

Building Stronger Families with High Fidelity Wraparound:

Outcomes and impact with data supported quality improvement in Erie County



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Dive Deeper:

Watch our podcast on Data Coaching in Erie County High Fidelity Wraparound System

[Full Episode Audio >>](#)

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Background: High Fidelity Wraparound in Erie County

Originating from a SAMSHA grant, the High Fidelity Wraparound program in Erie County, NY has been around for 20 years now. It began as a voluntary service for youth with serious mental illness (and at risk of out of home placement), but because it had been so successful in Erie County it has evolved to serve child welfare families throughout the Department of Social Services Preventive Services program.

As a national evidence-based practice, High Fidelity Wraparound delivers effective and positive outcomes when delivered with fidelity to the model. As a result, for the past 5 years, Erie County staff has been making referrals to care coordination agencies that provide preventive services in the High Fidelity Wraparound model. Additionally, the County supports those agencies in service delivery and adherence to the model.

One of the reasons High Fidelity Wraparound has been so successful is that it encourages family engagement on the front end. Because it is family driven and youth guided, families have the primary decision making role in the care of their children. This creates a buy-in and partnership for the service plan that helps define outcomes and achieve them. Outside of traditional services, the local model also creates a network of flexible, per diem home based service providers that can serve specific areas within a specialized service plan when the need cannot be immediately addressed through traditional community based providers. For example, a family can access in-home therapy, or skill building or other services from the provider network that expands the family's choices beyond the traditional case management programs (often with long wait lists), which encourages the family to take a more immediate and active role in designing how they will meet their goals.

3 Outcomes of Focus in Erie County High Fidelity Wraparound

There are 3 main pillars to Erie County High Fidelity Wraparound outcomes; Permanency, Safety, and Well Being. Recognizing these three pillars of focus, Erie County has moved away from the idea of successful vs unsuccessful discharge tracking, and instead moved to a more dynamic form of data collection for case closures.

The case closure form being used today was developed with multiple stakeholders and emphasizes the three pillars. It asks questions around the family’s safety measures, how the family met their permanency goals, and how family well-being outcomes were positively impacted. The program also utilizes the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS), to measure and track improvements across multiple family domains.



Permanency

When determining whether or not permanency outcomes were achieved, the wraparound team assesses if the youth and children are in or remained in a permanent and safe home. In some cases, children may have gone to another placement that was necessary for mental health treatment or kinship resources, which has adjusted the family dynamics. While the program will seek to limit placements, sometimes those are the right things to happen for that family.

“Normally we used to look at it as if any child was removed from that home that it was automatically unsuccessful, but we’re being flexible in how we’re looking at it, because that might be the right thing for that family given the circumstances at this current time.”

Catie Gavin

Deputy Commissioner – Erie County Department of Social Services



Safety

When addressing safety concerns, Erie County monitors occurrences of critical incidents over the length of stay in the program. For example, the wraparound care coordinator develops a crisis plan with the family within 12 days of the case being open with the program. As a result, the family is able to access their crisis plan immediately and prevent a crisis (safety) critical incident from occurring (i.e. psychiatric inpatient).

Further, as other critical incidents decrease, the family is able to stabilize and maintain safety for their children in the community. There may be cases where permanency might not be achieved, but safety has, so the outcomes measurement is accounting for those positive safety outcomes.



