Evidence Based Practice in Child Welfare in the Context of Cultural Competency

June 11, 2007
McNamara Alumni Center

Susan J. Wells
Gamble-Skogmo Professor in Child Welfare and Youth Policy
Our Purpose Today

- In Child Welfare
  - What works for children and families...
  - ...of diverse populations?
Through Today’s Discussion
We Seek to Establish:

☐ What do we know and…
what do we need to know?

☐ Where are we now and…
where do we need to go?
We Will Focus On:

- Research
- Practice
- Policy
Conceptual Approach to the Day

- Foundation:
  - Definitions & EBP/Cultural Competence in Child Welfare
  - Conceptual Framework
- Implementation Panels
- Informational Discussion
- Build for the Future: Group discussions
Note on Things Familiar and Unfamiliar

- Because you are experts in your fields – we have asked you to come and share your experience, your questions and your ideas

- At the same time, some topics or terms may be new
One Resource: The Meeting Book

- Standard items – for example, agenda, bios, roster, maps of building and area
- Structured guidelines for group discussion
- Legislative information, a preliminary bibliography, copies of PowerPoints
- Examples of participants’ ongoing projects
A Preliminary Review Has Found…

- Many studies underway & not published
- Most of the Literature is on
  - EBP
  - OR
  - Cultural Competence
Preliminary Review (continued)

- Some research on EBP includes race or ethnicity as a factor in the clients’ experience and effectiveness.

- Very few studies attend to EBP and cultural competence from the inception of the question; those are mostly in health and mental health.
Definitions First – Evidence Based Practice

In practice we use…..

- Most recent valid and reliable information that
- Results in change for children and families
How Do You Know What is the Cause of Observed Changes?

- **Association** between Cause & Effect
- **Time order**: Cause Comes Before Effect
- **Eliminate** Alternative Explanations

For example,

- Did something else cause the effect?
- Would it have happened anyway?
Association and Time Order
Alternative Explanations
Solution: Randomized, Controlled Trials

First Measure | Intervention | Last Measure

Presented by Susan J. Wells
June 11, 2007
So, How Trustworthy are Our Observations?

- Clinical experience & case studies
- Observed associations between intervention and outcome, but without
  - comparison group or
  - random assignment

Continued
How Trustworthy are Our Observations? (continued)

- Randomized control group designs (peer reviewed and publicly reported)
- Replication – measure the same intervention and outcomes with different groups in different places over time
- Meta-analysis
Next: Applied in Realistic Settings?

- Applicability of outcome findings
  - Efficacy
  - Effectiveness
- Are outcomes sustained over time?
The Best Interventions

- Culturally competent
- Well-researched, standardized (manualized)
- Appropriate to the:
  - Population
  - Agency mission and services
  - Assessment results
  - Purpose of the intervention

Continued ➡
The Best Interventions (continued)

- Used by a well-trained clinician who can:
  - Conduct an expert assessment
  - Discern the appropriate interventions and variations needed
  - Provide the intervention in an expert manner
When Well-used, EBP is Responsive to:

- A family’s race, ethnicity and culture
- A family’s specific needs and circumstances
- The recognition of diversity within cultures
Evidence Based Practice (EBP) in Child Welfare

- Very few controlled studies
- Rarely attend to race, culture, ethnicity in the question & design
- Outcomes measured are not always helpful

Continued
EBP in Child Welfare (continued)

- Intervention used not measured or not reproduced faithfully (with fidelity)
- Positive findings not easily transferred from one place to another
- Transfer often doesn’t consider race, culture or ethnicity
Some Studies to Think About - Practice: Therapeutic Interventions

- Abuse-focused cognitive behavioral therapy
- Parent-child interaction therapy
- Functional family therapy
Some Studies to Think About - Practice: Parenting*

- Parent Management Training ($318/family)
- The Incredible Years ($600/parent)
- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy ($3,638/family)

Some Studies to Think About - Practice: Prevention

- **Family Connections**
  - Community centered
  - Quasi-experimental design
  - Child welfare target population
  - Currently being replicated
Some Studies to Think About: Policy

- Illinois’ Subsidized Guardianship Project and other Title IV-E Waivers
- Michigan’s Case Management Project with Children’s Research Center
- Minnesota’s Alternative Response
Barriers to EBP in Child Welfare*

- Funding
- Lack of advocacy or consumer demand
- Lack of incentives linking reward to client outcomes

Barriers to EBP in Practice*

- Gulf between research and practice communities
- Search for the magic bullet
- Attitudes about EBP or Practice

Suggestions*

- Change funding to support and reward outcomes-based practice
- Fund implementation grants
- Increase EBP emphasis in graduate schools
- Improve marketing of EBP

Suggestions (continued)*

- Foster a continual evaluation feedback loop in public agencies with a positive climate
- Demonstrate EBP as a practitioner friendly support and tool
- Increase advocacy & demand for best practices

EBP and Cultural Competence*

- Communities of color must be included in planning and development of EBPs
- Cultural competence must be defined and required for EBPs
- Practice based evidence must be a critical component of EBPs

EBP and Cultural Competence*

- Process of developing and credentialing EBPs needs to be inclusive of communities of color
- Process of implementing EBPs in communities of color must be supported with resources

*Isaacs et al., 2005.
And Now, A Conceptual Model for EBP in the Context of Cultural Competence…

Dr. Bell
References


References (continued)


References (continued)


Mullen, E., & Shlonsky, A. (2004). From concept to implementation: The challenges facing evidence-based social work. On *Faculty Research and Insights: A Series Featuring CUSSW Faculty Research* [PowerPoint presentation].

References (continued)


Testa, M. (n.d.) Encouraging child welfare intervention through IV-E waivers. Urbana, IL: Children and Family Research Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
