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## Milwaukee Selects a Workforce Intervention: Organizational Culture & Climate (Blog Post)

Posted on March 11, 2019

The Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS) of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) will be implementing and testing an organizational culture and climate intervention called ARC, which stands for Availability, Responsiveness, & Continuity. ARC is an organizational change process that has improved outcomes in mental health settings by:

- 1) introducing core principles to guide service improvement efforts,
- 2) embedding research-based organizational components for service improvement, and
- 3) fostering attitudes necessary for ongoing service improvement.



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DMCPS employs approximately 185 State employees. These employees conduct initial child protective service assessments, oversee ongoing case management services delivered by private providers in Milwaukee County, and are supported by an administrative structure in performing these functions. The DMCPS leadership and staff selected ARC as a mechanism to involve the DMCPS workforce in agency decision making, create a less hierarchical organizational culture, and improve communication between leadership and staff. ARC teams, consisting of frontline staff and facilitated by supervisors/mentors/program managers, will carefully develop brief written proposals to improve practices and policies that are submitted to an Organizational Action Team (OAT) for consideration, adjustments and possible implementation. The OAT is a vertically integrated team representing all functional areas of the agency and is empowered to review, approve and facilitate the implementation of these proposals.

The QIC-WD is dedicated to generating new knowledge about effective strategies to improve child welfare workforce outcomes. In Milwaukee, through a rigorous process evaluation and time series outcome evaluation, we will be studying if, and under what circumstances, the implementation of ARC leads to numerous outcomes. The process evaluation will include an assessment of the training of participants, fidelity to the intervention by team members, and processes such as consultation with the ARC liaison and ARC team meetings. The process evaluation will be a mixed-methods approach of quantitative and qualitative data collection. Outcomes will be measured at multiple points in time with monthly evaluation of ARC team knowledge and skills; semi-annual evaluation of the workforce perceptions of ARC and its impact on key areas such as leadership style, decision-making, and communication; and an annual evaluation of the organizational culture and climate and key workforce outcomes. These workforce outcomes are part of a cross-site evaluation that will assess the relative effectiveness of

the ARC intervention to impact common workforce variables such as organizational commitment, intent to stay, job satisfaction, stress and resiliency, functional and dysfunctional staff turnover. The time series design is essential given that the ARC intervention targets the entire workforce (compared to an evaluation approach with an experimental and comparison group) and there is a solid evidence base of its general effectiveness for organizational change. This study has the potential to contribute a better understanding of the application of ARC to child welfare, as well as the specific components of ARC that effect change through the rigorous time series design and process evaluation.