Dear Conference Attendee:

Welcome to the International Conference on Innovations in Family Engagement and to beautiful sunny San Diego!

The Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect is excited to host this year’s event in the city known as “America’s Finest City”. Resting on the coast of the Pacific Ocean in Southern California and famous for its miles and miles of white-sand beaches and amazing weather, San Diego offers an abundance of fun attractions for visitors of all ages and a perfect backdrop against which to gather and share ideas and innovations to improve the lives of children and families and the systems that serve them.

As the new Executive Director of the Kempe Center, I am thrilled to lead an organization that has had such a long-standing history and commitment to improving the care and well-being of all children by strengthening families, communities and systems that serve them. Over the past 47 years since Dr. Kempe opened our doors, we have seen tremendous strides in the protection of children and support of families. Since our beginning, the Kempe Center has strived to deliver evidence-based clinical care; foster a culture of creativity, research and discovery; educate and train professionals, service providers, and community members in service to children and families; and provide local, national and international leadership in policy development and research.

One essential element that has not changed, however, is the basic human need to belong and feel connected, as without a sense a belonging, one can feel isolated and alone. For children, that belonging and connection is crucial to health and healing. Dr. Kempe knew this in 1956 when on his first day as Chairman of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado School of Medicine while on a visit to the pediatric ward of Colorado General Hospital he removed a sign on the wall reading “No visitors allowed” which announced his change from one hour daily parental visitation to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! Today this need for connection may be more important than ever as technology has changed the way in which we relate, bringing us closer in some ways, but more disconnected in others. And for those working with marginalized children and families, relationship and connection are especially important, providing the critical support and courage necessary to perform these roles.

As you all gather to share knowledge, enhance connection and engage souls in an effort to improve the lives of children and families and the systems that serve them, we challenge you to also welcome the opportunity to embrace new ideas such as addressing the challenges of healing work cultures and improving personal and collective wellness in this critical work. Our most vulnerable children and families are depending on it and the possibilities of what we can achieve together are limitless.

Finally, I want to extend my deep gratitude, to all of you for the challenging but courageous work that you do and to this year’s conference planning committee for sharing their ideas, expertise, and time to make this year’s conference a success. This would not have happened without them! Enjoy your time with each other and in the sun. We welcome your feedback to please share your ideas or comments with staff or in the evaluations.

Warm regard,

Kathryn Wells, MD, FAAP
about the conference

An Invigorating Learning Platform Since 1997

For more than two decades, this annual international conference has brought together a global audience of 500-strong committed innovators to re-envision how child welfare and other systems can meaningfully engage families in planning and decision making. It attracts child welfare system professionals, allied partners, courageous leaders, and people who envision systems working differently, more effectively and in partnership with families.

As a stimulating learning arena for leaders at all levels within human service organizations, you will find numerous opportunities to support you as you innovate in how you serve children and families. You will network with other leaders, share innovative practices and policies, create a link between research and practice, understand implementation successes and challenges, explore voice and participation of children/youth and extended family and community networks, and dialogue about system change with a special focus on power differentials, marginalized groups, disparities and disproportionality.

Family Engagement History

Since the early 1990s, public human service agencies, community-based organizations, and other institutions have implemented numerous family engagement strategies, system reforms, and decision-making models. The field of child welfare has made great strides to implement various inclusive and culturally responsive processes in how they serve families. The basic belief is that outcomes improve when service providers productively and positively engage with the family group in matters that directly or indirectly involve them. This construct holds true across many systems including child welfare, juvenile justice, aging and adult protection, education, and mental health.

“....you will find numerous opportunities to support you as you innovate in how you serve children and families.
Family Engagement Defined

Engagement is an inherently complex topic. It is defined as collaboration, partnership, inclusion, involvement, and cooperation. But what does it really mean and how do you know when it is happening meaningfully and effectively? What we know is this: when human service systems meaningfully engage children, youth, parents and extended family members, positive outcomes for children, families, and systems are likely more attainable. The engagement process begins with the first “hello,” knock on the door, or telephone call, and it must continue throughout the entire relationship between service providers and families. In most instances, it is imperative that the widest circle is created, extending far beyond engaging with the parent/caregiver and child/youth to including the extended family, and the family’s community and their informal networks.

“.......when human service systems meaningfully engage children, youth, parents and extended family members, positive outcomes for children, families, and systems are likely more attainable.

supporting values

With this conference, we will identify and showcase practices, policies, procedures and protocols that lead to best-practice implementation, advocacy and research that elevate these values:

1: FAMILIES AND THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
At a minimum, family groups need to be included in decision-making processes. To the extent possible, formal systems should strive to implement processes whereby family groups lead decision-making.

2: FAMILIES AS EXPERTS ON THEIR OWN LIVES

3: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IS A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS
Engaging with families is a collaborative process that brings together the extended family system and their natural supports with formal systems and community partners.

4: FORMAL AND INFORMAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS
Child welfare and allied systems are more successful when they combine agency and community resources with informal resources and supports.

