Counsel for Social Work Education Annual Conference

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Roundtable Presentation

Courts, Communities and Accountability

Executing genuine community-based research
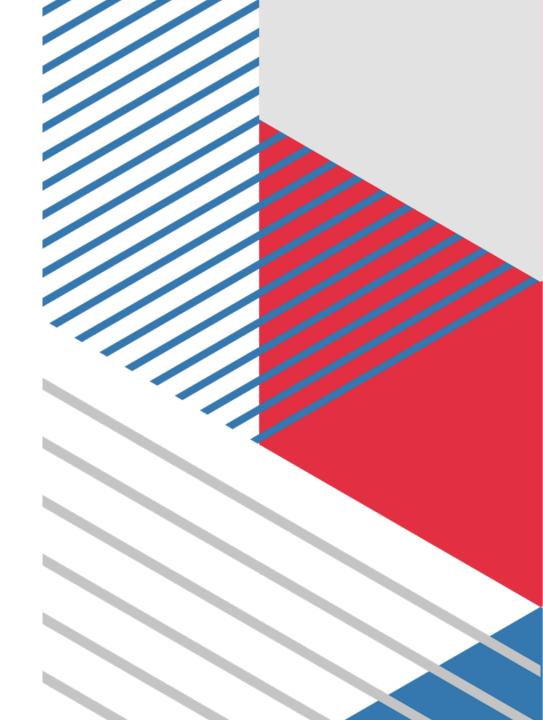
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Authors:
Kelechi C. Wright, Becci A. Akin, Kaela Byers,
Sarah McCall, and Shelby Clark

KU SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE

The University of Kansas

Introduction

- ## Presenters

  - Kelechi Wright, MEd, Doctoral Student, KUSSW
  - Becci Akin, PhD, Associate Professor & PhD Program Director, KUSSW
  - Kaela Byers, PhD, Associate Research Professor, KUSSW
  - Shelby Clark, Doctoral Candidate, KUSSW

Courts, Communities and Accountability…

Overview

- Objectives
  - Understand challenges surrounding racial disparities in child welfare
  - Discover the fundamentals of IA and its critical connection to communities
  - Demonstrate strategies for properly assessing racial disparities and form questions using IA models that most effectively inform research designs.
  - Identify ways social workers can use IA tools to address similar issues in their own organizational and direct practice.

Courts, Communities and Accountability…

Data

- ## Child welfare System and Racial Disproportionality…

Black families are more likely than their White counterparts to have their children removed and placed involuntary into foster care

53%

This represents the number of investigations among black families in comparison 28% for White children

The likelihood of poor outcomes as children exit care is higher for Black children and their families

24.3%

This represents the number of Black children involved in the child welfare system nationally even though they only represent 13.8% of the population

Reunification with families is lower and parental rights termination is higher for Black children than for White children

Courts, Communities and Accountability…

Innovative and Imaginative thinking of a new child welfare system….

Courts, Communities and Accountability…

Objective Roundtable Focus

The fundamentals of IA and its critical connection to communities…

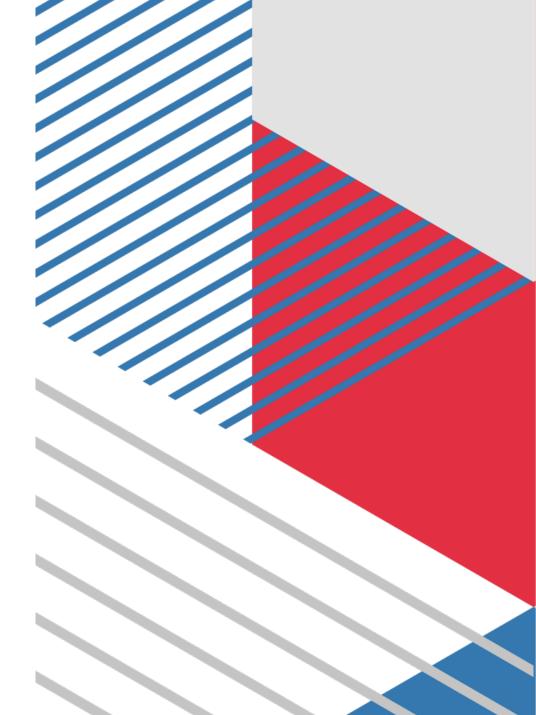Courts, Communities and Accountability…

Background on Institutional Analysis

Center for Study of Social Policy worked with Dr. Ellen Pence to apply IA to racial disproportionality and disparities

