

**Family Connections Model – The Family Center
Program Evaluation Plan**

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SWK 628- Social Work Program and Practice Evaluation
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Family Connections Model – The Family Center: Program Evaluation

Description of Program

Child Maltreatment

According to The World Health Organization (WHO) “child maltreatment” includes all forms of neglect, sexual abuse, exploitation, emotional and physical ill-treatment that can result in potential or actual harm to a child’s development, health or dignity. The main types of abuse are psychological, physical and sexual abuse. These abuses are considered an “act of commission”, which means an individual initiates some course of action on another. On the other hand neglect which is abuse is considered an act of omission, which means failing to perform something required that can be committed inadvertently or willingly.

According to (WHO), All races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic groups are affected by child abuse with boys and adolescents more commonly affected. However, each year, millions of children are investigated by the Child Protective Services for child abuse and neglect. (Gonzalez, 2020)

Child protective service, AKA, Administration for Children Services, formerly known as the Bureau of Child Welfare (BCW) for the state of New York decided to adopt a Model that would assist in combating the war against child abuse and neglect. The Family Connections Model was founded by Diane DePanfilis and introduced to the NYC ACS in 2014. This model has currently (2020) been adopted by the NYC ACS as the only model that they will use to combat the war on Child abuses / neglect. The Family Connections Model “is a multi-faceted community-based program that works with vulnerable families in their homes, in the context of their neighborhoods, to help them meet the basic needs of their children and prevent child maltreatment.”

Family Connections

Family Connections was developed to reduce risk factor related to maltreatment and enhance protective factors that may help families meet the basic needs of their children. Family connections core components are emergency and concrete needs, Comprehensive SMART Goals used to measure progress. In addition to that there is change focused intervention which includes one on one weekly in home counseling utilizing change talk, family plan evaluation at 90 days and then work towards case closure within 7 – 9 months. The family connections philosophical principles include community outreach, empowerment approaches, culture competence, developmental appropriateness, critical thinking and strengths perspective. The goal of the worker is to create a positive environment and exhibit a positive attitude. Be available to mentor and counsel when needed and assist the family in creating a safe environment for the child(ren) and implement safety measures that will allow the family to independently move toward case closure and an understanding of the importance of maintaining a safe environment for their family. The ultimate goal of Family Connections is to work on changing parenting attitudes, which will create a safe environment for the families who participate. Outcome evaluations using pre – post designs, interviews and observations will work best in evaluating this model.

Outcome evaluations are important and provide information into how a program is functioning in its present state. It also allows for programs to be revamped if the information provided doesn't prove in the best interest of the community in which it is being presented. Outcome evaluations allow the agency to learn more about what works and gives an opportunity for the stakeholders to give input on their level of expertise. It allows the program to look for alternative ways provide services that will enhance the community in order for the community to strive.

Program Setting & Location

The Family Center serves the families associated with Administration for Children Services through preventive service agencies. The agency I worked with served the Bedford – Stuyvesant community and its surrounding neighbors. Psychiatric evaluations and treatments and counseling takes place on – site at the agency. Case Planners conduct weekly 1 – on – 1 in home counseling and works with family’s from 0 – 99 years of age. Services are available by appointment but the agency’s doors are open Monday – Saturday. The agency offers parenting skills and anger management classes 2 – 4 times per year as needed and outsources as sessions become available. Translation is available upon request.

Program Inputs	Program Activities	Outputs	Short – Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long – Term Outcomes
Staff: 8 Case Planners, 2 Supervisors 1 Director 1 Psychiatrist 1 Office Aide Administration for Children Services Location: Non - Profit Agency Office Building Equipment: Laptops Cellphones	Parenting Groups Individual and Group Counseling 1 – on – 1 in home counseling Anger Management Classes	Clients participate in 1 – on – 1 home counseling 30 Minute counseling sessions with Child Therapist Family Counseling as needed Clients participate in Anger Management sessions as needed. Clients participate in	Increase clients knowledge about alternative discipline methods Increase clients knowledge on how to work better with children in stressful situations Gain a better understanding of the stresses of the world on children	Improving interactions with child(ren) Parents utilize knowledge of new parenting skills to implement	Parents change methods of discipline according to the age of the child. Children will be able to actively function in their communities in a positive way.