5: GREATER CHILD SAFETY AND WELL-BEING
Through partnership and engagement with the family and their support systems, greater child safety and well-being is possible.
forms of family engagement

For engagement to be effective, systems have to be structured to work collaboratively and respectfully with parents, child/youth and broader kin networks. This requires systems to create the space, flexibility, creativity, and courageous leadership so that systems adapt to the uniqueness of each kin network rather than each kin network adapting to the system.

Actualizing family engagement starts with building relationships and rapport, forming the foundation for all practice areas including prevention/early help, investigations/assessments, safety planning, service planning, and decision making.

At the front-end of child welfare systems, many innovations and reforms have been created and implemented that embody family engagement principles and processes. For example, with the implementation of differential response (also called alternative response), front-end CPS systems are restructured, creating at least two different pathways to respond to child abuse and neglect reports that increase the intentional engagement of families. CPS systems have an increased emphasis on safety organized practice, signs of safety, comprehensive family assessments, trauma-informed care, and other innovations that engage with caregivers, children, youth and their family networks in determining their needs.

Throughout all stages of families’ involvement with child welfare systems, various family engagement strategies and techniques, including some form of family meetings are now consistently being embedded into child welfare practices. Such models as family group conferences, family team meetings, team decision meetings, family team conferences, child permanency mediation, child and family teams, family decision meetings, restorative conferences, family safety planning meetings, wraparound services, family finding, and family team decision making are some commonly used family meeting models. The common thread woven throughout all of these approaches is that none of them are possible without finding and engaging with the family.

All of these family meetings and other engagement practices rely on comprehensive policy and systemic supports to enable successful implementation and sustainability. This includes a focus on organizational readiness and workforce issues. Attending to the following three implementation drivers is critically important for implementation fidelity: Competency driver (coaching, training and selection), Organizational driver (systems intervention, facilitative administration and decision support/data system) and the Leadership Driver (technical and adaptive).

This is only the beginning. Many formal and informal opportunities to advance family engagement practices remain untapped and under-utilized.
In order to best facilitate learning for our diverse participants, we strive to offer an array of topical areas to choose from when selecting sessions to attend. To aid in your selections, each breakout session will be identified by the track within its description.

**PRACTICE**

Focus on what participants need to know, do, or feel to **forward a change in themselves, their team or agency, or their community** in serving families through direct practice.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Focus on what is needed to **develop and sustain a robust and thriving workforce** with healthy organizational culture and climate that supports family engagement practices.

**SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE**

Focus on **aligning systems with family engagement principles** requires attention to infrastructure, policies, implementation, partnerships, and collaboration.

**RESEARCH AND EVALUATION**

Share findings from research and evaluation efforts that can **inform the implementation and sustainability of family engagement** practices, processes, policies, and system reforms.
Dr. Jaiya John was born into foster care in New Mexico and is an internationally recognized humanitarian, author, speaker, poet, and youth mentor. He is the founder of Soul Water Rising, a global rehumanizing mission that has donated thousands of his books in support of social healing and offers scholarships to displaced and vulnerable youth. Dr. John is also the founder of Harvest Project, a global initiative reviving traditional community gathering and storytelling practices to fertilize social healing and liberation. He is a former professor of social psychology at Howard University, has authored numerous books, and has spoken to more than half a million people worldwide and audiences as large as several thousand, including national and international conferences, schools, indigenous reservations and communities, prisons and detention centers, shelters, and colleges. Dr. John is a National Science Foundation fellow and holds doctorate and master's degrees in social psychology from the University of California, Santa Cruz, with a focus on intergroup relations and identity development. As an undergraduate, he attended Lewis & Clark College, in Portland, Oregon, and lived in Kathmandu, Nepal, where he studied Tibetan holistic medicine through independent research with Tibetan doctors.


Following the opening keynote, there will be an opportunity for a meet-and-greet and book resource sharing and signing with Dr. John.
“Like It Never Even Happened [?]”: Restoring Trust, Re-engaging Families

Dondieneita Fleary-Simmons, MSW, Strategic Development Consultant, Madison, WI
Shirlyn Garrett, EdD, LCPC, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Chicago, IL
Lee Annes, MA, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Chicago, IL

Sometimes we invite parents and families to the table as decision makers in the lives of their children as though the family has always functioned well, and we have always honored their voices. But bad things have happened! It is both ineffectual and unfair to families not to acknowledge the typically tumultuous relationship that exists between them and the “care” agency and the broken trust that may exist between families and children. Families deserve more than to be invited to the table, ill-equipped, and as if that has always been a safe place. Respecting and valuing families’ voices often begins with redressing the harm and distrust that families have previously experienced. For months or years they have been marginalized, isolated, and excluded. Therefore, they do not believe that their opinions will be valued nor their voices heard. Families deserve more than information. They need agency!

