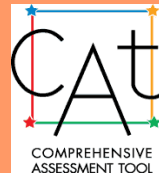




Comprehensive Assessment Tool



SPHERE Institute
September 2006

CAT: September 2006

Why do we need a new assessment tool?

What is the CAT?

How does the CAT support practice?

What's next?



A young child wearing a white hooded winter hat is looking upwards. The background shows bare trees against a blue sky. Overlaid on the right side of the image is the text: "Why do we need a new assessment tool?"

**Why do we
need a new
assessment
tool?**

We want to know what works.

In January 2005, Contra Costa, Glenn, San Mateo, and Stanislaus Counties received permission from CDSS to develop a new tool.

- ▶ Existing tools did not contain new content from the Recommended Statewide Assessment System.
- ▶ Other options did not meet counties' needs to:
 - Support existing practices
 - Promote evidence-based results.



Why a new tool?

We want to know what works.

We seek to improve:

- ▶ Effectiveness
 - Practice grounded in evidence
- ▶ Outcomes
 - AB636 measures, fairness and equity
- ▶ Accountability
 - Transparent, inclusive planning
 - Shared decision-making



A young boy with dark hair and eyes, wearing a light blue collared shirt over a white t-shirt, is looking directly at the camera. The background is a bright, outdoor setting, possibly a schoolyard, with a low wall and some people in the distance, all of which are blurred.

**What is
the CAT?**

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's face, showing their eyes and part of their nose and mouth. The person appears to be looking towards the camera. The image is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping the orange background.

What is the CAT?

The CAT is a risk management system.

- ▶ Five assessment tools
- ▶ Reports that explain what places children and families at risk
- ▶ Training and technical assistance
- ▶ Secure website

Five assessment tools.

- ▶ Response Determination Assessment
- ▶ Emergency Response Assessment
(Initial Safety and Referral Disposition)
- ▶ Placement Assessment
- ▶ Continuing Services Assessment
(Case Planning and Reunification
Readiness)
- ▶ Case Closure Assessment

Reports that explain what places children and families at risk.

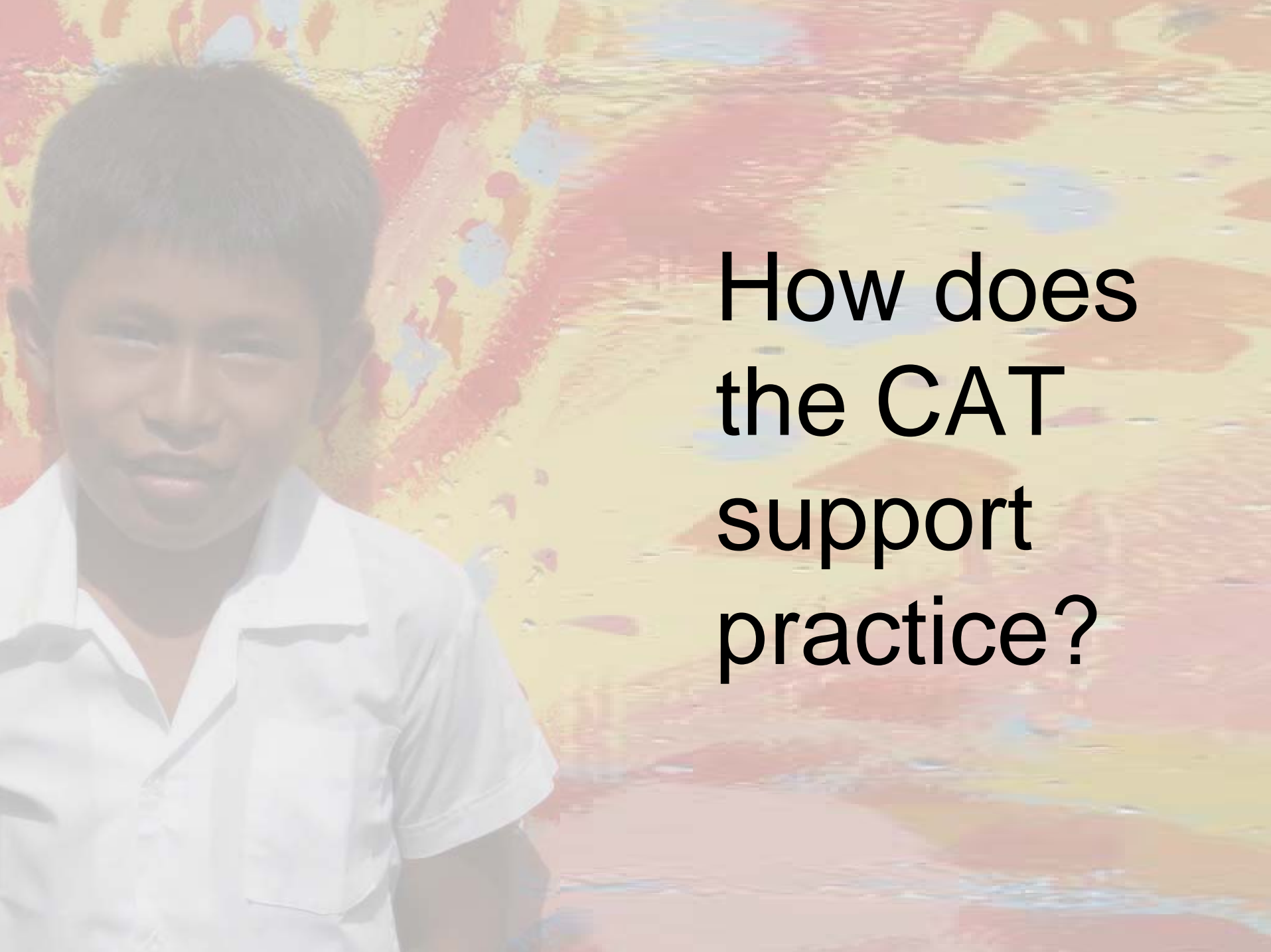
- ▶ SPHERE analyzes completed CAT tools to learn how child, adult and environmental factors affect social workers' decisions.
- ▶ This information can help social workers, supervisors and managers to make decisions that support positive outcomes for children and families.
- ▶ CAT data will contribute to the evidence-base that supports practice and program improvement in California.

