

School-based Prevention of Depression and Anxiety Symptoms in Early Adolescence: A Pilot of a Parent Intervention Component

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Previous studies suggest that school-based cognitive-behavioral interventions can reduce and prevent depressive symptoms in youth. This pilot study investigated the effectiveness of a cognitive-behavioral depression prevention program, the Penn Resiliency Program for Children and Adolescents (the PRP-CA), when combined with a parent intervention component. Forty-four middle school students and their parents were randomly assigned to the enhanced PRP (the PRP-CA plus parent program) or control conditions. Students completed measures of depression and anxiety symptoms at baseline and 2 weeks, 6 months, and 1 year after the intervention ended. The combined version of the PRP significantly reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety during the follow-up period. Children assigned to the intervention condition were less likely than controls to report clinical levels of anxiety symptoms. Findings suggest that school-based cognitive-behavioral interventions that include parents may prevent depression and anxiety symptoms in early adolescence.