# **Using Comprehensive Family Assessments to Improve Child Welfare Outcomes:**

### A Partnership between the Ramsey County Community Human Services Department and the University of Minnesota Traci LaLiberte, Ph.D., Principal Investigator; Susan Wells, Ph.D., Consultant Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare **Skogmo** & Youth Policy School of Social Work

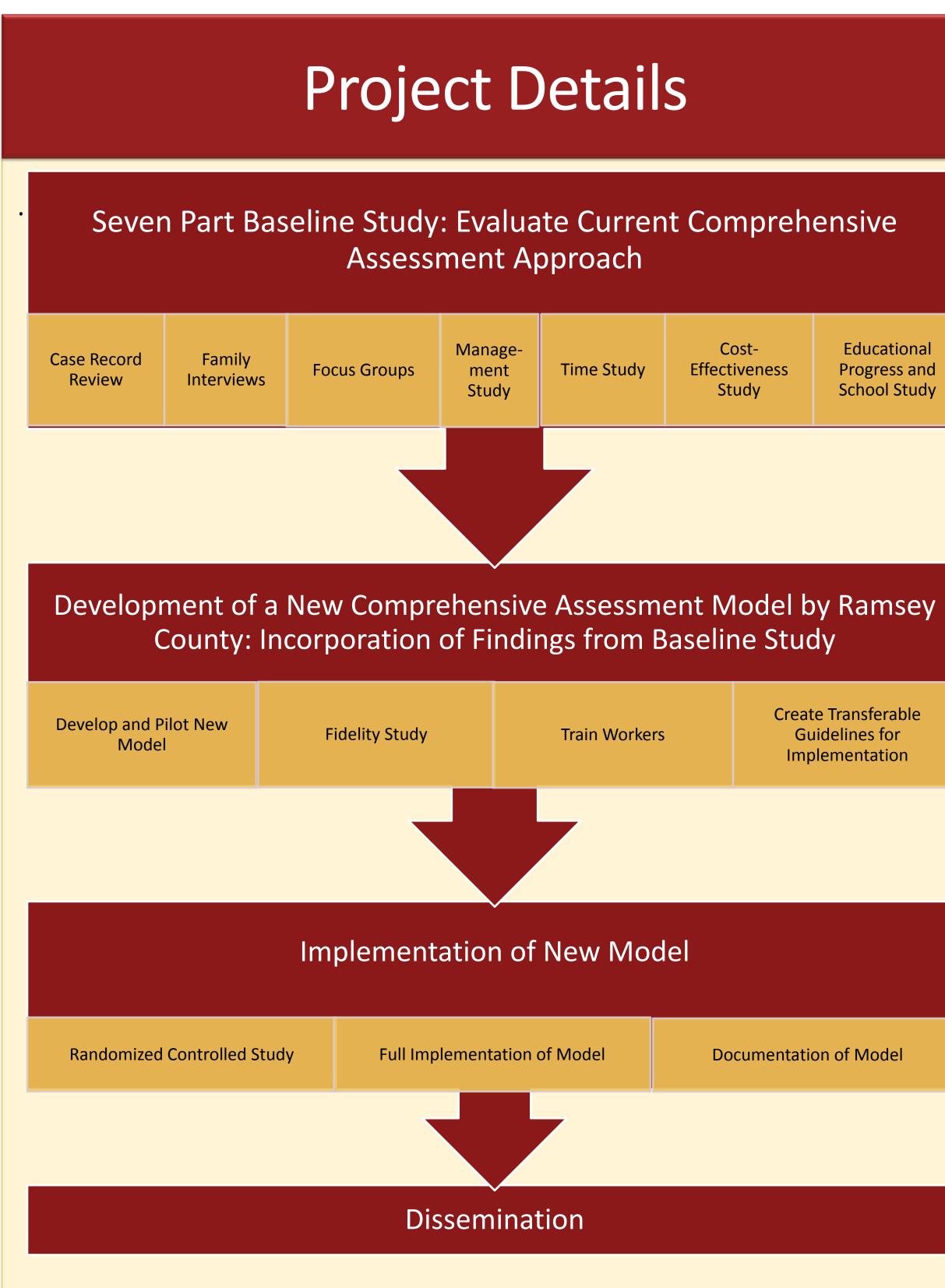
## Project

#### Background

Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSRs) are used by the Children's Bureau to assess the performance of state child welfare agencies' efforts at achieving positive child and family outcomes. A 2001 CFSR indicated that child welfare agencies needed to improve family assessment and service provision. This led to the development of the Comprehensive Family Assessment (CFA) Guidelines and the funding of five state sites through a Children's Bureau Demonstration Grant to examine and improve their comprehensive assessment process.

