware...that the student is doing this [behavior]”
	It is important to understand the cause of the problem (4)	“you should look back at like how it started and then maybe you can end it from...what first happened”
	There are challenges with identifying problems (3)	“might not know how the problem is starting”
Importance of positive relationships (10)	CBC can allow students to interact with preferred adults (6)	“someone who can help them with like, learning”
	CBC depends on the relationships between consultees (4)	“depends on how the teacher works with other people”
Barriers to process and content (10)	Time constraints and scheduling may affect CBC implementation (5)	“parents that don't have much free time”
	There are some barriers to student participation (5)	“[could be problematic or challenging] if the student doesn't...learn that much or doesn't do much in class”
Communication (7)	Communication (7)	“a way for...everybody to kind of...talk to each other you know about kind of what's going on at home and what's going on at school”
Positive qualities of participants (6)	Positive qualities of participants (6)	“teacher kind of like knows what to do in different situations”

Lack of need for adaptations/modifications (5) Lack of need for adaptations/modifications (5) “can’t really think of a good replacement”

Themes Across Parents, Teachers, and Students

We identified several themes reflected in parent, teacher, and student responses. Table 4 presents themes that were identified by two or more of those individuals. We follow the table with a discussion of similarities and differences in how participants described each theme.

Table 4
Common Themes Across Parent, Teacher, and Student Groups

Themes	Parents, Teachers, or Students
Communication and collaboration	Parent, teacher, student
Barriers and challenges	Parent, teacher, student
Consultation procedures/problem-solving process	Parent, teacher, student
Positive statements about CBC	Parent, teacher, student
Participants involved	Parent, student

Communication and Collaboration

All participant groups noted that CBC could improve communication and that communication is a necessary component of the process. Parents and teachers placed more emphasis on collaboration than did students, and parents and teachers also discussed the importance of collaboration with community agencies or providers, which students did not.

Barriers and Challenges

Parents, teachers, and students identified potential barriers and challenges to the process. Parents identified several barriers to teachers’ participation (e.g., lack of time and number of obligations), and teachers identified barriers for parents (e.g., lack of trust and a history of poor interactions with schools). All participants identified lack of time and difficulty scheduling as barriers to participation, and all participants identified some concerns related to student

involvement. For example, students discussed that those who are not experiencing success at school may have difficulty participating. All participants identified challenges in understanding others' perspectives or misunderstandings in communication as potential barriers as well. For example, one teacher reported "they [parents] feel like they're being criticized when... we're not trying to do that", while one parent noted "he's [the student] telling me one thing, I'm kind of getting another". Finally, parents and teachers discussed contextual and historical variables that may make implementation challenging, while students did not discuss these features. For example, parents identified challenges related to current systems of special education (e.g., labeling, stigma) while teachers identified differences in racial and linguistic status across participants as well as poverty as barriers.

Consultation Procedures

Parents, teachers, and students all discussed aspects of the consultation procedures that they found important. Parents and teachers discussed that parent preferences and support should be incorporated into the process (e.g., scheduling at convenient times) and that goals should be relevant to all parties involved. Students similarly discussed that intervention strategies should be individualized to the target student (e.g., taking preferences into account)

Positive Statements About CBC

Parents, teachers, and students reported that CBC would be beneficial to students. Students expressed a desire for the individualized support that CBC could offer. Similarly, parents and teachers reported that they thought it would be helpful for specific students.

Individuals Involved

Parents and students placed particular emphasis on selecting who should be involved. Each group reported that participants should be selected carefully and discussed that any school

personnel could serve as consultees and this process should not be restricted to teaching staff. Parents and teachers identified student involvement as valuable, but parents offered considerations for promoting collaboration, such as highlighting student strengths. Students reported that they would like to participate in this process with their peers, which was not discussed by parents. Important features related to participant selection across parent and student perspectives suggested that school staff who are selected might be those who spend the most amount of time with the target student or provide the student with support. Students identified trust as an important variable in selecting participants across home and school settings.

