

EVALUATION OF SUPPORTGROUPS FOR CHILDREN OF DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES

Annemi Skerfving

Institutionen för socialt arbete

Stockholms Universitet

Support groups i Sweden

- ❑ Support groups – now in a majority of all communities in Sweden
 - ❑ Used since 1988 – Ersta Vändpunkten
 - ❑ The CAP-program Children are people too – from AA Minnesota (alcohol and drug abuse)
 - ❑ Now different trainings, programs, manuals
 - ❑ Developed for children from families with various kinds of parental problems
 - ❑ Mental illness, family violence, mentally retarded, criminality, divorce conflicts
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Evaluation so far

- ❑ Lack of scientific evaluation of effects of group interventions.
 - ❑ Thomas Lindstein's longitudinal qualitative Ersta Vändpunkten-study the only scientific study so far (12 years follow up).
 - ❑ Instruments put together by groupleaders/ temporary consultants, "content customer".
 - ❑ No "effect studies" with valid instruments.
 - ❑ Evidence is very much in focus i Sweden now – a shift of paradigm.
 - ❑ All services must be evidence based (Socialstyrelsen).
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Why evaluate?

- ❑ Focus on children/youth in riskgroups
 - ❑ Children/youth and parents believe that the group will help
 - ❑ The intervention has a **preventiv intention**
 - ❑ Important to know that the intervention helps and not harms
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Other reasons

