

Can they give you an elevator speech? Lessons learned from Child Welfare Implementation Projects

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**National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
New Orleans, April 30, 2014**

NCIC
Northeast and Caribbean Implementation Center
A Service of the Children's Bureau, a member of the T/TA Network

Organizational Change: Why an “Elevator Speech”?

An elevator speech communicates:

- Why are we doing this?
- How are we doing this?
- What will be the outcome?

An effective elevator speech:

- Captures urgency
- Is clear and understood by many
- Is honest – has heart!

An elevator speech indicates:

- Readiness
- Communication
- Commitment

Organizational Change: Child Welfare Challenges

- How can our agency ensure good practice?
How can we tell that our practices result in positive child and family outcomes?
- How can we shift our agency from collecting data, to using it to improve our services for children and families?
- How can we make our practice consistent?
How can we ensure that every child and family receives good services?

Organizational Change: Our Approach

From 2008-2013, the Children's Bureau funded 5 national implementation centers to develop & apply implementation knowledge within child welfare

- National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) Framework, posits key implementation stages and drivers important in successful implementation

Our Implementation Center (NCIC): NIRN framework with:

- Partnership, strong, long-term relationships
- Team based, coaching, insider knowledge/outside perspective
- Readiness -- willingness and ability to undertake change
- Culture/Climate -- context, communication, available resources
- Adaptive Leadership -- Identify friends and foes, recognize loss

Implementation Project Sites

How can we shift our agency from collecting data, to using it to improve our services for children and families?



New Jersey: Manage by Data

Design and implement a model to train Data Fellows using a competitive selection process

How do we ensure that our practice model values are reflected in all aspects of our work?



Vermont: Model of Practice Supports

Support Practice Model: Develop hiring, performance and practice guidance, enhance data/Quality Improvement structure

Why do reunification rates vary so widely among our local offices? How can we make our practice consistent?



New Hampshire: Development of a Practice Model

Design practice model using inclusive process, focus on family engagement, incorporate Solution-Based Casework

Implementation Project Sites

How do we ensure that our values are reflected in all aspects of our work?

In our county based system, how can we improve supervision so that we can support best practice?

How do we use supervision to reinforce our practice model?



Penobscot & Passamaquoddy:
Articulation of practice models in each community

Updated policies and tribal codes, enhanced capacity for data collection



New York:
Supports for Child Welfare Supervisors

Pilot supervisory practice model in select counties to test strategies, individual group coaching, skills clinics on identified competencies



Massachusetts:
Supervisory Curriculum

Develop and implement supervisory training and coaching program to support implementation of the agency's practice model

Completed Implementation Projects: Sample Outcomes

Vermont:

- Increased access to family meetings
- Increased rate of kinship placement

New Hampshire:

- Increase in parent engagement
- Greater avenues for parent/youth engagement
- Improved avenues for achieving permanency for youth
- Increased quantity and quality of worker contacts with clients

Completed Implementation Projects: Sample Outcomes

New Jersey:

- Improved hotline performance. Fellows learned that hotline screeners can improve investigation practice if they can reduce the rate of anonymous referrals.
 - Found screeners had extremely varied rates of anonymous referrals (3-50%)
 - listened to the recorded calls of screeners, discovered low rate screeners persuaded more callers to give their names by using strong engagement skills.
 - captured those skills in a revised script for screeners.
- Anonymous referrals went down significantly, a decline of more than 2,000 over an 18 month period.

Change is Hard.



Helping Agencies Design & Implement Changes

How do we...?

- Help an agency assess their readiness to design and implement agency changes
- Discover how an **agency's culture and climate**:
 - **influence design** of changes and implementation; and,
 - **use the design process to shift the culture** to support implementation of these changes
- Support movement through the phases of implementation so organizations can successfully design and implement changes

Analysis

Embedded Evaluation Approach: Insider/Outsider Perspective

Interviews with agency staff involved in their state project on the implementation process

- Conducted three times: early, mid and end of project
- Questions framed to draw agency staff's perceptions of the implementation process, including supports & barriers

Survey of implementation staff involved in supporting state and tribal projects

- Identify barriers and facilitators
- Collaborative, Team Analysis

How to Change: Phases of Implementation

What do the phases of implementation look like in child welfare agencies that are designing change initiatives?

