

Strengthening Families Leadership Team Minutes 5/22/2013

In Attendance: Bill Buchanan, Michael Cheek, Tal Curry, Courtney Daniel, Sandy Fawbush, Amanda Flanary, Cindy Heine, Marybeth Jackson, Beth Jordan, Janna Estep Jordan, Diana Koonce, Tom Lottman, Karen Napier, Amanda Riley, Vestena Robbins, Joe Roberts, Ruth Ann Shepherd, Terry Tolan, Paula Woodworth and Mary York

The Strengthening Families Leadership Team met on May 22 at the Franklin County Health Department Annex. Ruth Ann Shepherd and Terry Tolan welcomed the group.

Dr. Shepherd introduced our guest presenter, Nilofer Ahsan, who is a Senior Associate with the Center for the Study of Social Policy and Strengthening Families lead. Nilofer works with states and national partner organizations to improve outcomes for parents and children by through the Protective Factors Framework. She presented an overview and the history of Strengthening Families and the Protective Factors.

Introduction to Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families is an integral part of the work of the Center for the Study of Social Policy. CSSP uses a unified theory of change that applies to all its work. Thriving children and families is our mission. We believe that this is achieved by building protective factors, reducing risk and creating opportunities for families. Our particular everyday role is building capacity to do these things through community change, systems change and policy change. Four lenses frame all of our work: results based analysis, ecological perspective, race equity and social justice, and always, co-invested constituents.

The Doris Duke child abuse prevention idea that became Strengthening Families is one illustration of how CSSP strives to incorporate the whole theory of change as individual ideas and project develop over time. An idea like Strengthening Families may start in one place but over time will integrate other aspects of the Center's work as well.

Nilofer continued her training on the Protective Factors which are the heart of the model, grounded in research and provide a common core of practice that can be adapted to multiple settings. She provided the official CSSP logic model and the definition for each PF:

- **Resilience**—ability to respond effectively to stress. Characterized by: Optimism, problem solving skills, help seeking behavior, proactive responses; sense of one's own worth
- **Social connections**—not just the size of a network, but that it has positive norms embedded within it, and that supports flows through the network (emotional and tangible)

Strengthening Families Leadership Team Minutes 5/22/2013

- **Knowledge of parenting and child development**—Provided in a “just in time” format so that information is available to a family when they need it—or when an issue is presenting and is tailored to the family’s specific situation.
- **Concrete Support in Times of Need**—Importance of trusted gateways—which help families make the connection to the supports they need—this is particularly true of more stigmatizing services
- **Children’s Social and Emotional Development**—Investment in the child’s social emotional development as an equally important part of developing the parent child bond

Currently, there are 33 active states in the SF National Network, eight launching states (VT, AZ, MT, NE, VA, Guam, and Virgin Islands), and six states with active SF agenda but not in the network (OR, NV, NM, IA, NY, and KY). In addition, CSSP has a strong partnership with a number of federal agencies and are in conversation with a number of federal partners about the relevancy of the Strengthening Families work (Administration on Children, Youth and Families—particularly Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, Maternal and Child Health—especially through Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems, but also in conversations about relevance to the work of federally qualified health centers, Child Care Bureau, Office of Head Start, SAMHSA—related to project LAUNCH sites which are taking a protective factors approach).

Role of the Leadership Team

The next part of the meeting covered the Role of the Leadership Team (LT). Nilofer discussed how you could align existing programs with SF and how to have a cross-system, multi-sector leadership by including many of these areas on the LT. She discussed how the median leadership team size is about 24 individuals who represent 16 organizations. The largest is over 70 individuals and the smallest is 3. Most states also have a SF coordinator. The top 5 Sectors represented on Leadership Team: Early Care and Education (21 states); Children’s Trust Fund (21 states); Home Visiting (19); Public Health (16); Maternal and Child Health (16). She also discussed the importance of having parent representation in leadership. The total number of parents represented at leadership level aggregated across all 20 states is 78, and the median per state is 4.

We discussed the role of the LT and how they set and hold the vision of the SF initiative, sustain collaborative support, support ongoing learning and implementation, communicate about SF and provide accountability. The LT members will be responsible for advocating SF within their own systems by: Identify synergies between the SF vision and the needs and priorities within their own system; Sustain support for SF within their own system; Support learning and implementation within their own systems; Communicate about the initiative and about

Strengthening Families Leadership Team Minutes 5/22/2013

changes, trends and opportunities within their system; Monitor implementation within their own systems.

Parents may be the single most influential partner when it comes to the many different avenues families use to connect with one another, share information and referrals, and provide the kind of peer to peer assistance that nothing else can provide. They can also be powerful partners in encouraging systems and policies to respond to their needs. A typical example of parent involvement is the parent who gets activated as a leader in her family by being involved in a SF program who then gravitates into program or community leadership roles and ends up participating at policy tables. Their leadership at any one of these stages can influence changes in other domains.

