

## Barriers and facilitators to treatment participation by adolescents in a community mental health clinic

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[Oruche, Ukamaka M.](#) ; [Downs, Sarah M.](#) ; [Holloway, Evan D.](#) ; [Draucker, Claire Burke](#) ; [Aalsma, Matthew C.](#)



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### Abstract:

An estimated 40–60% of children in mental health treatment drop out before completing their treatment plans, resulting in increased risk for ongoing clinical symptoms and functional impairment, lower satisfaction with treatment, and other poor outcomes. Research has focused predominately on child, caregiver, and family factors that affect treatment participation in this population and relatively less on organizational factors. Findings are limited by focus on children between 3 and 14 years of age and included only caregivers' and/or therapists' perspectives. The purpose of this descriptive qualitative study was to identify organizational factors that influenced participation in treatment, with special attention to factors that contributed to dropout in adolescents. The sample included 12 adolescent–caregiver dyads drawn from two groups in a large public mental health provider database. Analysis of focus group interview data revealed several perceived facilitators and barriers to adolescent participation in treatment and provided several practical suggestions for improving treatment

participation. Implications of the findings for psychiatric mental health nurses and other clinicians who provide services to families of adolescents with mental health concerns are discussed.

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