Effects of a New Follow-up Model for Social Workers

A Cluster-Randomised Study

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The problem

• Increased amounts of children in persistent poverty in Norway.

• Increase from 7% in 2006, to 10.3% in 2016.

• 5.5% are children with ethnic Norwegian parents, while 38% are children with immigrant parents.

• Of children with parents from Somalia, 80% live in persistent poverty.
The Norwegian Government have implemented targeted initiatives to reduce child poverty.

HOLF is a governmental model for the follow-up of families living in poverty.

After a development phase in 2014-2015, the project is evaluated 2016-2019 in a cluster-randomised design.
The aim

• To analyse the effects of a new follow-up model (HOLF) for social work professionals (family coordinators) in Norway.

• Effects are analysed on goal focused meetings, relational skills, comprehensive and empowering follow-up processes and the coordination of services.

• The effects of the HOLF model are compared to local family projects.
The governmental HOLF-model (experimental condition)

- Designated family coordinators (15 offices x 2)
- Manual-based
- Supervision structure
- Implementation fidelity support
- Tools and schemes for follow-up
- Project goals
- Employment, housing, economy, social inclusion of children
- Family requirements (21 families all the time)
Local family projects (control condition)

- Designated family coordinators (14 offices x 2)
- Project plans and goals
- Family requirements (21 families all the time)
- Employment, housing, economy, social inclusion of children
- ??
Program theory: HOLF

CLIENT NEEDS
Reduce risk of intergenerational transmission of poverty
Better coordination of existing services
Need for comprehensive perspectives in follow-up work

PROGRAM ELEMENTS
Family level:
Process manual
Dedicated family coordinator
Empowering and comprehensive follow-up processes
Goal-focused meetings with families
System level:
Implementation manual
Leader involvement
Coordination of services through inter-professional efforts

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES
Recruitment, training and supervision.
Family level:
Forms (charting form, family plan, PCE form) and close follow up Tools (IIMM, IAR, Menu Agenda, SMART goals)
System level:
Implementation at leader level (participation in meetings)
Establish action network
Forms (PCE)
Tools (IIMM, IAR)

DESIRED OUTCOMES
Short term (12 months):
Family coordinators work more:
- comprehensively
- goal-focused
- systematically
- empowering

Medium term (12-48 months):
Families gain:
Employment
Improved financial situation
Improved housing
Social inclusion of the children

Long term (4-18 years):
Decreased intergenerational poverty
Data

• Baseline (prior to randomisation) and follow-up (+ 18 months) questionnaires to family coordinators
• 58 family coordinators filled out the baseline questionnaire (100%)
• 18 months later 13 had ended their work, 12 new recruited
• 57 family coordinators filled out the follow-up questionnaire (100%)
• 45 family coordinators (78%) filled out both questionnaires
Measures

• Goal-focused meetings, 3 items (Cronbach Alpha 0.74)
• Relational skills, 8 items (Cronbach Alpha 0.88)
• Empowering follow-up practices, 9 items (Cronbach Alpha 0.83)
• Comprehensive follow-up processes, 11 items (Cronbach Alpha 0.93)
• Coordination of services, 5 items (Cronbach Alpha 0.69)

• All scales from 0=not at all to 4=always
### Baseline (n=58)

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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Control</th>
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<tr>
<td>Goal-focused meeting</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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<td>Relational skills</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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<td>Empowering follow-up processes</td>
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<td>Comprehensive follow-up processes</td>
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<td>Coordination of services</td>
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## Findings

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Conclusion

• HOLF-model compared to local family projects
• Main elements in experimental and control condition (family coordinators, low caseloads, close follow-up).
• Effects of HOLF on goal-focused meetings (sig.), relational skills (n.s.), empowering follow-up processes (n.s.).