

CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS OF THE STRENGTHENING  
FAMILIES PROGRAM FOR YOUTH AGES 10-14  
IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

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Abstract

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The current study explores how facilitators culturally adapt the Strengthening Families Program for youth ages 10-14 in the state of Washington. I partnered with 16-facilitators and conducted semi-structured interviews with them to build knowledge about their experiences implementing the program to diverse populations, particularly to Latino and American Indian families. This study's research questions are (a) what are cultural adaptations facilitators make and (b) what are the reasons facilitators chose to adapt? Grounded systems theory methodology guided my inquiry and interpretation of facilitator narratives. Three main themes emerged as to why facilitators culturally adapt the program: 1) Time and program structure, 2) family compositions and dynamics, and 3) acculturation challenges. Cultural adaptations facilitators discussed include: 1) Added information, 2) skipped/reorganized games and activities, 3) extended discussion time, 4) translation of information, 5) cultural practices, and 6) symbols in program implementations, and 7) facilitator fit. Reasons for adaptation include both cultural and circumstantial needs of families. Implications for community-based prevention programs are discussed and topics are proposed for interagency conversation.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

For the last decade, the evidence-based program Strengthening Families Program for Youth ages 10-14 (SFP 10-14) has been implemented throughout counties in the state of Washington. Dissemination of the program reaches Latino and Native American populations who come from significantly different cultural backgrounds than the samples used in the SFP 10-14 experimental trials. Cultural differences exist, therefore, one may wonder if the meaning and look of quality implementation is similar or different for various people.

Universal family-focused prevention programs are intended for non-clinical populations. They are based on developmental literature and work to translate evidence-based knowledge to populations in an interactive format. Evidence-based programs are those rigorously tested and are shown effective to produce positive outcomes for participants. The Strengthening Families Program was found effective for homogenous European-American populations then disseminated to local communities to be implemented as designed. In summary, universal programs are wide spread and implemented to populations from different backgrounds.

The goal of the current study is to understand better what cultural adaptations facilitators make and for what reasons when they implement the SFP 10-14 to diverse populations in the state of Washington. Narratives from in-person semi-structured interviews show facilitator reasons why they choose to adapt program material or not. This knowledge gives the prevention community an insider's perspective of what works well and what does not when a standardized program is implemented within various contexts. Demographics are constantly changing within areas of the United States. Therefore, cultural adaptations research supports program

sustainability efforts that help implementers streamline, tailor, and modify evidence-based programs to make them more appropriate for different populations.

### *Background and Overview History*

#### *Program Fidelity*

Model or exemplary evidence-based programs are those that have been shown to produce desired outcomes in randomized-clinical trials (RCTs) that are ready to be disseminated in a standardized format. Presumably, standardization should allow for the transfer to real-world circumstances of the program as it was intended to be delivered (i.e., with fidelity). This is important because evidence-based programs have curricula that improve outcomes if administered correctly and efficiently (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000; Hill, Maucione & Hood, 2007; Hogue, Liddle, Singer & Leckron, 2005).

A basic assumption of the fidelity model is that program implementers make their decision to adopt and deliver a program as designed based on a positive evaluation the evidence-based program receives. Fidelity adopters believe that if programs are implemented as designed it will work because it is shown effective. It is understood that program implementers and participants are passive consumers of information and will improve on outcomes if program material, and processes are followed explicitly (Blakely, Mayer, Gottschalk, Schmitt, Davidson, Roitman & Emshoff, 1987; Dusenbury et al., 2003).

Features that promote fidelity are: 1) Adherence – the degree to which program components were delivered as prescribed; 2) Dosage – the frequency and duration of program administration; 3) Quality of program delivery – qualitative aspects of the program delivery (content and affective quality); 4) Participant responsiveness – degree to which participants are engaged, and 5) Program differentiation – distinct theoretical underpinnings of a program

intervention (Dane & Schneider, 1998; Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000; Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco and Hansen, 2003; Hogue et al., 2005). Domitrovich and Greenberg (2000) for example, found that of 34 studies of mental health prevention programs for children and adolescents, most only reported measuring for adherence.

### *Cultural Adaptations of Evidence-Based Prevention Programs*

Researchers know facilitators of prevention programs do not always deliver program material with fidelity because program components may not be appropriate for the participants (Castro, Barrera & Martinez, 2004; Hill, Maucione & Hood, 2007; Kumpfer, Alvarado, Smith & Bellamy, 2002; Schinke, Brounstein & Gardner, 2002; Turner, 2000). Dane and Schneider (1998) say some researchers oppose adaptations because they think program effectiveness would be compromised by any changes. Rogers (2003) suggests that local adopters make changes to technologies and social programs to meet the locals' needs.

Researchers know adaptations are being made to evidence-based prevention program. For example, Schinke, Brounstein and Gardner (2002) found that out of their sample of 44 evidence-based programs over half were implemented with some form of adaptation. However, there is very little research on what content and delivery processes are being modified and why facilitators adapt certain components over others (Castro, Barrera & Martinez, 2004).

In order to understand why facilitators adapt programs, it is essential to understand the challenges within planning, implementing, and disseminating family-based prevention programs to diverse cultures (Turner, 2000). Adaptations of content and delivery processes may occur when material used for one culture is not applicable for another (Castro, Barrera & Martinez, 2004; Kumpfer et al., 2002).

Culture is knowledge and information transmitted from one generation to the next, particularly traditions, values, belief systems, norms, attitudes, rituals, religion, social conformities, and worldviews, that make up characteristics of groups (Castro, Barrera & Martinez, 2004; Ringwalt & Bliss, 2006; Turner, 2000). Facilitators must use appropriate material and procedures that align with the families' culture and at the same time must not compromise the evidence-based content of a program (Moran & Reaman, 2002). When implementing a program over time, providers often acquire a unique understanding of the local needs of the people, including how people will respond to time constraints, community norms, and the availability of resources (Castro, Barrera and Martinez, 2004).

Castro, Barrera and Martinez (2004) believe that a primary reason for cultural adaptations is mismatch effects. A mismatch may include group characteristics, program delivery staff, and/or administration, and community factors that do not line up with the design of the evidence-based program. If participants do not work well with program material, facilitator, or the environment individuals may not buy in to the program, and it may be difficult to retain participants.

Cultural tailoring is the process of developing or modifying prevention program material to characteristics of a certain group (Resnicow, Soler, Braithwaite, Ahluwalia & Butler, 2000; Ringwalt & Bliss, 2006). A recent example of cultural tailoring comes from Unger, Soto and Thomas (2008) who studied the translation of cigarette programs tailored and adapted to American Indian adolescents in the United States. American Indian families and adolescents have a higher prevalence of risk factors, including access to tobacco, stressful life events, low socio-economic status, parental influence, peer influence, and favorable attitudes toward tobacco. Unger, Soto and Thomas (2008) discuss the sacred entity of tobacco, such as tobacco's use for

ceremonial purposes, including curing ailments and facilitating communication among spirits. However, they clarify that sacred tobacco use does not predispose American Indian adolescents to addictive and recreational tobacco use behaviors. Unger, Soto and Thomas (2008) conclude that comprehensive knowledge of sacred tobacco use may be a protective factor for American Indian adolescents, instead of campaigns that label tobacco as “bad”.

### *Tension between Fidelity and Cultural Adaptations*

Blakely et al. (1987) say that in the 1960's and 1970's, great concern went into designing, developing, and testing family-focused programs. Researchers developed new social technologies that would help prevent youth, parents, and family maladjustment. Programs were tested against rigorous qualifications for effectiveness before wide-scale dissemination. Developers believed organizations would consume and disseminate programs because they were shown effective by rigorous evaluation. The fidelity perspective has developed and in the late 1980's, conflicting schools of thought emerged: Pro-fidelity and pro-adaptation/reinvention.

The pro-fidelity camp argued for close adherence to programs. The camp warns against modifying the program in fear that it will become ineffective (Blakely et al., 1987; Dusenbury et al., 2003). Testing program fidelity is important because it solidifies conclusions from outcome results (Dane and Schneider, 1998; Hogue et al., 2005). Additionally, tests of internal validity can tell whether programs work. However, they do not guarantee that treatments and outcomes will be generalizable to another population (Shadish, Cook & Campbell, 2002).

Cultural adaptation researchers argue that material for one culture may not be appropriate for another culture (Castro, Barrera & Martinez, 2004; Kumpfer et al., 2002). Cultural adaptations may occur when evidence-based programs surface and deep structures are a mismatch for a group. Surface structure is the relational components and stylistic features to

programs that help participants feel comfortable within the program environment. In other words, cultural adaptations made on the surface relate programs to participants. For instance, facilitators might add personal stories that are relevant to the participants' lives. Deep structure is the behavior changing content of a program curriculum that might not be the same for families who have different cultural beliefs (Resnicow et al., 2000; Castro, Barrera & Martinez, 2004). For example, program lessons. Dane and Schneider (1998) suggest that program modifications are necessary to accommodate local needs and thereby preserve program effectiveness.

Families within the United State are becoming more diverse over time. For example, different family members might have various levels of acculturation. Acculturation, and the challenges that arise from it, pertain to the tensions between the traditional cultural elements of the country of origin that an individual holds on to and the cultural elements of the new dominant culture (Phinney, 1996). Researchers know various levels of acculturation influence family dynamics at home. Tension occurs between parents' transmission of traditional values and youth perspectives on socially constructed expectancies (Grusec, 1997; Kuczynski, Marshall & Schell, 1997). However, researchers are unfamiliar with how acculturation and various family dynamics influence the delivery of evidence-based programs in real-world implementations.

Elliott and Mihalic (2004) demonstrate another perspective about cultural adaptation within prevention programs. They think the need for cultural adaptations for evidence-based program effectiveness is overstated. Some cultural adaptations to curriculum, such as translation into a different language, are reasonably justified, they said. However, the need for adaptation is more for parents than for youth. They described modern youth culture in the United States as more blended with people of diverse backgrounds living more closely together. With such

variability in the population, they believe prevention programs that are designed around developmental needs will sustain over time.

Another perspective on fidelity and cultural adaptations represents a compromise between the two points of view. The hybrid model, introduced by Martinez and Urbana (2001) may ease the tension between fidelity and cultural adaptations. They propose the mix and integration of evidence-based curriculum with appropriate cultural variables. The goal of the hybrid model is to generate appropriate program adaptations over time (Castro, Barrera & Martinez, 2004).

Program developers now accept that local communities are influential in the program development, dissemination, and local adoption of health programs (Blakely et al., 1987). It is understood that local adopters of program models change/reinvent them to fit their needs (Rogers, 2003). Developers say how core content and form of delivery components of programs can be widely disseminated between groups (Kumpfer, Pinyuchon, Teixeira, de Melo, & Whiteside, 2008). Following program adoption, researchers say evidence-based programs need to be implemented with quality, including fidelity of the curriculum, procedures of core components, and appropriate adaptation to sustain effectiveness (Spoth, 2008). However, I wonder if quality implementation means the same thing for different program implementations delivered to various groups. Researchers know high-adherence to some content and process components found within the SFP 10-14 in Washington may lead to negative outcomes for some minority family members (Owens, 2009). Knowledge about cultural adaptations facilitators make and how specific activities work in real-world implementations to diverse groups needs to be constructed.



### *Cultural Adaptations within Strengthening Families*

The Strengthening Families Program (SFP), a forerunner to SFP 10-14, is an evidence-based program originally developed for families with substance-abusing parents (Molgaard, Kumpfer & Fleming, n.d.). It targets a broader age range, lasts for 14 rather than seven sessions, and has been adapted for a number of different cultural groups within the United States, and internationally (Kumpfer et al., 2008).

