

B-01 Major Activities and Accomplishments in This Period

1. Project Administration

Contracts with Consultants

Cultural Consultants: During the period of this report our cultural consultant, Full Circle Institute, has held regular meetings with the African American and Native American parent response focus groups. They have discussed the CFA model with the groups and have presented us with very valuable feedback from them. Full Circle has also added a Latina consultant. In order to overcome the problems noted previously with recruiting Latino parents for a parent response focus group, the director of Full Circle has conferred with a community agency serving Latino families. The agency believes they will be able to assist Full Circle in obtaining referrals for the Latino group. The Hmong consultant for Full Circle has been working with parents on a one to one basis, as has been mentioned in the previous Semi-annual Progress Report submitted October 31, 2009.

Also during the period of this report the Ramsey County CFA project team held five planning meetings with our cultural consultant. Two of these meetings included parents. Full Circle is working with these parents to assist them in developing into an advisory group for our project.

The African American and American Indian parent response groups have been very active during the period of this report. As of the October Advisory Group meeting, several of the focus group parents have joined that group and have been actively participating. The two groups have created powerful vignettes depicting the members' collective experience with the Child Protection system. The American Indian group presented its vignette to the Advisory Group in March, and we are planning to have them repeat the performance for all of the supervisors and managers in Child Protection. We will then plan for the presentation to be made to Child Protection staff. The African American group will make its presentation in May.

As was mentioned in the previous Semi-annual Report, the University of Minnesota evaluators believe that the quality of the information obtained from parents by the cultural consultants is more useful and more truly reflective of the parents' experience than was the information obtained in parent interviews. Therefore, the evaluators have met with Full Circle and are working on a method

to incorporate the parent response focus group information into their evaluation findings.

- Training Contract: We are continuing our contract with Lorrie Lutz from L3P Associates. (See Training Section below)

Ongoing Project Administration

- CFA Steering Committee: This group continues to meet twice each month and has proven to be a very effective vehicle for overseeing the development and implementation of our CFA model, coordinating Ramsey County activities with the University of Minnesota evaluation activities, coordinating the Service Quality Assurance (SQA) initiative described below, and problem solving in a number of areas.
- Advisory Group: In the fall we expanded the Advisory Group, adding additional stakeholders who are able to bring important perspectives to the group. The new members include representatives from the County Attorney's Office, Guardian Ad Litem Office, and child protection service consumers. Also, we increased the frequency of our meetings and now meet every two months. This group provides an excellent setting for the sharing and discussion of feedback from our cultural consultants and parents from the parent response focus groups.
- Service Quality Assurance (SQA): This is an agency-wide initiative aimed at improving Targeted Case Management rates and improving performance in audits by developing tools and training to promote standardized clinical practice and documentation in each program area. The goal is to "follow the golden thread" that connects assessment of needs and strengths, choice of services, effectiveness of services, and case outcomes. SQA features an auditing tool for supervisors so that they can track workers' performance. As was mentioned in the previous semi-annual report one of the units currently using the CFA model became a pilot unit for SQA. In this capacity the supervisor of that unit is using the auditing tool for supervisors. The pilot for Child Protection Intake is currently being planned.

Care has been taken to prevent confusion between SQA and CFA because they have somewhat similar goals and are being rolled out during the same period of

time. To date the coordination of the two projects has been very successful with both agency and University of Minnesota staff participating on the relevant SQA

working committees. A very deliberate effort has been made to incorporate CFA practice guidelines into the SQA guidelines with the hope that the supervisory audit tool will be useful in helping supervisors track workers' adherence to the CFA model.

2. Planning and Development of the CFA Model

INTAKE

- Activities Related to the Baseline Study of Use of Assessment Protocols in Practice in Child Protection Intake in Ramsey County Conducted by the University of Minnesota
During the period of this report the University analyzed data from the case record review, parent interviews, and worker and supervisor focus groups conducted during the period of the last semi-annual progress review. They have disseminated findings from the study (see section on Dissemination below), and have completed their report on the study (see attached).
- Planning and Development of the Intake Component of the CFA Model:
In approaching the development of the Intake component of the model, we have applied the important lessons we learned during the early planning and development of the model for Child Protection Program. These lessons were that we needed to allow much for time for planning, be very deliberate in training the supervisors adequately, and providing more training for all parties in smaller, more interactive sessions. In January we formed a planning group of six Intake staff, three supervisors, and the Intake manager, Tina Curry. This group has met weekly. Prior to the formation of this group, the managers consulted with our trainer and consultant, Lorrie Lutz, to devise our approach to the Intake model development. Ms. Lutz then conducted a two day training session with the Intake Planning Group: a full day with the whole planning group and a second day with the Intake supervisors only. These sessions were extremely helpful .