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Utilizing FGDMs and FGCs to Address Juvenile Status Offenses

J’aime Allbee, MS, CDPT, Family Resource and Training Center, Coeur d’Alene, ID
Patricia Schaefer Nordquist, MSc, Family Resource and Training Center, Coeur d’Alene, ID

Juvenile status offenses such as truancy, runaways, and ungovernable/incorrigible behavior are often a symptom of a deeper family or systemic issue. Research compiled by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention shows that by placing youth in detention for these status offenses, they are more likely to re-offend or commit more serious crimes in the future. Come learn how the utilization of FGDMs and FGCs can assist families in addressing these issues with their youth to help them avoid detention. This will also be an opportunity for professionals to come together and learn from each other how various states and juvenile systems are honoring the deinstitutionalization of status offenders.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Learning Circle

Anita Barbee, PhD, MSSW, Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY
Lisa Purdy, MSSW, Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY
Courtney Harrison, MPA, CLH Strategies and Solutions, Denver, CO

The Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD), reviewed the literature and found that child welfare workers are experiencing high levels of secondary traumatic stress (STS). A total of 1,113 front line child welfare workers in thirteen jurisdictions completed the Bride (2007) Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale as part of a workforce needs assessment. An average of 54 percent of participants reported clinical levels of STS. When these elevated numbers are compared to the original Bride research of social workers, they far exceed the 15 percent he found. The panel will also discuss promising strategies and facilitate dialogue with participants about the implications and potential solutions STS has on the child welfare workforce.

SESSION TRACK: Research/Evaluation
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Collaboration between Families and the Child Welfare System: What Are the Settlers’ Responsibilities?

Marilee Sherry, MSW, RSW, Independent Consultant, Brantford, Ontario, Canada
Nancy Freymond, PhD, MSW, BSW, BA, RSW, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
Joanne Ebear, BSW, MSW, RSW, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

Embedded in the bureaucracy of contemporary North American child welfare systems are deep-rooted colonizing practices and processes that began more than a thousand years ago, when European settlers began arriving on Turtle Island (North America). The outcome has been the dehumanization of the North American indigenous peoples and others who are non-European, particularly those who are black. A child welfare system working collaboratively with children, youth, and their family/community systems includes addressing the power imbalances, transparency, creating space for participation and voice, inclusion, and cultural safety. These values are in direct contrast to colonization processes. What are the responsibilities of the settlers on Turtle Island to dismantle the oppressive colonization codes entrenched in the child welfare system that prevent genuine collaboration? How do barriers encountered in working collaboratively with those receiving services link to these codes? Together we will consider our collective settler responsibilities in decolonizing the child welfare system.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Learning Circle
Engaging Families Utilizing the DANSR Approach

Jenna Quigley, LMFT, Colorado Judicial Department—State Court Administrator’s Office, Denver, CO
Alison Young, BS, Colorado Judicial Department—State Court Administrator’s Office, Denver, CO
Megan Kearsley, LPC, Colorado Judicial Department—State Court Administrator’s Office, Denver, CO

Colorado’s Dependency & Neglect System Reform (DANSR) infuses best practices from family treatment drug courts into the larger dependency and neglect system for families who experience substance use or co-occurring disorders through use of the DANSR approach and principles. It is implemented in seventeen counties, with plans to expand statewide. Presenters will provide an overview of the DANSR approach, principles, and collaboration, focusing on how the approach engages and improves outcomes for families. More specific information regarding cross-system collaborative efforts, two-generational family engagement, and DANSR approach implementation at the state and local levels will be provided. Presenters will emphasize how family engagement efforts through the DANSR approach strengthen families and aim to improve outcomes related to permanency and well-being. Through experiential activities, participants will enhance compassion for families and feel the impact of the DANSR approach.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

How to Get to “Eureka!” in Your Family Engagement Program Using Continuous Quality Improvement

Amy Papandrea, MPA, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Rensselaer, NY
Adele Costa, MPA, New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Rensselaer, NY

There are a lot of ways to build a system that effectively engages families, but how do you know if the model you’ve chosen lives up to the hype in practice or if your program is being implemented with fidelity? In this session, the differential response managers for New York State (NYS) Office and Children and Family Services will share how systematically applying the principles of continuous quality improvement (CQI) helped them paint a vivid statewide picture of program performance and its real-time, real-world nuances in each participating district. This knowledge has since allowed NYS to identify and leverage key bright spots in family engagement practice and to effectively prioritize and tailor supports in response to emergent concerns. Come learn how CQI can transform how you manage your family engagement program.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
How a Public/Private Partnership Is Innovating the Way They Serve LGBTQ+ Youth and Their Families

Shannon Deinhart, LISW-S, Kinnect, Cleveland, OH  
Karen Anderson, LISW-S, Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services, Cleveland, OH  
Dana Prince, MPH, PhD, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH

An LGBTQ+ youth’s lack of permanency and accepting relationships has very serious consequences. Research shows that LGBTQ+ youth are overrepresented in child welfare, and a study in LA County found they made up almost 20 percent of the foster care population. Knowing you want to serve LGBTQ+ youth more effectively is an amazing first step! Knowing what to do to get your agency ready and how to determine who your community partners are that can help is your second step! What approach would you take and what steps would you consider in order to be successful? Come learn how Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services and their local partner, Kinnect, and Case Western Reserve University came together to develop a three-pronged approach to develop better outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth and their families. This collaboration is made possible by a grant from the Quality Improvement Center at the University of Maryland.