Kumpfer et al. (2002) reviewed five research studies conducted in the 1990's, comparing the effectiveness of the original version of the SFP to versions that were culturally adapted for African-Americans (urban and rural), Latinos, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and American Indian families in the United States. Material in the Latino version was in Spanish and focused on respecting family traditions (Kumpfer, Wamberg & Martinez, 1996; Kumpfer et al., 2002). The American Indian tribe – Ojibway – had an eight-session SFP that had more relational content. Even with positive results associated with family and child risk and protective factors, the findings of these studies showed no evidence of decreased substance use among the youth (Kumpfer et al., 2002; Whitbeck & Smith, 2001). Program developers adapted the 14 sessions, and created a 20-session SFP for Asian/Pacific Islanders: 10-sessions dedicated to Hawaiian family values and the other 10 were dedicated to SFP content. Evaluators found that retention decreased from 60% to 52% and had slightly decreased positive results. The original curriculum showed increased parent skills, reduced depression, improved child behavior, and reduced child substance use among Hawaiian families. Therefore, researchers changed the program back to the original 14-sessions (Kameoka, 1996; Kumpfer et al., 2002). After adaptations to the SFP in Detroit, the adapted version when compared to the generic version had a minor increase in outcome results for urban African American drug abusers in treatment. Adaptations included

helping with basic needs (i.e. paying bills) and moved the program location to an African American church that was more culturally appropriate. The completion rate went up from 45% to 85% after adaptations were made. The retention of rural African American mothers in Alabama who abused drugs, improved from 61% to 92% after adapting the stories to be more culturally relevant, and after reducing content to a lower reading level (Aktan, Kumpfer & Turner, 1996; Kumpfer et al., 2002).

Marek, Brock and Sullivan (2006) researched the implementation and outcomes of a culturally adapted version of the original SFP (14 week) in Southwestern Virginia – Appalachia culture. Cultural characteristics they described of Appalachians include desire privacy, slow acceptance of outsiders, and resistance to change. Appalachians do not value traditional education, but value practical knowledge. Suggestions for adaptations came from both participant and facilitator feedback after implementing the SFP for 8 out of the 14 weeks. Adaptations included changing the way facilitators greet children (not touching the child) and changed the way the drug and alcohol material was delivered: 1) make it more basic since 6 to 10 year-olds had no real knowledge about drugs yet, 2) homework was deleted from the program because of low reading skills, and 3) sessions focused more on role-play rather than discussions, reading, and writing. The two groups were compared. One group received adapted SFP curricula and the second group received the original curriculum.

Kumpfer et al. (2002) and Marek, Brock and Sullivan's (2006) findings coincide because participants that received culturally adapted curricula improved retention rates. However, parent and child outcomes did not change that much. They both concluded that core content supplemented with culturally adapted material can increase retention and participation among participants, but may have minimal effect on outcomes. These findings coincide with Blakely et

al.'s (1987) findings that programs with high-fidelity implementers had participants with higher outcome scores than low-fidelity adopters. On the other hand, additions to the program, such as relevant examples seem to improve program effectiveness (Blakely et al., 1987).

Adaptation research has been conducted on the SFP 10-14 in the state of Washington. For instance, Hill, Maucione and Hood (2007) interviewed facilitators around the state. They found types and frequencies of adaptations made to the SFP 10-14 and reasons for them. Some types of adaptations are local to one implementation. However, other adaptations may be generalizable between programs.

Frequent reasons for deviations from fidelity were found when facilitators reported running out of time and the most common adaptations said were to delete the games. Real-world implementations may take longer than strict rigorous trials because populations are more heterogeneous with unique cultures, facilitators have various levels of experience implementing the program, and pretest/posttests may affect the program time (Hill, Maucione & Hood, 2007).

Hill, Maucione and Hood (2007) found that many facilitator reasons for adapting SFP 10-14 material are because it seemed right. Understanding decision-making among program implementers is essential. The purpose of the current study is to continue building knowledge about cultural adaptations within and between various cultural groups that the SFP 10-14 is implemented to in the state of Washington.

### *Background to Study*

The Strengthening Families Program 10-14 (SFP 10-14) is a universal evidence-based prevention program that targets families with 10 to 14 year-old adolescents. Spoth, Redmond and Shin (2001) conducted a randomized-control trial (RCT) of the Iowa SFP 10-14 testing its effectiveness. Public schools were randomly assigned to different treatment groups, SFP 10-14

and Drug Free Years Program, and a control group who received no treatment. The SFP 10-14 was found most effective for delaying the initiation of alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use, decreasing aggression, and increasing family communication and cohesion. Many follow-up studies have also found the SFP 10-14 effective over time (Kumpfer, Molgaard & Spoth, 1996; Spoth, Redmond & Lepper, 1999; Spoth, Redmond, Shin & Azevedo, 2004).

Family recruitment to evidence-based programs happens in various ways. For example, community organizations advertise and school personnel will recommend families to attend the SFP 10-14. The SFP 10-14 is implemented one time per week for two hours each night over a period of seven consecutive weeks. In the first hour, parents and youth are separated into different rooms, and are delivered different lessons. For example, parents learn skills aimed to increase parental warmth and youth learn resistance skills. In the second hour, parents and youth come together for family skills training, i.e. practice communication with interactive activities. The program material is delivered in the form of videos, lectures, activities, discussion, and role-plays. Homework is also given for families to take home and practice, and is revisited at the beginning of the next week's session.

The sample used in the RCT was a homogeneous group of European-American, middle-class, Protestant, rural families (Kumpfer, Wamberg & Martinez, 1996; Spoth, Redmond & Shin, 2001). This poses a problem of external validity, since the program on a large scale is implemented to a much broader spectrum of the population. In 2000, the SFP 10-14 was adopted and disseminated within the state of Washington by Washington State University (WSU) Extension faculty (Hill, Maucione & Hood, 2007).

In the state of Washington, the program is delivered to diverse populations, including Latino and American Indian families (25% and 6%, respectively). An adapted version of the SFP

10-14 English version is offered in the Spanish language, and bilingual Spanish-English implementations exist within Washington. Normally, in a bilingual Spanish-English version parents are delivered the Spanish version, and the youth are delivered the English version in their session.

### *The Current Study*

The purpose of this study is to help prevention program researchers, developers, implementers, program trainers, and other stakeholders understand facilitator experiences implementing the SFP 10-14 within and between cultural and ethnic groups in the state of Washington. Identifying and understanding alterations made to the content of the SFP 10-14 curriculum, and program modes of delivery will help the prevention community understand what is appropriate and what is not for program implementations to diverse populations. To research cultural adaptations, I asked facilitators of the SFP 10-14 questions about what they have adapted and if adaptations were made for cultural reasons.

It is important to study facilitators because they are delivery agents of program material. Understanding areas where facilitators do (or do not) adapt to make the program work is important for researchers who evaluate program effectiveness. Participants are actively engaged in the process of program delivery as well.

Many prevention programs implemented in the United States are not scientifically tested. Various health workers implement and translate research into practice. Therefore, researcher-community engagement is an important process (Spath, 2008; Woolf, 2008). Translational research helps developers understand the appropriateness of information for different groups and environments to make public interest messages more effective in real-world application (Spath, 2008).

The translation of research to practice and the effects of evidence-based principles in real-world settings need to be studied (e.g. implementation, or quality improvement research) (Woolf, 2008). Evidence-based programs will remain sustained overtime and have a wider-range public health impact through health worker-researcher partnership. This partnership creates a network for agencies to work together in population-based delivery systems for evidence-based programs. Interagency response to public health concerns in theory should have greater impact (Spoth, 2008).

The current study's goal was to learn if the SFP 10-14 meets the needs within and between groups in Washington. Therefore, to search for answers to my research questions I conducted interviews with facilitators in counties throughout the state. Interviews were conducted in person at a local location convenient for facilitators: WSU Extension office, place of work, home, or church.

The research questions for the current study were based on pilot interviews conducted by two WSU Extension faculty members. They interviewed five facilitators who implement the program to American Indian and Latino populations. The current study's research questions were: 1) What are the cultural adaptations facilitators make and 2) what are the cultural reasons facilitators choose to adapt? Researchers know different cultures have diverse belief systems, values, traditions, norms, attitudes, and languages that may affect participant response to standardized program content (Turner, 2000). However, there has been little research in the prevention field on how to adapt program material to meet local needs.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Method

I used grounded systems theory methodology to learn about facilitator experiences from their perspective, in a systematic, and a meaningful way. I had a back and forth interplay between the raw data, research questions, and empirical literature. Decisions I made throughout my research process followed a pragmatic approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The iterative process is a delicate balancing act between the current study's research questions and my own sensitivity to the information given by project collaborators during the research process. Throughout data collection and analysis, I asked questions framed around the overarching research questions, followed up with project collaborators to clarify meaning within the raw data, contacted new project collaborators, and compared themes within and between responses (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

This study's interview process started with my main research questions and one theoretical lead (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The theoretical lead was from Owens (2009), who ran a component analysis of content and process in the delivery of SFP 10-14 in Washington. He found relationships between minority status, adherence to fidelity, and outcomes indicating unique occurrences are taking place around a few core components of the SFP 10-14 for minority parents when compared to European-American parents. For example, Owens (2009) found that high adherence to some components of the curriculum, was associated with poorer outcomes for parents of minority status only, but strict adherence to other components was associated with more positive outcomes for parents of minority status. During interviews I asked questions regarding specific activities associated with Owens' (2009) findings when I felt it was appropriate. For example, in interviews where collaborators were quieter, I would give a specific

instance in the program with the goal of generating conversation (e.g. rule-making activities, five-minute chores, “I feel” statements).

### *Interviews*

The Universities Internal Review Board approved the current study with exempt status. The counties I selected for interviews in Washington were based on: 1) geographic location and 2) diversity among ethnic groups the SFP 10-14 was implemented to. Corbin and Strauss (2008) stress the need to use “gatekeepers”, that are people who have knowledge and status, in order to identify participants/collaborators for qualitative research. Site coordinators served as my gatekeepers. They provided me access to knowledgeable and qualified facilitators with experience implementing the program. Each coordinator had different suggestions about how to arrange and conduct individual and group interviews; and what type and amount of gift cards I should give facilitators for their time and participation in the study. Therefore, the process for each county and specific interview was different.

I collected data over a four-month period and conducted 12 in-person semi-structured interviews with individual facilitators, or in three cases with groups of facilitators. The current study has a total of 16 project collaborators from six different counties (Spokane, Cowlitz, Whitman, Whatcom, Skagit, and Chelan/Douglas). I developed a form to help me describe and introduce the current study, and the reason for the interview. I went through conditions of the interview, told collaborators they did not have to answer any questions they did not want to, and I answered any questions they had before I turned the voice recorder on. See appendix A for the interview notes I developed and had in front of me as I conducted semi-structured interviews. Interviews were flexible to collaborator responses, so each interview experience was different.



At the end of the interview I gave each project collaborator a gift card and thanked them for their collaboration in this project.

### *Project Collaborators*

Table 1 introduces this study's sample of project collaborators who are facilitators that implement the SFP 10-14 to diverse populations within the state of Washington. Collaborator names have been changed to conceal their identity. In Table 1 they are organized in the order I interviewed them, and facilitators who were involved in a focus group have identification numbers along with interview number.

Facilitators I interviewed hold various occupations within the health services and some include: Youth and family advocates, work with gang response, youth minister at a Catholic church, counselor, retired teacher, WSU Extension faculty, AmeriCorps worker, county director of substance abuse prevention programming, director of a coalition, and directors of a cultural-community center.

