



Plenary Session Descriptions

The Impact of Maltreatment on the Developing Child

Dr. Bruce D. Perry, The Child Trauma Academy

The development of a child is profoundly influenced by experience. Experiences shape the organization of the brain which, in turn, influences the emotional, social, cognitive, and psychological activities. Insights into this process come from understanding brain development. This presentation will review clinical work and research in the areas of abuse and neglect which can help us better understand attachment. An overview will be provided that suggests new directions for clinical practice, program development, and policy.

Mind Changers: The Impact of Alcohol and Drugs on the Developing Brain

Dr. Cardwell C. Nuckols, Nuckols & Associates LLC

Mind changers can be positive or negative. Negative change agents include alcohol, drugs, hatred and jealousy. This presentation will address the impact of alcohol and drugs on the developing brain and how these substances “hijack” the brain’s natural reward systems. Participants will learn how alcohol and drugs actually change the brain, and most importantly, what science and traditional wisdom can teach us about helping those with actual or potential substance problems discover their true nature.

Child Protection Response Continuum: Program Overview and Research Findings

David Thompson, Minnesota Department of Human Services

Tony Loman and Gary Siegel, Institute of Applied Research

Minnesota has developed a child protection response continuum that more flexibly tailors intervention to the circumstances and needs of the reported family. Family Assessment Response seeks to create a partnership with the families, provide resources to secure child safety, and increase child and family well-being. With support from the McKnight Foundation, Minnesota commissioned a rigorous longitudinal process, outcome, and cost/benefit study of the Family Assessment Response. The presenters will address the Institute of Applied Research’s findings and an analysis of Minnesota’s Family Assessment Response.

The Role of Race and Culture in Substance Abuse and Child Abuse and Neglect

Dr. Kathy Sanders-Phillips, Baltimore Research Center on Child Health Disparities

Dr. Sanders-Phillips will provide a theoretical framework to increase your understanding of the social and cultural factors influencing drug use and violence in the form of child abuse and neglect in communities of color. A conceptual model useful in guiding treatment plans and interventions for substance use and violence will be included.

Cultural Considerations as it Relates to Child Protection

Don Coyhis, President and Founder, White Bison

Mr. Coyhis will discuss what it’s like to be raised in a dysfunctional family and will address the results of intergenerational trauma. He will also identify factors we should know when returning a young person to sacredness and will share tools a family can use for healing.

The STARS Program: Sacramento County Dependency Drug Court

Jeffrey Pogue, Director, Bridges; Steven Nelson, Parent’s Attorney; Dana Martinez, Recovery Specialist; Vivian Hudspeth, Parent

The STARS program is the service component of the Sacramento County Dependency Drug Court. Since the advent of the STARS program, reunification rates among substance abusing parents in the system have doubled. The panel will provide an overview of the STARS program, including the basic concepts of both the STARS Program and Dependency Drug Court, key steps in its implementation, and the principles behind its huge success. Presenters will share their unique roles, perspectives, and experiences.

H.O.P.E. – How Our Potential Explodes

Paul Bernabei and Tom Cody, Top 20 Training

The closing presentation of “Connections Matter” will provide practical and easily applicable ways of strengthening the two connections that matter the most: connections with ourselves and connections with others. Our potential explodes when we connect (1) internally by being aware of our thinking and (2) with others by communicating, “You matter.”

Breakout Session Descriptions

1. The Impact of Chronic Neglect

Dr. Bruce Perry, Child Trauma Academy

Neglect is the absence of necessary, appropriately timed experiences at a time when the brain is forming key systems. Neglect can lead to lifelong problems with emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and social problems. In this workshop you will learn to understand the various forms of neglect and to appreciate the emerging clinical and research findings related to neglect in children.

