



# PRACTICE MODEL PRESS

## Solution Based Casework In Action

Anne Graham

The Concord District Office has jumped feet first into Solution Based Casework after attending training over the summer. Assessment workers have made copies of the colored tip sheets provided during the training and shared them with families during visits. Others have begun to incorporate tracking the sequence of events as well as partnering with families to create “refrigerator plans”. Staff report that it feels simple and tangible to do this with families, though they have also found it’s taking a bit more time during home

visits. However, as with anything new, with practice comes mastery!

Staff recently took a risk in a case and put an in-home support service on hold based on feedback from a parent about its “ineffectiveness” within their family and took it straight down to the issue: getting the kids to school. The Judge was skeptical initially but agreed to try it after hearing that the family came up with the plan, on their own, to address attendance. We advocated giving it a try for 30 days and re-visiting

the need for the supports. The Judge ordered services “suspended” but able to be started again when needed.

The Concord District Office staff have conducted a number of case consultations and used smartphones to take pictures of our consults for posterity. Again, with practice comes mastery! We hope to take our message to our community partners during our regular meetings with them so they can learn about the positive changes in our practice!

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 To join communities and families in providing opportunities for citizens to achieve health and independence

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- Solution Based
- Every Day Life Event
- Sequence
- Single Parent
- New Relationship
- Blended Family
- Infant Toddler
- School aged
- Teenager
- Launching
- Post Parental
- Objective



“Strategic sharing is about making good choices when we tell our life stories so that our voices can be heard, our message is effective, and our well-being is protected.”

-Casey Family Programs 2007

## Strategic Sharing

Emily Quigley

On July 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Casey Family Programs and the NH Practice Model sponsored Strategic Sharing Training. Eleven youth currently in care attended the first day, where the youth learned what strategic sharing is, the benefits and risks of sharing, and created and shared their own personal stories. Bob Boisvert, Administrator for NH Division for Children, Youth & Families, and Sandy Ziegra, Field Supervisor for NH Division of Juvenile Justice, were blown away by the courage and honesty of all eleven youth who shared

their stories. “It is important for all of us in this line of work to hear youth’s stories because it reminds us and reenergizes us to focus on what’s really important, and that’s the kids” said Administrator Bob Boisvert. The second day was Train the Trainers. Three former youth in care, Three parents who previously received assistance from DCYF, and state employees attended the training to become trainers in the future. The training covered materials from day one, as well as how to be an effective trainer and

how to create a safe haven to encourage the youth to share their story in a safe effective manner. Going forward this training will be regionalized across New Hampshire, giving more youth the opportunity to share their story.

## Youth Conference: “The Game of Life”

Meryssa B –former youth in care

The 7<sup>th</sup> annual DCYF/DJJS Teen Conference was held on August 11th at Plymouth State University. The theme for this year’s conference “Taking charge of the game of LIFE” was evident throughout the entire day.

Youth participated in a variety of activities to prepare them for the game of life, such as, building a house made of needs and wants and finding out they need to get necessities such as food and heat before they get a flat screen television. There were workshops where youth could learn how to go from being a youth in care to a youth in college, former youth in care who went to college (or are still in college) told youth about their transition into that new experience. There were

also workshops about how to pay for college, how to stay safe online, how to find a roommate, information about Job Corps and many others.

A highlight of the day was “Maggie’s Town Hall” where youth could ask the DCYF/DJJS Director, Maggie Bishop, questions they had about DCYF/DJJS, herself, caseworkers, or just ask for advice. There was a talent show where very brave youth got on stage and performed. There were singers, dancers, poetry readers, break-dancers, guitar players, and many others. Throughout the day staff handed out raffle tickets to youth who were “caught” showing leadership, giving a helping hand, answering questions or participating in activities. These tickets were

used to raffle off multiple laptops and gift cards. Many youth left happy with a new laptop.

During dinner there was an awards ceremony for youth and workers. Awards were given to a youth in care and former youth in care who demonstrated leadership throughout the year. A community member and a DCYF Adolescent Worker also got awards for leadership and hard work. After dinner, youth and staff members said their good-byes; youth and workers alike left with more knowledge and tips on how to get through the game of life, resources they didn’t have before, new friendships and a strong sense of knowing that they are not alone in this battle. I know I did!



## Better Together With Birth Parents (BTBP)

The Better Together with Birth Parents is a powerful workshop that brings together staff and parents to learn to partner with each other. We have had four regional sessions and two additional sessions are

planned for this year. We will continue to offer BTBP regional sessions in 2012. Over 40 staff and 40 parents have participated so far. Participants report a new understanding of partnership and an appreciation for

working together to keep children safe. We recognize that it is better for children, parents, and staff to work in partnership, collaboration, and mutual respect.

Patrice and Jason are willing to talk to anyone wanting to hear directly from a parent or a staff. To contact them or to learn more about the Better Together with Birth Parent Workshop, you can call Geraldo Pilarski, Parent Leadership Coordinator at 603 271 0532.