My collaborators used Hispanic/Latino/Mexican-American, American Indian/Native American, and Caucasian/White interchangeably throughout interviews to describe themselves, or someone else's ethnicity. Therefore, I will describe as my facilitators do throughout my paper. My project collaborators consist of 11 females and five male facilitators. Five females were European-American, three were Mexican-American, two were American Indian, and one was "half African-American and one-eighth Cherokee". Two men were European-American, two were Mexican-American, and one was American Indian.

Throughout interviews it became clear that facilitators have various levels of experience with the program. "Trainer/coordinator/facilitator" is used to represent facilitators who have many roles. These collaborators train other facilitators, coordinate programs within their own

county, and have often facilitated themselves. A “coordinator/facilitator” is someone that coordinates individual programs within counties and has facilitated. A “new coordinator/facilitator” represents a facilitator whose county recently adopted the program over the last few years and is working to keep it going. “A long time facilitator” is someone who has implemented for a long time, potentially since program adoption at the state level in the year 2000.

“Facilitator” represents someone who has experience in many facets of facilitation. They are trained and have implemented the program. Facilitators described that they have implemented various sessions: All sessions, parent-family, and youth-family. Facilitators responded to various facets of facilitation not just within the sessions they have implemented.

“Implemented pilot Spanish program” represents a facilitator who co-facilitated the Spanish version with another facilitator. This facilitator has more specific comments to one implementation, verses others whose answers might cross over multiple programs they have experienced implementing.

“Facilitator who has not facilitated in a while”, represents a facilitator who has not implemented the SFP 10-14 in a couple years, i.e. two years. The answers provided by the facilitator who has not implemented in a couple years seem more general to the experience as a whole than working with a specific populations.

“Spanish version” is shown for facilitators who directly implement the Spanish version, and who speak Spanish. A star by facilitators’ name represents facilitators who have held implementations for American Indian groups. These specifications do not include coordinators because coordinator responses are interpreted more generally across families they implement to and not specific to one cultural group, unless designated within interviews, that is who they are

talking about. Most coordinator knowledge and information about these implementations and groups is based on what they have heard from the facilitator who directly implements the program to Latino and American Indian families.

I am also a collaborator, interactive agent, and voice in this project. Therefore, my demographic data needs to be considered. I am a European-American female graduate student, in her mid 20's, born and raised in Longview, Washington, a town in Cowlitz County.

### *Data Analysis*

I wrote memos to document any potential leads I identified. It was a strategy that helped me curtail my own biases throughout my project, reflect on interviews, document descriptions about them, and compare responses from project collaborators. I constantly checked the effectiveness of my questioning, interview style, and techniques I used to sort, organize, and interpret data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Undergraduate research assistants and I accurately transcribed interviews from voice recordings. Additionally, I listened to voice recordings, took notes, edited, and paid attention to collaborators responses to research questions throughout this process. Once an interview was transcribed, I integrated the interviews into an iterative reading cycle where an undergraduate research assistant and I read, discussed, and coded themes that we identified in the transcribed material.

During the data collection and analysis process, I developed a conceptual model (see figure 1) and coding scheme based on responses in the raw data, and my research questions. I identified themes related to programming needs, particularly for cultural reasons and the cultural adaptations that satisfied those needs. Two more main elements emerged during model construction: Program challenges and the strategies facilitators used to address those challenges.

Facilitators discussed many problems and conditions that influenced program needs. To counter problems, facilitators discussed strategies and solutions to remediate problems. I used this scheme to help me extract information from transcripts, sort, organize, sequence, and explore the range of dimensions, properties, and characteristics of themes (see appendix B).

I considered reasons for adaptations as cultural if they met the criteria of what facilitators and I established within interviews, that changes made were because of facilitator or family beliefs, values, practices, norms, traditions, or language. I also considered reasons for adaptations as cultural if they fit within the conceptual model and helped explain a relationship between program condition, facilitator strategy, and cultural adaptation.

My research questions and coding scheme guided me through a sorting process of my raw interview data. I first extracted any thoughts pertinent to my research questions and paraphrased ideas. In addition, I selected relevant quotes that summed up concepts regarding common and uncommon facilitator experiences, cultural adaptations, and reasons for them. Newly emerged concepts were constantly compared and contrasted with raw data and previous themes, and I sorted until constructs made sense. Additionally, I modeled patterns and corresponded with my project collaborators for clarification as needed (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser, 1965).

## CHAPTER THREE

### Results

In the following two sections I describe the major themes that emerged from facilitator narratives. I have organized themes within a framework guided by my research questions: 1) cultural reasons *why* facilitators adapt and 2) *how* facilitators culturally adapt programs.

#### *Cultural Reasons for Program Adaptations*

First, I describe the main cultural reasons why facilitators made adaptations to programs including *time and program structure, family composition and dynamics, and acculturation challenges*. Following reasons for cultural adaptations, I describe how facilitators culturally adapt the SFP 10-14.

#### *Time and Program Structure*

Time surfaced as a multifaceted concept and its characteristics present challenges that facilitators have to balance. The SFP is constructed with the mainstream linear concept of time – things start at a certain time, each activity has a certain time allotted to it, and each session is designed to last two hours. Facilitators I spoke with felt rushed at moments and were frustrated with time components of the program. Several facilitators who implement to Hispanic and Native American groups expressed that, during discussion moments, there is not enough time for groups to discuss information and messages before the DVD's countdown runs out, and they have to move on.

Latino and American Indian families may not feel the same pressure to start “on time”. Many families show up late to programs. Facilitators said that programs run out of time because late arrivals challenge the program schedule. Late start times often lead to program tension.

Facilitators expressed that they felt hurried and families seemed irritated by the time and program structure.

Malinda is American Indian and asked me if I knew what “Indian time” was. I had heard a similar phrase before. However, I asked her to explain what she meant. Malinda expressed that if one has to be somewhere by 6 p.m. then people really arrive at 6:30 or 7 p.m. She stated that, “you are already running late from the beginning with Native American families”. Facilitators who implement the Spanish version also said Latino families arrive late. Transportation challenges is a wide spread issue for many families. Jane said that programs might work better on weekends for Latino families. Ben, Julie, and Jane discussed that they experienced how a Spanish pilot program can fall apart because too few families show up.

People hold various customs, beliefs, and meanings about time. Viola compared Caucasians/Whites to “digital clocks” that are wired to think of time like it will never come back. She said they have busy lifestyles. Viola described Native Americans thinking of time as “cyclical and it comes around again”. They believe everyone has a voice and deserves time to speak during the program. Native Americans and Latino families’ value honoring one another by allowing everyone time to speak if they want to.

Facilitators said it was rare for American Indians and Latino families to respond and give answers instantly within the discussion time. American Indian parents are often more quiet, Viola explained, so when they do talk it is rare and “you don’t want to pull them back in from discussion”. Nobody likes to be cut off when they are talking. As Patulla said, “Only having two minutes to talk sometimes is not enough for parents to open up. Then you’re watching the clock and say well we got to stop because we got to go to the next part”. Patulla thinks parents tend to shut off: “Why, I’m sort of sharing myself with you, then you cut me off because okay we have

to stay on the curriculum, so I'm just going to sit here the rest of the night and not say anything". Viola and Patulla describe that American Indian parents are more private they needed more time to warm up and feel comfortable enough to share and participate in programs.

Facilitators viewed discussion time as essential and as sensitive periods within parent sessions. They felt that parent conversations often went too long and put them in difficult positions. As Julio expressed: "It's really hard for me to stop somebody in the middle because the tape's going to, you know, run out, the message is going to start to play, so it's giving you a warning and it's really hard for me". Facilitators agreed parents often talked into the next video segment. Julio said, "it is a tough position for facilitators who do not want to cut them off". Facilitators felt that some parents seem unfamiliar with the material presented to them and need more explanation and time to talk about the material.

Many reasons for cultural adaptations revolve around the program process. Patulla explained that it is not the program material that is inappropriate, but sometimes it is "the way" the program is packaged and delivered. It is the "white man's book", the idea of learning from a book, she said. In Native American history, boarding schools tried to change the "Indian" by teaching them only English, cooking, and sewing, she said. Patulla stated that the youth were not taught valuable book smarts back then. Here is how she reflected on the first time she saw the curriculum:

I mean when I first seen this curriculum when I first took the training. Like, man I don't want to do this. Then when I start looking at the curriculum and put new ideas in it, this is how we can kind of change it to adjust to our families then I thought it was really cool, but I think a lot of parents when they come walking in they see this [refers to the SFP 10-14 curriculum on the table] sitting where Malinda has her stuff all set up, the video stuff all set up, [and parents think] oh we're going to get preached at again.

The standardized format, curriculum book and DVD set, was unsettling for some families at first. For many Latinos, the program was a new experience—they had never experienced a format like this before, Julio explained. In summary, facilitators who implement to Latino and American Indian families said the program time period is “too short” for families. “Just as they are getting it, it is over”, Xavier said.

### *Family Composition and Dynamics*

Facilitators in Washington deliver the SFP 10-14 to various family compositions beyond Caucasian two-parent nuclear family systems. Facilitators said that they have implemented to European-American, American Indian, Latin American, Mexican-American, African American, Russian, Asian, and multiethnic family members. They said they have delivered the program to family members who come from a low-income background, have low-educational experience or possibly illiterate, as well as those with mental health issues, alcohol and other drug use problems. Facilitators reported that gang members and teen parents attend programs, as do youth with fetal alcohol syndromes, behavioral issues, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD). Family structures vary. Facilitators have worked with single parent families, grandparents raising kids, blended families, gays, lesbians, multiple children, and relatives that attend programs. As Viola said, “We get a lot of different permutations of what is family”.

Although the program recommends a parent to child ratio of one-to-one, several family members often come to the program. This is especially true for American Indian and Latino families. Malinda said, “In Native American history... it didn’t just take the parents to raise the child, it took the tribe to raise the child”. Dawn said that values and mindsets, different than what the curriculum recommends, as well as family circumstances, influence attendance. Some people believe that all family members should be involved in the program: A “whole family



experience”. Circumstantial factors explain that many family members attend because caregivers cannot leave other children at home alone, so they bring them. Malinda discussed how she ran another program – Second Step—for younger children at the same time as the SFP 10-14. However, parents who participated in the SFP 10-14 implementation wanted the whole family together in the family session of the SFP 10-14, so family sessions were large.

Older siblings often challenge facilitators. Ben said that some older youth who participate in programs think the information is stupid or silly. He felt that they are uninformed as to why they were there with younger kids and some end up disrupting the program. In contrast, Julie said that older Hispanic youth who attend with younger siblings are not a problem because they are accustomed to helping out with younger siblings at home.

Various family compositions pose challenges for some program activities. Several facilitators said that writing letters to their children is an important activity for parents. However, writing letters is often difficult for families with multiple attending family members. Albert and Ben explained that, when parents bring several children with them to the program, it is essential that facilitators allot enough time for parents to read their letters to all their youth.

Program effectiveness may be compromised, as Jane said, if one parent implements new strategies and the other does not. Xavier and Julio expressed that Latino men often think they are the head of the household and the house and family must work their way. In many Hispanic homes men expect women to handle all the responsibilities of taking care of the children and being involved in the children’s schooling and other extracurricular programs and activities. Wives are expected to acquire information from meetings and bring it back to their husbands. Facilitators who implement the program to Latino populations said that program messages challenge “machismo” attitudes. Julio said some immigrant families from Mexico come to the

SFP 10-14 with cultural beliefs and practices similar to ways of the “old country”. Macho attitudes make it difficult for facilitators to discuss program information with a group, he said. However, Monica said that over time Hispanic women feel stronger, want their husbands to be more involved in their children’s schooling and programs, and stress that fathers need to participate in the SFP 10-14 programs, and acquire its information.

