

# The Safety and Risk Review

Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

March '09 | Issue 9

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## Learning Session 3: Tampa Bound!

By Donna Parrish, Project Manager

We are already gearing up for our third Learning Session in Tampa! Here is some helpful information to assist you in getting ready for Learning Session 3.

- » Connect with your faculty coaches as soon as possible ~ they can assist you with some of your pre-work assignments.
- » Complete all of your pre-work assignments as a team ~ one person cannot represent the entire team.
- » Connect with your tri-team connection as early as possible ~ you will be surprised at how much you will learn from one another.
- » If you are struggling to complete any of your assignments contained in the pre-work packet, please contact your faculty coaches or Donna, Stacie or Anne.

participation ~ listen and make room for everyone to voice their ideas, opinions, etc.

- » Expect that either staff, faculty or invited guests will be present during your meetings to:
  - ✓ provide ideas and suggestions.
  - ✓ observe your process.
  - ✓ sit in, upon request or invitation, to help with questions and brainstorming.
- » Share responsibilities ~ facilitating, note-taking, etc. ~ so everyone feels included and no one feels overburdened.
- » Review any team materials, such as Self Assessment results, before the learning session.
- » Expect to attend all team meetings for the full allotted time.

## Team Meeting Success

Learning Session 3 will provide three opportunities to connect as a team. Here are some helpful tips to making your team meetings successful:

- » Be ready to actively engage in BSC teamwork.
- » Hold each other accountable for maximizing

In addition to this information, a Learning Session 3 Tips and Helpful Hints document that details all of the logistics is located on the Extranet in the Learning Session 3 folder. If you need assistance in locating this document, please contact Stacie Hanson, Project Associate, at [Stacieh@americanhumane.org](mailto:Stacieh@americanhumane.org)

## Reminders:

Day-to-day Manager Call:  
March 16, 3 p.m. EDT

Birth Parent Affinity Group Call (Option 1):  
March 17, 8 p.m. EDT

Birth Parent Affinity Group Call (Option 2):  
March 20, noon EDT

Senior Leader Call:  
March 23, 1 p.m. EDT

Youth Affinity Group Call:  
April 8, 8 p.m. EDT

All-Collaborative Call (Optional Call):  
April 13, 1 p.m. EDT

For all calls, dial (800) 410-3590 and use the code 6280207#.

## Notes on the methodology

Spread: Breaking new ground | By Karl Chan Brown

As your team approaches the "spread" portion of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative, you may not realize you are part of a large test of change in addition to all the smaller ones you have conducted so far. The American Humane Association Safety and Risk Assessments BSC will be the first BSC in child welfare to move deep into the realm of spread. Your work in the next phase will affect not only how practice is implemented in your jurisdiction, but also how the BSC will be implemented in many others.

As you probably know, the BSC methodology was developed by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement as a means to improve healthcare. But the BSCs that IHI conducts follow a slightly different course, often completed in the comparatively short time of six to nine months. In that brief period, it is hard to move new practices from concept to spread. Since Casey Family Programs introduced the methodology to child welfare, BSCs have undergone a continuous evolution, each

adaptation tuning the methodology to the needs of the field. Previous BSCs have helped develop the early and middle phases of a BSC, leaving the concept of spread to the third and final Learning Session. Past teams took the work of spread forward on their own.

This BSC moves the developmental effort to the final stage, introducing spread and balancing it with continuing PDSA development. Casey Family Programs has funded an additional Action Period and Learning Session to accomplish this task, and the staff and consultants have developed new tools and strategies to help teams spread the practices tested in PDSAs. Spread represents new ground for everyone on the project. As a team, you have the chance to spread practice learning to the rest of your jurisdiction and the other teams in the BSC, but as a collaborative, we have the opportunity to shape the methodology and benefit the next ~ and all future ~ BSCs.

# Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments

## Using our Extended Team to Increase Success



*By the  
City of  
Roses*

The City of Roses has used its extended team in a variety of different ways. The extended team has evolved over time and includes anyone from whom we can obtain new and different insight and knowledge, whose experience we can draw from with our department and the children and families, and who is willing to assist us in our efforts to improve our safety and risk assessment efforts.

The extended team includes line supervisors, social workers, community partners, parents and youth. Recently, master's-level interns have been added to the extended team. Each has his or her own unique skills, knowledge and experiences to bring to this process.

Two Team Decision Making (TDM) meeting facilitators are part of the extended team. The TDM process is a key component within the department, as it is where risk and safety, family strengths, family needs and supports are assessed. The TDM facilitators have conducted PDSAs and had surveys completed. They have been an integral part of the team.

