INTRODUCTION

Thanks for:

- Generous Intro
- Ron Hughes & Judy Rycus
  - Inviting me
  - Writing the article that blew cover off the DR topic
- Frank Vandervort & Viola Vaughan-Eden for also helping expose problems with DR

Huge Honor:

- You are doing hardest, most important work: Protecting Abused Children: the ultimate Powerless group
- Many of you: doing the Research key to true Policy Reform

MY TOPIC: Differential Response: A Dubious Experiment in Child Welfare: Actually a Dangerous Experiment

Demonstrates the Need for & Challenge of your work:

- Alleged Child Welfare Reform Move that threatens Child Welfare – puts kids at greater risk for Abuse
- This is not new, but the continuation of a familiar pattern, the dominant pattern in field

MY TALK TODAY -- OUTLINE:

First, DR:

1. What it is
2. Why it matters
3. What Risks: why not “Child Welfare Reform”, doesn’t deserve the name
4. Research: why it’s not “Child Welfare Research,” doesn’t deserve the name
Second, the History

- Why It Matters
- Why if don’t change dynamics won’t matter if defeat DR

DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE

First: What It Is: Nature of DR

- Divert 70% of CPS track to Alternative Response Track (AR, FAR) – Voluntary Track: Can without sanction:
  - Refuse at get go
  - Drop anytime
- Federal Finance “Reform”: $ from CPS to DR

Second: Why It Matters

- The “Reform” Move of the day; majority of states now have DR to some degree
- Not officially “law” – Discretionary Power of Child Welfare Admin
- But is law/policy, can overrule Congressional Law effectively: eg endrun around ASFA: if no CPS jur, finding, then no ASFA


- Risks inherent in DR: Diversion to Voluntary Track
  - Can’t say 70% are Minor; most CPS cases involve serious Risks to Kids
  - Reason to think More not Less Risk if Remove any Coercive Potential
    - Take eg: Substance addicted parent – most of the 70%:
      - Ask or Require Treatment?
      - Monitor or only if Parents invite?
  - No Investigation to Assess Risk & Decide Track: no separate interview, no unannounced visit; must be family-friendly
    - Then how decide if suspicious burn = torture?
    - Ignores best evidence of Future Risk
  - Drop Out Evidence:
    - One-half to one-third Drop Out
    - Most Dangerous Parents Drop
      - Home Visitation Research
      - Most recent IL QIC-DR Research:
        - Close to 1/3 drop out
■ Risks in Funding for DR thru Federal Finance “Reform”: Starving CPS of Resources
  o CPS already starved of resources to adequately deal
  o EG Jeremiah Oliver case in MA: Child went missing 4 months, dead: CWLA Report: recommends more $ for more Workers, lower caseloads; under DR would get less and kids like Jeremiah receive even less supervision/protection
    ▪ FN on JO case: Primarily Neglect reports, many dismissed; Would be Classic DR diversion case, part of the “low-risk” 70%

Fourth, the DR Research: why not Child Welfare Research (majority of research, the stuff being used to claim “evidence-based” success story)

■ Most of the Research Reports out on DR very favorable: “evidence-based,” “success story”
■ Not Research: Objective search for truth: but Policy Advocacy disguised as Research: Designed to demonstrate success not assess
■ Not Child Welfare Research: No real Child focus
  o DR Movement goal is Fam Pres
  o Advocacy Research goal is justifying Fam Pres
■ Examples of the Advocacy Research Problems:
  o Leading section of Reports on Success Results:
    ▪ Parent Satisfaction compared on the 2 tracks
      • Doesn’t pass Laugh Test
      • Compare
        o friendly $ stipends(rent, appliances)
        o to CPS Investigation, Rehab Services, Potential Threat/Action
        o What’s not to like for Parents?
  o No Attention to Dropouts Problem: First time any Breakdown is latest IL Report when desperate to explain away Higher Re-Report Rates on AR track; and now see devastating facts: High dropout rate, Dropouts more dangerous
  o Apples/Oranges: Give AR track more $ and see if does better in Services
  o Contrast Child-Friendly Research: Some Focus on How TR track would do if gave it more Resources so could do More/Better Intervention
■ Happily: a Major Challenge to this self-serving Research from within the Child Welfare Research community, & this APSAC community:
  o Ron Hughes & Judy Rycus hugely important article leading to:
  o Whole Issue in Social Work Practice featuring DR Debate
  o Hughes & Rycus Devastating Points included:
Critique of Methodology as fatally flawed in multiple respects – no proof of claims

Critique of

- DR in terms of Child Safety
- Research in its claims re Child Safety

Challenge to the Research as “Promotion” not “Science”

- APSAC now President Frank Vandervort & Immediate Past President Viol Vaughan-Eden provided important support for Hughes & Rycus

DR an Unfinished story: need your help

But regardless, for future need:

- A new dynamic within Child Welfare,
- A new Research tradition, truly independent, peer-reviewed: independent from Policy Advocacy

Or else will repeat History:

THE HISTORY:

DR simply latest successor to other similar movements – extreme Family Preservation.

Even if it’s shot down can expect another such unless and until fundamentally change the dynamics of the child welfare world.

Two prior key Fam Pres Moves during past 4 decades:

- IFPS (Intensive Family Preservation Services)
  - Promoted by power child welfare foundation of time: Edna McConnell Clark
  - Basic Idea: Similar Fam Pres
  - Research:
    - Similar advocacy, self-serving:
    - Similar Focus: not child, but justify Fam Pres
    - Eventually all concluded Research a scandal, Reform move largely disgraced

- Racial Disproportionality
  - Promoted by power child welfare foundations of the day: the Caseys
  - Basic Idea: Similar Fam Pres, now for Black kids
Research
- Tried to prove the Bias justifying the RD Movement
- NIS-3 used by all for years
- NIS-3 proved in end grossly misleading: false claim that Blk and Wt maltreatment rates the same so only bias could explain High Rates of Blks in Fcare which was inconsistent with own underlying data
- May be significantly discredited/derailed but may not matter:

Energy now devoted to Differential Response: same features as prior Fam Pres movements:
- Fam Pres the Goal;
- Advocacy Research a major Means

CONCLUSION
For Future to be Different: Must change underlying Dynamics:
- The Research Dynamics: The corrupt combination of Policy Advocacy with Research
- The Extreme Family Preservation Bias

Family Preservation? Who can be against?
Consider: Domestic Violence involving Adult Victims of Family Dysfunction
- Historically our society promoted “Family Preservation” when Family at issue dominated by a Man abusing the Woman
- Today we recognize Women deserve to be liberated from this kind of Family

Children deserve the same when their Families aren’t true Families, Parents aren’t true Parents

Reminder: Workshop 54 next: Conversation on Differential Response