



Regional Partnership Grants
and Cross-Site Evaluation

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS ROUND II

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INC., ENHANCING
SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN OF DRUG COURT PARTICIPANTS

LEAD AGENCY: Georgia State University Research Foundation, Inc.

LOCATION: DeKalb County and Cobb County (Atlanta), GA3

PROGRAM FUNDING: \$935,800.00/Year; \$790,452 Federal; \$145,000 Match

GEOGRAPHIC AREA AND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS SERVED: DeKalb County, GA-005 and Cobb County, GA-006, 011, 013

NUMBER SERVED: 120 parenting and trauma needs assessment; 30-40 therapy/counseling

PROJECT ABSTRACT

This project represents a collaborative effort between Georgia State University, DeKalb County Superior Court Drug Court, Cobb County Family Dependency Treatment Court, the GA Department of Family and Children's Services, the GA Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the DeKalb County Community Service Board, Lutheran Family Services, the GA Center for Child Advocacy and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta. Together, the team implements evidence-based parenting, trauma treatment for adult drug court participants and their children and mentoring services. Specific services implemented include the (1) parenting using the SafeCare® and Nurturing Parenting models, (2) trauma treatments using Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) for children, and the COPE model for adults, (3) the social recovering initiative for drug court clients and families to promote healthy socialization and (4) mentoring (Big Brothers, Big Sisters) for children. Assessments for service needs of adult participants and their families are completed regularly. These family based services provide in an integrated manner, with DFCS- and DBHDD-supported providers attending staffing at the DeKalb County Drug Court to ensure coordination and collaboration between partners and that treatment considers the entire family unit. The Drug Court currently implements a menu of evidence-based practices for a high-risk offender population including pre-service assessment and manualized curricula (e.g. relapse prevention, Moral Reconciliation Therapy, Thinking for a Change), random drug screening and graduated sanctions and incentives, among other practices.

In Year 4, the project expanded to Cobb County Family Dependency Treatment Court. Enhancement services provided include TF-CBT, SafeCare® and mentoring services. Existing therapists at CFTC were trained in TF-CBT and SafeCare. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro

Atlanta is a new partnership in both DeKalb and Cobb Counties, which provides mentoring services for children of enrolled families.

The evaluation plan includes the collection of process, treatment, and outcome measures. Process measures include the number, dosage, and modalities of services offered across parenting, trauma, substance abuse and criminogenic thinking domains. Client satisfaction surveys are conducted. Outcome measures focus on both parental and child functioning and child welfare outcomes regarding reporting to DFCS and family stability.

TARGET POPULATION

General: Drug Court clients with children, along with their families and children.

Adult Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria: In DeKalb County: Must be a participant in the Adult Drug Court, must have a substance use disorder. In Cobb County: Must be a participant family in the Family Dependency Treatment Court.

In-home/Out-of-home Focus: Both, approximately 30% are in home and a majority of out of home see their kids at least once a week.

MAJOR PROGRAM SERVICES

- **Parenting**
 - SafeCare®
 - Nurturing Parenting Program
- **Mental Health and Trauma Services for Adults**
 - Concurrent Treatment of PTSD and Substance Use Disorders using Prolonged Exposure (COPE)
 - Moral Reconciliation Therapy- Trauma Enhancement Module
- **Mental Health and Trauma Services for Children**
 - Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) – Evidence Based Practice
- **Substance Abuse Treatment for Adults**
 - Intensive Outpatient
 - Aftercare/Continuing Care
- **Specialized Outreach, Engagement and Retention**
 - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy- Moral Reconciliation Therapy
- **Children's Screening and Assessment**
 - Trauma
 - Behavioral
- **Adult Screening and Assessment**
 - Trauma
 - Behavioral
- **Housing**

- Transitional Housing
- **Evidence-Based Practices:**
 - Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
 - Concurrent Treatment of PTSD and Substance Use Disorders using Prolonged Exposure (COPE)
 - SafeCare®
 - Nurturing Parenting Program (NPP)
 - Moral Reconciliation Therapy
 - Mentoring services for children (with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta)

MAJOR PROGRAM GOALS

- Goal 1:** Promote positive parenting among drug court clients with children to promote child development and a positive parent-child relationship and prevent neglect and abuse.
- Goal 2:** Address trauma among drug court clients and children of drug court clients.
- Goal 3:** Promote positive socialization among drug court clients and their families through the social recovery initiative.
- Goal 4:** Promote positive socialization among children of drug court clients through a formal mentorship program.

KEY PARTNER AGENCIES

The Regional Partnership Grants encourages service providers to develop and/or strengthen cross-system linkages between substance abuse treatment, child welfare, dependency court and other service systems. The following partners are included:

- **University**
 - Georgia State University –lead agency and evaluator for the project
- **Child Welfare**
 - Georgia Department of Human Services, Family and Children Services
 - Lutheran Services of Georgia- private CW services
- **Substance Abuse & Mental Health Treatment**
 - DeKalb Community Services Board – community based behavioral health provider
 - Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)
 - Georgia Center for Child Advocacy
- **Court**
 - DeKalb County Superior Court, DeKalb County Drug Court (DCDC),
 - Cobb County Juvenile Court, Cobb County Family Dependency Treatment Court
 - County Superior Court
- **Criminal Justice**

- Department of Safety/Pretrial Services, Sheriff's Office
- District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office

DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

There is a subcommittee focused on dissemination and sustainability. The subcommittee includes representation from all of the major partner agencies as well as a representative from the Governor's Office on Children and Families. The broad goal of the sustainability and dissemination subcommittee is to focus on ways to disseminate project findings and the service model and ways to fund services from ongoing available funding streams on a more permanent basis.

