Practice and Process in Wraparound Teamwork

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Collaborative family–provider teams have become an increasingly popular mechanism for creating and implementing individualized service and support plans for children and families with complex needs. In the context of children's mental health, this type of individualized service planning is most often known as *wraparound*, and it has become one of the primary strategies for implementing the system of care philosophy. A consensus has been reached about the values that underlie wraparound; however, less agreement exists regarding the specific techniques or procedures that translate the value base into practices at the team level. Difficulties in reaching agreement about guidelines or standards for wraparound practice are exacerbated by the lack of a theory describing how the wraparound process produces positive outcomes. This article brings together theory and research from a variety of sources in proposing a model of effectiveness for wraparound. The model specifies relationships between team practices, processes, and outcomes. The model is then used as a basis for recommending specific practices for wraparound teamwork.

In recent years, collaborative family–provider teams have become increasingly popular as a mechanism for creating and implementing individualized service plans for children and families with complex needs. This sort of team-based planning is currently used in a wide variety of human service contexts, including special education, developmental disabilities, child welfare, and juvenile justice. Recently, much attention has been focused on collaborative planning teams in the context of children's mental health, where this approach—most often known as *wraparound*—has become one of the primary strategies for addressing the needs of children with severe emotional and behavioral disorders (Faw, 1999).

A formal consensus on the essential elements of wraparound in children's mental health has been reached (Goldman, 1999). This consensus focuses primarily on the value base of wraparound, asserting that the plans and the planning process should be family-driven, collaborative, individualized, culturally competent, and community- and strengths-based. In contrast, little agreement exists regarding the types of techniques, processes, or procedures that translate the value base into practice at the team level. The lack of agreement regarding practice guidelines or standards contributes to difficulties in assuring the quality of wraparound implementation and has hampered efforts to build an evidence base for its effectiveness (Burchard, Bruns, & Burchard, 2002; Burns, Schoenwald, Burchard, Faw, & Santos, 2000).

Difficulties in reaching agreement about guidelines or standards for wraparound practice are exacerbated by a lack of a well-developed theory describing how wraparound produces positive outcomes. It has been pointed out that wraparound is "consistent with" (Burchard et al., 2002) or "associated with" (Burns et al., 2000) several influential psychosocial theories of child development, particularly social–ecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and systems (Munger, 1998) theories. Each of these theories stresses the importance of understanding not only the unique relationships between the child and various environmental systems (e.g., family, school, community) but also the relationships among such systems themselves. Effective intervention thus begins from an understanding of the child's unique social, cultural, and interpersonal systems environment. Effective intervention further requires that representatives of the different systems in a child's environment work together in a collaborative and coordinated fashion to rearrange the environment in ways that promote adaptive functioning. Using these theories, researchers have proposed that adherence to the wraparound value base promotes desired outcomes because it requires teams to develop an understanding of a child and

family's unique environment and to build an individualized plan that promotes adaptive and supportive relationships among the family, community, and service providers (Burchard et al., 2002; Burns et al., 2000).

The language used to describe the value base of wraparound is also consistent with theories of family-centered (Allen & Petr, 1998) and strengths-based (Saleebey, 2001) approaches to mental health service delivery. Both of these approaches have been advocated on moral and ethical grounds; however, proponents have also argued that family-centered and strengths-based approaches are effective in promoting positive outcomes for the consumers of services. Both approaches include the idea that services and service planning are more likely to be effective in meeting needs when the consumer and/or family is treated as a full partner in selecting and evaluating service goals and strategies. Both approaches also assume that the experience of being treated as a full partner in service planning helps build consumer/family optimism and empowerment, which in turn promotes increased capacity for adaptive problem solving.

These theories provide an important foundation for a discussion of how wraparound promotes positive outcomes for children and families. To this point, however, the connections between the previously mentioned theories and wraparound have not been explored in detail, and the implications for wraparound practice remain unclear. In this article, we bring together theory and research from a variety of sources in proposing a model of wraparound teamwork that links practices to outcomes. We begin with the assumption that wraparound teams are in many ways similar to other teams engaged in complex planning tasks, and we base the proposed model on a general template that is frequently used in the theoretical and research literature on team and group effectiveness. Of course, wraparound teams are also different from other sorts of planning teams, and the more general model must be significantly tailored to reflect the priorities, values, and outcomes specific to wraparound. After describing the model, we demonstrate how it can be useful as a basis for recommending specific practices for wraparound teamwork.

A Model of Effectiveness for Wraparound Teamwork

The proposed model of effectiveness for wraparound teams is a variant of the input–process–output type of model (Hackman & Morris, 1975) that is the most widely used template for theory and research on team effectiveness (West, Borrill, & Unsworth, 1998). In this template, inputs include the task, team members' characteristics and capacities, and the organizational context. Given these inputs, team members work together to produce outputs defined by the task. The team's work is either enhanced or impaired, depending on the quality of group-level interpersonal processes that take place as team members interact around the task, and the team's effectiveness is judged by the extent to which it is successful in accomplishing the task.