Exploration

- Identify priority issue
- Consider potential solutions that fit with agency context
- Identify general strategy
- Determine “design of design”

Design/Installation

- **Design of Intervention** (curriculum, delivery method, develop model, policies that support practice)
- **Detailed Planning for Roll Out** (timelines, resource needs, communication strategies, evaluation planning)

Implementation

- Pilot selection
- Begin roll out (build staff competency, implement supporting organizational structures)
- Implement Evaluation and QA Structures to provide feedback
- Further design articulation as needed

Exploration

Exploration

- Identify priority issue
- Consider potential solutions that fit with agency context
- Identify general strategy
- Determine “design of design”

This is what we've identified as a problem, how we determined it is a problem, and why it is very important to solve.

Elevator Speech Begins...

Exploration: Readiness Components

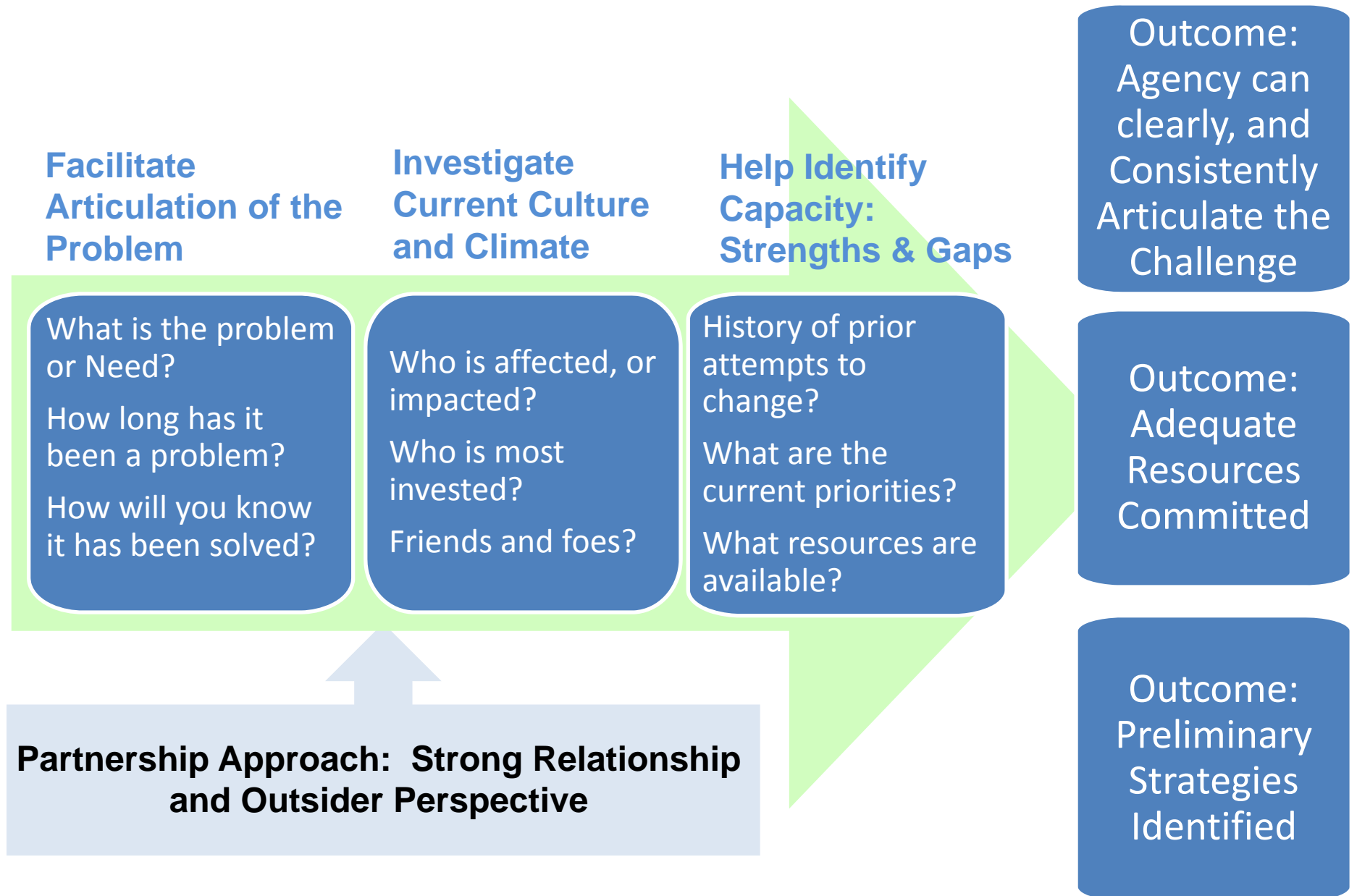


Exploration: Readiness



"No, it's not water. You seem to be retaining food."