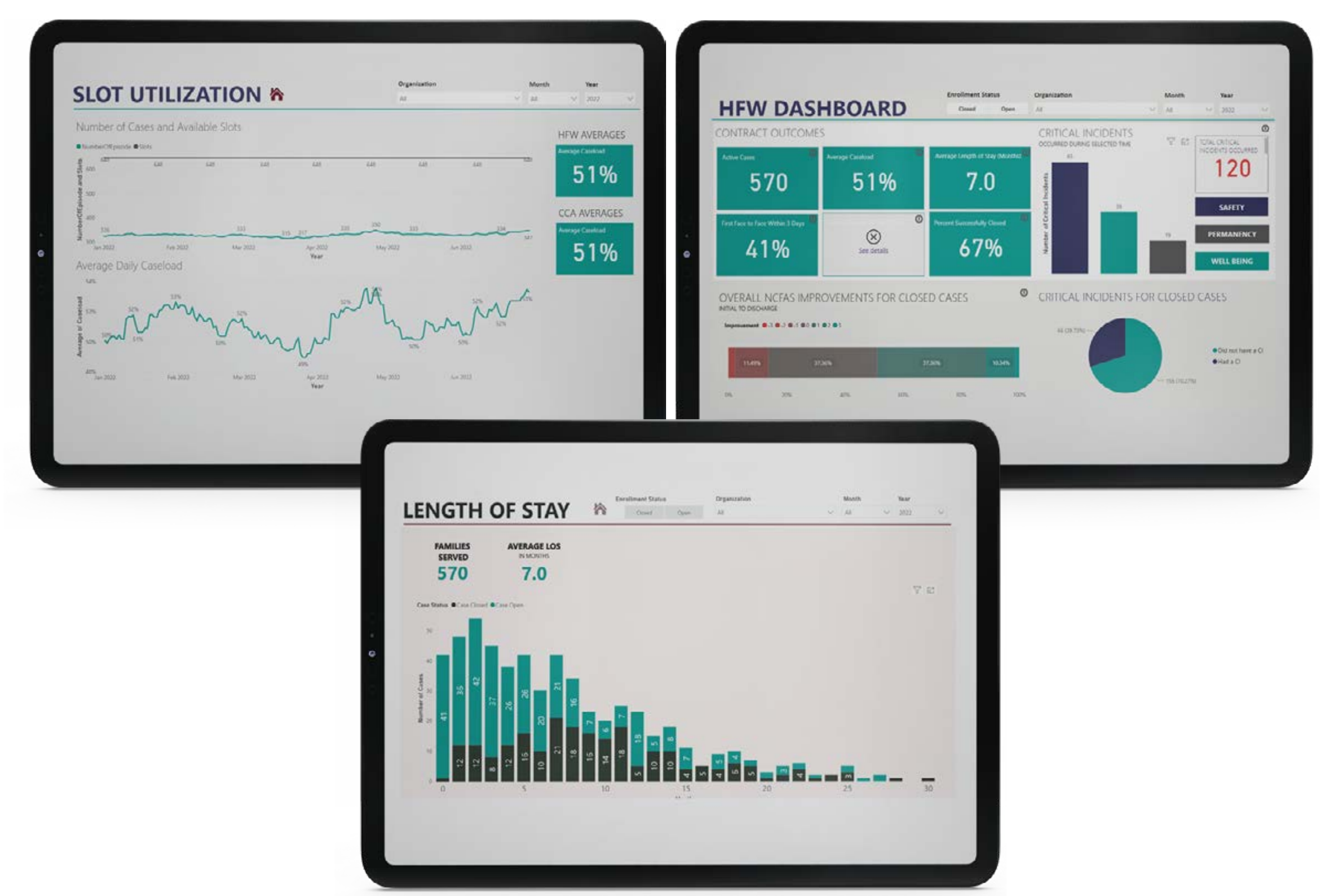
Well-Being

The well-being indicators are based on each family’s achievement against their own goals and objectives. When well-being outcomes are met, families can better provide for their children and children receive appropriate services to meet their educational, physical, and mental health needs. Given the unique nature of each family’s goals, there is also a unique nature of understanding their progress. Progress is also measured by the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS) that assesses for improved functioning over 8 domains. The County gives the provider agencies the ability to create conversations around case closures and conference around the outcomes.



System-Wide Quality Improvement

Analyzing data for Erie County High Fidelity Wraparound focuses on the three core outcomes of permanency, safety and well being. The analysis also takes into account program and performance management metrics such as length of stay, caseload capacity, critical incident, critical incidents by different groupings etc.