Facilitators described Latino and Native American parents as more culturally conservative (i.e. they stay within their ethnic and cultural group) than their children. Children are more adaptive and change to reflect multicultural group identities. Adolescence is a period where youth explore their self-identity. Latino and Native American adolescents also navigate through dynamic processes of exploring their cultural and ethnic identity. Several youth including American Indian youth, as Dawn pointed out, code shift back and forth, transforming to fit different cultural and social rules in the diverse contexts that make up their daily lives. Julio said that Hispanic youth often live in three different cultures. When they are with their peers in school they act and dress in ways that make their peers accept them. At home they act and dress in ways their parents want them to. Finally, Julio said that in church, out in the community, and in the larger society as a whole, youth feel they have to prescribe to a different code.

### *Acculturation Challenges*

The effects of acculturation on families posed challenges for facilitators. Facilitators described different levels of acculturation between parents and children. They observed problems with communication because of parents’ “old” and youths’ “new” ways of living. For example, tension between traditional American Indian parents and their American Indian children, and first-generation Latino parents and their second, third, or fourth generation children. Facilitators said that youth are more adjusted to the modern U.S. culture than their parents.

Noel and Monica stated that Hispanic youth are sometimes more “sophisticated” than their parents. For example, Julie said that many immigrant parents lack the skills and education to understand and monitor the use of technology by their children. Julie said that with the advancements in technology today many parents are more scared and increasingly unfamiliar with the dangers of it, such as sexting. Sexting is when people send sexually explicit photos electronically between cellular phones. Additionally, while parents may hold onto traditional disciplinary practices, children have also learned how to use the criminal justice system to their advantage, or to “push back” as Julio said. Noel thinks Hispanic parents need to adapt to be successful with their children. Monica, Julie, Noel, Xavier, and Julio said that Hispanic parents are afraid that their children will call the police on them and many Hispanic parents have been charged with child abuse.

Xavier said parent-child communication is limited within Hispanic households, “just the daily functions”, he said. Julio believed parents are still connected to the “ways” of Mexico: “Parents go to all the Spanish stuff where people speak Spanish, so they do not have to learn English” (e.g. Mexican restaurants and Catholic Mass in Spanish). Noel said that Hispanic youth are forgetting the Spanish language they used to know. Parents also appear to be uninformed about the general rules of American society (e.g. all children attend school) and many Hispanic parents do not understand the risks that youth in the United States face. American Indian parents also struggle with their children becoming increasingly acculturated. Viola said that American Indian parents are worried that their youth will lose their traditional culture. Smokey stated that languages in some tribes are lost among younger generations and tribal elders want, and try to bring it back. Younger American Indians are increasingly moving into urban settings, and are

perceived as an “Urban Indian” which Patulla explained as someone who has abandoned his or her cultural traditions.

Julio mentioned that Latino youth in the United States now “push back” against their parents. He has heard youth tell their parents, “we’re not in Mexico anymore”. Several facilitators commented that some Hispanic youth will help their parents translate English to Spanish, however Monica expressed that some children display an attitude like, “Oh, my parents don’t understand, they don’t know, or they don’t read English”. Facilitators said that there are power struggles between parents and youth within the SFP 10-14. While parents learn new ways to gain control of their children, youth sometimes resist. However, as Julio continued, youth in the program also learn how not to be so resentful towards their parents. Therefore, facilitators need to understand the differences in acculturation between parents and children and how such differences might impact each generation’s points of view. As Julio said, facilitators will then be able to efficiently deliver program activities to meet the needs of each member of the family.

### *Cultural Adaptations*

*Cultural adaptations*, as I define them, are made by facilitators to accommodate, change, and make modifications to program content and processes because of differences between participants belief systems, values, language, social norms, traditions, and attitudes in relation to program material. Dawn described culture as the community, organization, and worldview of a group. Lorna explained that culture is knowledge passed down from generation to generation; it is the beliefs, practices, and values of society, or a group of people. Lorna added that some families in the state of Washington have “backwoods” cultures and value privacy. Sarah said “academic” cultures are accustomed to sitting in classroom formats. Xavier said he works in “gang response” and said that there is a “drug culture”. Smokey stated that culture means

knowing traditions like “being able to talk Indian”. However, some people think that their “culture is a handicap”, Patulla expressed. Malinda said that people from Indian reservations are moving into towns and losing traditions. Julio said similar sentiments, describing the dynamic nature of culture and family. He mentioned that cultures look different because they are constantly changing: The effects acculturation has on Latino and American Indian households. Dawn explained that the purpose of making adaptations to the program is to attempt to make the program work better for the people you are working with. Lorna described program adaptations as the adjustment to what is happening in the program. Violet described adaptations as “making the kernel fit with the group”. Facilitators feel they need to make the “kernel fit” with certain groups because the message is unfit as it stands alone.

Facilitators made cultural adaptations in response to their perception of program participants’ needs and their own needs. The cultural adaptations facilitators made were tied to the reasons for cultural adaptations—*time and program structure, family composition and dynamics, and acculturation challenges*. Cultural adaptations facilitators reported are: 1) *adding information*, 2) *skipping/reorganizing components*, 3) *extending discussion times*, 4) *translation of information*, 5) *including cultural practices*, and 6) *symbols in program implementations*, and 7) the concept, *facilitator fit*, captured culturally adaptive qualities of facilitators who bestow resources that deliver universal evidence-based programs better for program participants.

#### *Time and Program Structure*

Facilitators felt that the program time often goes too long when they add additional elements. Therefore, some facilitators choose to skip or reorganize activities to make up for lost time. The components facilitators skip most often are games. Ben explained that facilitators may

move up an activity, push back a game, do the game at the end if there is time, and/or send the activity home to accommodate for family needs (e.g. multiple children).

Facilitators themselves hold different beliefs about program time and their beliefs were expressed in their style of timekeeping. Albert is a trainer/coordinator/facilitator who believes it is important to stick to the time and program structure although, if facilitators need to make adaptations Albert tells them to “keep it simple”. Many other facilitators agreed with the idea of keeping adaptations simple. Albert stated that most parents understand the program schedule and time frame. “They understand the video countdown”, he said. He thought that families tend to look to the facilitator to keep things going. Albert expressed that he refers back to the ground rules poster to reel parents back in if the group needs to move on, but there is cross talk amongst parents. Ben said that he reminds families that he has a “commitment” to them to be done by 8 p.m. Albert thought parents are fine with the schedule, especially if you go over the procedure the first night in the introduction. He felt it important to “stick with the rules, rituals, and routines you set on the first night”.

Many facilitators said they change characteristics of the program to accommodate different cultural beliefs about time and participants needs. Violet displayed a flexible attitude. According to “Indian Time”, SFP 10-14 would not start at the start time. Violet said to “roll with it because it’s better they get 1 ½ hours of the program than nothing. So, make sure to focus and stress what is important”. Sarah said that making changes to the program is a hard call to make and depends on the facilitator’s style. Some facilitators may want to keep moving through the material, and some may be more laid back.

Extending discussion time was a common cultural adaptation among Latino and American Indian implementations. Facilitators who implement to these populations described

similar reasons for extending discussions: They needed more time to explain the new and unfamiliar information, and to allow for the parents to speak and converse with one another. Facilitators seemed frustrated in their responses to questions I asked about the time involved in the discussion sections. Facilitators felt that some Latino and Native American parents are hesitant to open up at first in the allotted discussion time of the program. Facilitators said that parents' need to feel like they can trust facilitators and other parents before they share their responses to discussion prompts.

Translation of information means that facilitators' inserted information to better relate program material to participants. In the Spanish version, the program DVDs and manual did not work smoothly for populations from Mexican descent. Julio said that the language is from South, or Central America and facilitators and parents are Mexican American. All facilitators who implement the Spanish version seemed confused when they discussed the language of the DVD and the manual, and Julie said the Spanish version takes more time. Julio agreed and said the "words" in the DVD and manual can be confusing for the families, himself, and even his wife. He had to reference the English version to make sense of the Spanish. Facilitators said they have to give more explanation to parents about what the DVDs and lessons mean. As Julio commented, "The parents know it was a script, but it wasn't their script at home. When I talk to my parents after the video, you know they like kind of, they almost had this dumbfounded look on themselves, like what? So you have to talk to them". The way the actors speak in the Spanish version of the DVD is different than the way Mexicans speak in their daily lives. Xavier said the DVD's are "too soft". He stated that he sometimes adapts his voice and talks sternly, so Hispanic parents can better identify. Interestingly, he said that Hispanic parents essentially understand the

DVD storylines because they resemble Spanish Soap Opera's that Hispanic parents watch on television, although the messages do not relate to their home life.

### *Family Composition and Dynamics*

Facilitators made cultural adaptations to accommodate for various family compositions and dynamics. Sometimes big families show up to program implementations. Facilitators felt that discussion sections need more flexibility and allow more opportunities for parents to speak within large groups. Many children of different ages often attend the program. Julie suggested, and Lorna agreed, that a productive approach is to make older children group helpers and provide them with leadership roles during the youth session. Xavier said that one older youth attended their pilot Spanish program. She preferred to sit in the parent session. Xavier thought she got something out of learning from the parent perspective.

Some activities are more sensitive for particular family compositions and dynamics. For example, Albert said he was conducting the family tree activity where the youth's parents were divorced. The youth wanted to include their dad on the tree, but his mom and her new boyfriend were constructing the tree with the child and did not want to add the youth's dad to the tree. Albert said he now inserts information in the parent session about how parents (or the principle caregivers) need to be willing to include all of the family members that youth want on their trees. Albert and Ben mentioned that family trees adapt to any shape and style that families want. Lorna and Violet said that various family compositions attend the program; "family is family, but looks different". Trees can get "creative" and can be big, or small, Viola said.

Many facilitators felt that rule-making lessons are more difficult for some families, particularly Latino families. Some parents want to heap the chores on their children, Lorna said. Xavier stated that the SFP "love-and-limits" messaging about rule making and discipline



challenge some Latino parent's cultural beliefs, values, and norms. He said some parents believe a broken rule is a broken rule and youth should pay for the indiscretion. Some parents are not used to the idea of small five-minute chores, so more discussion is required. They said they could not move onto the next lesson until discussions are over and parents have finished talking, yet facilitators felt they had to explain lessons further.

Facilitators who implement the Spanish version also said that a lot of Latino parents have been involved with criminal justice system. Collectively, facilitators felt responsible to tell parents that the program environment is a safe place to share, but that they should be careful not to say things that would incriminate themselves. Facilitators make sure to explain to parents what unacceptable parenting behaviors are and tell families that, "as facilitators", they have to report domestic violence and child maltreatment to authorities. They give extra information to protect them from saying something they do not know will get them in trouble. Xavier explains to parents that they can speak differently, "Hey, I have a friend who whacks their kids".

Facilitators said they add examples and stories from their own experiences to help build trust with participants and to better relate program material to families' lives. Xavier explained that relational stories make parents feel comfortable enough to begin to converse with facilitators. Monica mentioned that she often uses herself as an example during program discussions. Her mom was a cannery worker and her dad was a farm worker. She is a first-generation Mexican-American on her dad's side, and second generation Mexican-American on her mom's side. She said she uses examples from her life to better relate program material to the families she facilitates to, including stories of her growing up as well as her current experiences as a single parent with two kids. Lorna and Jane also tried to relate to parents by stressing that they too are parents: "I am a parent too, not just a facilitator up here".