Dissemination activities include:

- Disseminate initial findings and immediate lessons learned regularly with partners and the network of service providers for each of the partners
- Presentations at state and local conferences, including Georgia Public Health Association, the Georgia Home Visiting Institute and the Georgia Accountability Court Conference
- Presentations at national conferences, including the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect's bi-annual conference, the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, NIMH Implementation and Dissemination Conference, the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, the American Society of Criminology, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences and the National Association of Drug Court Professionals to present the service model, lessons learned and key findings
- Dissemination of the service model to other drug courts

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

Involvement of Partners: There is a subcommittee whose primary responsibility is sustainability. The sustainability subcommittee includes leadership from all participating agencies, along with members from state agencies in Georgia that fund service programs (e.g., DBHDD and DFCS).

Sustainability Approach: Following the development of a comprehensive funding map, the team determined what kind of data is collected from the current project to determine whether services could be eligible for funding through promising funding streams.

Additional Funding: The team has developed and strengthened its relationships with various state agencies, in order to keep them informed of the project and outcomes. In addition, the team is seeking out alternative sources of funding to support the services long-term such as preventive funding from Governor's Office on Child Welfare, a state agency that focuses on the systems of state care, the Maternal Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, a federal grant to promote evidence-based home visiting programs and Medicaid funds.

EVALUATION

To expand the evidence base of promising approaches to serve families with children affected by parental substance abuse, the Children's Bureau requires all RPG grantees to conduct local evaluations of their programs. Georgia State University is conducting a quasi experimental comparison group design evaluation to examine the effects of the package of services to standard drug court services provided by the DCDC and CFTC. In addition to these standard services, families in the Enhancing Safety and Well-Being of Children of Families in Recovery intervention group receive services including adult and child trauma treatment, a parenting program, and mentoring services for children. The comparison group consists of families who have children and who are involved with the nearby Cobb County Drug Court (CCDC) or Douglas Family Treatment Dependency Court (DFTC). Families in the comparison group receive the regular services provided to all CCDC and DFTC clients and do not receive parenting, trauma or mentoring services. The grantee anticipates having 240 families participate in the evaluation, split evenly between the intervention and comparison groups. In addition to evaluating the enhanced DCDC and CFTC services, Georgia State University will also analyze the activities conducted to implement the program.

Outcome Study Design: The intervention group consists of DCDC and CFTC clients with children who consent to be in the evaluation. The comparison group consists of drug court clients in neighboring Cobb County and Douglas County who have children and agree to participate in the evaluation. According to the grantee's research, the populations served by the four drug courts are similar in terms of demographic characteristics, family needs, substance-use treatment needs and risk of recidivism.

Georgia State University collects outcomes at baseline and once annually for the duration of the grant in the following areas: child well-being (including trauma symptoms and conduct problems); family functioning and stability (including parent mental health, protective factors, and parent's openness to communication) and adult recovery. The grantee is conducting some primary data collection and has a data sharing agreement in place to obtain child welfare administrative records on permanency and safety outcomes from the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. Finally, the grantee collects data on a subset of those outcomes for the intervention group only at baseline and at program discharge.

Additional Evaluation Components: Georgia State University's evaluation team is also collecting information on the implementation of its programs, which provides the field with an account of how parenting and trauma treatment programs could be incorporated into services mandated by an adult criminal drug court and family treatment court.

RPG National Cross-Site Evaluation Participation: In addition to its local evaluation, the grantee provides data on program outcomes, implementation experiences and collaboration for the RPG national cross-site evaluation.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The lead agency is Georgia State University Research Foundation, Inc. (GSU). Daniel J. Whitaker, PhD, is the Principal Investigator and Project Director. He has ultimate responsibility for directing all activities of the project. He oversees coordinating efforts of all sub awardees, as well as oversees the evaluation work conducted at GSU. As the PI, Whitaker is the contact person for cross-site evaluation efforts conducted by ACF.

An Executive Committee also oversees the project, which consists of management from each of the participating organizations: Project Director (Whitaker, GSU), Evaluation Director (Guastafarro, John Jay College), DCDC Executive Director (Dent), CFTC Program Coordinator (Markle), the family services coordinator and one representative from each primary agency in the collaborative. This committee ensures that: those responsible for the day-to-day operations of the project are in communication, decision-making is collaborative, there is progress of smaller workgroups and barriers to progress are shared. The Executive Committee meets monthly, at a minimum.

The Service Provision Subgroup includes members from each of the service providing agencies, along with the Project Director and the evaluation lead. The broad goal of the services provision subgroup is to ensure the highest quality services possible are delivered by this partnership. In line with that goal, the services provision subgroup discuss the following: the collection of services provided by the group; adaptations needed for this particular population; training issues including cross agency training; referral issues including screening/assessment procedures; issues of client engagement and compliance and issues of cultural responsiveness and sensitivity. The service provision workgroup meet weekly initially and progress to monthly conference calls.

Subgroups are formed for three areas: evaluation, service provision and sustainability/dissemination.

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