

Effect of Maladaptive Behaviors Among Male Youth



Brenda Trujillo | Prof. Martone | California State University, Fullerton

Abstract

It was essential to determine the effectiveness of the Wraparound program on maladaptive behaviors to discover the impact the Wraparound program is having locally. In addition to looking into maladaptive behaviors decreasing, the study also aimed to examine the relationship between flex fund dollars spent on the family and youth maladaptive behaviors in the last quarter. Flex fund dollars are an essential part of Wraparound that help the identified client and their families to become stabilized or assist with the family's unique needs.

Introduction

Evaluation Questions

- The purpose of examining the effectiveness of the Wraparound program on maladaptive behaviors amongst male youth would be paramount because of the trend that males tend to externalize maladaptive behaviors in comparison to their female counterparts.
- Flex fund dollars aim to help the family in unique ways, as well as create familial stability. Therefore, flex fund dollars could provide answers about whether the money spent helps decrease maladaptive behaviors and outcomes.

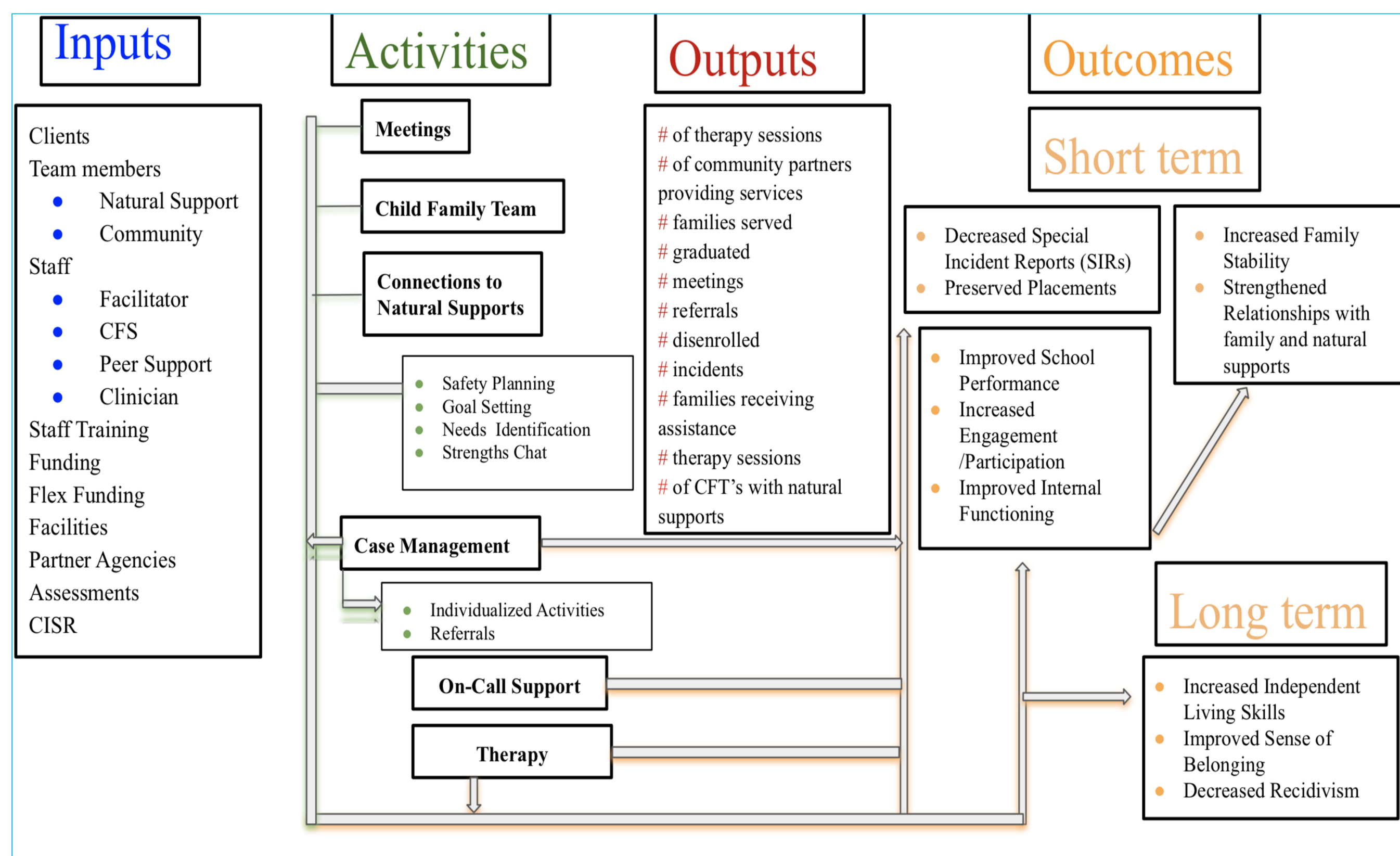
Expected Findings

- It is expected that maladaptive behaviors do decrease with the implementation of Wraparound services.
- It is also expected that flex fund dollars aid in decreasing maladaptive behaviors among male youth.

