



Exploring Cultural Biases in Child Welfare Decision Making

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TDFPS Background


- Child Protective Services
 - The mission of CPS is to protect children and to act in the children's best interest.
 - It is also to seek active involvement of the family to solve problems that lead to abuse and neglect.
- CPS Vision
 - Children first: Protected and connected.
- CPS Values
 - Respect for culture.
 - Inclusiveness of families, youth and community.
 - Integrity in decision making.
 - Compassion for all.
 - Commitment to reducing disproportionality.



TDFPS Background (continued)

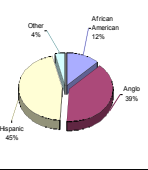
The Texas child welfare system is a state-administered system, with services provided in 254 counties through 11 regions.

- Child Protective Services (CPS) is a program within the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), one of four agencies under the organizational umbrella of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.
- In state Fiscal Year 2007, which concluded August 2007, CPS completed 163,471 investigations, served a monthly average of 10,025 families in their homes, removed 15,920 children, and consummated 4,023 adoptions. On any given day, Texas has approximately 31,322 children in out of home care.
- There is a total of 6,580 CPS staff, including an average of 3,752 caseworkers with a turnover rate of 34.1%.
- The CPS budget in FY2008 is \$1,062,099,773 (1 billion 62 million 99 thousand 7 hundred and 73 dollars).

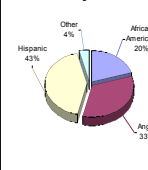


Disproportionality Background (FY 2007 data)*

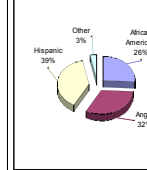
State: Children Under 18 Years




State: Confirmed Victims from Investigations



State: Children Removed




* data as of 9/7/2007. Data shown here may vary from final end of year totals once FY07 data are finalized.



Disproportionality Background (continued)

In 2004, the Texas State Strategy, a collaboration of Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and Casey Family Programs designed to improve service delivery, identified the over-representation of African American children in Child Protective Services as an issue.

- Subsequently, the passage of Senate Bill 6 in 2005 by the 79th Texas Legislature, which mandated comprehensive reform of DFPS, included a requirement to examine and address racial disproportionality in CPS. http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/documents/sb06.pdf/006-01-02_Disproportionality.pdf
<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About/News/news/05-07-01.asp>
- To begin the dialogue with local communities, a State Leadership Planning meeting was held in October 2004 and was followed by Regional Planning Meetings in the two regions, Houston and Arlington, selected as the initial sites. Those meetings, held in November and December 2004, respectively, resulted in the formation of Regional Advisory Committees comprised of local community leaders as well as Texas State Strategy members.
- As disproportionality efforts have concentrated on specific localities (Port Arthur, Houston in Sunnyside and the 3rd and 5th Wards, and Dallas, Tarrant and Denton Counties), these locally based Advisory Committees have coordinated efforts.



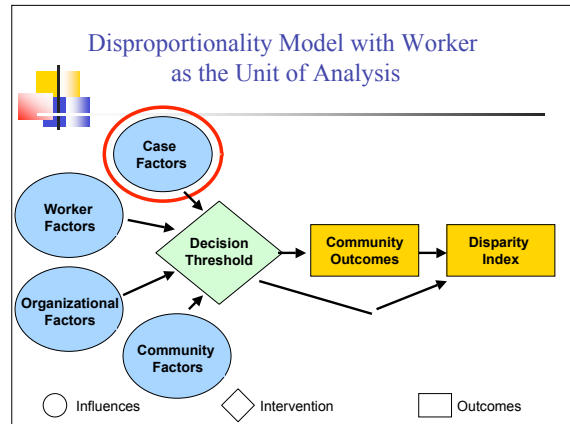
Disproportionality Background (continued)

- Disproportionality sites are currently being located in all 11 Texas Regions and Disproportionality Specialists have been hired for each region with a Disproportionality Manager as the state office reporting to Assistant Commissioner.
- To track the progress of these interventions, a Statewide Evaluation Committee representing the participating regions, the Texas State Strategy, and DFPS research and evaluation team met in August 2005. Through this consortium of state and university evaluators, an evaluation plan was developed to address four key questions.
- Current collaborative partners are Casey Family Programs, the American Humane Association, Walter R. McDonald and Associates, and the Universities of Washington, Illinois, Chicago and Texas at Arlington.
- The four key questions are: (1) Are racial and ethnic groups disproportionately represented in Child Protective Services (CPS)? (2) What are the perceptions of CPS in racial/ethnic communities and by others, (3) What more can we know about the factors involved in any potential disparity, and (4) Can the process be changed?

Disproportionality Background (continued)

Question 1 (disparity) was addressed by analyses of the decisions to close, provide services or remove a child from the home, as well as the decisions to reunify, place with relatives or adopt. Racial and ethnic disparity was found and a report was provided to the legislature in January of 2006. It was followed by a remediation plan in July of 2006.