The proposed model of effectiveness for wraparound teamwork retains much of the basic structure of the general template. Wraparound *inputs* are defined similarly to those in the template (Figure 1). The wraparound team's work is guided by a task: to design and implement an individualized plan that capitalizes on community-based services and natural supports to achieve positive outcomes for a child and family (Burns & Goldman, 1999). To this task, team members bring their diverse perspectives, skills, and knowledge, and their efforts are supported and/or constrained by the organizational, policy, and funding contexts within which the team operates.

The proposed model departs somewhat from the general template by interposing wraparound *practices* between inputs and process. In the model, practices are defined as the various specific techniques and procedures that team members intentionally use as they work to develop the plan and operationalize the wraparound value base. Practices include specific techniques and procedures for defining and prioritizing goals, stimulating the exchange of information, making decisions, obtaining feedback, building an appreciation of strengths, ensuring family-centeredness, and so on. Wraparound practices influence outcomes largely through their impact on team-level process.

Team *processes* in the wraparound model include two interrelated subprocesses through which the team defines itself as a collective entity. As the team carries out its work, members develop shared understandings about the team's *collective activity* and *collective identity*. Members define their collective activity through the process of creating and continually revising a team plan, and they define their collective identity through the process of building team cohesiveness. Whereas practices are specific techniques or procedures that begin and end within a relatively short time span, team processes are complex and ongoing and derive much of their direction and momentum from internal feedback loops. Shared understandings of activity and identity thus continue to evolve throughout the life of the team.

Rather than outputs, the wraparound model focuses on the conceptually similar *outcomes*. In addition to the wraparound outcomes identified in previous theory and research, the proposed model includes additional outcomes that will be discussed in greater detail later. Shorter term outcomes include a family-driven goal structure and individualized service and support strategies. Longer term outcomes include supportive and adaptive relationships between family, community, and service providers; improved coping and problem solving; enhanced feelings of competence and empowerment; and attainment of team mission.

The discussion of the proposed wraparound model presented in this article focuses on only a subset of the possible interrelationships among inputs, practices, processes, and outcomes. In particular, attention is drawn to the "forward" effects from inputs through practices and processes to outcomes. Attention is also focused on several of the feedback loops that operate within team processes and between processes and outcomes. As is the