Time		parenting class			
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Program Consumers, Clients & Patients Served

The Family Center serves the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn and serves family's for various reasons. They work with people from 0 – 99 and from diverse ethnic backgrounds. There are different departments that work with a different set of clients who may need counseling, psychiatric care, self – care, legal care or assistance with housing, food, personal hygiene amongst other things. Clients who worked with preventive received 1 – on – 1 counseling, individual counseling for the children, anger management or parenting classes amongst other medical or educational needs. Most family's finished the program and utilized the services provided at our facility without re-entry into the system.. Each person had the ability to utilize the services after preventive services were complete.

The agency has been serving the community for over 25 years and has established a strong rapport with their clients. Some clients who have completed services in the agency has come back to support, work, or volunteer for the agency and give back to a community.

Characteristics of Program Staff

During my timed at the agency I got a chance to work with a gifted and talented group of people who have assisted in shaping what I would like to do and what I would like to work

towards. This team of about a dozen directors (Program and Executive) are dedicated to working to build the community that they are housed in. *Rebecca Kim* and her team work in TFC's Family Support and Counseling Program. This program offered counseling services to our youth and adults as needed. *Joan Salmon* and her team work in Behavioral Health and assisted where needed as it pertains to working with a child who had a behavioral diagnosis but we also outsourced and / or maintain communication with the counselor that they may already have. We had a Child' Trauma Unit which consisted of 4 volunteers and a few interns.

In addition, the program I worked with Family Net which was contracted by ACS to implement the Family Connections Model. On staff was 1 Director, 2 Supervisors, 1 Case Aide and 9 Case Planners. Family Net Program worked towards implementing safety / risk assessments with families before being contracted by ACS to work the with the Family Connections Model which also focused on safety / risk amongst other things.

Program Cost and Funding

The Family Connections program was funded by ACS, however the amount of funding was not disclosed to us during my time working with the agency.

Program Goals & Objectives

Family Net's goal was to service the community to ensure that family's are able to live productive lives in safety. This will allow the children in these family's to learn tools needed to thrive, survive and live productively in society. The Family Net / Family Connections program which was housed at The Family Center provided housing assistance, counseling, selfcare sessions and TFC offered parenting and anger management classes. TFC offers affordable and / or free services to assist in reducing everyday life stressors and ways to work through it. This

will allow families to gain a better understanding of what is helpful in raising children today and will increase communication in the home. TFC is dedicated to building family's through communication and services that fit each family that comes through their doors.

Program Goal # 1: Increase clients knowledge on parenting skills and their ability to implement techniques when needed so that the children can become productive members in their communities.

- **Objective #1:** Conduct weekly in home 1 – on – 1 counseling sessions for one hour with the family's to discuss and learn how to implement appropriate discipline methods.
- **Objective #2:** Conduct monthly family collateral sessions with Child, Parent and Social Worker and work towards goals set to improve upon parenting attitudes towards age appropriate discipline.
- **Objective #3:** Provide clients with information to attend parenting classes and learn new methods of age appropriate discipline. This will assist the family in gaining insight on ways to control their child's behavior so that they can be productive in their community.

Program Goal # 2: Increase the family's understanding on the needs of safety which will allow for them to communicate in an effective way. This will address concerns as it pertains to culture, education and economic needs.

- **Objective #1:** Conduct weekly in home 1 – on – 1 counseling sessions for one hour with the family's to discuss safety and risk.

- **Objective #2:** Provide clients with information on reducing anger and stress and how to utilize it when situations arise.
- **Objective #3:** Provide clients with alternate methods to keep children safe and out of harms way.

Purpose of Evaluation & Stakeholder Engagement

Purpose of the Evaluation

The Family Net / Family Connections program has been providing services to the Bedford Stuyvesant community for 5 years. There is a need to evaluate the program and test the validity of the program with the services that it is providing to assess if the program is offering what it states. To evaluate the program, we will use the Outcome Evaluation methods. Outcome evaluation is a good fit for this program because it will determine if learning parenting skills are effective in changing parenting attitudes. We will also be able to determine if other services are needed for the families that are involved in services.

The Family Connections Model uses family and individual assessments along with SMART goals to trace and documents the change in parenting attitudes and behaviors. The question then becomes, does utilizing the Family Connections Model work effectively to change parenting attitudes? Do Families continue to utilize excessive corporal punishment as a means of discipline?

Hypothesis 1: There are reduced child neglect / abuse / maltreatment cases in the Bedford Stuyvesant community as a result of the Family Connections Model through The Family Center.

