



BASSC

'Evidence for Practice'

Projects 2004-2005

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BASSC Strategy 2004-2005

- Three Structured Reviews:
 - Interventions to Reduce Front-end Disproportionality
 - Instruments for Risk and Safety Assessment
 - Child Welfare Outcomes

BASSC Strategy 2004-2005

- Questions posed by BASSC Agency Directors
- Done in collaboration with advisory groups
- “Structured” process with specified search terms and sources
 - Reduces bias
 - Allows for transparency

Systematic Review Vs. Structured Review

Systematic Review

Review protocol includes:

- Topic/objective of review
- Population
- Type of intervention(s)
- Outcomes of interest
- Search strategy
- Inclusion/Exclusion criteria (largely based on methodological rigor)

Selection of studies:

- Based on inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Randomized controlled trials
- Other quasi-experimental studies
- Meta-analyses

Systematic Review Vs. Structured Review

Structured Review

- Based on systematic review model
- Protocol is specified before search
 - Topic/objective of review
 - Population
 - Type of intervention(s)
 - Outcomes of interest
 - Search strategy (see handout of search terms and databases)
 - Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

Systematic Review Vs. Structured Review

Structured Review

- Modified inclusion/exclusion criteria—topic relevance in addition to methodological rigor
- Example of disproportionality: wide variation in methodology, absence of studies with high degree of methodological rigor
- Broadened focus to include studies that indirectly addressed disproportionality by improving outcomes for children and families of color.
- Focus is on describing the nature of interventions and the overall kind of evidence in support of them

Interventions to Address Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality

- Focus was on front-end of CWS (directors' request)
- Decision point analysis to see where disproportionality was introduced
- Identified three theories upon which interventions were based

Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality: Theories and Interventions

<i>Theory #1:</i> BIAS	<i>Theory #2:</i> POVERTY	<i>Theory #3:</i> SYSTEMS
Actuarial Risk Assessment	Differential Response	Leadership
Family Group Conferencing	Out-Stationing Social Workers	Vertical Case Management
Improving Cultural Competence	Ethnic-Specific Services	Community Collaborations
	Home Visiting	
	Involving Fathers	

Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality: Categorization of Studies

A: Reduction of disproportionality

- None

B: Improvement of child welfare case processes possibly related to disproportionality

- Actuarial Risk Assessment
- Family Group Conferencing
- Differential Response

C: Effectiveness with children and families of color

- Ethnic Specific Services
- Home Visiting

D: Client satisfaction

- Differential Response

E: Program descriptions with no evidence of outcomes

- Improving Cultural Competence
- Out-Stationing Social Workers
- Involving Fathers
- Organizational Leadership
- Vertical Case Management
- Community Collaborations

Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality: Implications

- Empirical research lacking
- No studies testing interventions to reduce racial/ethnic disproportionality
- No specific practice emerges as best, suggestions are general
- Counties can look at which theories applies to their specific context and combine interventions
- More evaluations are needed

Instruments for Risk and Safety Assessment

- Topic selected by directors
- Considered identified instruments for which there were research studies assessing:
 - Validity
 - Reliability
 - Outcomes
 - Use with different racial/ethnic groups

Instruments for Risk and Safety Assessment

- Excluded studies if:
 - Instrument not assessing risk
 - Not examining a specific instrument
 - Not examining qualities of interest
- Five instruments:
 - Consensus based instruments: WRAM, CFAFA, CARF, CERAP
 - “Actuarial” instruments: CRC Risk Assessments

Instruments for Risk and Safety Assessment

- Available studies on consensus based instruments generally showed poor predicative validity and reliability
- CRC risk assessment instruments showed stronger validity and reliability
- Several studies showed improved recurrence rates after CERAP implementation
- Mixed findings regarding use with different racial/ethnic groups
- NOTE: Gaps exist in research literature on the subject!

Understanding and Measuring Child Welfare Outcomes

- Not an intervention study
- Provided a summary of outcomes and measurement strategy as context for new federal outcomes
- Process and Critique of CSFRs
- Summarized research on 3 federal child welfare outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being

Understanding and Measuring Child Welfare Outcomes: Summary of Research

Safety:

- **Recurrence of maltreatment**
- **Incidence of abuse or neglect in foster care**
- **Foster care re-entry**

Permanence:

- **Stability of foster care placement**
- **Time to reunification**
- **Time to adoption**

Well-Being:

- **Physical and mental health**
- **Education**
- **Independent living**

Understanding Child Welfare Outcomes: Federal Reviews

- Children and Families Services Reviews (CSFRs) launched in 2001
- All 50 states completed; all failed
- Two kinds of data used:
 - Administrative data (6 indicators)
 - On site review data (case files and interviews; 23 indicators)

Understanding Child Welfare Outcomes: Measurement Concerns


- Administrative data
 - Same standards for all states
 - AFCARS not longitudinal
 - Exit cohorts used
- On site data
 - Small sample
 - Heavily weighted

Understanding Child Welfare Outcomes: California's Response – AB 636

- Incorporates federal outcomes and adds others
- Uses longitudinal data
- Entry cohorts
- No standards set



Lessons Learned 2004-2005

- Research gaps, few studies methodologically rigorous
 - Questions posed by researchers and practitioners differ
 - Need strategy for best way to work with agency
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Upcoming BASSC Structured Reviews

- Evidence on how tools measuring **family assessment** might inform the risk assessment and service planning process
- Evidence on **substance abuse interventions for parents involved in the child welfare system**
- Evidence on **parent education programs for parents involved in the child welfare system**



Questions?

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