

Prevention of mental illness in children of parents with depression: from effectiveness to implementation

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Overview

1. Recap **GuG-Auf**
2. **Polar bear** project – current status
3. **Next steps**

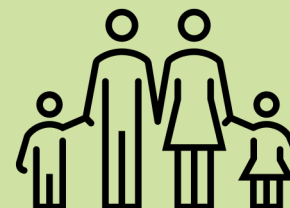


Evidence-Based prevention for children of parents with depression

GuG-Auf

Psychoeducation

- What is depression?
- Why does it run in families?
- Is it my fault?



Coping with stress

- Acceptance
- Distraction
- Positive activities
- Positive thinking



Parenting with depression

- Providing structure
- Warmth
- Getting support
- Providing support

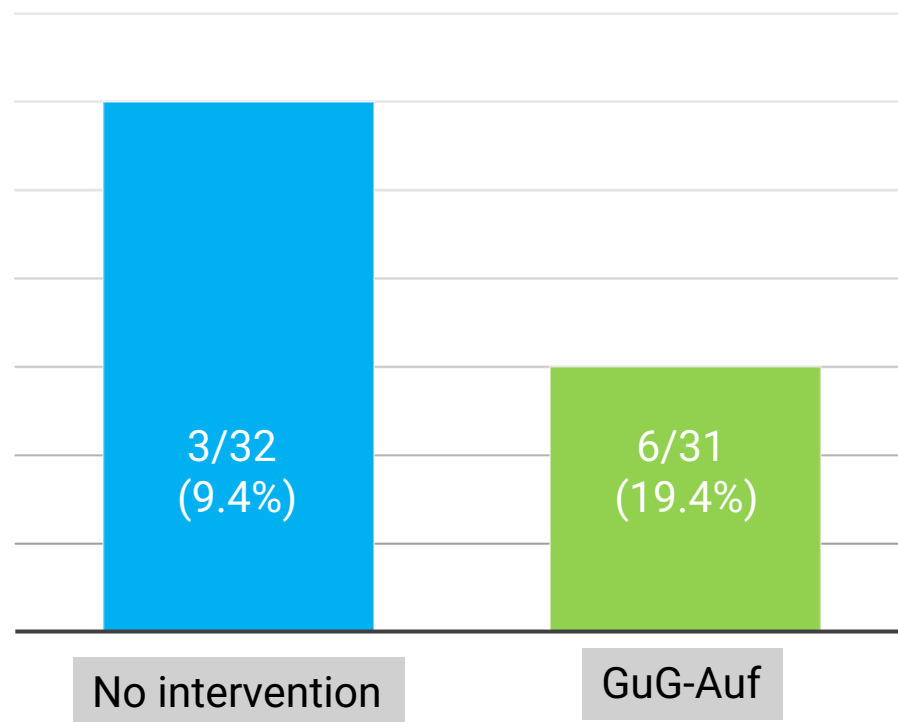


GuG-Auf!

Evidence-Based prevention for children of parents with depression

Effectiveness of GuG-Auf

Rate of mental illness during the study period



Löchner et al. (2021) *Child Adolesc Psychiatry Ment Health*
 Löchner, Platt et al., (2023) *BMC Psychiatry*

Löchner et al. *BMC Psychiatry* (2023) 23:455
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-023-04926-2>

