



THE LOUIS DE LA PARTE FLORIDA MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE

Did you know...

1 The Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health in the USF Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute is internationally recognized as a leader in studying the emotional and behavioral health of children.

2 The USF de la Parte Institute is home to Florida's largest Professional Development Center for the training of child welfare workers. More than 6,000 child welfare and juvenile justice staff members are trained annually.

3 USF's Department of Child and Family Studies at the de la Parte Institute is home to Florida Kids Count, the statewide repository of statistical data about the development of child well-being indicators.

4 Just last year the First International Conference on Positive Behavior Support, organized by CFS, drew nearly 1,300 attendees to the largest conference devoted to positive behavior support ever assembled.

5 The USF Collaborative for Children, Families and Communities, housed within CFS, has provided more than \$1 million in grants to faculty and community partners over the past six years to provide seed money for more than 120 faculty research projects, many of which have gone on to bring in millions more in additional research.

Investing in Children and Families: Nearly Ten Million New Federal Dollars Support USF Initiatives

This fall, the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute celebrates significant new federal support for several initiatives aimed at improving the well-being of children and their families.

The Institute is uniquely qualified to do the work described here. Its primary mission is the development and dissemination of practices that improve the mental health status of populations in Florida and nationally, and its faculty are increasingly successful in attracting federal support for these efforts. In fact, the Institute now ranks as the second largest external funding source for the University of South Florida. This level of external support reflects a national reputation for excellence in scholarship, community service, and leadership in the multidisciplinary world of behavioral health care and mental health research.

Since the Institute's inception in 1974, Institute faculty and staff have developed productive relationships across the many service systems and advocacy organizations that touch children's lives, from the halls of government to the classroom. The results of their research and training activities are evident in policy and practice here in Florida and nationally.

Much of this work originated in the Department of Child and Family Studies (CFS). CFS is the largest of the Institute's research departments, and is engaged in a wide range of national, state and local projects supported by public and private not-for-profit agencies. Department Chair and Professor, Dr. Robert M. Friedman states, "As leaders in the children's mental health field, we have a special responsibility to try to develop and disseminate the knowledge that will enhance the likelihood that all children have the opportunity to live, learn,

work, and participate fully in their communities."

The five new initiatives highlighted here reflect this vision through innovative strategies to improve academic achievement for children with challenging behavior or serious emotional disabilities, reduce teen suicide, and guide policy makers to invest mental health and social service dollars in proven approaches that address the unique challenges of the families in their communities. In all cases, family voice will serve as a compass as methods are refined and solutions crafted.

While there are no overnight cures for complex societal problems, the rigorous application of lessons learned through these grant programs will play an important role in the improvement of our child-serving systems. The Institute community takes pride that, in years to come, the University of South Florida can add the success of these efforts to its growing reputation for leadership in meshing scholarly activity with real world benefits for our nation's citizens.





Research Agenda of the RTC 2004-09

- 1 Study 1**
National survey of systems of care implementation
- 2 Study 2**
Holistic approaches to studying community-based systems of care
- 3 Study 3**
Financing structures and strategies to support effective systems of care
- 4 Study 4**
The school-based mental health services study
- 5 Study 5**
Accessibility of mental health services: Identifying and measuring organizational factors associated with reducing mental health disparities
- 6 Study 6**
The family voice study: Assessing the role of family organizations in developing family voice in systems of care

Center Adds Strong Youth Voice to Board of Advisors

For this grant cycle, five young adults have accepted positions on the Center's National Advisory board, where they will add to the counsel of a diverse group of individuals including family members, researchers, policy makers, advocates, administrators, and practitioners.

At the recommendation of RTC staff, the youth were chosen based on their experiences and ability to help create a vision for improved services for children and youth with serious emotional disturbances. Three of the young adults have had personal experiences in the mental health system, while two others are preparing for, or have already begun careers in the field.

