Evaluation of Parent Therapy/Training in a Community-based System of Care

Dr. Mary Kay Falconer, Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida

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College of Social Work, Florida State University

Funded through a Contract with the Florida Institute for Child Welfare
Project Overview

• Overall Purpose of the Project – The purpose was to evaluate parenting programs and therapies currently offered to families with children birth to 5 receiving case management services within the system of care managed by Big Bend Community-based Care.

• Two Components
  – Implementation Study
  – Key Informant Study
Implementation Study Description

• **Purpose:** This study was designed to evaluate the implementation and performance of Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) and Circle of Security (COS-P) currently offered to families with children birth to 5 receiving case management services within the system of care managed by Big Bend Community-Based Care (BBCBC).

• **Sample:** 10 parents in 9 cases

• **Measures and Data Collection**
  – Self-administered questionnaire (modified Parenting Sense of Competence Scale) to 10 parents measuring perceptions of parent competence,
  – Semi-structured interviews with 3 parents regarding their views on their therapeutic experiences, and
  – Case-related data from FSFN and case management files
Implementation Study Findings (selected CFSR)

- Safety: No “verified” or “not substantiated” maltreatment findings during EBI and study
- Permanency: One family reunified during EBI
- Well-Being (i.e., enhanced capacity of families to provide for children’s needs): 1 of 3 parents reported higher sense of parenting competence after EBI
Key Informant Study Description

• **Research Question:** What are the key informant experiences and views regarding: 1) current operations of parenting education services, 2) use of evidence-based interventions in improving parenting among at risk families of children, age birth to 5, and 3) collaboration?

• **Sample (Key Informants):**
  – Case Management Staff: 20 (case managers and supervisors)
  – Therapist/Service Providers: 7 (CPP, COS-P, STEP, Early Steps, Common Sense Parenting, Early Learning Coalition)
  – Judicial Representatives: 6 (judges, magistrates, and court managers)

• **Measurement and Data Collection:** Semi-structured individual interviews

• **Data Analysis:** Thematic (EBI and Collaboration themes)
Key Informant Study Findings

• Criteria for the selection of EBIs and services by case managers were not standard.
• Strengths of EBIs did not always refer to specific items or components in each EBI model.
• Limitations of EBIs and other services were based primarily on inappropriate conditions or challenges that made it difficult for them to be successful (i.e., lack of parental engagement, no transportation, delays in initiating EBIs and services).
• While the importance of current EBIs was recognized and supported, there were also other therapeutic approaches that were considered beneficial.
• Collaboration essential among child welfare professionals.
Challenges, Limitations and Strengths

• Challenges recruiting therapists/providers and participants for the implementation study.
• Information required for the implementation study was not always available in FSFN or hardcopy case management files.
• In the key informant study, the level of interest and participation of case management, therapists/providers, and judicial representatives was excellent.
Questions for CBCs Interested in Incorporating EBIs in their Array of Services

1) Will standard criteria be used to select EBIs for families in the child welfare system? If yes, who will develop the criteria?

2) If a service or therapy does not meet the standard criteria for EBIs, will it be funded as a service for families in the child welfare system?

3) If a provider uses a therapy model that does not meet the standards for an EBI but is requested by a parent, will that provider be permitted and funded to provide services to that parent?

4) What process will be used to monitor the implementation of an EBI in order to determine its fidelity to the therapy model?
Questions for CBCs Interested in Incorporating EBIs in their Array of Services

5) What are the barriers that affect the implementation of an EPI and jeopardize its model fidelity and effectiveness?

6) Is the child welfare system functioning at a sufficient level in terms of their “readiness for evaluation” to empirically implement and assess therapy models and outcomes, such that evidence of the effectiveness of services for families can be determined? If not, what changes are needed and how can these changes be implemented?
An Overview of New Hires into the Child Welfare Workforce

Results from the Florida Study of Professionals for Safe Families

Dina J. Wilke, PhD, Melissa Radey, PhD, Philip Osteen, PhD, Caitlin Nolan, MSW, LMSW, Erin A. King, MSW, LCSW, Carmella Miller, MSW, LCSW
Funding Source

