

The Quality Standards Assessment: Connecting Quality Care with Youth Outcomes

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Background

The Quality Standards Assessment (QSA) is a validated measure of quality practice standards for youth residential care

The QSA was a mandated initiative to establish a Statewide Accountability System for residential group homes (Florida Statute, Section 409.996(22))

The QSA draws upon research and empirically-driven frameworks to transform youth residential services through the integration of research-informed practice standards, ongoing assessment, and continuous quality improvement.

The Group Care Quality Standards (2015) outline a set of research-informed practice standards across eight domains:

1. Assessment and Service Planning
2. Safe, Positive Environment
3. Monitoring and Reporting Processes
4. Family, Culture, and Spirituality
5. Staff Training and Supervision
6. Program Elements
7. Education and Life Skills
8. Transition and Discharge Planning

Background

Based on frameworks of implementation science and practice, the implementation framework for the QSA consists of eight phases:

- 1) Advocacy and engagement
- 2) Establishing the Group Care Quality Standards
- 3) Developing the GCQSA
- 4) Feasibility study
- 5) Implementation pilot
- 6) Statewide pilot
- 7) Validation studies
- 8) Full implementation

Purpose and Research Questions

Early evidence from statewide studies of the QSA demonstrated that programs that scored higher on the standards experienced significantly fewer critical incidents (e.g., youth runaway episodes, hospitalizations, law enforcement intervention).

Despite these promising results, the question of the extent to which the program's performance on the standards predict positive youth outcomes remains.

The purpose of the outcomes pilot was to examine whether the quality standards and which specific standards are related to youth outcomes. That is, are higher QSA scores associated with greater improvements in youth's behavioral and emotional symptoms over time and discharge outcomes.

Research Questions:

1. Do the quality standards relate to youth outcomes?
2. If yes, which standards are most strongly associated with youth outcomes?
3. Does the QSA distinguish between higher and lower performing programs?

Methods

Data collection:

Data were collected between August 4, 2021 and April of 2022.

Outcomes data were collected at baseline (within 30 days of admission), 60-days, and 90-days after admission, using both youth self-reports and staff proxy reports.

Measures:

1. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The SDQ is a 25-item behavioral screener used to measure changes in youth behavioral and emotional symptoms. The SDQ includes five subscales measuring emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems, and prosocial behavior in the past 30 days. Items are rated on a 3-point scale where 0 = Not True, 1 = Somewhat True, 2 = Certainly True.
2. Quality Standards Assessment. QSA data continued to be collected during the relicensing of residential programs across the state and was extracted and used for this study

Results

Baseline: 164 surveys, representing 96 youth.

60-day: 101 surveys, 58 (57.3%) were completed by staff and 43 (42.7%) were completed by youth, representing 69 youth across 40 programs.

90-day: 21 surveys have been completed by staff and 20 have been completed by youth.

Sample Demographics (n = 88)		
Variable	Mean or N	SD or %
Age	15.02	1.63
Race/Ethnicity		
Black	36	41.4%
White	51	53.7%
Male	33	37.5%
Female	55	62.5%

Note. Missing data on eight youth for race, and seven youth on age and gender.

Results

Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire Scores

Baseline to time 2 scores showed little change in symptomology.

At time 3, SDQ scores indicate a decrease in overall symptoms and problems scale, with only peer relationship problems classified as 'slightly raised'.

SDQ Subscales	Baseline		Time 2		Time 3	
	Youth (n = 90)	Staff (n = 71)	Youth (n = 43)	Staff (n = 58)	Youth (n = 20)	Staff (n = 21)
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Emotional Symptoms	3.82 (2.66)	3.48 (2.72)	3.47 (2.26)	3.59 (2.77)	3.43 (2.87)	3.71 (2.67)
Conduct Problems	2.77 (2.16)	2.93 (2.39)	2.23 (2.07)	3.55 (3.13)	1.93 (1.98)	2.81 (2.48)
Hyperactive/Inattentive	4.70 (2.47)	4.31 (2.88)	4.91 (2.33)	5.02 (2.67)	4.07 (2.64)	4.48 (1.86)
Peer Relationship Problems	3.77 (1.94)	3.56 (2.08)	3.56 (1.78)	3.64 (2.16)	1.86 (1.23)	3.24 (1.51)
Prosocial Behavior	7.32 (2.05)	6.23 (2.50)	7.60 (2.23)	5.78 (2.51)	7.93 (1.86)	6.71 (2.39)

Results

Results will be presented on the associations between SDQ outcomes and QSA

Implications

Implications will be discussed of the results for residential programs