Exploration: Supporting Tasks & Outcomes



Exploration: Agency Descriptions

Resources

A former Director who could talk through the process of implementing a practice model was helpful, she was a peer that could speak of her experience

Culture and Climate

That's what we see influencing the success of our initiatives over the years, that county organizational culture and climate

Leadership

The Deputy Commissioner had worked on an earlier effort on supervision, so it's an issue that is near and dear to her

Design

We identified a problem.
It's important because....
This is how we are going
to solve it.... and we'll
know that we have
solved it when we see
this happening....

Exploration

- Identify priority issue
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Design/Installation

- **Design of Intervention** (curriculum, delivery method, develop model, policies that practice support
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Elevator Speech articulated by those involved in designing the intervention

Design of the Design

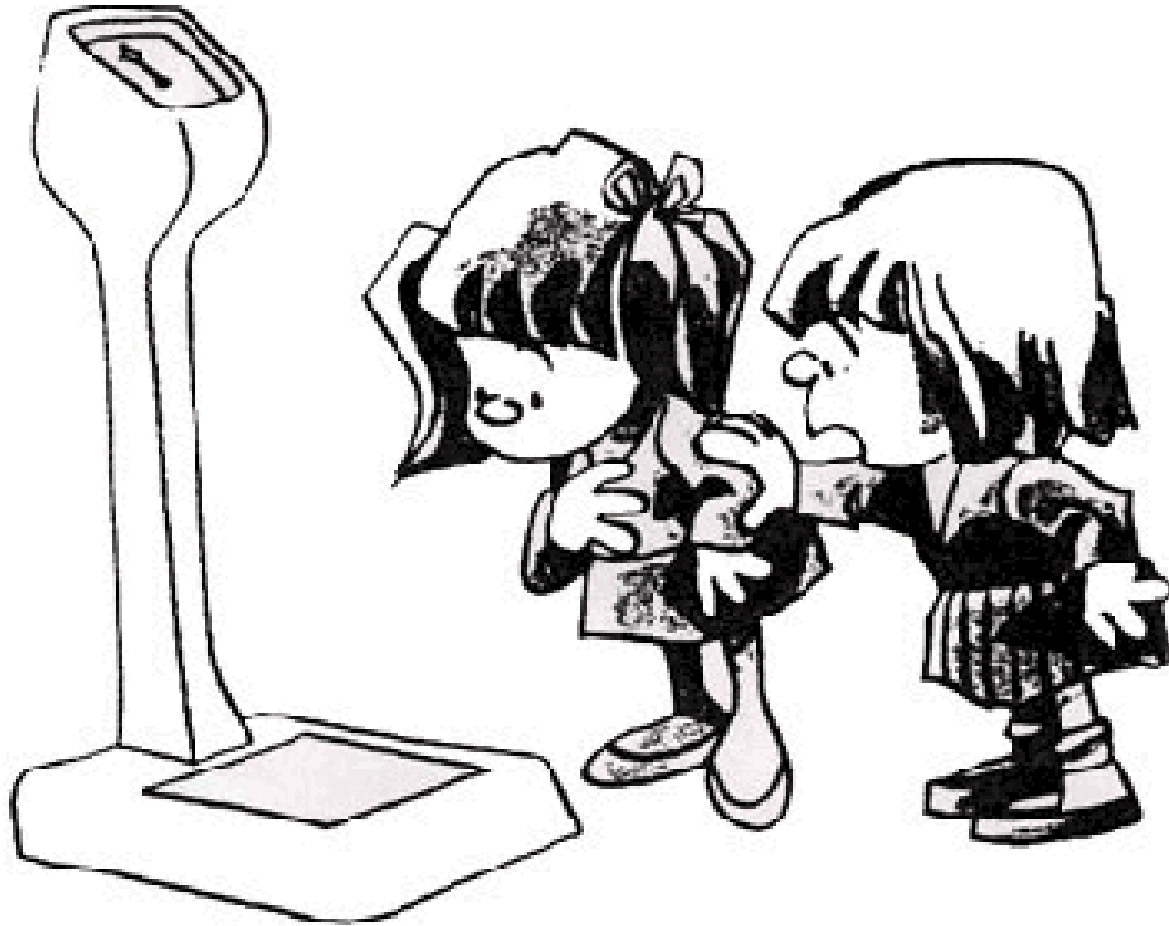


Design: The Influence of Culture & Climate

THE LAST THANKSGIVING

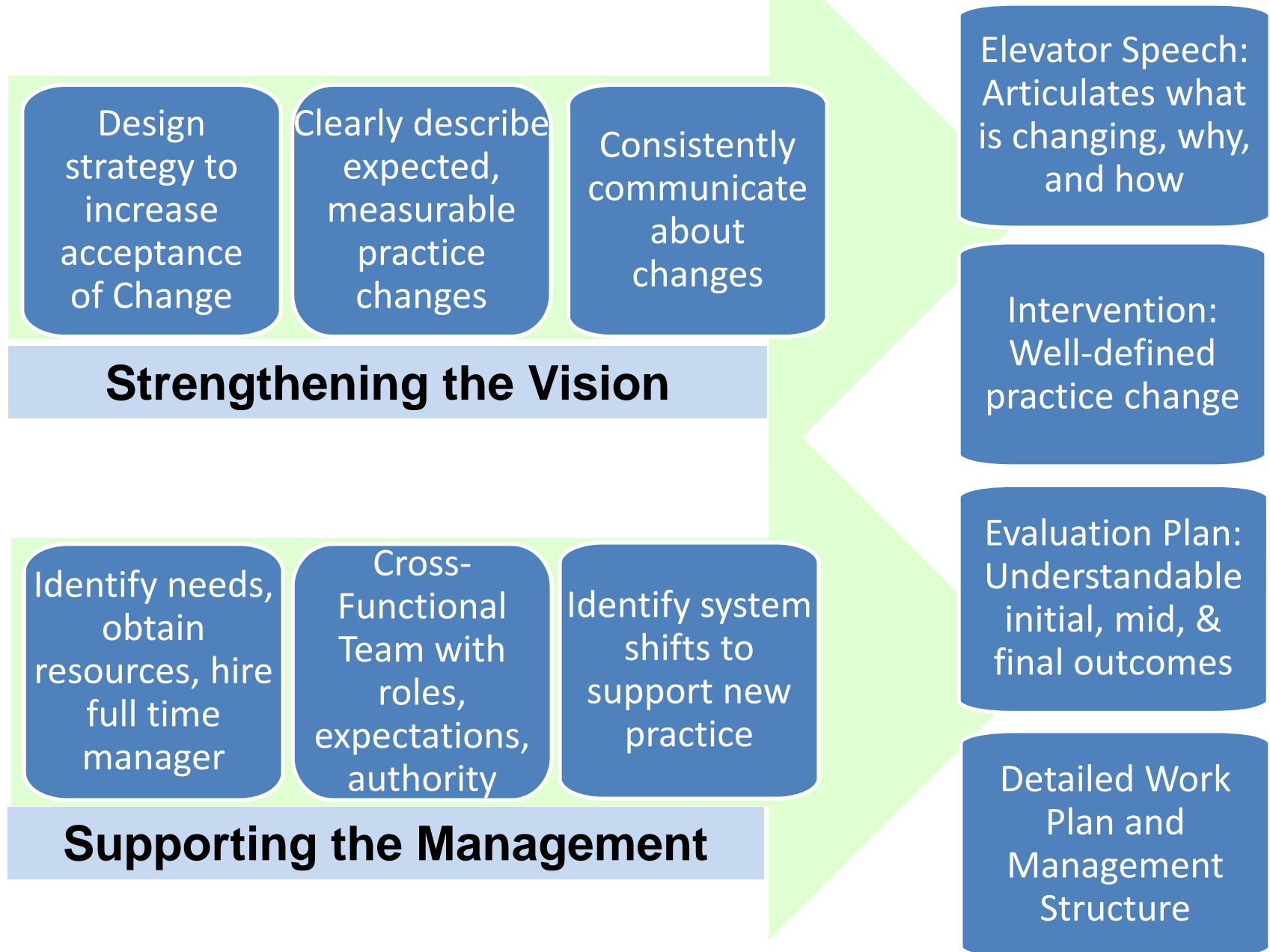


Design: Measuring Changes



“Don’t step on it . . . it makes you cry.”