BMC Psychiatry

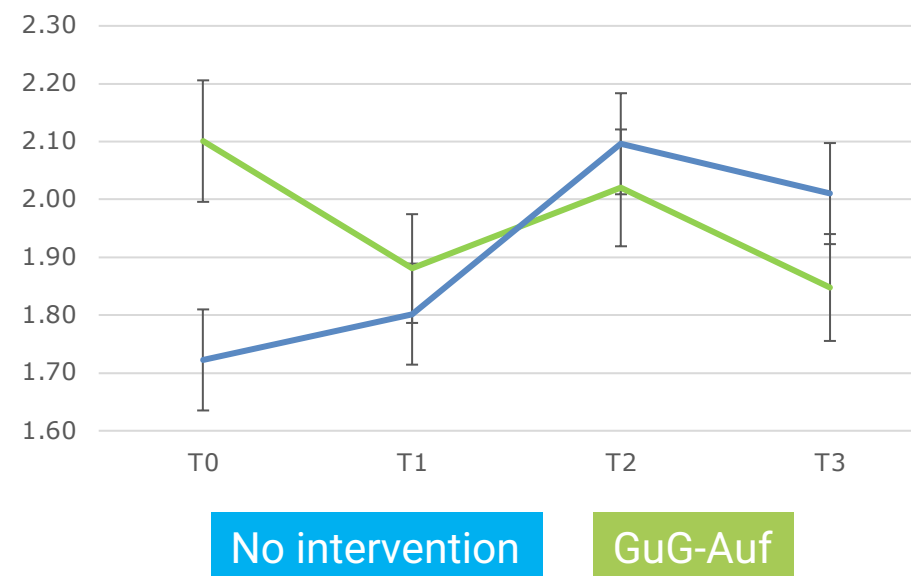
RESEARCH

Open Access

A randomized controlled trial of a preventive intervention for the children of parents with depression: mid-term effects, mediators and moderators

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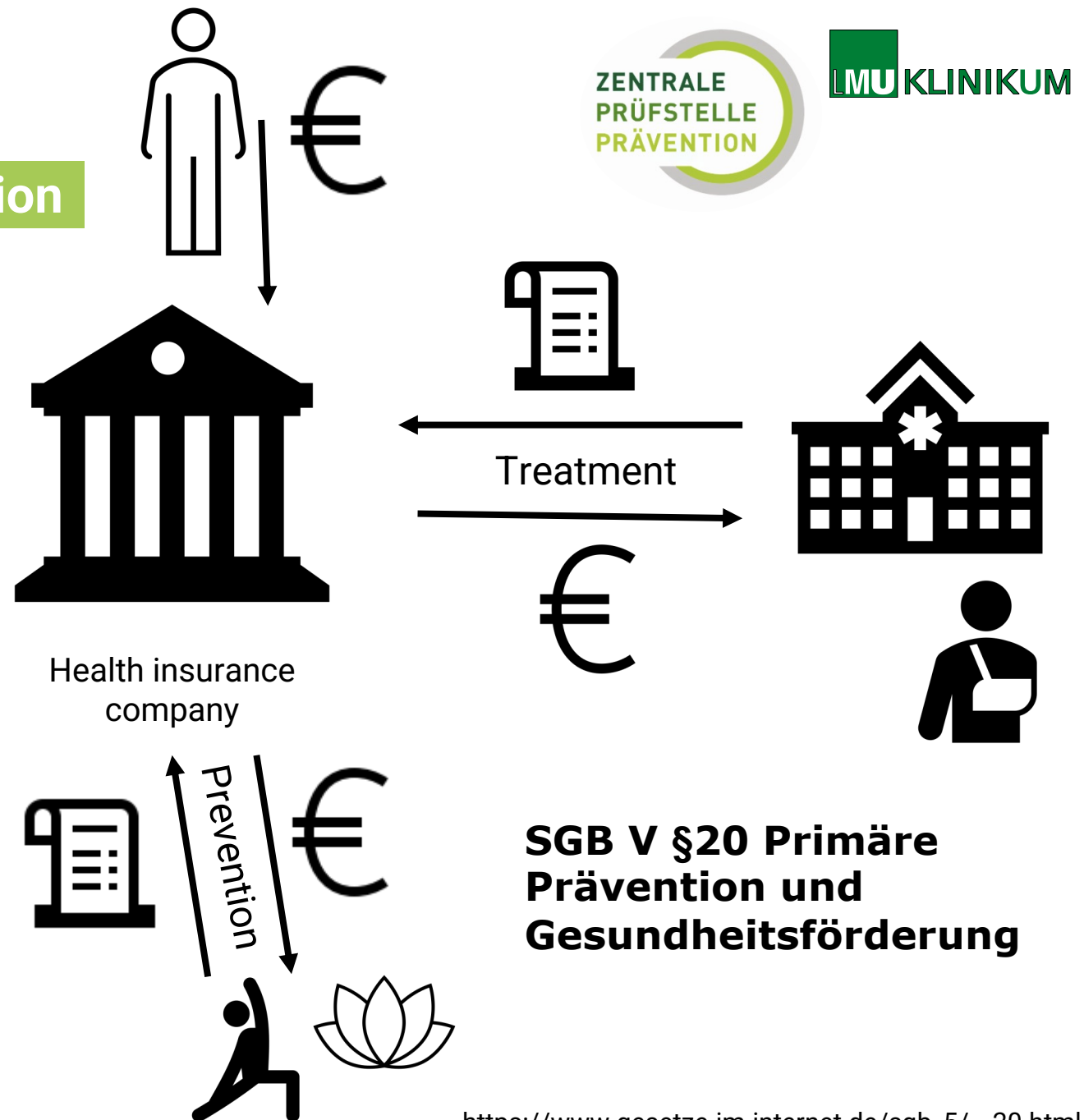
Internalising symptoms (Youth Self-Report)



