

Visioning For Prevention: Leading the Charge for Transformation Advice Reel Podcast

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NARRATOR: In North Carolina, public-private investments are being made with families and communities to build out a full continuum of child maltreatment prevention services—primary, secondary, and tertiary. This includes implementing the Positive Parenting Program or Triple P, a parenting and family support system designed to prevent – as well as treat – behavioral and emotional problems in children and teenagers. Standing up a collective impact project like Triple P requires a well-functioning collaborative partnership. Listen to some advice from a few of these partners about what makes their collaboration work.

DEBORAH DAY: I'm Deborah Day, the community prevention programs administrator for the North Carolina division of social services.

Honestly, child welfare can't do this work by themselves. This requires a community. And so, it's one of those situations where we don't just want to prevent bad things from happening to children. We want to ensure that the families have what they need to create really nurturing environments, where children can grow to their full potential. That that is our overall goal, and that goal overlaps with a lot of other agencies and all our communities and including the prevention ones. This is just a joint effort, and it has to be viewed that way.

You are definitely trying to figure out what overlaps, right? Cause you want to know where you have shared experiences, then you can start talking about shared policies or shared requests for applications or shared ways of funding something. And also the same time, it's really important to just find out what is completely off limits, you know, like, we at this agency are gonna do our home visiting program this way, and it doesn't matter if everyone in the state is doing something else. Like if that's a non-negotiable thing, then you just know right from the beginning.

When you're collaborating with other statewide organizations or community-based programs, it is really important to keep in mind that circumstances change. You do have to be willing to make compromises. You have to be able to step back.

Child welfare's role in those situations that are outside their purview are to build these collaborative relations with their community partners and not just other government agencies and nonprofit agencies, but also families to build those relationships, to listen to what families say they need.

The initiatives where we have started with family members, right from the beginning, they just added a richness and a real different perspective that we haven't had when we started just with administrators or funders.

And I will say, in our early initiatives, like triple P, we did not do that. We started with major funders. We didn't start with service providers or with families.

And if I were to do it again, I would definitely have those family members, right from the very beginning, I would have someone like Barbara, right from the start.

BARBARA YOUNG: My name is Barbara Young and I am a family partner with North Carolina's child welfare family advisory council and I'm a Triple P practitioner.

The child welfare family advisory board in North Carolina consists of six biological parents two youth with foster experience or previous foster care experience, and then two kinship providers and one foster and one adoptive parent. And I think the key for us is that when we're at the table together, everybody's voice is equal.

They need one contact person to answer questions, to provide support around, who's going to be at the meeting. What's it going to be about? Is there information that they need ahead of time? Are we looking at documents, right? Do they have access to those documents so that when they show up at the meeting, they're not the only one that didn't get to see anything. And with that one contact person is also the person that they can check in with after, or that that person would then contact families and say: Hey, I saw that you were at the meeting. Do you have any questions? Did you feel like it went well? Was there something else you wished that you had shared that maybe you didn't feel like you had an opportunity to? So do you just get that extra, just a little bit of extra support is really helpful.

I would say the earlier you can get family involvement the better. When you're talking about families, they should be at the table from the very beginning. And so, if you're talking about how this will work with my child welfare families, then ask your child welfare families.

PHIL REDMOND: I'm Phil Redmond, a program officer with the child and family well-being area of the Duke Endowment, which is a private foundation headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina and funds exclusively in North and South Carolina.

My advice to another jurisdictions is that is exploring a collaborative effort as we have in North Carolina would be to expect that there will be major bumps, that there will be partners who will exit some who will enter and that you, you have got to be nimble and be willing to adjust.

If you have a learning agenda when you enter into these partnerships, then that helps you be prepared for those bumps, those excursions that partnerships are going to take sometimes. And not to say that it's going to make it easier, but at least you'll expect it and you'll know that you can learn from it.

Have some patience with yourself and with the process. Collaboration is often confused with cooperation or communication. And I think of those three C words as a continual, and sometimes you have to begin with just learning to communicate to and with one another, and then learning to cooperate around a shared idea or some co-funding or coming together around a meeting before you can move to the deeper relationship that I think characterizes authentic collaboration, which is about co-creating and sharing decision-making and being mutually accountable and responsible for the results. To get to that collaborative stage takes time. It takes trust and to build trust, you have to learn to know each other, I'll be vulnerable with each other, share honestly with each other and recognize that collaboration doesn't mean uniformity in agreement or thinking, but it certainly does mean unity in moving forward together.

And it's just, you know, collaborations moves at the speed of relationships and relationships with the speed of trust.

The care and feeding of these collaborative relationships, has required that we talk regularly, that we meet frequently, that we spend time together, that we brainstorm with one another we'd bounce ideas off one another, and that we tend to the trust of the group.

NARRATOR:

Good advice, right? From Deborah's advice of discussing non negotiables and having family at the table from the start, to Barbara's advice that everyone at the table has an equal voice and the earlier you can get families involved the better, and then finally to Phil's advice to expect some bumps yet have patience and begin by communicating with each other. This kind of advice transforms partnerships and achieves real change. Can you use any of these strategies in your work?

To hear more about how North Carolina's child welfare agency, partner organizations, and families work together to become more prevention oriented, watch the recorded webinar, Leading the Charge for Transformation available on our website at capacity.childwelfare.gov/states

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