

Brief Mindfulness Activities to Enhance Parenting Skills: A Randomized Trial

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Mindful Families, Schools and Communities: Research to Practice Promoting Child Well-Being



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TEAM

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Overview

- **Rationale** for Mindfulness in Parenting
 - A Conceptual Model
- **The Program**
 - Translating the conceptual model into practice
 - Adaptation of the ***Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14***
- **Results** from current RCT
 - Mindful parenting
 - Proximal parenting processes

Why a mindful parenting program?

- **Parents report of Stress**
 - Parenting Stress
 - Work-Family Stress
- **Parent-child relationship dynamics**
 - “overlearned negative patterns” (Dumas, 2005)
- Inability to effectively use parenting skills to ***“parent in the moment”***
 - We become ***“Swamped by Emotion”*** which overrides our logical thought and ability to see alternative solutions --- Daniel Goleman



Why a mindful parenting program?

- **Mindfulness** in parenting might help
 - Bring greater attention and awareness to one's parenting
 - Increase INTENTION in parenting
 - Shift out of “automatic” cycles of parent-youth interactions (Coercive)
 - Enhance use of positive parenting techniques
- Important during adolescence
(parent-youth relationship quality/processes)



Conceptual Model

- Mindfulness – contextualized for parenting situations
- ***Intra***personal and ***Inter***personal
- 5 Core elements – **that could be applied in intervention**
 - **Listening with Full Attention – Present centered attention**
 - **Emotional Awareness of Self and Child**
 - **Nonjudgmental Acceptance of child and self**
 - **Self-regulation in parenting**
 - **Compassion for Self and Child**

Duncan, L. G., Coatsworth, J. D., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*.

Developing a Mindful Parenting Program

- We chose to **ADAPT** an existing program
 - Parenting programs show good evidence for:
 - Parenting skills acquisition
 - Parent-youth relationships
 - Youth adjustment
 - Can Mindfulness **ENHANCE** program effects?
 - If so, in what ways?

STRENGTHENING



families
PROGRAM

- ***Strengthening Families: For Parents and Youth 10-14***
 - Strong evidence for reducing problem behavior and SU through changes in parenting/family processes
 - Experience with the program
 - Teaches foundational parenting skills
 - Good test of “added” effect of mindfulness
- 7 weekly sessions; parents AND youth
 - Revised parent activities
 - Changed language (“awareness”, “intention”, “compassion”)

Parent

S1: Love & Limits



1. **Introductions and introduction to breath awareness**
2. Identify stresses and problems in youth
3. **Identify comfortable and uncomfortable emotions while parenting**
4. **Stop, Be Calm, Be Present**
5. Learn the value of parental love and limits in helping youth develop qualities
6. Learn to support youth goals and dreams
7. **Setting an intention for family session – supporting youth goals and dreams**

