Hearing Voices
Describing Child Maltreatment Social Work

Determining Outcomes in Child Protective Services - the Need for Omaha System

- Federal Child Family Services Reviews (CFSR)
- California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare
- Direct Practice Evaluation methods
- Court Involvement

Interviews with Social Workers about their evaluation methods and evidence-based practices

- 30 CPS social workers, MN & WI, urban, suburban and rural counties
- How do you evaluate your practice?
  - Personal Observation - actual = 60%
  - Personal Observation - intuition = 100%
  - Staffing with coworkers/supervisor = 30%
  - Reports from other professionals = 10%
  - SDM tools = 30%
Interviews with Social Workers about their evaluation methods

- How would you rate yourself regarding your knowledge of practice evaluation? (1-5)
  - Average rating = 3.1
  - "I don’t think our agency talks about it a whole lot – it’s the first time I’ve been asked that question"
  - "I just feel like you can feel when things are going better"

- How would you rate yourself regarding the frequency of your evaluation of your interventions? (1-5)
  - 3.5
  - I’m thinking we don’t have a great way of evaluating our practice so we do the best we can by engaging and knowing what’s going on.”
  - I’d like to say all the time but of course we always might be missing something

Current Case Level Evaluation Process

- Structured Decision Making tool developed by Children’s Research Center
  - Risk Assessment
  - Risk Reassessment
  - Strength & Needs
  - Actuarially based
- Needs list easily tied to Omaha System problem list
- Applied 30 case scenarios to grid - environment not included but received intervention
PRELIMINARY findings

- 4.5 identified “problems” per case example
- Significant number of case closings due to court decisions, not necessarily effectiveness of interventions.
- Only one County used an actual evidence-based practice, it was an intervention program for victims of domestic abuse.
- Evidence-based practices are not consistently available if available at all.
- Workers are interested in using evidence based practices but 100% report having inadequate time to keep up with the research.
Further Work

- Identify Omaha System pathways that include evidence-based practices for the 6 SDM Needs categories
- Identify problems that are in Omaha System but not SDM (example Environment issues)
- Identify KBS ratings for Omaha System pathways in child protection
- Pilot the use of Omaha System documentation system among willing workers