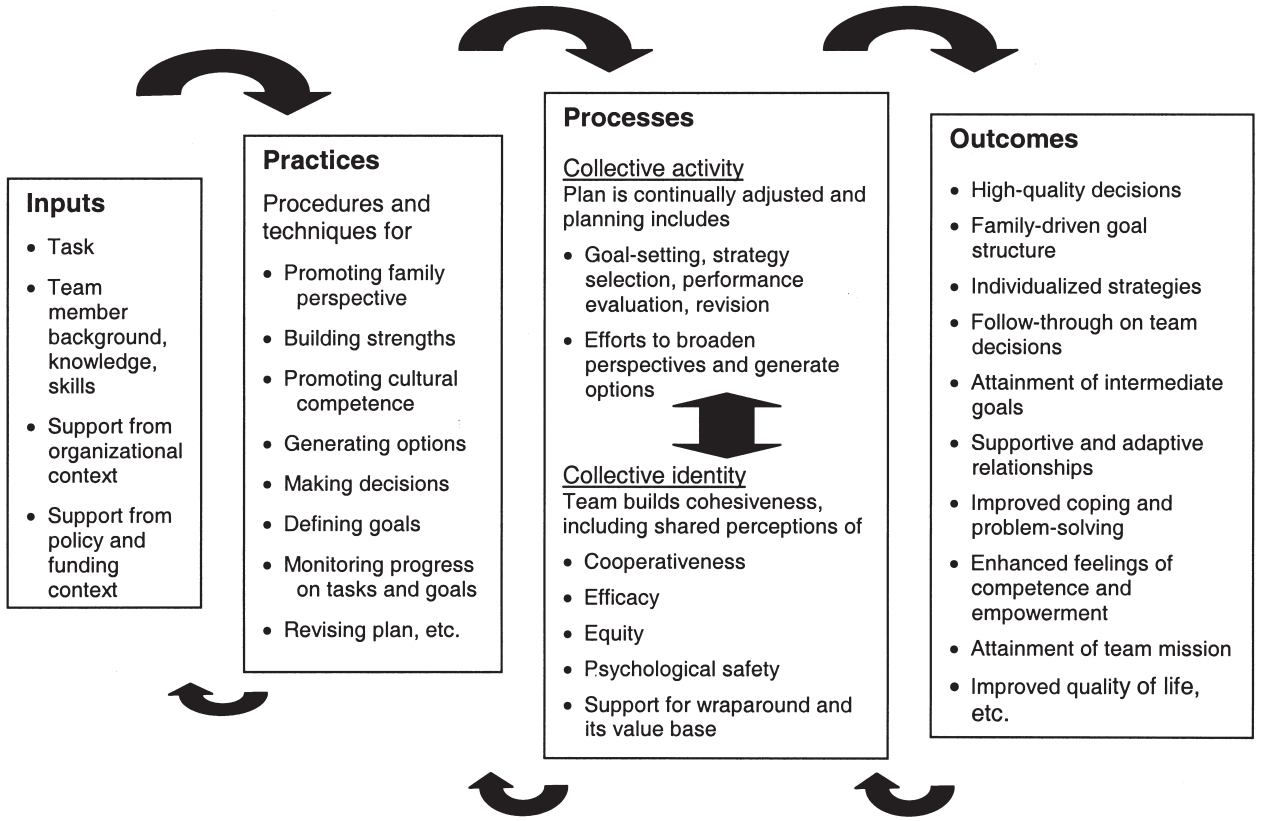

FIGURE 1. A model of effectiveness for wraparound teamwork.

case with most models of social phenomena, the interrelationships between the various elements are more complex than can be depicted or described in a simple model; however, the effects shown in the model and discussed in the following sections are those that have received the most support from empirical studies.

ATTRIBUTES OF PROCESS IN EFFECTIVE TEAMS

In this section, we flesh out the proposed model with a detailed description of the two subprocesses through which the team defines itself as a collective entity. We also describe how these processes are related to each other and to desired wraparound outcomes. We begin the discussion of process with a summary of relevant research results from studies of effectiveness, focusing on studies of groups and teams that are similar to wraparound teams (e.g., teams that undertake complex, long-term projects or tasks; teams whose goals and work are largely self-determined; teams whose members are heterogeneous in terms of their demographic characteristics, experience, and/or expertise). The discussion enumerates attributes of team process that have been linked to effectiveness across multiple contexts. We then describe how this more general description of the attributes of effective team process must be tailored to reflect the unique goals and values of wraparound.

Planning

Effective teams adhere to a high-quality team planning process that is structured around specific goals with associated strategies and performance criteria. Team goals or objectives are "the most consistently important factor in determining group effectiveness" (West et al., 1998, p. 31). When groups set goals that are specific and that include observable performance indicators or evaluation criteria, they consistently perform better than groups with no goals or with vague goals (S. G. Cohen, Mohrman, & Mohrman, 1999). Clarity of long-term goals or team mission has been linked to effectiveness as well as to creativity and quality of decisions—ideas generated by the group can be assessed more efficiently when team objectives are clear (West et al., 1998). Teams that work together benefit over time from having specific intermediate goals in addition to long-term goals (Latham & Seijts, 1999; Weldon & Yun, 2000). The presence of these intermediate goals appears to lead to the development of better strategies for attaining the long-term goals. Presence of intermediate goals has also been linked to the setting of more difficult long-term goals (Weldon & Yun, 2000), which in turn is associated with increased strategizing and effectiveness (Mesch, Farh, & Podsakoff, 1994).

The positive effects related to goal-setting are most reliable when teams receive feedback regarding progress on

tasks and goals (S. G. Cohen, 1994; DeNisi & Kluger, 2000). When individuals know they will be accountable for carrying out tasks related to the goals, their motivation to complete the tasks is increased (Paulus, Larey, & Dzindolet, 2001). At the team level, knowing that tangible progress has been made produces beneficial effects on team cohesiveness and morale. However, receiving negative feedback—information telling the team when it is failing to meet its goals—is also essential to effectiveness, because it stimulates further goal refinement and strategy development (Mesch et al., 1994).

Teams are also more likely to be effective when members share information (O'Connor, 1998) and then generate several options before making decisions about which goals or strategies to pursue. Generating options for goals helps teams avoid jumping to solutions before the problem has been clearly defined, a tendency that has a negative impact on effectiveness (Hirokawa, 1990; West et al., 1998). Generating options for strategies appears to increase effectiveness for at least two reasons: (a) first solutions tend to be of poorer quality than solutions devised after additional thought and (b) weighing various options gives teams additional insight into the nature of the problem.

In sum, a team increases the likelihood that it will be effective when it defines its collective activity by engaging in a planning process that (a) moves through repeated iterations of setting goals, strategizing, evaluating performance, and revising goals and strategies and (b) focuses on broadening perspectives and generating options during discussion and decision-making.