Youth



S1: Having Goals & Dreams

1. Making Group Ground Rules
2. Goals & Steps Toward Goals
3. Making & Sharing Treasure Maps

Family

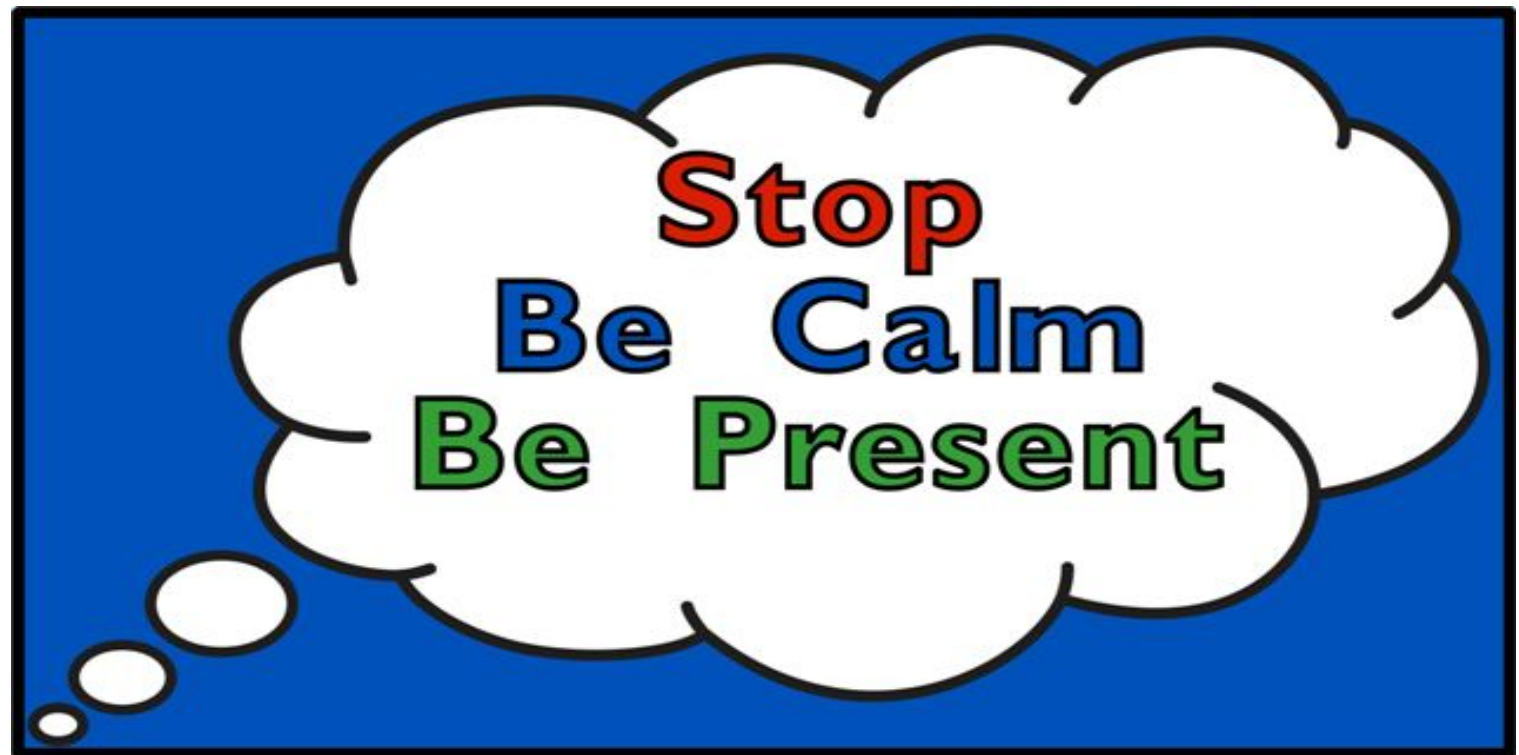


S1: Supporting Goals & Dreams

1. Parent/Youth View & Discuss Treasure Maps
2. Steps to Reach Goals
3. How Well Do We Know Each Other?

Prototypical New Exercises

	Listening with Full Attention	Nonjudgmental Acceptance of Self and Child	Emotional Awareness of Self and Child	Self-Regulation in the Parenting Relationship	Compassion for Self and Child
Session 1	Attention to Breath		Emotions of Parenting	Breathing Emotions of Parenting	Emotions of Parenting
Session 2	Attention to Breath			Automatic Reactions, Stop, Be Calm, Be Present	
Session 3	Attention to Breath	Seeing Our Children Clearly	Seeing Our Children Clearly		Loving Kindness



Stop
Be Calm
Be Present

Prototypical New Exercises

	Listening with Full Attention	Nonjudgmental Acceptance of Self and Child	Emotional Awareness of Self and Child	Self-Regulation in the Parenting Relationship	Compassion for Self and Child
Session 4	Being Present	Acceptance of youth needs		Being Present	Compassion for youth needs
Session 5			Awareness and Compassion for youth	Responsive Not Reactive Parenting	Awareness and Compassion for youth ; Things I like about my parenting
Session 6	Really Listening	Really Listening	Really Listening	Really Listening	Loving Kindness

- PLAY CLIPS

Current RCT

- **Strengthening Pennsylvania's Families**
 - Multi- Site (4 communities)
 - Universal Recruitment of 6th & 7th graders
 - N = 436 families
 - Random Assignment to 3 conditions
 - SFP
 - Mindfulness-enhanced SFP
 - Home Study Control
 - Assessments: PRE, POST, 1 year FOLLOWUP
 - 6 Waves -- implemented Fall and Spring
 - 17 “cohorts” of intervention groups

Locations



Current RCT

- **Demographics**

- 71% 6th graders (n= 310)
- 54 % girls
- ~87% White
 - African American, Hispanic, Asian, Mixed
- 69% of Parents Married or Cohabiting
- 235 Mothers participated in intervention
 - 117 Fathers participated in intervention