The concepts and scenarios in some lessons are “foreign”, Xavier said, and do not relate to the way Mexican-American families live. He mentioned that parents would not understand video messages. Therefore, he often needed to “bring the message home” for the families. For instance, he will point out that youth in the video do not necessarily “act those ways” in reality. Facilitators described “I feel” statements as a challenging activity for slow to warm up groups because they were foreign concepts to their life and a challenging topic to discuss on the second night of the program. Viola said, “It is difficult for some families to bring up feelings”. Facilitators need to earn and build trust with families. Several facilitators suggested that “I feel” statements come too early in the program, participants think they are silly, and facilitators mentioned the activity should be later on.

Facilitators have found ways to adapt activities to make them more culturally relevant, sensitive, and appropriate for families. Julio recommended that Spanish programs should improve their games to be more culturally relevant – for example, there should be more things that are “inviting” to Hispanic families, such as piñatas. Dawn described how blindfolding some family members might be inappropriate because of terrible historical memories. Viola expressed that she cuts the game Timbuktu because it is too silly for American Indian families and instead inserts other games.

Viola said she inserted a different game that she learned from a nature program. Everyone sits in a circle and each person rubs their hands together to make noises. As she explained, “Start by taking your hands and make a little [noise], rubs like this”. She started rubbing her hands to make noise. “I start and the person to the right copies what I do, and you copy that person next to you. A rule is that you don’t copy what the leader does; you only copy the person to the right of you. So the leader starts like this and pretty soon everyone is going like

this rubbing their hands together”. Viola rubbed her hands together, snapping, clapping, and slapping her thighs. She continued to rub her hands together making snapping and clapping sounds. “It is a rain storm”, Viola exclaimed. She continued to rub her hands together and the sounds went from soft to loud as she talked, then the sound lessened creating a softer and quieter mood again. Viola explained that, “you can start by just hearing the breeze rustle, then little pitter patters and its getting bigger rain and then it’s raining really hard, and then it starts breaking up again, and then just the breeze blows”. She said she uses this game in sessions, for instance during “I feel” statements, to help parents better identify with their feelings.

Malinda and Viola said that saying a prayer before the program is essential when implementing to Native American families. Malinda said that on the first night of the program an elder often comes to “start the program off right”. She mentioned that they also “add a drummer, someone to sing, make fry bread, talk about huckleberry picking, hunting and fishing”. She said that these traditional activities are needed in programs that are delivered to Native American families. Malinda mentioned that she also tries to show families cultural traditions that they may not have experienced before.

Gift giving holds cultural value and significance among American Indian populations, and some facilitators and families’ incorporate gifts into implementations. Gift giving is the key feature of potlatches in the Pacific Northwest. Dawn said that potlatches are a cultural tradition of honoring people and sharing wealth. If someone has gone through a journey, she said, then as a group “we honor that person”. She mentioned that an American Indian group they once worked with gave elaborate gifts once the SFP 10-14 was over. The youth excitement over gifts made the last night challenging. Violet said that children saw nice wrapped gifts and nearly lost it with excitement. However they had to wait until the end of the session to open gifts. Furthermore, the

facilitators did not know about the gifts ahead of time to plan for it. Therefore, they had to juggle a tight schedule (e.g. a panel of high school kids and pre-post tests) with gifts and the graduation ceremony as well. As Malinda mentioned, “What I’ve been taught, is when you have a family that completes something, we don’t only give them certificates, we get them gifts and we feed them a traditional meal. We also get drummers to come in and talk to the families”. Patulla added stating that, “with Native American families, as long as somebody gives you something, it doesn’t have to be expensive or, as long as they know it came from your heart”. Malinda also explained that gift giving builds a community. She mentioned that, “People see you in the community and remember nice things”.

Facilitators have found ways to include culturally relevant symbols in program implementations. Many activities are adaptable and facilitators have learned how to make them relevant to families of different cultural backgrounds. For example, Dawn said that in implementations to American Indian families, facilitators often use nets instead of fishing poles for the fishing game in the youth session because nets are more traditional.

Many facilitators who implement to American Indian families changed the family shield to a medicine wheel. Patulla described the medicine wheel as having symbols all tribes’ honor and value: “Four directions with four colors, black, white, red, and yellow and eagle feathers”. The medicine wheel is a symbolic representation of Pacific Northwest Indian tribes. It represents who someone is and the spiritual energy of that person. The wheel is a protective symbol that tribal members will dance with at ceremonies (Brady, 1995). Within the context of the SFP, the meaning behind the family shield activity is for families to learn who they are and what they value together as a family. The meaning is similar to medicine wheels. Facilitators change the

structure of the shield to a medicine wheel and families build medicine wheels to represent who they are and what they value.

### *Acculturation Challenges*

Facilitators felt that they need to give more information to families who have acculturation challenges within their homes. Julie said that, “Parents from Mexico feel powerless because they don’t know the rules”, and both Julie and Monica mentioned that they add information about the rules of American society to the program material. They explain to parents that not only do youth need to go to school but they need to go to school fed. Julie said she includes information about topics she thought Latino parents might not be aware of the risks. As Monica explained, “Over time we try to help parents with more information and they are slowly getting a clue about what youth are up to”.

### *Facilitator Fit*

Facilitator fit emphasizes that programs need facilitators who understand, reflect, and resemble the program participants they work with. Fit is represented by facilitator experience and understanding families’ backgrounds. Facilitators with similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds as program participants are valuable to community-based program implementations because facilitators are better able to identify, understand struggles, and speak the language of the families that attend programs. Similar backgrounds and understandings of the world help facilitators relate programs messages to participants.

Julio was born in Mexico City, Mexico, and moved to San Diego, California at age five. He said that when he was growing up he felt like he did not fit into one culture or the other. It was not until he was 18-19 years old that he was able to bridge cultures. Xavier grew up in East Los Angeles, California and shared with me what it was like growing up around gangs. He tells

how small his world was: Not able to go outside his neighborhood. Julie is third generation Mexican and grew up in San Diego, California. However, she has now lived in Longview, Washington, for many years and calls it her home. Noel said it is appropriate for her to implement to Hispanics because she is Hispanic. Julio described Mexican migrant populations that have moved up to the Pacific Northwest from California. They move a lot and the kids have real “low self-esteem”, he said. Julio explained how he is thinking in the future about how he can help youth in his area.

Malinda, Patulla, and Smokey said it was beneficial that they implemented the program to American Indian families. It is beneficial because they are American Indians and they understand their struggles, they said. I am not saying my project collaborators themselves have had alcohol problems, but they said they understand the culture of “drug and alcohol problems” of American Indians because they too are American Indian. Some children with fetal alcohol syndrome attend programs. Malinda said they often “structure information around the message towards drugs and alcohol” because it is a reality within some families.

Some facilitators do not realize how some participants might feel about the program. For example, Albert said that Native American families are familiar to doing things the “majority way”. In contrast, Malinda said that American Indians do not want to learn the “white man’s way”. There is “no desk” between American Indian facilitators and families, Malinda stated. American Indian facilitators understand the cultural and historical roots of American Indians, and understand why families have uncertainties about programs and why they might not accept the program immediately. Facilitators said they accommodate to make the program more appropriate (e.g. prayers, elders).

Men need to be involved in program implementations, particularly in implementations to Latino and American Indian families. Facilitators expressed that more men need to get involved, be participants, become facilitators, and be good role models. Patulla said that Smokey was an important male figure for American Indian youth – “they started finding strength in Smokey, talking to him about sticking, singing, the drum and stuff”. Patulla continued, “We don’t just teach material, but live it, demonstrate it in our own lives. When you talk the talk, you better walk the road. The Indian community is small, so everyone knows everyone. Parents don’t see Smokey and I at the bar by ourselves, but they do see us at Powwows together as a family”.

It is helpful when the facilitator is seen as someone who could have been in the families’ shoes. Dawn mentioned, “You can’t just have a bunch of white faces delivering to native and immigrant parents. It’s not so much of a problem for kids”. Facilitators need to be knowledgeable about the culture of the people they are working with, and they need to mesh and blend well.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Discussion

The goals of the current study were to learn about facilitator experiences implementing the Strengthening Families Program in real-world conditions to diverse populations. The current study extends the prevention community's understanding about what facilitators adapt and why they adapt. The tension between fidelity and adaptation within evidence-based programs has been discussed in the prevention literature for many years. Over the years stakeholders have become aware that facilitators adapt programs at the local level to help programs work for participants, and increasingly stakeholders realize that cultural changes to programs may be beneficial. However, we know little about adaptation for cultural reasons. I conducted interviews with facilitators who implement the SFP 10-14 to families of diverse cultures, particularly Native Americans and Latinos, in six counties in the state of Washington. In the first two sections below, I summarize the main findings of the current study – why facilitators make cultural adaptations, and the kinds of adaptations they make. Following these two sections, I will discuss 1) the ecology of prevention programs and 2) assimilation, biculturalism, and multiculturalism in relation to the results in the current study. I will then discuss: 1) The current study's conclusions, 2) implications for prevention programs, 3) the current study's strengths and limitations, and 4) future directions for research and evaluation.

#### *Reasons for Cultural Adaptations*

##### *Time and Program Structure*

All facilitators reported that they experienced challenges with the time and program structure of the Strengthening Families Program although many challenges reported were experienced in different forms. The current study extends what is known about time as a key



reason why facilitators adapt evidence-based programs in community-based implementations (Hill, Maucione & Hood, 2007). All facilitators reported challenges with the time and program structure. The program is micromanaged by a two-hour time block. There is a timer component on the DVDs and the curriculum manuals give time limits for activities. Facilitators often discussed a level of chaos when the program structure and logistics were a mismatch to participants' needs, i.e. reasons why families are late. Facilitators indicated that participant backgrounds might pose challenges for the program delivery.

Facilitators reported that they themselves and participants believe both similarly and differently about time. Some feel families understand the time schedule and the facilitator role is to stay on time. However, some family members believe that everyone has a voice and the program is their time to come together and support one another. Some facilitators respond well to participants needs, i.e. extend discussion. However, the differences between facilitators and family beliefs about time might cause tension. To alleviate tension within programs, facilitators reported that they made cultural adaptations.

The diversity within cultures presents challenges for facilitators in program implementations. Participants' needs are different among groups of various socio-cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Cultures are rapidly changing and levels of acculturation among Latinos and Native Americans vary. Some facilitators might be more assimilated than the parents they work with. Families might have members who are more assimilated than others who are separated from the larger society and believe in ways of his or her country of origin (Coatsworth, Maldonado-Molina, Pantin, Szapocznik, 2005; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind & Vedder, 2001).

Facilitators often viewed the structure and process of the Strengthening Families Program difficult for various groups. For example, the structure of the program as a whole is a new

experience for Latino families. Facilitators often had to relate, translate, and give more information to families. American Indian parents associate the structure with negative experiences within their cultural history, i.e. government systems designed to force American Indians to live within America's mainstream culture.

Facilitators who fit with participants' culture understand challenges families face. Some participants have circumstantial factors that further inhibit full participation in the program separate than cultural differences. A few circumstantial factors found in the current study include inconsistent rides to the program, family structure, divorce, and gangs, families monitored by child protection services, low education, and alcoholism.

In summary, facilitators reported mixed feelings about time, and the program structure and processes. Time and program structure was often inappropriate for Latino and American Indian families. For example, facilitators reported that families felt they had the right to speak, some had low education, or arrived late, and the program would go too fast. Facilitators often felt the need to reorganize and extend discussion time to accommodate families.

