

UNIT 4.1

Collaboration with parents as innovative approach

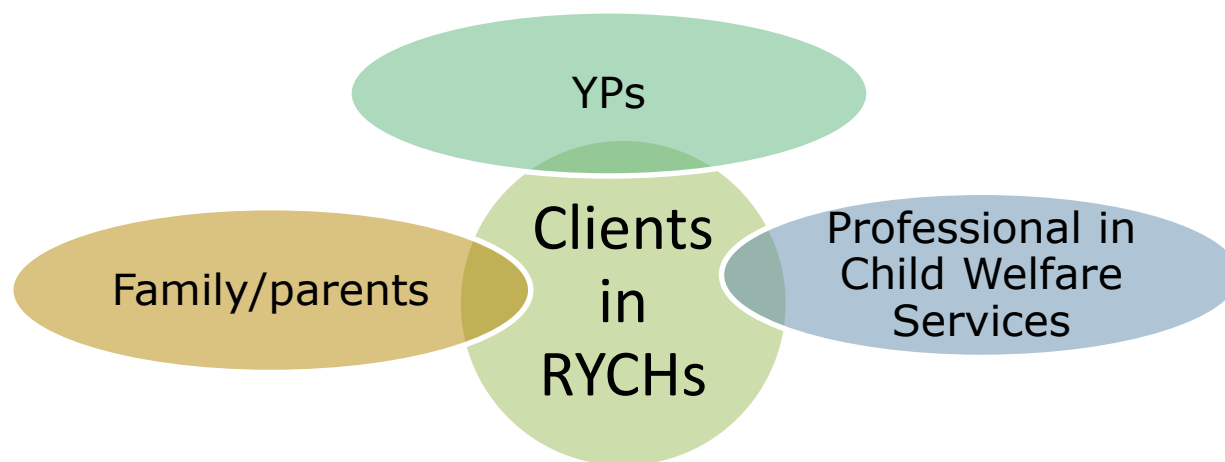
Working with the parents



Jugend in Aktion
Österreichische Agentur



- RYCHs treatments and programmes can be effective if CLIENTS fully participate



- Let's focus on family participation!

- Increasing family involvement is one of the challenges faced by residential youth care programmes¹
- In general, parent participation is reported to be the “gold standard” for child and youth welfare service²

(1. M. Leichtman, 2008, *The essence of Residential Treatment: III. Change and Adaptation; Residential Treatment for Children & Youth Vol.25, Iss. 3,*
2. P. Kemp, et Al., 2009, *Engaging Parents in Child Welfare Services: bridging family needs and child welfare mandates, Journal of the Child Welfare League of America, Inc. Vol. 88)*

- We can distinguish two components of family participation³:
 1. COLLABORATION in treatment planning
 2. COMPLIANCE with programme expectations

(3. Littell, Julia H., and Emiko A. Tajima. "A Multilevel Model of Client Participation in Intensive Family Preservation Services." *Social Service Review* 74 (2000): 405-435

4. *Ibidem*)

- Participation can be considered⁴:
 - A product of client characteristics (most studies define family participation in this way)
 - A result of multilevel influences (family, worker, programme) on treatment participation or effects of cross-level interaction.

(4. *Ibidem*)

Participation as a result of multilevel influences



Family, worker and programme characteristics
are relevant elements in terms influencing the level of
participation.