Discussion

The goal of this study was to understand parent, teacher, and student perspectives about CBC for middle school students who have emotional and behavior concerns. Research examining CBC has suggested that CBC is an efficacious family-school partnership intervention for students' behavioral challenges among students in elementary school (Sheridan et al., 2013). However, CBC has not been thoroughly examined or modified for the middle school setting to support students with emotional and behavior concerns. Students in middle school navigate structural and developmental changes that can amplify emotional and behavior challenges (Eccles, 1999; Garbacz, Zerr, et al., 2018). These contextual and developmental considerations are important to address in CBC to disrupt pervasive negative developmental cascades and set a positive trajectory (Masten & Cicchetti, 2010; Stormshak et al., 2005).

This study aimed to improve contextual fit of CBC by understanding parent, teacher, and student perspectives about important contextual and implementation considerations. Researchers have called for the use of research questions and methodologies that address how individuals and settings interact with consultation models to better incorporating contextual features and

individuals' preferences (Castillo, 2020; Clare, 2020). Better understanding parent, teacher, and student perspectives about school systems and practices may facilitate sustained implementation in a manner that integrates their beliefs, values, and perspectives (Dishion et al., 2020).

Main Findings

In parent and teacher focus groups, parents and teachers described family-school partnerships as relevant for middle school contexts. Within family-school partnerships, parents and teachers indicated that trust among parents and teachers is crucial and that they perceived an intervention like CBC—that aims to create a trusting alliance—to be helpful. Participants also indicated that a working relationship among home and school that is consistent and bidirectional would be helpful in supporting student needs.

In addition to describing positive features about CBC for the middle school context, parents and teachers identified several potential barriers to CBC implementation during middle school. Teachers reported concerns that buy-in from both teachers and parents may be challenging, and that the individuals who may benefit most from CBC may be the most hesitant to work with a consultant. Teachers reported that this hesitancy may be related to the fact that parents and teachers are protective of their time and the details of their parenting practices, home lives, and skills. Similarly, parents reported that consultation would require substantial effort from all parties involved, which they indicated would present a challenge. Parents noted that consistent communication among parents and teachers would be critical for the success of CBC, and that this may be challenging given the relatively high number of teachers that students work with each day in the middle school context. Both parents and teachers emphasized that it would be a challenge to identify teachers to work with students to make meaningful progress towards behavioral goals due to the high number of transitions that students make during each day.

Similar to parents and teachers, students who were interviewed had some positive impressions of CBC. Students emphasized the importance of getting everyone “on the same page.” Students reported concerns regarding the current supports they receive to promote their behavioral and academic success, indicating that an additional program was warranted, and that CBC could address their needs. Students did not provide substantial feedback regarding potential barriers to the success or implementation of CBC during middle school.

Parents, teachers, and students reported that CBC would likely be acceptable and a potentially effective process for addressing behavior concerns as a result of the partnership-centered orientation, cross-setting coordination and communication, and that it could benefit students’ behavior. Despite the perceived promise of CBC, teachers and parents noted that the necessary communication and coordination would be a challenge, and that the general decrease in parent educational involvement in middle school meant that identifying, selecting, and gaining buy-in from families would likely be a barrier.

Limitations and Future Research

The present study advances CBC research in many ways by considering the experiences of parents, teachers, and students at the middle school level. However, the study had several limitations that must be considered when interpreting findings. The focus group and interview study questions were specific and limited to domains related to context, implementation, and preferences. Additionally, the questions were modified for CBC from the Quality Implementation Framework, which measures acceptability and implementation issues for behavioral health treatments (Meyers et al., 2012). Despite the literature base regarding this measure, modifications made for this project and the specificity of the questions may have elicited responses from participants that are not representative of their true views of CBC. Future

studies should consider asking more open-ended questions in a less structured manner to understand other aspects of participants' experiences.

