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Inter-agency and university research collaboration: A study of the another road to safety program

Abstract

Presentation at the California Social Work Education Center Leadership Symposia on Evidence-Based Practice in Human Services on 28 June 2007.

Keywords

university, research, safety, road, program, another, study, collaboration, inter, agency

Disciplines

Education | Social and Behavioral Sciences

Publication Details

Wright, A. C. (2007). Inter-agency and university research collaboration: A study of the another road to safety program. Leadership Symposia on Evidence-Based Practice in Human Services (pp. 1-14). United States:

Inter-Agency and University Research Collaboration: A Study of the Another Road to Safety Program

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Leadership Symposium on Evidence-Based Practice
in Child Welfare Services

June 28, 2007

Davis, CA

How the Research Began...

- Previous collaboration to develop Program Replication Guide (copy available upon request)
- Opportunity to work together on research to inform curriculum
- Partnership between Center for Child & Youth Policy, UCB and Executive Committee, ARS

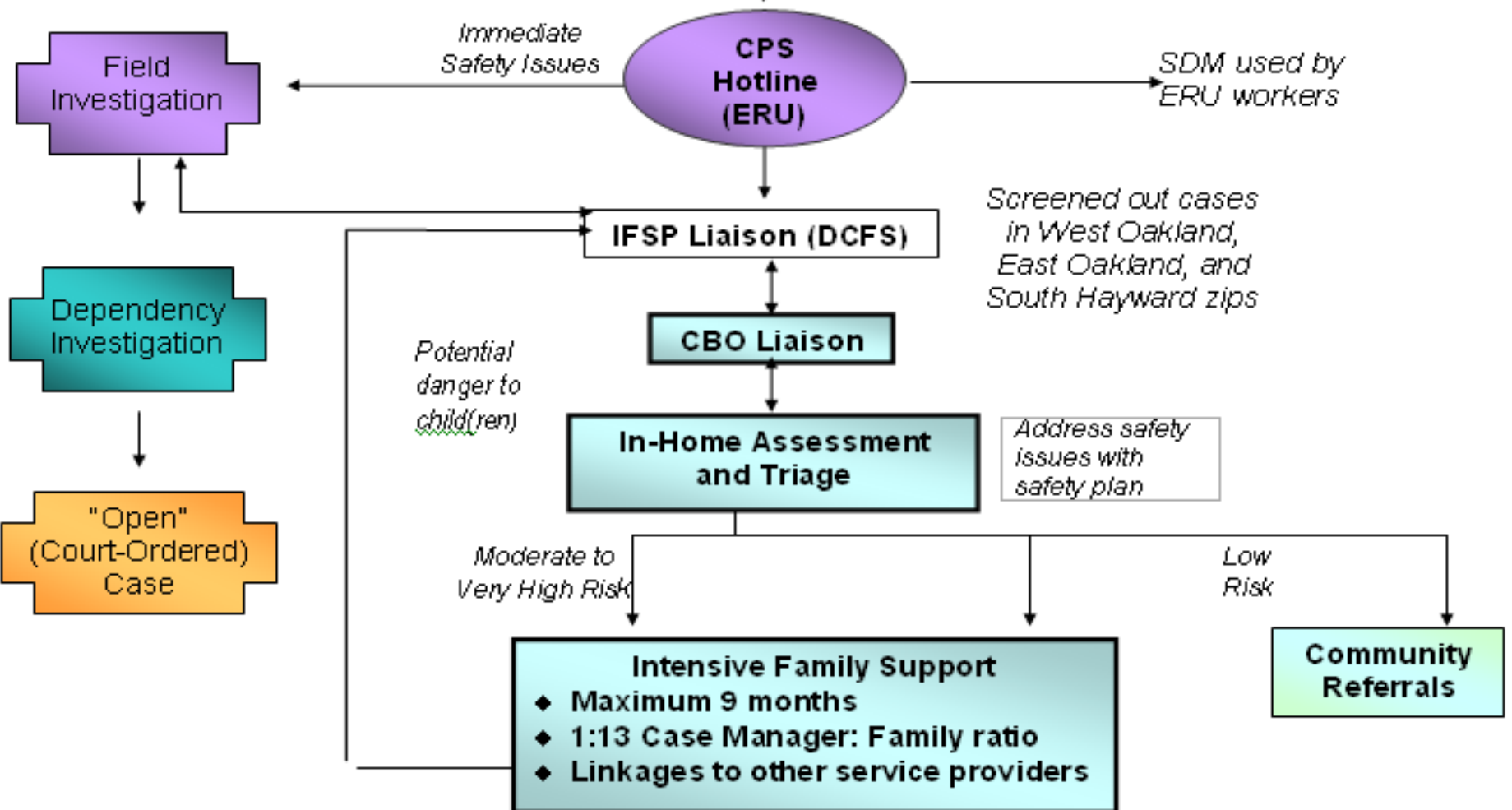
Another Road to Safety overview

"Another Road to Safety" (ARS)

This diagram depicts all cases that are referred to the Alameda County Child Protective Services

Allegations of Child Abuse/Neglect

Services in blue shaded boxes will be provided by contracting CBOs



ARS Agency Collaborative

Alameda County

West Oakland (Prescott Joseph)

East Oakland (FSSBA)

South Hayward (La Familia)

- Social Services Agency, Alameda County
- First Five, Every Child Counts
- Prescott Joseph (West Oakland)
- Family Support Services of the Bay Area (East Oakland)
- La Familia (South Hayward)

Purpose of Study

To examine agency processes and client experiences associated with Differential Response in Alameda County, along with preliminary outcomes and neighborhood factors, in order to inform the development of an evidence-based curriculum.

Study Design

- Year 1:
 - Focus groups with line staff and face-to-face interviews with management in the five ARS agencies.
 - Telephone interviews with clients currently receiving ARS services.
 - GIS study of neighborhood resource availability.
- Year 2:
 - Complete qualitative and GIS studies.
 - Outcome study using survival analysis to examine rates re-referral for the most established ARS program.