SESSION TRACK: Systems  
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

North Carolina Child Welfare Family Leadership: Engaging and Investing in Partnership

Kara Allen-Eckard, MSW, North Carolina State University Center for Family and Community Engagement, Raleigh, NC  
Kristin O’Connor, MEd, North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services-Division of Social Services, Raleigh, NC  
Child Welfare Family Partner, Raleigh, NC

North Carolina’s 2015 federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) revealed a need for stronger family engagement at both the practice and systemic level. North Carolina embraced that opportunity to develop a multilayer Child Welfare Family Leadership Model. This model established a systemic approach to involving families in conversations and decisions about child welfare policy and practice. Presenters will share practical considerations, lessons learned, and implementation strategies through the lens of the Kempe Center’s five supporting values of family engagement (families as a part of decision making processes, families as experts on their own lives, family engagement as a collaborative process, the need for formal and informal resources and supports, and working to provide greater child safety and well-being). Participants will be encouraged to think about how to be intentional in their actions so families are not only engaged but also invested in system change.

SESSION TRACK: Systems  
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
Fathers Matter: Engaging, Involving, and Advocating for Dads and Their Children

Kelly Lynn Beck, JD, National Institute of Permanent Family Connectedness at Seneca Family of Agencies, Oakland, CA
Martin Henderson, Executive Director, Fatherhood Matters, Incorporated, San Antonio, TX

A highly interactive workshop facilitated by two experts in the field of father representation, father involvement, and training, the workshop begins with an overview of the legal requirements for identifying and involving fathers and his relatives in child welfare, delinquency, and family law proceedings. This will be followed by an in-depth exploration and discussion of the research surrounding obstacles and challenges fathers and practitioners face in these proceedings, including a focused discussion about individual biases, recognizing and addressing those obstacles to effectively advocate for fathers. There will be further consideration and discussion of why some fathers appear reluctant to participate in these proceedings or even defiant in their behavior toward professionals. A resource tool will be provided to all participants that will help guide the practitioner to uncover intentional strengths and true commitments from the fathers they represent.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Fostering Healthy Futures: An Innovative Approach to Family Engagement through Youth Mentoring

Heather Taussig, PhD, University of Denver and Kempe Center, Denver, CO
Robyn Wertheimer, LCSW, University of Denver and Kempe Center, Denver, CO

Fostering Healthy Futures (FHF) is an evidence-based program for preadolescent children in out-of-home care designed to promote child well-being through weekly skills groups and 1:1 mentoring. Although the program was not designed with family engagement as a core focus, the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that families (both biological and substitute) experience high levels of program engagement. Over ten years of the program, only one biological parent (of more than 200) withdrew their child, and research demonstrated higher rates of reunification and permanency for children who participated, compared to a control group. Preliminary findings from an adaptation of FHF for teens with open cases (over half of whom are living at home) suggest higher rates of case closure for FHF families. Using video, pictures, quotes, and statistics, this workshop will highlight a nontraditional approach to family engagement demonstrated to improve both child well-being and permanency.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

In Between Family Engagement Meetings: How to Plan and Prepare for Success

Paul Gamino, BSW, Larimer County Department of Human Services, Fort Collins, CO
Sarah Gadomski, MSW, Larimer County Department of Human Services, Fort Collins, CO

Any successful event relies on the behind-the-scenes planning and preparation that is completed leading up to the big day. Facilitators are often the party planners charged with laying the groundwork for successful and productive family engagement meetings. As impartial parties, we have a unique opportunity to influence positive outcomes by preparing participants to create and invest in rigorous plans that keep children safe and empower families and their support networks to resolve challenges independently. Although it’s easy to conceptualize the importance of preparation, it is much harder to put this idea into practice when faced with a demanding workload, competing obligations, and preconceived notions of success. In this session, we will examine the benefits of prioritizing prep work, the skill set needed to do the work while remaining impartial, and the role facilitators play to increase the chances for successful outcomes.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
Meeting the Emotional Well-Being of Our Most Challenging Families—Making Our Classrooms Successful

Estelle Macdonald, Head Teacher, OBE, Hull Collaborative Academy Trust, Hull, United Kingdom
Joanne Faulkner, Hull Collaborative Academy Trust, Hull, United Kingdom

This workshop will explore the relationships between schools and our hard-to-reach children and families in Hull, UK. This unique and innovative project is delivering significant positive outcomes for those who are hard to engage and provides a positive experience for our families within schools in Hull. It uses a continuum of restorative approaches and family group conferencing, ensuring that everyone within the child's education is able to play a supportive role and give the child every opportunity to be as successful as possible. This has produced impressive results that have been advantageous both within family life and school. To make our children successful in education we need to think outside of the box; if we don’t widen the net and engage with their families, we are simply firefighting and waiting for the next day and the next incident.

