

Keeping Mother and Baby Safe: Lessons from an in-home family services program

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The evaluation

Commenced late 2005

Data collection completed 2007

The evaluation questions were:

- Who were the clients?
- What intervention did SEFS provide?
- What was achieved?
- What else do we need to understand or do to achieve better outcomes for families?

Evaluation design

- Analysis of sample of 417 clients from Integrated Reports and Information System (IRIS) database
- Development and use of four family categories
- Analysis of referrals as a result of an information program
- Staff survey
- Eight case studies of successful practice
- Case studies of two of the most complex families

SEFS family categories

Category 1: Mild parenting difficulties, strength and competency.

Category 2: Families in crisis.

Category 3: Families with several problems. Cumulative effect on parenting over time

Category 4: Seriously complex, troubled and excluded families.

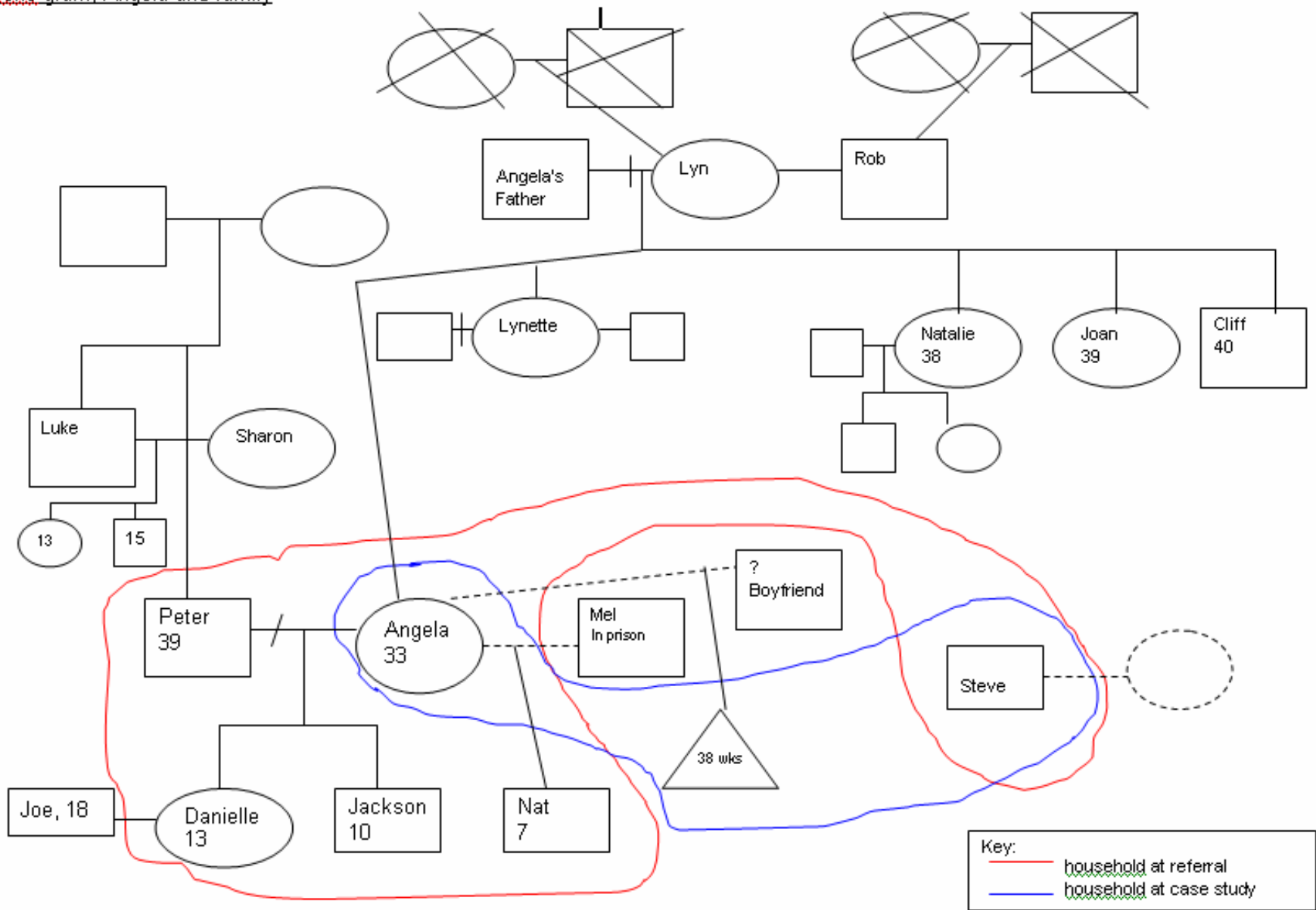
“Excluded families”- a term used by Tierney (1976) to describe a particular group of clients in child welfare.

See Tierney, Leonard, “Excluded families”, Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1976.

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Geno gram, Angela and family



The importance of the worker-client relationship

A successful worker-client relationship involves:

- high levels of professionalism
- tailored to the particular needs of each family,
- a personal and compassionate approach
- in the face of very difficult client behaviour and extremely difficult family situations

Essential program components for excluded families (1)

- Further development of close collaboration within the service system
- More intensive services for longer periods of time

Essential program components for excluded families (2)

- Specialist services for men in excluded families – family violence, substance abuse, specialist education and employment services
- Programs to reduce social isolation – Community development, social network building, specialist education and employment programs
- Specialist Education programs for children

Essential program components for excluded families (3)

- Strengthened casework – a personal informal, but highly skilled, focussed and professional relationship, therapeutic work
- Continuity of worker
- Specifically targetted child development programs