Design: Supporting Tasks & Outcomes



Design: Agency Descriptions

Resources

If we hadn't had the Project Manager, Parent Partner, Youth Partner, and technical assistance, we couldn't have done what we've done

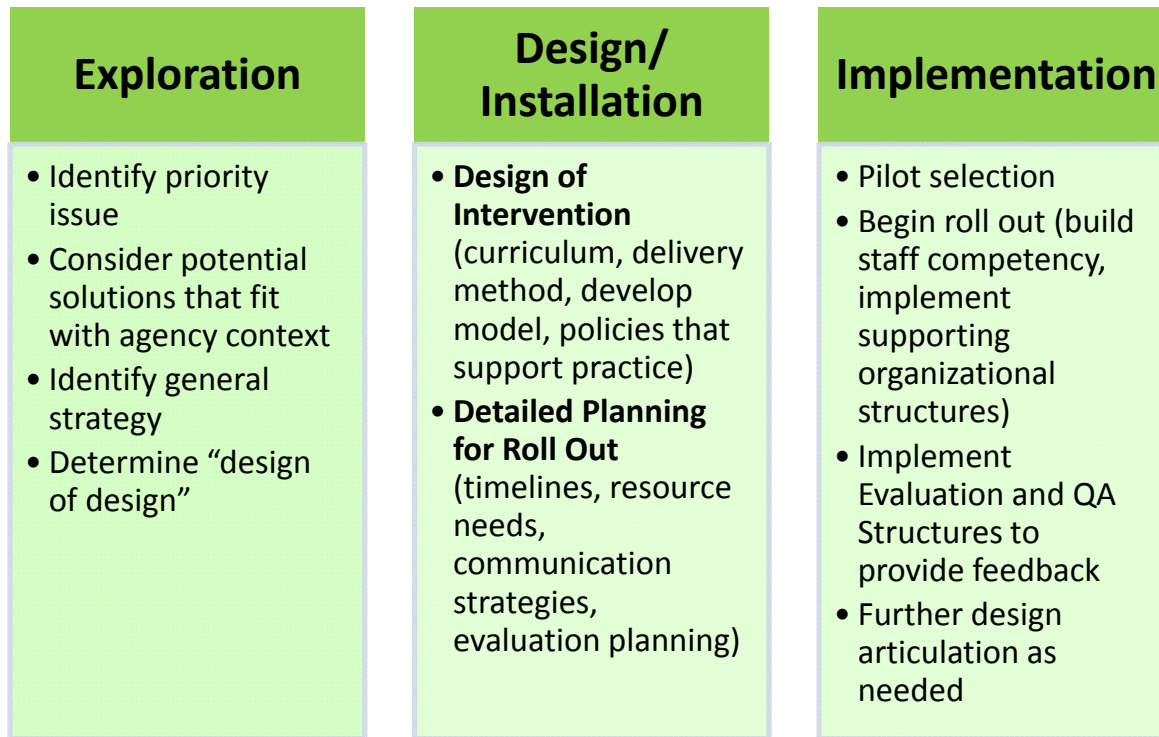
Culture and Climate

We had data available; it was on everyone's desktop. People knew that the organization had valued it enough to have it out there

Stakeholder Involvement

The bottom up design... as I'm going out and doing training, staff are saying "I know this, I developed this"