• Florida Institute for Child Welfare
FSPSF Overview

- Primarily focused on turnover and retention
  - Worker personal characteristics
  - Organizational characteristics
  - Work characteristics
  - Community context

- 5-year longitudinal study
  - Same cohort of workers
  - Surveyed every 6-7 months
  - Designed to measure change over time

- 100% of administrative units are participating
  - 6 DCF regions
  - 6 Sheriff’s offices
  - 17 CBCs
Sample Recruitment

• Case Managers and CPIs in pre-service training
  – September 2015 – August 2016

• Through first 9 months:
  – Visited 99 pre-service trainings
    • 93% of eligible participants consented (n=1,081)
    • Received completed surveys from 92% (n=995)
  – Received completed surveys from 85% of all new hires
Sample Description

- **Job category**
  - Case managers: 58%
  - CPIs: 42%
    - DCF: 84%
    - Sheriff Offices: 16%
Worker Characteristics

• Race
  – White: 54%
  – Black: 40%
  – Asian/Pacific Islander: 1%
  – Native American: < 1%
  – Alaskan Native: <1%
  – Bi- or Multi-Racial: 5%

• Ethnicity
  – Latino/Spanish origin: 16%

• Bilingual: 26%

• US born: 89%

• Gender Identification:
  – Male: 16%
  – Female: 83%
  – Transgender/Other: <1%
Worker Characteristics

• Age
  – Average: 31.9 years
  – Range: 21-65
  – Standard dev: 9.5

• Marital status
  – Single, never married: 55%
  – Married: 30%
  – Separated/Divorced/Widowed: 15%
Education/Employment Background

**Highest Degree**

- Bachelors: 80
- Masters: 10
- JD/MD/PhD: 5

**Major**

- Crim/CJ: 25
- Psych: 30
- Soc Wk: 20
- Other HS: 15
- Non HS: 10
Education/Employment Background

• Years of full-time work experience
  – Average: 8.9 years
  – Range: 0-50
  – Standard dev: 8.8

• Prior child welfare experience (paid or internship): 42%

• Years of child welfare work experience
  – Average: 3.8 years
  – Range: 0-39
  – Standard dev: 4.8
Personal Circumstances

• History of childhood maltreatment: 40%

• Level of current psychological distress
  – Average: 0.51
  – Range: 0-4
  – Standard Dev: .55

• Level of sleep disturbance
  – Average: 1.1
  – Range: 0-4
  – Standard Dev: .84
Work Circumstances

• Reliance on child welfare employment income
  – Completely: 66%
  – Somewhat: 29%
  – Not at all: 5%

• Number of days/week spent completing some work
  – Average: 5.1
  – Range: 0-7
    • 3% indicated 4 or fewer days worked
  – Standard Dev: .82
Work Circumstances

• Satisfaction with **salary**
  – Average: 2.5
  – Range: 0-5
  – Standard Dev: 1.1

• Satisfaction with **benefits**
  – Average: 3.1
  – Range: 0-5
  – Standard Dev: 1.0
Preparing the Child Welfare Workforce

*Examining Differences in Pre-Service Curriculum Implementation*

*Dina J. Wilke, PhD*

*Stephanie C. Kennedy, PhD*
Project Overview

• Rationale
  – Standardized curriculum content
  – Much variation in curriculum implementation

• Process
  – Requested one example of a training calendar from each unique training unit
  – Abstracted data elements from each calendar
  – Sent findings to key points of contact for each training unit
    • About 52% of contacts responded
  – Revised findings per feedback from contact
    • May still be mistakes (pending verification)
  – Received permission to summarize findings here (n=36)
## Total Days in Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full Sample</th>
<th>Case Managers</th>
<th>CPIs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>55.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Std Dev</td>
<td>10.32</td>
<td>9.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Range</td>
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<td>29 – 59</td>
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## Number of Structured Field Days

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<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Std Dev</strong></td>
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<td>4.4</td>
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<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
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## Number of Labs

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<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>9.4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Std Dev</strong></td>
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<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>0 – 10</td>
<td>0 – 7</td>
<td>8 - 10</td>
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## Number of FSFN Days

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<th>CPIs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Std Dev</strong></td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Range</strong></td>
<td>1 – 15</td>
<td>1 – 7</td>
<td>2 – 15</td>
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### Number of Days of Online Content

(n=16)

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<th>CPIs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Std Dev</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>.80</td>
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<td>Range</td>
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“Thrown Right in Right Away”: Voices of Recently-hired Child Protection Investigators and Case Managers

Melissa Radey, PhD
Carmella Miller, MSW
Philip Osteen, PhD
Dina Wilke, PhD
Lisa Schelbe, PhD
Research Questions

• What characterizes the training and transition process for newly-hired Child Protective Investigators (CPIs) and Case Managers (CMs) in Florida?

