Think Tank: Sustaining Community Mental Health Consultation to Urban Schools

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Discussion Leaders

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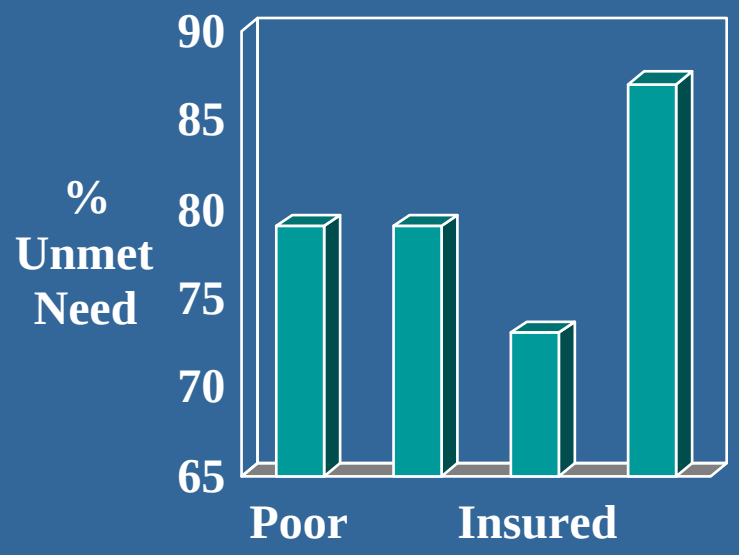
Think Tank Goals

- Present ongoing study of a developing model for community mental health consultation to inner city schools
- Discuss tensions in
  - Redefining roles for community mental health practice
  - Activating indigenous resources in highly dynamic settings
- Implications for research and practice

7.5 Million U.S. Children with Unmet MH Need

- 6% to 7.5% U.S. children received MH services in 1997
- Only 21% of children in need received services within year
- Uninsured especially vulnerable

Kataoka et al. 2002



A New Direction for Mental Health Services

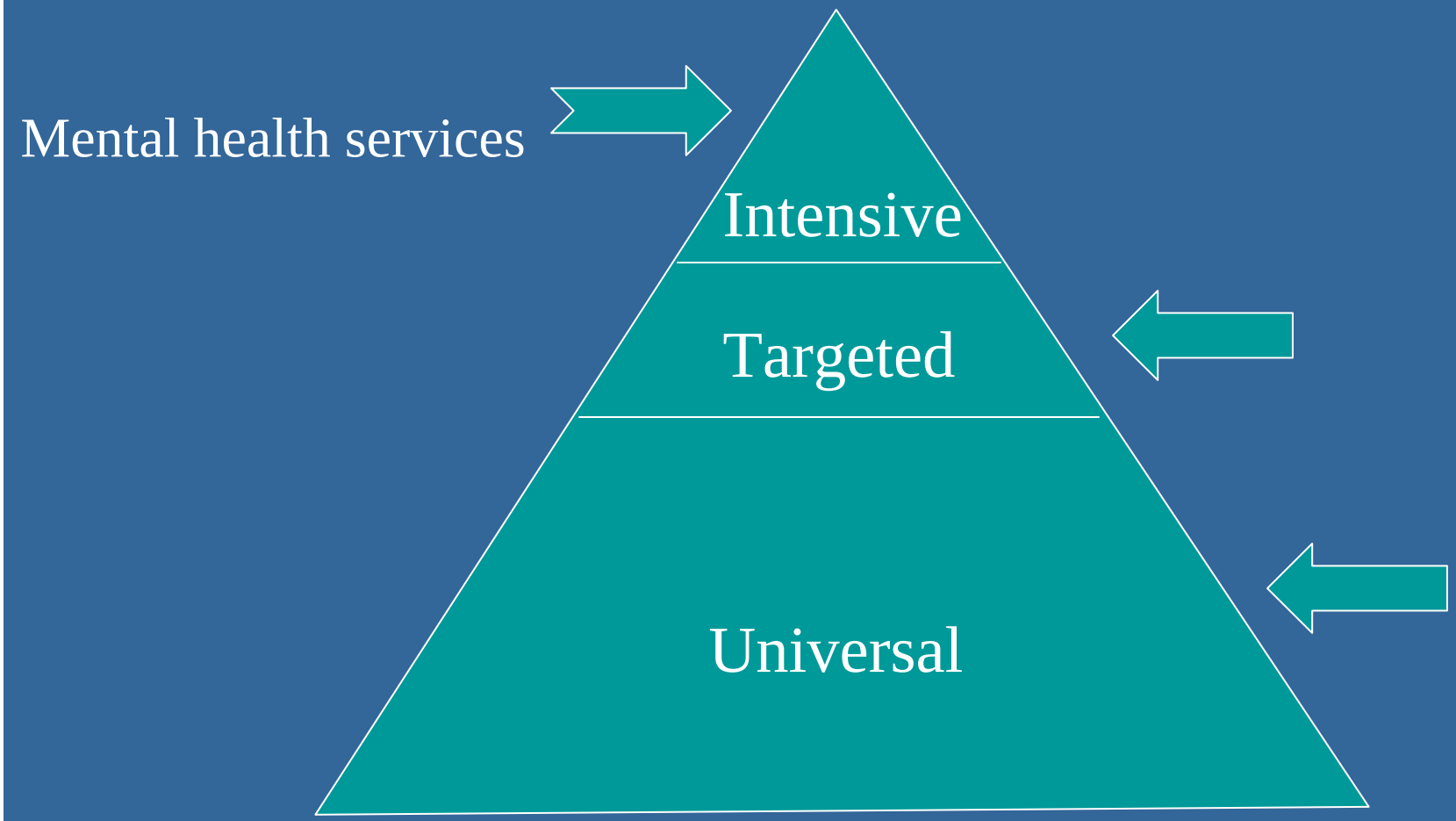
- National crisis in children's mental health requires renewed focus on public health models
- Ecological school-based services provide a model for mental health services that rely on indigenous resources to enhance and sustain program effects
- Overall goal is for a new model that integrates mental health services into the ongoing context of children's lives

