

Promising Practices in Wisconsin:

## Child Maltreatment Prevention

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## Outline of Presentation

1. What is Community Response?
2. Findings from the CRP Implementation Evaluation
3. Risk Factors for Child Maltreatment



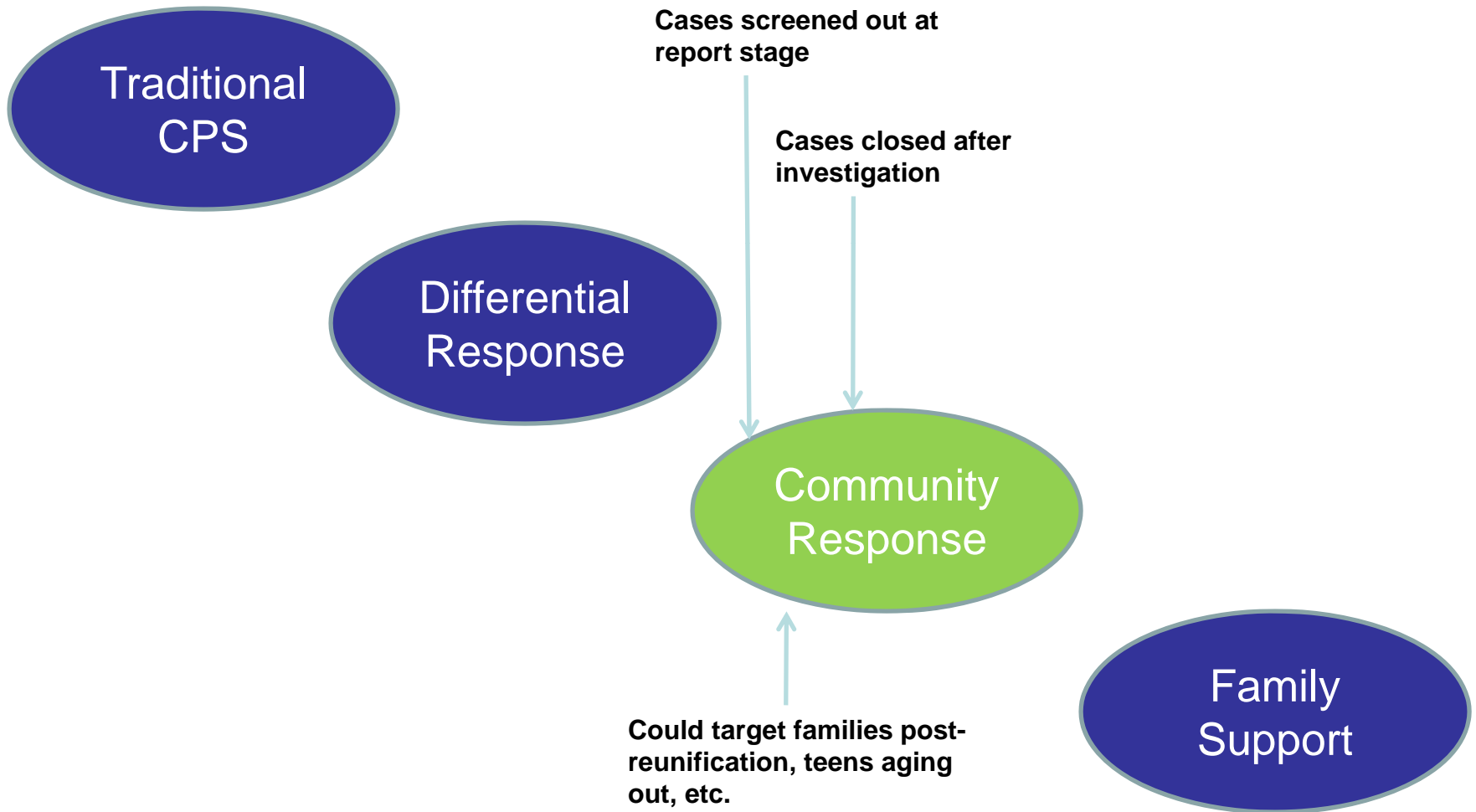


## Goals of Children's Trust Fund CRP Initiative

1. To enhance comprehensive voluntary services to lower-risk families that are reported to, but not served by, the CPS system;
2. To reduce demands on the CPS system;
3. To prevent re-reports to CPS related to escalation of risks;
4. To build a more comprehensive, community-based service continuum for families at risk for maltreatment.



