

How effective is Functional Family Therapy for addressing youth behavior problems?

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Functional Family Therapy is a family-based intervention for youth with behavior problems, and although it's been implemented in 45 states in the U.S and in nine other high-income countries, a recent analysis of

published and unpublished studies found that the therapy is not consistently more or less effective than other treatments, including various forms of individual, family, and group interventions.

The authors of the analysis, which is published in *Campbell Systematic Reviews* and included 20 studies, also noted that there is [insufficient evidence](#) to draw conclusions about the effects of Family Functional Therapy compared with no [treatment](#).

"Functional Family Therapy is actively marketed as a 'scientifically proven' or 'evidence-based' program, but there are serious concerns about the quality of the evidence for FFT and available evidence does not support claims that FFT is consistently more effective than other treatments," said corresponding author Julia H. Littell, Ph.D., Professor Emerita of Bryn Mawr College.

Dr. Littell and her colleagues looked at the best available studies and found that they all had some serious risks of bias. "At least three-quarters of these studies did not fully report their results. Some FFT studies have not made any of their results public. Available data show that results are inconsistent within and across FFT studies," she said. "Also, information on the cost effectiveness of FFT appears to be based on inflated estimates of treatment effects; therefore, claims about FFT's cost effectiveness are not convincing."

More information: Functional Family Therapy is not consistently more (or less) effective than other services, *Campbell Systematic Reviews* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/cl2.1324](https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1324) , onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cl2.1324

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