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Refocusing School-Based Intervention Research

- single programs ⇨ integrated
- prevention *or* intervention ⇨ continuum
- external resources ⇨ indigenous resources
- “good” schools ⇨ struggling schools

Public Health Model
Building a Base

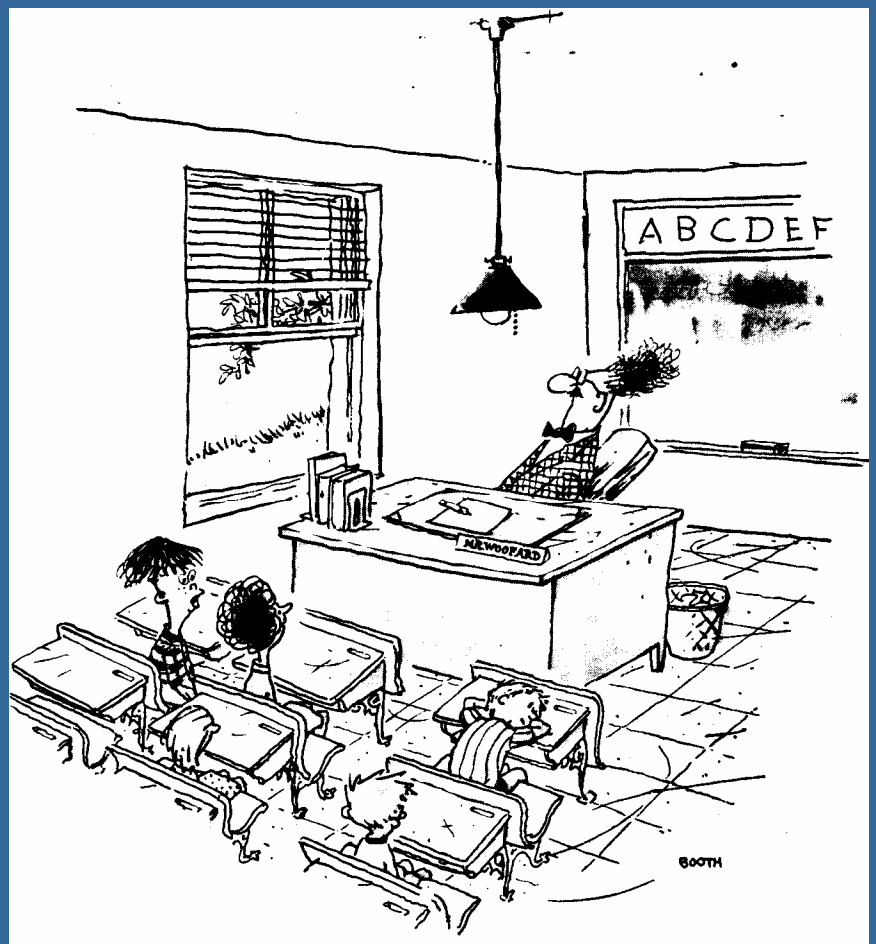


Ecological Principles: Services Support Settings

- Consider primary mission of setting (e.g., different goals for schools vs. after school)
- Consider these goals as mental health goals (don’t ask setting to change goals)
- Consider how mental health resources can be reallocated to support setting goals
- Always think sustainability (no shortcuts)