Research Questions

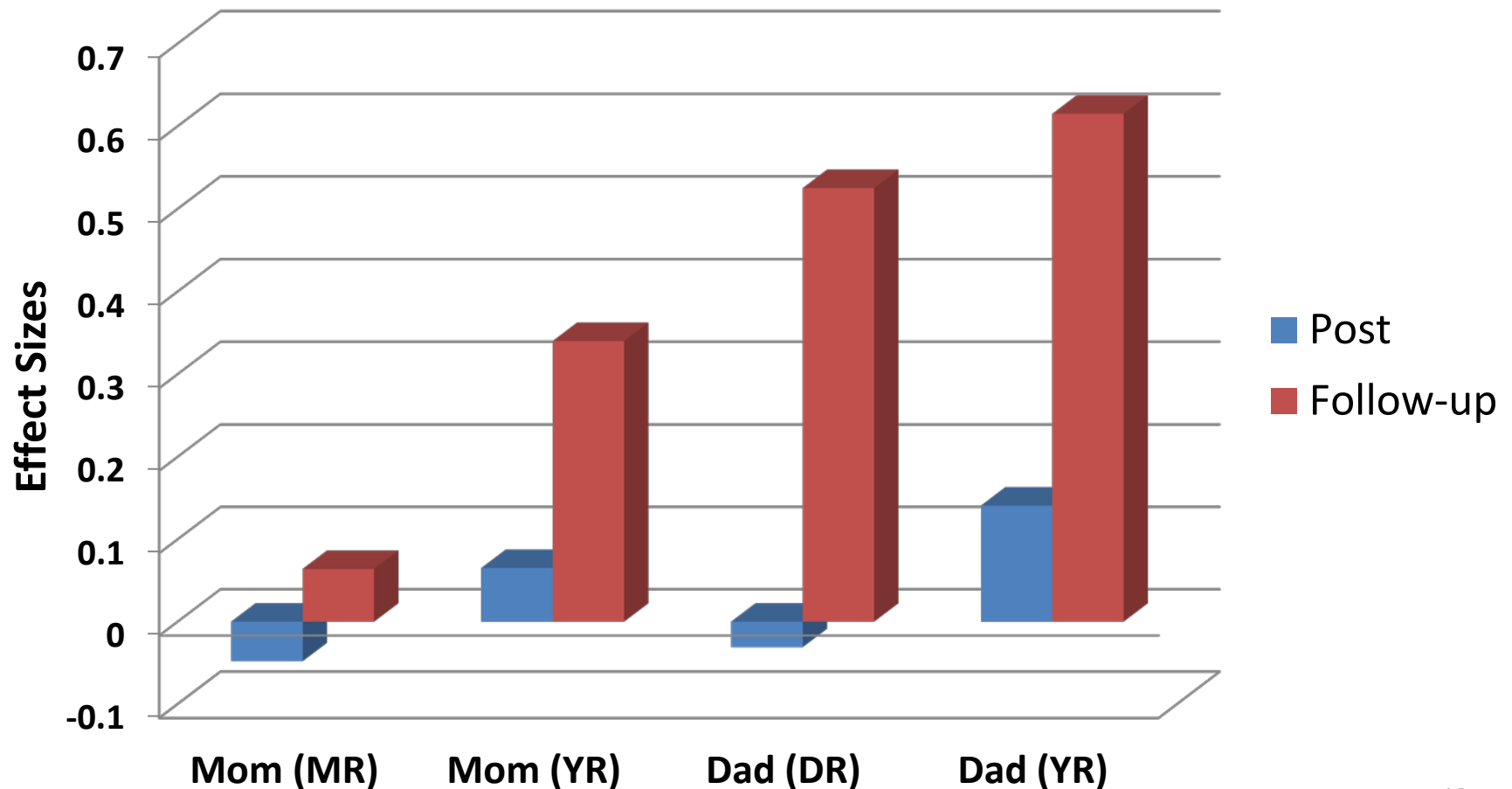
- **Does the Intervention Change Mindful Parenting?**
 - Implementation check AND intervention effect
- **Does the Mindful Parenting Intervention enhance effects on other important parenting behaviors?**
 - Relationship Quality
 - Child Management (e.g., Monitoring, Discipline)