"They are a special part of the future in our field," said Robert Friedman, director of the Center. "We look forward to the perspectives these young adults will offer at our annual meeting in Tampa, as well as their correspondence with the Center throughout the year offering advice on specific issues related to the Center's research."

Research and Training Center to Reach 25-Year Mark

An award of 4.125 million dollars to USF's Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health will support continued research on service systems for children and youth with serious emotional disturbances and their families.

The five-year award is funded jointly by the US Department of Education's National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), and the National Institute of Health's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services.

NIDRR Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC) are centers of excellence that provide long-term coordinated approaches to research and training in priority areas. Operated in collaboration with institutions of higher education, they serve as national and regional resources for individuals with disabilities, their family members and advocates, as well as for providers, and each have a major program of research in a particular area.

USF's Center was originally established in 1984. "Centers are intended to be more than a collection of individual projects," said Robert Friedman, Ph.D., founding director of the USF Center. "They represent an opportunity to bring together a critical group of talented individuals from diverse backgrounds to work on an integrated set of research, training, and dissemination activities." Drs. Albert Duchnowski and Krista Kutash serve as deputy directors for the Center.

In the next five years, the Center at USF will provide a leading role in supporting the recommendations of the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, which has recently called for a transformation in the nation's mental health services system for children and adolescents. Despite advances in past decades, care for children and adolescents with behavioral, psychological and emotional problems remains fragmented and hard for families to access.

"The number of children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances, and the degree to which their lives and the lives of their families are affected by their disturbances is enormous," said Friedman. "There is a strong need for effective systems as one important part of achieving the transformation called for by the President's New Freedom Commission. I am confident that our activities will bring about positive change in practice and policy."

The Center, housed at the Department of Child and Family Studies (CFS) of USF's Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, is staffed by a multi-disciplinary team of researchers, family members, and individuals with experience as policy makers.

During this grant cycle, six interrelated studies will be conducted. The first two studies will take a comprehensive look at how communities are implementing factors theorized by the Center to contribute to effective systems of care. These findings will contribute to the Center's research agenda as a whole, and guide studies on school-based mental health systems, access to services for culturally diverse populations, financing strategies, and the role of family organizations in systems development. Additional information on the Center can be obtained from their website at <http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu>.



New Funding Will Evaluate Intervention Model for Severe Behavior Problems in School

Statistics show that three to eight percent of students in today's classrooms have behavioral problems severe enough to be labeled as disruptive, noncompliant, aggressive, defiant or oppositional. These students, who predictably find their way to the top of the "most troubling" list, are of greatest concern to schools.

For schools in Tampa Bay, Florida and Denver, Colorado, help is now on the way. The Department of Child and Family Studies has received a four-year, \$4,300,000 grant to evaluate a school-based intervention model used for students having severe behavior problems.

The evaluation, *Evidence-based Intervention for Severe Behavior Problems: The Prevent-Teach-Reinforce (PTR) Model*, is being funded through the US Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). OSEP provides leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts, including institutions of higher education and other non-profit organizations to support research, demonstrations, technical assistance and dissemination.



"A student with severe behavior problems is one whose behavior significantly impedes his or her own learning or the learning of others," said Don Kincaid, Principal Investigator of the evaluation. "Because a number of events can influence the likelihood of problem behavior occurring, it is important that a behavior support plan intervention include strategies to prevent inappropriate behavior, as well as teach and reinforce appropriate behavior."

Two hundred students from kindergarten through eighth grade will be selected from the Hillsborough County (FL), Pinellas County (FL), and the Denver (CO) Public School systems. PTR teams will be developed for each student and will include the child's teacher, a special educator or paraprofessional if the child receives part-time services in special education, and a behavior specialist. The teams will receive direct training and technical assistance from PTR project staff.

