




March 8, 2010 • Tampa, FL

23rd Annual Children's Mental Health Research and Policy Conference

Symposium:
Advocacy On Behalf of Children and Families Needing Mental Health Care

Lenore B. Behar, Ph.D., *Child & Family Program Strategies*
 Chris A. Zeigler Dendy, M.S., *Author, ADHD Consultant, and Publisher*
 Christina Klokner Young, C.K. Young and Associates
 Maria Rodriguez, *Vanguard Communications*



The Role of State-Level Advocacy in Making Change

Lenore B. Behar, Ph.D.
 Child & Family Program Strategies

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Vantage Points

- State Director of Child & Family Mental Health Services in North Carolina, 1968 – 2002
- Member of Technical Assistance Panel, appointed by the Federal Court for *Felix v. Waihee*, 1992-2000

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Advocacy from the View of a State Director

- In 1968, 42 years ago (!), the concept of advocacy was just emerging—as promoted by the Joint Commission on Mental Health of Children (1969)
- Advocates were professionals who spoke out on behalf of children
 - Breaking the silence of “therapy”
 - Not talking about parents as partners
 - Not collaborating with other agencies

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Gaining Strength Internally

- Gathering data to estimate need
- Gathering data from service providers about failures/inability to provide appropriate services
- Developing a foundation for a lawsuit
- Finding legal advocates to help
- Basing system change on guiding principles

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What Was Missing

- Parents as advocates
- State and local partnerships, not competition with other providers
- Commitment of providers beyond their individual clients
- Higher level recognition of needs for services
- Collaboration with non-lawsuit professionals

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What Helped to Push Ahead

- Willie M. lawsuit got the attention of State and local leaders
- CASSP focus on needs assessment, data collection, automated data systems
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grants
 - Introduction to ways to maximize federal funds
 - Requirements for state and local partnerships

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Advocacy from the View of a Court Expert

- In 1991, the *Felix v. Waihee* suit was filed
- Role as the expert for the State of Hawaii
 - To determine if needs were being met
 - To recommend a course of action for the state
- Role as the court-appointed panel member representing the State's interests
 - To plan with and advise the State agencies
 - To help determine whether or not the State was meeting expectations

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Strengths That Helped

- Organized groups of parents as advocates
- Internal advocates with strong commitments
- Excellent data system
- Settlement plan based on SOC guiding principles

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Inside and Outside Advocacy!

Chris A. Zeigler Dendy, M.S.

Florida 1970-1986

- Dir. Children Services, ACMHC
- FL DHRS Children's MH Supervisor
- CEO Florida Council CMHC

Georgia 1986-1998

- Dir. Georgia Mental Health Association
- Bd. Mem. and Chair, GRN MH, MR, SA

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Progress In Florida Federal and State Support

- ACMHS, Fed Grant, children's services expanded
 - DHRS Children's MH funding
 - SAFE, partner with school
 - Multi-agency multi-disciplinary training and staffing-wraparound without the label
- Established DHRS Children's Planning Committee
 - Identified total amounts spent on residential care by DHRS
 - Counted out-of-state placements—Bring Our Children Home
 - Funded all components on statewide basis—each dist.
 - \$30M funding; \$2M prevention

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Bring Our Children Home



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Progress in Florida State and Local Support

- Est. Statewide Children's Blue Ribbon Com.
 - Statewide multi-agency conferences (families included)
 - Policy development conferences
 - Published policy goals; make sound official
 - Issued report card at end of year
 - Launched BOCH campaign
 - Reported results monthly in newsletter
 - Send to legislators, budget staff, DHRS districts, and CMHCs
- Developed continuum of care/linked with FMHI

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Data Published in Newsletter



Honor Roll

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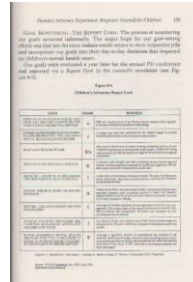
Progress in Georgia State and Local Support

- GA Mental Health Association
 - Drafted children's mental health bill for legislator
- GRN, Fed Grant, children's services expanded
 - Developed therapeutic foster care
 - Parent involvement