2. Family Involvement Strategies in Child Protection

Rob Sawyer and Sue Lohrbach, Olmsted County Human Services

Family strategies in child protection promote positive results for children and families. The workshop highlights different strategies to infuse family participation into agency decision making processes, the court and the community. Information on Family Group Conferences, Family Case Planning Meetings, the Parallel Protection Process under the court, and a Rapid Response Meeting will be discussed.

3. Making Early Connections: The Parent Support Outreach Program

David Thompson, Minnesota Department of Human Services

Tony Loman and Gary Siegel, Institute of Applied Research

The Parent Support Outreach Program, an early intervention service for families with young children at risk of child maltreatment and other poor developmental outcomes, is currently being piloted in 37 Minnesota counties. Families are self-identified or referred by community sources, and services are delivered through the county welfare agency or their contracted services. This presentation will include the pilot design, principles, service array, and delivery models. The Institute of Applied Research will provide demographic information on the clients served, details on the research design, and identify early findings.

4. Preserving Family Connections

John Hanna, Minnesota Department of Human Services

Panel of foster parents, private agency personnel, and county staff members

This session will stress the importance of family relationships and connections when children cannot live with their parents. The panel will offer information and practice strategies to promote partnership with relatives from intake through permanency planning. Participants will learn effective engagement strategies between social workers and relative foster care providers, and the supports, services, and resources that are most important to relative foster care providers.

5. Educational Outcomes of Young Children and Teens Involved with Child Protection: Room for Improvement, Reasons for Optimism, Opportunities for Change

Timothy B. Zuel, Hennepin County Indian Child Welfare Child Protection

Anita M. Larson, University of Minnesota, Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare

An overview of recent research on the connections between educational outcomes of children and adolescents involved in the child protection system in Minnesota will be provided. Participants will learn the history of educational neglect and how it came to be part of the child protection system, the status of educational engagement and progress in the wake of child protection involvement, the economic and social implications of child protection teens who do not graduate from high school, and policy and practice recommendations that spring from the research.

6. Not So Fast: What Courts and Counties Need to Know About Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

Claire Hill, Minnesota Department of Human Services

Cheryl Glassel, Citizen Facilitator, Minnesota Citizen Review Panels Steering Committee

The courts and the counties are obligated to ensure that youth entrusted to the state's care have the support they need to age out of care as self-sufficient, healthy, and productive adults. Research, as well as federal and state mandated independent living plans for youth in care, will be discussed. Participants will understand county responsibilities to prepare adolescents in long term foster care to live independently as they age out of care, and what needs to be in place for them before they are discharged from care by the county and the court. Results from county case reviews and community focus groups conducted by Minnesota's Citizen Review Panels on the topic will be shared. Recommendations made by the Citizen Review Panel members to ensure youth who age out of foster care are prepared will be included.

7. White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack – Implications for Social Workers and Others Working in the Child Welfare System

Kathy Heltzer, University of Minnesota Duluth, Department of Social Work

This overview of Peggy McIntosh's essay, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" will address specific implications for child welfare practice at the micro, organizational, and community levels. Participants will learn to recognize the daily effects of white privilege and other forms of privilege, identify their role as an "ally" within the child welfare system specific to issues of privilege, and identify ways in which they might intervene at a variety of levels of practice.

8. Family Centered Practice: Using the Strength-Based Model in Daily Practice

Janine Moore, Hennepin County Child Protection

Nationally, Family Centered Practice is emerging as the best way to promote safety, permanency, and well-being for abused and neglected children. This model builds and supports family resilience and strengths using assessments and an array of formal and informal services and relationships that are identified and planned with the family. Participants will learn about the model and how to relate the model to practice strategies that promote family engagement.

9. Non-Citizen Minnesotans and Federal Immigration Law – Now What?

John C. Keller, Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota / Oficina Legal

This presentation will provide an overview of the federal immigration legal system of benefits and enforcement. It will focus on how family relationships are essential to accruing immigration benefits. It will discuss limitations on family relationships in enforcement actions. Finally, it will address ways in which federal immigration laws must be considered by lawyers, the judiciary, and social workers as they apply their respective responsibilities to the non-citizen adults that cross their paths. Participants will gain a basic understanding of Federal Immigration Law, the many different statuses of non-citizens, and intersections and considerations of federal immigration law and Minnesota Laws.

