

# Organizational Contributors to Disproportionality and Disparities

Children's Bureau Evaluation Summit

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# I. Frameworks for Considering the Role of the Agency

- Organizational culture
- Institutional racism
- Cultural competency continuum

# Organizational Culture

- Values
- Norms
- Patterns of behavior
- Myths
- Implicit goals
- Rituals
- Reward system
- Subcultures....race, gender, role
- Professional identity
- Leadership style and focus

# Institutional Racism

- Organizations are products of the larger culture in which they are created and its biases
- Organizations policies and practices can systematically disadvantage particular groups
- Organizations are the gate keepers to resources and opportunity
- Impact on individual actors is entitlement and internalized oppression

# Cultural Competence Continuum

- Cultural destructiveness: intentional
- Colorblind: treat all the same
- Culturally pre-competent: recognition of diversity and the need for diverse responses but not institutionalized
- Culturally competent: adapts policies and practices to increase effectiveness with diverse groups
- Culturally proficient: policies and services are designed in a manner that is consistent with the cultural context of children and families

## II. New Approach

- Partners: CSSP, Praxis International and host agencies
- Focus on the lived experience of clients
- In the tradition of organizational analysis or audits
- Qualitative approach
- Extracts themes or patterns
- Used extensively in domestic violence to improve the legal and service responses to victims

# Framework for Analysis

- Organizations are designed to get the results they achieve.
  - Mission
  - Text
  - Policies and procedures
  - Accountability structures
  - Theories and concepts
  - Training
  - Resources
  - Linkages: internal and external

# Institutional Analysis:

- Unpacking Organizational Contributors
  - Qualitative approach
  - Multiple data sources
    - Case record reviews ( paper reviews)
    - In depth case analysis ( QSR)
    - Interviews....
    - Review of Policy and procedures
    - Observations
    - Focus groups

# Lessons

- Families experienced services as irrelevant, difficult to access and or inadequate.
  - Traditional vs. community and/ or faith based
  - Location and access
  - Formulaic and not tailored to needs
  - Fragmented and extended

# Lessons

Families were not adequately assessed and their strengths were not identified, appreciated or utilized

- Risk assessment protocols were not properly utilized....used to justify a decision rather than to make a decision.
- Team decision making process were misused with decision being made in advance of the meeting and failure to engage the family in problem solving.

# Lessons

- Labeling of families that impedes the delivery of services
- Labeling /Fear of the community that impedes the delivery of service
- Policy mythology which reduces opportunities for AA families
  - Termination of parental rights
  - Age requirements for kinship care givers

# Lessons

- Little advocacy for resources was available to AA families:
  - Housing, drug treatment etc
  - Legal representation was pro forma, precluding meaningful participation by families in court proceedings
- AA youth were deemed delinquent when their behavior was a response to lack of appropriate placement/ service in the child welfare system

# Lessons

- Lack of accountability for outcomes for AA children and families
  - Data not used to report disparities and disproportionality.
  - Lack of administrative focus on results for these children.
  - Contractors not held accountable for serving all children

# Strategies for Change

- Build internal and external leadership commitment to reduction in disparities and disproportionality
- Assess the extent and location of DD in your child welfare system: entry, reunification, alternative permanency, length of time in care , aging out.

# Strategies

- Build the capacity for the organization to recognize institutional racism and to work with families in a culturally competent manner through training, dialogue and consultation.
- Build the capacity of the organization to talk about race and racism in a non-defensive way by focusing on the organization and not individual workers

# Strategies for Change

- Implement an approach to direct practice which recognizes needs and strengths in families; engages and partners with families to solve problems and includes the competence to work with communities of color. Hold workers accountable for this kind of practice with all families.

# Strategies for Change

- Track the outcomes at each decision point and begin a problems solving process to determine how to reduce disparities and disproportionality while keeping children safe.
- Scrutinize policies and policy implementation to assure that are not contributing to disparities

# Strategies

- Assure that tools like screening protocols, risk assessment protocols are not biased and are implemented as intended.
- Build consumer ( parents and youth in care) feedback mechanisms into the accountability structure and be willing to act on the feed back
- Build partnerships with communities residents, indigenous and faith leaders to develop proactive support for the safety of children and to hold the agency accountable for equitable services

# Strategies

- Build an array of services that are responsive to the needs of children and families of color and are accountable for results.

# Institutional Analysis

- Positive Outcomes for All: Using and Institutional Analysis to Identify and Address African American Children's Low Reunification Rates and Long-Term Stays in Fresno County's Foster Care System (2010). Center for the Study of Social Policy: Washington DC.
- Race Equity Review: Findings from a Qualitative Analysis of Racial Disparities and Disproportionality for African American Children in Michigan's Child Welfare Study (2008). Center for the Study of Social Policy: Washington DC

<http://www.cssp.org>