Vista Del Mar

- Per Vista del Mar, it serves about 130 youth each year in Los Angeles County and has a 70% graduation rate of the program. Targeting youth who are displaying high risk behaviors.
- The Wraparound program consists of the Child and Family Team. Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTs) are held to discuss needs, strengths, safety planning and individualized interventions for the youth. Those who participate in the CFT include: the identified youth, the family, the Wraparound team, the referring party, and any additional formal or informal supports to the family.
- The Wraparound program focuses on the individual needs of the identified youth.

Logic Model



Literature Review

What we do know

- Wraparound emerged from the principles of the Theory of Change.
- The Wraparound approach has been recommended as being "best practice" to be utilized with male youth who are at risk and present maladaptive behaviors by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMSHA).
- Research by Janet S. Walker and Marlene Matarese (2011) confirm that when the effective use of Wraparound along with the fidelity to the model is followed, youth and their family produce positive outcomes.
- After becoming involved in the juvenile justice system on average, 25% of youth were referred to therapy, 14% were referred to court diversion programs, and 10% were referred to substance abuse programs (Carney & Buttell, 2003) however, none of these are individualized programs, such as Wraparound.
- An important statistic demonstrates that 41% of delinquent youth returned to court when appropriate referrals were made to a suitable program. It confirms the findings of the importance of Wraparound services.

What we don't know

- There is a gap in the literature that needs additional research. The gap in literature could provide more insight about the impact flex funds have on maladaptive behaviors amongst male youth in Wraparound services (Dollard, Evans, Lubrecht, & Schaeffer, 1994).
- Although the use of flex fund dollars is helpful and needed throughout the process, more research is needed to find out to what extent do flex fund dollars impact the outcome of decreasing maladaptive behaviors.

How this study adds to the current literature

- This study is consistent with the literature because it demonstrates that youth were able to learn how to better self-regulate and decrease the externalization of maladaptive behaviors. The findings appear to be compatible with the Wraparound program theory.

Methodology

Type of design

- The data collected from 2015-2019 was provided by Vista del Mar.
- One group pre and post test design.
- Original sample size consisted of 323 youths, but the criteria of the study eliminated most. The criteria was being male, having an SIR, and reaching graduation of the program. The sample was reduced to 21 males whose ages ranged between 8-17 years of age. SIRs were tracked at the beginning and last quarter because SIRs were recorded during the youth's time in Wraparound services.
- The males were compared to the 22 females who also reached graduation and had SIRs.

Operational Definition

- Dependent variable
- The operational definition of maladaptive behaviors are any behaviors that include the following: arrests, assaults, injury, police contact, fighting, probation violation, property damage, psychiatric hospitalization, runaway, school suspension or expulsion, self-harm, substance abuse, suicide, Tarasoff, and any high-risk sexual misconduct. The Special Incident Report (SIR) will be utilized to gather data whether the youth's maladaptive behaviors decrease.

