Engaging Moms Program (EMP): Serving “the best interests of the child” by Improving Maternal Functioning

Gayle A Dakof & Elliete Duarte
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine
Engaging Moms Program

- **Goal**: Help Drug and Child Welfare Involved Mothers Succeed in Life: Recovery & Individual Functioning, Parenting, Family and Romantic Relationships

- **Not A Substance Abuse Treatment** ---But A Family-Based Intervention That Supports Treatment and Facilitates Recovery by Improving Family Relationships and Familial Role Functioning
Two Current Versions of EMP

Objectives:

- Enrolling and Retaining Mothers In Substance Abuse Treatment
- Helping Mothers Succeed in Dependency Drug Court
Core EMP Interventions

- Build & Strengthen Therapeutic Alliance: I Am On Your Side!
- Enhance Motivation to Change: Women & Children First
- Strengthen Emotional Attachment With Children
- Involve Family of Origin-Repair Relationships/Seek Support
- Improve Parenting Practices
- Examine & Improve Romantic Relationships
- Conduct Shuttle Diplomacy Between Mother & Service Providers/Courts/Child Welfare
- Deal With Relapses, Setback and Mistakes in a Therapeutic Manner (non punitive)
- Launch To Independent Life: Planning In Excruciating Detail/Prepare for Bumps in the Road
EMP: Substance Abuse Enrollment & Retention Version

(Dakof, Quille, Tejeda, Alberga, Bandstra & Szapocznik, Enrolling and Retaining Mothers of Substance-Exposed Infants in Drug Abuse Treatment. JCCP, 2003)

- NIDA-funded study
- 103 Black non-treatment seeking mothers of drug exposed infants
- Randomized to EMP or Community Service As Usual
- Therapeutic Goals: Enroll in Substance Abuse Treatment within 8 weeks, Retain in Treatment for at least 4 weeks
Enrollment In Substance Abuse Treatment

EMP Community Services

Enrolled
Not Enrolled

Enrolled
Not Enrolled

0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%

EMP
Community Services

Enrolled
Not Enrolled
4 Week Retention
90+ Day Retention

Enrolled
Not Enrolled

EMP
Community Services
EMP In Dependency Drug Court

- Develops Original EMP by:
  1. Expanding goal from enrollment & initial retention in treatment to longer term outcomes (recovery & reunification)
  2. Stay with Mothers In Increasingly Less Intensity Until Permanency (12 – 15 months)
  3. Goal Is To Help Mothers Succeed In Dependency Drug Court
EMP in Dependency Drug Court

Intervention Development Study (NIDA Funded)

- Randomized Design: EMP vs. Intensive Case Management
- Sample Size = 65
- Data Collection at Intake; 3, 6, 9, 12, 18 months
EMP in Dependency Drug Court

Broad Range of Outcomes:
- Reunification
- Parenting Skills
- Substance Use
- Child Maltreatment
- Vocational/Educational
- Psychological Functioning
- Child Functioning
Permanency-Reunification: Preliminary Results (n = 36)
Can The Engaging Moms Program Be Adapted for Mothers Involved In Criminal Justice System?

Potential Opportunities to Implement: Identify Mothers & Recruit Into EMP

- At Time of Arrest
- Prior To Release From Jail
- Upon Release From Prison
- Probation
- Parole
Can The Engaging Moms Program Be Adapted for Mothers Involved In Criminal Justice System?

What Is the Purpose:

1. Engage & Retain in Substance Abuse Treatment & Other Services

2. Help Succeed In Recovery & Improve Parenting Skills, Attachment To Children, Relationships with Parents & Partners/Fathers/Spouses