

**Summary of Findings
Focus Groups- Jefferson County
Systems of Care Grant
2007**

Butler Institute for Families

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Three Focus Groups During May/June 2007

- Department Staff and Community Partners (12 Participants)
 - Head Start, Workforce Development, Community Assistance, Faith-based, housing, etc.
- CYF Supervisors (17)
- CYF Caseworkers (14)
 - Intake, Ongoing, Delinquency Services & Treatment, Resource & Permanency Planning, Finance, Resource

Highlights of 3 Areas of Focus

- Implementation
- Impact
- Sustainability

Knowledge of activities, effective strategies and barriers

- Positive impact
 - Community Resource Fair
 - Cultural Awareness Kick-off and Training Events
 - Partner Information Trainings
 - Child Welfare Orientation (limited attendance)
 - Parent Partner Program (acknowledged challenges)
 - Parent Partner Handbook (great idea)
 - Volunteer Program
 - “A Day in the Life” activity for staff
 - Community outreach
 - Information sharing policies and procedures

Any unmet expectations?

- Ideas generated at cultural awareness trainings but not implemented
 - Building aesthetics
 - Hiring practices
 - “Go-to person”
- Implementation is slow
- Limited changes in judicial practices
- Lack of “buy-in” by upper level management, e.g. SOC is a grant not a practice

What is level of Collaboration Between CYF and Department/Community?

- General agreement across all 3 focus group audiences
- Collaboration challenged by restructuring and turnover
- Colorado Works and CYF beginning to work more together

Cultural Competence

- CYF is improving
 - Client forms translated to other language
 - Greater awareness
- Ongoing challenges
 - Agency does not actively recruit diverse staff
 - Low competence re: poverty (judgmental)

Does CYF involve families in a meaningful way?

- Majority agreed family participation has increased
 - Team Decision Making
 - Parent Partners Program (reduces barriers with families)
 - Child Welfare Orientation program
 - Necessity – need for kin homes, changing federal requirements

Strengths-based approach to practice

- Differing views
 - Changes due to TDM
 - Practice hasn't changed
 - Change in forms would drive change in practice

Community-based services

- Conflicting perspectives
 - Efforts to enhance resources in areas of high need (noted in geo-mapping)
 - More geo-assignment
 - Level is the same; lack of resources at the community (versus county) level

Overall Impact of SOC Grant

- Grant supports efforts that wouldn't otherwise occur
- Increase in communication/collaboration
- Reaching out to families
- Increase in use of data, i.e. Minority Overrepresentation report, geo-assignments
- Training: Brown Bag lunches, PIT, OJT
- Raised level of awareness re: needed improvements
 - No time to implement
 - Stymied how to implement

Sustainability of SOC grant activities post funding

- Department would need to create the positions to sustain activities, which couldn't be absorbed by others
- Training would continue, increased communication, involving families through TDM
- Other programs to carry forward
 - Parent Partner, Child Welfare Orientation, Volunteer Program

Key Themes and Observations

- Participants hopeful that management would embrace and sustain SOC
- Principles/philosophy of SOC have not been fully embraced/integrated into CYF day-to-day practices
- Family involvement is increasing
- Increased collaboration within Department and community agencies
- Participants have high expectations – moved from awareness to expecting “mastery” of SOC practice concepts