Parents, teachers, and students who participated in focus groups and interviews volunteered. Therefore, participants represent a unique subpopulation within middle schools. Previous research has shown that many families lack trust in schools (Santiago et al., 2016) and that many parents are unlikely to engage with school even when their child has behavior concerns (Stormshak et al., 2005). Although students, parents, and teachers in the present study had experience with student emotional and behavior concerns, they volunteered to participate in the study; thus, the voices of many parents and students were not represented. In addition, participants did not report on their race/ethnicity. Future research should seek to document race/ethnicity and obtain the perspectives of families and students from all enrollment groups (e.g., race/ethnicity, grade, special education eligibility).

The study was conducted in city and suburban locales within a Midwestern U.S. state. Context plays an important role in family-school connections and school supports for students with emotional and behavior concerns (Witte & Sheridan, 2016). Although CBC has evidence of efficacy for students and families across urban and rural areas, future research is needed to understand participant perceptions of the CBC process in different geographic locales as there may be ways to optimize CBC for different geographic contexts and for individuals with different experiences and perspectives.

The intent of the present study was to understand parent, teacher, and student perceptions of CBC in a middle school context for students with emotional and behavior concerns. Thus, the study findings are most relevant for practitioners and researchers examining CBC or other

family-centered or family-school programs in a middle school context or for an early adolescent developmental period.

Another consideration is that parents, teachers, and students described their perceptions of CBC without participating in the process. Future research should examine parent, teacher, and student experience with the CBC as they are participating in the process as well as after completing the process. Such research will be a helpful complement to the present findings and could inform future iterations of CBC in middle school.

Implications

In the context of these limitations, there are several important implications of the present study that can propel future CBC research, as well as family-school interventions. Primary implications are for (a) consultees and clients, (b) communication and collaboration, (c) the home-school interface, and (d) alignment and integration in middle schools. Parents, teachers, and students noted the importance of attending to characteristics of consultees and clients, suggesting the importance of tailoring the CBC process to align with values and expectations for each individual. For example, during the initial stages of CBC, priority concerns are identified for the home and school setting, with behavior definitions tailored to family, teacher, and student priorities. Tailoring may also be needed to align with family and teacher experiences and preferences, as well as address cultural and personal identities. In their framework for cultural responsiveness, Bal and Trainor (2016) note the importance of affirming participants' cultural identities and personal identities, as well as including individuals' perspectives and interests, both of which are hallmarks of the CBC process. CBC centers family and teacher voice and integrates their perspective as equal collaborators and decision-makers throughout the process.

Participant responses affirm the importance of CBC in explicitly addressing and incorporating consultee and student ideas, perspectives, and identities.

In addition to integrating consultee preferences, ideas, and cultural and personal identities, findings suggested the importance of a positive relationship among consultees. Research suggests that in the absence of intervention, for parents and teachers who have a student with emotional and behavior concerns, the family-school relationship may degrade over time (Sheridan et al., 2012). By the time their child reaches middle school, parents may have received many messages from schools about their child's behavior concerns and their child may have been victim to disproportionate discipline practices (Powell & Coles, 2021). Before initiating CBC in middle school, it would be helpful for a consultant to talk directly with the family about their experiences with schooling so that issues such as rebuilding trust and establishing positive connections can occur before expectations for authentic partnering.

Another primary theme that we identified from participant responses focused on communication and collaboration. Indeed, CBC research has shown that one mechanism through which CBC improves outcomes for children is through communication and collaboration parents and teachers share (Sheridan et al., 2012, 2017). Findings from the present study suggest that communication and collaboration are important aspects of the CBC process for middle school. Thus, these findings underscore the importance of family-school partnerships during middle school for students with emotional and behavior concerns and suggest that future intervention trials of CBC during middle school might examine aspects of parent-teacher communication and collaboration as mediators on the effect CBC has on student outcomes. In addition, these findings suggest that CBC consultants might plan for and encourage parents, teachers, and students to communicate and collaborate in developing and carrying out plans.