FULL ← Continuum of CPS Involvement → NONE





## What was the initial CRP intervention?

Wisconsin's Community Response Program (CRP) now operates in 11 sites across the State. Sites vary on the length and intensity of their intervention. All referrals are from CPS.

Families define their needs; receive comprehensive case management services on a voluntary basis.

Services may include: domestic violence, mental health, substance abuse, basic needs, assistance with employment, parenting, and community resource referrals.





## Key Findings from CRP Implementation Evaluation

- Community service provider and CPS agency need to have a shared understanding of how to make referrals, and for whom.
- Average acceptance rate of 54%; range 28% to 83%. Those referred following an investigation more likely to engage than families screened out at report stage.
- CPS referral reasons (to CRP) were most often related to parenting needs; participant defined needs most often related to income.





## Key Findings, continued

- Participant reports of public benefit receipt were low at CRP intake, despite very low income levels.
- 70% of participants made significant progress toward at least one service goal; 57% attained at least one goal.
- Having an income-related service goal was highly predictive of goal attainment.





# Poverty and Child Maltreatment

## *What we know*

Low-income families are over-represented in CPS and out-of-home care populations;

The National Incidence Studies (NIS-1-2-3-4) show a strong inverse correlation with income;

Child maltreatment report rates are greatest in communities with high poverty rates and high unemployment rates;

Strong correlation between public assistance and child protection caseloads, at least prior to 1996 federal welfare reform law.





# Poverty and Child Maltreatment

## *What we don't know*

No experimental evaluations linking access to economic resources to child maltreatment related factors

- **Delaware's welfare reform experimental evaluation**
- **Wisconsin child support demonstration waiver**

Limited understanding of the mechanisms linking poverty and child maltreatment

- **Direct effects of resources?**
- **Stress/coping affects parenting?**
- **Surveillance bias?**
- **Social "selection"?**



# The Milwaukee CRP Model

\*Currently being piloted in La Crosse County

Linking to Benefits and  
Economic or Material  
Resources

Target Population:  
Families whose CPS  
cases close upon  
investigation

Service Duration:  
~6 weeks; families can  
re-engage if they need  
additional assistance

Financial Planning  
Assistance

One-time emergency  
assistance with  
economic needs

ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES  
AT RISK

\*Referrals for other  
“non-economic”  
service needs



## Key Elements of M-CRP

Objective referral eligibility criteria:

- All cases closed after an investigation

- No sexual abuse allegations

- Family has reasonable contact information

CRP service provider is external to CPS

- Different from most Alternative Response models

Intervention around economic stressors only

- Significance for the prevention field: **“How much prevention can be attained by intervening only around economic issues?”**





## M-CRP Staff Roles

Outreach and **engagement**

**Resource** hub for information on public benefits and local resources to help stabilize a family's economic situation

Guide and **advocate** in benefit linkage process

**Educate** on issues pertaining to financial planning, debt reduction, credit issues.....





## Implications of Existing Research

Reported but not substantiated or served:  
.....then what?

The role \$-related factors play in CPS policy and maltreatment definitions:

**CPS practice philosophy dictates “not for reasons of poverty alone”; less clear in practice**

**Need for explicit attention to the economic needs of families at-risk for maltreatment—rather than just their parenting-related needs—whether or not CPS has a role**

**Economic interventions clearly not “THE” answer, but if we can learn the extent of their role in prevention, very important knowledge for the field.**