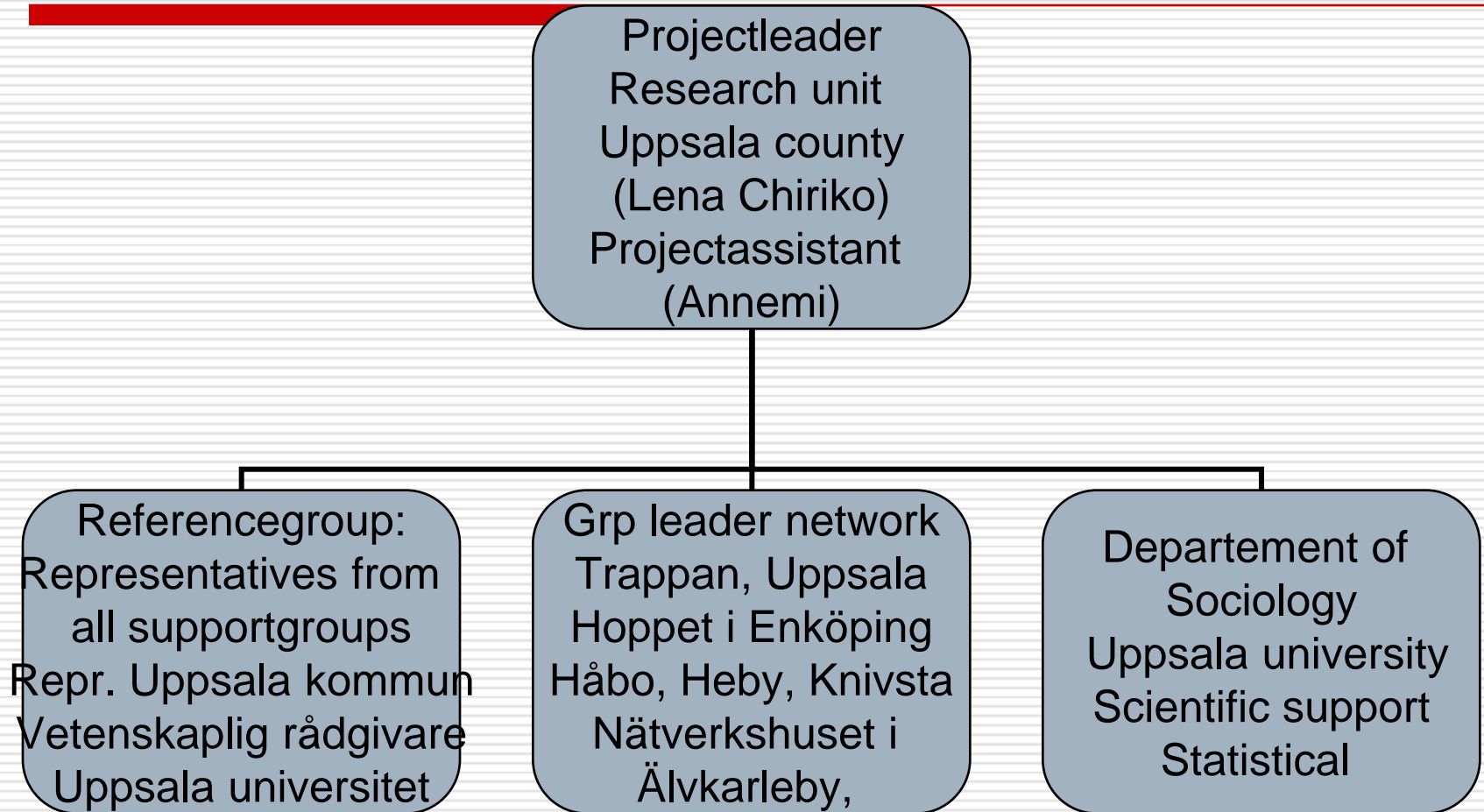
We know fairly little about the impact

- ❑ If it works as well for all kinds of problems that it is used for.
 - ❑ If it works as well for boys and girls
 - ❑ If it works as well for all ages.
 - ❑ If it works as well for children with for children/youth with **own problems** of different kinds.
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Three projects

- **Uppsala region**– to develop, try out and implement an evaluation method for support groups of different kinds.
 - **Stockholm City**– to implement the Uppsala model in all support groups, run by NGO's and Social Service
 - **School health care in Stockholm** - RCT study with a controlgroup to provide evidence of efficiency.
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Uppsala project design



Starting point Uppsala

- To create a model with valid instruments.
 - Instruments must be relevant for the context and validated
 - They must be easily available available in Swedish and without restrictions/licence
 - They must be comprehensible, manageable and meaningful to use for the groupleader
 - Children must like to fill them in – must be comprehensible, manageable and meaningful also for them
 - Parents must approve of them
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Aim of the groups

- ❑ To give children/youth a chance to **share experiences**.
 - ❑ To provide **information** improve knowledge about parents problems and how they affect the family.
 - ❑ To improve consiousness about own needs.
 - ❑ To improve **copingstrategies**
 - ❑ A more or less pronounced **preventive** intention - to help children to **feel better** and not develop problems.
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Theoretical framework

SOC – sense of coherence (Antonovsky)

- ❑ **Comprehensibility** – to understand external and internal occurrences
 - ❑ **Manageability** - Möjlighet att påverka sin situation, handlingsstrategier
 - ❑ **Meaningfulness** - Att uppleva det som meningsfullt att försöka
 - ❑ **SOC – promotes** salutogenic, i.e. healthy processes (Antonovsky - *Mystery of Health*)
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The evaluation model

- ❑ Children's SOC – "Hur jag mår" - 10-13 years
 - ❑ SOC 13 "Sense of coherence" - 14 years and older. "Känsla av sammanhang"
 - ❑ Ladder of Life – hopefulness – 10 years and older
(Used for Life quality research since the 1950:ies)
 - ❑ SDQ – Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire – global mental health - the childrens scale from 10 years – the parents for all children, not youth
 - ❑ For the group leaders an adherence questionnaire – comparable
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Datum: _____ Nr: _____

Födelseår: _____ Flicka _____ Pojke _____

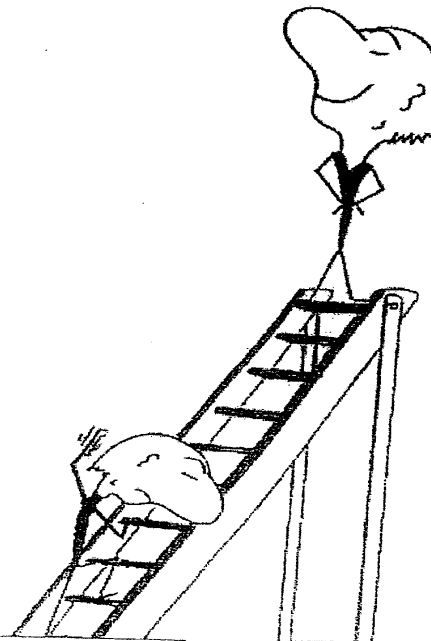
Här är en figur som ska föreställa livets steg. Översta steget skall föreställa bästa tänkbara liv för dig. Nedersta sämsta tänkbara liv.

