Effective Collaboration for Child Welfare Advocacy

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About This Webinar

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- All participants are muted throughout the presentation.

- If you have questions, please type them in the Questions box at the bottom of the GoToWebinar control panel and click Send. We'll take a few opportunities during the session to ask the questions aloud so everyone can hear the answers.

Workshop Overview

- ☑ Dispelling old approaches
- ☑ "Gradients of Agreement"
- ☑ "Appreciative Inquiry"
- ☑ Effective coalition building
- ☑ Identify potential challenges
- ☑ Setting ground rules
- ☑ Revisit advocacy opportunities
- ☑ Moving forward

How do you want to work?

or

"We always did it like that"
"It's how we began"
"We never tried that"
"What if it doesn't work?"
"Everyone might not like it"
"I want what I want – now"

Moving from *carrying the weight of the world* to *collaboration* requires thinking differently

Stop preaching to the choir

Limit circular conversations

Intentionally seek out new voices

Set an "active" agenda and stick to it

Embrace the opportunities that <u>controversy</u> can provide

Share leadership

It's okay to not please all, always

Your efforts will get watered down if you only do what everyone can agree on

Agree to take turns on agenda items that are important to some
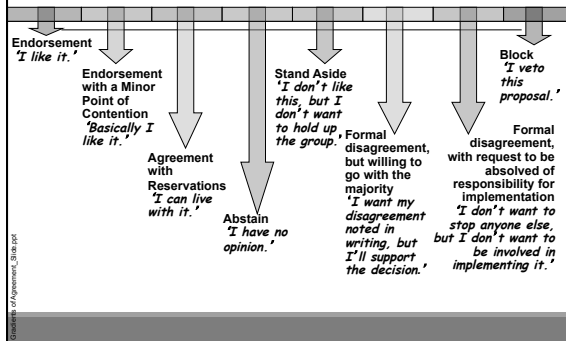
Use gradients of agreement

Move away from "one for all"

Try not to set rules or issue notices to all members that are based on only one or two individual difficulties
◦ Have private one-on-one conversations BUT only for the purpose of clarification and/or problem-solving
◦ Those who are *not* causing difficulty feel disrespected when lumped in

Be open to negotiating against "policy" if it is in the best interest of the group or event

Gradients of Agreement

Endorsement
'I like it.'

Endorsement with a Minor Point of Contention
'Basically I like it.'

Agreement with Reservations
'I can live with it.'

Abstain
'I have no opinion.'

Stand Aside
'I don't like this, but I don't want to hold up the group.'

Formal disagreement, but willing to go with the majority
'I want my disagreement noted in writing, but I'll support the decision.'

Block
'I veto this proposal.'

Formal disagreement, with request to be absolved of responsibility for implementation
'I don't want to stop anyone else, but I don't want to be involved in implementing it.'

Gradients of Agreement_Slide.ppt

Assessing Agreement

- Show of hands
- Pick one and say why
- Secret ballot
- "Post-it" ratings

Problem vs. Appreciation (appreciative inquiry)

What to fix	What to grow
Language identifies what's wrong	Language identifies what is working and what could be
Breaks things into pieces & specialties, guaranteeing fragmented responses	"Problem focus" implies an ideal. AI breaks open the box of what the ideal is first.
Slow! Takes a lot of positive emotion to make real change.	Expands vision of preferred future. Creates new energy fast.
Assumes organizations are constellations of problems to be overcome	Assumes organizations are sources of infinite capacity and imagination

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Examine the Positive

What is working?

What are the benefits?

Tell me about a time when you successfully worked together?

What do we agree on?

What are our individual/team strengths?

Appreciative Inquiry Commons: www.appreciativeinquiry.case.edu

Why It Works

Doesn't focus on changing people → Relief that the message isn't about what they've done wrong or have to stop doing.

Invites people to engage in building the kinds of organizations and communities that they want to live in.

Helps everyone see the need for change, explore new possibilities, and contribute to solutions.

Through alignment of formal and informal structures with purpose and principles, it translates shared vision into reality and belief into practice.

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Why It Works

Process responds to three truths about human nature:
○ Exceptionality: We're all exceptions. We respond best when this is noticed & conditions for exceptional performance are enhanced.
○ Essentiality: We each need to be seen as essential to the group. If we "lift up" meaningful contributions, it creates a compelling guiding image for others
○ Equality: Creates a way for the organization to be in "full voice" about the true, good, better, possible.

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Sustaining Change

• Nurture the new relationship
• Reward improved performance
• Develop & renew resources on a regular basis
• Be proactive

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Effective Coalitions

Win-Win scenarios

Turn negatives to positives

Find the common ground

Remember radio station WII -FM

Compromise without selling out

Keys to Success!