#### A Partnership between the Ramsey County Community Human Services **Department and the University of Minnesota**

Ramsey County was chosen as one of five state sites and is partnering with the University of Minnesota on a five year project to develop, evaluate, and disseminate a new model of comprehensive family assessment. This new model is being developed in collaboration with community members, cultural consultants, and cooperating agencies. External evaluators at the University of Minnesota are implementing a comprehensive evaluation plan and will assist with project dissemination.





Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs)

#### **Federal Evaluation of Child Welfare Practice and Outcomes**

Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSRs) assess several areas of child welfare practice. In this study, analysis will focus on specific areas including safety and risk assessments (Items 3-4), maintaining children's connections to the community, extended family, friends, etc (Item 14), placements with relatives (Item 15), comprehensive assessments (Item 17), family involvement in case planning (Item 18), patterns of worker visits (Item 19), connection of services related to a child's physical and mental health and educational needs (Items 21-23). Children's Bureau evaluators note that family assessments impact outcomes on these measures.

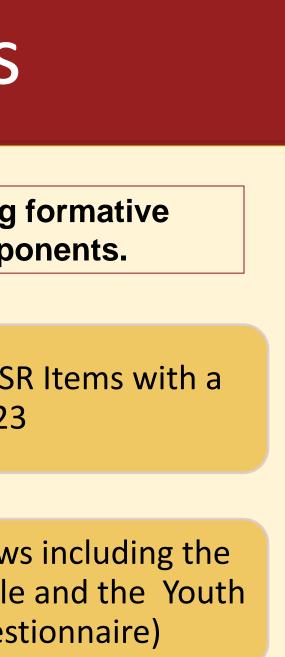
### **Evaluation Methods**

Utilization-Focused Evaluation (Patton, 2002) including formative (implementation and process) and summative components.

	Case Record Reviews (CRRs)	• CRR Questions are based on CFS focus on items 3, 4, 14, 15, 17-23
F	amily Interviews	<ul> <li>Qualitative, structured interview Poertner Client Satisfaction Scale CFSR Tool Kit (Ansell-Casey Quest</li> </ul>
	Focus Groups	<ul> <li>Worker and supervisor input on practice and again on the new m</li> </ul>
M	lanagement Study	<ul> <li>Internal management review to quality assurance structure, pro- feedback loop</li> </ul>
	Time Study	<ul> <li>100% workload, week-long study implementation</li> </ul>
C	Cost-Effectiveness Study	<ul> <li>Using time study data pre and perimplementation, In-House Time CFSR data</li> </ul>
Pr	Educational ogress and School Study	<ul> <li>Use Minn-LInK data (a database welfare files with school data)</li> </ul>