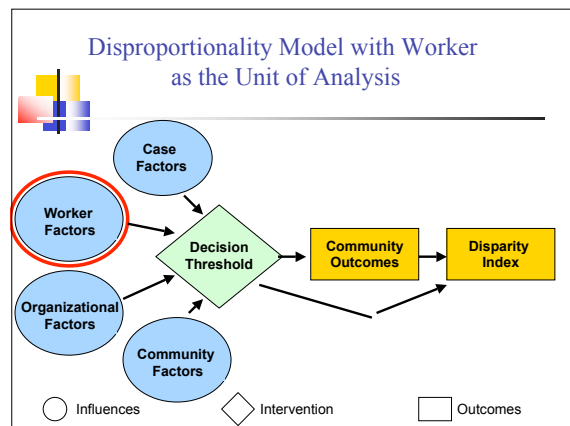
- Question 2 (perceptions) was addressed by holding focus groups in the two largest regions in the state. Texas Southern University led the groups in Houston and The University of Texas at Arlington led groups in Dallas and Fort Worth.
- Question 3 (causal factors) is being addressed through modeling the relationship between worker, organizational and community influences on decision-making.
- Question 4 (change) is being addressed through testing the impact of the sites and on worker training on disparity.



Case Factors

- At Intake**
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Income
 - Source Report
 - Type Allegation
 - Intake Priority*
- At Investigation**
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Income
 - Source Report
 - Level of Risk
 - Case Disposition*
- At Removal**
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Income
 - Source Report
 - Type Allegation
 - Intake Priority
 - Gender
 - Age Group
 - Number of Children/Victims
 - Marital Status
 - Teen Parent
 - Removal*
- FBSS**
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Age Group
 - Income
 - Service Provision*
- Substitute Care**
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Age Group
 - Year of Cohort
 - Primary Care
 - Time in Care*
 - Exit Destination*

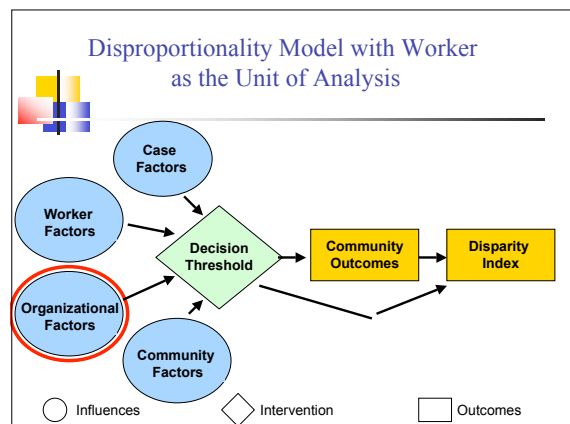
* The Outcome



Worker Factors

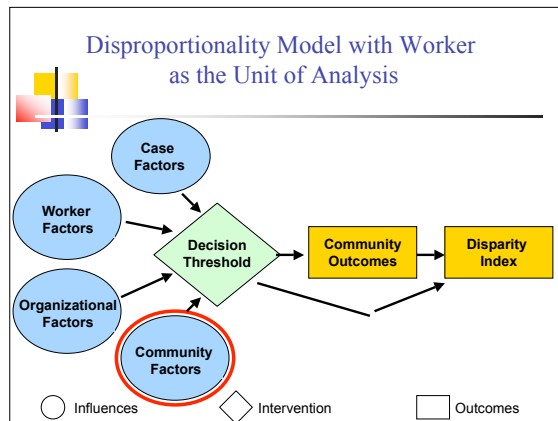
- Demographics (Age, Sex, Race and Ethnicity)
- Skills
- Decision-Making Style
- Experience
- Decision-Making Liability

* Measures need to be located or developed



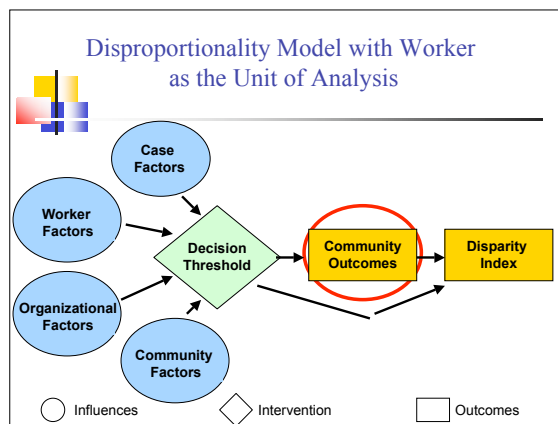
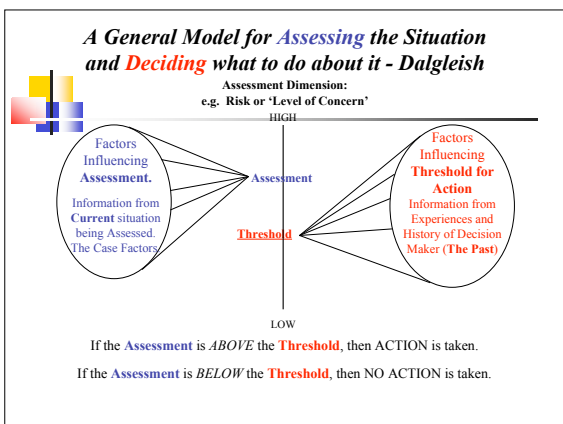
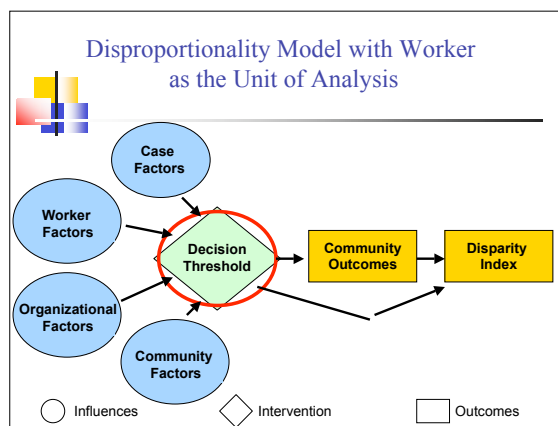
Organizational Factors