Cohesiveness

A team is also more likely to be effective when members define a collective identity through the process of building team cohesiveness. *Team cohesiveness* refers to team members' shared perceptions that the team is a viable unit whose members can work collaboratively to achieve goals they hold in common. Reviews and meta-analyses have shown a strong link between cohesiveness and the effectiveness of teams (S. G. Cohen & Bailey, 1997). Within the broader idea of cohesiveness, several more specific types of shared perceptions have been linked to team effectiveness, including perceptions of team cooperativeness, psychological safety, equity, and efficacy.

Teams tend to be more effective when team members believe that they have cooperative goals (S. G. Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Korsgaard, Schweiger, & Sapienza, 1995; Tjosvold & Tjosvold, 1994). As a part of such a cohesive team, members believe their goals are linked in a positive way, such that moving toward the goals of any one member simultaneously helps others reach their goals. Teams whose members believe they have cooperative goals are more likely to share information and perspectives, use high-quality reasoning, and discuss opposing viewpoints. In contrast, teams whose members believe their goals are independent or antagonistic may restrict their sharing of information, distort communication, and avoid discussion of controversial topics (Tjosvold & Tjosvold, 1994). It is worth noting that teams with overall cooperative goals may yet be in disagreement about how best to proceed to reach those goals; in fact, constructive disagreement is beneficial to teams because it encourages cognitive effort, creative strategizing, and effective problem-solving and decision-making (Nemeth, 1992; Tjosvold & Tjosvold, 1994). However, when disagreement turns into interpersonal conflict, teams' effectiveness tends to suffer (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999). A similar construct that has been linked to effectiveness is *team psychological safety* (Edmonson, 1999). Team psychological safety describes an interpersonal climate characterized by mutual trust and respect. When a team member feels psychologically safe, she or he is less concerned with protecting her or his ego and is thus more likely to engage in learning behaviors, such as seeking feedback, sharing information and ideas, talking about errors and problems, and experimenting.

Teams are also more likely to be effective when team members perceive that team decisions are made using equitable procedures (i.e., when team members perceive that procedures for making decisions are clear and fair and that the procedures are followed when decisions are made). Members of teams and groups are more likely to support decisions they perceive as equitable, even when the outcomes of the decisions affect their own personal situation for the worse or when they disagree with the decision (Cropanzano & Schminke, 2001; Korsgaard et al., 1995). Perceptions of equity in decision-making are important predictors of team member commitment to follow through with or abide by decisions (Kim & Mauborgne, 1993), as well as other effectiveness outcomes (Cropanzano & Schminke, 2001).

Another facet of cohesiveness that has been linked to effectiveness is team-level perceptions of efficacy. Research in this area explores the hypothesis that when team members share a sense of confidence in the team's ability to meet its goals, the team will in fact be more likely to meet its goals. Teams that lack this sense of efficacy can enter a downward spiral of confidence loss, poor performance, and then further loss of confidence (Lindsley, Brass, & Thomas, 1995). A shared perception of efficacy favorably affects goal-setting, strategizing, and effort, thereby increasing the level of goal attainment and building further confidence (S. G. Cohen, 1994; West et al., 1998).

Just as the elements of a high-quality planning process reinforce each other, the aspects of cohesiveness are also interrelated. For example, psychological safety and equity build cooperativeness, and cooperativeness decreases conflict and increases psychological safety. Effective planning and cohesiveness also affect each other through many routes. For example, cooperative teams provide a hospitable context for high-quality strategizing and problem-solving, and teams whose members feel psychologically safe are more likely to share information and perspectives. Teams that establish clear goals and associated performance criteria can document their progress, leading to increased perceptions of efficacy, even when the successes are modest (Latham & Seijts, 1999).

Wraparound Team Processes

In the larger literature on teams, effectiveness is judged by the extent to which a team is successful in achieving goals consistent with the task. For wraparound teams, achieving goals is necessary, but not sufficient, to produce the range of desired outcomes. By definition, wraparound cannot be considered successful unless both the planning process and the plan produced are individualized, family-centered, and culturally competent. The goals pursued by the team must reflect the family's own sense of its needs, strengths, and priorities. Furthermore, the strategies used to meet the goals and the indicators used to judge the success of the strategies must be consistent with the family's beliefs and values. This implies that when teams are sharing ideas, developing priorities, and making decisions about goals and strategies, it is essential that family members' perspectives are not only elicited, but in fact given priority, during teamwork. Evidence from a number of studies has supported the idea that meaningful family participation in planning can contribute both to high-quality planning and to positive wraparound outcomes. For example, parent and youth participation in planning for children with emotional and behavioral difficulties has been linked to enhanced selection of treatment goals and strategies (Williams, 1988), improved treatment outcomes (Byalin, 1990; Williams, 1988) and service coordination (Koren et al., 1997), and increased family empowerment (Curtis & Singh, 1996). When families see the importance of their own roles in achieving team successes, their perceptions of individual-level self-efficacy are likely to increase, contributing to both empowerment and an enhanced sense of competence. Research in the area of positive psychology has shown that interventions that provide training in problem-solving and planning are empowering to people experiencing psychological difficulties and stressful life events (Heppner & Lee, 2002). The interventions promote increased goal-related thinking and perceptions of efficacy, which in turn are associated with positive mental health outcomes and coping effectiveness (Snyder, Horsch, & Childs, 1997).