• What impacts newly-hired workers’ preparedness for independent caseloads?
Methodology

- We used quota sampling of Florida Study of Professionals for Safe Families (FSPSF) baseline respondents.
- We conducted telephone interviews with 21 CPIs and 17 CMs in all Florida regions.
- Participants met four criteria:
  - currently employed as a CPI or CM
  - recently participated in the online portion of the FSPSF study
  - recently completed pre-service training
  - recently acquired own caseload.
- Interviews lasted between 22 and 68 minutes, averaging 43 minutes.
Analytic Approach

• Thematic analysis using the qualitative software, NVivo
  – a detailed approach appropriate for identifying and analyzing patterns in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
    • Become familiar with the data.
    • Generate initial codes.
    • Search for initial themes.
    • Review the themes.
    • Define and name the themes.
    • Produce the report.
Sample Description

• Workers ranged in age from 21 to 59 with an average of 33 years old.
• Most workers were White \( (n = 21) \) or Black \( (n = 9) \), with 2 bi- or multi-racial participants.
• Workers had been on their current job an average of 28 weeks, or approximately 6 months (range = 21-41)
• 52% indicated previous child welfare experience
Findings. Pre-Service Training

- Content is informative, yet difficult to apply because of client complexities and agency procedures that workers encounter.
  - [The] book covered textbook cases, but people are not textbook cases.
  - we never really got the full, the realness, the rawness of what it really means to be a CPI. We never really got that. We got the sugar-coated part of it.
  - I feel like the classroom prepared us for the perfect world, if everything went okay, ...whereas when you're working with a family, a lot of times our families have ten-plus priors, and so they're very familiar with the system. At times they may know more than you do, and it's just a different ball game – very different ball game.
Findings. Pre-Service Training

- Field training was helpful, but highly variable. Participants wanted more field days to understand the daily reality of the work.
  - The field days were very critical in learning how to be prepared in learning the agency’s approach to things like conducting home visits...which to me was the scariest thing.
  - Unfortunately there weren't a lot of those field days and we weren't guaranteed to get whatever unit item you were supposed to be learning if you went out in the field that day.
  - I had field days, but rarely did I go out. There was not staff willing to take me out or to take us out. We were more used as transporters. Go pick up kids, take them here, take them there.
Findings. Transition to Independent Caseload

• Transition was highly variable depending on protected caseload procedures and caseload assignment procedures.
  – Varying lengths of protected caseload sizes (0 – 12 weeks)
  – Varying lengths of protected caseload severity (0 – 12 weeks)
Findings. Transition to Independent Caseload

— I can tell you [my transition] was a disaster. [On a protected caseload in my agency,] you get a case, and you get a day to work that case, and the next day another case. You get a day in between to...get all your ducks in a row, get all the paperwork done...[W]hen I got off of protected caseload, ...I went from getting two cases a week to getting two cases a day, and that was challenging. I was not a happy camper.
Findings. Transition to Independent Caseload

• Unwritten expectations about forms and procedures leave workers confused about what to do.
  
  – There was no guidance from supervisors to be like, "Hey, this is the case you're getting. This is what you need to do." That was very difficult for me because it was almost like you're given a case, and they assume you know certain things. The things you don’t know, they assume you know.
  
  – There was little guidance on handling the first case and then the cases keep coming, but there is no guidance on how to handle the cases.
Findings. Agency Environment

• The environment was stressful due to the nature of the job (e.g., guidelines, expectations, rules, workload).
  – we're all on the same page that we are severely overworked [and] severely understaffed...