Results

- **PRE → POST Effects**
 - Waves 1-5 (N = 350)
 - N = 129 Original SFP
 - N = 126 Mindful SFP
- **PRE → 1 YEAR FOLLOWUP**
 - Waves 1-3 (N = 187)
 - N = 71 Original SFP
 - N = 69 Mindful SFP

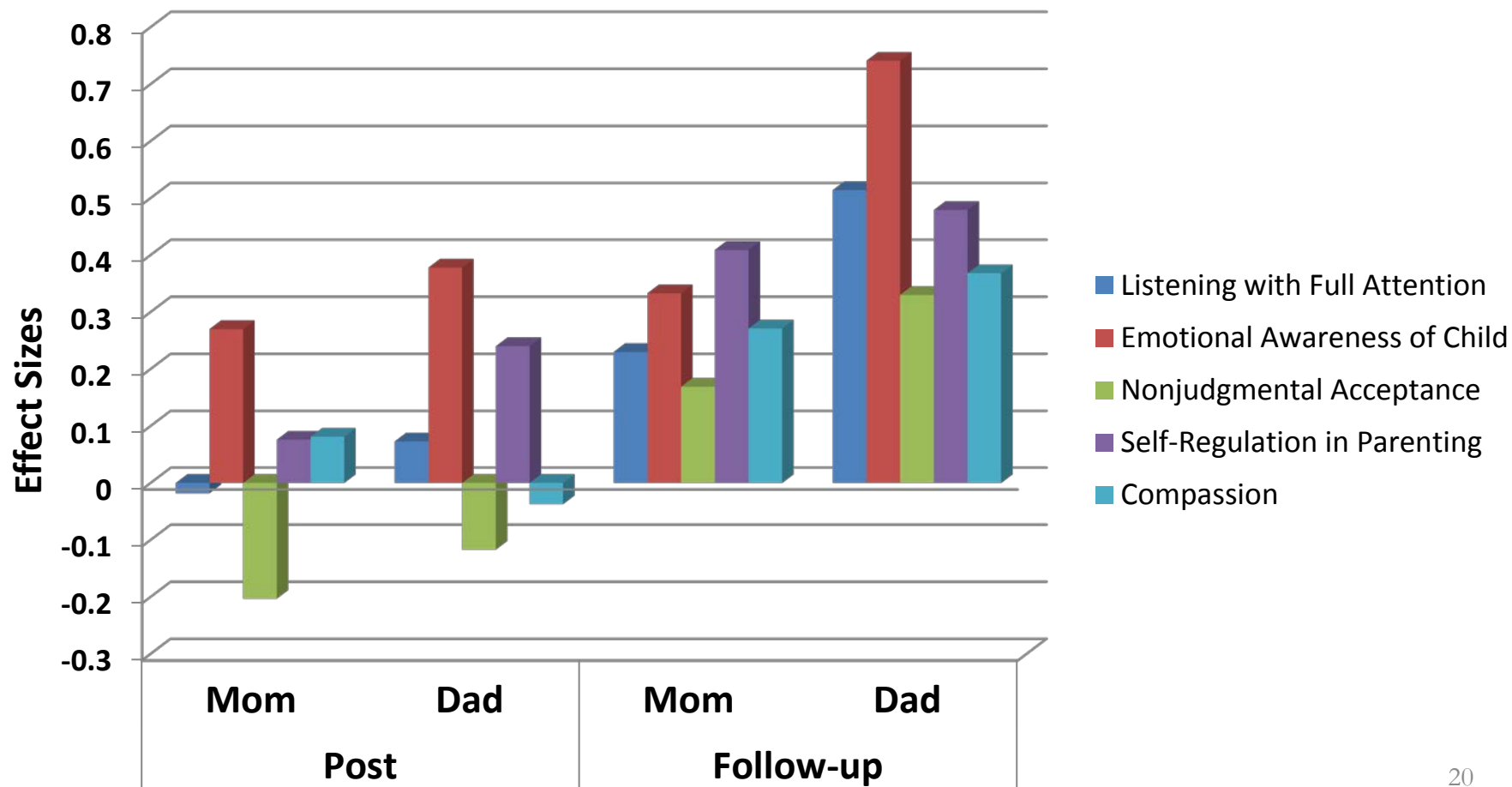
Does the Intervention Change Mindfulness in Parenting?