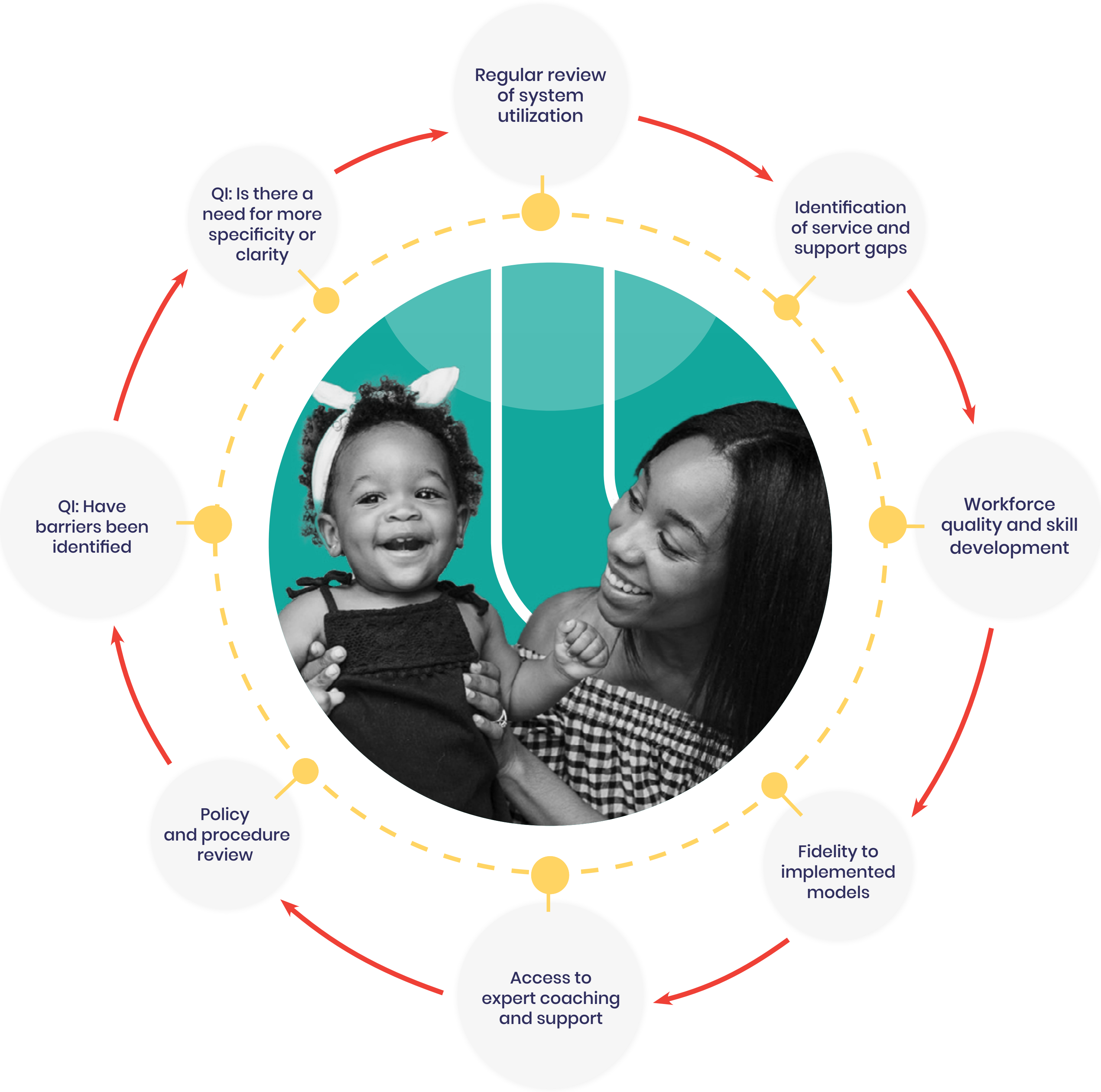


The Erie County HFW dashboard also looks at assessment measurements like the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS) to establish a baseline, and track measurements throughout an episode of care with a family along the way, and then quantify improvements at discharge.

Other operational measures include how quickly case managers are initiating the first family face to face, which is a proven indicator of getting a case started on the right track and quickly. The first meeting establishes goals and creates family engagement. Ensuring it happens quickly is critical.

Cycle of Quality Improvement Activity for High Fidelity Wraparound

By using the dashboard analytics process, CCNY and Erie County are able to identify two to three system wide improvement areas every year. The end game for significant system-wide improvements is to truly understand why something needs to be an area of focus and then work with the entire stakeholder community to create their buy-in around the particular effort, which includes identifying strategies that can be executed at various levels.



