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SPECIAL REMINDERS

- ❖ Learning Session Two Pre-Work Assignment Due Dates:
 - Sept. 19 - Collaborative Self-Assessment
 - Sept. 19 - Updated Priority Statements
 - Oct. 24 - Storyboard
 - Oct. 24 - Case Example
- ❖ Learning Session Two - Oct. 27-29 in Anaheim, Calif.
- ❖ "Tips and Helpful Hints" document is available on the extranet and will assist participants in getting prepared for travel to Anaheim.

Team Spotlight: Fresno Fuel



This team has been on fire with solid PDSAs and contributions to the collaborative. They posted a PDSA titled "Engagement with Parents During Assessment." Not only was this PDSA rich with learnings, it also energized the team in a remarkable way. Here are reflections about their participation on this BSC.

"I am excited when I see Social Workers being able to do what they came to the profession to do: connect with people and facilitate the parent's awareness and growth in ways that provide an opportunity for a family to become a safe and healthy place for their children."

David Plassman
Agency Supervisor

"It is wonderful to sit down with my clients and engage in a really meaningful discussion about their family. In carrying out our PDSA so far, I feel like I have gone back to the basics of strengths-based social work and I am really able to HEAR my clients. These are conversations that we should already be having... this has just provided a little more structure as well as a visual reminder to the clients of why we are here and what we are doing together as a team to provide safety and well-being for these children."

Julie Brager
Agency Social Worker

"We are all so glad to be part of a national team of colleagues who we are learning from and being inspired by to try some creative and really effective new approaches in our safety and risk assessment work."

Andrea Sobrado
Senior Leader

"I like the way our core team has come together and has invited me – the youth – to speak of my experiences to help them understand about what they need to work on."

Claribell Duarte
Youth

"I found that being able to better engage the parents in a positive manner provides the basis for a better working relationship. I was able to bring up very difficult points regarding their case and not have them become defensive as I was able to express concerns that I have and the Court is having as the reasons why the children were removed. Together we came up with a plan to work on those issues and address what needs to happen to bring about a positive outcome. By doing this and having the parents actively participate in their own case plan has eliminated many of the barriers that they felt were present in the beginning of their case. I do not just represent our Department, but the link in the chain that needed to be present to demonstrate that they can become a more healthy united family."

Eva Torres
Site Specified Member

"As a community member, I have had the opportunity to be the eyes looking from the outside in to the window of DCFS. I have had what I feel to be a long-standing working relationship with the Department... I have been a part of many teams, discussion groups, etc. When this team began working on the first PDSA, I have to say I was pleasantly surprised to hear the team leader say, 'I feel that we should focus first on engagement with families,' and to see the rest of the team readily agree was wonderful and brought a true sense of hope for positive change in the way services are offered to families; creating a 'team approach' between the social worker, the family and other agencies/individuals who may be involved."

Cindy Stoops
Community Partner

"While 'studying' and reporting out on our PDSA, I experienced a moment. It was a moment of growth for us as a team. The pure discovery and willingness to listen as we opened up about our work, the intentional work we are trying to achieve as well as our unconscious 'bias' that we didn't recognize until another team member named it. The willingness to stay in that moment and have that discussion was priceless."

Joy Cronin
Day-to-Day Manager

Monthly Measures

By Stacie Hanson
Project Associate

As teams are gearing up and starting to collect and post their monthly measures, some common questions have come up. Below are some tips that may help smooth your data collection process.

- Your monthly measures are meant to demonstrate the change in your entire target site over the life of the BSC, not just families that may be affected by a PDSA. Your measures should include data for your whole target site, even if your PDSAs may be touching only a few families right now.
- Your baseline measures are meant to show the functioning of your agency **right now**, so that you can see how the BSC has effected change. It's OK if some of your baselines do not represent a positive picture – that just means you have nowhere to go but up!
- The re-referrals measure can be tricky. Keep in mind that the number of “open cases” and “closed cases” should be a subset of the total number of re-referrals for each population that month.
- When posting data on the extranet for a new month, select “New Item” from the main list of jurisdictions’ measures. Do not go into already posted data and select a new month—this will overwrite your previous data!
- If you are having individual workers or supervisors collect information, I can help you create some simple Excel data entry spreadsheets to facilitate this process.
- Talk to me!!! We know this process can be difficult, but please just keep me updated on your status and any trouble or issues you may be having.

