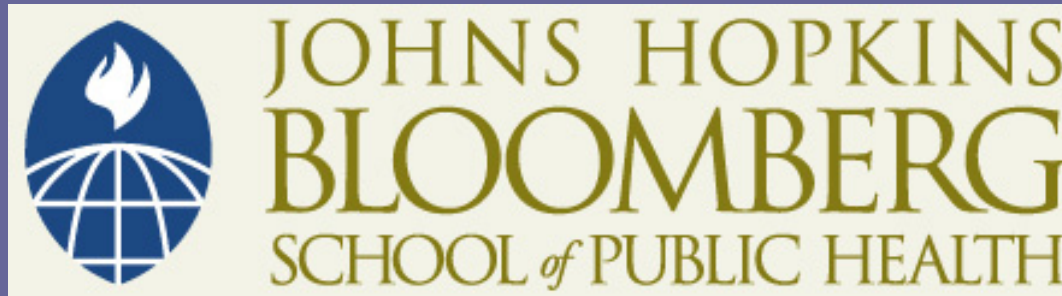


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Family Involvement Interventions in the U.S.

Olivia Lindly



Presentation Objectives

- Background on child maltreatment in the U.S.
- Where family involvement interventions fit in
- Evidence base supporting intervention use
- Theory of change & evaluation design for Baltimore City team decision-making (TDM) program
- Conclusions



What constitutes child maltreatment in the U.S.?

“Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in the death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual exploitation; or an act of failure to act, which presents an imminent risk of serious harm” (U.S. DHHS, 2008).

