

REACHING OUT WITH UNIVERSAL PARENTAL SUPPORT

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Avhandlingen för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i psykologi, som med vederbörligt tillstånd av samhällsvetenskapliga fakultetsstyrelsen vid Göteborgs universitet kommer att offentligens försvaras fredagen den 24 maj 2019, klockan 14.00 i föreläsningssal 1, Psykologiska institutionen, Haraldsgatan 1, Göteborg.

Fakultetsopponent: Anna Sarkadi

Föreliggande uppsats grundar sig på följande artiklar:

- I. Thorslund, K., Johansson Hanse, J., & Axberg, U. (2014). Universal parental support-How to reach out: a cross-sectional random sample of Swedish parents. *BMC Public Health*, 14(1064), 1-8. doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-14-1064
- II. Thorslund, K., Johansson Hanse, J., & Axberg, U. (2017). Do parents of adolescents request the same universal parental support as parents of younger children? A random sample of Swedish parents. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 45(5), 492-502. doi: 10.1177/1403494817705233
- III. Thorslund, K., Alfredsson, E. K., & Axberg, U. (2018). Universal parental support for parents of adolescents: Who wants municipality-based parental support and in what form? *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 60(1), 16-25. doi: 10.1111/sjop.12498
- IV. Thorslund, K., Axberg, U., & Boström, P. K. Universal support groups for parents of adolescents – a thematic analysis of parents' requests in terms of content and form. Unpublished manuscript.



Abstract

Thorslund, Karin (2019). REACHING OUT WITH UNIVERSAL PARENTAL SUPPORT. Department of Psychology, University of Gothenburg, PO Box 500, SE-405 30 Gothenburg, Sweden.

The overarching aim of this thesis was to explore the general interest in universal parental support, the circumstances under which this interest is stronger, and how universal support groups for parents of adolescents could be developed according to those parents' perceived needs. **Study I** examined parents' interest in municipal parental support. The results showed that mothers were more interested than fathers in all forms of parental support except a webpage, and that very frequent use of the Internet as a source of parenting information was associated with high interest in parental support. **Study II** explored interest in existing and possible universal parental support in parents of adolescents compared with parents of younger children. About 82% of the parents of adolescents interviewed considered universal parental support most important during the child's adolescence. There was substantial interest, in most forms of support. Despite their interest, parents had limited awareness of available support. **Study III** explored the factors associated with interest in universal parental support and found it was linked to parents' own anxious mood, lower perceived parental capacity, perception of their child as having psychiatric problems, perception of their adolescents' openness about things, and perception of their adolescent's overall difficulties in daily life due to psychiatric symptoms. **Study IV** explored what kind of support parents of adolescents' request from universal parent support groups and what practical requirements would enable parents to participate. Parents could give each other emotional support and develop better parenting skills together. **Reaching out** with support universally requires that various information channels be utilized to reach out to all parents regardless of gender and social status, and various forms of support be offered. The Internet is an important but challenging information channel for reaching out to parents, especially fathers. Supports should be developed that are targeted to parents of adolescents, tailored to their needs, and well-advertised. Schools are important arenas for offering universal parental supports such as support groups moderated by trained professionals. Lighter support forms should be accompanied by more resource-demanding forms of support. to prevent increasing inequalities between parents with different social situations.

Keywords: Universal prevention, Promotion, Parenting, Parental support, Parental engagement, Adolescence, Adolescent mental health, Family services