

UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre: Lunchtime Webinar Series (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/114428>)



UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre

In Association with the

Institute for Lifecourse and Society, University of Galway

Lunchtime Webinar Series

Title: Complexity Theory for better Child Protection & Welfare and Public Services

Complexity is a feature of modern public service provision. Rather than fear and seek to simplify it, we need to harness complexity. This webinar series explores complexity theory and related aspects for public service and child protection and welfare work. We aim to increase insights into how complexity theory frameworks and approaches can help practitioners, managers, leaders and academics to better understand and engage with complexity at practice, service and system levels.

Webinar 6: ‘Complexity Theory and the Importance of Networks’

Organizations tasked with responding to child protection and welfare concerns do not function in isolation, but are instead interconnected components in a broad system of complex and non-linear networks involved in care and protection, which include domains across domestic violence, physical and behavioral health, housing and homelessness, criminal and juvenile justice, mental health, education, and a myriad of community service and social supports that intersect with child protection and welfare involved families. Colvin and Millar (2020) consider that it is essential to consider the ways in which organizations interact, to what degree, and to what end. What dynamic processes and networked approaches are fundamental to meeting child, family and community needs? How is knowledge created, transferred, synthesised intra and inter-organisationally to inform shared decision-making; joint policy implementation; and service delivery integration? We will discuss how complexity theory and network analysis help us to better understand the intra and inter-organizational dynamics found in modern child protection and welfare service provision landscapes.

Date and Time: Wednesday, 9th April, 2024, 1:00-200pm (GMT)

Speaker:

Dr Marianna Colvin, Associate Professor in the Sandler School of Social Work at Florida Atlantic University.

Biography:

Marianna L. Colvin, PhD, MSW is the Associate Dean of Research & Academic Effectiveness in the College of Social Work & Criminal Justice and an Associate Professor in the Sandler School of Social Work at Florida Atlantic University. She is also the Director of the Child Welfare Institute at Florida Atlantic University, where she teaches courses on child welfare and social work supervision and coordinates the School of Social Work's Child Welfare Certificate Program. With 20 years of experience as a social work practitioner, educator, and researcher, her areas of expertise include child welfare practice and policy, interorganizational human service delivery systems, multi- and transdisciplinary and professional collaboration, and applications of systems and complexity theories. Areas of specialization include mixed-methods, network analysis, and participatory action research designs and she has an extensive record of implementing community-engaged research for local county, regional, statewide, and national initiatives.

Respondent:

Marie Crawley, Area Manager, Donegal, Tusla Child & Family Agency

Biography:

Marie Crawley is Donegal Area Manager with Tusla Child and Family Agency, the dedicated agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children in Ireland. She formerly worked as Senior Manager for Prevention, Partnership & Family Support in Tusla involved in the establishment of Child and Family Support Networks, inter-agency networks responsible for service delivery and planning for children, young people and families and the establishment of Meitheal, Tusla's inter-agency early intervention and prevention practice model. With 30 years experience as a community development practitioner, Marie formerly worked as a consultant specialising in the areas of strategic and operational planning, project evaluation, gender equality, cross-community dialogue and organisational effectiveness. She has served on numerous NGO / statutory partnerships throughout Ireland, mainly in the areas of rural development, gender equality and the implementation of peace and reconciliation programmes and currently chairs the Donegal Children and Young People's Services Committee. Marie is co-author of numerous publications on gender proofing and mainstreaming commissioned both by the Irish government and the NI Assembly. Marie has also authored many reports on minority experiences, gender equality and policy to practice handbooks.

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