Social Connectedness of
Families in Wraparound:
Implications for Practice

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Importance of Informal/Natural Supports in Wraparound

- Provide support professionals cannot
- Sustainable after professionals leave
- Part of natural environment
- May know family well
- Can provide links to other supports in the natural environment

(see Burns & Goldman, 1999; VanDenBerg & Grealish, 1996)

Use of Informal/Natural Supports in Wraparound

- Informal supports often not involved in teams
  - Epstein et al. (2003) - 33% of meetings
  - Davis & Dollard (2004) - 32% of meetings; 40% of plans
  - Cook et al. (2007) - 29% of meetings

Use of Informal/Natural Supports in Wraparound: Potential Issues

- Emphasis on "evidence-based practice" may discourage use of informal supports
- Professionals tend to rely on professionals
- Linkages with informal supports are not billable
- Families may not want to include informal supports

Assessing Support Families Receive from Informal Sources

- The Assessment of Social Connectedness asks caregivers to report on support from:
  - Neighbors
  - Friends
  - Partners/Spouses
  - Family
  - Service Providers
  - Faith Community
  - Family Support Organizations
  - Coworkers

Assessing Support Families Receive

- Caregivers are asked, for each source, how much of the following types of support they receive:
  - Information/Advice
  - Emotional
  - Tangible (e.g., food, transportation)
  - Financial
  - Crisis
- And the degree to which they wish they had received more of these types of support in the last 6 months

Data Collection

- These "Social Connectedness" (SC) questions are included in the National Evaluation (NE) interview

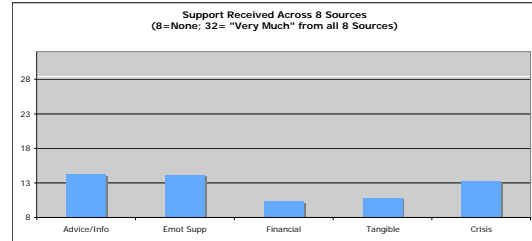- We started collecting SC information in year 2 of NE data collection

Data Collected Thus Far

- To date, we have:
  - 143 initial SC interviews with caregivers
    - These initial SC data reflect different time points of the NE
    - 80 were included in Time 1 NE interview
    - 31 included in Time 2 NE interview
    - 28 included in Time 3 NE interview
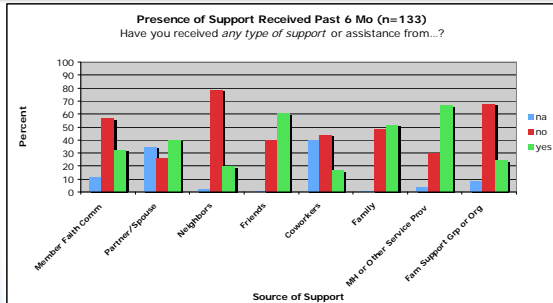 - 48 follow-up SC interviews have been conducted

Measurement Scale

- Caregivers are asked, for each source, if they've received support from that source in the past 6 mo
- If yes, respondents use a 4-point scale to report about each type (e.g., emotional):
  - 1 = Not at all (no support received)
  - 2 = A Little
  - 3 = Somewhat
  - 4 = Very much support
- Ratings summed
  - across 5 types (range 5-20)
  - across 8 sources (range 8-32)

How Much Do They Receive?

Support Received Across 8 Sources
(8=None; 32= "Very Much" from all 8 Sources)

From What Sources?

Presence of Support Received Past 6 Mo (n=133)
Have you received *any type of support* or assistance from...?

Do Those in the SOC Longer Evidence More Support?