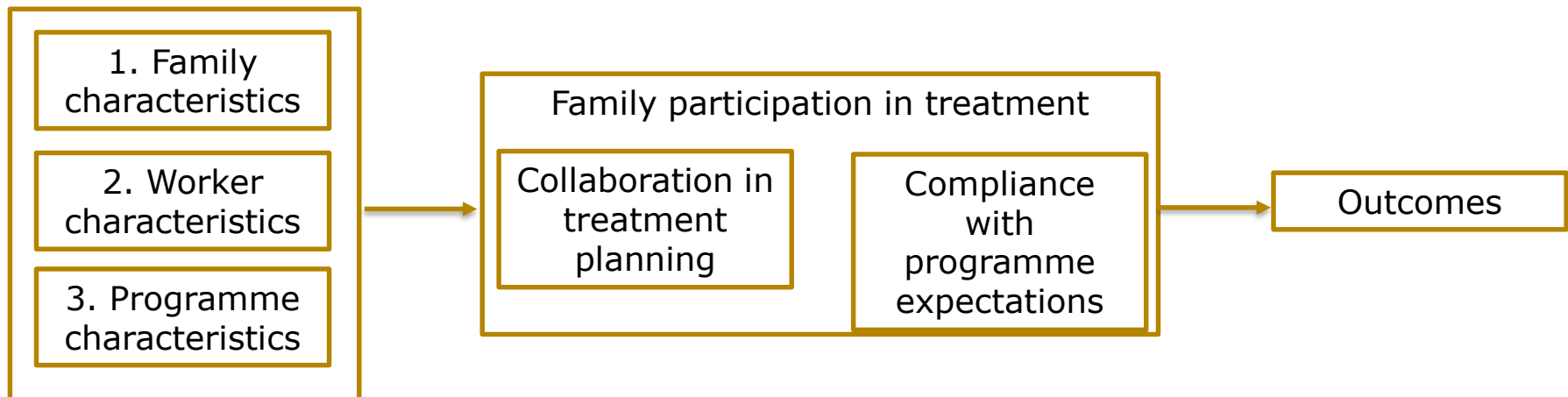


Fig. 1: adjustment of model of client participation. Source: Littell, Julia H., and Emiko A. Tajima. "A Multilevel Model of Client Participation in Intensive Family Preservation Services." *Social Service Review* 74 (2000): 405-435

In this framework, three steps are necessary to build and to strengthen positive family participation:

1. Analyse family characteristics
2. Define essential skills, attitudes and competences as RYCWs
3. Develop innovative methods and tools

Family characteristics

Worker characteristics

Programme characteristics



1. Analysis of family characteristics and pre-conditions:

What are the most important categories to use to properly analyse the family context?

- The aforementioned characteristics are strictly related to the environment in which the YP grew up

Youth variables relating to family

Out of home placements

Legal guardian

Biological families

Foster care

- The presence of family/parents problems (listed above as risk factors) may reveal a difficult approach in terms of collaboration between parents and RYCWs, especially in the early stage.
- Studies and evidences demonstrate that youth residential care programmes have families with high level of risks...

Family risk factors

Substance abuse

Domestic violence

Financial Problems

Mental health Problems

...Furthermore, findings suggest that families involved in youth residential care programmes have low levels of parenting skills:

Parenting skills

Adequate supervision

Discipline

Communication

Cohesion

- YOUR CONTRIBUTION:

Try to elaborate some creative tools to be used to examine and assess the family characteristics in relation to the YP in RYCHs.

- TIPS FOR THE ELABORATION OF TOOLS

a) Make a list of questions to be addressed to the parents

REMEMBER: the objective is to collect information in order to have a direct overview of the family context

e.g. Parents' highest education level, significant changes in the family structure, connection with welfare services, connections with friends, neighbours, community in general, etc...

b) Elaborate a tool to be used during an interview with the parents:

REMEMBER: the objective is to guide your interview and to facilitate you in reporting it to external professionals or to your colleagues

e.g. See the model in the following page

What is the family like?

- Family composition
- Personal information: sex, age, level of education, occupation, health status, etc...
- Lifestyle

What resources are available to the family?

- Economic situation
- Connection with welfare services, with professionals in the sector of psychology, etc...

Areas of Family characteristics

What are the parents need?

- Limitations (cognitive, physical, economic etc..)
- Do they voluntarily ask for any support?

How is the relationship with the YP?

- Information about the life of the YP in the family context, etc...



Thank you for your attention!