#### *Family Compositions and Dynamics*

Multiple caregivers, youth outside the age range of 10 to 14, and families with various cultural, ethnic, and circumstantial backgrounds come to universal programs. Facilitators reported that families who attend program implementations represent the state of Washington's diversity. The current study shows that information presented to Latino parents may challenge old patriarchal beliefs about how a family should work. Facilitators felt that they needed to transfer more information to parents, so they could understand environmental risks that their youth may face. American Indians have had more time to become accustomed to mainstream culture. They realize social risks youth face. Facilitators mentioned that they felt the need to

include cultural practices and symbols to help caregivers and youth connect and reflect on who they are as family. Previous literature suggests that cultural adaptations to the program delivery in particular, need to be considered with diverse groups because families believe and respond differently to program material (Castro, Barrera & Martinez, 2004; Kumpfer et al., 2008).

### *Acculturation Challenges*

The current study provides information about why facilitators adapt programs due to acculturation challenges. Differences in acculturation between caregivers and youth may be complicated. Facilitators reported that inconsistent communication between Latino and American Indian parents and youth often challenged the delivery of program activities to them. While parents want to maintain authority, youth perception of parental legitimacy and authority decreases as a teenager ages (Darling, Cumsill & Martinez, 2008). As such, facilitators discussed how they needed to address cultural-ethnic identity conflict between parents and youth within programs. Some facilitators reported that they needed to coach parents more than what the curriculum provides. They often felt that families needed more opportunities to work together and build common ground. Hispanic youth have learned societal rules that parents cannot abuse their children. Facilitators reported that minority parents often felt that they have lost authority over their youth. Youth who learn social norms at school discover that it is illegal for parents to abuse their children. They may interpret parents' "whacks" and older discipline style as what schools classify abusive behavior, and call the police without clear knowledge about what will happen to their parents and the family. Families have been distressed by these experiences, are now monitored by child protection services, and parents feel they do not have the right to know about their youths lives. Facilitators often believed that they themselves acted as a bridge between family members and the Strengthening Families Program messages.

## *Cultural Adaptations*

### *Time and Program Structure*

The delivery of the Strengthening Families Program to diverse families is complex. Facilitators reported that they often needed to skip games, or shift program activities around to make sure all essential curriculum messages were covered in the allotted time frame. Facilitator style is an element that influenced how facilitators and families handled program time constraints. Some facilitators reported that they chose to extend discussion times and others adhered to the program structure. Facilitators reported that extended discussion times would often make the program delivery more appropriate to accommodate group needs, but then programs would often go late. They needed to be sensitive to slow to warm up groups, particularly Latino and Native American groups, who believe that everyone has a voice.

A more specific challenge that Hispanic facilitators reported is that the “words” and style of the Spanish DVDs and manual are confusing for families, and facilitators from Mexican descent. The Spanish DVDs language and styles is from Central, or South America. The current cultural adaptation literature discusses how program language needs to correspond with participants’ language (Allen, Coombes & Foxcroft, 2007; Elliott & Mihalic, 2004; Kumpfer et al., 2008). The diversity within the Latino culture is complicated, there are many indigenous languages, and facilitators reported that they had to help Mexican families make sense of the material because it did not relate to their home life. In the current study, facilitators needed to culturally adapt, translate, and relate program information to participants’ lives because the language and DVDs style did not match up to participants’ background they worked with from Mexico.

### *Family Compositions and Dynamics*

All facilitators reported adaptation to accommodate different family compositions and dynamics. Facilitators indicated that they added stories and examples from their own experiences to help communicate information, gain rapport, and build mutual trust among families. The current study extends the literature about program lessons that are a challenge for facilitators. Participants who are connected to traditional parenting practices of their county of origin needed more time to understand new parenting strategies. Lessons about rule making were tough for some Latino parents because “love-and-limits” messaging is a different style than what they are accustomed to.

Minority parents in Washington showed lower outcomes when facilitators implement rule-making activities and supervise the program process with high fidelity (Owens, 2009). Increased discussion time and added information helped parents learn new information, and not get frustrated by time constraints. Facilitators reported that parents often shut down if they get cut off when they are speaking. The current study builds on Owens (2009) findings because facilitators who implement to Latino and American Indian families reported that it was important that facilitators discuss more about rule-making lessons, and they do this by extending discussion time.

Facilitators who reported working with specific cultural groups discussed ways to include cultural practices and symbols within program implementations. Many facilitators discussed changing games to reflect cultural practices of Latino and American Indian families. For example, breaking a piñata is an appropriate game to include with Latinos. The family tree activity is an adaptable activity. Among American Indian implementations, including elders and

prayers are essential components to properly begin a program. Previous literature has recommended that programs use cultural variables, such as elders within programs for American Indian families (Castro, Barrera & Martinez, 2004; Kumpfer et al., 2002; Turner, 2000). Gift giving was also found as an essential cultural component to end programs with for American Indian groups.

### *Acculturation Challenges*

The current study extends the literature on acculturation challenges and how they influence program implementations. Facilitators that implement the Strengthening Families Program to American Indian and Latino families reported that they often felt the need to insert information, cultural practices, and symbols to make the program implementation more meaningful for families. Families needed opportunities to build common ground among their members. Specifically, facilitators who implement the Spanish version mentioned that Hispanic parents were uninformed about customs of American society. Facilitators reported that they felt the need to educate parents about societal rules and norms of mainstream life because youth were more assimilated. Among American Indian youth facilitators provided more opportunities for youth to connect with their traditional language, cultural practices, and symbols.

### *Facilitator Fit*

I found that facilitators and families that have similar life experiences are more likely to respond well to one another. Many Hispanic and Native American facilitators reported how they were a bridge for parents, youth, and the meaning behind messages of the Strengthening Families. Facilitators seemed to coach parents saying that their children are rapidly changing and becoming more assimilated to mainstream life, and parents need to be aware of more societal risks.

Many facilitators reported the need for male involvement in the Strengthening Families Program. Fathers and male caregivers seemed to be a barrier sometimes for program messages because they were different than what he was used to in the old country. Men often do not participate in the program, so the mother goes and gets the information and brings it back to him. However, fathers might not want to give the new ideas a try, not practice SFP principles, and they would not get applied within in the household. Facilitators reported that men as facilitators is a key element for programs Latino and American Indian implementations, particularly to help encourage other fathers to come to programs. They were also helpful for some youth who struggle with their cultural-ethnic identity. Youth look up to facilitators that they can identify as someone they want to be like.

Facilitators reported that they needed to adapt when program processes did not match program participants needs. Many facilitators added information within programs to directly relate program material to program participants. Blakely et al. (1987) says additions to program material is not a problem and believes they can be beneficial to improve program quality for specific populations. Qualified, culturally sensitive, and competent facilitators bestow attributes of adaptability, flexibility, and skill to adapt programs to fit families' needs without compromising program integrity.

Those who engage with families within prevention programs and demonstrate a willingness to build relationships may increase the benefits of evidence-based curriculum for diverse groups (Orrell-Valente et al., 1999). Facilitators reported that they like the program and want to see it succeed and help families. They found getting to know families as valuable. One facilitator discussed how she started out in a program as a substitute facilitator. The program was targeted for an American Indian group and she mentioned that she did not put as much effort into

getting to know families as she normally would. After a few sessions she learned that they needed her to stay on and facilitate the whole program. Therefore, she invested more of herself into getting to know the families to better deliver the program. Cultural adaptations are a means to broaden the range in which universal program messages can reach diverse families and increase impact.

### *The Ecology of Prevention Programs*

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems framework of human development helps 1) ground the complexity of community-based prevention programs and 2) highlight the multi-dimensional factors of facilitator and families' backgrounds that influence program implementation. Many different systems shape who we are and our understanding of the world. Families and individuals develop within larger contexts of various social, political, economic, and cultural systems. Worldviews continue to be molded by more specific contexts, such as someone's community, religion, school, work, and peer relations. These elements mold our perception of what is the social norm and what is valuable within an environment. Family compositions and dynamics shape caregiver and youth relations within program implementations. The Strengthening Families Program recommends one caregiver to one youth ratio. However, the reality is that many permutations of family come to the program. Furthermore, individual differences exist and influence program delivery. Facilitators reported that some parents were alcoholics, foster parents, and illiterate, for example and some youth had ADHD, were teen parents, and gang members.

Facilitators and families come from different systems with which they were raised in although some systems might be similar. For these reasons, the concept of "universal" evidence-based program implementations might be challenged. Facilitators of similar cultural backgrounds



as immigrant participants shared common experiences, such as how they were raised and how they migrated to the state of Washington from states that border Mexico. In addition, American Indian facilitators reported that they have the knowledge about American Indian history and are best to implement to American Indian participants. Common challenges occur within programs: Time and program structure and family compositions and dynamics. Acculturation challenges within programs are more specific to program implementations with Latino and Native American families.

### *Assimilation, Biculturalism, and Prevention Programs*

Some previous literature on acculturation assumes that immigrants who come to the United States will inescapably face pressure to either stay within their own ethnic culture, or culturally adapt to reflect the culture of the larger society (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). In the United States people within ethnic and cultural groups have different levels of acculturation. Some researchers have conceptualized acculturation in terms of either 1) *assimilation*, when someone does not maintain ties to his or her original culture and adopts customs from their new host country, or 2) *biculturalism*, when someone remains actively involved in his or her original culture while building new connections with the dominant culture (Coatsworth et al., 2005; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997).

The distinction between assimilation and biculturalism is relevant to prevention programming because of the potential difference between facilitators' and families' levels of acculturation and how those differences influence program implementations. For example, facilitators of SFP might be perceived as more assimilated than some of the families they deliver the program to, and they might also have higher education and higher-paying careers than families who attend the program. More highly assimilated facilitators, or those from a different

socioeconomic class from participants, might adapt the program in order to encourage greater assimilation. However, I did not interpret the motivation of facilitators who made cultural adaptations as a means to impose the mainstream culture on immigrant, or native families. Some facilitators reported that they have lived similar lives to families attending the program and therefore understood acculturation challenges between parents and their youth.

My impression is that facilitators were a bridge for families and encouraged biculturalism and sensitivity to the needs of diverse groups. Biculturalism is the active involvement in one's culture of origin while building new connections with the dominant culture (Coatsworth et al., 2005). Multiculturalism is the active involvement in several cultures, which may be more salient within urban settings. Additionally, facilitators with backgrounds similar to those of participants understood circumstantial factors, such as low socio-economic status (SES), alcoholism, various family compositions, blended families, and single parenthood, that are associated with being Latino or Native American and might also pose barriers for prevention programs.

Immigrant youth have adapted more to the mainstream culture than their parents, who may be separated from the larger society and stay within their culture of origin (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). I interpreted facilitator adaptations as a means to promote biculturalism/multiculturalism within families. Some facilitators felt Mexican immigrant parents needed to increase their understanding of mainstream culture because their youths are more assimilated to the mainstream culture. On the other hand, facilitators felt native youth, needed to learn more about cultural traditions because they were becoming lost amongst the next generation. My impression was that facilitators' intentions were to help coach families and bridge cultures, not to change a family's culture. Facilitators' intentions were to integrate the old with the new (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997) and for parents to understand what their youth

are up to. However, families may perceive facilitator intentions differently. In addition, my own perceptions might have been influenced by the fact that I am of the mainstream culture.

Facilitator bias against traditional culture or attempts to impose assimilation may not have been obvious to me. Therefore, there is need for more research from the family, caregiver, and youth perspective about how the program works for them and their perceptions of cultural relevance of program content and packaging.

### *Conclusion*

Qualitative methods are appropriate to understand facilitator insights about real-world implementations. Facilitators like the Strengthening Families Program content, but sometimes the program processes were inappropriate for different cultural groups. Discussion about adaptation needs to be included in facilitator trainings.