Polar Bear Project 1.0

Step 1: certification of the intervention

- **Certification** by the Central Prevention Center (ZPP) as a course to improve children's **stress coping**
- **Strict criteria:** 8 - 12 sessions, 60 - 90 minutes, evidence-based
- **Qualification** of group leaders
- Families pay the **course fee** (250€ per child) up front
- Course fee is **reimbursed** by health insurance company after successful completion of the intervention





HEY DU!

GuG-Auf – Gesund & Glücklich Aufwachsen

Ein Programm für Jugendliche zwischen 13–17 Jahren
Deine Eltern sind in einer psychischen Krise (z. B. Depression)?

Du bist nicht allein!

In unserer Gruppe triffst du Jugendliche mit ähnlichen Erfahrungen:

- ✦ Lerne coole Strategien gegen Stress
- ✦ Hol dir Tipps für den Umgang in schweren Zeiten
- ✦ Sprich offen über das, was dich bewegt

Wir sind ein junges, motiviertes Team und freuen uns darauf, dich kennenzulernen

**MACH MIT – DU MUSST DAS NICHT ALLEINE
TRAGEN! DU BIST STARK. UND GEMEINSAM
WERDEN WIR STARK.**

**DAS IST KEINE THERAPIE!!
WENN DU SELBST GERADE STARK BELASTET
BIST ODER EINE PSYCHISCHE DIAGNOSE
HAST, KÖNNTE WEITERE UNTERSTÜTZUNG
HILFREICH SEIN.**

