

Frequently Asked Questions about Using Measures from the *Wraparound Fidelity Assessment System*

April 30, 2007

The Wraparound Fidelity Assessment System (WFAS) is a multi-method approach to assessing the quality of individualized care planning and management for children and youth with complex needs and their families. WFAS instruments include:

- **The Wraparound Fidelity Index, version 4 (WFI-4)**, which consists of interviews with wraparound facilitators, caregivers or parents, youth, and team members;
- **The Team Observation Measure (TOM)**, which consists of indicators of high-quality wraparound implementation to be rated during the course of a team meeting;
- **The Documentation of Wraparound Process**, which rates the presence or absence of 29 indicators of wraparound adherence from a youth and family's case file and other documentation; and
- **The Community Supports for Wraparound Inventory (CSWI)**, a 40-item measure completed by key informants to assess the level of system support for wraparound.

The measures that comprise the WFAS have been designed to include items that assess the degree of implementation of prescribed activities of the wraparound process, as specified by the National Wraparound Initiative. (See www.rtc.pdx.edu/nwi/PhaseActivWAProcess.pdf for a description). The WFAS tools are also organized to assess adherence to the 10 Principles of Wraparound (See <http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/nwi/TenPrincWAProcess.pdf>). The instruments that comprise the WFAS can be used individually or, to provide a more comprehensive assessment, in combination with one another.

In early 2006, the WFI-4 underwent preliminary pilot testing and was revised based on pilot data and user feedback. It was then made available for broader dissemination as part of a larger pilot. Currently, over 10 communities nationally are participating as WFI-4 collaborating communities. In late 2006, we began pilot testing of the TOM, DWP, and CSWI. We continue to seek communities who would like to participate in pilot testing of these new instruments.

Frequently Asked Questions

The Wraparound Evaluation and Research Team (WERT) has been responding to increasing requests for information about the measures comprising the WFAS. This FAQ sheet has been prepared to assist communities in their evaluation planning.

How did the WFI change when it was revised to version 4?

Previous versions of the WFI assessed adherence to 11 elements of wraparound as identified at the Duke conference in 1998. However, these versions of the WFI did not have a consistent practice model upon which to base its items. The work of the National Wraparound Initiative (www.rtc.pdx.edu/nwi) to specify the typical activities of a high-

quality wraparound team meant that a new version of the WFI could be created that included questions about whether these behaviors and activities actually occurred. We also hoped that a more stringent version would make the items more objective and thus increase the variation in scores, making it a more useful research tool. Finally, based on feedback on previous versions, we added a “Team Member” form to the WFI interviews, allowing a site to systematically interview a fourth member of a wraparound team, and get their perspective on the quality of implementation.

What are the psychometrics of the WFI-4? Is it reliable and valid?

Previous versions of the WFI, including the WFI-3, have demonstrated adequate test-retest reliability, internal consistency, and inter-rater reliability. Validity studies have found that fidelity correlates with the ratings of an external wraparound expert, while other studies have found significant associations with child and family outcomes as well as the level of community and system supports for wraparound. Initial pilot studies using the WFI-4 have primarily involved collecting data across communities to determine basic psychometrics and get feedback from users. Results of these efforts have found greater variance in scores than for previous versions, and greater internal consistency for total respondent scores. In addition, WFI total scores have been found to be significantly higher for collaborating sites implementing rigorous quality assurance activities (e.g., training, coaching, and directive supervision) than sites without these supports. This result provides initial evidence for construct validity of the WFI-4. Future studies of the WFI-4 will more systematically assess test-retest reliability and concurrent validity, and results will be communicated to collaborating users as these results are generated.

Our community has been using the WFI-3. Should we transition to the WFI-4?

Communities and programs using the WFI-3 should compare the two versions and come to a decision that meets their needs. Sites and communities who have been using the WFI-3 for some time and wish to continue to do so to provide continuity of quality assessment are encouraged to do so. However, those sites that are implementing a model that is in line with the NWI Phases and Activities may find the WFI-4 provides a more useful assessment of implementation adherence. We also expect that psychometrics of the WFI-4 will be improved, as a result of more objective items and more stringent criteria for adherence.

Now that there is a Team Member version of the WFI-4 forms, what type of team member should we interview for our participating families?

The Team Member form of the WFI-4 is provided for those communities who wish to systematically assess fidelity from a perspective other than the parent, facilitator, and youth. Ideally, the community will set criteria for who is interviewed using the Team Member form, to help facilitate interpretability. For example, some communities may incorporate parent partners on every team, and thus wish the form to be systematically used with each team’s parent partner. Other wraparound efforts may be intended to support positive child welfare outcomes, and thus, the social services case worker will be identified for interviews in each case. Finally, some communities may not have such consistent team membership, and choose to interview a natural support for the family. As for all forms of the WFI, use of the Team Member form is an option, not a “requirement.” Each community’s use of the Team Member form should be based on its own unique implementation effort and evaluation goals and resources.