Educational Progress and School Study





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linking child

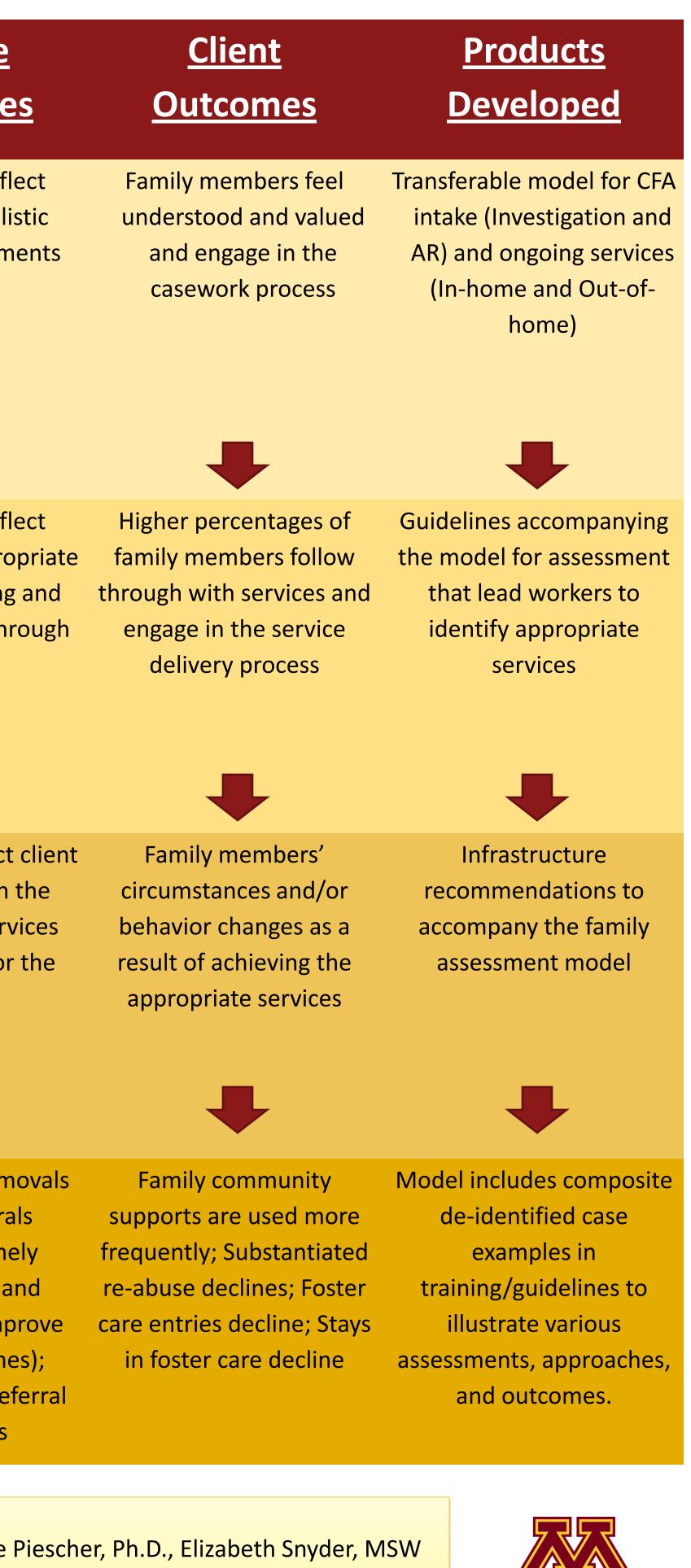
## **Comprehensive Family Assessment (CFA)**

### **An Assessment Model**

The proposed project will provide evidence-based knowledge about the emerging role of comprehensive assessment in child welfare. The CFA will be effectively linked to family engagement and inclusion of fathers, support of healthy marriages, worker-family visits, and case planning and service delivery – all of which lead to better outcomes for families involved in child welfare.

<u>Focus</u>	<u>Intermed</u> <u>Objectiv</u>		<u>Service</u> Outcome
Family assessment Child Parents Family relationships Environment	Assessment clearly family needs and and addresses in family members dynamics a environmental context.	strengths dividual s, family nd /social	CFSR items refl accurate, holi family assessm
Case planning Service selection Service delivery	Case planning reflects a specific, accurate, holistic assessment that pinpoints the need for specific services; Services are coordinated and delivered as planned		CFSR items refl specific and appro service targeting worker follow-the
Case monitoring and follow- up	Casework supervision and quality assurance accommodate the design of comprehensive family assessment and are structured to ensure its appropriate use		CSFR items reflect engagement in appropriate serve and changes for family
Completion of child welfare services	Cases more ofte with goals in the met		Unnecessary rem and re-referra decrease; time reunification a permanency imp (CFSR Outcome Percentage re-re diminishes
		Project Sta	aff:
COLLEGE C + HUMAN D	Social Work OF EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT OF MINNESOTA	<u>Project Re</u> Mary Harr	S. Daniels, Kristine e <mark>search Assistants:</mark> ison, MSW, MPP; L Neuman, MSW; Me

**Gamble**- Land Grant Chair in Child Welfare



Lani Merritt, MSW; Angela Neal, MSW; Ielissa Schmidt, MSW As of 5/15/2009



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