Building team cohesiveness may be even more important in wraparound than in other team contexts. Wraparound outcomes include supportive and adaptive relationships, and some of those relationships will be those formed or strengthened between team members. The experience of participation on a cohesive team provides a basis for these relationships, as well as a model for family efforts to build similar adaptive and supportive relationships outside of the team context or after the team has concluded its work. Other aspects of cohesiveness are central in wraparound as well. Without psychological safety, for example, it is unlikely that family members will fully share sensitive information with the team. Building perceptions of cooperativeness is important for teams, particularly for wraparound teams whose members represent different agencies with disparate mandates and priorities.

Equity is important in wraparound, just as it is in other team contexts. In the wraparound context, however, it is important not to confuse equity with equality. If wraparound is to be family-driven, the family's perspectives, opinions, and preferences must be more influential than those of other team members. This implies that wraparound team effectiveness will be positively affected when team members have reached a shared understanding that it is equitable for family members to have disproportionate influence during teamwork. Wraparound team effectiveness is likely to be enhanced when members perceive team-level support for the wraparound paradigm more generally, and for the set of values that underlies it. Research on teams in other settings has suggested that teams are more likely to be cohesive and effective when they hold common values that are relevant to the mission and goals of the team (Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999). Shared values are thought to contribute to effectiveness through decreased conflict and increased cooperativeness and psychological safety. It is likely that shared perceptions regarding wraparound as a viable means of achieving outcomes will also affect outcomes positively, because team perceptions of efficacy are less likely to develop when members are skeptical of the intervention's utility.

Implications for Wraparound Practice

Wraparound effectiveness depends on the team's ability to promote cohesiveness and high-quality planning in a manner consistent with the wraparound value base. This section elaborates on the nature of some of the challenges to effectiveness that wraparound teams are likely to encounter and provides examples of the types of practices that can be used to address them. The challenges and practices are grouped according to three themes: prioritizing the family's perspective, promoting cohesiveness, and promoting high-quality planning. The practices described could be implemented by any team member, and on experienced teams the group as a whole may engage in certain practices spontaneously. On other teams, particularly those that are newly formed, the responsibility for implementing practices is likely to fall primarily on the team's facilitator.

Prioritizing the Family Perspective

While prioritizing the family's perspective is essential to effectiveness in wraparound, it may well be difficult to achieve. There is a strong possibility that family members' perspectives will differ substantially from the perspectives of other team members. Families and professionals often hold different views regarding the causes of children's mental health difficulties (Johnson et al., 2000). Human service professionals may be skeptical of parents' expertise and parents' ability or desire to make decisions in the best interest of the child (Allen & Petr, 1998). When these differences occur, there is a likelihood that professionals' views will prevail during decision-making. In groups and teams, there is a general tendency for peo-

ple of higher social status to dominate discussion and decision-making, while those of lower social status defer and/or withdraw. Research findings demonstrate that status differences within a group tend to mirror status differences outside the group, and similar effects are observed regardless of the type of status markers—such as race, sex, occupation, or educational attainment—that distinguish group members one from another (Owens, Mannix, & Neale, 1998). In wraparound teams, it is not uncommon for family members (particularly youth) to possess relatively few markers of high status. Furthermore, the status they do have is likely to be deflated relative to that of professionals because (a) professionals are more likely to be seen as experts and (b) family members are more likely to be viewed in terms of needs and deficits (Malysiak, 1998). Professionals also have disproportionate control over the financial and service resources available to the team. Thus, it is not surprising to find professionals dominating discussion and decision-making in the context of parent–professional collaborative planning, even when they specifically intend to act in a family-centered manner (Ware, 1994). These barriers may be even more significant in deterring the full participation of ethnic minority caregivers in decision-making (Harry, 1992). Conversely, supporting the family perspective in decision-making may be the most effective route to increasing cultural competence (Wilhelmus, 1998).

Practices that reinforce the competence and expertise of low-status individuals can be effective in increasing their influence over others (Berger, Rosenholtz, & Zelditch, 1980). For example, E. G. Cohen and Lotan (1995) demonstrated that small, infrequent interventions could increase the amount and quality of participation of low-status team members. In one intervention, team members were simply reminded that many different types of abilities and expertise are required for successful teamwork and that each person has some of these abilities. Using another intervention, an even stronger effect was realized by drawing attention to a specific contribution of a low-status team member to the group goals or effort. These counterstatus interventions did not have to be employed frequently; however, they did have to be specific, so that group members, including the individual being recognized, would see the relevance of the contribution to the group and its activity. Both of these interventions could be easily translated into the wraparound team context, and both are consistent with strengths-based approaches. For example, teams could begin each meeting with a discussion of what is going well. Team members would cite family actions that were positive, specific, and relevant to success in achieving team goals. This practice can also be extended to highlight the competence of other team members, particularly those who may be of relatively low status in terms of educational attainment or occupational prestige.

