

Selected Practices in Engagement and Assessment: Identifying Factors that Build Resilience

Resilience is a developmental process¹ that produces positive patterns of adaptation following periods of privation or abuse². In order to support resilience building in child welfare case planning and policy, identifying the factors that contribute to this promising development is essential to the initial stages of client contact: engagement and assessment.

Engagement Best Practices

Signs of Safety

- ❖ At least 20 counties around MN and one Tribe (2010)
- ❖ Utilizes Appreciative Inquiry

Motivational Interviewing

- ❖ Recommended practice by Minnesota Department of Human Services
- ❖ Frequent use with parents experiencing drug or alcohol dependence

Assessment Best Practices

MN Family Assessment Response

- ❖ Comprehensive Family Assessment (CFA) – Ramsey County
- ❖ Family Assessment (FA) – Hennepin County

Structured Decision Making (SDM)

- ❖ Minnesota Safety Assessment
- ❖ RED (review, evaluate, and direct) Team child protection screening process

Engagement: *Signs of Safety* is a strengths based framework that supports resilience building in child welfare case planning by developing a partnership with the entire family from the first contact and promoting a context of safety as opposed to danger while still addressing the issue of maltreatment³. This initial contact utilizes Appreciative Inquiry to focus on assets and goals.

Motivational Interviewing is a method that supports resilience building in child welfare case planning by facilitating the parent's self-motivation in complying with the child protection system⁴. By developing efficacy at the first point of contact, MI allows parents to identify resilient factors in themselves and connect those factors to the welfare of their child(ren).

Assessment: *Family Assessment Response* supports resilience building in child welfare case planning by assessing the needs of the child(ren) and parents simultaneously from a strengths based perspective⁵. This process allows parents to develop skills that appropriately and effectively meet the needs of their child(ren) in order to strengthen family unity and ensure continued welfare.

Structured Decision Making supports resilience building in child welfare case planning by offering checklists in order to assess levels of risk, need, strength, and safety, among other determinants of well-being⁶. These tools provide structure while allowing for individualization to best address concerns of maltreatment and work towards a safe and strengthened family.

¹ Cicchetti, D. et al. (1993). "Resilience in Maltreated Children: Processes leading to adaptive outcome." *Development and Pathology* 5, 629-647.

² Masten, A. (2006). "Promoting Resilience in Development: A General Framework for Systems of Care." Published in Flynn, R.J. *Promoting resilience in child welfare*. University of Ottawa Press: Ottawa.

³ Signs of Safety, 2010 <http://www.signsofsafety.net/signsofsafety>

⁴ MN Judicial Branch, MN Department of Human Services "Through the Eyes of the Child: CJI-AOD Tool Kit"

⁵ MN Department of Human Services, 2011 <http://www.dhs.state.mn.us>

⁶ MN Department of Human Services, 2009, *SSIS Training Module*

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Short List of Factors Associated with Behavioral Resilience in Children and Youth

Masten, A. (2006). "Promoting Resilience in Development: A General Framework for Systems of Care." Published in Flynn, R.J. *Promoting resilience in child welfare*. University of Ottawa Press: Ottawa.

Relationships and Parenting

- ❖ Strong connections with one or more effective parents
- ❖ Parenting quality (providing affection, rules, monitoring, expectations, socialization)
- ❖ Bonds with other prosocial adults (kinship networks, mentors, elders, teachers)
- ❖ Connections to prosocial and competent peers

Individual Differences

- ❖ Learning and problem-solving skills (intelligence)
- ❖ Self-regulation skills (self-control of attention, emotional, arousal, impulses)
- ❖ Positive views of the self and one's capabilities (self-efficacy and self-worth)
- ❖ Positive outlook on life (beliefs that life has meaning, faith, hopefulness)
- ❖ Appealing qualities (social, academic, athletic, attractive; engaging personality; talents)

Community Context

- ❖ Effective schools
- ❖ Opportunities to develop valued skills and talents
- ❖ Community quality (safety, collective supervision, positive organizations, emergency services)
- ❖ Connections to prosocial organizations (clubs, religious groups)
- ❖ Socioeconomic advantages