## Parent Voice

Patrice

I didn't really know what I was in for when I attended The Better Together workshop. I definitely couldn't have anticipated the changes it has already made in my life. At the workshop I was given the opportunity to share my story about my involvement and my experience with DCYF. I was scared because I had never really openly shared my story with anyone..never mind a room full of strangers. But through the activities we had participated in and how comfortable and safe the facilitators of the workshop made everyone

feel, it helped me feel more at ease and eager to tell my story. After I told my story I felt almost lighter; it was a very emotional and therapeutic experience. And then when I had the opportunity to talk with staff who attended and other parents that were at the workshop and they let me know that just by me sharing my story had helped them either see things differently, or made it easier for another parent to tell their story...the feeling was amazing. This was truly empowering for me, and there were many

Aha moments for all of us participating. I know see that all the struggle and pain I had gone through and worked very hard to come out of hadn't been for nothing..it finally wasn't just something I went through because "crappy things happen to people" and always feeling like my involvement with DCYF was a dirty secret that I had to hide. It became apart of my journey.a part of my story that I could share and say...Yes this happened..but with the help of amazing people who truly cared about my child, and me I made it through.

And if I did it, other parents can do too. This Workshop was an amazing experience. I hope to have other opportunities to share my story and in some way, no matter how small, help other parents regain their hope and make life better for their children and families. I am so happy to be a "parent ally" in Manchester as I want to reach out to other parents to help them see the light in the end of the tunnel.

## CPSW Shares His Experience

Jason

My enthusiasm about parent engagement and parent leaders is directly related to my great experience at the Better Together Workshop. I think it would be hard to deny the tremendous impact this workshop has on everyone in attendance. As a CPSW, our jobs require an intense commitment to help the families we work with. Workers being burnt-out or poorly trained can lead to poor outcomes for families. My coworkers and I all agreed this was

the most motivating and helpful two days out of the office we have ever had.

We, as workers, need to understand how to engage families, and the best way to learn is to hear directly from fathers and mothers about their experiences. I think this workshop should be used to help train new workers about the Practice Model and how DCYF is moving to more family focused work. A Better Together session should also be attended by workers after being in the

field a few years, to help recharge their batteries. It can be easy to allow negativity to develop and dominate our thoughts about clients and this impacts how we motivate them. If we think they can't do it, they probably won't. The Better Together Workshop challenged all of us to do better work and I was ready to take on a new case as I walked out the door! I also think that the parents who attended the Better Together Workshop can be a tremendous resource to this agency if

utilized. I will offer to do whatever is necessary to bring this wonderful resource to my colleagues. I'm very proud to be part of an agency that is always trying to be better. I think the Better Together Workshop is a great example of this. I look forward to more discussions about this and the work we will be doing in Manchester to promote partnering with the families we serve.

## Practice Model Team Updates

### Policy Work Group

The Policy Work Group, composed of Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Specialists and Field Administrators, has been meeting on a monthly basis since March 2011. This group identifies and reviews draft policies to incorporate Practice Model concepts and language. Some recent work

includes FAIR and safety vs. risk language changes. In addition, this group has developed a draft policy statement that summarizes the Practice Model. This statement will be incorporated into policy to ensure that the Practice Model continues to be a

guiding influence on current and future policies. It will serve as a reminder for current and new staff to use the Practice Model in their day-to-day work with children, youth, families, and stakeholders.

### Project Team

New Hampshire's Practice Model Beliefs and Guiding Principles have been developed and all DCYF and DJJS staff have been trained. We are currently working to align various internal and external reviews with our Beliefs and Guiding Principles. Our Practice Model and PIP have inspired us to initiate over 20

activities that we anticipate will promote better outcomes for families and more consistency in practice statewide. Some of these activities include statewide Supervisory Standards, FAIR, The Youth Action Pool, Solution Based Casework, Family Team Conferencing and the aligning of Structured Decision Making &

Signs of Safety. These will be implemented by spring 2012. Although not related to the PIP, our Parent Partner Program is also making progress and will improve our engagement with families, including absent and incarcerated parents.

### Training Workgroup

The Training Workgroup (PMTW) has worked conscientiously to revise the core competencies for the New Worker Core training. The group has collaborated with the trainers for each of the

eight New Worker Core Modules to ensure all changes align with the Practice Model and related strategies, while maintaining the training content.

### Evaluation Team

The Evaluation Team is in an exciting transition phase. We have just completed our contract with Patrick Shannon, who worked closely with us over the last two years on two large projects, the "Perceptions of Child Welfare Practice at the

Division for Children, Youth and Families: A Focus Group Report" and the "NH Practice Model Evaluation DCYF/DJJS Staff Survey." Now we are moving into the Practice Model Outcome phase and we are contracting with another terrific consultant, Anita Barbie. In this

### Communications Team

The Communications Team has conducted four regional Practice Model Information sessions to over 100 representatives of various stakeholder organizations. Additional trainings have been provided to Easter Seals, CASA, Granite State College, and the Attorney General's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect. There was a Practice Model workshop presented at the recent AG's Conference. We had a fantastic turnout for the workshops at the DCYF/DJJS Annual conference and the Youth conference. We were also well received at Police Standards and Training. There are plans in the works to train all Judges throughout the state. The team ensures that staff and stakeholders receive the Practice Model Updates and the newsletter, as well as the quarterly Maggie's Message. We have completed the "staff card" and distributed throughout the state. **Coming soon:** Stakeholder booklet, Parent/Youth pamphlet, Updated DCYF/DJJS website and Webinars!!

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