1. På vilket steg tycker du att du står just nu?

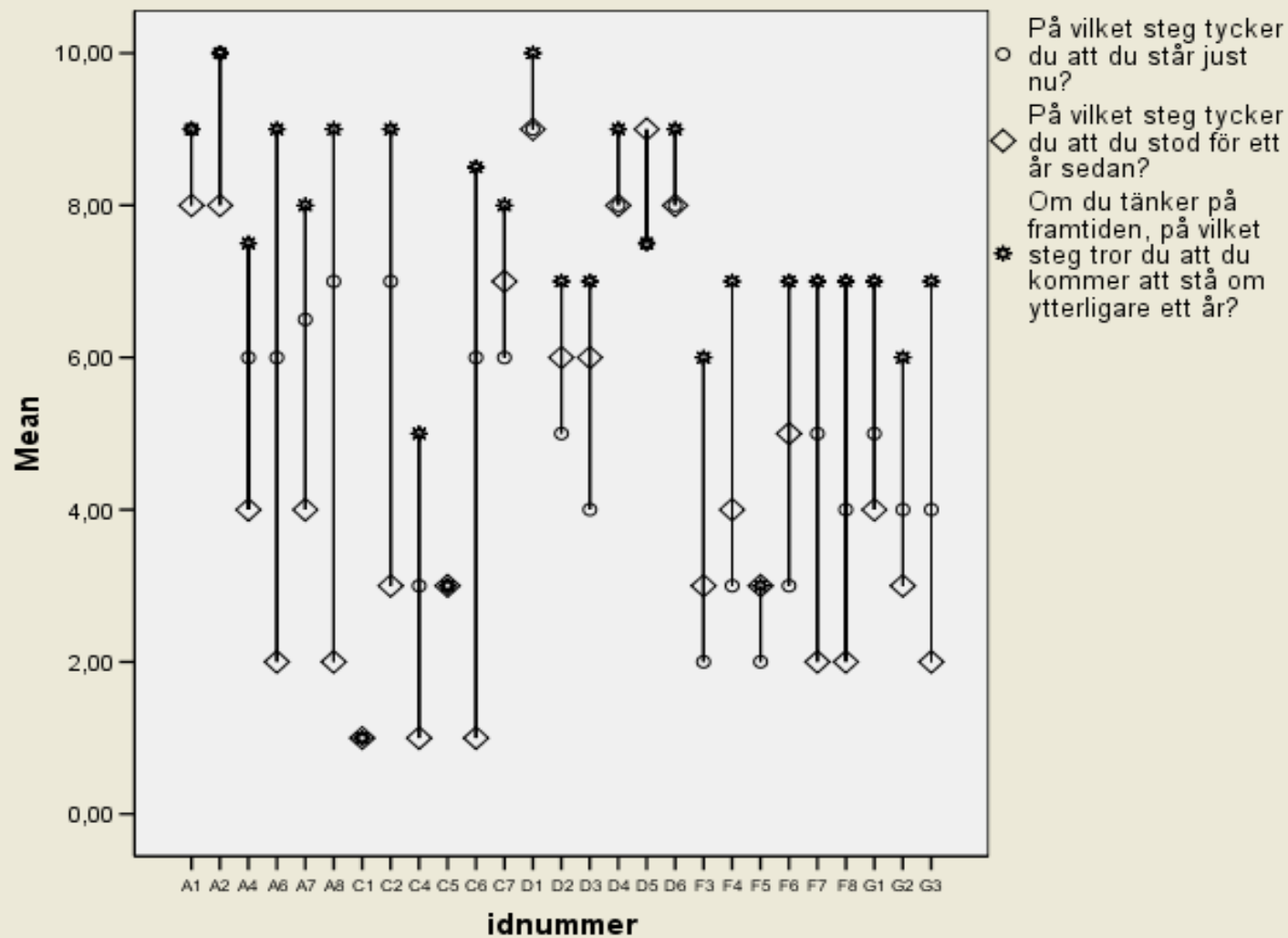
2. På vilket steg tycker du att du stod för ett år sedan?