System-Wide QI

Example: Engagement

Between 2020 – 2021, COVID presented challenges for case managers creating meaningful engagement with families. As a result, the engagement efforts have not been as successful as Erie County would want them.

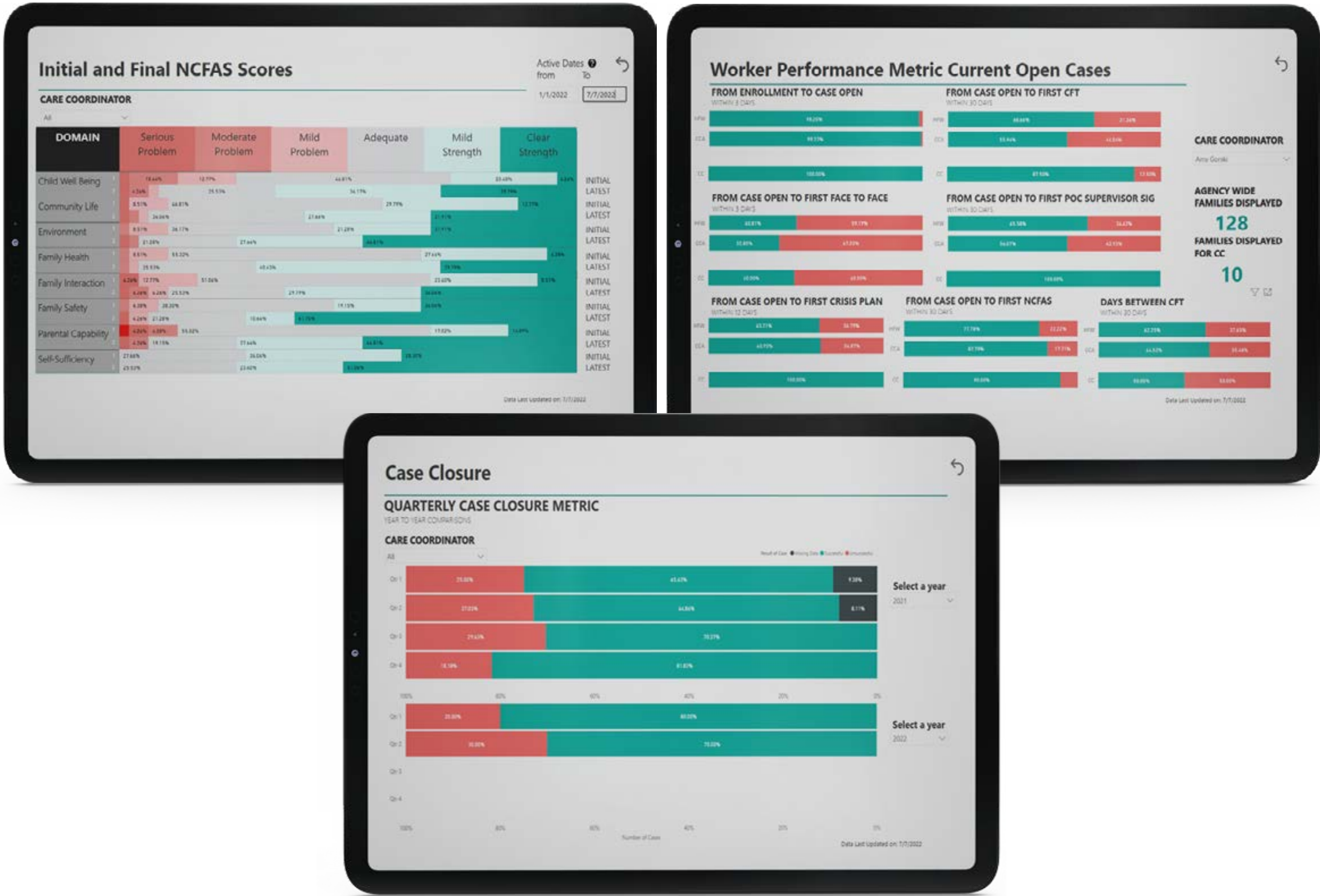
By working with HFW stakeholders across the County, the question was asked, what can we do differently? The answer was a multifaceted approach to implementing family orientation that included a quick access video to introduce the High Fidelity Wraparound Model, expectations, and testimonial from youth and family advocates as well as families that have gone through the program successfully. The goal is rather than just filling out a referral and handing it over to the care coordinator, this orientation gives families an opportunity to actually view someone, talking about their experience which is more engaging to a family rather than a paper referral.

