Western MRS Meeting Notes
January 16, 2008
St. John's Church

Counties Present: Buncombe, Gaston, Haywood, Iredell, McDowell, Swain, Transylvania

Introductions
News from Raleigh
Evaluation: Duke – Fact Sheets, Data Entry, Updates
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News from Raleigh

- New supervisor for the Performance Management – Dawn Cambridge who came to us from Juvenile Justice.
- DataWarehouse trainings – Heather ONeal will be doing some for WF and CW in Asheville, Heather B will do two March 17 in Jackson county for CW workers that uses MRS and CR as the basis of the training. Heather O's training uses WF data as well.
- WF Institute - April 29, 30, May1, invitations have already gone out, so if your county has not responded with the number of people you are sending, please do so when you get back to your county.
- MRS Institute – mid August. In mid-February there will be a call for presentations. Hope to have community folks there and expand to 600 people. This means we will have 14 presentations at the same time, so we will need more presentations. If you have an idea, please send it in when the call goes out. (18-20th of August at the Koury Center).
- Division's current campaign to help county DSS agencies recruit and retain foster parents. Information gathering, the first phase of this campaign is already underway. Counties have been asked to complete a web-based survey that asks for some demographics and inquires about the agency's perception of its needs in this area. Participation in this survey, which closes Feb 4, is important because the information it provides will help determine the content and emphasis of the next phase of the campaign, which will be a series of foster parent recruitment and retention clinics to be conducted in different parts of the state in late Spring 2008. The purpose of these clinics will be to share innovative and effective strategies and to encourage agencies to develop/refine plans for recruiting and retaining foster parents. The Jordan Institute for Families at the UNC-CH School of Social Work, which is assisting the Division with this campaign will follow up with participating agencies at least quarterly during SFY 2008-09 to offer additional support and information. If agencies have questions about this campaign or want information about participating in the online survey they should

contact the Jordan's Institute's John McMahon (johnmcmahon@mindspring.com, 828-670-5051) or Mellicent Blythe (mblythe@email.unc.edu 919-843-7382)/

- NC Coalition against Domestic Violence Conference (co-sponsored by the Division) May 21-22 – not sure where the location will be yet, but it will be in the Triangle area.
- Admin letter coming out in the next week or so regarding training. Counties wanted to make orientation around CFTs required for all supervisors and social workers, so it shall be!

Evaluation –

Fact Sheets – Nicole shared what was on the current sheet. Duke wants these to be evolving documents with information that will be useful to local counties, and not just state aggregate data. Things that people like about the current sheet, and want to keep, or things that may not be as useful, or items that are not on there that could be – please share any of these ideas with her. Keep in mind they are trying to keep the fact sheets relatively brief – no more than 4 pages – so adding too many things will require some decisions of what is the most important because some things may need to come off the sheet in order to add multiple new things. All 100 counties will get a fact sheets this year (last year was just the pilot 10.) Asked that folks think about what they want, and then let her know (left cards, or can get her information from Holly or Patrick) obviously may not be able to think of everything you might want right now.

- Think of things that you would want to know if you were going to present to your County Commissioners or your Board.
- All data from the fact sheets comes from the 5106 and 5104. If data is not being entered, then it is not being reported on the fact sheet.
    - For example, the Contributory Factors were not selected for a majority of the cases. Currently although policy requires you to enter one, the Central Registry system does not. Also, currently only the primary contributory factor is available in DW, but are in the process of testing for being able to look at multiple ones.
- Pilot 10 are compared to themselves. 2nd wave counties only compared to other 2nd wave counties, 3rd wave only compared to other 3rd wave counties. Rates of assessment (per 1,000 children) counties were grouped with each other within those groups of 2nd and 3rd wave counties so that similar counties could be compared with each other instead of comparing a Hyde county to a Wake county.
- Using 2005, 2006, and 2007 as years of data.
- Child Safety – looking at doing it on a fiscal year rather than a calendar year. Have gotten some feedback that counties would prefer it this way (and this group agreed).
- Percentage of children with 6 and 12 month reassessments. Looking at combining In Need of Services and Substantiations and then getting rid of the 12 month – just looking at within 6 months of receiving either one of the two findings did a family receive another finding (in other words, instead of separating substantiations and In Need of Services, looking at findings that result in a family receiving 215 services.)
- Frontloading – one of the previous findings of MRS evaluation was that an increase in frontloading minutes of services decreased the rate of repeat assessment. Wanted to know if counties though this was valuable because it is a large table and if there may be something counties would rather have on there.