Interns have been added to the team. They provide additional experience and knowledge to the process and expand our capacity to complete various tasks, such as taking surveys, engaging additional staff and conducting

PDSAs. Additionally, these interns will be future employees who will enter the department with the latest innovations and breakthroughs in the risk and safety assessment process.

Line supervisors and social workers have also participated in this process. Several PDSAs have run through our line staff, in both the emergency response and family maintenance and reunification sections. Additionally, we have worked diligently to engage our parents, youth and community partners in this process. This work has included processing personal issues they have encountered with the department and how we can build on their experience and provide better, timelier and more effective services in terms of risk and safety.

We are constantly evaluating who else can be added to the extended team. We feel everyone's experience and expertise is valuable, and can only improve our efforts in improving the safety and risk assessment processes for the children and families we serve.

# Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments

## The Extranet World

By Stacie Hanson, Project Associate

I decided to take a break from measures this month to focus on the importance of the extranet and its role in our collaborative.

**Extranet Access** ~ Hopefully, if you are reading this newsletter, you were able to log on to the extranet and access this newsletter from the BSC Documents folder. However, if you or another member of your team are unable to log on to the extranet, please contact me at [stacieh@americanhumane.org](mailto:stacieh@americanhumane.org). We want every team member to explore the extranet, so I will be happy to set you up with a new password. It's a very easy process.

**Extranet Highlights** ~ We know that Day-to-Day Managers are on the extranet frequently, but other team members may be wondering why they should explore the site. The simple answer is because the extranet is your source for up-to-date information about your teams, other teams and the collaborative as a whole.

- You can look at some of the 253 PDSAs that have been posted by other teams to gather ideas for your own team. By clicking on the drop-down boxes in the title row, you can sort or filter the PDSAs by team, key area, monthly measure, etc.
- You can set up personal alerts for different sections of the sites so you'll know when new items have been added. You can also create your own personalized views of site sections.
- There are more than 100 articles and other resources posted under the Key Area and Bibliography documents. These are organized by topics such as safety, risk and family engagement, and they provide you with access to the most up-to-date research in this field and lots of PDSA ideas.
- You can access other teams' documents and

tools under the relevant Key Area Documents folders.

- You can keep the collaboration fires burning from Learning Sessions and phone calls on the discussion boards.

The extranet might seem a little confusing if you haven't used it much, but that's what I'm here for. I'm happy to time over the phone with anyone who is having trouble navigating the site. I will also be providing an "extranet tour" as a speed-sharing session at Learning Session 3, and I hope you will all join me. As always, don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about extranet access or navigation!

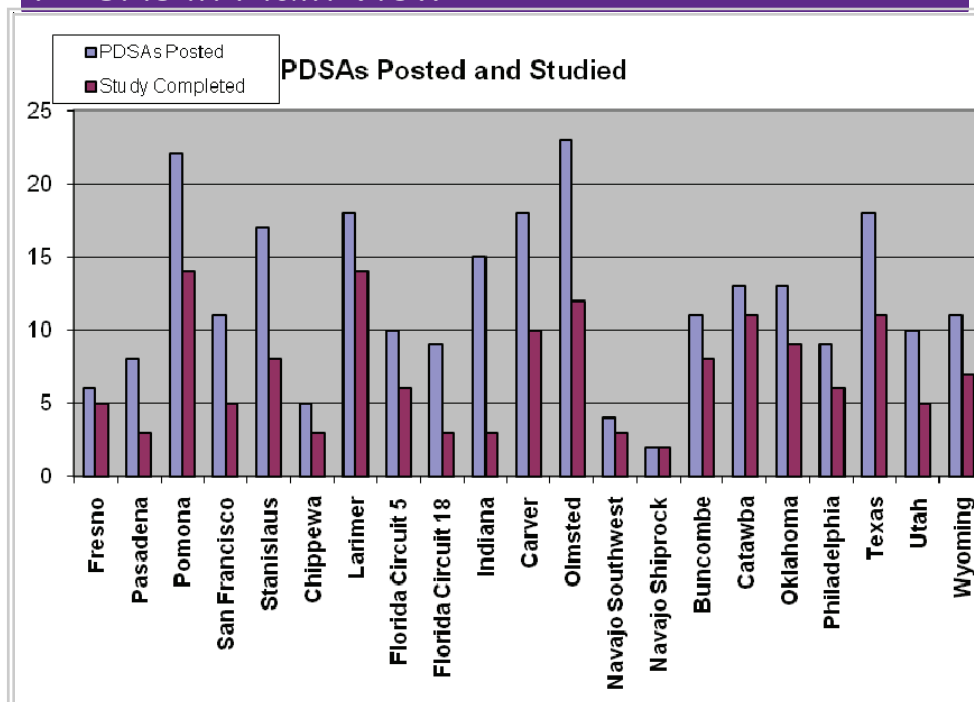
## Extranet Highlights

Progress is still going strong. Congratulations to those teams that continue to post PDSAs and share relentlessly!