**SESSION TRACK:** Practice  
**SESSION TYPE:** Workshop

Exploring a Continuum of Possibilities to Mobilize Family Networks in Immediate Safety Planning

Kelli DeCook, MSW, LGSW, Family Service Rochester, Rochester, MN  
Kari Hohn, BSW, Olmsted County Child and Family Services, Rochester, MN  
Jessie Stratton, MSW, Olmsted County Child and Family Services, Rochester, MN  

Research and practice wisdom tell us that kids do best when in the care of their family network, but at times, our systems are not set up to engage those family networks when there are imminent safety concerns. This will provide one system’s experience in building capacity to respond to immediate worries that mobilizes the child’s natural supports to keep kids safe. Through case examples and discussion, we will demonstrate a practice model that partners with families in leading a process that can increase the agency and social worker’s confidence that there will be enduring safety for children over time.

**SESSION TRACK:** Systems  
**SESSION TYPE:** Workshop

We Know Supportive Connections Improve Child Well-Being, So Why Are They So Difficult to Measure?

Candice Dosman, Texas CASA Inc., Austin, TX  
Jennifer Huffman, MPAff, Child and Family Research Partnership, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX  

Building supportive connections and long-term networks for children and their families is one of the goals of Texas’s family-finding approach called Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE). Information about the four-year independent evaluation of the statewide implementation of CFE will be shared, including the difficulties with measuring the impact creating connections has on child well-being. If you’ve found yourself struggling to report this finding or have questions on how to quantify this most often qualitative outcome, then this is the workshop for you. Attendees will learn from members of the implementation and evaluative team, as well as one another, as strategies are brainstormed to address this conundrum.

**SESSION TRACK:** Research/Evaluation  
**SESSION TYPE:** Workshop
Broadening the Lens to Provide a Comprehensive Family-Centered Approach

Theresa Lemus, MBA, BSN, RN, LADC, Children and Family Futures, Lake Forest, CA
Marianna Corona, LCSW, Children and Family Futures, Lake Forest, CA

Parental substance use disorders are often a main reason why children and families become involved with the child welfare system and family courts. A comprehensive family-centered approach, grounded in cross-systems collaboration and evidence-based practices, is needed to effectively serve these families. This workshop will highlight successful strategies that the Prevention and Family Recovery grantees implemented to better engage families in their Family Treatment Court and involve them in case planning, family-strengthening services, and decision making to improve family outcomes. Presenters will discuss selected grantee strategies and approaches to enhance and improve quality parenting/family time (visitation), ensure staffings and collaborative team meetings are more family focused, leverage the support of foster and kinship caregivers as a supportive resource, and incorporate family group decision making in a tribal community.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Coaching to Fidelity—Use of Case Review Findings for Improvement and Sustainably of Differential Response

Sandra Davidson, MSW, New York City Administration for Children’s Services, New York, NY
Sharon Gibbs-Salisbury, LMSW, New York City Administration for Children’s Services, New York, NY

NYC’s Administration for Children’s Services successfully piloted an innovative review process of our DR/FAR case practice with implementation of a case review tool which allows for a strengths-based analysis. Case reviews focus on supporting FAR Child Protective Specialist (CPS) that are consistently striving to meet with all family members within 48 hours of case assignment while understanding the importance of the first contact in engaging all members of the family, completion of the family-led assessment guide, contacting the referral source, making use of collateral contacts and ensuring there is a ‘warm handoff’ to service providers. In this interactive workshop participants will learn how experienced FAR coaches work with CPS staff utilizing case review findings to develop improvement plans with goals which are supported by targeted coaching focused on system, procedure, and practice improvements.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
Wednesday, November 20, 2019

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM, BREAKFAST

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM, KEYNOTE

Cultivating Inclusive Workplaces

Dr. Brenda J. Allen
Professor Emerita, University of Colorado

Brenda J. Allen (PhD, Howard University) retired in April of 2019 as a Professor of Communication and the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Colorado Denver and Anschutz Medical Campus. Throughout her career, Dr. Allen has worked tirelessly to promote more inclusive, humane, and equitable communication and professional practices. She has developed a track record for scholarship, teaching, service, mentorship, and training related to organizational communication, diversity, inclusion, and equity. Among Dr. Allen’s numerous publications is a groundbreaking book entitled *Difference Matters: Communicating Social Identity*.