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Coming Soon to a Learning Session Near You!

Learning Session Two is fast approaching and will take place at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, Calif. This session will bring the 21 teams back together to focus on building connections, resources, skills and capacities of Collaborative participants to improve and enhance safety and risk assessments and decision making.

Objectives for Learning Session Two:

- ❖ Reviewing and reflecting on Action Period One activities, including major successes and challenges
- ❖ Continuously exchanging ideas and possible PDSAs on key areas of practice
- ❖ Increasing collective understanding of methodology, with a particular focus on spread
- ❖ Expanding collective knowledge and understanding of safety and risk concepts and practice
- ❖ Identifying effective strategies for youth and parent engagement and involvement
- ❖ “Continuing the conversation” on respecting and responding to race, ethnicity and culture
- ❖ Providing for inter- and intra-team work, sharing and networking
- ❖ Developing a clear plan of action for Action Period Two

Learning Session Two will be chock-full of opportunities to discuss, explore and learn about safety and risk assessment and decision making. It will include both general and breakout sessions that will encourage all team members to consider how their PDSAs and practice changes can improve their processes and outcomes for kids and families. Below are a few highlights of featured sessions:

Youth and Parent Voices Strategic Sharing and Collaborating

This session will help to identify challenges and strategies for youth and parent engagement and involvement in both the agency and on the BSC Team.

Speed Sharing

This is a fun, interactive way to have teams share and connect around specific tools, strategies, learnings and resources.

Leadership

This session is designed for Senior Leaders and will focus on how each leader will be measuring success in his or her jurisdiction.

Continuing the Conversation: Race, Culture and Ethnicity

This session will provide participants with information and strategies on addressing the disproportionate and disparate outcomes in connection with risk and assessment practice.

Meet Your Faculty

By Anne Comstock
Project Director

Our Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments is truly fortunate to have skilled, experienced and passionate co-chairs and faculty to provide support and technical assistance to teams in this critical work. We thought you might enjoy getting to know them a bit better, especially as you are now immersing yourselves in PDSAs and measures. We'll plan to highlight some interesting information about a couple of faculty in each of the coming newsletters. This month, we hope you get to know Tess Thomas and Kathy Deserly just a bit better.



Tess Thomas

- Tess has been a foster parent for 17 years, running a home called "Thomas House."
- Thomas House was featured in a PBS documentary, *Take This Heart*, that offered viewers a unique opportunity to

journey through the day-to-day struggles and rewards of life in a Seattle foster home.

- Tess has written a book titled *The Love Returns*. It describes her experience running Thomas House. It is, in part, an autobiographical account of her work that speaks about the lives of some of the children that make up her extended family.
- Tess' goal is to advocate nationally and globally to address the needs of children.

Kathy Deserly

- Kathy has 27 years of Indian child welfare experience in tribal, state agency and non-profit organizations.
- She has provided extensive technical assistance to tribes and organizations around the country, and she is most proud of assisting in the development of various tribal-state child welfare collaborations.
- Kathy has been a relative kinship foster caregiver, and she is passionate on the issue of foster care and adoption.
- Married 36 years, she is a mother/stepmother to three and grandmother to 15 (!)



The Art of Sharing!

Do you or your team have a PDSA, idea, resource, success or learning that would lend itself to a fast-paced, 20-minute presentation and discussion with your collaborative colleagues? If so, contact Anne Comstock to be a part of our fun and informative Speed Sharing Session at Learning Session Two.

Youth Voice

My name is Steven Parker, and I am the youth role on the BSC for Risk and Safety Assessments. Through the years I have been in cooperation with DSS, and I have gone through many different situations ranging from dealing with the courts to different case workers. The one thing that I want to improve or work on is the rift in the transition between different workers. It is sometimes hard on the child, going back and explaining everything over to someone new, and also building the trust back. I am hoping that my input in this study will help with making this an easier transition.