Mindfulness in Parenting Mindful SFP vs. Original SFP



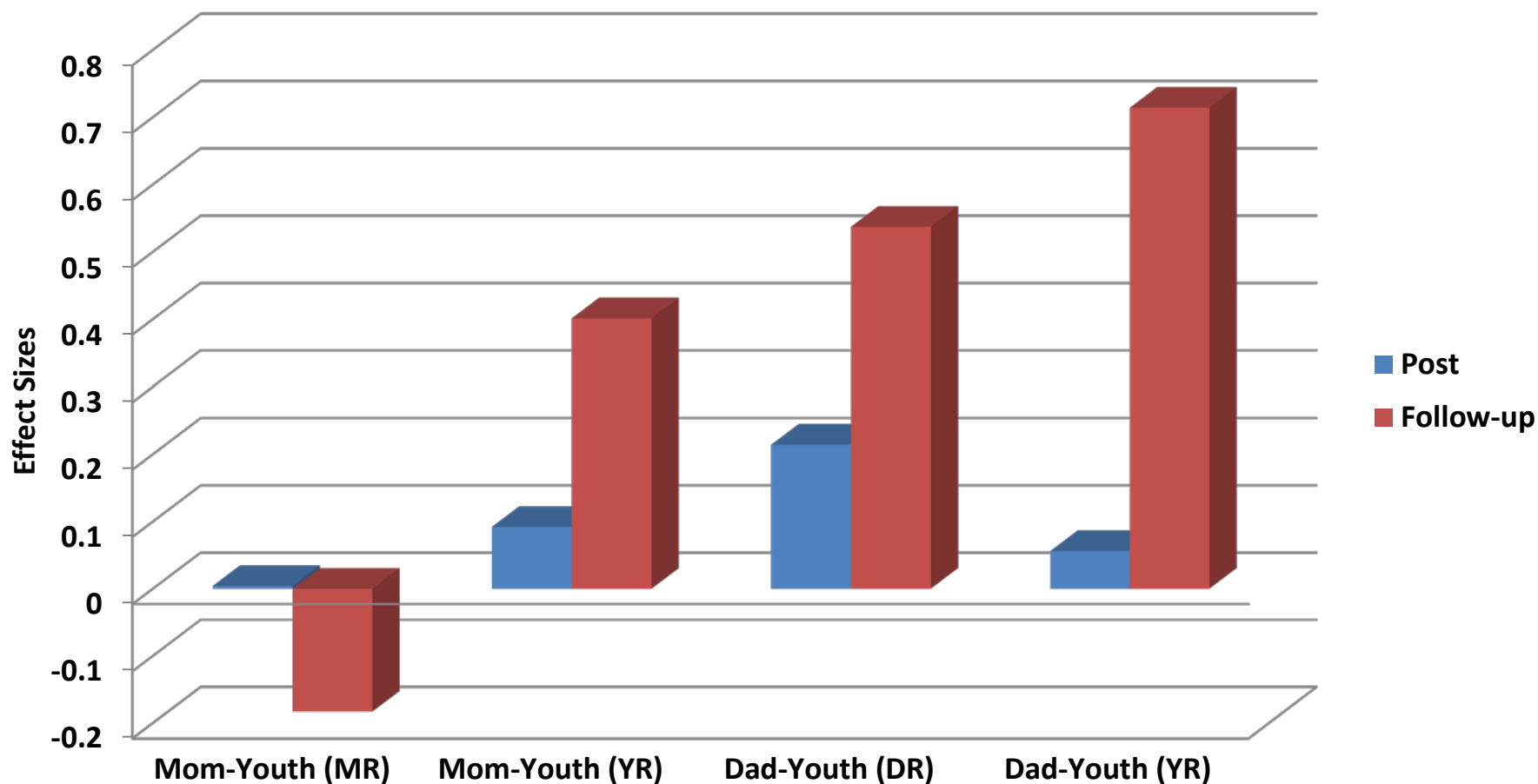
Does the Intervention Change Mindfulness in Parenting?