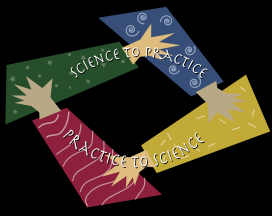
"Results of the project will include the development of a manual providing implementation guidelines, training materials, and assessment and tracking forms that can be used to replicate PTR in schools across the nation," added Kincaid. "Our goal is for the targeted children to successfully integrate into their communities and have positive outcomes in their lives."

For additional information, contact the CFS Division of Applied Research and Educational Support at 813-974-6100.

The PTR Intervention includes three essential components:

- 1 Preventing behavior problems from occurring by adjusting the student's curriculum and social and physical environment;
- 2 Teaching proactive communication skills to replace behavior problems; and
- 3 Reinforcing pro-social advancements in academic achievement.

Both USF and UCD have longstanding positive relationships with local schools and communities. Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project funded by the Florida Department of Education is the state identified provider of training and technical assistance for behavior support at the individual student, classroom, and school-wide levels. The PBS Project has trained over 160 schools across the State in the last two years and established capacity building relationships with 23 school districts including Hillsborough and Pinellas County Schools. In addition, The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities located at USF has provided direct assistance and training to local school personnel and families for the past twelve years. Likewise, the University of Colorado at Denver has had an impressive impact on the local community, training over 100 teams in behavior support strategies over the past three years.



NIRN
THE NATIONAL
IMPLEMENTATION
RESEARCH NETWORK

The Goals of NIRN Are to:

- 1 Provide a forum/vehicle for network participants to share knowledge, progress, and challenges related to the implementation of evidence-based programs and practices.
- 2 Review and advise on the "state of the art" from diverse and multiple perspectives (e.g., expert panels on specific issues or topics).
- 3 Generate high-impact research agendas that will aid in reducing the gaps between science and service and will create a science of program implementation.
- 4 Foster the creation of partnerships among network participants and others for conducting multisite, cross-program research.
- 5 Participate in technical assistance efforts to assist emerging evidence-based practices and programs and share state of the art information on implementation.

Behavioral Health Initiatives: Funding To Help Fill In The Gap between What Is Known to Work and What Is Being Practiced in the Field

During the past twenty five years, much research has been conducted to find proven methods for implementing behavioral health initiatives. While much has been discovered, there still exists a gap between what we know works and what is being practiced in the field. In many cases, potentially effective programs are poorly implemented and do not produce good outcomes.

With a mission to build resilience and facilitate recovery for people with or at risk for substance abuse and mental illness, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has recently provided nearly \$500,000 to establish the *National Implementation Research Network* (NIRN), housed within the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute.

NIRN is comprised of researchers, program developers and stakeholders interested in improving the science of implementation so that states and agencies can use proven methods (evidence-based programs) to avoid pitfalls that lead to ineffective programs and practices in the behavioral health field. NIRN participants and activities will span a variety of behavioral health initiatives, settings, programs and practices (e.g., adult/child, public/private/nonprofit, mental health, substance abuse, developmental disabilities, justice arenas, educational settings, child welfare, and early intervention).

The new funding will support a series of meetings with national, state, agency and family advocacy leaders to improve access to effective programs that are based on research evidence. The meetings are designed to discover implementation strategies that help get programs implemented as intended.

The funding also will help improve access to scientific information about implementation. NIRN staff will be establishing a searchable database of implementation articles that can help inform researchers, program developers and program users of current effective strategies for implementation. Future goals include developing training and consultation programs for "implementation specialists" who can assist states and agencies in the effective adoption of new programs and practices.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting 813-974-4463, or visiting the web, <http://nirn.fmhi.usf.edu>.



Parent Support Program Will Enhance Education for Children Who Have Emotional Disturbances

Parent Support Groups will be central to this school-based project aimed at improving outcomes for children with severe emotional or behavioral problems.

The Office of Special Education Programs at the US Department of Education has awarded \$750,000 to CFS to address one of the major challenges facing public schools today – the education of children who have emotional disturbances. When compared to children in other disability groups, it is these children who have the lowest grades, the lowest graduation rate, the poorest employment record; and after two years of separation from school, over 50% are involved in the criminal justice system.