Academic Achievement

- Hallmark of children's sense of competence (Masten & Curtis, 2000)
- Critical to social and emotional adjustment (Roeser et al., 1999)
- Protective for children in urban poverty (Spencer et al., 1993)
- Positive relations with peers, teachers, and parents (Kellam et al., 1998)



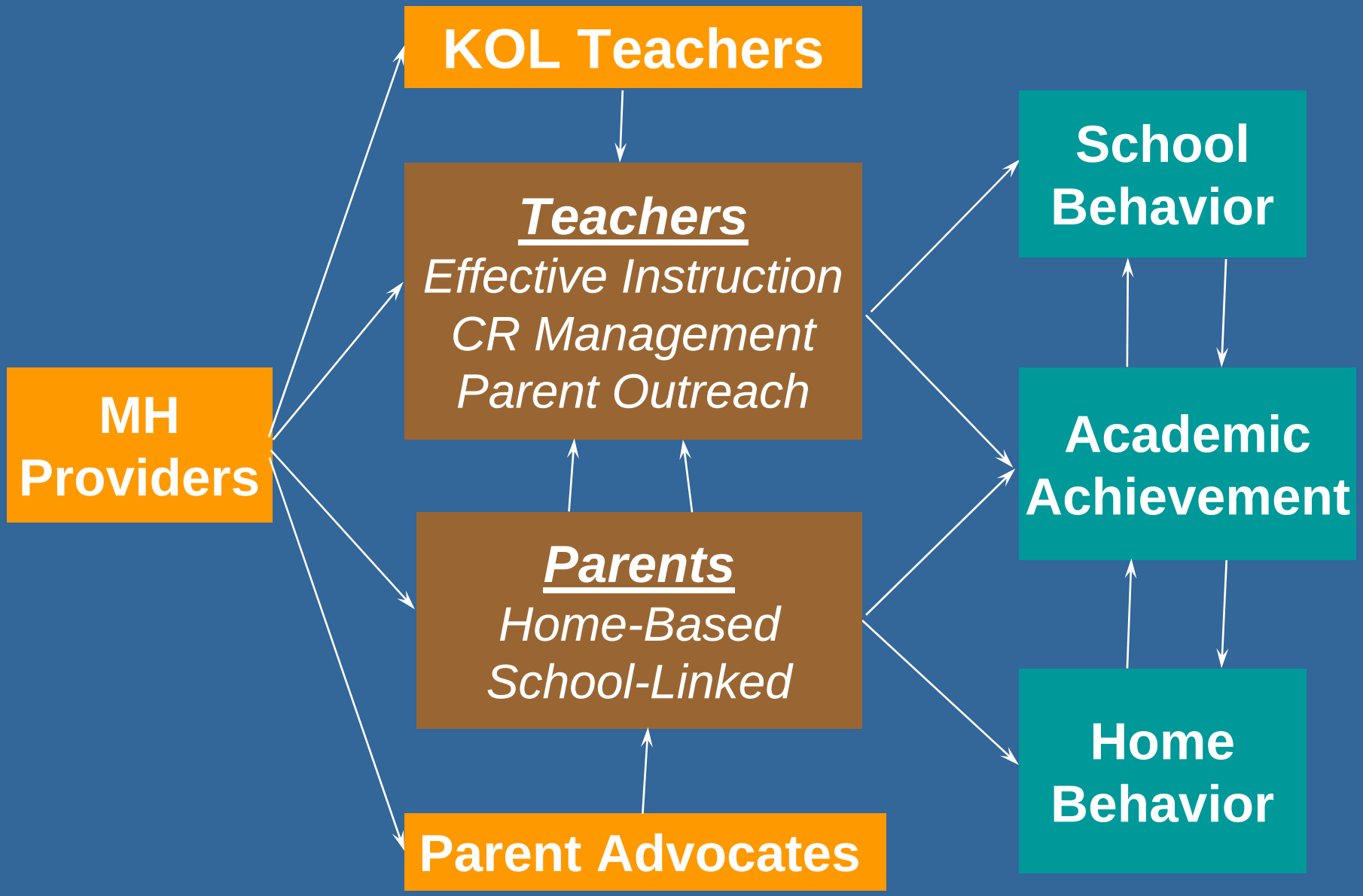
"You will like Mr. Woofard. He has an attention-deficit disorder