Ms. Lutz created a training guide for the Intake planning group to use that helped to link the concepts embedded in our CFA model with the Minnesota Department of Human Services mandated Structured Decision Making risk assessment tools.

Some of the staff on the Planning Group have begun to apply the new Intake model to their cases. The model incorporates a broad range of domains of family and individual functioning to guide the Intake workers' collection of assessment information in the case. It also provides a systematic procedure for using that information in deciding the level of safety threat in the case; whether placement is required; and whether on-going

services are required. The staff who have begun to use the model feel that the structure is very helpful.

The new Intake model will fit seamlessly with the already developed program model.

- Laptops: All social workers in Intake now have laptop computers. The two Child Protection units who formed the intervention group in the controlled trial found that the laptops have greatly facilitated their work, and it is assumed that the Intake staff will find a similar benefit when they begin to use the CFA model.

3. Implementation of the CFA Model

CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM

- Intervention Units: During the period of this report the two units that formed the intervention group during the controlled trial in Year 2 have continued to have regular consultation on the model with the Child Protection Program Manager, Richard Coleman. The staff have become adept at conducting functional assessments of their families, and have been using a “case mapping” process as a tool to help them apply the CFA model to their cases. This is an especially good method for conducting group case consultations as it provides a visual process for understanding how to proceed through the steps of the model.

Early in the period of this report, Ms. Lutz conducted interviews with the supervisors of the two intervention units in the controlled trial and a focus group with five workers. She found that overall the staff and supervisors were positive about the CFA model, but that some parts were not clear. In addition, she recommended that supervisors need focused attention and significant support in their understanding of how to guide workers in implementing the model.

It has become clear that some “infrastructure” needs to be developed to support the new practice model. With this thought in mind the case plan and court report formats have been provisionally amended to better reflect the concepts and activities of the new practice model. In addition, the referral forms for in-home and out of home parenting vendors have been altered to reflect more precisely what we are expecting from the vendors when they work with families using the CFA model.

- Model Modification Following Controlled Trial: During the period of this report discussions have been held with workers, supervisors and the managers as well as with evaluators from the University of Minnesota about whether adjustments may need to be made to the Program component of the model in light of the experience gained using it during the controlled trial. As was mentioned above Ms. Lutz

interviewed the supervisors and five of the workers involved in the trial. In addition, the University conducted extensive formative evaluation activities on the trial (see section below on Formative Evaluation of Trial in CP Program). The consensus of opinions on whether and how to modify the model is that a great deal more training needs to be offered to workers on how to use the model. There are no parts that people feel should be eliminated or substantially changed. Rather, there is a need for targeted and intensive training on how to use the model.

As we have approached the end of this reporting period we have reason to believe that the completion of the Intake portion of the model will actually substantially assist the Program workers in applying their part of the model. As was mentioned in the Semi-annual Report for the previous reporting period, a lesson we have learned is that the job of the Program workers applying the CFA model was made much more difficult because the Intake portion of the model was not yet developed. The activities of the Program workers are predicated on the analysis of safety, risk, family functioning, and parental behaviors requiring change done in Intake. Because we began model development in Child Protection Program, the workers needed to try to do that part of the work (the Intake portion) before they were able to proceed with their own work on the case. It is already clear that the largely completed Intake model lays out the case information and analysis in a way that will be very helpful to Program workers.

Training

- As was mentioned above in the Intake section, we have expanded and strengthened our training activities during the period of this review in response to the feedback obtained from staff during the University's fidelity testing. We have been mindful of the lessons we have learned from the fidelity testing feedback and from our experience in the development and initial training for the Program model. Hence, we have been careful to allow much more time for training; to schedule training in smaller, more interactive sessions; and to work much more intensively with our supervisors in order to maximize their ability to help and support staff as they learn and use the model. This approach has proven to be very helpful in our planning and training for the Intake portion of the model.
- Training for Program Supervisors: The results of the University's fidelity testing and other formative evaluation activities clearly indicated that our supervisors needed to be trained much more intensively in order to be able to function as leaders with their staff in learning and implementing the model. Therefore, as mentioned in the Intake section above, we provided additional separate training for the Intake supervisors that focused on their supervisory role.
- Training for the Two Control Child Protection Program Units: In beginning our approach to presenting the model to the two Child Protection units that were in the control group during the trial, we first worked with the supervisors of those units holding sessions where we provided an overview for them. We followed those

sessions with overview presentations for the workers in their units. These sessions were in preparation for training with Ms. Lutz that will occur during the period of the next report.