- Short answer: No

- In fact, those longer in SOC report no differences and, in some cases, less support over time. For example:

	Initial	6mo	12mo
Service Providers	10.4 >	7.8	9.6
$F(2, 133) = 4.33$, p=.015			
Family Support Org	6.9	5.4	5.8
$F(2, 132) = 3.55$, p=.031			

- And they report less support desired:
  - Want More Support

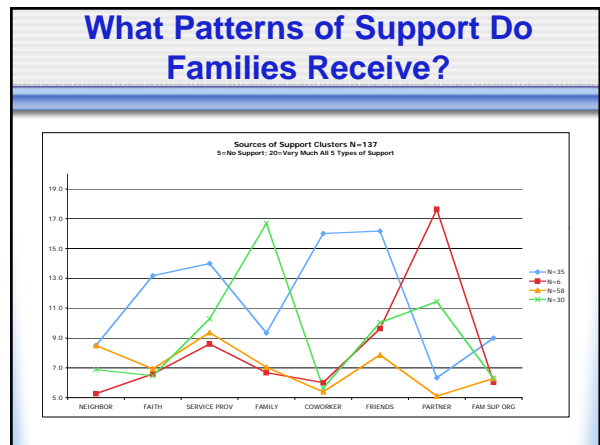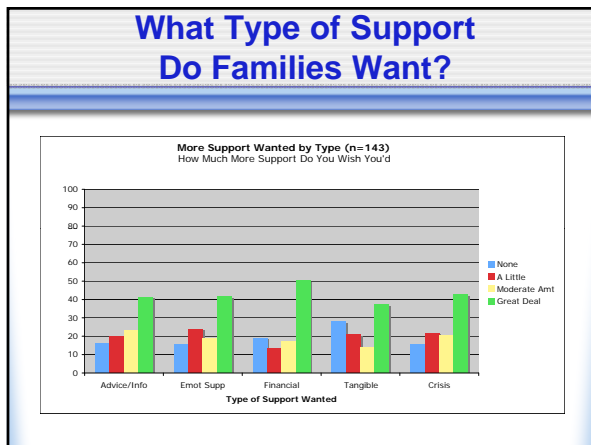 | | Initial | | 6mo | | 12mo |
    |---|---|---|---|---|---|
    | | 15.2 | > | 12.3 | | 13.6 |

    $F(2, 135) = 5.06, p=.008$

- While suggestive, these data are only cross-sectional

Upon Follow-Up, Does the Level of Reported Family Support Improve?

- Again: No

- In fact, for those for whom we have two SC data points (separated by 6 months; $n = 45$), analyses do not detect differences, except:

	First		Follow-Up
Friends	9.5	>	8.6

  $t(46) = 1.92, p=.061$

- And this result is not in the desired direction…

What Type of Support Do Families Want?

More Support Wanted by Type (n=143)
How Much More Support Do You Wish You'd

What Patterns of Support Do Families Receive?

Sources of Support Clusters N=137
5=No Support: 20=Very Much All 5 Types of Support

Take-Home Points

- The majority of those surveyed are reporting low levels of support overall
- Only one 'profile' of support includes meaningful support from informal sources outside of one's family
- Relatively low utilization of family support services
- Relatively low support received from providers

Some Other 'Early Returns"

Example relationships between support source and service utilization/satisfaction:

- Family Support Organization and — r
  - Family received wraparound services — .60
  - Family received non-SOC services — .47
- Faith Community Support and
  - Family received the help we wanted — -.44
  - Family received as much help as we needed — -.55
  - Caregiver satisfaction with services at T2 — -.49

Implications for the System At-Large

- The system needs to:
  - ◆ Work to understand and address the lack of perceived support from providers
  - ◆ Identify strategies to extend the reach of family support organizations
  - ◆ Work to understand the role of faith-based support
  - ◆ Consider mechanisms for meeting needs that do not fall under traditional "mental health" umbrella

Implications for Providers

- Providers would be well-served to:
  - ◆ Assess support needs/experiences
  - ◆ Work to understand the full range of needs experienced by their families
  - ◆ Ensure their families are aware of community-based resources (family support agencies, informal support options)
  - ◆ Connect families with supports in the community

Next Steps and Future Directions

- Do those evidencing different 'profiles' of support also exhibit differences in service utilization, adjustment, etc. over time?
- Relationships between SC and caregiver strain?
- Examine linkages between social connectedness and indicators of well-being and family functioning
  - ◆ To what degree does type of support predict these indicators?
  - ◆ Are certain types more strongly associated with well-being?

Contact Us

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