- Reassessment rates by findings – what are the findings that are associated with repeat assessments – people were interested in this.
- Blended caseloads – is there interest in looking at seeing if counties that have blended caseload have shorter 215 or fewer entries into 109?
- Foster Care Data - do CFTs during foster care result in reunification in less time?
- Look at kids that come into Foster Care through Juvenile Justice versus from CPS.
- Contributory Factors – this information can be useful when advocating for programs or funding. For example if 95% of your substantiations include DV, then you have a powerful tool for advocating for a program in your area.
    - However if you don't enter the stuff, it won't be in there! We recognize that the CFs have some limitations as they are on the 5104. Some of the CFs require a documented opinion from a medical professional The Division has set up a meeting to talk about the CFs. The Central Registry does not require you to put a CFs when keying in the system, but there is not always a CF that is a good fit with the issues in the case, so we are working on it, but it is not as easy as just making it required. In the meantime, if there is clearly a CF that is applicable, please indicate it on your 5104.
    - Would like state sanctioned querys regarding the items on the fact sheet so they would not come as a surprise.
- If folks want good information on their fact sheets they must completed the 5106.
- Currently the fact sheet comes out once a year – we could do twice a year if counties would like.

<u>CPS/WF Collaboration Issues</u>

- At a meeting for the WF Institute they want to really work on the collaboration between WF and CPS. The WF side feels that they have a handle on what causes the frustration on the WF side, but they are interested to find out what causes the frustration on the CPS side, and if people have found ways to overcome those barriers. They may like to have these as cracker barrel discussions.
    - Kinship Care and WF – trying to get those together. We are saying to put children into kinship placement, but then it seems to be difficult to get WF for that child (depending on the degree of relationship).
- If you think about any of these please share with Holly or your WF Rep or CPR so that they can pass them along.
- We will probably have a similar discussion at the MRS Institute.

<u>Further Discussion of the System of Care</u> - Partnering with families and children
What are things you are doing? As you read records, how do you know that some things are being done differently??

- Training has helped to focus on this area – instead of fixing it for the family, we talk with them about how to fix it.
- This discussion led into a discussion of CFTs. Need to be careful about what you are calling CFTs. As Holly as said before, CFTs are for addressing the family's needs, case planning and moving forward. There are some meetings that will need to happen where the same players from a CFT may be there, but it is ***<u>not</u>*** a CFT because it is primarily for the agency to establish a safety plan, gather information, or something

else for the agency's needs, which although hopefully safety of their child is the family's goal, however, even if it is not, is *has* to be the agency's goal.

- One of the ways one county helps keep straight which meetings are which is by looking at the forms that they are filling out after the meetings.
- If it is a fact gathering meeting for the agency, this is probably not a CFT.
- When the nonnegotiable items are too numerous or serious these meetings are probably not CFTs because the mission of the meeting is not for the family, but more for the agency, and it may be too adversarial to be in the spirit of a true CFT.
- This is why there will be more clarification on CFT in policy coming soon!
- There is a difference between pushing families to force them to bring people and let them see the supports that they do have and trying to get them involved. If we don't have any supports for these families in place, and it is just the family and DSS at the table and the meetings, then when we close the case and step out who is there for the family?