The family's perspective can also be made more influential by increasing the amount, impact, and consistency of the expression of family members' views (Nemeth, 1992), and there are a variety of practices that can be used to do this. For example, providing families with information, orientation, and/or a chance to consider options prior to team meetings results in family members' speaking more during collaborative planning with professionals (Brinckerhoff & Vincent, 1986). Another practice is to ensure that family members speak first *and* last whenever the team is considering options or making a decision. This not only affords family members more opportunities to speak but also widens the impact of their views, as the comments made first and last tend to receive more attention from listeners. Teams can also ask the caregiver and/or youth for formal approval whenever an action is written into the plan. Family members may be specifically asked if they think the action, outcomes, and timeline are reasonable. The consistency and impact of the family perspective can also be reinforced when teams have clearly stated their mission and goals. When the goal structure has been created through procedures that highlight the family voice, the frame of reference for the team's work will be the needs and priorities as expressed by the family.

The family's perspective can also be made more influential through changes in the makeup of the team. Including a parent advocate on the team is one strategy that has been linked to increased participation by family members during team planning (Brinckerhoff & Vincent, 1986). The parent advocate can contribute to increasing the quantity, impact, and consistency of parent contributions to discussion and decision-making by orienting the family to the wraparound process, helping build family members' confidence in their own perceptions of needs and goals, monitoring meetings to ensure that practices that support the family perspective are used, and assisting in the clarification of family views during the meeting (Harry, 1992). By virtue of shared experiences, the parent advocate may also contribute to team deliberations from a perspective that is similar to the family's. Likewise, the family's perspective may be reinforced when the team includes people from the family's community and natural support networks and when input from these informal supports is actively solicited during teamwork. Changing the makeup of the team in this manner may also be an effective strategy for working toward cultural competence, particularly in families from cultures in which the norm is to consult a range of family and community members before making decisions.

Promoting Cohesiveness

Building perceptions of cooperativeness and psychological safety is particularly difficult for teams whose members are diverse in terms of their knowledge, skills, values, and backgrounds (Owens et al., 1998). Wraparound teams are often quite diverse, and differences in values, perspectives, and organizational mandates may create friction both between and among family members and professionals (Walker, Koroloff, & Schutte, 2003). Teams with a diversity of perspectives have the potential to be more creative than more homogeneous groups because dis-

agreement stimulates cognitive effort (Jackson, 1996). On the other hand, diverse teams are also at greater risk of losing effectiveness due to excessive conflict (Jehn et al., 1999). Effective teams are able to develop a shared understanding that disagreement is a necessary part of problem-solving (West et al., 1998) but are able to avoid destructive conflict.

Teams and groups build mutual respect and avoid destructive forms of conflict when they are able to avoid or interrupt unproductive communication patterns and focus on solution-oriented patterns of interaction. One strategy for doing so is for teams to develop an explicit consensus about how people should interact and to ensure that these norms are enforced even-handedly, particularly in situations in which conflict arises (S. G. Cohen, 1994; S. G. Cohen & Bailey, 1997). The tone of interpersonal interaction that teams set in the beginning of their work is likely to endure (Beugre & Baron, 2001), so it is particularly useful for expectations about communicative behavior to be clarified early on. To this end, some wraparound teams devise "ground rules" in the early phases of their work and discuss how the rules will be enforced. Skilled facilitation is often crucial in helping groups and teams manage disagreement and avoid destructive conflict, and techniques used in other settings translate easily into the context of wraparound. Facilitators can be trained to recognize communications that may be perceived as attacking or blaming, even when the hostile content is subtle or unintentional, and they can learn to intervene proactively by using specific techniques to reframe a comment or reorient the discussion before conflict escalates (Binder & Strupp, 1997; Donohue, 1989; Pearson & Thoennes, 1989). Facilitators can also remind team members about the limits of certainty and help people remember not to overstate what they know to be true. This propensity may be particularly pronounced among human service professionals on wraparound teams, as professionals often feel entitled, or even obligated, to provide expert, definitive interpretations of events (Ware, 1994). When conflict does occur, facilitators can help prevent escalation and even turn the conflict to productive ends by encouraging team members to maintain a focus on shared goals (S. G. Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Pearson & Thoennes, 1989).