The new project, *An Empirical Investigation of the Effectiveness of Parent Support Groups* is a unique partnership between the Hillsborough Chapter of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, the Hillsborough County School District and the Department of Child and Family Studies. The goal of the project is to produce innovative strategies to support parents, enhance their collaboration with their child's school and teachers, and to improve outcomes for their children. This will be accomplished through the implementation of an effective parent support program that includes weekly parent to parent connections as well as periodic educational programs providing information about community resources.

CFS professors Drs. Albert Duchnowski and Krista Kutash will serve as co-principal investigators of the project. For the past 20 years, they have been conducting a coordinated series of research, training, and dissemination activities in the area of education and mental health services for children and families.

"There is a critical need to develop strategies to help schools increase their collaboration with families. The communication between school and parents needs to emphasize how each partner can work most effectively to help children do their best," said Krista Kutash. Family members from the Federation will be trained to implement family support and educational groups at selected schools in the Hillsborough County School District. If successful, it is expected that the program could eventually be implemented in all schools in the district.

The project will consist of a variety of activities that will reach the network interested in children and their families, including school personnel, parent advocacy groups, policy makers, mental health and social service providers and researchers. Dissemination products will range from family friendly manuals, workshops and presentations to articles published in scientific journals.

"The education of America's children has become an issue that ranks very high as a concern by the American public, and consequently, has become the focus of attention of political leaders and policy makers at all levels of government," said Al Duchnowski. "Our goal is to present an excellent model to the US Department of Education that will improve outcomes for the nearly 20% of US children who have a diagnosable emotional disturbance and their families."

Additional information can be obtained by contacting 813-974-4661.

"Between 1992 and 2002 the percent of students served in special education programs from all disability groups grew by 16%. For children who have emotional disturbances, the increase was 29%, almost double."

– Wagner, Leaf, Blackorby, Newman & Cameto, 2003



Some facts about the Hillsborough County School District...

3rd Largest
in Florida
with 180,000 Students

11th Largest
in the US

19%
of all students are enrolled in a
special education program

Nearly 2000
students are identified
as emotionally handicapped or
severely emotionally disturbed

48%
of students are eligible for free or
reduced lunches



Some figures to consider . . .

According to facts from the Columbia TeenScreen program, for teens 15-19 within a 12-month period:

3.4 million (17%)
thought about suicide;

3.3 million (16%)
thought about suicide with a plan;

1.8 million (9%)
attempted suicide;

606,500
of whom required medical attention.

FMHI tests Suicide Prevention Model

The United States Surgeon General has declared suicide, particularly adolescent suicide, among the most serious public health concerns and has initiated a call to action for every state to address this issue. The Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute in collaboration with Columbia University's Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry is developing and testing procedures for implementing suicide screening protocols in large, urban school districts.

The *Florida Suicide Prevention Pilot Project* will utilize the Columbia University TeenScreen Program, an adolescent mental health and suicide-screening initiative active in 40 states and identified in the President's New Freedom Commission Report as a model program. Columbia's goal is to ensure that all youth are offered a mental health check-up before leaving high school. As part of Columbia's interest in establishing and maintaining efforts in Florida, a school based screening initiative will be offered to Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pascoe County school districts in the Tampa area.

According to facts from the Columbia TeenScreen program, only one-third of teens at risk for suicide and one-fifth of those with depression ever receive treatment.

"By identifying and treating adolescents with mental illness," said David Shern, Dean of the Louis de la Parte Institute, "not only can we increase opportunities for social success with friends and family, we can also prevent the tragedy of a life being lost to suicide."

With funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, FMHI, Columbia and Tampa's Robert's Communication are developing a communication program that is designed to enhance family participation in the screening program.