Favorite Things

Accomplishment that you are proud of

- Holly is proud of the MRS Institute this year. The planners had learned a lot from planning the previous one and felt really good about how it turned out this year.
- Excited to be working with new Supervisors - new ways of approaching things
- CPR team will be fully staffed next week.
- Getting together an internal Domestic Violence dialog group. Always a challenge to get Division folks together. Is part of the Program Improvement Plan and will now go to a group with external members.
- Gaston is 3 ½ months into their blended team. Doing very well and excited to expand.
- Iredell & Transylvania got new positions.
- Swain reunified a family of 6 children that they did not think would be able to be reunified.
- Buncombe – In Home Services has been fully staffed for over 7 months. Over 98% of the children have been maintained safely without entering foster care.
- McDowell – had several adoptions go through, also had a worker they prayed for who has recovered from breast cancer.
- UNC – Work on the Foster Home visiting tool.
- WF Institute – how successful it was and how much people enjoyed it.

Tricks, tips and tools

- Buncombe just stared a totally paperless electronic child welfare system. It was in developed with Mecklenburg county and was in development for 3 years. The development was painful for non-techie people, but to see the impact with instantaneous results and access to data is well worth it.
- Iredell - participated in the Job Fair at UNC and had several good interviews as a result of it and hired 2 people as a result. Also have a list serve that you can post job vacancies on.

- Gaston – Using the 80/20 that they learned in Family Assessment tool training. Has to do with perceptions and how people's perceptions are different and how to look at this to determine intent for families.
- Recruitment and Retention project – Buncombe has seen wonderful result for this. Their turnover was 28% or so, so far this year its 3%. Filling positions has gone from 40-60 days to about 7 days. The video shows a realistic picture of social work and this helps screen people out that thought they wanted to do this, but may decide that they really don't. The structured interview is really good as well. Finally, they have decided to have an ongoing interview process so they always have a pool when a vacancy comes open. They can immediately look at the records from the interviews and contact those people and see if they are still available and talk further to them instead of starting from scratch when someone gives notice.
    - Tammy wishes that maybe in phase 2 of this project, they would take on the issue of supervision and maybe develop an interview for Supervisors.

Practice

- Holly just went to Coaching in the Kitchen training, and the coaching technique is a wonderful practice for anyone, from working with your case families, as well as your own family and anyone you interact with.
- Assign mentors to new workers to try and keep them! May need someone on their own level to ask things that they might rather ask another worker than a supervisor. This also works with families – if they have just moved here and don't have any supports, another family that has been through the system and help them from the perspective of someone who "has been there".

Wishes for 2008

- Trainings - wish they were scheduled differently (this was the discussion in November – see November's notes.)
- Holly wishes that we will get to expand the MRS Institute so that we can involve more community members.
- More collaboration at the Division level regarding Domestic Violence. And more abuser treatment programs in counties. (Some counties have no access to treatment programs at all.)
- Have the state really advocate for counties to make standards real. We have standards of 1:10 but we know that doesn't really happen. The state has the staffing survey and not exactly sure what else to do, sometimes CPRs have written letters for the Director to present to the County Commissioners. Don't know that the state holds the key to this, but perhaps they could help partner.
- Would like to see the state value training more, by including it as part of a CFSR. Some counties value training, but some of them have the culture that it is a waste of time and they are not encouraged to implement ideas when they returned.
- Wish that the sentence in cross county issues "all children in NC are the responsibility of all 100 counties" was truly taken to heart by everyone working in the system. Believe that these meetings help in that because you have met people at these meeting and would be more likely to call and help one another after knowing each other, even just a little at these meetings.

Blueprint Feedback

- Holly goes back to Denver at the end of the month to meet.
- It was interesting to try and talk about what was best practice and not have everyone come at it from the particular model that they were most used to.
- Decided to develop a continuum because there was never going to be one model because no one wanted to sacrifice the particulars of their model.
- Holly put out the draft document and if people have feedback please share it with her (preferably in writing) so that she can share with the group.

February meetings:
Central: Winston Salem, February 27th
Western: Asheville, St. John's Church, February 19th
East: Pitt Co., February 28th

March meetings:
Central: Rowan County Library, March 26th
Western: Asheville, AB Tech March 27th
East: Lenior Co Agricultural Extension, March 18th