When the prevention community thinks about cultural adaptations they also need to consider circumstantial reasons why adaptations may need to be made. A clear distinction arose between cultural reasons for adaptation and reasons due to circumstance (e.g. experience with the legal system). In the current study, several reasons for adaptation included changing the program to meet circumstantial barriers families had, separate from families' cultural beliefs, values, attitudes, languages, and norms. Participants' background histories, experiences, and circumstances influence how families participate within the structure of the Strengthening Families Program. Facilitators reported that family members with minimal education rely on facilitators to help them understand program information. Families with economic hardships challenged the program structure. Some families' transportation is the bus, fathers might be too tired from work and not want to help out by driving the family to the program, and some families live too far away.

In summary, not all adaptations were due to culture, and cultural adaptations were often to the format of activities rather than to program content. Facilitators reported that sometimes the program packaging made it difficult to work with diverse families who come from different cultural backgrounds. Facilitators reported that they felt the need to insert information, examples, stories, games, cultural practices, symbols, and skip/reorganize activities and extend discussions to relate messages to participants' lives. They made changes so that families have an increased likelihood to receive, comprehend, and believe in program messages and apply them within their daily lives.

### *Implications for the Strengthening Families Program*

In the current study, facilitators gave suggestions about ways to improve programs across the state, specific to cultural-ethnic groups, and local implementations. This study generates topics that need more interagency dialogue: 1) Facilitator trainings, 2) Spanish program DVDs, 3) discussion time and the DVD timer component, 4) conditions for whole family experience, 5) booster sessions, and 6) ideas about how to create more interagency partnership with local community agencies. Following these sections, I discuss strengths and limitations of the current study, and directions for future research and evaluation.

### *Facilitator Trainings*

The current study's findings should be used to inform and improve program trainings. More conversation about adaptations should exist throughout facilitator trainings. Facilitators possess different beliefs about appropriate quality implementation practices to diverse families. Trainings need to prepare facilitators for the reality of diverse communities and families that may show up to the Strengthening Families Program in Washington. Forecasting potential needs and reactions program participants may have to certain activities opens conversation to potentially

identify roadblocks, and provide opportunities for facilitators to estimate appropriate accommodations that may counter potential program challenges with program trainers.

Facilitator trainings need to include more conversation about cultural adaptations, cultural characteristics that can be meaningful for groups, and circumstantial factors that affect families. Facilitators need to be aware that there can be a lot of diversity within a group of families, such as culturally mixed groups. Trainers should also educate facilitators about specific cultural symbols that are relevant to certain groups, i.e. the importance of elder attendance at American Indian implementations, particularly to bless the program. Gift giving is also an important cultural practice. Facilitators also hold relevant ideas on how to accommodate challenges and these ideas need to be shared within trainings. For example, a facilitator discussed how she adapts the driving game in the youth session. If there is a large group she will suggest that youth “carpool”.

#### *Spanish Program DVDs*

The program’s Spanish DVDs are in a South or Central American dialect. Spanish DVDs are disseminated in the state of Washington and used with parents from Mexico. Hispanic facilitators reported that the families and they themselves do not understand some words and style of the curriculum. More energy is extended on behalf of facilitators to make Spanish DVDs work within parent sessions.

Interagency conversation needs to include discussion about investing in new Spanish DVDs. Beyond challenges with the program language Hispanic facilitators reported that they needed to explain new information to parents. Parents are unfamiliar with some of the program information and believe in old ways from Mexico. The program as a whole was a new experience for Hispanic parents, therefore, more time was needed to discuss information as a

group. Julio envisions working with migrant communities in the valleys of Skagit and Whatcom counties some day. Migrant families speak indigenous languages. Therefore, questions should be asked among different stakeholders about the worth of investment in new Spanish DVDs, what would work better, and if changes made would solve any of the program's challenges.

#### *Discussion Time and the DVD Time Component*

Many families need more time due to cultural and circumstantial reasons. Time and program structure should be considered in relation to the tension they create within the discussion sections of the curriculum. Extended discussion periods were warranted because some lessons needed more time. When parents talked too long it put the facilitator in a tough and compromising position.

More conversation needs to revolve around ways to adapt the DVD timer component. The timer component became an irritant to families and facilitators at some points. More time is needed for Latino and American Indian families to discuss information within programs. For example, families are slow to warm up and value the time for everyone to speak. Discussions are sensitive periods in programs and are a time when learning takes place. A timer component regulates program functioning and counts down the time allowed within a given discussion period. Within discussion time, facilitators often gave more information to relate messages to parents, so they could understand the material and what it means for them.

Facilitators find strategies to prolong discussions. Some facilitators stopped the DVD when the beeping timer came on to close out discussion. Facilitators seemed annoyed and frustrated, so they would pause the tape. This action, stopping the DVD, could draw out the program for that night. More conversation needs to revolve around how to handle tension created by program time constraints.

### *Whole Family Experience*

Program implementers need to discuss the idea of inviting the whole family to the Strengthening Families Program. A focus on the whole family may benefit diverse families (Castro, Barrera & Martinez, 2004; Kumpfer et al., 2002; Turner, 2000). Some parents believe that all family members should come to the program. Multiple family members arrived because of circumstantial reasons as well. Additionally, facilitators made the point that more fathers need to be involved in programs. Therefore, program conditions that allow for “the whole family experience” needs to be logically mapped out by various program stakeholders because facilitators reported that large groups change program functioning. A few facilitators suggested that programs held on weekends might decrease challenges and tension with time for implementations to diverse families.

### *Booster Sessions*

The current study found that diverse families required different amounts of time for facilitators to efficiently deliver program material. Many families felt that the program was too short. A few facilitators suggested having the booster sessions start the week after graduation. Taking time off between the program’s graduation night and booster program decreased family participation in boosters. One possible explanation was that the booster was too late. Stakeholders should consider budgeting and planning for the booster sessions to immediately follow the actual program.

### *Program Partners*

In the current study, I found that partnerships between local agencies provided more resources for program implementations. If programs moved to weekends and booster sessions followed graduation it seems more money within program budgets would need to be directed

towards paying facilitators for more of their time. Numerous programs are held at schools. Therefore, schools absorb some of the programs operating costs. A facilitator reported that an organization donated volunteers who helped translate and vans to help with transportation issues.

Facilitators reported that facilitators who are from the local community with similar cultural and ethnic backgrounds as family participants were a bridge to help relate the program to local populations. In summary, the importance of relationships between agencies at different levels needs to be fostered. Food and childcare are other program responsibilities that have the potential to be absorbed through partnerships with other local agencies. One facilitator reported that through tough economic times faith-based organizations help programs by absorbing some of the extra carrying costs of youth and family programs. Program dinners, snacks, transportation, and childcare were found essential components to the SFP 10-14. Through partnerships and relationships with other organizations, shared responsibilities and resources, promote sustainability.

#### *Strengths of the Current Study*

I drove to community locations and met facilitators of different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. The location of the interview and conditions were designated, and convenient for facilitators. I conducted interviews in person, not just over the phone, and email. An iterative process guided my procedures and data analysis. I started interviews with coordinators/facilitators I was familiar with from my work with the SFP 10-14 evaluation in Washington. I then narrowed my focus towards facilitators who implement to specific populations. Project collaborators consisted of facilitators with various levels of experience. They came from various backgrounds, have different family compositions and dynamics, educational levels, socioeconomic status, and are people who facilitated in different geographical



regions. I interviewed facilitators who seemed to display a cultural match with participants they described and those who were not the best match. This study demonstrates the positive impact qualitative methods have to explore real-world community-based program implementations.

### *Limitations*

The current study's perspective is limited to a small sample of facilitators' points of view. Therefore, generalizations should be cautioned. However, the broad construct of "time as a program challenge" may be considered generalizable among implementations within the state of Washington because all facilitators demonstrated issues with it. Information about programming needs for families is filtered through the perceptions of facilitators. Future studies should focus on ethnographic fieldwork methods to better inform how the themes derived from the current study's facilitator narratives apply to families' perspectives about how the Strengthening Families Program works for them.

### *Future Research and Evaluation*

Caregivers and youths' reflections about program impact on their lives needs to be constructed from their perspective. Evaluations of the SFP 10-14 in the state of Washington primarily use quantitative self-report surveys for both parents and youth. Parents also write out responses to qualitative questions on surveys. Self-report survey data limits program implementers' interpretation of what program outcomes mean for diverse families.

Populations are drastically changing in Washington and the complexity of family continues to develop. Diverse families challenge universal evidence-based programs in local settings. Facilitators are essential resources of knowledge about what works, what does not, and for whom within programs. They discussed acculturation challenges as they pertain to cultural adaptations within program implementations. I cannot build strong claims about diverse families'

daily challenges at home, in school, and within communities in Washington and how the program impacts their family. More research with local families throughout the state of Washington should be targeted next.

I found that facilitators are essential components in the function of how evidence-based programs work with diverse populations. More research is needed to understand complex processes as they relate to cultural adaptations within prevention programs. The availability of prevention dollars fluctuates in federal, state and county budgets. Stakeholders need to develop constructive ways to collect data about cultural adaptation to appropriately adapt standardized evidence-based programs to meet the needs within local community-based implementations. The current study's design was labor intensive and may be difficult to sustain its procedures over time. Historical event calendars can be a mechanism where facilitators write reflections, reactions, and journal about their experiences implementing the SFP 10-14 to diverse families. Sustainable evaluative methods and ways to interpret data needs to be created to capture and collect facilitator reflections about the adaptations they make and the reasons why they make them.

## Glossary

- 1) *Cultural Adaptations to Prevention Programs* are the consequence of facilitator accommodations, changes, and modifications to program processes and content due to differences between how the program is suppose to be delivered according to the fidelity model, and cultural values of how information should be transmitted: language, social norms, traditions, attitudes, belief systems, and values of a group
- 2) *Facilitators* and *program implementers* are used interchangeable meaning stakeholders, and agents who implement evidence-based program curriculum
- 3) *Innovation* is a new social technology
- 4) *Local Agents of Programs* are consumers: Facilitators and families
- 5) *Model and Exemplary Evidence-based programs* are standardized programs based on developmental literature shown effective under rigorous trial compared to control groups
- 6) *Program Adoption* is acceptance and program buy in. Buy-in occurs at many different levels. Federal, state, counties and local communities adopt program material. The term is used to represent multiple domains. And came be disseminated amongst local agents
- 7) *Program Consumers* are local agents who participate in the program. Primary consumers are families who attend programs, and are assumed by the fidelity model to buy-in to program material. Other consumers may include facilitators themselves who participate in the construction of program process. The term is used to represent both domains.
- 8) *Program Developers and Designers* create program material, boundaries and parameters, evaluate program effectiveness, and disseminate original version
- 9) *Program Fidelity* is implementing a program as it was designed

- 10) *Program Implementers* and *facilitators* are used interchangeably, and are stakeholders who implement program material to families
- 11) *Program Trainers* educate local facilitators about the implementation of evidence-based curriculum
- 12) *Stakeholders* have investment in outcomes of program success, or failure
- 13) *Translational Research* is quality improvement research that makes sure evidence-based principles are being implemented within communities effectively and appropriately
- 14) *Universal Evidence-based programs* are those for non-clinical populations
- 15) *Wide-Scale Dissemination* means distributing, and diffusing evidence-based material to program adoption agencies, and organizations that deliver material in the real world to local families

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Table 1

*Project Collaborators: SFP 10-14 Facilitators from the state of Washington (N =16)*

