

A System of Care for Children's Mental Health:
Expanding the Research Base
February 29 - March 3, 2004, Tampa, Florida

17th Annual Proceedings



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Editors:

Catherine C. Newman, M.A.

Cindy J. Liberton, B.A.

Krista Kutash, Ph.D.

Robert M. Friedman, Ph.D.

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Department of Child and Family Studies
The Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute

University of South Florida
13301 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33612-3807



For more information, call 813-974-4661
or visit the Website: <http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu>

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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.

Events, activities, programs and facilities of the University of South Florida are available to all without regard to race, color, marital status, gender, religion, national origin, disability, age, Vietnam or disabled veteran status as provided by law and in accordance with the University's respect for personal dignity.

Preface

We are very pleased to present the *Proceedings of the 17th Annual Research Conference: A System of Care for Children's Mental Health—Expanding the Research Base*, held February 29–March 3, 2004, 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.

Just a few months ago we were notified that our Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health has been funded for an additional five years by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, and the Center for Mental Health Services. We appreciate the confidence that these organizations have shown in us, and look forward to this opportunity to expand upon the partnerships we have developed over the past 20 years of the Center's existence, and to address important research issues.

As is evident from this volume, the field has made great strides in the past 20 years and has laid the foundation for tremendous progress in years to come. Our challenge is to build the “next generation” of systems of care on the lessons that have been learned in our field and others, on a research base that embraces a variety of approaches, and on perspectives that genuinely emphasize a “systemic” look at our efforts. The important issue may not be what we put into our systems of care, but how all of the pieces fit together, and how they respond to the local community and cultural context. This requires a holistic look.

In the pages of the proceedings you will hear from the researchers and evaluators who are currently at work framing issues and conducting research—using both established and emerging methods to promote better service delivery systems for children and their families. Their energy and expertise will be critical to continuing to add to what we know about implementing effective systems of care, as well as for championing promising practices, programs and measures, in a variety of contexts. Together, we will build upon the framework developed 20 years ago to expand our understanding of the concept of “systems,” with an emphasis on looking not just at components of our systems but examining their inter-dependency.

The Proceedings are designed to provide a “thumbnail” sketch of 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. We encourage you to contact the authors for more information about their presentations or studies. The Annual Research Conference presenters are selected for their commitment to high quality research, and the summaries of their presentations reflect their dedication to improving the lives of children and their families. 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.

The editors:

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

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, Ilene Berson, Karen Blase, Richard Briscoe, Hewitt B. ("Rusty") Clark, Norín Dollard, Albert Duchnowski, Kathleen Ferreria, Dean Fixsen, Paul Greenbaum, Mario Hernandez, Sharon Hodges, Mary Ann Kershaw, Krista Kutash, Lodi Lipien, Nancy Lynn, Chamaine Moss, Carol McKinnon-Lewis, Tom Massey, Debra Mowrey, Teresa Nesman, Don Policella, Diane Powell, Steve Roggenbaum, Susan Sheffield, Amy Vargo, Bobbie Vaughn, Frances Wallace 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 Taylor Johnson, Jon Wilson, and Judith Drake 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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