Take Away Message:

Deeper understanding (and improvement) of how family-level processes affect youth outcomes
Guiding principle:

To understand and improve the proximal social settings of youth ages 8 – 25 in the United States.
Proximal Settings

Proximal settings are the social environments in which youth experience daily life; they include:

- Families
- Peer Groups
- Classrooms and schools
- Youth-serving organizations
- Neighborhoods
Macro forces are policies, the economy, the environment, secular trends in demography, and the like, while micro factors are genetic and biological.
Social Processes

Macro Forces

Social Settings

Resources

Organization of Resources

Macro/ Micro Forces

Youth Outcomes

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A Heuristic Measurement Model of the Family Setting

Resources

Organiz./Resources

Social Processes

Norms

Interactions

Routines

Practices

Human

Economic

Physical

Social

One parent extended

Sleeping arrangements

Human

Economic

Physical

Social

One parent extended

Sleeping arrangements

Organiz./Resources

Social Processes

Norms

Interactions

Routines

Practices

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Types of Research Questions:

- How do settings work?
- How do settings affect youth development?
- How can the measurement of setting’s features and processes be improved?
- How can settings be improved?
- How is research evidence acquired, interpreted, and used in policy and practice settings to affect youth?
Types of Research and Exemplars

1. **Descriptive Research** *(Survey, ethnographic, observational)*
   - Unpacking parental structure and its impact on early adolescents (Grolnick & Espinade, Tufts)

2. **Intervention Research** *(Randomized trials, natural experiments, interrupted time series, regression discontinuity)*
   - Prevention of destructive family communication and conflict (Cummings, Notre Dame)

3. **Setting Measurement**
   - Generalizability of family daily diaries (Huseh, MDRC)

4. **Add-on Research**
   - Workplace family intervention (McHale et al., PSU)

5. **Analytic**
6. **Secondary Analysis**

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Evolving Social Setting Measurement Challenges

1. Which setting-level processes should be measured and when (temporally)? > must be theory-driven

2. By which method and with what level of inference can we effectively (including cost-effective considerations) measure setting-level processes?
   > Observations, daily diaries, time use logs, artifacts, etc?
   > Multi-method, multi-source, multi-construct?

3. Number of instances to be sampled, at what intervals, and by how many raters, etc.
   > Generalizability studies, e.g., daily diaries

4. How do we aggregate individual-level reports to tap setting-level phenomena?
   > Norms: consensus measures?

5. Linking setting-level change to individual-level change
From Submission to Funding: The Investigator-Initiated Grant Process

- **LOI**
  - Reviewed 3 times per year
  - Reject/More Details/Full Proposal Invited

- **Full Proposal**
  - 2 deadlines per year
  - Reviewed by two external experts
  - Rejected or PI response to external review invited
  - Reviewed by Senior Program Team
  - Board Review and Decision

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WTGF Scholars Program: Nature & Purpose

- For the development of promising scholars 0 to 7 years post-PhD or Medical Residency
- A developmental (“stretch”) award to new questions, literatures/disciplines, and/or methods

Capacity Building Components of Program

- Fall Workshops
- Summer Retreat
- Mentoring
- Networking
WTGF Scholars Program: Review Process & Deadlines

- Full Proposals due ~ July 1
  - Screened for consistency with criteria
  - Evaluated by Selection Committee
    - ~10 Finalists chosen
    - Expert external reviews solicited
- Interviewed in NYC by Selection Committee (Feb.)
  - Five Scholars recommended to B of T
- Five Year Award @ 70,000/yr($350,000)
- Supplemental Scholar Awards to Mentor Junior Researchers of Color

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Check out our website at:

www.wtgrantfdn.org

- It is chock full of information!

Submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI), electronically

- Instructions can also be found on our website

We look forward to hearing from you!
Evolving Research Design & Analysis Challenges

• Designing Research for Place-Randomized Trials to increase precision (Raudenbush, Bloom, and colleagues): *Old issues in search of new answers*
  - N of nested unit – asymptotes quickly
  - N of randomly assigned units
  - Baseline covariates, pretests at individual- and school-level
  - Intra-class correlation coefficients
  - Matching of covariates
  - Reliability of setting measures

• Products:
  - Optimal Design Software
  - Consultation Service