SCHREIB UNS



PRODO.GROUP

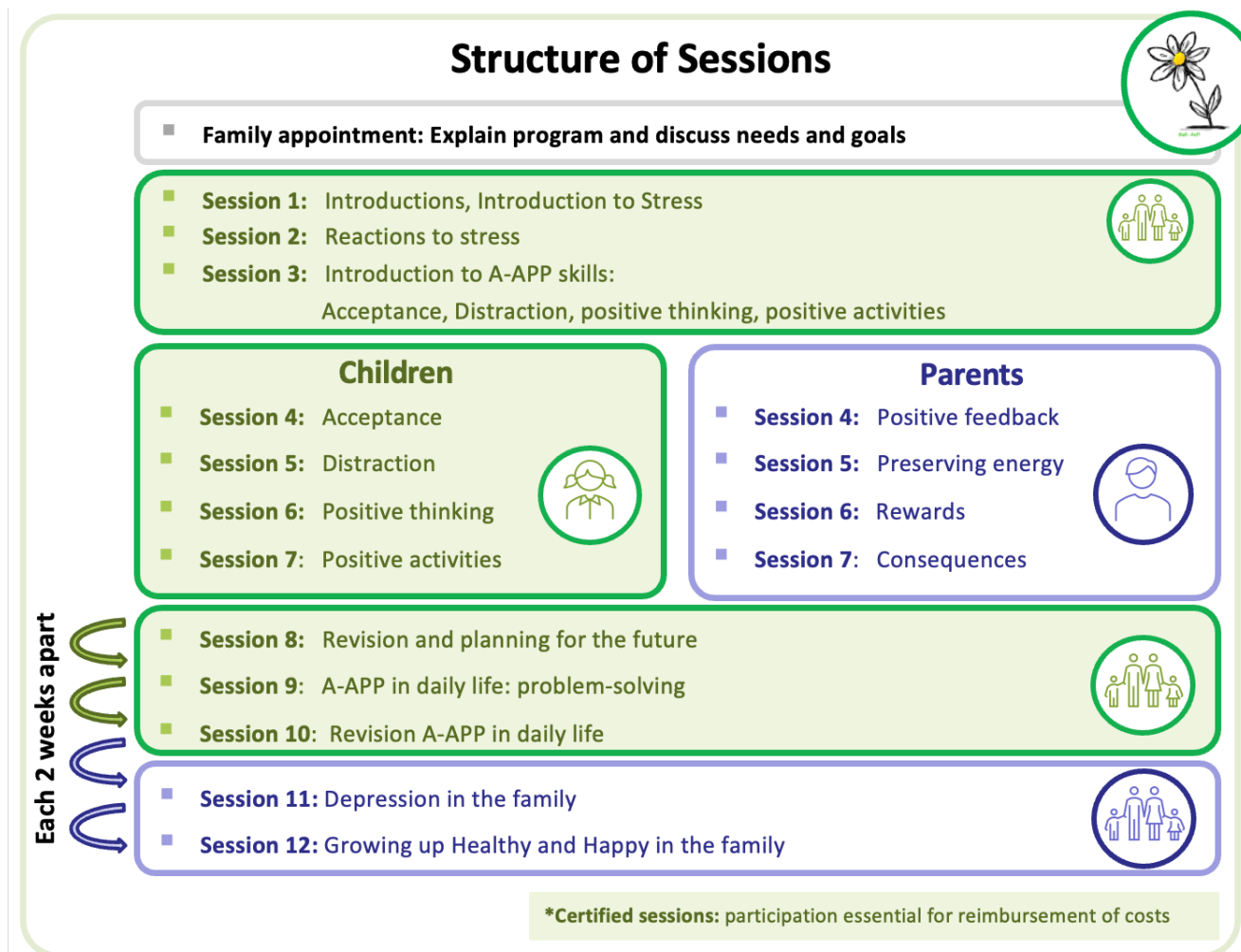


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Polar Bear Project 1.0

Step 1: certification of the intervention



Polar Bear Project 1.0

Step 2: revision of the app

- Training between sessions is a key aspect of the intervention
- We are currently using an app built for us by “mPath” 
- External centres who run the intervention will use an analogue workbook



Gesund und glücklich aufwachsen: Sitzung 1

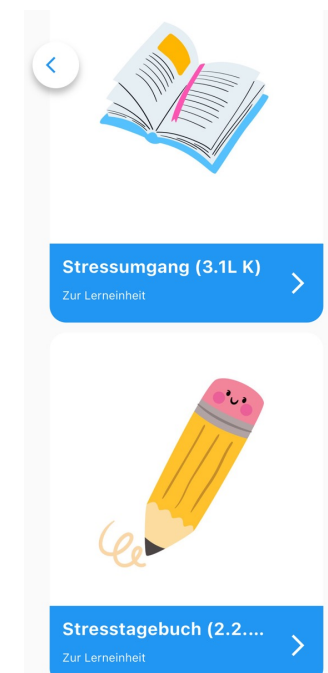
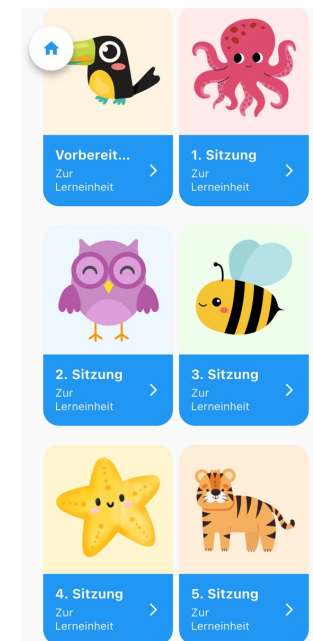
Sitzung 1 – Stress

Was ist Stress für dich?