- Comparison of the CFA Model with Signs of Safety: During the period of this report we became aware the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) has been conducting training for counties in Andrew Turnell's Signs of Safety Model. We asked our consultant, Ms. Lutz, to explore the similarities and differences between our CFA model and Signs of Safety. She did prepare a document on this comparison (see attached). We then met with staff at DHS to discuss the issue. We have previously met to present our model to DHS staff, and there are DHS staff on our Advisory Group, so the Department is familiar with our model. The DHS staff felt that our CFA model is in considerable alignment with and complements the Signs of Safety approach.

- Evaluation Activities Related to Implementation
 - Formative Evaluation of Trial in Child Protection Program: A formative evaluation of the implementation of CFA in Child Protection Program was completed and disseminated (see section below on Dissemination). The evaluation included the completion of fidelity interviews with all fourteen workers currently utilizing CFA in Case Management, a randomly selected case record review from each of the workers, a week-long observation of all four supervisors in the CFA intervention units, interviews with each supervisor both before and after the observation period, and interviews with all four case aides working in units currently implementing CFA. The report on the formative evaluation is in the final stage of editing.

 - Management Study: The management study of management structure, policies, and practice is currently in progress. The management study will allow evaluators to identify the change process that is occurring during the development and implementation of changes that may impact both the implementation of CFA as well as outcomes. Instrumentation is currently being developed for the management study. However, some data collection processes are already in progress (i.e., tracking training and meeting attendance, policy changes, implementation of new initiatives, etc.).

 - SSIS School Outcomes Study: The school outcomes study is also currently in progress. The goal of the school study is to better understand the processes by which child protection workers interact with school systems, as this may affect educational outcomes of children involved in Child Protection. Case record reviews of worker/school collaboration in all cases included in the Intake and Program Baseline Studies have been completed. Additionally, all subject children from the baseline studies have been matched to educational records using the Minn-Link administrative database.

- Cost Study: The cost study, a study designed to determine whether pre-CFA or post-CFA practice is more cost-effective in regard to foster care re-entry and other associated outcomes, is also currently in progress. Instrumentation for data collection is in the development phase, and the University of Minnesota evaluators are working with Ramsey County staff to locate reliable and valid sources of data using SSIS and other Ramsey County databases.

4. Sustainability N/A

5. Other Activities N/A

B-03 Significant Findings and Events

Lessons Learned

As has been mentioned previously, we have been applying lessons learned as we have conducted the activities and planning during the period of this report. The lessons were learned from the University's formative evaluation activities including the "supervisor shadowing" project; from the interviews Ms. Lutz conducted in October with participants in the controlled trial; from staff feedback; and from our own experiences in planning and implementing the Program portion of the model. The lessons include:

- It is essential to provide more targeted and intensive training to supervisors so that they are able to assume a leadership role in helping their staff apply the model. We have applied this lesson carefully in our planning and development of the Intake portion of the model and in beginning to prepare the control units from the controlled trial for their training in the model.
- We have tried to provide a "graduated exposure" to the key terminology and concepts embedded in the model before staff have formal training in the model with Ms. Lutz. That is, we have held meetings with supervisors and staff where we walked them through an outline of the model and explained the important terms and concepts. We employed this method in our development of the Intake model and in our approach to the two control units in Program. It appears that doing this has enabled the individuals being trained to gain a head start when the formal training begins.

- Training should be in smaller, more interactive sessions as opposed to large group sessions. We have done this with the Intake planning group and with our early activities with the two control units, and it seems to have been very helpful.

B-04 Dissemination Activities

a. Current

- University of Minnesota Evaluation Website: “Evaluation of the Comprehensive Family Assessment Model in Child Welfare”. URL: <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/SSW/cascw/research/CFA%20Evaluation/default.asp>
Contact person: Traci LaLiberte- 612-624-2279.