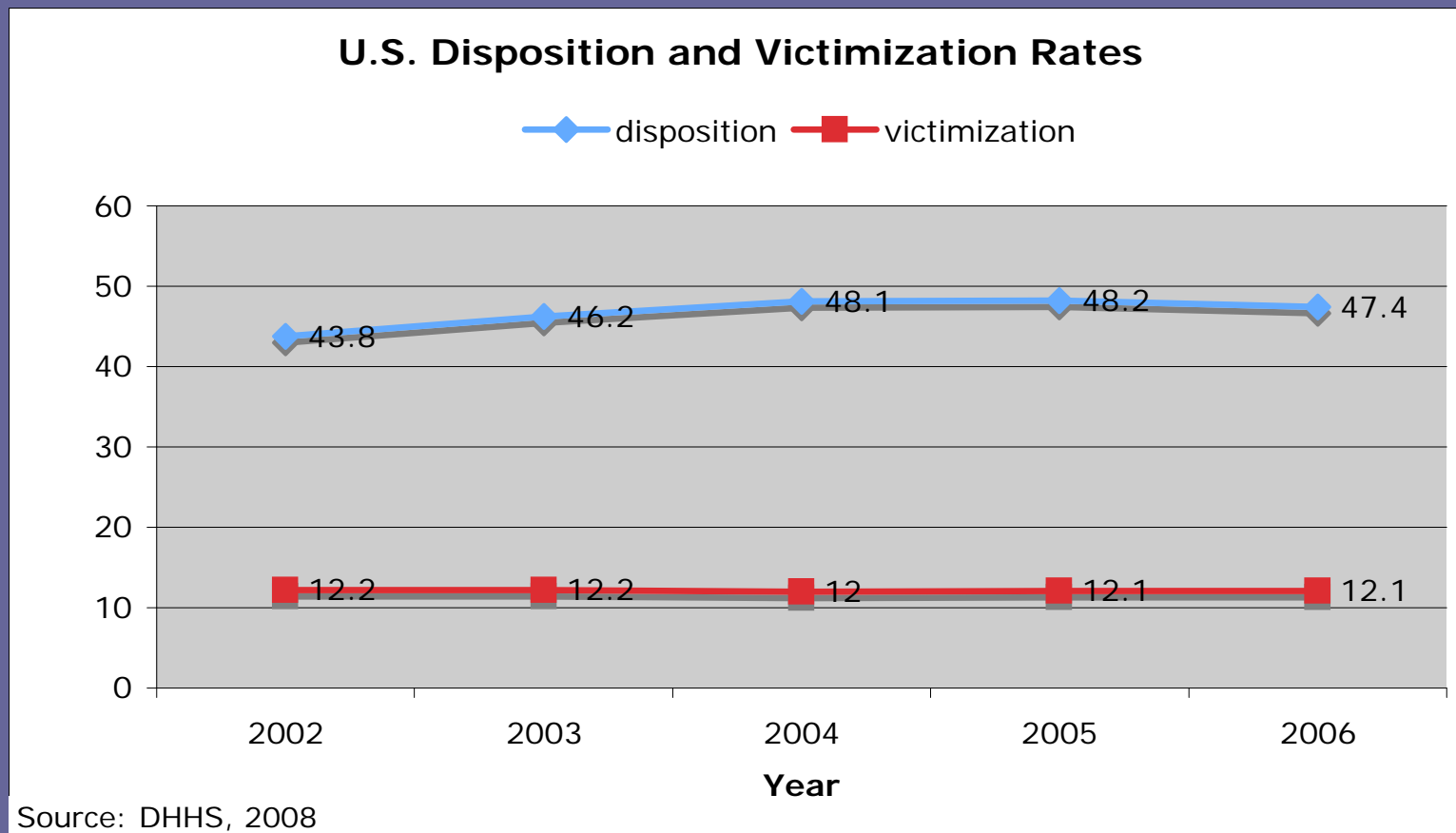


Child Maltreatment Types

- States primarily recognize five categories of child maltreatment.
 - Neglect: Failure to meet a child's basic needs (64.1%).
 - Physical abuse: Child's body is injured as a result of physical assault (16.0%)
 - Sexual abuse: Engaging a child in a sexual act (8.8%).
 - Emotional/Psychological abuse: Behaviors that harm a child's sense of self-worth and well-being (6.6%).
 - "Other" maltreatment: Includes abandonment, perinatal drug exposure, educational & medical neglect (14.3%).

Source: CDC, 2008; DHHS, 2008

The Burden of Child Maltreatment



In 2006, there were an estimated 905,000 child maltreatment victims in the U.S.



Child Maltreatment Consequences

- 1,530 child maltreatment related fatalities in 2006 (DHHS, 2008).
- Over half a million (513,000) children placed in foster care as of 2006 (AFCARS, 2007).
- 2003 NSCAW: 19-28% of children in foster care for one year were determined to have special needs that would qualify them for special-ed. Youth in foster care also had a significantly higher incidence of delinquent behaviors than other youth.
- Kaiser studies: Graded associations between exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and odds of chronic health conditions, risk behaviors, and mental health status (Edwards et al., 2003; Felitti et al., 1998).



Family-level Risk Factors

- Poverty
- Social support/isolation
- Family disorganization & violence
- Parenting skills
- Substance abuse
- Mental health

Source: CDC, 2008



Team Decision-Making (TDM)

Multi-disciplinary meetings with families, extended families, community members, providers of services, and child welfare staff that are held when [out-of-home] placement is contemplated, when a change in placement may occur, or when reunification is imminent. The goal [of TDM] is to reach consensus about a plan which protects the children and preserves or reunifies the family (DeMuro, 1997).