Links to Learning

NIMH R01-MH073749

- Unite teacher, parent, and MH provider around the goal of *learning*
- *Link* MH providers with indigenous resources to support teachers and parents to promote children's learning
- *Sustain* program through fee-for-service Medicaid billing

L2L Service Model



Participants

Community Mental Health Agencies

- Community Mental Health Council (CMHC)
- Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4)
- Habilitative Systems, Inc. (HIS)

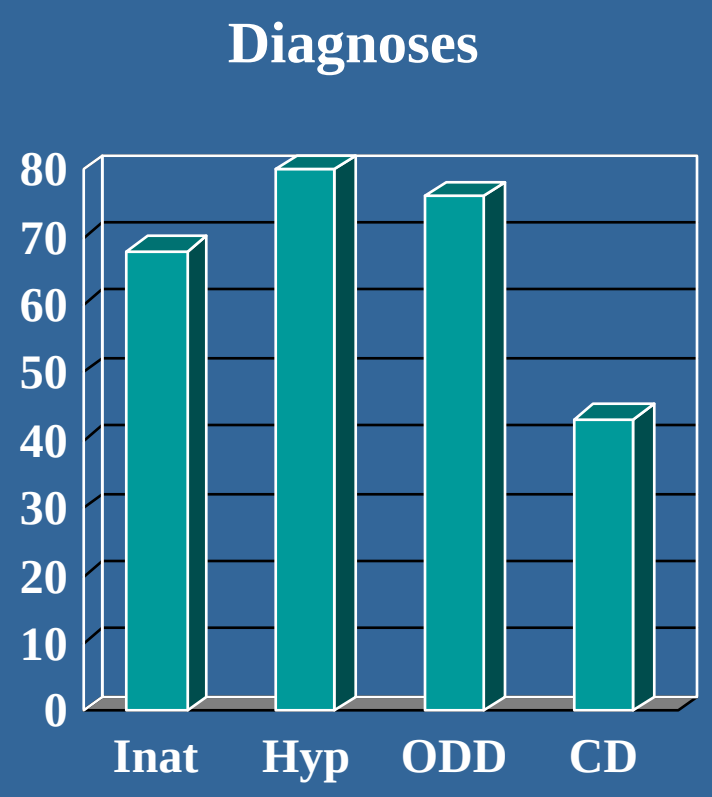
Chicago Public Schools

- Sherwood, Lawndale, & Emmet Elementary Schools

- UIC Staff
  - Consultants: Tara Mehta, Stacy Frazier, Elisa Shernoff, Ane Marinez-Lora, Elise Cappella
  - Graduate Students: Jenna Watling-Neal, Dana Rusch, Bonnie Solomon, Adabel Lee, Miwa Yasui, Nicki Dawes, Paul Rosen, Patrick Fowler
  - Research Staff: Erin Stachowicz, Rike Frangos, Raechel Torf, Shante Davis, Chrissie Haislup, Allison Wainer
- NIMH
  - R01 MH073749, R21 MH067361, P20 MH078058

Study Characteristics

- 6 high poverty poor performing CPS schools
- 3 CMH agencies
- 171 students (100 Links, 71 control) 76 teachers (40 Links 36 Control) grades K-5
- 2 year intervention



Teacher Curriculum

Universal strategies

- Peer Assisted Learning
- Good Behavior Game

Targeted strategies

- Good News Notes
- Daily Report Card

Parent Curriculum

- Home routines that support learning
  - Homework
  - Reading materials
  - Reading opportunities
- Home-school communication
  - Conferences
  - School-home notes

L2L
Services Questions

- Will parents respond to school success as a rationale for children's mental health services?
- Will teachers utilize and respond to KOL professional development series?
- Can MHPs link effectively with teachers and parents (and effectively link teachers and parents)?
- Can we create supportive learning environments in schools for teachers, parents, and students?

Current Status

- In Year 3 with two schools, and year 2 with one school (1 school dropped out)
- One school adopted the universal teacher curriculum (Good Behavior Game, PALS) following professional development series
- Agency staff organizing services to conform to staff strengths:
  - Parent advocate provide academic support to kids and link to parents
  - MHP develop daily report with teachers and parents
- Broadening influence of L2L beyond isolated program to inform clinical services agency-wide

Think Tank Questions

- If this works, will community agencies and schools stay involved with each other?
  - Redefining roles for community mental health practice
  - Activating indigenous resources in highly dynamic settings (schools and agencies)
- How do we articulate this process in a way that makes it replicable?
- What are the most important next research questions?