10. Mind Changers: Small Self and Big Self

Dr. Cardwell C. Nuckols, Nuckols & Associates LLC

As a follow up to the morning's plenary, participants of this breakout session can expect to learn how the mind changers hatred (anger) and shame affect the brain and how we can help young persons develop a greater sense of self (small self and Big Self). Emphasis will be placed on the development of the prefrontal cortices, the parts of our brain that govern conscience, executive functioning and playing within the rules.

11. Children's Justice Initiative and Family Group Decision Making: The Ties that Bind

Hon. John Rodenberg, Brown County

Mike Travers, Brown County Social Services

Jo Ellen Kregel, Facilitator, Family Group Decision Making

After a brief introduction to the concepts behind Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), the presenters from the Brown County Children's Justice Initiative (CJI) Team will discuss how local CJI teams can be a very effective way to implement FGDM. Multiple uses of FGDM throughout the continuum of the life of the case will be addressed.

12. Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in Indian Country

Lonna Stevens, Sheila Wellstone Institute

This workshop will cover the safety and risk factors that need to be considered when working with Native families affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. Participants will receive an overview of jurisdiction, prosecution, housing, programs, and services issues of Native women and children affected by violence.

13. The STARS Program: Beyond the Basics

Sacramento County Dependency Court Team Members

The STARS team will provide a more detailed description of both the STARS Program and the Dependency Drug Court. It will include the four components of the STARS Program, treatment philosophies, drug testing protocols, building partnerships, motivational principles, and the balance between accountability and support that the recovery specialists must maintain to be effective.

14. Dakota County Healthy Families Child Maltreatment Outcomes Study: Prevention Pays

Patrick Coyne and Gay Bakken, Dakota County Community Services

This presentation will include a brief overview of the start-up years and the model essential elements and a detailed discussion of the three strategies to effective child abuse prevention practice and accountability. Participants will be able to identify community outreach and family identification strategies, define performance measurement strategies, and use outcome measurement strategies to assess preventative effectiveness.

15. Cycle of Life

Don Coyhis, President and Founder, White Bison

The Creator has a design of how we are to grow up to be healthy. This work shop will explain the eight stages of development in a cultural/traditional way. It will also include a discussion of how any one of the missed stages can be recaptured at any age.

16. A Father's Place: The Importance of Male Involvement During the Early Years

Neil Tift, Dad's and Families Center

Too often the paternal side of the family is left out of the equation concerning placement decisions or reunification considerations. This workshop will address how child welfare systems can provide opportunities for fathers and men to stay involved in their children's lives, encourage rather than discourage them, and will present strategies that promote and support healthy male involvement in child development.

17. Effective Court Practice: What Judges Need from Attorneys, Social Workers, and Guardians Ad Litem

Hon. Paul Benshoof, Beltrami County

Hon. Susan Miles, Washington County

Hon. John Rodenberg, Brown County

Timely and quality hearings and judicial decisions are critical to children and families. And yet, the decisions of judges are only as good as the information upon which they are based. During this session, three CJI lead judges will share their perspective on what judges need from attorneys, social workers, and guardians ad litem in order to render timely, quality decisions.

19. Foster Care Re-entry Data and Practices

Deborah Beske Brown and Larry Wojciak, Minnesota Department of Human Services

Foster care re-entry is one of the items measured in the Child and Family Service Review (CFSR). Minnesota children continue to re-enter foster care at a greater rate than allowed by the national performance standards. The Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, has modified this measure to be a part of the permanency outcomes composite. As we prepare for the federal CFSR in September 2007, this workshop will explore re-entry data and practice information.