Stakeholders

There are several stakeholders who are interested in the outcome of the Family Connections Model presented by ACS. The Family Connections model is utilized in most non-profit organizations that have a stake in the community's in New York. Although this program is not voluntary once you have an active ACS case, however, some family's report that they have definitely learned more about raising children in the world today. Most family's raise their children with little to no experience and sometimes utilize methods that were taught to them when they were growing up. These methods, although effective in its own time are not so effective in today's world. Communication may work better than physical discipline if a parent knows how to express themselves.

Although reluctant at first, with the assistance and understanding of the case planner the family worked with, they were able to understand different and effective methods of age appropriate discipline. The other stakeholders were interested in numbers on paper and looked more at the physical data that gave answers. While not all data was correct data it was the way that ACS was able to see progress from the family's and the workers at the agency. This allowed the agency to continue to receive funding so that the community can utilize this model to which allowed family's to utilize a system that would create more effectiveness in the community. This model also assisted in exhibiting another way of discipline that would allow to be implemented in generations to come.

Method

Research Designs

Pre – Post design will be used with the Family Connections Model using Outcome Evaluation. (X = The Program, Observation 1 + Observation 2) X(The Family Connection)

O1(1st Computer Assisted Self Interview), O2(2nd Computer Assisted Self Interview). The Computer Assisted Self Interview (CASI) is administered in the home of the family on the 2nd or 3rd visit. A second CASI is administered 90 days after the 1st CASI to monitor the program and its effectiveness for the families that it serves. The families are allotted 45 – 60 minutes for the survey and are informed that it is not an exam and is used to better service the families that we work with. Side Note: When a case planner is hired for their position they are asked to take the CASI and to be honest. Upon entering the program I took the CASI and it was accurate as it pertained to my thoughts and actions on discipline. Taking the survey gave case planners the ability to explain the validity of the survey and also explain its purpose. The pre-test allows the worker to coach the family in areas where the score was low, such as, safety & risk, housing, discipline or essential needs such as food, clothing and hygiene necessities. The post-test is given to see if those needs were able to be met and if there was a change in parenting attitudes / behaviors towards their children.

One threat to this design is History of an unknown event. This event of the family and extended events that are unrelated to the purposes as it relates to the child neglect / abuse. For example, there was a sudden death in the family and I had to leave to take care of the events. I have no one to take care of my children in the state and they have to come with me. The pre-post survey doesn't have any questions or statements related to outside events that can place my children at harm for abuse / neglect. It was an unrelated event that has to do with my history. This test can use a control group, however it will not be effective to use as it pertains to other factors. These factors include, nationality, sex, living situation and / or educational status for parents. It will also lose validity due to the differences in educational needs for the children. It will only be available for the specific group which is targeted. The agency also provides a

confidentiality / privacy environment for its clients. Utilizing a control group would put the clients and agency at risk.

Another concern is called the “ceiling effect” as stated in (Smith 2010). This is “where participants already have the proper knowledge, behavior, attitude, skills or status before the program starts”. (Smith, 2010. P. 256) This is a concern due to parents already being involved in the system and knowing how to answer the questions according to what they were taught before. This doesn’t mean that they have changed any behavior, but that they know how to manipulate the situation.

Data Collection Procedures

This outcome evaluation will use surveys as the quantitative data to be conducted in home or in office, wherever the family is more comfortable. The survey will be conducted by the worker (case planner). The survey will be conducted by the 2nd or 3rd week of the program start and the 2nd survey will be completed 3 months later. Questions included are, 1) Do you think a 1 year old should be responsible for their parents actions? Or, do you believe it is ok for a 10 year old boy to be considered the man of the family when no man is involved or present? It is ok to use a belt when disciplining your children? Utilizing corporal punishment is good when your child is not listening to you when you speak. The answers from this questionnaire can be worked on with the parents and case planners until the post – CASI is administered.

During the 3 months, the case planner and the family will have had weekly discussions that will encourage the family to become more understanding of their children’s needs and the parent will be able to work through situations and problems as they arise or maybe even see them before they get out of hand. Weekly Observations will be done in home and anytime the family

visits the office to also be used as quantitative data. This data will serve dual purposes: Purpose #1 – it will allow the case planner to discuss the outcome with the family, and gain understanding of the family’s thoughts on child raising and safety and risk. Also, where safety and risk play a part in the family’s ability to understand its importance. Purpose #2 – Discussions will be documented and can be later used as an aide in other cases that may appear similar in nature as it pertains to offering services needed. For example, a parent caring for a child with a mental health disability who needs parenting classes to assist in ways to effectively discipline their child.