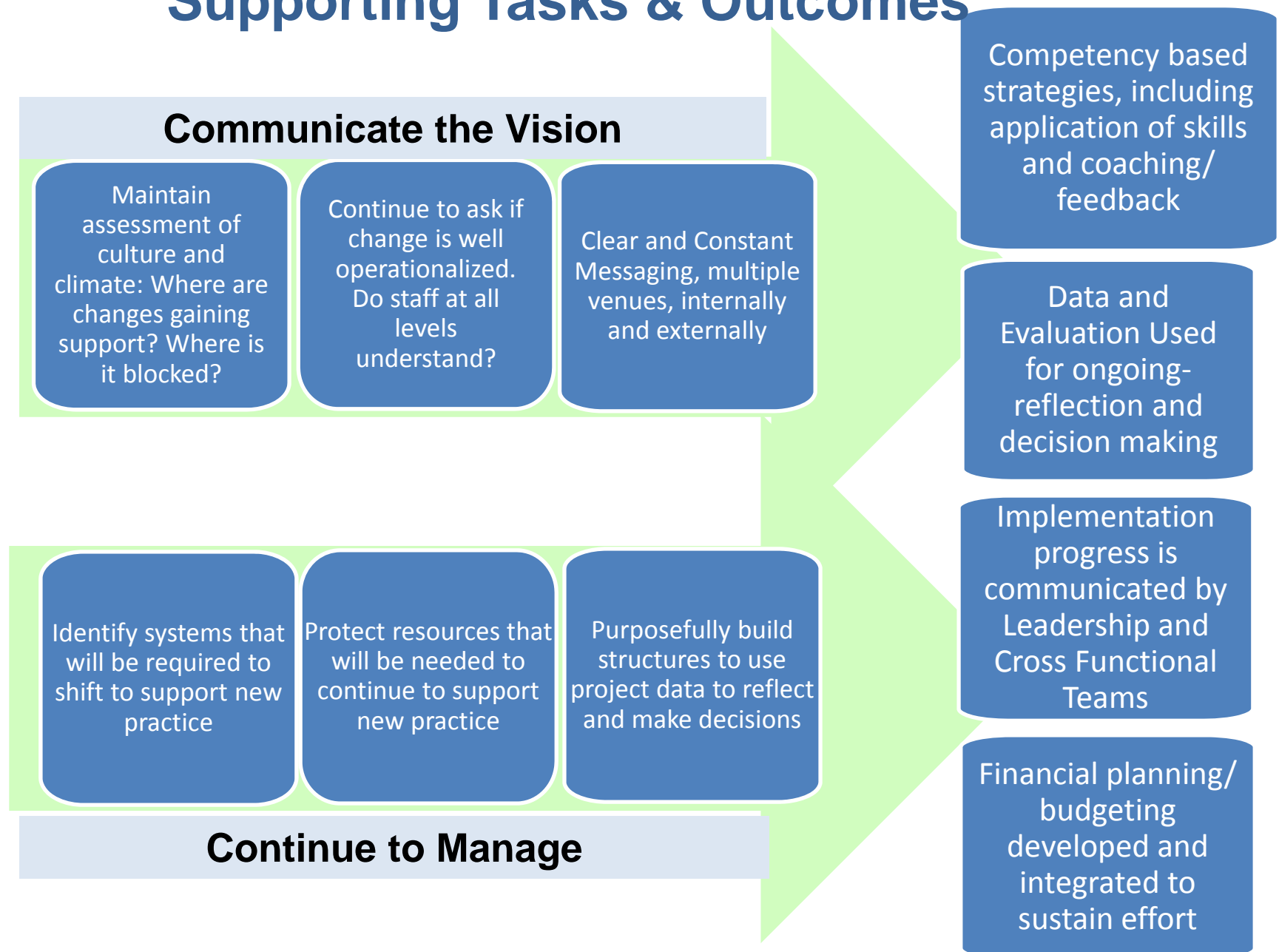
Implementation & Sustainability



We identified a problem. It’s important because.... This is how we are going to solve it.... and we’ll know that we have solved it when we see this happening....

Elevator Speech is fully developed, most agency staff can give this speech to each other and to outsiders

Implementation & Sustainability: Supporting Tasks & Outcomes



Implementation: Agency Descriptions

Resources

(Our state) could have written the book how to implement a practice model during budget cuts