Training and technical assistance.

- ▶ Beginning 12/06, Regional Training Academies will offer training in how to use the CAT.
- ▶ SPHERE provides ongoing support by:
 - Conducting on-site training and TA
 - Working with county staff to support implementation
 - Providing desk guides and other support material
 - Facilitating User Group and Policy Committee meetings to guide ongoing development

Secure website.

- ▶ The secure website allows counties to upload completed batches of CAT tools directly into SPHERE's database.
- ▶ Each county has its own webpage and access to the User Group website.
- ▶ County users can upload and download training materials, user guides, and meeting minutes.
- ▶ A designated county employee can assign user names and passwords to some, or all, county staff.



**How does
the CAT
support
practice?**

How does the CAT support practice?

The CAT promotes consistency.

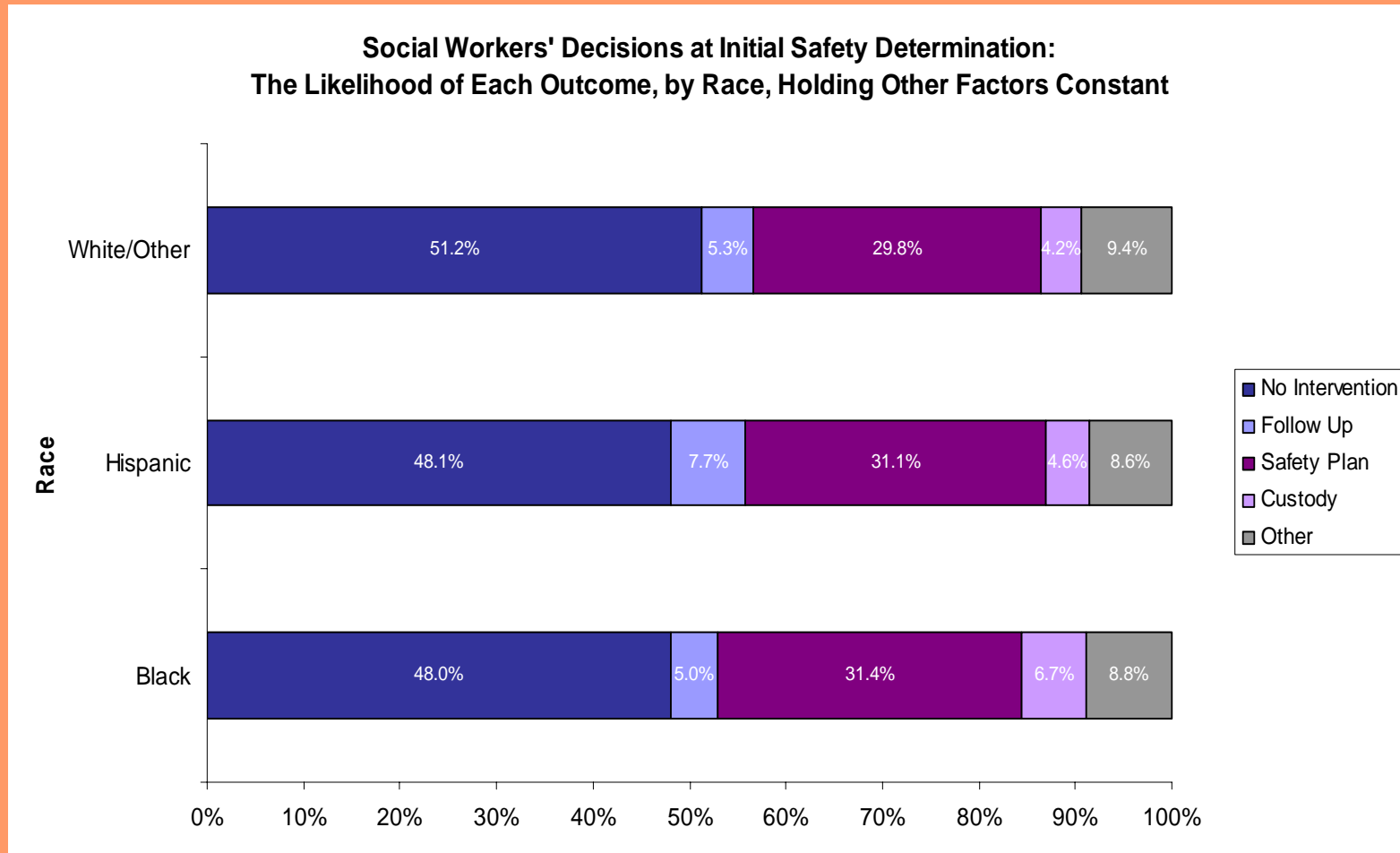