Dr. Allen presents keynote speeches and conducts workshops for a variety of audiences on topics such as inclusive leadership, cultivating inclusion in the workplace, implicit bias, empowerment, culturally responsive teaching, radical self-care, and diversity hiring practices. She has received numerous awards and accolades for her efforts, including the first Annual Ally of the Year Award from the GLBT Alliance at CU Boulder; an Excellence in Leadership Award from the CU System Faculty Council; and a Master Teacher Award from the Western States Communication Association. As part of her ongoing radical self-care plan, Dr. Allen enjoys listening to audiobooks, binging on Netflix, and trying new restaurants with foodie friends.
Cultural Wisdom: How Traditional Hawaiian Values Can Help Strengthen Our Family Engagement Work
Wilma Friesema, MFT, EPIC `Ohana, Inc., Honolulu, HI

FGC, originating in New Zealand, was born out of traditional Maori practices that emphasized restoration of relationship harmony over punishment. Similarly, traditional Hawaiian cultural practices are attuned to relational balance within families and communities. A broad range of teachings reinforce strong family ties and the interconnectedness of their people. In this workshop we will share some key Hawaiian values that can enhance our family engagement efforts; values that play an important role in making EPIC `Ohaha’s FGDM, `Ohana Conferencing, successful. Parallels to Western practices and universal values will be highlighted, so an integration of the spirit of the Hawaiian cultural teachings can be translated into practice in other communities.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Family Engagement and the Family First Prevention Services Act
Tess Mahnken-Weatherspoon, LMSW, MPA, Hillside Children’s Center, Rochester, NY
Reinette Mullenix, MSPH, Hillside Children’s Center, Rochester, NY

The Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 will have a profound impact on the need for improved family engagement. The bill’s stated intention is to increase prevention services and move children in foster care out of residential care and congregate care settings. Family First redirects the way that states will be reimbursed for their services. This workshop will educate participants about the impact of the Family First Prevention Services Act and the impact on services for youth and families. The workshop will present family finding and family engagement strategies for engaging parents and extended family members to ensure the safety and well-being of their children and supporting the reunification of children/youth with their families. The workshop will also provide strategies related to supporting kinship care for children whose parents are unable to care for them.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Family or Team Meeting Toxins and Leading to the Antidotes
Michelle Howard, MS, LPC, ORSCC, DWCF, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO
Kasey Matz, MA, ORSCC, ACC, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO

Family and team meetings, at their best, require that we work collaboratively as a team to support the needs of children and youth involved in the child welfare system. Unfortunately all too often, toxins—otherwise known as blaming, defensiveness, stonewalling, contempt, and flooding—can show up and derail the effectiveness of the meetings. Join us for this learning circle to walk the toxin grid and learn how to use the antidotes to toxic behavior and communication, feeding forward the behavior changes you want to create successful meetings.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Learning Circle

Preventive Response: Building Solutions with Families to Support Child Well-Being and Student Success
Tracy Miller, MSW, LMSW, Onondaga County DCFS–ACCESS, Syracuse, NY
Jessica Hopp, BS, Coordinated Care Services Inc., Syracuse, NY
Kimberly Frost, BA, Coordinated Care Services Inc., Syracuse, NY
Raquel Viel, BA, Coordinated Care Services Inc., Syracuse, NY

The ACCESS program in Onondaga County includes a Child Welfare Preventive Response Team that partners with families, student support professionals, school districts, and government units to assist with identification of child/youth needs, family assessment, and best-fit service connection to support opportunities for strengthening child well-being, family functioning, and student success. The Preventive Response Model includes a family engagement early intervention focus with a dedicated team of school liaisons who provide technical assistance, consultations, and referral response. The process embraces a family-driven approach to navigating child-serving systems and use of problem-solving and solution-building strategies that provide a foundation for mitigation, stabilization, and planning to enhance progressive opportunities and support sustainable outcomes. Join members of the ACCESS team to explore the Preventive Response Model, program implementation, and lessons learned along the way.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Wednesday, November 20, 2019
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM, BREAKOUT SESSIONS
Workforce Stabilization: A Parallel Process to Family Engagement

Michael DeGretto, BSW, Arapahoe County Department of Human Services, Aurora, CO
Irene Holguin-Sanchez, BSW, Arapahoe County Department of Human Services, Aurora, CO
Courtney Edwards, Arapahoe County Department of Human Services, Aurora, CO
Grant Miller, BS, Arapahoe County Department of Human Services, Aurora, CO

In 2014, in response to an increasing child welfare workload, Arapahoe County Child and Adult Protection Services leadership thoughtfully and holistically created a workforce stability initiative that parallels our county’s family engagement practice model, which led to significant improvements in staff retention. As we continued to prioritize family engagement, we realized that this same model could be applied to our hiring process to engage our staff. By replicating the foundational components of our practice model, including relationship building, implementing wrap-around supports and resources, transparency, and focus on well-being, we saw an increase in our staff retention. Over a five-year period, caseworker retention improved by 76.1 percent (from 47.3 to 83.3 percent). Over this same time frame, family engagement also improved due to caseworker continuity throughout the family’s involvement with our department, leading to better outcomes for families in Arapahoe County.