Our evaluation effort does not have enough resources to interview all 3 respondents: Facilitator, Youth, and Caregiver/Parent. Which one should we interview?

In our opinion, the best and most comprehensive information from the WFI is derived when all three forms are employed. However, data suggests that reports from Caregivers and Youths show the greatest variability and are best associated with outcomes. Facilitators represent an important perspective, and implementing WFI interviews with these staff may help reinforce the wraparound practice model. However, data and experience suggests facilitators may very well provide less reliable and valid information. If forced to choose among the WFI interviews, parent/caregiver report may be most useful.

We do not call what we do wraparound, but it seems like the tools in the WFAS get at a lot of the values our program is based on. Can we use the WFAS instruments?

Communities that use the measures that comprise the WFAS should employ a practice model that resembles that described in the NWI Phases and Activities. Communities that deviate substantially from this model (e.g., there is no requirement of a formal engagement process, the formation of a child and family team, the use of a facilitator, etc.) will find administration of the tools and interpretation of data difficult.

What do we need to do to be a collaborating community and use the WFI-4?

Sites that are interested in using the WFI-4 can request to be a collaborating community. As of now, collaborating sites need to agree to adhere to data collection procedures found in the WFI-4 User's Manual, to provide data to WERT, and to provide WERT with a one-time user's fee to help offset costs associated with managing the WFI development process. Sometime in summer 2007, we will end the pilot testing phase of the WFI-4, and begin to provide the WFI-4 to all communities who are interested, with enhanced training materials (see below) for an annual User's Fee that has yet to be determined. Sites will no longer be required to agree to adhere to the User's Manual or contribute data to WERT.

What about the TOM, DWP, and CSWI?

Because initial piloting of the TOM, DWP, and CSWI is still underway, there are less formal requirements to be a collaborator and, for now, no fee for communities that wish to use these tools. For the near future, communities will be required to adhere to the TOM and DWP User's manuals and agree to provide (de-identified) data to WERT.

Because the measure can be completed via web survey, communities interested in assessing community supports for wraparound via the CSWI can work directly with our research team to identify key stakeholders to be assessed, and collect data via web-based survey. To review the procedure for implementing the CSWI in your community, contact our research team.

What kind of training do we need to provide to our WFI-4 interviewers? Historically, WERT has provided WFI-4 users with copies of the instruments, a data entry shell, syntax for calculating total scores, and a User's Manual that includes scoring rules as well as instructions for training interviewers. Recently, we have begun providing a PowerPoint presentation for the evaluation lead to use in training interviewers. However, data from our WFI-4 pilot has alerted us to concerns that interviewers are not implementing the WFI-4 interviews with full adherence to the User's Manual. In order to

ensure greater reliability and validity of WFI-4 data, we are in the process of preparing sample WFI-4 interviews with completed WFI-4s and explanations for scores assigned, for use in interviewer training. Sites that are interested in training interviewers to criteria and enhancing the reliability and validity of interview data should stand by for the availability of these training materials.

What about training for the TOM, DWP, and CSWI?

We have created materials similar to those that support WFI-4 training and administration for the TOM and DSW. As for the WFI-4, additional supports for administration are needed and will be developed and made available. No special training is needed for the CSWI (see above).

Does WERT provide training?

WERT does not have the capacity to provide training to all sites using the WFI-4 or other WFAS measures. However, if communities are interested in being supported to use the measures (e.g., via training on the measures, assistance in setting up the evaluation, and support in analyzing and interpreting data), we may be able to help arrange for such support to be provided by consultants who are involved with our research team.

OK, we're ready to use one or more of the measures. Who should we use to collect data?

Our expectation is that with adequate training and supports, many types of stakeholders should be able to administer WFI interviews, serve as TOM observers, or conduct document reviews. Communities have employed family members, evaluation staff, graduate students, undergraduates, and other types of data collectors. The key is that they are trained fully on both the wraparound process and the use of the tool(s), and that their work is overseen by an individual with evaluation expertise. In the future, supports that allow for practice administrations and assessment of data collector skills (e.g., sample WFI-4 interviews, videos of team meetings, and redacted case files) will be provided and required. Please be patient as we develop these tools.

We serve a lot of families using the wraparound process. Do we have to collect fidelity data on every family?

