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ARTICLES

Toward Evidence-Based Treatment: Child-Parent Psychotherapy  
with Preschoolers Exposed to Marital Violence

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ABSTRACT

Objective

Treatment outcome for preschool-age children exposed to marital violence was assessed, comparing the efficacy of Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) with case management plus treatment as usual in the community.

Method

Seventy-five multiethnic preschool mother dyads from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds were randomly assigned to (1) CPP or (2) case management plus community referral for individual treatment. CPP consisted of weekly parent-child

sessions for 1 year monitored for integrity with the use of a treatment manual and intensive training and supervision. Parents completed the Child Behavior Checklist and participated in the Structured Clinical Interview for DC:0-3 to assess children's emotional and behavioral problems and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. Mothers completed the Symptom Checklist-90 and the Clinician Administered PTSD Scale interview to assess their general psychiatric and PTSD symptoms.

## Results

Repeated-measures analysis of variance demonstrated the efficacy of CPP with significant group  $\times$  time interactions on children's total behavior problems, traumatic stress symptoms, and diagnostic status, and mothers' avoidance symptoms and trends toward significant group  $\times$  time interactions on mothers' PTSD symptoms and general distress.

## Conclusions

The findings provide evidence of the efficacy of CPP with this population and highlight the importance of a relationship focus in the treatment of traumatized preschoolers.



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## Key Words

child witnesses of domestic violence; preschool children; child-parent psychotherapy

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