- Participation in Knowing Who You Are Training
- Participation in Undoing Racism Training
- Workload and Resources
- Supervision
- Service Utilization
- Agency Policy



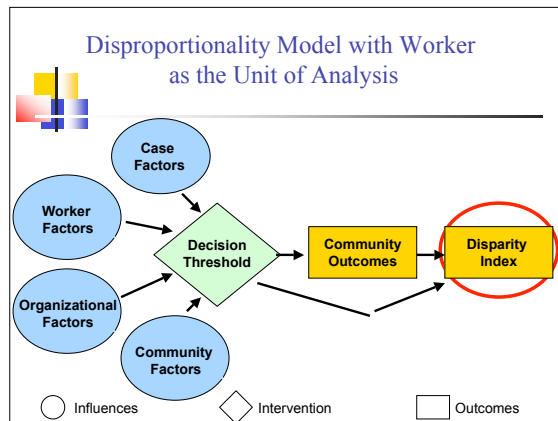
Community Factors

- Crime rates in the community
- Service providers in the community
- Drugs and alcohol abuse in community
- Income levels in the community
- Rate of CPS involvement in the community
- Number of single parent households in the community
- Poverty in the community
- Community understanding of contributing factors
- Community solutions



Community Outcomes

- Increased community satisfaction with CPS on the factors (Clarity of Expectations, Empowerment, System Fairness and others)
- Increased the level of community resources (e.g., service providers)
- Increased Rate of CPS involvement in the community



Are Racial and/or Ethnic Groups Disproportionately Found in CPS?

What we know thus far:

- Compared to the child population, African American children are part of reports, confirmed victims, removed more often and spend more time in Foster Care.
- Adjusting for other factors, African American families are reported more often but not confirmed for maltreatment more often than Anglos or Hispanics.
- Adjusting for other factors, African American children are more likely to be removed than Anglo children and, as do Hispanic children, spend longer in care.

What are the Factors Involved?

What we know thus far:

- When adjusted for risk and income, caseworkers base their decision to remove and provide services on race and/or ethnicity rather than risk.
- Workers associate low income with risk when making their assessment.
- System barriers to exiting care through adoption include the lack of concurrent planning & monitoring the process.


What are the Perceptions of CPS?

What we know thus far:

- Agency contributions: agency climate, differential response to African American families, ineffective interventions, and workforce issues.
- Community contributions: breakdown of community, environmental issues, and barriers to obtaining resources.
- Shared contributions: lack of cultural sensitivity, barriers to the use of kinship care, and a lack of engagement between DFPS and the community. The lack of services in low income areas may influence worker decisions.

Next Steps: Overviews of the Model and Sequence of Analyses


- Pre and Post tests in the sites will be conducted on racial disparity scores
- Worker and Organizational level variables will then be associated with decisions (see case, worker and organizational factors)
- Community Level Variables will then be associated with community outcomes (see community factors)



Can we Intervene Successfully?

What has been done for the next phase:


- **Base line data have been collected**
- **Worker survey data have been collected (over 1100)**
- **Linked administrative data construction is nearly complete**
- **Interventions are in the process of being implemented in the Disproportionality Sites**
- **A number of workers have gone through Knowing Who You Are Training**
- **A number of workers have gone through Undoing Racism Training**



Racial Overrepresentation

Three Views of Overrepresentation

- **"Racial Disproportionality"** refers to a situation where racial or ethnic minorities occur in the child welfare population at rates higher than their occurrence in the general population.
- **"Racial disparity"** occurs when the rate of disproportionality of one racial or ethnic group (e.g., African Americans) exceeds that of a comparison group (e.g., White Americans).
- **"Disparity Index"** refers to the degree to which individuals make a decision based on race or ethnicity, taking into account other factors.



The Right Thing to Do

"Cowardice asks the question, is it safe?
Expediency asks the question, is it polite?
Vanity asks the question, is it popular?
But conscience asks the question, is it right?
And there comes a time when one must take a position that is
neither safe, nor polite, nor popular
– but one must take it because it is right."

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.