The second approach focused on seeing families face-to-face within 3 days of their referral. Recognizing and understanding the importance of this engagement tactic – the program supervisors created an alternate process step to ensure early and active engagement. If care coordination staff couldn't make an initial visit to the home within 3 days, the Supervisor would conduct the initial visit, and subsequently facilitate a warm hand off to the case manager. Even if it's only a 10 or 15 minute visit, the face-to-face meeting encourages engagement from the start of the program. Data from 2022 shows improvement from 35% in Q1 2022 to 54% in Q4 2022.

Data-Driven Supervision

In addition to the system-wide quality improvement initiatives, the County and CCNY use other performance reports for Supervisors to coach individual case managers for specific improvement efforts. These reports were developed through the lens of a supervisor, and support the supervision framework and related conversations that happen regularly between supervisors and case managers.

The final result is data visuals that support trend spotting, with the ability to drill down into caseloads and individual cases for one on one coaching. The Supervisors work with the performance metrics and engage CCNY staff to help sort through the data with them. From there, CCNY provides coaching, helping to identify where there are areas for improvement and how staff can make adjustments to their own practices to achieve those fidelity metrics.



Data-Driven Supervision

Example: Child and Family Team Meetings

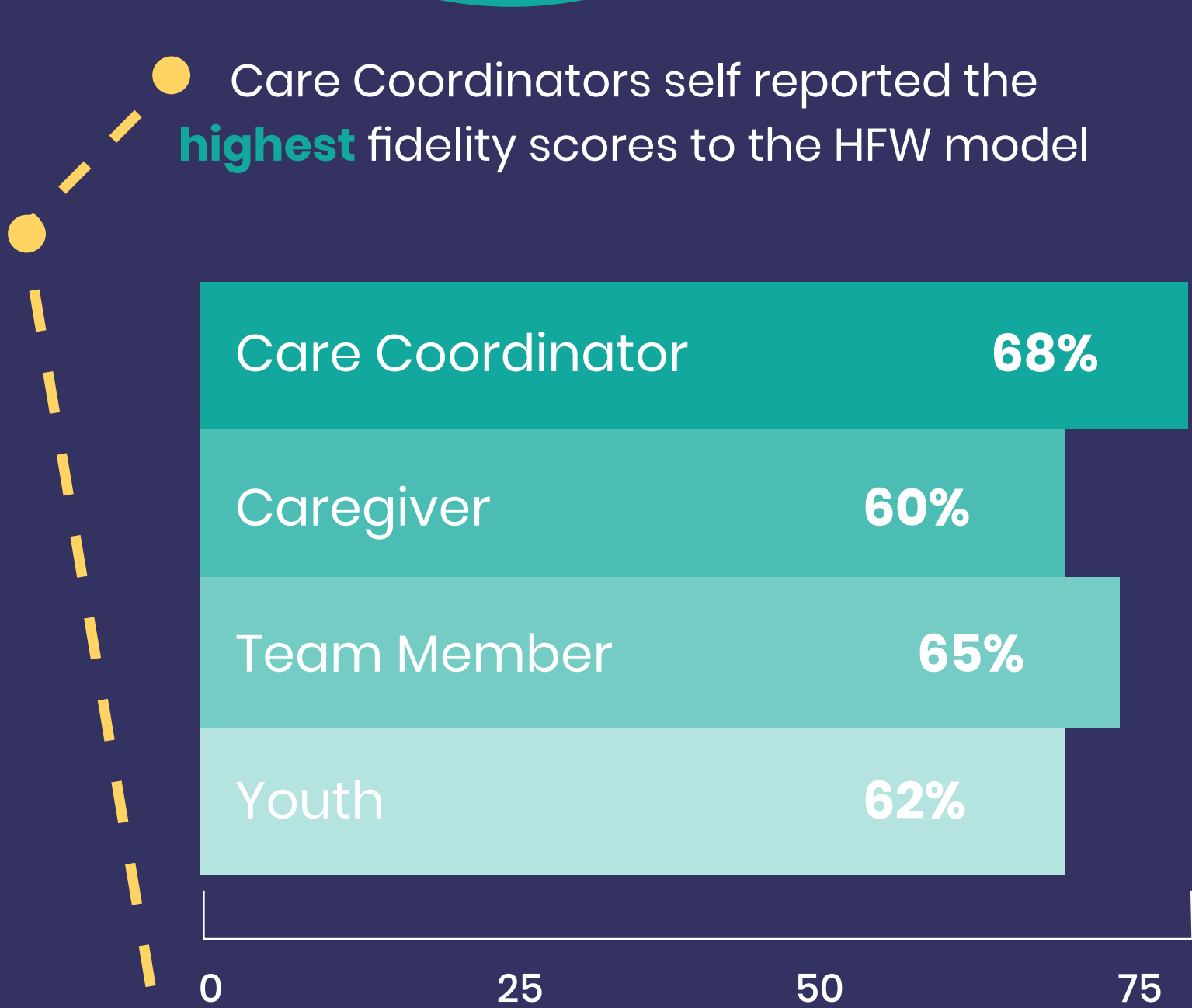
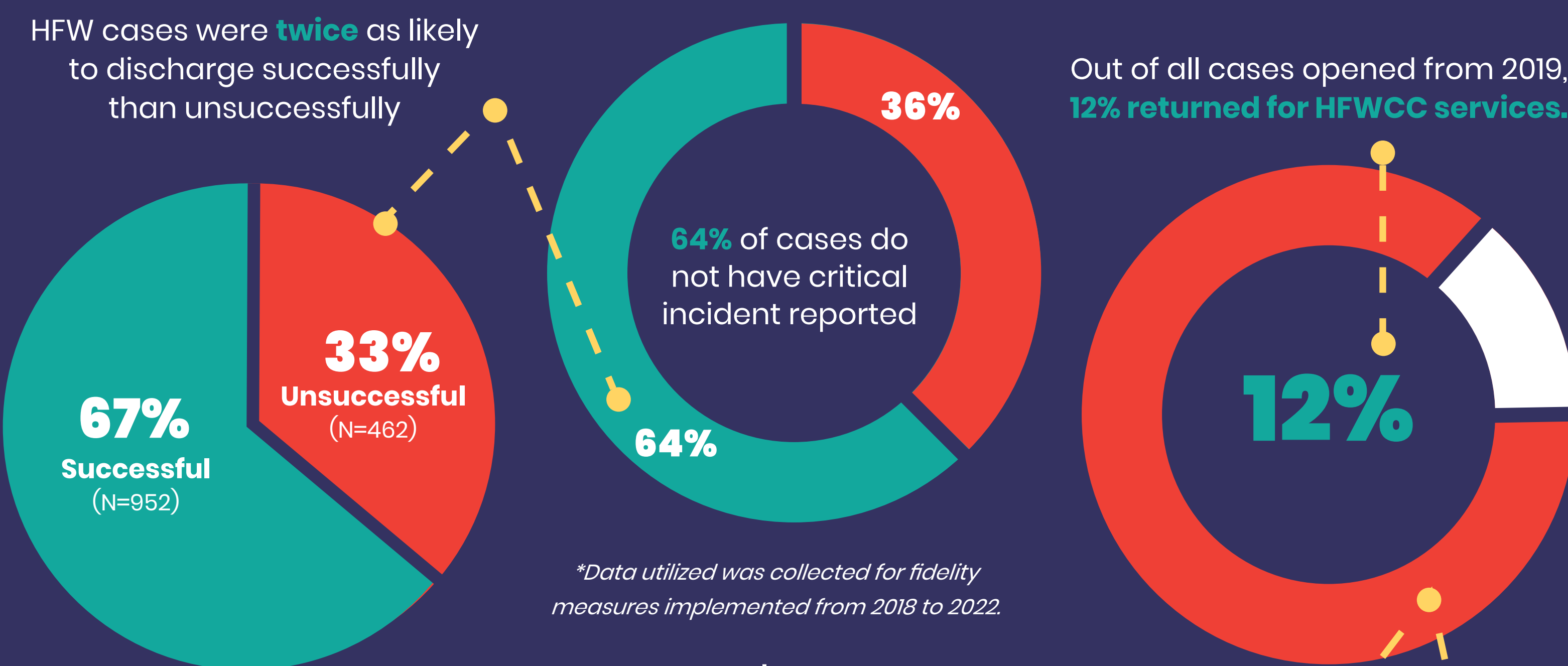
The HFW model requires facilitation of a child and family team meeting with the family every 30 days. The CFT is comprised of a team of people who are relevant to the life of the child or family (e.g. members of the family's social support network, service providers, and agency representatives) and who collaboratively develop an individualized plan of care, implement this plan, monitor the efficacy of the plan, and work towards success over time. This is a fidelity metric that is critical to the proper execution of the evidence based practice.