Data Collection Procedures

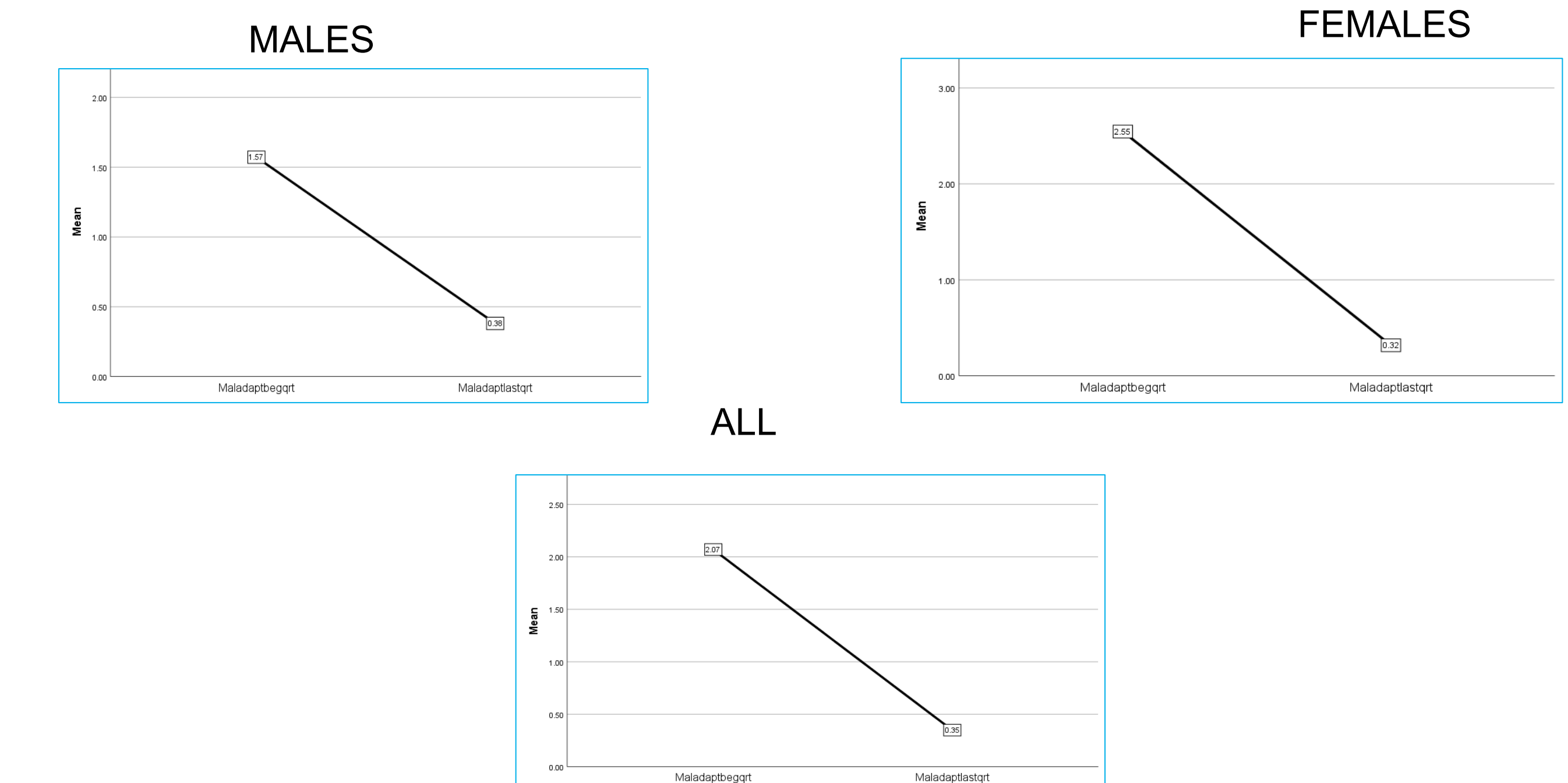
- Output data on graduation and disenrollment were tracked internally, records on the amount of flexible funds allocated to families were kept by staff, and data on incidents were tracked on an ongoing basis in the Wraparound database.
- The data collection method for this research project was the completion of the SIR document.

Results

Summary

Do maladaptive behaviors decrease with Wraparound?

- A Wilcoxon signed-ranks test examined the results of maladaptive behaviors in the beginning quarter and maladaptive behaviors in the last quarter.
- 1. A significant difference was found in the results ($Z = -3.36, p < .001$) for males. The median baseline of maladaptive behaviors in the beginning of the quarter was 1.57 compared to .38 at last quarter for males.
- 2. A significant difference was found in the results ($Z = -3.43, p < .001$) for females. The median baseline of maladaptive behaviors in the beginning of the quarter was 2.55 compared to .32 in the last quarter for females.
- 3. The median score for maladaptive behaviors in the beginning quarter was 2.07 compared to 0.35 in the last quarter for **all youth** involved.



Do flex fund dollars have an impact on maladaptive behaviors?

- A Spearman ρ correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationship between the amount of flex funds spent on a family and youth maladaptive behaviors in the last quarter. **No statistically significant correlation was found for males.**

Discussion

Implications

- The study confirms previous research that youth benefit from participating in Wraparound.
- Having multiple agencies who provide Wraparound services would mean that more youth are being served, and fewer youth are falling through the cracks.
- More social workers can make referrals to a Wraparound program due to its efficacy.

Recommendations

- Program:** Building a positive work environment that focuses on self-care and support would help the staff feel supported and connected.
- Train staff on cultural competence and culture humility.
- Future Evaluations:** One proposal for future evaluation studies is to gather more information about flex fund dollars within the Wraparound model. One suggestion that could provide more data about flex fund dollars across agencies is placing each flex fund receipt into individual categories.

Study Limitations

- The sample size consisted of 21 males, which limits the ability to get a wider range of observation regarding engagement in maladaptive behaviors and to see how youth responded to the Wraparound process.
- There is missing detailed data about flex fund dollars.

Conclusion

- The importance of the findings of this study is imperative to social work because the Wraparound model has proven once again that it is effective in decreasing unwanted, high-risk, maladaptive behaviors.