

A System of Care for Children's Mental Health:
Expanding the Research Base
March 2-5, 2003, Tampa, Florida

16th Annual Proceedings



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About the Center . . .

The Center is part of the Department of Child and Family Studies at the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida. Since its inception in 1984, the Center has conducted an integrated series of research, training, consultation, and dissemination activities to achieve its mission of improving service delivery systems for children with serious emotional or behavioral disabilities and their families. The Annual Research Conference represents one of the events coordinated by the Center to encourage the development and sharing of information on effective service systems.

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Preface

We are pleased to present the Proceedings of the *16th Annual Research Conference, A System of Care for Children's Mental Health: Expanding the Research Base*, held March 2-5, 2003, in Tampa Florida. Each year, this national conference is host to researchers, policy makers, service professionals, educators, and family members who gather to share their research findings, insights, and experiences in an effort to improve mental health services and outcomes for children and their families.

The work done at the 16th Annual Research Conference corresponds with a time of special opportunity for the field. In the summer of 2003, the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health presented their findings of a study of the problems and gaps in the mental health care system. Concluding that the mental health care system in the United States requires a "fundamental transformation" in order to provide services and treatments that are family oriented and which "focus on increasing consumers' ability to successfully cope with life's challenges, on facilitating recovery, and on building resilience,"¹ the Commission organized their report around six goals of a transformed mental health system:

- Americans Understand that Mental Health Is Essential to Overall Health.
- Mental Health Care Is Consumer and Family Driven.
- Disparities in Mental Health Services Are Eliminated.
- Early Mental Health Screening, Assessment, and Referral to Services Are Common Practice.
- Excellent Mental Health Care Is Delivered and Research Is Accelerated.
- Technology Is Used to Access Mental Health Care and Information.

These goals are not new to those of us who work in the field of children's mental health services; yet they are reproduced here to remind our readers that our work is consistent with the goals of the Commission, and to encourage us to continue our important work in these areas. The summaries in this proceedings not only support the transformation mandated by the Commission, but reflect that considerable progress has been made. In this volume, the authors describe research projects, program evaluations, aspects of investigation, implementation, and innovations to service delivery systems. The summaries reflect an interdisciplinary approach to children's mental health research, and cover such topics as building and maintaining a system of care; family involvement; substance abuse and juvenile justice; child welfare and foster care; wraparound; early intervention and resilience; culturally-sensitive programs and projects; information and outcomes management; and other special topics. Much of the information here can be found in more detail elsewhere—in published journal articles, books, reports, or through direct contact with the authors.

The Proceedings are designed to capture the discussions, papers, and posters presented at the Annual Research Conference, and to inform future research on many aspects of the design, implementation, and evaluation of systems of care for children and their families. The Annual Research Conference's presenters are selected for their commitment to high quality research, and all are invited to submit a brief summary of their work for the Proceedings. In the back, the author index will help you locate summaries from your colleagues, friends, and mentors. With sincere appreciation for our authors, reviewers, and to our colleagues in the field, thank you for your insight, hard work, and dedication to the field of children's mental health research. We hope you will find the Proceedings of theoretical interest and practical use.

¹ *President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (2003). Executive summary. Washington DC: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved: <http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/reports/Finalreport/toc.html>*

A Special Thank You...

Each year, as the Research Conference concludes, we look ahead to the Proceedings. The first step, of course, is to invite our presenters to share their work, and we are grateful that so many agree to do so. Thanks to all for their timely submissions, and patience with edits, suggestions and requests.

Upon receipt, each submission is matched with two expert reviewers from the University of South Florida's Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute faculty and staff. Their thoughtful comments and suggestions continue to contribute enormously to the quality of this volume.

This year's review team included: Kathy Armstrong, Mary Armstrong, Karen Blase, Richard Briscoe, Hewitt B. ("Rusty") Clark, Norín Dollard, Albert Duchnowski, Mary Evans, Dean Fixsen, Angela Gomez, Mario Hernandez, Sharon Hodges, Krista Kutash, Katherine Lazear, Lodi Lipien, Marcelle Maylott, Chamaine Moss, Carol McKinnon-Lewis, Debra Mowrey, Teresa Nesman, Diane Powell, Steve Roggenbaum, Susan Sheffield, Bobbie Vaughn, and Svetlana Yampolskaya. Much interdisciplinary expertise is represented by this list. Thank you.

The research conference is characterized by the collaboration of many disciplines; this is true for the production of this volume, as well. The Department of Child and Family Studies (CFS), which is home to the Research and Training Center, contributes support for production of the Proceedings. The department's CFS Communication staff members have worked on the Proceedings project for many years, and have created numerous strategies that make this publication possible. A special thank you goes to the leader of our desktop publishing team, Dawn Khalil, for her expert guidance in transforming hundreds of tables and figures into publication-ready digital images. We also want to thank Judith Drake, Kiki Harris, and Francis Vayalumkal for their tireless administrative support throughout the publication process.

And last, but not least, we are thankful for the continued leadership and support of our funders: the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, U.S. Department of Education, and the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. These agencies' commitment to excellence and to improving services for the nation's children and their families is strong. Our goal is for these Proceedings and all products disseminated by the Center is to reflect their vision.

The editors: Catherine C. Newman, Cindy J. Liberton, Krista Kutash, and Robert M. Friedman

On The Web...

The Proceedings are available on the World Wide Web. Go to <http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu>, and you will find a route to this Proceedings in its entirety, as well as past issues.

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