

A Reflection on the Approach to Evaluate  
*Comprehensive Family Assessment*

**RAMSEY COUNTY  
COMMUNITY HUMAN  
SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

# Ramsey County Community Human Services Department

- ◎ State supervised, county administered provider employing over 1,400 staff and annually serving over 70,000 individuals
- ◎ Located in an urban county (approximately 500,000 individuals)
  - 25% of children are eligible for Medicaid
  - 19% of children are Asian
  - 17% of children are African American
  - 12% of children are Latino
  - 1% of children are American Indian
- ◎ High rates of child poverty, children born to teen mothers, children eligible for free and reduced school lunch, child abuse and neglect, and children arrested for serious crimes
- ◎ Service delivery system includes both RCCHSD employees and a wide variety of community providers
  - 60% of all of RCCHSD's services are provided through private contracts

# Ramsey County Community Human Services Department

- ◎ Family and Children's Services Division provides child welfare, child protection and children's mental health services in addition to licensing foster homes and day care homes
  - Division Director (Janine Moore), Intake & Program Managers (2), supervisors (7)
  - Approximately 80 workers (Intake, FA, Case Management)
  - Child Protection stats for 2010:
    - 2,950 children assessed for maltreatment
    - Maltreatment was determined for 784 children
    - Nearly 1,700 children received case management services
    - 500 children were in out-of-home placement

# Original Evaluation Design

- ◎ Randomized Controlled Trial
  - Implementation/Evaluation in Case Management
  - Implementation/Evaluation in Intake
- ◎ Core Evaluation Components:
  - Case Record Review
  - Worker & Supervisor Focus Groups
  - Family Interviews
  - Fidelity Studies
  - Workload/Time Study
  - Cost Study
  - Management Study
  - Outcomes Study
  - School Outcomes Study

# Original Evaluation Design Cont.

## ◎ Appropriateness of Evaluation:

- Experimental design in large urban county
- Division of units (location & agency structure)
- Building off of current practice in CM units
- Leadership amenable to change in practice
- Partnership b/w RCCHSD and UMN

## ◎ Evaluation Planning Process:

- Grant co-written between RCCHSD management and University faculty
- Addressed critical issues

# Departmental Changes

- ◎ Structural/Staff Changes
  - New CFS Director 2008
  - Family Assessment (Alternative Response) Changes:
    - Creation of FA CM unit 2008
    - Creation of FA “one worker, one family model” 2011
  - Reduction of 1 supervisor position 2008
  - New Intake & Case Management Managers 2011
- ◎ Implementation of internal initiatives:
  - Service Quality Assurance (SQA)
  - Parent Partners
  - Family Group Decision Making
  - Permanency Planning
- ◎ CB Adoptions Opportunity Grant (AOG)
- ◎ 2006-2009 Declines in maltreatment reports, Case Management caseloads, and out-of-home placements

# Evaluation Adaptation

- ◎ Pre-Test/Post-Test Design
  - Implementation/Evaluation in Case Management pilot units
  - Full Agency Implementation/Evaluation in traditional CP units
  - Implementation in CP FA units
- ◎ Core Evaluation Components:
  - Case Record Review
  - Worker & Supervisor Focus Groups
  - Management Study -> Study of Organizational Change
  - ❖ Fidelity Studies (intensified via Formative Evaluation process)
  - ❖ Case Aide Interviews
  - ❖ Supervisor Interviews & Observations (2x)
  - ❖ School Outcomes Study (intensified to include CRR portion)
  - ❖ Cultural Consultant Summary
  - Workload/Time Study
  - Cost Study
  - Family Interviews
  - Outcomes Study

# Evaluation Adaptation Cont.

- ⦿ Challenges faced:
  - Short time to develop and implement CFA
  - Agency initiatives and structural changes
- ⦿ Challenges overcome via:
  - Adaptation of evaluation design
    - On-going, regular communication
    - Technical assistance from JBell
    - Worker & supervisor responsiveness and openness
    - Inclusion of cultural consultants
    - Willingness of RCCHSD & UMN to consider adapting design
- ⦿ Factors hindering adaption:
  - Time
  - Agency initiatives/changes competing with resources (SQA)



# In Hindsight....

- ⦿ Re-evaluate scope and/or timing of proposed implementation and evaluation activities
  - Allow for more time to develop and implement CFA practice
  - Scale back overall implementation and/or evaluation design to accommodate unexpected adaptations that must occur and to allow for increased dissemination opportunities
  - Plan for a more extensive formative evaluation
- ⦿ Structure the experimental groups to consist of both Intake and Case Management units (not start with Case Management units solely)
- ⦿ Opportunity for preparation via SOC or other opportunity