Name	Interview	County	Ethnicity	Sex	SFP Experience	Version
Albert	1	Spokane	Caucasian	M	Trainer/Coordinator/ Facilitator	English
Ben	2.1	Cowlitz	Caucasian	M	Trainer/Coordinator/ Facilitator	English
Julie	2.2		Mexican- American	F	Long time facilitator	Spanish and English
Jane	3	Cowlitz	Caucasian	F	Coordinator/Facilitator	English
Sarah	4	Whitman	Caucasian	F	New Coordinator/New Facilitator	English
Dawn	5	Whatcom	Caucasian	F	Trainer/Coordinator/ Facilitator	English
Lorna	6.1	Whatcom	Caucasian	F	Long time facilitator	English
Violet*	6.2	Whatcom	½ African American, 1/8 Cherokee	F	Long time facilitator	English
Viola*	7	Whatcom	Caucasian	F	Long time facilitator	English

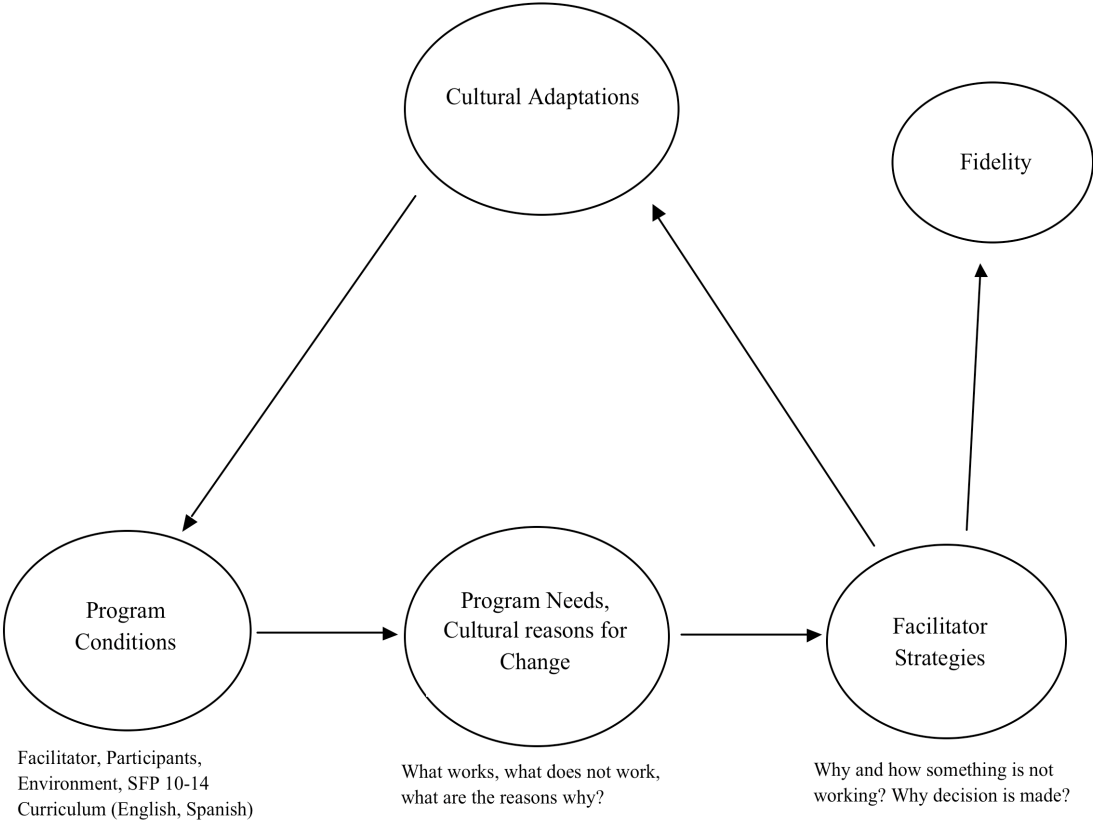
Table 1 Continued

*Project Collaborators: SFP 10-14 Facilitators from the state of Washington (N =16)*

Name	Interview	County	Ethnicity	Sex	SFP Experience	Version
Xavier	8	Whatcom	Mexican- American	M	Implemented pilot Spanish program	Spanish
Julio	9	Skagit	Mexican- American	M	Facilitator	Spanish and English
Malinda*	10.1	Spokane	American Indian	F	Coordinator/Facilitator	English
Patulla*	10.2	Spokane	American Indian	F	Facilitator	English
Smokey*	10.3	Spokane	American Indian	M	Facilitator	English
Monica	11	Chelan/ Douglas	Mexican- American	F	Facilitator who has not facilitated in a while	Spanish
Noel	12	Chelan/ Douglas	Mexican- American	F	Long time facilitator	Spanish

*Note.* \* Facilitator has directly implemented SFP 10-14 to American Indians

Figure 1. Conceptual Model



## APPENDIX A

### Interview Questions/Prompts for Interviews 1-4

Facilitator(s) Name(s):

Interview date and location:

Tell me about what you do...

How long has the SFP been implemented in \_\_\_\_ County?

How many SFP sessions have you implemented in this county?

Which sessions have you implemented: Parent, youth, family?

Have you been to a facilitator training?

Describe the families that participate in the SFP in \_\_\_\_ County?

Ethnicity, demographics (SES)?

#### *“Ice-Breaker” Questions*

How did you hear about Strengthening Families Program?

Why did you become a facilitator?

Why do you like the SFP? Or, what do you like about the SFP? What do you dislike?

Share reason for the interview: “Over the years we have learned some facilitators adapt program material and some do not.”

#### *Main Questions – (Go through Manual)*

Have you ever found it necessary to make changes to the material?

Do you need to adapt any games?

Are there any portions of the DVD that were not representative of families in your culture?

Are there any portions of the discussion that you changed? If so, what led you to change the discussion?

Are there any portions of the homework that you changed? If so, what led you to change the homework?

*Follow-up on Rob's findings:*

How did it go? E.g. Lessons about making rules/consequences?

Lessons about "I" feel statements

How about staying calm activities?

■ How do parents react when you try to keep them on track?

How'd you react?

How did the parents react? Engaged/disengaged? Responsive/Interactive?

Did they resist? Look frustrated?

*Facilitator Cultural Background Information*

Where were you born? Where did you grow up? How long have you lived in the area?

## Interview Questions/Prompts for Interviews 5-12

Collaborator/Facilitator Name:

Interview Date and Location:

\*Position them as the expert:

I'm interested in understanding what it's like out in the field implementing the SFP from your perspective. "Over the years we have learned some facilitators adapt program material and some do not". I'm interested in learning how the program changes from its original form to be successfully implemented among diverse populations. I'm partnering with you and other facilitators throughout Washington to build knowledge, so we can come to an understanding of what facilitators adapt and reasons why to help preserve the quality of the SFP in Washington.

Which groups have you implemented to: Parent, youth and/or family?

Before we get into cultural adaptation questions:

Everyone has their own understanding of culture, so I'd like to establish when we say culture in this interview we know what each other are talking about. When I say culture I mean... values, belief systems...

1. When you think of culture what comes to mind? What is culture to you?

Same thing for adaptations – when I say adaptations I think of modifications to the SFP to make it work better for the participants and for yourself (referring to the facilitator).

2. What does it mean to you for a facilitator to make an adaptation?

*Main Questions:*

1. Have you ever found it necessary to make changes to the material?

a. If so, what is the change?

b. What is the reason for the change?



- c. How often do you have to make changes?
2. Have you ever found it necessary to make changes for cultural reasons?
3. Have you ever found it necessary to make changes to the content? List out content items (e.g. making rules, “I” statements)
4. Have you ever found it necessary to make changes to the process? List out process items (e.g. Set-up, Instructions, Supervise Process)
5. Is there any material that is not representative of the values and/or beliefs of the participants you facilitate to?
6. Is there any material that does not work for the families you work with?
7. Is there any material participants do not identify with?
8. Does any material not meet the needs of families?
9. Have you ever made any special accommodations for families?
10. How do you decide what to alter?
11. How do participants respond?

Follow-up to these questions:

1. If so, what do you adapt?
2. Why do you adapt?

### *Games*

1. Have you ever found it necessary to make changes to the games?
  - a. If so, what are they?
  - b. What is the reason for the change?

### *DVD's*

1. Are there any portions of the DVD that did not work for the families?

2. Do you make any changes to the DVD?
3. Have you ever found it necessary to stop the DVD in the parent session?

*Discussions*

1. Are there any portions of the discussion that you changed?
2. If so, what led you to change the discussion?
3. How did you change the discussion?
4. How did you come to the decision to change the discussion?

*Homework*

1. Are there any portions of the homework that you changed?
2. If so, what led you to change the homework?
3. How did you change the homework?
4. How did you come to the decision to change the homework?

*Comeback Questions:*

- What does that mean?
- Why does that happen?
- Do you think it's a mismatch?
  - Is something not working for particular families?
  - Why is it not working?
  - Is something working well for particular families?
  - Why is it working?
- Are there specific activities families do not understand?
- Why do you think that happened?

*At the end:*

What is your view why I am asking questions about of cultural adaptations?

Is there anything else we need to understand about implementing the SFP to diverse families?

Thank You

## APPENDIX B

### Cultural Adaptations SFP 10-14 Coding Scheme

F: Information from the facilitator narrative

I: Information from the interviewer (researcher)

**Source:** Interview #, participant/collaborator # (based on order in transcript; except for #2.1 (this code was based on the time of first contact (rationale: through email prior to email). Collaborator #2.1 was first contacted. I received access to #2.2: Note: #2.2 talks first in interview 2).

**SFP 10-14 Curriculum:** English/Spanish Version

**Driving Nature:** What are the influential mechanism driving adaptations? Facilitator, SFP 10-14 participant (youth, parent, family – member, caregiver

**Condition:** Deviation from SFP 10-14 material. What is the problem?

**Need/Reason for Change:** What is the need? What's not working well? What are the reasons why?

**What Works Well?** What are the reasons why?

**Cultural Reason for Change:** *Deep* out of alignment with belief system, values, language attitudes, social norms, traditions, and religion → problem with material. *Surface* out of alignment with style → problem with games, examples

**Facilitator Strategy:** Perception of what needs to be done → *this could be a fork in the road between fidelity adherence and adaptation—any clue towards facilitator beliefs?*

**Energy Extended Towards Adaptation:** Investment and/or energy given by a facilitator and/or participant/family. It is the input into the program? What does the facilitator, participants, environment do – output?

**Adaptation:** Accommodation/Change/Modification

**Cultural Adaptation:** If condition is satisfied the consequence of accommodations, changes, modifications made to SFP 10-14 material is because of different beliefs systems, values, language, social norms, traditions, attitudes, religion etc... tested within and between counties and ethnic groups represented in my sample.

**Positive/Negative/Neutral Strategy:** Was the (cultural) adaptation positive, negative, or neutral? Yes, No, neutral, NA if not present in interview

***Explanatory Question Guidelines – Suggestions Apply to All***

**Who, what, when, where, why and how** can be inserted anywhere along the path towards a cultural adaptations. These questions can also be inserted after cultural adaptations. **Think of these questions and ask yourself about the research questions: 1) what is the cultural adaptation? What is the reason behind the cultural adaptation? What is the nature of the cultural adaptation?** Is the facilitator talking broad? Is the facilitator focused towards one type of implementation (e.g. Spanish version)? This question may bring us full circle.

**Who?** Who is the program working for? Who is this not working for?

**What?** What is going on?

**When?** When does the adaptation occur?

**Where?** Where are they? Where is the cultural adaptation needed?

**Why?** Why is this? Why is cultural adaptation needed?

**How?** How does this look in the real world