As of March 9, 2009, 253 PDSAs were posted and 148 have been studied in the following key practice areas:

1. Race, Ethnicity and Culture - 32
2. Family and Youth Engagement - 83
3. Tools - 24
4. Sound Decisions - 30
5. Integrated and Comprehensive - 20
6. Permanency and Well-Being - 22
7. Community Collaboration - 21
8. Services - 5
9. R.1 - Workforce - 4
10. R.2 - Data - 8

## PDSAs in Plain View



# Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments

## *Meet Your BSC Staff & Consultants*

By Anne Comstock, Project Director

Over the past months, you have “met” our Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments co-chairs and faculty. We think you’ll agree they are skilled, experienced and passionate people ~ very committed to this work. We are grateful for their leadership. We thought you might also enjoy getting to know the BSC staff and planning team just a bit better. We will continue to highlight some interesting information about these folks in the coming newsletters. This month, we are featuring Kary James and Anne Comstock.

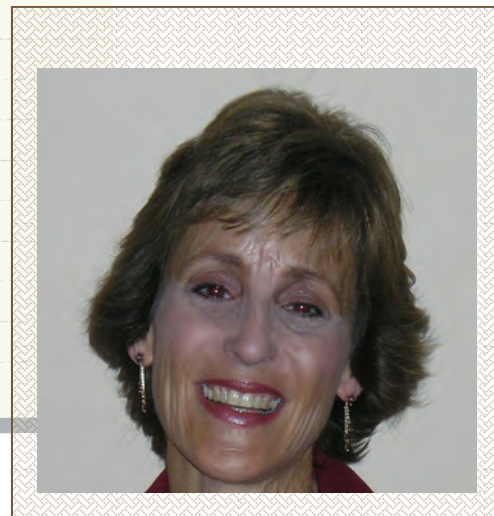


### *Kary James*

- I am Mom to Sydney and Stone and married to Jason James ~ the loves of my life.
- I am a trained classical pianist (18 years).
- I love to be organized.
- I am a trained sharpshooter (9mm and M16).

### *Anne Comstock*

- I have spent more than 25 years in child welfare and still feel passionate and excited about the work.
- My favorite moments center on family ~ spouse, five kids, five grandkids and large extended family.
- A bachelor’s degree in human services and a master’s in management have given me a really helpful educational foundation to do this BSC work.
- My avocation involves music. I’m currently a member of a 70-voice Spirituals Project community choir, whose mission is to keep alive the African American spirituals ([www.spiritualsproject.org](http://www.spiritualsproject.org))



# Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments

## From the Ordinary to the Extraordinary!

### Now That's Dedication!

Deb Conway, our birth parent faculty member, has personally called every single birth parent team member to tell them about our Birth Parent Cluster Call next Tuesday. We hope to hear everyone on the phone next week!

### Sowing Self Assessment Seeds!

The Catawba Builders have decided to split up their self assessment, using CORE Team members to gather feedback from different groups of people about their system. What a great way to gather diverse feedback

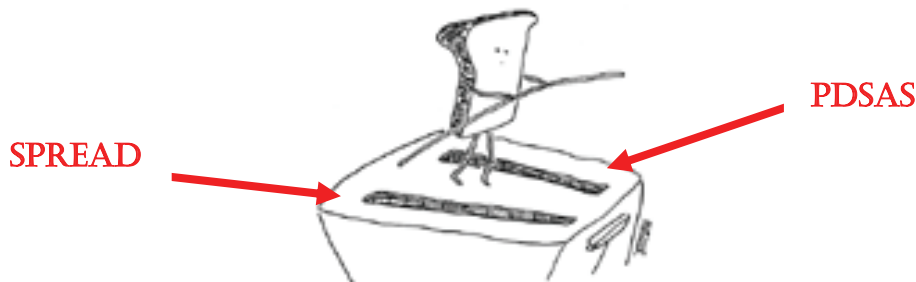
Have you seen something extraordinary happen on your CORE team, at your target site or beyond? We want to hear about it too! Please either post these good deeds on the extranet or email Donna Parrish at [donna@americanhumane.org](mailto:donna@americanhumane.org) to have your entry posted in an upcoming newsletter.

## Discussion Boards!

Have you seen all of the collaborative sharing going on lately? If not, visit the general discussion board to ask a question or share an idea with your collaborative learning community! Many thanks to all of you who have posted some excellent discussion topics thus far -- keep it going!