3. Om du tänker på framtiden, på vilket steg tror du att du kommer att stå om ytterligare ett år?

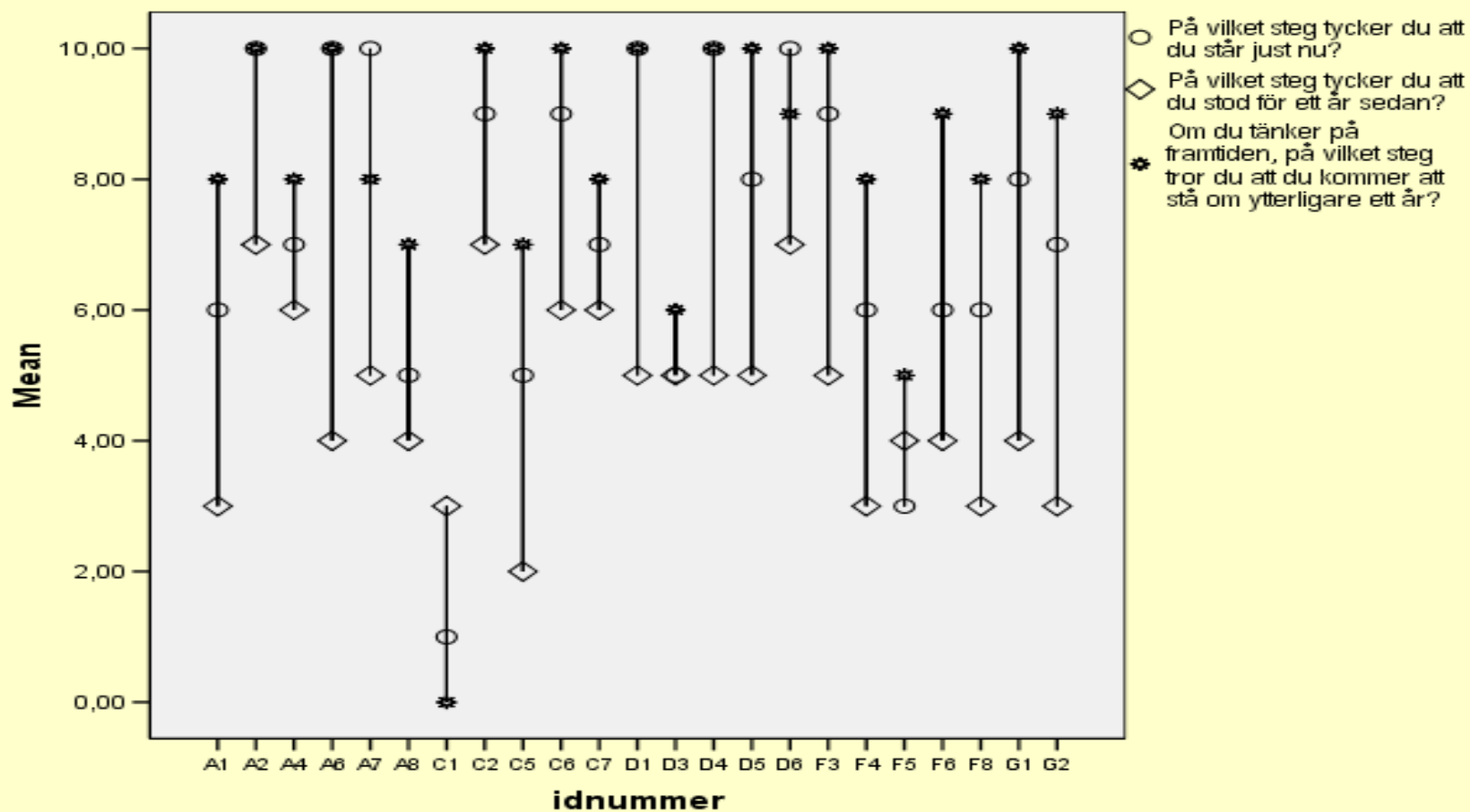
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1



Ladder of life before group



Ladder of life after group



Result of the Uppsala project

- ❑ Based on 90 children/youth 7-22 years
 - ❑ The questionnaires are useful for this purpose
 - ❑ Ladder of life showed increased hopefulness
 - ❑ The KASAM 13 showed increased sense of coherence
 - ❑ SDQ children/youth showed less emotional problems (but behavior problems seemed to be the same).
 - ❑ BarnKASAM – not analysed yet (too few answers)
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The present and future

- ❑ The Uppsala project - continued datacollection - now totally 250 answers collected (analyses almost ready)
 - ❑ A digital version of the model is being developed to simplify data collection.
 - ❑ Self evaluation forms for the youngest 7-9 still needed
 - ❑ The Stockholm project is developing – data collection in about 30 groups during fall of 2009.
 - ❑ The RCT-study is in its planning state.
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