Objective of this project was for me to search for an assessment tool that gives an understanding of mothers who are court ordered to substance abuse treatment. Methods: Search scholarly literature and consult with field supervisor. Results: Adoption of an assessment tool that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of parenting skills. Conclusion: A structured interview assessment allows the therapist to gather data on the parent with a person centered perspective with a holistic approach.

Background

The purpose of the assessment is to identify the mother’s parenting skills. The therapist can use the assessment results for treatment planning and written reports for the drug courts.

Literature Review

• In 2007, there were 40 drug courts in existence in Minnesota. In 2006, there were 47,776 admissions to drug/alcohol treatment in Minnesota, compared to 45, 339 admissions in 2006, and 46, 029 admissions in 2004 (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2008).
• Psychometric tests performed to evaluate parenting abilities include: The Parent Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI) Parenting Stress Inventory (PSI), Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory 2 (MMPI-2), Million Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI-III) measures intelligence, academic functioning and personality (Flens & Droid, 2005).
• The NEATS, A Child and Family Assessment developed in Minnesota in 2008, focus on Neurobiology, Executive function, Attachment, Trauma, and Self regulation. One of the drawbacks of this assessment tool is to have the knowledge in the neurological functions.
• Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families implemented in England in 2001. This is a structured interview assessment tool that has been given solid recommendations by Department of Health; London, England (Miller & Corby, 2006).
• A Practitioner’s Tool for Child Protection and the Assessment of Parents, first designed in 1988 and first published in the United Kingdom in 2003. A checklist assessment method that could be useful in gathering general information from the client (Fowler, 2003).
• Project AIMS Developmental Indicators of Emotional Health, developed in 1990 with three additional updates with the last update being in 1996. AIMS is a structured interview assessment tool for use with parents that have children birth to five years of age (Partridge & Marsh, 1996).

Methods

2. Electronic search in a number of social science databases including PsychInfo, Sage, Academic Premier, Science Direct, ProQuest, Science Direct and ASSIA.
3. Internet search sites Google Scholar, Dogpile, and Bing.
4. Minnesota State University, Mankato Library Reference Section, Human Services (HV) Section, Psychology Section.
5. Sort through the vast amount scholarly information to find a structured interview assessment tool that is a reliable and valid instrument on parenting.
6. Discussion with Field Supervisor.
7. Discussion with Harbor House manager.
8. Discussion with peers in Seminar.

Results

The adoption of the Project AIMS assessment tool, that was developed in 1986 with a five-year federal funded collaborative agreement with fourteen member multidisciplinary instrumentation team (Partridge & Marsh, 1996), was selected for this project. This assessment of parenting skills tool uses open ended questions that explores the parents knowledge, skills and abilities of parenting. The assessment tool covers the child, parent, and family issues from the strengths perspective. A Parent Questionnaire has been developed that blends nicely with the structured interview. No public study on this assessment tool could be found. Feedback from organizations like Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, NY, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Boston City Hospital, Boston University School of Medicine, Maine Medical Center, Family Practice in Portland, Maine, State of Vermont, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services and Child Care Services of Vermont all had positive remarks (Partridge & Marsh, 1996). The AIMS assessment was developed to be compatible in health, education and mental health professions. Focus is on the emotional well being of families with small children. Interventions that address the family strengths and their support systems are addressed with this assessment tool. Cultural competency , beliefs, values, and standards of clients are openly discussed with the AIMS assessment. The AIMS can be used by all therapist in a urban or rural setting.

Conclusion

The clinical interview assessment holds the greatest potential for understanding the client substance abuse dynamics. Having an assessment tool like the AIMS will provide the therapist with a 3D picture; finding the strengths and the weakness of the client. The AIMS assessment tool allows the therapist to meet the requirements of Minnesota Drug Court along with the confidence of adhering to the Social Work Code of Ethics. The advantage of having the structured interview assessment allows the client to express her emotions with the facts of the event and have the therapist listen reflectively with the ability to develop goals together.

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