## Spread and PDSAs: A Delicate Balancing Act

By Jen Agosti and Susan Dougherty  
Model-for-Improvement Advisors



The run-up to Learning Session 3 is always an exciting time in a Breakthrough Series Collaborative. Most teams find that they have at least one PDSA that they've tested thoroughly enough to spread beyond their target area. But as you continue to come up with new ideas for PDSAs to test while you're simultaneously testing multiple cycles of other PDSAs, the idea of spreading a PDSA *at the same time* might feel daunting. So what's the right balance between testing "new" PDSAs and spreading successful practices?

As with most things "BSC," there is no one right answer. While PDSAs are an ideal way to test ideas, tools, and practices, there is no prize for the team that tests the most PDSAs. A question that can help you decide how many PDSAs to test is: *Has our team effectively addressed all of the Key Areas of Practice - particularly those noted as requiring attention in our team's Priority Statement?* In fact, this is why teams are asked to complete the Self-Assessment before each Learning Session. This activity is intended to help you see where you have made progress as a team and where you might need to continue testing PDSAs.

But this all still avoids the million-dollar question: *How do we balance the workload and effort required to spread a successful practice with the energy and person-power required to test new PDSAs?* As you complete the "Ready for Spread" exercise in your pre-work assignment, you will quickly see just how much effort true spread and sustainability

require. The key to making this work is getting "all hands on deck" ~ far beyond the eight people on your Core Team. By the time you've tested a PDSA broadly enough to consider it ready for spread, you probably have many workers and supervisors on board as well as parents, youth, community partners and agency managers. You have likely talked about it with your Extended Team and have them as champions, too. So as you engage in spread, the goal isn't to spread *yourselves* too thin; it's to spread *the practice* as broadly and thoroughly as possible.

You might want to think of the Ready for Spread form on the Extranet as your spread work plan. You may even want to put together a "spread team" that includes those people beyond the Core Team who can play a lead role in supporting the spread activities. That way, most of your Core Team can move into a supportive role, rather than a lead role, in the spread process while continuing to assess where new PDSAs might be needed.

There is no magical, perfect, one-size-fits-all approach to balancing the work and tension between new (and continuing) PDSAs and the spread of successful practices. But as you start to see your entire office, region, county, tribe and/or state using the same practice in the same way that you tested it with one youth or one family way back in November, we hope you will then experience the real value in starting small yet moving quickly. Because this is the magic of the BSC.

# Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments

## Looking for Contributors!

If you have an article, you'd like to write or share with members of the BSC, guest columnists are always welcome!

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## New England PDSA Spotlight: Ripe and Ready for Borrowing!

The New England BSC on Safety and Risk Assessments is in full swing. This month, in the spirit of community collaboration, we are highlighting the following PDSA. What would happen if you borrowed and tested this PDSA in your jurisdiction? Try it in your target site ~ we'd love to see the results! Remember, you can access the New England Extranet as well to view all of the PDSAs that are being tested.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	Maine: Rockland, District 4
<b>What are you trying to accomplish?</b>	Change Technique: To help parents connect their substance use/abuse with the impact on their children.
<b>How will you know that a change is an improvement?</b>	There will be a reduction of repeat maltreatment and a reduction in the number of children entering foster care due to their parents' substance use/abuse.
<b>What strategy can you test to result in improvement?</b>	Cross-train staff regarding substance abuse identification. Development of specific case plans to address the parental substance abuse as it relates to reunification.
<b>Key Area/Key Theme</b>	II. Engaging the Child/Youth and Family
<b>Monthly Measure</b>	1B. Participation in Plans
<b>Title</b>	Pairing Caseworkers
<b>PDSA Cycle #</b>	1
<b>Plan: Overview</b>	Identify caseworker with experience and pair with less experienced caseworker on next assessment. The goal is to share knowledge of substance abuse and the impact on child maltreatment with less experienced workers.
<b>Plan: Who</b>	Christina Fish will make assignment
<b>Plan: When</b>	Next report in which substance abuse is a concern.
<b>Plan: Hypothesis</b>	The pairing will enhance the caseworker's knowledge and ability to engage a family successfully.
<b>Plan: Key Questions</b>	The less experienced worker ("B") will have increased skills in working with families with substance abuse issues. Additionally, the family will be able to recognize the effect of their use of substances on their maltreatment of their children.
<b>Do</b>	Caseworker Brannan (caseworker "A") was assigned a report and paired with a less experienced worker for purposes of expanding the less experienced worker's skills. Caseworker A conducted an assessment. Caseworker B participated in the assessment as an observer.
<b>Study</b>	The conclusion was that no substance abuse was present in the family home. There was a comprehensive assessment of the family with apparent good engagement. Caseworker B gained additional skills as a result of the pairing.
<b>Act</b>	Repeat this scenario in round 3 after a staff training on substance abuse & child maltreatment.
<b>Ready for Spread</b>	Yes