Wenn Du an Stress denkst, an was denkst du dann?

Wann hast du dich in der letzten Woche gestresst gefühlt?
Wie zeigt sich Stress bei dir?
Wie fühlst du dich, wenn du gestresst bist?

Es gibt keine richtige oder falsche Antwort ©



Polar Bear Project 1.0

Step 3: Adapt intervention based on feedback from families



2. Sitzung
Zur Lerneinheit

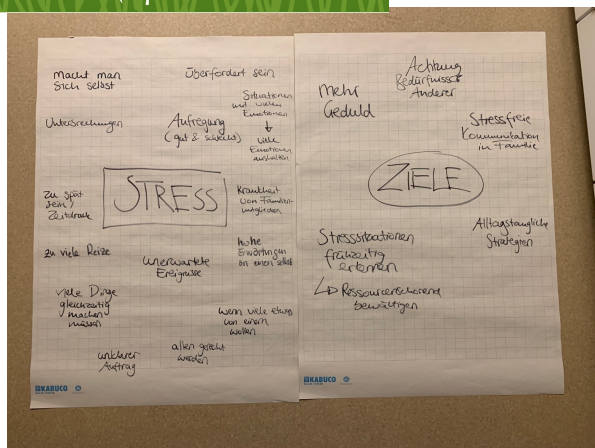
3. Sitzung
Zur Lerneinheit

4. Sitzung
Zur Lerneinheit

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6. Sitzung
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7. Sitzung
Zur Lerneinheit



ZIELTABELLE

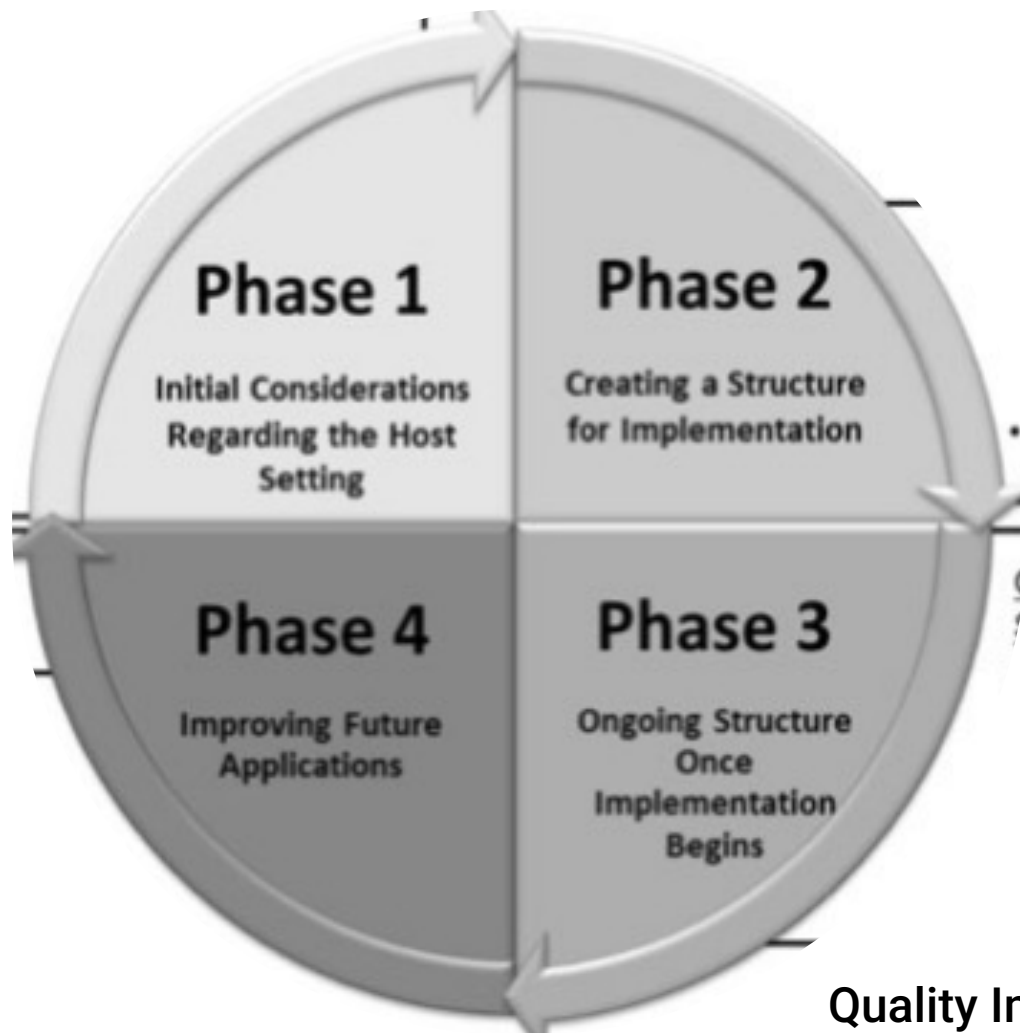
Name:

	Montag	Dienstag	Mittwoch	Donnerstag	Freitag	Samstag	Sonntag
Das möchte ich diese Woche schaffen:							
1x Haken/Tag:							
4x Haken/Woche:							
6x Haken/Woche:							



Polar Bear Project 2.0

Evaluate the implementation of GuG-Auf



Quality Implementation Framework (QIF, Meyers et al., 2012)

Polar Bear Project 2.0

Evaluate the implementation of GuG-Auf

Phase 1: Selecting appropriate settings

Identify potential settings

- Contacted 15 potential cooperation centres
- Four external centres confirmed interest in delivery of GuG-Auf
 - Two parenting counselling centres (one specifically for parents with acute difficulties)
 - One health centre
 - One Community Mental Health and Social Services Team

Interviews with all centres regarding barriers and facilitating factors – data analysis ongoing

Training over two days on March 23-24th 2026

Polar Bear Project 2.0

Evaluate the implementation of GuG-Auf

Phase 2: Creating a structure for implementation

Address barriers identified in Phase 1

- Using CFIR-ERIC-Matching-Tool to find suitable strategies to adress barriers

Develop implementation plans for each setting

- Schedule, personnel, finances, recruitment, ...

Polar Bear Project 2.0

Evaluate the implementation of GuG-Auf

Phase 3: Establish structures during implementation

Supervision with the research team

- Still to be defined how often and in which format

Reporting modifications

- **FRAME** (Wiltsey Stirman et al., 2019)

Polar Bear Project 2.0

Evaluate the implementation of GuG-Auf

Phase 4: Improving future applications

Analysis of Implementation Outcomes

- Constructs: Penetration, Acceptability, Appropriateness, Feasibility, Fidelity, Sustainability, Costs und Safety (Proctor et al., 2011)
- Measures:
 - assessment of the acceptability of GuG-Auf as perceived by participating families
 - structured documentation related to intervention delivery (e.g. attendance rates, completion of training exercises)
 - semi-structured interviews with the staff members, focusing on experiences, challenges, and perceived solutions in the implementation process
- Detailed analysis with the LMU and more basic analysis in external sites

Polar Bear Project

Summary

- GuG-Auf is a family-based program that strengthens children's coping skills, supports parents in reflecting on their parenting, and fosters open family communication about depression
- Implementation into the German care system is currently ongoing
 - First steps: developing an implementation strategy, identifying cooperation centers, and conducting needs assessments
 - Next steps: addressing barriers, giving training, running GuG-Auf groups in cooperation centers, and evaluating implementation outcomes

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