Parent responses noted challenges during early adolescence and the transition to middle school. Much is documented about the challenges children experience during early adolescence and the differences across middle school and elementary school (Eccles, 1999). Parent perspectives suggest that it would be helpful for CBC implemented during middle school to incorporate questions and supports for the transition to middle school and transitions across home and school. CBC consultants may embed questions about the transition to middle school, as well as any differences in expectations across home and school. Transitions across home and school during early adolescence can be particularly challenging for minoritized students (Phelan et al., 1991). The CBC process can support affirming family and student identities, incorporate those identities in the school setting, and with families and teachers create culturally responsive transition planning within CBC plans. For example, a CBC consultant can validate a family's cultural background during the identification interview, then the CBC team can incorporate the family's cultural values into the support plan.

Parents, teachers, and students noted positive aspects of CBC as well as concerns with factors related to feasibility. Parents and teachers raised questions about buy-in and financial support needed to implement CBC. Although there is research support for family-school interventions, authentic family-school collaboration as incorporated in CBC is not common in many schools in the U.S. (Garbacz et al., 2018). Parent, teacher, and student responses, alongside lessons learned from related research (Stormshak et al., 2016), suggest ways to harmonize intervention features to optimize implementation fidelity. For example, it may be useful for CBC to be organized in the context of a district leadership team with a main point person at the district level to coordinate with school personnel, such as school psychologists, to promote implementation (Dishion et al., 2020).

In addition to these systems-level factors, there may be some important planning that can occur during initial stages of the CBC process. Parent, teacher, and student perspectives suggest specific barriers that consultees may experience throughout the CBC process. Integrating a structured approach to implementation planning may be one way to embed a planning and barrier reduction approach within CBC (Fallon et al., 2016). A consultant could implement such an approach with parents and teachers at the outset of consultation to identify obstacles and plan for overcoming them (Winslow et al., 2016). In addition, this process could be addressed again when interventions are developed to plan for implementation (Collier-Meek & Sanetti, 2014).

Conclusion

This study examined parent, teacher, and student perspectives on the CBC process and its relevance for the middle school setting. Parents, teachers, and students identified several important considerations for CBC in a middle school context, such as the importance of a trusting home-school relationship and bidirectional communication pathways. Implications for the utility of CBC in middle school suggest the importance of streamlining the process as well as aligning and integrating CBC within existing school systems and practices. Engagement in CBC may depend in part on a school's efforts toward building and repairing trust with families, as well as other culturally sensitive schoolwide relationship-building practices that affirm the role of parents as equal collaborators in their child's education.

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Appendix A

Parent Focus Group Protocol

Conjoint consultation includes a consultant meeting together with a student's teacher and family to discuss strengths and concerns, set goals, develop plans to address concerns for the home and school, and evaluate progress. In conjoint consultation, the consultant works jointly with the teacher and family to develop a common understanding for strengths and needs. In this way, family members and school staff are viewed as equals. Three goals of conjoint consultation are to (1) help students do better and meet their goals, (2) help family members and teachers build skills to help students, and (3) strengthen home-school connections.

The purpose of this meeting is to identify how well conjoint consultation would work for middle school students who display behavior challenges.

1. How do you envision conjoint consultation working for you and your child?
2. Do you have a need for conjoint consultation?
3. What barriers to participating in conjoint consultation do you envision?
4. What could be added to make it easier for you to participate in conjoint consultation?
5. What could conjoint consultation consultants do to maximize the positive benefits of conjoint consultation for students, families, and teachers?
6. Who at the school and from the home should be involved with conjoint consultation cases?
7. What role should your child have if you were to participate in conjoint consultation?
8. How does conjoint consultation fit your needs and preferences?
9. What can be done during conjoint consultation that could help the procedures continue after cases conclude?
10. Is there anything else that is important to share about conjoint consultation's relevance for middle schools and students who display behavior challenges?

Strategies used in conjoint consultation are guided by an understanding for what causes behaviors to occur.