19. Children's Justice Initiative – Alcohol and Other Drugs (CJI-AOD) Project: Best Practices Tool Kit

Jackie Crow Shoe, Minnesota Department of Human Services

Danisa Farley, Consultant and Trainer

Carole Johnson, State Court Administrator's Office

Deborah Moses, Minnesota Department of Human Services

The team of presenters includes a parent consultant, staff from the Child Safety and Permanency and the Chemical Health divisions of the Minnesota Department of Human Services, and staff from the Minnesota Judicial Branch. They will provide a brief history of the CJI-AOD Project and explain why and how the Best Practices Tool Kit was created. Participants will learn what best practices are included in the tool kit and how it is being used. They will also learn how they might use this Best Practices Tool Kit in their counties and judicial districts to improve outcomes for children and families involved in the child protection system who have concerns with alcohol and other drug use.

20. Overview of Minnesota Child Protective Service’s Structured Decision Making (SDM) and Recent Risk Assessment Validation Study

Kristen Johnson, The Children’s Research Center, Madison, Wisconsin

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Children’s Research Center recently conducted a validation study to ensure the risk assessment implemented by DHS accurately estimates the likelihood of future maltreatment. This presentation will describe the history of the use of SDM in Minnesota, provide an overview of SDM components, summarize the findings from the recent risk assessment validation study, and review future efforts related to the implementation of SDM in child protective services.

21. Evaluating County Outcomes and Performance Related to Disparities

Christeen Borsheim and Nan Beman, Minnesota Department of Human Services

Minnesota has serious concerns about the disproportionality of children and families of color in the child welfare system. Minnesota had approximately 14,500 children in foster care in 2006. In any given month, 42% of those children were American Indian or Black/African American. This presentation will suggest methods using the Social Services Information System (SSIS) to analyze individual county disproportionality in child welfare practice and propose a course of action to address this concern.

22. County Best Practices in Preventing and Managing Out-of-Home Placements

Tom Henderson, Brown County Family Services and the County Fiscal Best Practices Workgroup

This presentation will share best practices in how counties attempt to prevent out-of-home placements when appropriate, and actively manage placements when necessary. The County Fiscal Best Practices Workgroup has studied this topic over the past year and is very interested in sharing its findings with the Children’s Justice Initiative community.

23. All Children Excel (ACE) Case Management: Practical Application of Competency-Based Support for Our Highest Risk Clients

Danette Jones, Mary McRoy and Dylan DiPrima, Ramsey County ACE Program, St. Paul Youth Services

This workshop will present an overview of lessons learned by ACE case managers and their clinical supervisor. Topics to be addressed include: how to engage extremely resistant parents of our highest-risk urban clients, how to avoid reinforcing dependence with clients who attempt to manipulate the system, and keys to building resilience with clients facing multiple and severe kinds of risk.

24. The Role of Race and Culture in Substance Abuse and Child Abuse and Neglect

Dr. Kathy Sanders-Phillips, Baltimore Research Center on Child Health Disparities

Dr. Sanders-Phillips will provide a theoretical framework to increase your understanding of the social and cultural factors influencing drug use and violence in the form of child abuse and neglect in communities of color. A conceptual model useful in guiding treatment plans and interventions for substance use and violence will be included.

25. Making Permanency Permanent: Concurrent Permanency Planning

Janine LePage, Crow Wing County Attorneys Office

Lynda Erickson, Crow Wing County Social Services

This session will focus on the key strategies that are effective for quality, timely decisions about permanency. The key strategies include: thorough assessment of both parents and of the child’s needs; early identification of relatives who can serve both a permanent placement resources and provide other supports to the parents and child; short-term written agreements that break the out-of-home placement plan into doable pieces so that the parent can experience success; regular re-assessment of the parent’s progress and the child’s needs; readjustment of a case plan that isn’t working; working with the permanency resource family to support the parent and commit to being the long-term resource for the child is that is needed.