

Impact of a Peer-Family Connection Program on Social Belonging and Risk Behavior Reduction in Adolescents

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the sentence “Parental monitoring, open communication, and emotional support have been found to buffer the negative impact of peer pressure,” the term “buffer” is too vague. Consider elaborating on the specific mechanisms by which these parental factors mitigate risk behavior (e.g., through internalization of norms or emotional scaffolding).

The description “participants were randomly assigned into two groups” lacks detail on the randomization process (e.g., block randomization, stratification). Please clarify how randomization was conducted and whether allocation concealment was implemented.

While the use of the YRBS is well justified, the article mentions “selected subscales” but does not specify which items were used or how composite scores were calculated. Please provide more detail on item selection and scoring methodology.

The “letter to home” activity is a strong family engagement strategy, but the manuscript does not mention how many adolescents completed this task or how caregivers responded. Consider adding information on participation rates or qualitative feedback.

This is the only session that explicitly involves caregivers. For a program centered on family-peer connection, having just one joint session seems minimal. Justify this design choice or explain how caregiver involvement was otherwise sustained.

The text notes that “control group scores remained relatively unchanged,” yet does not mention whether these changes were statistically tested. Consider adding non-significant ANOVA or post-hoc findings for the control group to support this claim.

The phrase “improve adolescents’ cognitive control and self-awareness” implies a neurocognitive shift, yet no cognitive measures were used. Consider softening this claim or clearly identifying it as hypothetical based on prior literature.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. *Reviewer 2*

Reviewer:

You write, “Programs that cultivate social bonds and promote inclusive environments have been associated with reductions in aggression...” but do not specify the mechanism by which these reductions occur. Consider elaborating on whether the reduction is through identity integration, increased school bonding, or emotional regulation.

In the sentence “Adolescents high in sensation seeking are more prone to engage in novelty-driven behaviors,” it would strengthen the argument to explain whether the intervention addressed this personality trait specifically or merely its behavioral outcomes.

The claim “many [interventions] lack sustained engagement, developmental sensitivity, or culturally relevant content” is critical but unsupported. Please cite at least one systematic review or meta-analysis that identifies these limitations across similar programs.

The sentence “No significant differences were found between post-test and follow-up scores” is critical. Please interpret what this plateauing suggests about the intervention’s long-term effects—does it indicate a ceiling effect, stability, or lack of further improvement?

The authors state “adolescents who participated in joint sessions with caregivers reported enhanced communication,” but no self-report data or qualitative quotes are included to substantiate this claim. Add support or clearly frame it as anecdotal.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. **Revised**

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.