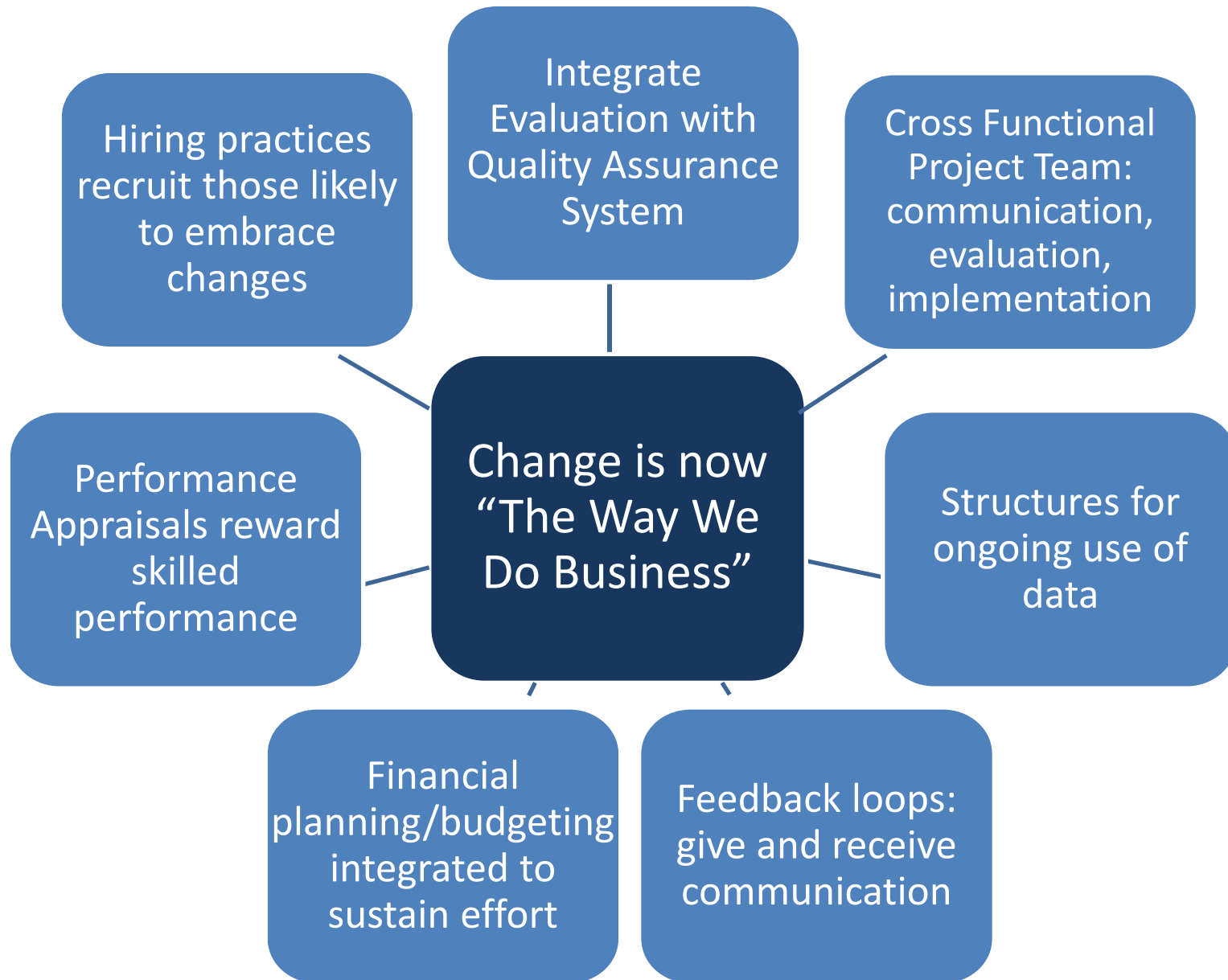
Culture and Climate

You really had to challenge the status quo. People had reasons why things weren't happening. This project changed their whole mindset