Youth Report Mindful SFP vs. Original SFP



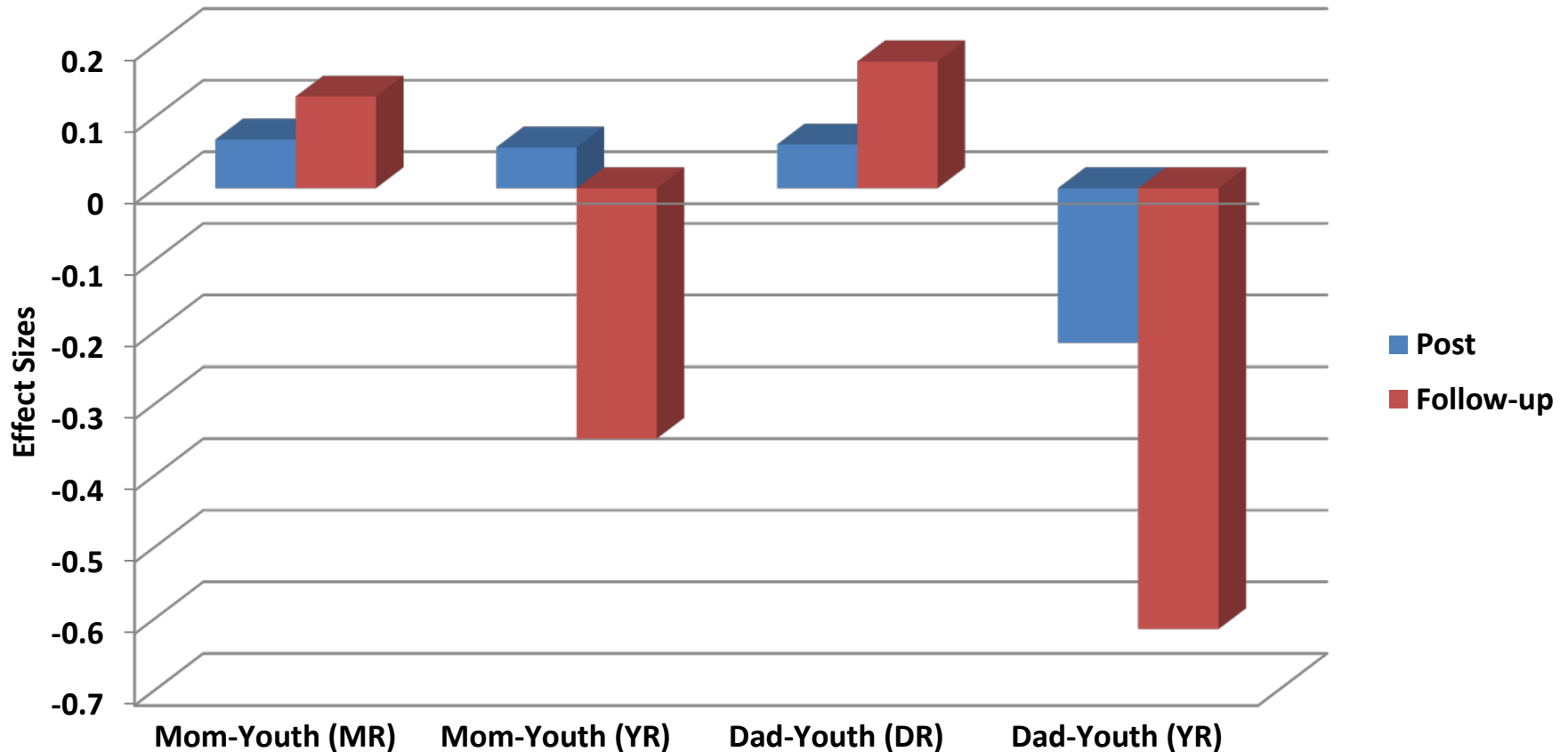
Does the Intervention Change Proximal Parenting Processes?