Monitoring FGDM Practice to Inform FGDM Continuous Quality Improvement

Isabella Rivera, MPH, Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, Mechanicsburg, PA
Eliza White, MSW, Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, Mechanicsburg, PA

The workshop will demonstrate how evaluation data presented through a dashboard can be used to monitor and inform FGDM practice. The dashboard allows county and state stakeholders to access data so that they can answer questions related to practice. The data is captured in an easy-to-understand format and reported in real time. Presenters will use the dashboard to highlight families’ experiences with conferences, including their perceptions of cultural safety, family leadership, and community partnership, as well as reports of outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being. This workshop will further explore practice needs and the utilization of data to inform areas of FGDM practice that need strengthening and provide further guidance. Additionally, a discussion will be held around how this information can be used by counties and the state to plan and monitor continuous quality improvement goals.

Family Voices United: Leveraging Lived Experience, Collectively

Celeste Bodner, Executive Director, FosterClub, Seaside, OR
Jaia Lent, MSW, Generations United, Washington DC
Constituent Consultants

Advocates with lived experience in the child welfare system have long been engaged in separate silos—as youth/alumni, birth parents, and kinship/relative caregivers (sometimes referred to collectively as constituents). We believe there is power in bringing these voices together to impact system change and that with support, it can lead to greater innovations and improvement in effectively serving families. Join an interactive dialogue with those with lived experience and national organizations to explore this unique approach of leveraging their voices, collectively. Learn how national partners have supported cross-constituent collaboration, challenges that were encountered, tools for leveraging joint advocacy, and ways those with lived experience are collectively engaged to educate, inform, and transform the systems supporting families. Discuss opportunities related to the implementation of Family First Prevention Services Act and ways that states and jurisdictions can engage constituents.
Engaging Families Affected by Prenatal Substance Exposure: Collaborative Community Court Teams

Ken DeCerchio, MSW, CAP, Children and Family Futures, Lake Forest, CA
Jill Gresham, MA, Children and Family Futures, Lake Forest, CA

This session will include an overview of the National Quality Improvement Center for Collaborative Community Court Teams and the implementation strategies from fifteen court teams to engage families of infants and young children affected by substance use disorders and prenatal substance exposure. The presenters will discuss the policy and practice implications of the CARA amendments to CAPTA, state-level policy and practice strategies to address infants affected by prenatal substance exposure and their families, and the role of collaborative community court teams in implementing Plans of Safe Care. Challenges and barriers to collaboration will also be discussed, as well as the implementation of strategies to engage families during the prenatal period.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

The Joys, Fears, and Tears of Replicating an Evidence-Informed Program

Mike Kenney, Kinnect, Cleveland, OH
Maria Roehrkeasse, LSW, MSSA, Kinnect, Cleveland, OH
Ian Forber-Pratt, MSW, Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition, St. Louis, MO

Learn from the Ohio experience of implementing and scaling an evidence-informed program, 30 Days to Family®. Regardless of which evidence-informed program your agency is undertaking, there are rich lessons to learn from the Ohio experience, such as avoiding costly mistakes, overcoming systemic hurdles, and maintaining model fidelity. To learn more about this project’s funding, visit www.kinnectohio.org. During this session, you will also learn about the 30 Days to Family program, which is proven to increase placement stability, result in faster reunification/permanency, and save at least $10,000 per child served. To learn more about the model, visit www.foster-adopt.org.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Team Decision Making’s Next Chapter: Evolving toward an Evidence-Based Prevention Strategy

Heather Meitner, MSW, LCSW, NCCD Children’s Research Center, Madison, WI
Pat Rideout, JD, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD

This workshop will offer participants an overview of team decision making (TDM) and how it has become an integral part of child welfare practice models in many jurisdictions. Recent research efforts to demonstrate TDM as an evidence-informed prevention strategy will be shared. Facilitators will host a discussion of best practices, how the TDM model attends to each, and how to measure TDM’s impact on outcomes. Two distinct features include the following: 1) TDM is held for EVERY out-of-home-care decision. 2) Data is collected from every meeting and reported (monthly, quarterly, annually) in reports generated from a Web-based data application. TDM implementation support will be moving from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to the NCCD Children’s Research Center in 2020, and the scope of work and contact information for TDM refresh consultations or new implementations will be offered.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
Relationships between Lateral Violence in Aboriginal Communities & Family Group Conferencing

Mel Brown, Master of Indigenous Studies–Healing & Trauma, Ballina, New South Wales, Australia
Michael Riddell, Ballina, New South Wales, Australia

This workshop will address the relationship between lateral violence in Australian Aboriginal communities and its impact on the outcomes of family group conferencing (FGC). Lateral violence prevents our families from attaining better outcomes, as culturally we have a very strong sense of being oppressed, which is linked directly to colonization and then, later, assimilation policies. During the FGC process, lateral violence is an issue that arises. Our families often come together to show a united front against the ‘Authorities’ (Child Safety Services), however, the realities are that many of our families are unable to sustain ongoing change to ensure their children’s safety, because of the significant amount of infighting between our Aboriginal families and in our communities; we are often our own worst saboteurs. This workshop will provide an information session and a time for case studies and questions.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Trans 101: Cultural Responsiveness While Serving LGBTQ+ Children and Youth