Looking at the CFT achievement rate – some programs were achieving 75% success rates – while others were lower at around 50%. This is a case where instead of a system-wide improvement, individual supervisors and case managers in specific programs can be coached up to the level of their peers.

In some cases it's as simple as data entry issues, where the wrong dates are being logged into the case record system. In other cases, caseloads might be too high, and so balancing the right number of cases across care coordinators can break down barriers to regular CFT meetings. Or, even with balanced caseloads there could be inequity in case intensity that creates an imbalance where more time spent on a few cases can detract from achieving fidelity on the other cases.

Implementation of High Fidelity Wraparound

Families enrolled in High Fidelity Wraparound (HFW) Care coordination have more positive outcomes when the evidence-based model is implemented with fidelity.*

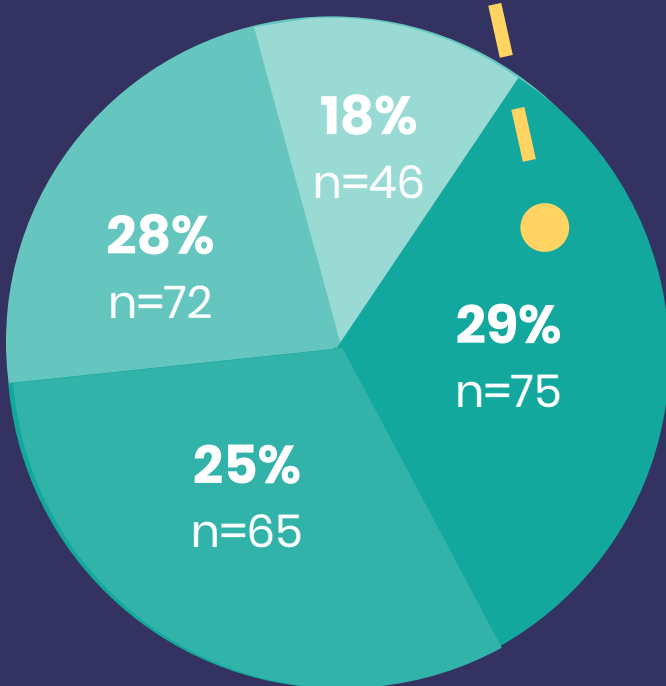


North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS)

Cases that have a **higher fidelity** score report improved outcomes in seven out of eight **NCFAS domains**, with Family Safety improving the most, and **Environment** having no change.

Cases that have a higher **fidelity score** are most likely to have a **successful discharge**.

Of these reopened cases:
29% successfully closed
18% were unsuccessful
25% have remained open



73% of youth and caregivers are **satisfied** with HFW services



“Youth now has an educational placement that meets his needs. Parent and identified youth were linked [with] and attend counseling regularly. [The] family spends more time with one another doing things they like to do.”

Caregiver, 2019
WFI-EZ

“Since wraparound, my son seems to have a more positive outlook, seems less anxious overall, and is communicating his needs better. Overall, the program did help us due to our coordinator and in-home therapist’s help.”