In general, each community needs to create an evaluation plan that is based on its own context and learning needs. Communities that serve a large number of youth and families need to determine how many interviewers/observers/reviewers it can train and oversee, and how much data collection it can support. It has been estimated that completion of each WFI-4 interview requires approximately 1-1.5 hours of work, when considering the processes of arranging interviews, completing it (including call-backs), entering data and so forth. Obviously, communities that choose to complete interviews in person will need to add time to this estimate. Team observations are even more resource intensive, given the need to coordinate around time and date of team meetings, travel time by observers, and the length of team meetings, which can often take 1.5 – 2 hours. Because of the effort involved in completing data collection for just one data point, sampling is a common approach to data collection using the WFAS tools.

How many families should we include in our sample?

Again, this decision will be based on the size and context of the local wraparound effort, as well as its learning needs and evaluation resources. More important than the number of families included in a sample are several other considerations:

1. The sample should be random or at least representative of the families served by the wraparound effort.
2. If the evaluation wants to generate information about different levels of wraparound implementation (e.g., multiple provider agencies, counties, supervisors), the sample must be “stratified,” or representative at each of these levels.
3. Once the sample is chosen, adequate effort must be expended toward obtaining a high completion rate. Preferably, at least 70% of all proposed data collection (e.g., the total number of WFI surveys to be completed or teams to be observed) will be completed. 80% or more would be ideal. Ultimately, the data collection completion rate is more important than the number of youth/families in the sample.
4. If fidelity data collection is going to proceed over time, then once a sampling method is determined, the same method should be used consistently across data collection waves.

As we collect evaluation data over time, should we collect data on the same families at each evaluation point?

Many sites propose to conduct fidelity data collection consistently over time, such as every 3 months, 6 months, or every year. If a site is sampling families from their overall roster, we recommend drawing a new sample at each evaluation timepoint, and conducting a “cross-sectional” evaluation, rather than interviewing the same families over time. This is partly because WFI-4 interviews ask a family about the wraparound process they have participated in from the beginning of the process to the current time; thus, interviewing the same family again 6 months later may not be the best use of evaluation resources.

Are there any requirements about how long a family should have been enrolled in the wraparound program before we interview them?

Given that WFI-4 interviews ask a family about the wraparound process they have participated in from the beginning of the process to the current time, we recommend that families not be included in the evaluation until they have participated in the process for at least 3 months.

Do we need Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to collect WFI-4 data or use other WFAS tools?

Local sites need to determine if their local evaluation requires review and approval by a human subjects protection entity. This is likely to be determined based on the proposed use of the data and who will collect the data. When data is likely to be used for research rather than quality assurance purposes, it is more likely that IRB approval will be necessary. In addition, data collection by a university partner will make it more likely there is an IRB that will need to review and sign off on the proposed evaluation plan. For communities that will be integrating the WFAS instruments into their everyday quality assurance, the need for IRB approval may be less likely. Regardless of your local requirements, WERT can provide a boilerplate “information statement” for families and participating providers, that can also be used as the basis for constructing consent forms.

We want to know whether our scores are good or not. Are there standards for the WFI-4 and the other WFAS tools to which we can compare our results?

Data from evaluation studies using the WFI-3 and from the national WFI-3 dataset have been used to set rough guidelines for poor, adequate, and high fidelity scores using the WFI-3. A description of this process is included in the WFI-3 and WFI-4 Manuals. However, these provisional standards will not be applicable to the WFI-4. In coming months and years, results from evaluation studies and the national dataset will be used to help communities interpret their scores. However, in the meantime, WFAS instrument scores can be used by collaborating sites to identify relative strengths and weaknesses in implementation quality, assess progress over time, and compare fidelity across different programs and implementation contexts.

How should we use the data in our quality assurance efforts?

As described above, scores from the WFI-4 and other WFAS measures can be used by collaborating sites to identify relative strengths and weaknesses in implementation quality, assess progress over time, and compare fidelity across different programs and implementation contexts. Over time, WERT will also publish and post data from the national collaborator community and from evaluation studies that will help interpret scores. In general, we have seen data from the WFI-4, TOM, and DWP used in several ways:

- Item scores for each tool that are relatively high and low are reviewed to identify areas of strength and needs for improvement.
- Total respondent scores can be compared across provider organizations, sub-programs, or jurisdictions.
- Data such as those described above are presented to a community team to brainstorm potential quality improvement efforts to be undertaken.
- Data are reviewed with providers, who use them to generate ideas about how the wraparound effort can be better supported by the host agency, collaborating agencies, and the system overall.
- Data are reviewed over time to assess success in quality improvement efforts and celebrate success.