This website is designed to share information regarding the CFA project with the Children’s Bureau, other grantees, and the broader audience of those interested in comprehensive family assessment. In addition, in order to be transparent it will provide a feedback loop to Ramsey County staff and management with on-going information regarding the status of evaluation activities and findings.

- Intake Baseline Study (See Attached): The findings were disseminated via a written report, a presentation to Ramsey County management staff, and two presentations to staff (one to the CFA Intake workgroup and one to the Program units currently implementing CFA).
- Formative Evaluation: The preliminary findings of the University’s formative evaluation were disseminated to supervisors participating in the supervisory observation prior to being presented elsewhere. The preliminary findings were also presented to Ramsey County management, to the Advisory Group, to the CFA Intake planning group, and to the Program units currently implementing CFA.
- Ms. Lutz’s Report from October Site Visit: A presentation was made to the two units who used the CFA model in the controlled trial to present the findings of Ms. Lutz’s interviews with the supervisors of those units and five workers. Ms. Lutz found that overall the staff and supervisors were positive about the CFA model, but that some parts were not clear. In addition, she recommended that

supervisors need focused attention and significant support in their understanding of how to guide workers in implementing the model.

- Advisory Group: Updated information regarding the project is presented to this group at the meetings which are now held every two months.

B-05 Other Activities

- I. Process Evaluation (See Attached)
- II. Practice Evaluation (See Attached)
- III. Outcome Evaluation (See Attached)

B-06 Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period

1. Project Administration

Cultural Consultants and Parent Response Focus Groups: Our cultural consultants will continue their work with the four identified cultural communities: African American, American Indian, Hmong and Latino. The cultural consultants feel that by this coming fall the Latino group will be at a point that they will join in the presentations to the Advisory Group and agency staff. The vignettes presenting the participants' experiences in Child Protection will be presented first to the Advisory Group, next to Ramsey County supervisors and managers, and finally to Child Protection staff.

The University will continue to work with the cultural consultants to find ways to incorporate the parents' feedback into their findings.

Finally, we will continue our efforts to move from simply obtaining feedback from the parents to having them function in an advisory role.

Advisory Group: The Advisory Group will continue to meet every two months and will serve as a vehicle for sharing project information and receiving input from our parent members and other stakeholders.

Steering Committee: Team meetings of the project management staff from Ramsey County and the University of Minnesota will be held regularly twice each month.

Service Quality Assurance: By the end of the next reporting period, the SQA pilots in both Child Protection Intake and Program will have been completed.

2. Planning and Development of the CFA Model

Child Protection Intake: The Intake planning group will complete its work in May.

3. Implementation of the CFA Model

Training

- Child Protection Intake: Five of the workers on the Intake Planning group will pilot the newly developed model throughout May. In May all Intake staff will attend an informational session to present the key concepts and terms to them and to provide a high level overview of the model.

In early June Ms. Lutz will present two days of training for Intake. Following that training the workers will begin to use the model.

- Child Protection Program: At the end of June Ms. Lutz will present four days of training. The primary audience will be the Child Protection Program workers. However, since all of Intake will have learned its part of the model by then, the training at the end of June will feature combined sessions of Intake and Program workers so that they can observe and practice “transfer meetings”. Under the new model, transfer meetings will be held between an Intake worker and a Program worker when a case is ready to be transferred for on-going service to Program. During these meetings, the Intake workers will present the information and analysis they have compiled on the case. They will explain which behaviors of the parent are endangering the children and hence need to be changed.

During the summer all the Intake and Program workers will use the new model and have periodic telephone consultations with Ms. Lutz. The University will begin fidelity testing (see Fidelity Study below).

In September Ms. Lutz will make an extended site visit to provide additional training and to consult with work groups on any issues they may be experiencing in implementing the new model.

Evaluation Activities:

- Fidelity Study: An evaluation of worker and supervisor fidelity to the adapted CFA practice will begin in the summer of the next reporting period. Workers and supervisors from Intake and Child Protection Program will be randomly interviewed about their use of CFA components in practice; case record reviews of randomly selected cases will complement the interview process and enhance the understanding of fidelity to CFA practice in Child Protection
- Management Study: The management study, mentioned above on page 6, will continue throughout the next reporting period.
- Cost Study: The cost study, mentioned above on page 6, will continue throughout the next reporting period.

Attachments

- B-05 Sections I, II, and III
- Logic Model
- Timeline
- Comprehensive Family Assessment Baseline Study
- Analysis of Ramsey County CFA Model and Signs of Safety Model