Team cohesiveness is enhanced when team members perceive that decision-making is equitable. A proven means for cultivating perceptions of equity is by allowing team members who are affected by a decision to have meaningful input in decision-making. Merely providing opportunities to speak is not sufficient, however, and team cohesiveness is adversely impacted when members feel that their participation is only cosmetic or consultative (S. G. Cohen & Bailey, 1997). Team members must feel that their input is being given serious consideration by the team, and they tend to feel this way when their ideas are listened to attentively and when their viewpoints are respectfully acknowledged (Beugre & Baron, 2001; Korsgaard et al., 1995). In the wraparound context, teams can express attentiveness and provide acknowledgment in a variety of ways. For example, teams can solicit input from all team members in as many phases of the planning process as feasible. Input can be acknowledged through verbal reflection or by summarizing the contribution in written form. Even when input is not immediately incorporated into the team plan, written summaries can be saved and consulted later. For example, when a given strategy has not worked out, teams can return to records of the initial discussion to see what other strategies were suggested.

Perceptions of equity are also increased when decision-making procedures are clear and consistent (Beugre & Baron, 2001) and when team members understand why a particular option was favored over others (Korsgaard et al., 1995). Clear procedures help build a sense of consistency and nonarbitrariness in decision-making, which in turn enhances perceptions of fairness. In the wraparound context, the team must start from a general agreement that the family's preferences will be prioritized in decision-making. However, simply going with the family's choice will not seem justifiable in all cases to all team members, even if each team member has had the opportunity to have his or her input considered by the team. For example, a professional team member may feel that his or her organizational mandate precludes a particular option favored by the family, while family members may feel that the mandate is being used to override their preferences. A situation such as this may be avoided if teams discuss mandates (e.g., a probation officer's mandate to ensure community protection, a child welfare worker's mandate to ensure child safety and pursue permanency in a timely manner) early in the planning process. This would prevent decisions from appearing arbitrary later on, when mandates are raised. Having clear evaluation criteria associated with team goals can also contribute to team perceptions of equity, especially when there is disagreement among team members about which strategy to pursue. When clear goals and evaluation criteria are present, there is less ambiguity regarding the rationale for choosing a particular strategy, as well as greater confidence that the strategy will be judged by whether or not it is successful in promoting team goals. If a strategy is not successful, it can be discarded. Where goals and evaluation criteria are not specified, strategy selection may appear to be a more biased or arbitrary process. Transparency and consistency in decision-making also contribute to team perceptions that facilitation is neutral. Neutrality of facilitation has been shown to be essential in building psychological safety, and it has been suggested that facilitator neutrality is particularly important with families of color whose trust in the service system is often low (Mackey & O'Brien, 1998; Wilhelmus, 1998).

Finally, cohesiveness and effectiveness tend to be increased when team members (a) have confidence that the team can be effective and (b) experience the team being effective in accomplishing its goals (S. G. Cohen, 1994; West et al., 1998). Over time, perceptions of effectiveness and actual effectiveness can build on each other, because teams that are confident of success tend to experience success, which in turn sustains or increases perceptions of efficacy while also building general cohesiveness. Teams can build perceptions of efficacy by focusing attention on accom-

plishments, even when these are only "small wins" (Latham & Seijts, 1999). In this vein, many wraparound teams use the practice of "celebrating successes" during each meeting. This practice is likely to build team-level efficacy perceptions when the successes can be attributed to teamwork or the team plan, rather than to incidental individual team member activity. Opportunities to experience success can be increased if goals and tasks are broken down into smaller elements of activity that can be completed in a relatively short time frame. If team members are skeptical of the effectiveness of wraparound as an intervention, it is particularly important for teams to create the opportunity to experience success. If skepticism cannot be overcome, a wraparound team may be launched into a cycle in which efficacy, cohesiveness, and performance are negatively affected. Experiencing success using a new model for practice appears to be far more persuasive to skeptics than further information and education about the new model (Guskey, 1986).

Promoting High-Quality Planning

The evidence presented in the preceding sections reinforces the importance of adhering to practices that promote a high-quality planning process. This is particularly true regarding practices related to deriving a goal structure that includes both an overall mission and well-formulated intermediate goals. As noted earlier, having clear, well-formulated goals is a robust predictor of team effectiveness and a prerequisite for developing other attributes of high-quality planning. Having goals is also crucial for promoting the family perspective and building cohesiveness through a number of the practices described earlier. Yet, a recent study of wraparound teams found that only about a quarter of teams had clearly articulated team goals (Walker et al., 2003). It is of central importance, then, that wraparound teams become more aware of the importance of simply having a complete goal structure. Many teams whose plans do include goals use a plan template that requires a team mission and intermediate goals. The template may also require the team to record performance criteria for each goal, the strategies used to meet the goal, the tasks required for implementing the strategies, and the people responsible for carrying out the tasks. In some communities, the plan template is maintained as an online document with internal links to lists of strengths and other supporting documentation. Beyond encouraging teams to be disciplined in developing a clear goal structure, this sort of plan template promotes effectiveness by encouraging accountability and by clarifying the purposes of strategies.