Research Collaboration

- Monthly check-ins at ARS Executive Committee meetings
- Consultation on design of study protocols
- Staff time devoted to focus groups and interviews
- Staff assistance in client recruitment for interviews
- Feedback on curriculum drafts
- Collaboration on developing sampling frame for outcomes study

Collaboration on Joint Curriculum

- Regular meetings with other CCYP team conducting parallel study of Contra Costa's Differential Response System
- Developing joint curriculum around commonalities between the two models

Successes & Challenges

- Staff participation in interviews and focus groups
- Recruitment and participation of clients in interviews
- Opportunity to collaborate on curriculum development with other CCYP team

- Hesitation around research among line staff
- Sensitivity to comparison and the need for clear communication

Key Findings

- Curriculum themes:
 - Program development & implementation in the neighborhood context
 - Staff information & training
 - Community understanding & preparation
 - Practice issues: Assessment, client engagement, referrals, child development & parent-child relationship, termination
 - Satisfaction and experience of clients
 - Best practices & lessons learned

Dissemination of Findings

- Presentation to ARS management & staff
- Curriculum
- Journal articles
- Conference presentations

Future Research

- Continued study of Differential Response implementation in California, particularly in the areas of program implementation, client experiences, neighborhood context, and client outcomes.
- Referrals to external service providers and their accessibility, affordability, quality, and cultural sensitivity.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Engaging in collaborative research can be a rewarding and challenging process. What are some strategies to facilitate communication and collaboration between university and agency representatives?**
- 2. Unlike many research studies, those projects funded by CalSWEC have a practical end: informing the development of curricula. How might research be conducted to ensure that curriculum development captures the most important topics for training in a practice area?**
- 3. A paradigm shift to differential response in child welfare requires new ways of engaging and serving families. How might universities modify their curricula and field components to respond to these practice changes?**

Thank you!

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