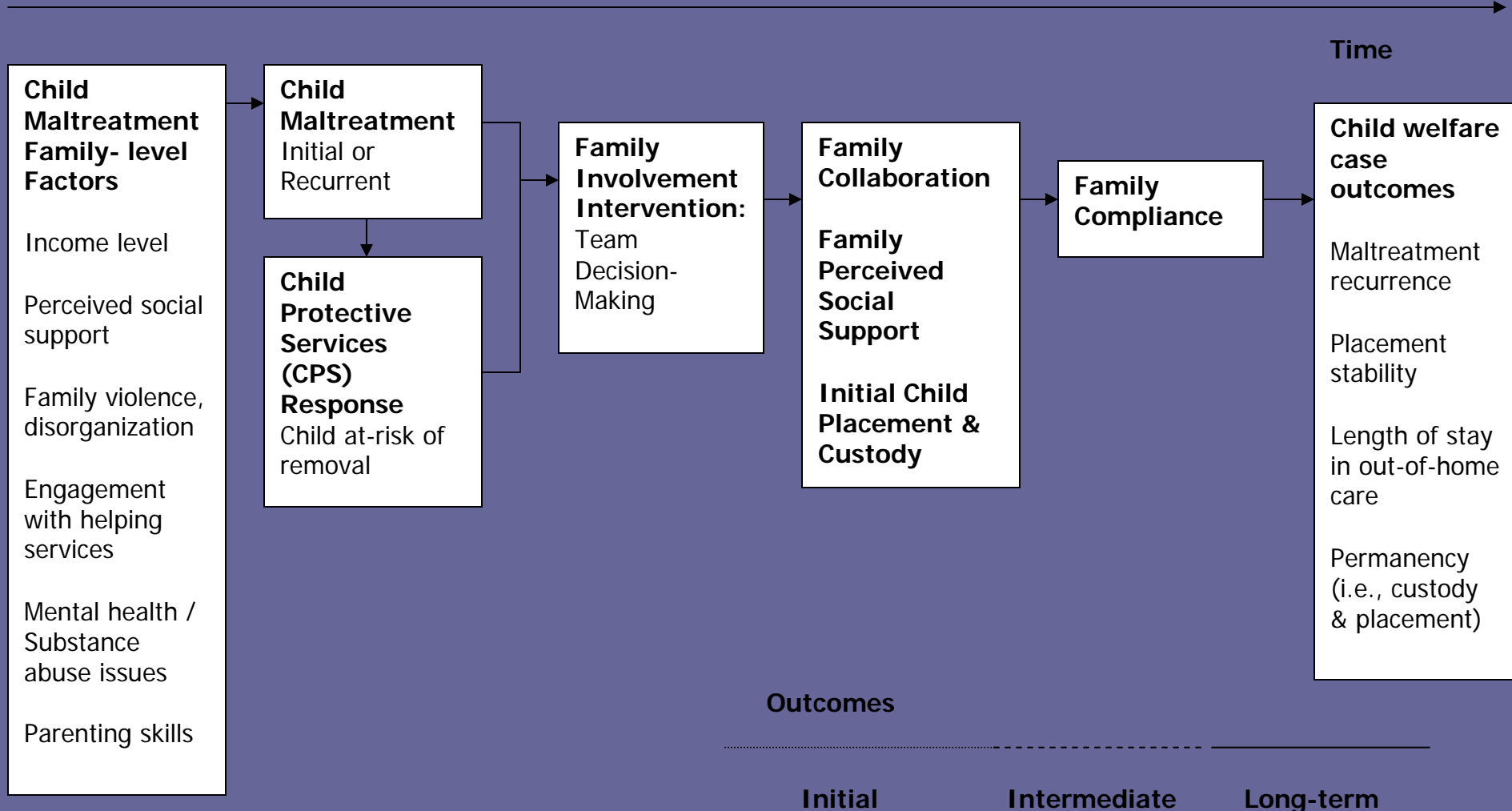


Evidence Base

- A handful of peer-reviewed journal articles.
- Findings primarily based on retrospective, administrative data related to long-term case-level outcomes.
- Limitations of findings- selection bias, small sample sizes.
- Bottom line (1)...inconclusive evidence base supporting the utilization in terms of long-term child welfare outcomes.
- Bottom line (2)...similarities between family involvement interventions with respect to short-term & intermediate goals.

Theory of Change

Crosscutting historical, political, economic, environmental trends at societal, community, neighborhood, and/or family levels





Evaluation Design

- **Setting:** Baltimore City Department of Social Services
- **Sample:** Families with substantiated maltreatment whose children are at-risk of removal from East Baltimore (experimental group) & families with substantiated child maltreatment from West Baltimore whose children are at-risk of removal (control group).
- **Design:** Quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group
- **Null hypothesis:** No difference between groups in terms of change in social support, collaboration, and compliance.
- **Alternative hypothesis:** Difference observed between groups in terms change in social support, collaboration, and/or compliance.



Limitations & Strengths

- Selection bias, regression to the mean, contamination, testing, & attrition are all possible threats to internal validity.
- This evaluation design does not include a comprehensive process evaluation component.
- This is a politically & logistically feasible design.
- By using an internal control group, the equivalence of comparison groups may be increased.



Conclusions

- Currently, there is insufficient evidence indicating that these interventions are efficacious for children and families.
- The proposed research is intended to provide more evidence with respect to the initial and intermediate outcomes of family involvement interventions, specifically team decision-making.
- Research indicating that family involvement interventions elicit positive psychosocial and behavioral outcomes among families may be sufficient to warrant continued utilization of these interventions.
- If more children are diverted to relative foster/kinship care as a result of family involvement interventions, then more resources will need to be allocated to these caregivers.

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