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Report Card on PD Goals



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Lessons Learned

- Advocacy skills learned are with you for life
- Support for children's services waxes and wanes
- Enjoy and make best of it in good times
- Chemistry changes when players change
- Build into system so it's systemic
- Partner inside and outside advocates: state, local, parents
- Analyze bottom line goal; determine key action steps
- Set specific measurable objectives; analyze & plan Policy Development goals
- Know who writes/approves policy/budget issues at each level
- Report data—BOCH, Objectives for Blue Ribbon Committee, report card
- Out of state and hospital placements, reported/honor roll

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Current Challenges


- Numerous challenges
- Lack of money
- Fewer legislative statesmen
- Disseminate information to new generations
- Disseminate best practice treatment information

Final advice:

Look at your sphere of influence; determine if you can impact change

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Christina Kloker Young

- Illinois—advocate for abused and neglected children, 1971 – 75
- Akron, Ohio—Exec. Dir Mental Health Association, 1979 – 1988
- Co-laught course at Kent State University on "Child Abuse & Children's Rights"
- Chair and co-chair of Advisory Board -Research & Training Center for Improved Services for Children, Child & Family Studies, University of S. FL 1985 – 2008
- Advisory board for Child & Adolescent Services System Program (CASSP)
- Technical Assistance Center at Georgetown University
- Contributed to book *Advocacy on Behalf of Children With Serious Emotional Disturbances*, 1990
- President of C.K.Young & Associates Creative Planning Systems since 1990, facilitating planning sessions for improving and designing Systems of Care
- Consultant and speaker on Advocacy
- Founding member of A START – Alliance for the Safe, Therapeutic and Appropriate Use of Residential Treatment 2005

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Enhancing Advocacy Through Communications

Maria Rodriguez

President, Vanguard Communications
Project Director, Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign

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Communications Can Transform Perceptions

The "Big C"	➔	Breast cancer is part of the vernacular
Isolation and fear of AIDS patients	➔	Increased understanding, acceptance, and inclusion
Inconsistent drinking and driving laws	➔	Zero tolerance

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Application: Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign

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Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign

Effective communications and advocacy are changing attitudes about people with mental health needs:

- Awareness
- Understanding
- Inclusion

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Early Role of Communications was Mental Health Awareness

- There are children and families with serious mental health needs
- Isolation and separation are not the best approaches
- Serious mental health needs can be addressed through the System of Care model

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Next Stage was Understanding and Engagement

Goal is increased commitment to a coordinated system of care that helps children and youth thrive at home, in school, and in the community

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Current Campaign Focus is Acceptance and Inclusion

- Counter blame-the-victim mentality
- Remove barriers to accessing care
- Eliminate us vs. them rationale

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Communicating in 2010 and Beyond

- Build sustainability into programming
- Bring programs to scale
- Address ethnic/racial disparities and cultural barriers

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Making Communications Work for You

Know Your Audience

- What is important to them?
- How do they spend their time?
- What do they think or know about your issues?
- Where can you find common ground?

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Sharing the Experience

Tell a story that is:

- Actionable
- Timely
- Relevant
- Relatable
- Interesting

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Your Main Message

Audience will retain one or two key messages from a presentation

- Organize your thoughts around a Single Overriding Communications Objective (SOCO)
 - Reflects core messages
 - Helps to organize your thoughts
 - Keeps you focused

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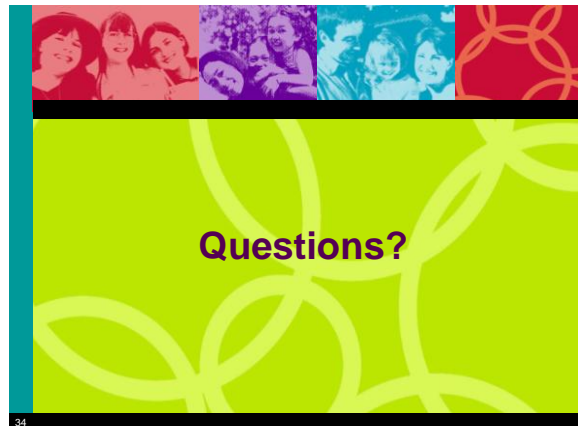
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Tips for Maximizing the Opportunity to Communicate

- Know your audience
- Use data and research to illustrate your points
- Use personal statements and anecdotes
- Be transparent
- Remember your SOCO
- Keep it short and simple

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