Participation observation / field notes and agency records/ document reviews will be utilized for qualitative data collection procedures. Observation are done by case planners in home, in addition to counselors, teachers and other workers when the client has office visits. These observations are noted and if requested can be shared. There is a privacy / confidentiality clause that protects what is said with their counselor, however, the case planner has to document what is shared in their weekly visits. Records are kept and stored from the participation observation / field notes. These records / documents can be utilized for future referencing to other cases when the need arises and it can also be utilized to educate staff on noticeable geographical and personal needs to be met that surface often.

There are positives and negatives with any collection data procedures and therefore must be monitored carefully. The advantage of survey/questionnaires are they are inexpensive and “can produce normative data for programs” on services and if necessary “consumer satisfaction.” (Smith, 2010.) The disadvantage is that depending on the descriptive data needed a survey / questionnaire can not be used as qualitative data. There was also no explaining a question or its purpose if the person taking the survey / questionnaire.

As stated in (Smith, 2010) Observation is good in the evaluation process when it describes the consumers response and how the program operates in a thorough manner. Use of field notes in observation would be good to gather information if the notes are written correctly without bias. These notes would be written by the observing worker, whether it is the Case Planner or Supervisor. These notes can be compared to other observation notes to obtain services needed specific to age, ethnic group and / or gender specific. For Example, needed services such as, Parenting classes for Spanish speaking parents with children ages 0 – 5. In addition to that support groups for parents parenting gender specific children and how to encourage support within their households. The notes gathered will be able to assist families and may be effective for future needs assessments. When data used is quantitative and it can't be measured correctly then you go to the qualitative data.

Data Collection Instrument (Measurement)

The researcher will use a questionnaire rubric to explore the thoughts and actions of parents from different ethnic backgrounds and age differences. Questions such as, 1) Do you think a 1 year old should be responsible for their parents actions? Or, do you believe it is ok for a 10 year old boy to be considered the man of the family when no man is involved or present? Answers are Somewhat Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Don't understand. These questions have to do with understanding the role responsibilities of children and adults. There are also questions such as how many times as an adult have you moved in the past 12 months, and is there enough food in your home for at least two meals a day? These questions have to do with the way a parent observes their living situation.

After the questionnaire is administered, physical data will be collected through observation and documented as field notes by the Case Planner and as needed the Supervisor. Observations, field notes and survey / questionnaire will be utilized to discuss needs assessments and any services that may be useful for the family's as they enter or exit the program. This program is not voluntary and is offered to those who have an open case with ACS. The validity of this measurement is that it shows similarities across ethnic groups and different ages as it pertains to parenting. The one thing that it doesn't take into account is current situations and barriers to effective parenting while dealing with family crisis and career downturns.

Sampling

Non-probability sampling will be used based on purposive or judgmental sampling. Those that have cases with ACS will automatically be given this survey / questionnaire and be observed whether they need it or not. This may not represent the larger population in one setting due to the diverse nature of the family's that become involved with ACS.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Data

This outcome evaluation will focus on participation observation field notes and agency records. The purpose of observation is to observe the person(s) involved in their environment to get the most truthful answers through observation without bias. The field notes and agency records together can gather information based on ethnic background, age and sex and have the

ability to assess for any needs or services that can be utilized to further assist family's that have come into the sight of ACS.

Quantitative Data

The outcome evaluation will conduct a paired sample T-test to evaluate the effectiveness of the family connections program in changing parenting attitudes. This survey questionnaire focuses on the child in whom the problem was focused on. Answers from pre and post-test will help the program determine if it is useful and productive to the population that it serves.

Findings and Implications

The outcome of the survey evaluations may show a disparity in income versus values and will quickly dissolve any biases one may have as it relates to discipline and wealth or the lack thereof. This outcome is solely to measure if the program is effective in addressing corporal punishment and changing parenting behaviors as a result. The Family Connections Program assists parents in understanding better discipline methods and how to get in front of a situation by observations and knowledge. If a family follows the steps of this program they will be able to gain the knowledge of alternative discipline methods. Family's will also be able to not cross adult / child barriers and will be able to get in front of most situations before something bad happens.

The findings will be reviewed and shared with key stakeholders, such as case planners, supervisor, program director, clients and the funder. This report will include demographics based on age, ethnicity, social economics, finances. The findings of this survey will allow the stakeholders an opportunity to provide needed services and gain reports and statistics on these

reports. This will lead to families being more informed on appropriate discipline methods and ways to change their attitudes towards parenting. This will also allow policy makers to gain a better understanding of the community that they are involved in.

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