Positive Affective Quality
Mindful SFP vs. Original SFP

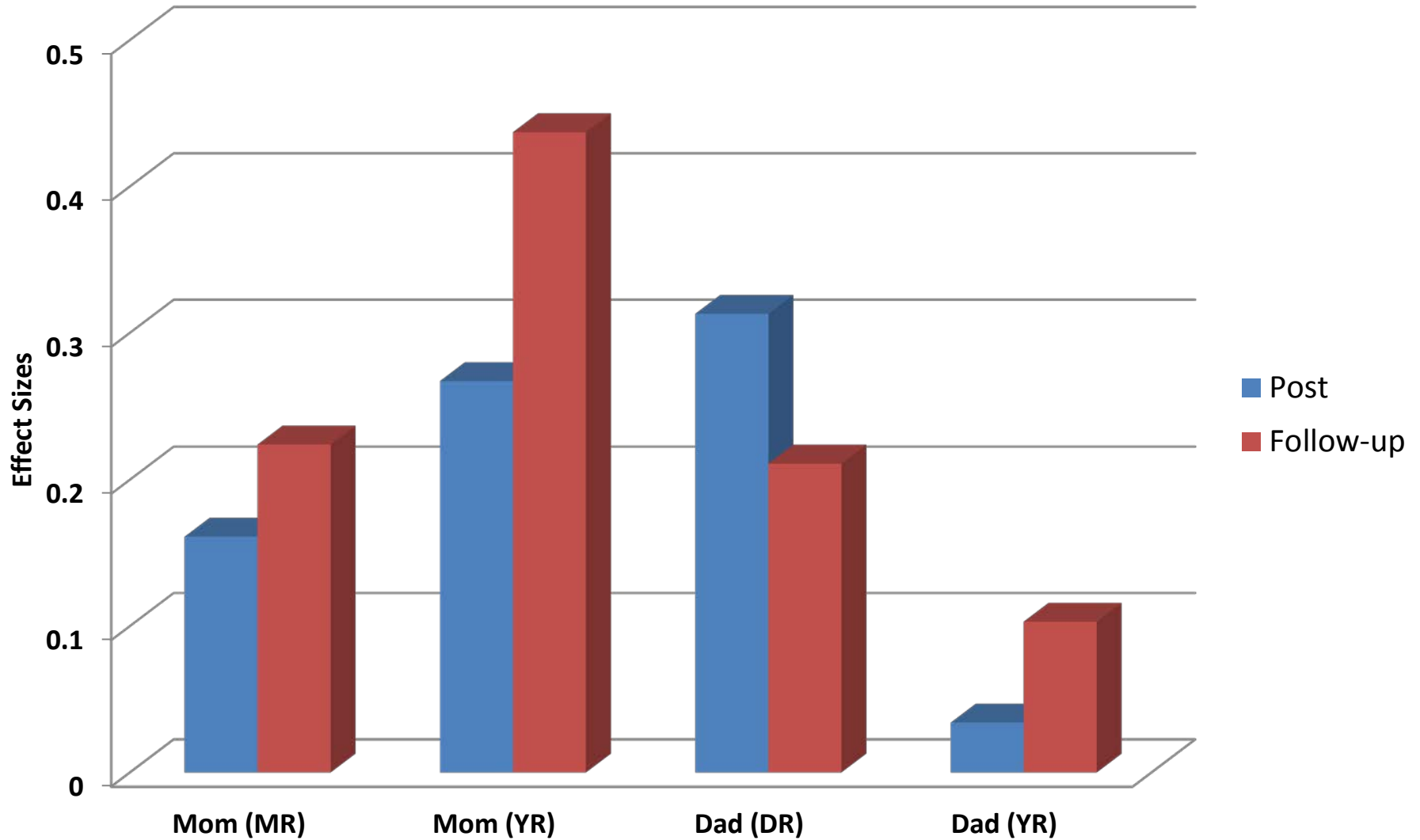


Does the Intervention Change Proximal Parenting Processes?