A diagnostic process to understand how negative outcomes occur for specific groups of people, focusing on revealing disconnects between institutions' stated purpose and individuals' experiences of that institution.
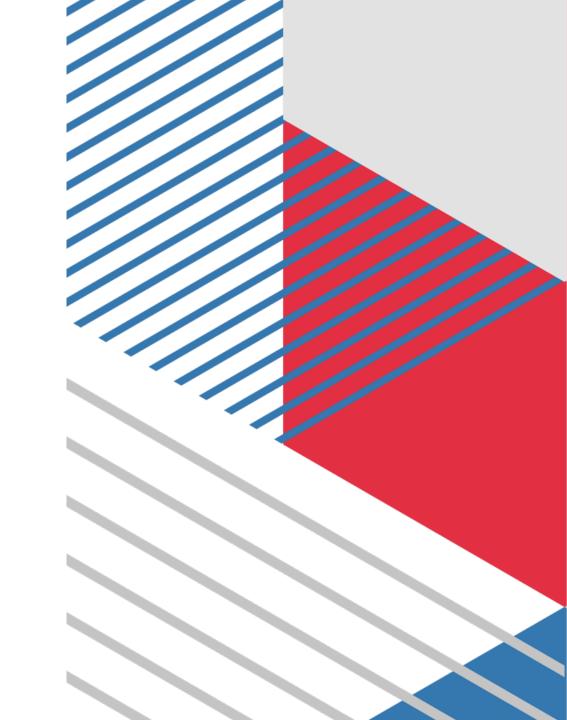
"Attributing institutional failures to the attitudes, personal beliefs, biases, or ignorance of individual workers leaves unchallenged and unaltered all the ways institutions do not adequately connect the intervention to what is actually going on for people" (Pence, 2021, p. 331).

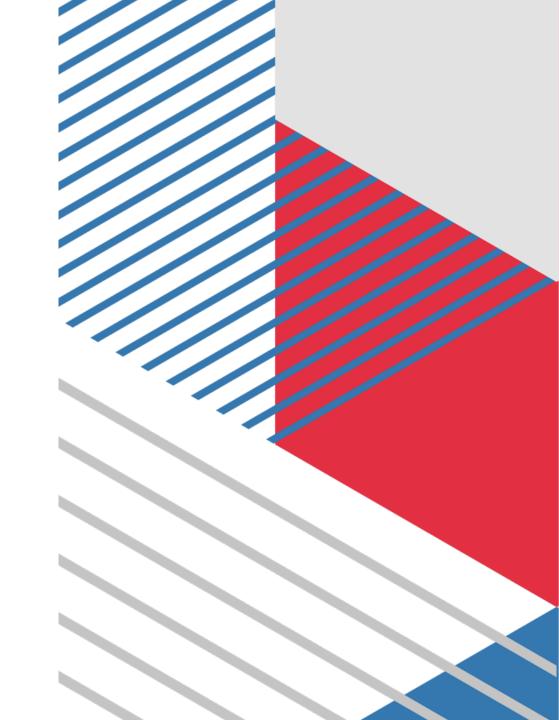# 3 Critical Elements of Institutional Analysis

3 critical elements of IA

1. Center the lived experience of Black families

2. Involve leaders of the Black community and understand the community context of Black families' experiences of the child welfare system

3. Uncover the institutional structures and components that contribute to racial inequities

8 Investigative Trails of Institutional Analysis

8 Investigative Trails for Identifying Institutional Structures that Contribute to Racial Inequities

1. Mission and job functions

2. Rules and regulations

3. Processes, tools, and forms (e.g., paperwork)

4. Linkages between workers within and external to agencies

5. Resource allocation

6. Accountability

7. Education and training

8. Concepts and theories

Objective Roundtable Focus

Demonstration of strategies for properly assessing racial disparities and forming questions using IA models that most effectively inform research designs