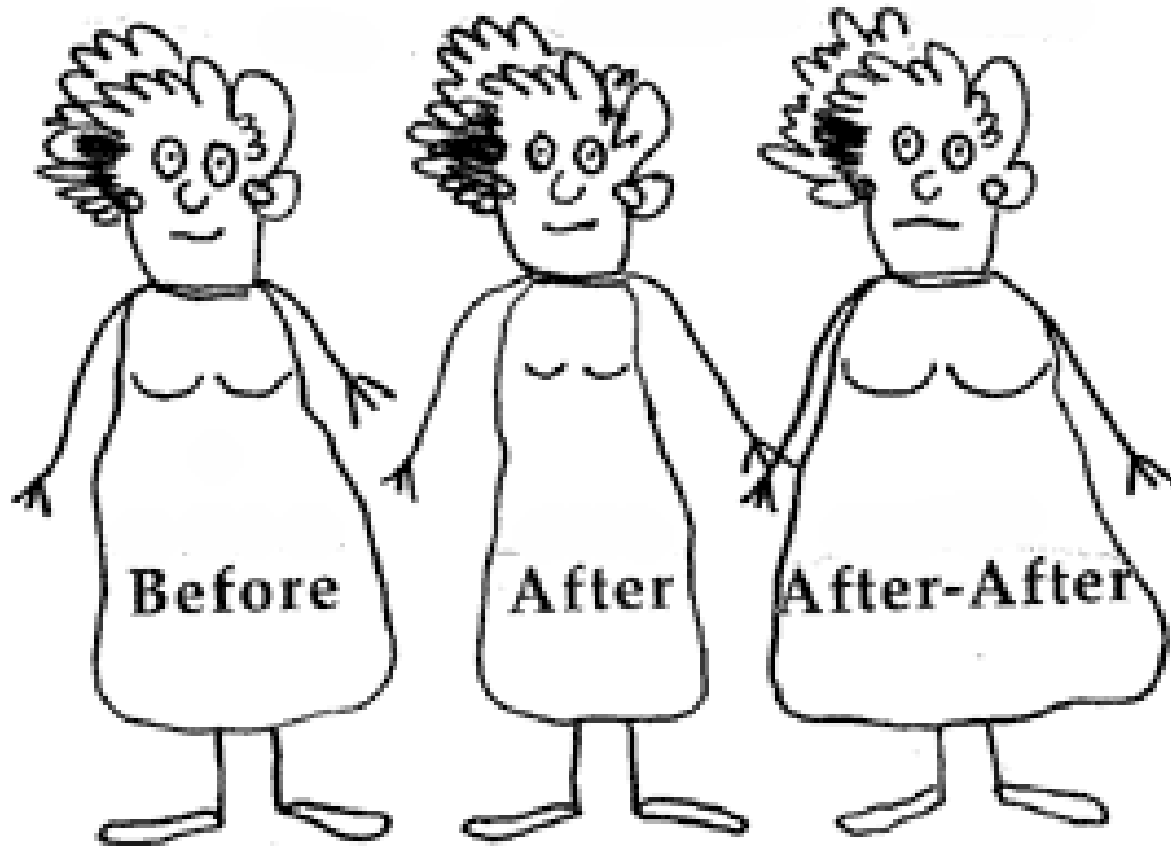
Staff Competency

More defining: what does it mean day-to-day? That's very hard work to do, to get very specific about what is implemented at the field level

Sustainability: Strategies



Sustainability



The **Real** Diet Story

Sample Questions for Implementers

Explore and Assess

Articulate need/problem:

- Have you tried to solve it before? If so, what happened?
- How would you know that this problem has been solved?

Identify champions and assess potential resistance:

- Who would need to change the way that they work for this problem to be solved?
- What would keep them from changing? What would motivate them to make necessary changes?

Understand current agency capacity:

- Can you tell me about the last time your agency decided to make a similar change ?
- Who was involved? What went well? What were the challenges?

Sample Questions for Implementers

Design and Install:

Resource Needs for Design & Implementation

- Who will have the primary responsibility for coordinating this work?
- What will be required for staff time? Staff travel?

Stakeholders Who Should be Involved/Connected in Design

- Whose behavior will need to change? What will motivate them to change?
- How can we use their practice expertise as we solve this problem?

Cross Functional Project Team(s)

- What decision making structures will teams use?
- What is the authority of the team?

Evaluation & Assessment

- What are the observable and measurable practice changes? How will they be assessed?

Vision and Communication

- Are we clearly able to explain why we are making this change, what the change is, and what the outcome should be?
- Would other staff in our agency be able to give this elevator speech?

Sample Questions for Implementers

Design and Install:

Feedback and Communication

- Where are the changes gaining support? Why?
- Where are the changes blocked? Why?

Staff Competency

- How are staff receiving feedback about whether or not they have been successful in making these changes?

Assess Work Plan & Budget

- How well are you meeting timelines? Why or why not?
- How is the budget? Are resources as expected? Are shifts in resources necessary and/or possible?

Integration and Sustainability

- To what extent has the change been integrated into daily practice up and down the organization? How can you tell?
- How are leaders and staff showing their commitment to sustaining the change initiative? How will they continue to be ?

Back to the Elevator Speech

Some examples from state/tribal projects....

New Hampshire: Creating a Practice Model



*“This is not a new initiative...
it will be our way of life”*

Maggie Bishop, NH DCYF Director May 2009





NEW HAMPSHIRE PRACTICE MODEL



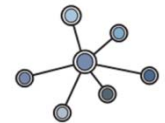
Why did New Hampshire decide to create a Practice Model?

- Shared vision for all staff
- Consistency in practice & policies statewide
- Improved accountability for DJJS, DCYF and agencies providing services on their behalf



The program is amazing – the wealth of knowledge provided as well as the fundamental skills acquired are both so essential to us as Division leaders (or want-to-be-leaders)...the Fellows program information I have learned can be utilized immediately, everyday and is most applicable to the work we do daily. The analytical skills being taught are priceless to our positions.

–New Jersey Data Fellow email to Department of Children and Families Executive



Action Research Partners

Back to the Elevator Speech

Questions?

Thoughts?

Examples?

Why Change?



We must make changes so that children and families receive the best possible services

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