1. How do you see this approach working for you and your family?

After possible causes for why behaviors are occurring, specific strategies to help are selected. Common strategies include ways to prevent the behavior from occurring, teach appropriate responses, provide positive consequences for appropriate behavior, and create strong home-school communication systems.

1. How do you envision this approach working for you and your family?
2. What barriers do you envision?
3. What should be considered in addition or as replacements?

Appendix B

Teacher Focus Group Protocol

Conjoint consultation includes a consultant meeting together with a student's teacher and family to discuss strengths and concerns, identify a specific target concern at home and school, set goals, develop intervention plans for the home and school setting, and evaluate progress. In conjoint consultation, the consultant works collaboratively with the teacher and family to develop a common understanding for strengths and needs, and share ownership over procedures and solutions. Three goals of conjoint consultation are to create positive outcomes for students, build family member and teacher skills and knowledge, and strengthen the home-school connection.

The purpose of this focus group is to identify the relevance of conjoint consultation for middle school students who display behavior challenges.

1. How do you envision conjoint consultation working for middle school students who display behavior challenges?
2. Do you have a need for conjoint consultation? Do you have students and families who would benefit from it? Would you benefit from it?
3. How do you envision conjoint consultation working in middle schools and in your classroom?
4. What barriers do you envision to using conjoint consultation for middle school students who display behavior challenges?
5. What do you see as supporting or contributing to good implementation of conjoint consultation in middle schools for students who display behavior challenges?
6. What could be added to support good implementation of conjoint consultation across home and middle school?
7. What could conjoint consultation consultants do to maximize the positive benefits of conjoint consultation for students, families, and teachers?
8. Who at the school should be involved with conjoint consultation cases, and what should their role be?
9. How would this fit with family needs and preferences?
10. What role should students have in conjoint consultation?
11. What can be done during conjoint consultation cases that could help the procedures continue after cases conclude?
12. Is there anything else that is important to share about conjoint consultation's relevance for middle schools and students who display behavior challenges?

Strategies used in conjoint consultation are based upon hypotheses about why behaviors occur.

1. How do you see this approach working in middle schools for students who display behavior challenges?

After hypotheses are made about why behaviors are occurring, specific intervention tactics are selected. Common strategies include ways to prevent the behavior from occurring, teach

appropriate responses, provide positive consequences for appropriate behavior, and create strong home-school communication systems.

1. How do you envision this approach to developing collaborative intervention plans for home and school working in middle schools for students who display behavior challenges?
2. What barriers do you envision?
3. What should be considered in addition or as replacements?

Appendix C

Student Interview Protocol

Conjoint consultation includes a consultant meeting together with your teacher and family to discuss strengths and concerns, identify a specific target to focus on at home and school, set goals, develop plans to improve targets for the home and school setting, and evaluate progress. In conjoint consultation, the consultant works collaboratively with the teacher and family to develop a common understanding for strengths and needs, and share ownership over procedures and solutions. Three goals of conjoint consultation are to improve your experience at home and school and give you new skills, help your family and teacher build new skills, and strengthen the home-school connection.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss how conjoint consultation could work for you and your family.

1. How do you envision conjoint consultation working for you and your family?
2. Do you think conjoint consultation would be beneficial for you at school and home?
3. What could get in the way of this working for you and your family?
4. What could help conjoint consultation be successful?
5. How would you like to be involved in this process if your family and teachers were to use it?
6. Who at the school and from the home would you like involved if your family and teachers were to use it?
7. Is there anything else that is important to share about how conjoint consultation would work for you?

Strategies used in conjoint consultation are based upon reasons why behaviors occur.

1. How do you see this approach working for you?

After reasons for why behaviors are occurring are developed, intervention strategies are selected. Common strategies include preventing problems from happening, teaching new skills, providing positive consequences for appropriate behavior, and creating strong home-school communication systems.

1. How do you envision this approach working for you and your family?
2. What barriers do you envision?
3. What should be considered in addition or as replacements?
4. What would help you most at school?