Nilofer discussed the importance of keeping in mind when facilitating parent leadership that this participation flow isn't always going to be continuous for a single individual; parents often 'stage' their engagement based on family responsibilities. Regardless, the dynamic nature of the system is sustained. SF initiatives look to advance this sort of developmental process by building structures and supports that help 'turn these gears. In regards to all of these examples, remember that the core assumption is that everything that is done is filtered through a cultural lens. In other words, when we say 'providing information & education tied to the Protective Factors,' what we really mean is 'providing information & education' that is culturally responsive and appropriate to those who will receive it.

A culture of engagement is what all organizations or systems who want to partner with parents should be in the business of creating. You can recognize a culture of engagement this way: they are constantly build on what is working, deepening practice, taking risks and learning from them, and asking for help and making best use of it when it's offered. This can even be something as straightforward as knowing you need to translate materials. "Rethinking what services and programs do" is really just one part of what it takes to build a culture of engagement. A cautionary note for organizations & systems about "buddy systems & mentoring" and "leadership ladders & career pathways" related to building a culture of engagement. When that culture is not strong, it's easy to default to stereotypes of what makes for a 'good' parent leader – someone who fits a certain mold. Parent partnership thinking requires us all to stretch on this – to open doors to leadership for those who aren't typically at the front of the line. Here are some state statistics from Parent Involvement:

- 2011 data from state profiles:
 - Member of state leadership team: 12
 - Member of advisory or working committees: 13
 - Host for Community Cafés or Parent Cafés: 13

Strengthening Families Leadership Team Minutes 5/22/2013

- Member of a Parent Advisory Council: 9
- Trainer, co-trainer or presenter: 8
- Paid staff: 4
- Number of parents involved in leadership at state level (20 states reporting)
 - Total number of parents: 78
 - Median per state: 4
 - Highest: Kansas, Minnesota, & Tennessee (10 each)
 - Lowest: NC, MO, MA, CT, AR (all 0)
 - Parents on leadership team representing parent networks/organizations: 12

Nilofer discussed some CSSP tools that are available for states to use when implementing SF:

- Parent Cafés
- Self-assessment
- Online Suite of Tools
 - Registration
 - Self Assessment
 - Action Planning
 - Parent/Staff Surveys
 - Reports
- Online SF training at www.ctfalliance.org/onlinetraining
- Protective Factors Survey

Strategic Next Steps for Kentucky

Nilofer led us through discussion about:

- Implications for Kentucky,
- What aligns with existing work
- Strategic next steps

The following suggestions were discussed by members of the LT:

- Prevent Child Abuse – Parent education, public awareness campaign, business partners, Kids Are Worth It! Conference
- Child Care – Don't hold something that is going to add a burden. How to engage the school system? QRIS has abilities to embed these pieces. Highlight what we are doing and have programs be able to recognize that they are doing protective factors. Recognizing abuse and know where to refer. Getting supports to families.
- MCH Systems – training. It is a big shift from risks to protective factors. Change mindset to focus on protective factors. Not implementing a new program. Implement a common language from common messages into our work.

Strengthening Families Leadership Team Minutes 5/22/2013

- Early Childhood – Shift to look at whole family not just the child services
- Prichard Committee – Strong Start Kentucky, HANDS, Preschool, Born Learning Academies. Parent Cafés seem like good ideas. Parent leadership training. Empower parents for elementary and middle school. California doing something with leadership training which has same principles.
- Metro United Way – Neighborhood/Community outreach. Collaborate all the time. How do we collectively make a change in our agencies so we are all looking at developing strong, stable families? How do we coordinate all of these things and pull them together? Magnolia Place in CA is coalition of 80 local providers all agree to operate under the protective factors, they have data dashboard and use Collective Impact (***met her at MIECHV grantee meeting and she said that she would come to a meeting to conduct training***).
- KDE – common framework, vision. KDE is important partner. Do have programs around parents and families. KISSED model is social/emotional learning. Early Learning Leadership Network can deepen capacity for implementing standards. Core KY academic standards are approaches to learning. The well-being of families and parent emphasized in all standards. Parent guides – early childhood standards- highlights approaches to learning.
- Child Welfare – leadership role in developing things that will outlast us. Saw that thru KIDS NOW and how groups across domains worked together to get things in legislation. Important to consider. Home Builders Models – looking at different models and terminology. Important for frontline workers. Build on families’ strengths – not as strong as it needs to be in our programs. Gives us a chance to influence legislation like in-home services/home visiting program. Time is excellent.
- Children Inc. – excitement around common lens/language at state and local level. How do we bring to local communities? Now and Forever video with use in Parent Cafés modeled after SF.
- Head Start – Parent trainings. Head Start grantees struggle on good parenting model – What models work? QRIS put it into system (voluntary vs mandatory)
- Councils – fit along with what they are doing. Do a lot of parent engagement at local level. Ask councils to be more intentional on common language and tools. There is synergy with councils.
- Overall
- Develop plan for Kentucky and then align other state model