An attribute of high-quality planning frequently missing from teamwork is attention to generating options before making decisions about which goals and strategies to pursue (Paulus et al., 2001). Failing to generate options decreases the creativity and quality of decision-making. A recent study of wraparound teams found that participating teams rarely considered even two options before selecting a course of action (Walker et al., 2003). This lack of attention to generating options may partially explain one of the study's other findings, namely that wraparound teams do not appear to be particularly successful in developing creative, individualized plans that incorporate unique constellations of services and supports. Relative to other team contexts, generating options may be of even greater importance for wraparound. Brainstorming or similar activities provide an ideal opportunity to elicit input from family members and from team members representing the family's natural and community support networks. Furthermore, when there is an opportunity to consider multiple alternatives, it becomes possible for family members to choose the option that is most compatible with family goals, beliefs, and values and that builds on or incorporates family strengths and connections to community supports and resources. Generating options thus provides the opportunity to promote creative and effective problem-solving, as well as family-centeredness, strengths, and cultural competence. In one practice used by wraparound teams for generating options, the team brainstorms family needs in a variety of life domains, making sure to elicit a large number of responses from family members. The team then uses the list of needs as a basis for clarifying and prioritizing goals, often over the course of several meetings. Teams can also agree on rules for decision-making about strategies, such as "Always consider at least three strategies before choosing one" or "Always come up with at least one option for a strategy that is not a formal service." The latter of these two rules has the further advantage of encouraging the team to think of ways to respond to needs by using informal and natural supports.

Future Research

In this article, we proposed a model of effectiveness for wraparound teamwork and then used the model as a basis for recommending specific types of team practices. Both the model itself and the practice recommendations were derived with reference to research on the effectiveness of teams and groups that are similar to wraparound teams in important ways. However, it remains to be seen whether or not the proposed model accurately represents the relationships between practices, processes, and outcomes in wraparound teamwork. Future research is necessary to test the hypothesized relationships. For example, correlational and path analytical research approaches could be used to explore whether teams that use a larger spectrum of the kinds of practices consistent with the model do indeed show evidence of predicted improvements in team processes and outcomes. Research could also take place in the context of training interventions designed to increase teams' knowledge and use of particular subsets of practices (e.g., practices designed to increase team cooperativeness or to promote the family perspective), to examine whether or not predicted improvements in processes and outcomes are realized. Research along these lines would be useful in ongoing efforts to define and refine wraparound theory and practice and to identify the essential components of successful wraparound teamwork.

In addition to team member skills, other inputs have also been linked to team effectiveness. One such input is suppor-

tiveness from the larger organizational context within which teams work (S. G. Cohen et al., 1999). In the case of wraparound teams, members may be highly skilled in using team practices yet find their efforts stymied by, for example, excessive documentation requirements; rigidity around access to, and payment for, services and supports; or inconsistent support for the team plan among managers and supervisors at agencies whose workers participate on teams. Progress has been made in clarifying the ways that the organizational, policy, and funding contexts affect wraparound teamwork (Bruns, Suter, Burchard, & Leverentz-Brady, 2004; Walker et al., 2003), yet further work in this area is important to clarify the program and policy supports that are necessary for effective wraparound.

Conclusion

Research from across a variety of settings highlights the potential for teams to be highly effective in planning to meet complex challenges. However, the same research also documents the many barriers and pitfalls that can detract from team effectiveness. Even in the absence of equivalent research from wraparound teams, stakeholders in wraparound would be well advised to approach their work with a realistic awareness about the range of possible outcomes of teamwork, including the possibility for teams to be inefficient and even counterproductive. The research from other settings cannot provide definitive support for specific team practices to promote effectiveness within wraparound; however, wraparound teams and programs are likely to benefit when teamwork is guided by the most consistent findings from that research, namely that teams tend to be more effective when teamwork promotes high-quality planning and team cohesiveness. If this is to occur, wraparound team members must acquire a repertoire of practices and skills that enables them to accomplish these two basic tasks of teamwork in a manner consistent with wraparound values. Stakeholders responsible for program oversight should then hold program administrators accountable for providing evidence that the program has systematically defined such a set of practices; that the program provides training, coaching, and/or supervision sufficient for team members to learn the practices; and that the program monitors teamwork in some way, to ensure that appropriate practices are used. In return, policymakers and funders must be willing to recognize the full costs associated with these activities. Finally, it will benefit all stakeholder groups to recognize that there is much yet to learn about effectiveness in wraparound and to collaborate in efforts to increase what is known about how wraparound can produce positive outcomes for children and families.

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