"In order to increase the rate of participation in screening," added Shern, "it is essential that a focused effort be placed upon increasing the likelihood that children and families consent to participate in screening and complete follow-up once a problem is recognized."



The Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute is uniquely qualified to work on the *Florida Suicide Prevention Pilot Project* because it has, as its primary mission, the development and dissemination of practices that improve the mental health status of populations in Florida and nationally. The Institute has well developed relationships with the major school districts in the Tampa bay area; is developing protocols for pilot testing the TeenScreen program in a large high schools in each of these school districts; has extensive experience in evaluating program initiatives, documenting the extent of their effectiveness and widely disseminating the evaluation results in a manner to maximally impact practice.

Additional information on the *Florida Suicide Prevention Pilot Project* can be obtained by contacting project manager Justin Doan at 813-396-9219.

About Us

The University of South Florida

Since opening for classes in 1960, USF has developed into one of the nation's major public research universities. Ranked among the top 100 public research universities in the annual report "The Top American Research Universities," USF has formed vital partnerships with business leaders and organizations throughout the region and contributed to the well-being of its immediate urban neighborhoods through its networks of social research and service projects.

The Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute

The Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute is a unique resource for Florida. It was created over 30 years ago by the Florida Legislature to expand our knowledge about how best to serve the mental health needs of Florida's citizens. The researchers at the Institute include over 550 faculty, staff and students using applied research techniques to understand complex social problems and develop and disseminate state-of-the-art technology and knowledge to improve human services.

Department of Child and Family Studies

The Department of Child & Family Studies is one of three research departments at the Institute. Its faculty and professional staff share a critical mission: to improve the well-being of children and families in Florida.

Contemporary society poses difficult challenges for family life. Oftentimes, children and their parents need special attention and support to resolve issues of education, disability, healthy development and mental health. We believe that each family and every child has the right to effective services and support, as well as services that meet individual needs, and are sensitive to developmental, social, cultural and familial issues.

Who We Serve

While the Department's faculty and staff are concerned about all children, special attention is paid to the following groups:

- Children with serious emotional disturbances and their families;
- Children with autism and other developmental disabilities and their families;
- Children at special risk of poor outcome because of exposure to abuse, neglect, other forms of violence, absence of family, or long-term poverty;
- Pre-school children; from low-income families.
- Children with serious emotional disturbances transitioning into adulthood.



New initiatives in brief...

A Special Thanks to Our Federal Funders:

US Department of Health and Human Services

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration (SAMHSA)

Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS)

US Department of Education

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation
Services (OSERS)

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

*National Institute on Disability and
Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)*

The Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health

This five-year research and training program will build on 20 years of experience to increase the effectiveness of community-based mental health service systems for children with serious emotional/behavioral disabilities and their families.

Funding from NIDRR and CMHS/SAMHSA

The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN)

NIRN will provide a national clearinghouse for current best practices throughout the range of human service systems. Through its national network, it provide guidance for identifying proven approaches, and implementing these approaches successfully.

Funding from SAMHSA

Evidence-based Intervention for Severe Behavior Problems: The Prevent-Teach-Reinforce Model

This initiative will help schools develop a team-based approach with proven strategies for supporting children with severe behavior problems and increasing their academic and social success. This project will result in a set of training materials and procedures that can be used by schools nationwide.

Funding from OSEP

An Empirical Investigation of the Effectiveness of Parent Support Groups

Parent Support Groups will be central to this school-based project aimed at improving outcomes for children with severe emotional or behavioral problems. This project will investigate how families can help each other work successfully with schools to meet the educational needs of their children.

Funding from OSERS and OSEP

Florida Suicide Prevention Pilot Project

The Florida Suicide Prevention Pilot Project will bring the Columbia University Teenscreen Program to the Tampa Bay area. This screening program, endorsed by the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, focuses on offering all youth a mental health checkup before leaving high school; an important component of detecting issues related to suicide risk.

Funding from SAMHSA