• ½ of participants felt the agency morale was positive; the other ½ felt it was negative.
Findings. Agency Environment

- Environments with high morale included accessible supervisors, collaborative coworkers, and a team approach.
  - If somebody observes that another CPI is struggling with their caseload. A lot of times they’ll go to that CPI’s supervisor or their supervisor and say, “Hey, what can we do to help this person? They seem like they’re overwhelmed.”
  - I had one of my teammates go out with me on a case, because I couldn’t find a father...and we worked together to find him. And we did. And it was a good teambuilding experience. And then I had another time when a teammate called me and said, “Hey, I really need help with this.” And I went out and helped them.
Findings. Agency Environment

- Environments with low morale were largely unfriendly and understaffed with high caseloads.
  - In training, they told all these stories about how we got all this support system around us and how we can count on each other, and that's not true. It's a lie. We're nothing more than numbers... [t]hat's what it feels like around there.
Findings. Agency Protocol

• Workers felt a disconnect between training content and agency protocol.
  – Knowing the policy and doing the job are two different things:
    • [I]n the classroom setting, you've got a lot of information being thrown at you. Not thrown at you, but being presented to you, and when you pass that exam and you get your caseload, you've got a lot of expectations being put on you. I don't know. Then I've had people say, "It'll all come together. You've got to give it about a year or two and you'll get it." Well, I don't feel like I'm getting it.
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• Workers were unfamiliar with necessary forms for particular circumstances.
  – there are certain forms that I have difficulty filling out or that weren't shown to me in training and... I just feel like I'm letting down my supervisor often.
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Findings. Expectations-Reality Divide

- Participants felt that the job met their expectations that they could help children and families; however, they did not expect the extremely high caseloads and the workload expectations associated with each case (e.g., forms, procedures)
  - So I knew that we would be making safety decisions...however it's just different when ...you're actually doing it, and then those cases start to pile up, and you feel as though you're just one person and all this weight is piled on top of you and it's holding you down so then you just become overwhelmed.
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• The environment was stressful due to the nature of the job (e.g., guidelines, expectations, rules, workload).
  – *we're all on the same page that we are severely overworked [and] severely understaffed*...

• Job took more than 40 hours.
  – ½ of participants felt the agency morale was positive; the other ½ felt it was negative.
Findings. Agency Environment

- Environments with high morale included accessible supervisors, collaborative coworkers, and a team approach.
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    • This is not what I signed up for.
Findings. Agency Protocol

• Workers were unfamiliar with necessary forms for particular circumstances.
  – there are certain forms that I have difficulty filling out or that weren't shown to me in training and... I just feel like I'm letting down my supervisor often.
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  – I was just thinking I might as well have been told to build a rocket ship by myself in an hour without knowing how to build a rocket ship. That's how I feel about this job. It's impossible to do a good job with what you're working with.
Findings. Agency Protocol

• Workers unsure of case assignment protocol, deadlines, and office policy and regulations.
  
  — It's a very convoluted thing. The chief advisors all go into an office every morning and they sit down together, and they figure out who's on rotation and who isn't, by some magic formula. And then after an hour or two of negotiation, they put out a list of who's on rotation and in what order.
Findings. Expectations-Reality Divide

- Participants felt that the job met their expectations that they could help children and families; however, they did not expect the extremely high caseloads and the workload expectations associated with each case (e.g., forms, procedures)
  - So I knew that we would be making safety decisions...however it's just different when...you're actually doing it, and then those cases start to pile up, and you feel as though you're just one person and all this weight is piled on top of you and it's holding you down so then you just become overwhelmed.
Summary of Key Findings

• Transitions vary greatly among CPIs and CMs
• Client complexities and agency protocol (written and unwritten) contribute to difficulty in applying knowledge gained in training
• Field days help understand reality of position
• Participants felt unfamiliar with certain forms and procedures
Summary of Key Findings (continued)

• High caseloads and being understaffed contribute to low morale
• Supportive colleagues and supervisors contribute to high morale
• Positions are stressful and require more than 40 hours a week
Implications

• Emphasize “real-life” scenarios in training
• Provide training on agency protocols and forms
• Prioritize manageable caseloads
• Promote support for new CPIs and CMs