Team Member, 2019
WFI-EZ

Contributors



Christa Foschio-Bebak

Director of Quality Improvement, CCNY, Inc.

As Director of Quality Improvement, Christa leads, facilitates, and manages projects that improve quality outcomes and increase direct staff participation in data-driven decision-making, - helping minimize organizational performance gaps that could hinder funding initiatives. She is adept at working with senior administration in measuring the specific mission of our clients and using data management to implement QI programs that improve service delivery. Christa holds certifications from the University of Buffalo School of Social work and has studied with The Fiscal Policy Studies Institute.



Catie Gavin

Deputy Commissioner, Erie County Department of Social Services

Catie has been working professionally in the human services field for over 25 years. After receiving her Bachelors in Social Work from SUNY College at Buffalo, she began her Child Welfare journey. She has worked at the county, voluntary/contract agency, and state level in child welfare giving her a breadth of experience in the child welfare and human services field. She received her Master's in Social Work from SUNY Buffalo, and has continued her learning and leading journey in social work. Catie is currently the First Deputy Commissioner at Erie County Department of Social Services, overseeing the Family Wellness division. Family Wellness encompasses the entire continuum of child welfare and adult protective services.

Listen to the Podcast



Episode 2:

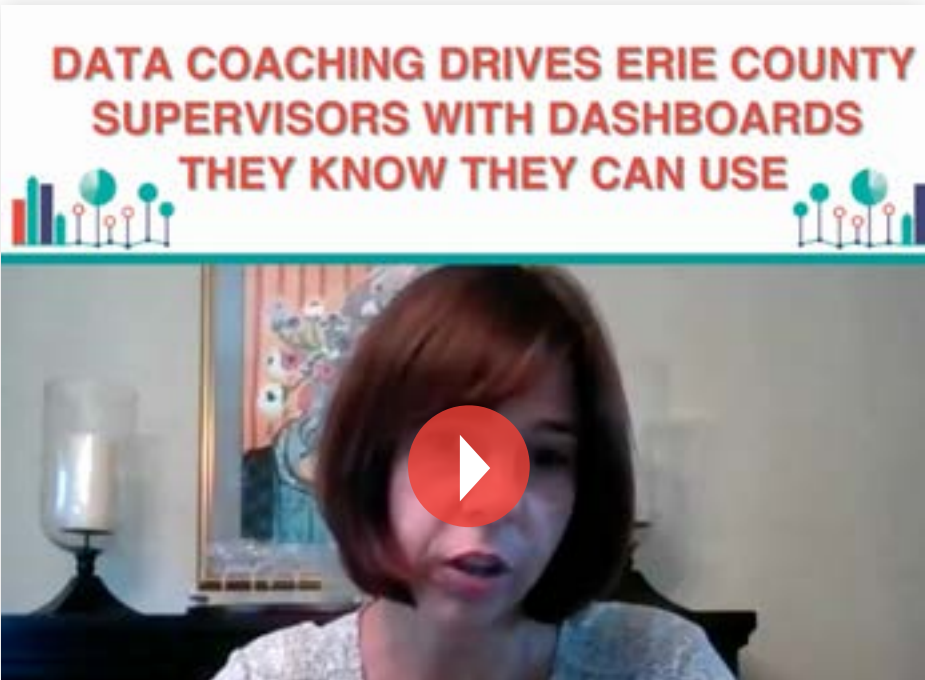
Data Coaching in Erie County High Fidelity Wraparound System

In a very impactful episode, guest Christa Foschio-Bebak (Director of Quality Improvement at CCNY) and Catie Gavin (First Deputy Commissioner of Erie County DSS) talk about how Erie County, NY is putting data into action in the High Fidelity Wraparound program.

[Full Episode Audio >>](#)

[Full Episode Video >>](#)

Episode 2 Shorts:



Data Coaching Drives Erie County Supervisors with Dashboard They Know They Can Use



Monitoring the 3 Main Tenets of Child Welfare



Using Date in Flexible Ways to Start Conversations About What is Best for Families



CCNY and Erie County Make Date Useful for the Field and Valuable to Families

