CAN A THERAPEUTIC SUMMER CAMP PROGRAM IMPROVE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS WITH EBD

Michelle Boone-Thornton

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ABSTRACT

Students diagnosed with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) experience deficits in multiple areas that negatively impact the classroom environment. This study examines treatment and barriers, availability, options, effectiveness, and gaps in services. For students with EBD, the largest gap occurs in the summer. A program evaluation was performed to determine the effectiveness of a therapeutic summer camp program and how it impacts the behavior and school performance of 94 middle school students with EBD. Students who attended the summer camp program were compared to students who did not attend. The intensive 7-week therapeutic summer camp program was designed to provide safety and structure, address clinical needs, support educational plans, and teach classroom skills. Components of the program—such as evaluation questions, goals, objectives, and key indicators—were analyzed. Results indicated that program goals had been met, and there was an improvement in student behaviors. Pre- and postmeasures were used to determine if there was a statistical difference in behavior. The researcher obtained behavior information on each participant from their school. A STI software program compiled this data. A chi-square, contingency table, and Cramer’s V were used to analyze behavior violations and school performance data. The findings showed statistically significant differences between the two groups. The null hypothesis was rejected. Students who attended the therapeutic summer camp program had a significant reduction in school violations as it relates to behavior and school performance. Additional research is recommended to move this treatment option to a solid evidence-based practice that is used to support and treat students with EBD during the summer months.