✓ Buy- in from all parties to a common agenda
✓ Nurturing relationship and developing trust
✓ Understanding each other, imagine walking in each other's shoes.
✓ Believing everyone has something to learn
✓ Believing everyone has something valuable to contribute

Teaming for Advocacy Wins

▪ Identify common ground, issues of mutual interest
▪ This is not one org/group doing for another, it is everyone working together equitably
▪ There may be some areas of disagreement
• Dig deeper for underlying issue
• Step back and look for common interest
• Choose another priority
▪ Develop a strong foundation for partnership
▪ The work can be powerful and exciting – it is also *hard*

Challenges to Anticipate

- Groupthink: go along to get along
  ○ False consensus
  ○ Concede to "boss"
- Devaluing ideas from within
  ○ No experts in their own land
  ○ Condescending language
  ○ Making assumptions without inquiry
  ○ Holding onto stereotypes

- Trying to "boil the ocean"
- Professional jealousy
  ○ Derailing, minimizing contributions
  ○ Sharing personal experience/ beliefs without hearing others'
- Emotionalism
  ○ Hearing statements as attacks, even when they are not meant so

Strategies

- Facilitator skills
  - Mix groups
  - Post-it brainstorming
  - Contain "talkers" and…
  - Engage quiet ones

- Appreciative inquiry
  - Skills assessment
  - Shared or rotated leadership
  - "How?" rather than "We can't"

- Create equilibrium
  - Memorandums of Understanding
  - Statement of values/goals
  - Reciprocal collaborative agreements
  - Develop calendar of priorities and opportunities
  - Manage differing opinions
  - Encourage emerging leaders

Setting the Ground Rules Model Language

These kids/those caregivers

Us and them ~ They

Parking lot grumbles

Respectful language

Keep the person before the issue
  ○ NOT "my bipolar son" or "that rigid mother"
  ○ BUT "my son, John, is challenged with some mental health issues" or "a mom in my group is really struggling with how to keep her daughter safe"

Examples of Negative Stereotypes and Assumptions

Foster parents have all resources they need while kinship families receive little to none.

Kinship families want all the support without going through accountability and red tape that unrelated foster and adoptive parents do.

Blood is thicker than water.

Youth have to go along with adult priorities.

They're in it for the money.

Relatives can swoop in at any time and grab the kids, even though they weren't there when needed.

Once the adoption is final, the parents should take care of their kids.

Strategic planning

Short term and long term goals

Activities must support mission and priorities

Seek community partners for leadership in "sidebar" interests

Look for partnerships where others can take the lead

Advocates for Families First

1. State implementation items
2. What can advocates do to inform local implementation?
3. What resources can Advocates for Families First offer?

Provision Included	State Responsibility	Local Advocacy
Supporting Normalcy	States implement "prudent parent standard" States revise licensing standards May require legislation	Inform the definition Provide testimony Serve on task force
APPLA Improvements	Demonstrate increased permanency efforts Should result in increased permanency outcomes for older youth	Serve in foster care review meetings and permanency roundtables Support youth network and advocacy teams Educate and support youth regarding permanency options
Youth Empowerment	Include youth age 14+ in case planning Report to fed in 2 years	Ensure youth have skills and ability to participate fully Anticipate results from 2 year report and develop advocacy plan
Documentation	Provide legal (official) copy One year to implement	Share California legislative language Push for additional documentation on time in care Monitor implementation
Improve Incentive Program	Effective as of October 2013 Based on RATES Incentives for Guardianship	Monitor RATES of guardianship/adoption and reinvestment of incentives (NACAC reports) Push for KinGAP in your state Anticipate advocacy approaching 2016

Provision Included	State Responsibility	Local Advocacy
Title IV-E De-link	Report annually on savings and reinvestment Must not supplant 30% to support permanency outcomes 20% post-adoption, post-guardianship support	Monitor reporting and hold states accountable Serve on advisory panels Develop reinvestment plans and share early
Successor Guardians	Must transfer assistant payments to named successor	Educate caregivers about the importance of naming a successor Familiarize self with ACYF-CB-PI-14-06 Push for GAP in non-participating states
Data Collection	Report on re-entry after adoption/ guardianship	Monitor reporting and analyze results Inform systems regarding training, support, and service models that support stability
Siblings	Notify parents of siblings One year to implement	Familiarize self with ACYF-CB-PI-14-06 instructions Monitor states' progress Inform legislation, if required
Family Connections Grants	Awarded final year of funding	Watch for evaluation reports and use information in 1) developing advocacy plan to request future funding, and 2) replication of successful models

Resources Available

Assistance with data collection

Assistance with understanding funding streams and promoting spending plans

Assistance in developing:
◦ Legislative language
◦ Program proposals
◦ Action plans

Questions?

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