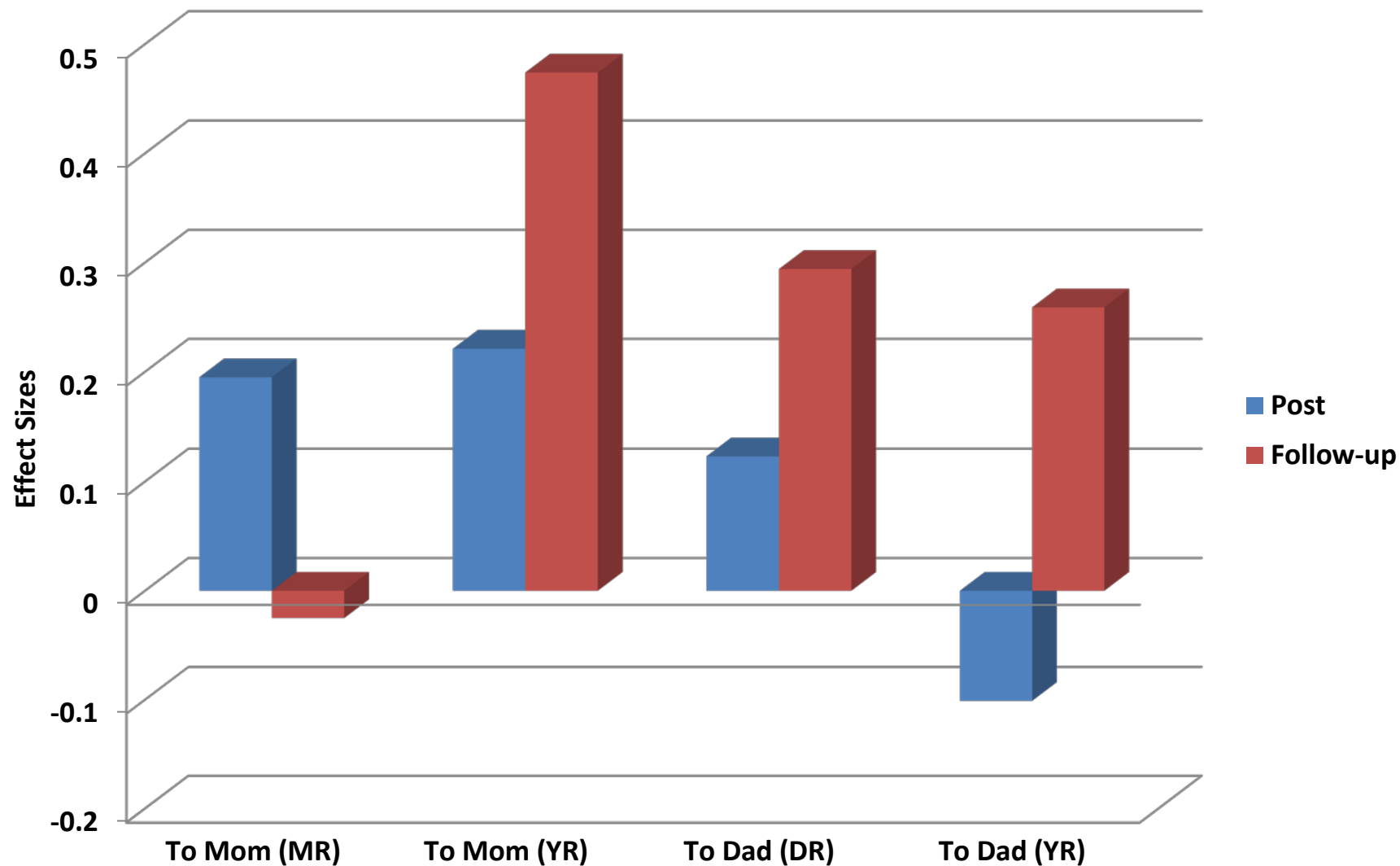
Negative Affective Quality
Mindful SFP vs. Original SFP



Monitoring (Knowledge)



Youth Disclosure



Results Summary

- **Effects on Mindfulness in Parenting**
 - Modest to Strong
 - Total Score
 - Subscales (Father and Youth Report)
- Also improvements in Self-compassion (M & F)

Results Summary

- **Effects on Mindfulness in Parenting**
 - Modest to Strong
 - Nuances in Subscales (Father and Youth Report)
 - Also improvements in Self-compassion (M & F)
- **Effects on Proximal Parenting Processes**
 - Modest to Strong
 - Affective Quality of relationship
 - Monitoring Processes (knowledge, solicitation, disclosure)
 - Also
 - Emotional Awareness, attunement, involvement
 - Guidance (Fathers)

Summary

- Parents respond positively to Mindfulness activities
- Experimental evidence that brief Mindfulness activities can enhance effects (small to medium) of an evidence-based prevention program on:
 - Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting
 - Affect/Relationship Quality
 - Other Important Parenting Processes
- Some **effects strengthen with time** (1 year followup)
- Generally, stronger effects for **YOUTH** report of **PARENT BEHAVIOR**
- Stronger effects for **FATHERS'** behavior (medium – large)

Future Directions

- Intervention effects on Youth Well-Being and Problem Behaviors
- Tests of Mediating Mechanisms:
 - Changes in youth behaviors mediated by Parenting practices
 - Changes in parenting practices mediated by changes in Mindfulness in Parenting
- Longer-term Followup
 - Have we reduced likelihood of problem behavior and substance use onset



More to Come Soon

Thank You

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