- ▶ Builds on successful county practice
- ▶ Standardizes information that social workers have as they make decisions
- ▶ Identifies variation in practice and outcomes
 - Within and across counties
 - Holding other risk factors constant



How does the CAT support practice?

The CAT can inform system improvements.

e.g. By comparing inconsistent results



**What's
next?**





What's next?

Considering implementing the CAT?

- ▶ Contact SPHERE for more information.
- ▶ Request a site visit and presentation to learn more and ask questions.
- ▶ SPHERE will discuss your county workflow and explore how the CAT can be integrated into your current practice.

Comprehensive Assessment Tool

Questions? Please contact:

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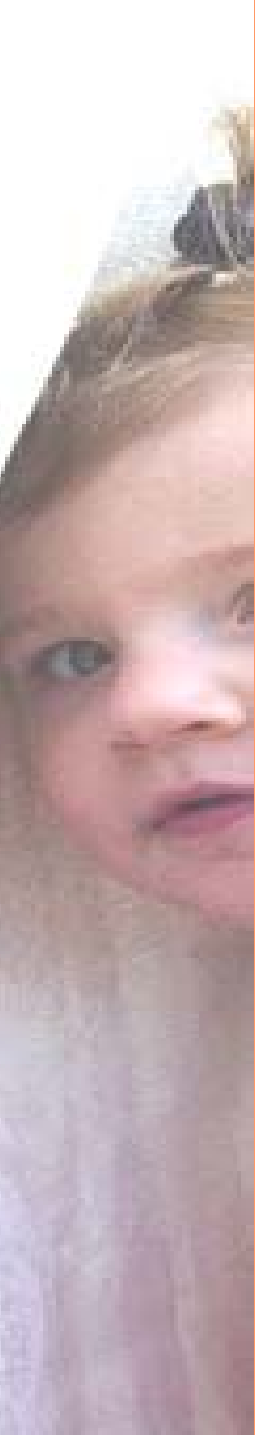
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Supporting Positive Outcomes for Children and Families

Supporting Child Welfare



SPHERE Institute
September 2006