My research program focuses on enhancing the adoption, implementation and sustained use of evidence-based practice in outpatient mental health settings serving children, adolescents and families. A significant barrier to effective mental health care for children, adolescents and families is the low rate of the adoption and implementation of evidence-based practices in outpatient mental health settings. Despite the growing body of literature on the effectiveness of evidence-based practices and specific interventions, these innovations are not being implemented. Regardless of the growing momentum to incorporate evidence-based practices in outpatient mental health settings the actual adoption and implementation of these practices is slow. Research focusing specifically on the factors that facilitate the adoption and implementation of evidence-based practices in mental health settings is greatly needed to inform policymakers, administrators, providers, and researchers in order to improve care for families in need of services. Furthermore, a better understanding of innovation adoption in mental health settings will not only lead to the increased adoption of innovation, but also to the greater development of implementation strategies tailored specifically for mental health organizations in the provision of best practices.

My scholarly research encompasses three main areas:

1. Exploring and analyzing the type, extent, and effect of specific factors impacting the adoption and implementation of evidence-based practices in mental health settings serving youths.

2. Understanding the underlying mechanisms of innovation adoption and implementation of evidence-based practice in mental health settings serving youths.

3. Building on this understanding to develop interventions that will be widely adopted and implemented in outpatient mental health services serving youths.
My current research

My dissertation study aims to (1) explore the relationship between organizational climate and adoption of evidence-based practices among outpatient mental health providers; (2) explore the relationship between provider beliefs and the adoption of evidence-based practices; (2b) examine the way in which organizational climate impacts the relationship provider’s beliefs and the adoption of evidence-based practices; and (3) explore the implication of organizational and provider-level factors on adoption of evidence-based practices to improve mental health services for youth. My dissertation study utilizes secondary data from a large-scale longitudinal randomized control trial of the multiple family group intervention for children with disruptive behavior problems and their families receiving services at outpatient mental health clinics. Structural equation modeling is being applied to analyze the data from the large-scale multi-phase NIMH-funded implementation study that is currently underway within a population of 134 New York State Offices of Mental Health-licensed clinics located within the New York City’s five boroughs. This study will contribute to the development of implementation strategies tailored specifically for mental health organizations to provide best practices for youth.

Moving forward

The next steps in my research program aims to incorporate the findings from my dissertation study into clinical practice. Based on the knowledge from my dissertation study, organizational guidelines will be developed and empirically studied that incorporate the multi-level factors that facilitate adoption, implement and sustainment of evidence-based practices in outpatient mental health clinics serving youths. These guidelines can then be distributed to outpatient mental health clinics resulting in improved services to clients.

Social work as a field has contributed to the literature focusing on the importance of evidence-based practices and in the development of evidence-based interventions, as well as the literature focusing on the ways to effectively implement this knowledge into clinical practice. As both a social work researcher and a clinical social work practitioner, I have the knowledge of research and practice. I am therefore in a unique position to make significant contributions to the understating and improvement of innovation implementation in mental health settings thus improving services for families receiving treatment in outpatient settings.