Youth Representative
Catawba County

Ask and You Shall Receive!

Feedback from the Learning Session One evaluation revealed that the majority of teams felt that their time together was invaluable. Therefore, Learning Session Two will provide teams with four opportunities to have team time. These meetings will provide teams with the ability to:

- Reflect on the collaborative learning from Action Period One.
- Develop a clear plan for Action Period Two.
- Expand knowledge around safety and risk assessments and develop meaningful PDSAs for practice improvement.
- Receive coaching and instruction from BSC staff and faculty.
- Allow observers to learn from them by watching their process.

Extranet Highlights

- 86 PDSAs posted by 21 teams (as of 9/1/08).
- 37 PDSAs have been studied by 17 teams.

PDSAs by Key Areas of Practice

1. Race/Ethnicity/Culture - 14
2. Family/Youth Engagement - 38
3. Tools - 6
4. Sound Decisions - 7
5. Integrated & Comprehensive - 3
6. Permanency & Well-Being - 7
7. Community Collaboration - 9
8. Services - 1
9. Requisite - 2; Data - 1

Southwest Thunderbirds Really Measure Up!

Congratulations to the Southwest Thunderbirds of Texas for being the **ONLY** team to post three months of measures! Way to go!!!

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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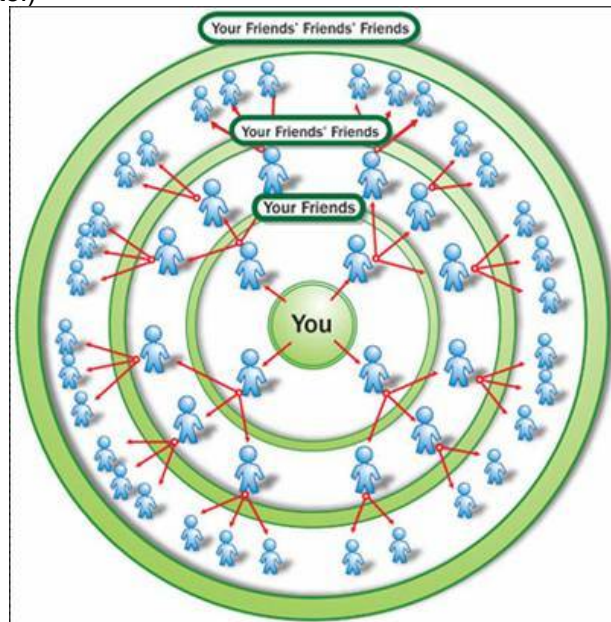
Spread and Sustainability

By Jen Agosti and Susan Dougherty
Model for Improvement Advisors

You've done a PDSA and it was fabulous. We mean really fabulous. So fabulous that the next week you expanded it and tested it with three families. And you learned even more, applied your learnings to the next test, and that was even more fabulous. You know this is the right way to do practice as you see the difference in the families who have been involved in the tests; you have heard it from your two colleagues who have tested it; and you feel it in your gut. But now what?

Spread (*verb*)- disseminating or expanding over a wide area.

This is the concept we will tackle at Learning Session Two. Moving from small tests of change to the way we do practice every time, with every family, across our entire target site and eventually our entire jurisdiction. We will even try spreading our own improvement at the Learning Session as a test (and hopefully demonstration!) of how spread really works. But until then, just remember that it's a bit like that old shampoo commercial: "...and she told two friends, and so on, and so on..." (And for those of you who don't remember that commercial, it's something like adding friends of friends of friends to your Facebook site.)



Why Pre-Work?

By Donna Parrish
Project Manager

We appreciate that the 21 teams participating in this collaborative all have competing demands, and sometimes staying focused on the project presents a new set of challenges. The pre-work packets that precede the Learning Sessions are designed to help teams come together and develop a common focus for the work of the collaborative. The pre-work packet for Learning Session Two provides assignments that allow teams to take stock in their growth since the first Learning Session, re-establish priorities and tell about their risk and safety process through the eyes of the families they serve. Please contact Donna Parrish if you require further assistance with completing any of the assignments.