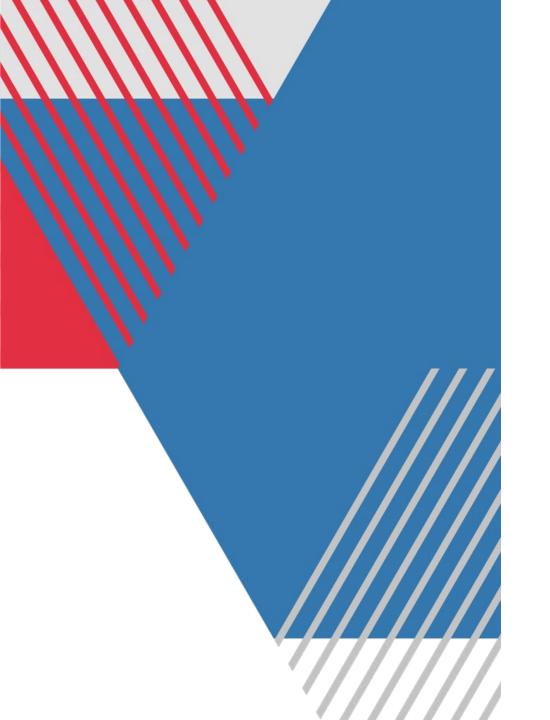Courts, Communities and Accountability...

Interconnected and Complex System

Child welfare includes a complex array of systems and people with shared responsibility for the function and outcomes of the system:

- Child protection and foster care

- Court and legal personnel

- Healthcare

- Education

- Families

- Foster parents

Multiple Approaches to Disentangle Complexity

- Multiple forms of qualitative data collection

    o Case record review

    o Document review of policies and forms

    o Interviews and focus groups across groups, including Black parents with lived experience of child welfare systems, frontline workers, supervisors, trainers, administrators, foster parents, attorneys, and judges

    o Community mapping of services

    o Field notes from workgroup and community stakeholder meetings.

- Centered black families in our analysis

- Involving a historical analysis of the Black community in the region of focus

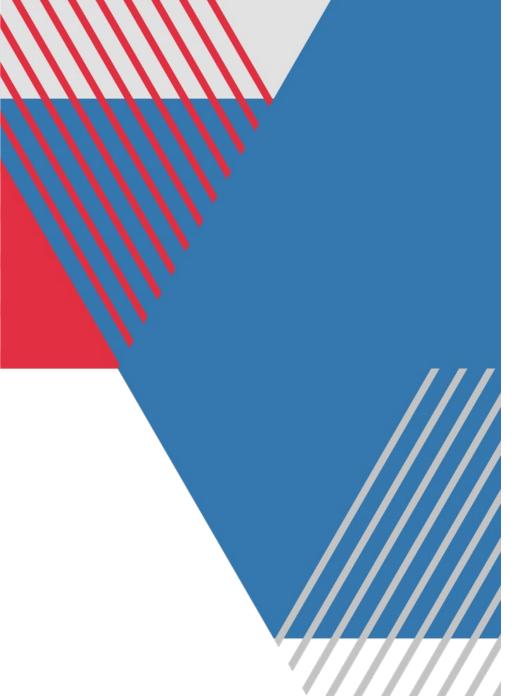- Team-based consensus approach to coding

Objective Roundtable Focus

Identify ways social workers can use IA tools to address similar issues in their own organizational and direct practice.

Courts, Communities and Accountability…

Reflections and Questions

References

Kim, H., Wildeman, C., Jonson-Reid, M., & Drake, B. (2017). Lifetime Prevalence of Investigating Child Maltreatment Among US Children. *American Journal of Public Health*, *107*(2), 274-280. https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2016.303545

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Wattenberg, E., Kelley, M., & Kim, H. (2001). When the rehabilitation ideal fails: A study of parental rights termination. *Child Welfare*, *80*(4), 405-431.