Luck Pecas Luckey, MS, Independent Consultant, San Diego, CA
Heather Meitner, MSW, LCSW, NCCD Children’s Research Center, Madison, WI

Luck is genderqueer, a person who identifies as non-binary. Heather is a heterosexual, cisgender woman. Luck and Heather are master practitioners of Safety Organized Practice, demonstrating how to work across differences. This training will engage participants in understanding sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE). Participants will be introduced to terms and concepts associated with the LGBTQ+ community to increase their ability to engage with children and youth. A solution-focused approach to working with queer children that stresses the importance of staying sensitive to their needs will be modeled. Trainees will have the opportunity to “try on” best practice when interviewing LGBTQ children to determine preferred name and pronouns. Solution-focused inquiry techniques will be offered as a strategy to help children and youth feel safe, prevent internalized biases from becoming barriers, and address the unintended impact of heterosexism and transphobia.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Tribal Communities: Practical Tips for Creating a Collaborative Response to Child Sex Trafficking

Charisma De Los Reyes, MSW, Child Welfare Services, San Diego, CA
Emily Harlan, JD, County Counsel County of San Diego, San Diego, CA
Karan Kolb, MPsy, Indian Health Clinic, San Diego, CA

The National Human Trafficking Hotline reported that 37 percent of sex trafficking cases involving American Indians and Alaska Natives referenced minor victims. This statistic is particularly concerning for San Diego as San Diego County has the most Indian reservations of any county in the United States. Recognizing that sex trafficking disproportionately affects American Indian and Alaska Native youth, we needed to act. This session will examine San Diego’s efforts to foster sustained, multidisciplinary collaboration with our local tribal communities to better identify and respond to commercial sexual exploitation of children. Attendees will hear lessons learned from San Diego along with practical tips for engaging with tribes and creating a successful multidisciplinary team in their own communities.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
An Adolescent, a Kinship Caregiver, and a Caseworker—Lessons Learned Twenty-Five Years Later
Lori Oswald, MSW, LCSW, Arapahoe County Department of Human Services, Aurora, CO
Chrystal Lester, Aurora, CO
Jennie Santistiven, Aurora, CO

Chrystal’s story is one of hope and resilience. In 1994, Chrystal entered the foster care system at age 11 when she was placed into kinship care. She was never able to return home but successfully emancipated when she was 18 years old. So often this is where the story ends for Human Services. However, twenty-five years later, Chrystal, her kinship caregiver, and her caseworker came together to develop a powerful workshop about lessons learned regarding Chrystal’s journey through the child welfare system. Come join this unique opportunity to hear from each perspective to help transform our system.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Courageous Conversations
Claudia Smith Kearney, MBA, Center for Family and Community Engagement, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

Cross-cultural conversations should be a celebrated learning of differences. But what happens when those conversations become passionate, emotional, not-so-pleasant cultural clashes? In this interactive training, participants will examine personal awareness, biases, and assumptions that can unknowingly create barriers to having courageous conversations. Participants will gain shared knowledge and skills on how to build cultural safety as a critical first step in not only developing best practices with diverse families, but also in creating an inclusive, supportive environment to have cross-cultural conversations.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Utilizing FGC Model to Create Independent Living Transition Plans
Patricia Schaefer Nordquist, Master’s in School Counseling, Family Resource and Training Center, Coeur d’Alene, ID
J’aime Allbee, MS, Family Resource and Training Center, Coeur d’Alene, ID

This workshop will explore the use of family group conferencing models to assist foster youth with developing transition plans to support their success once they exit the foster care system. Through this process, we aim to honor the youth’s voice and empower them in the decision-making process. Assessment tools to facilitate this process will be presented and discussed. Case study scenarios will be used to engage participants in small-group discussions as well as a general discussion time to encourage the sharing of ideas among the participants. Come join us to gain ideas to broaden your current practice or to guide new program development!

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Our Path to Innovation
Darlene Kirkup, BA, BSW, RSW, Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba, Brandon, Manitoba, Canada

Child welfare agencies face the unique task of needing to innovate while operating within a culture of historical trauma, heavy caseloads, and scarce resources. In this field, there is seldom a sense that we have enough time and energy or that we are making a meaningful difference in the lives of the children and families we serve. Our agency’s (Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba) shift toward becoming more empathetic, respectful, understanding, and trauma informed has had profound positive outcomes. Our path to innovation has resulted in improved staff engagement and work satisfaction, positive outcomes for families, and a significant reduction of days in care. Importantly, this shift has also given our agency the ability to demonstrate cost savings and to invest these savings in preventative programming. This session will provide practical information on how to shift the culture of your agency while authentically engaging families in ALL decisions made with them.

SESSION TRACK: Workforce
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
Translating Research to Practice: Innovations in Developing a Practice-Research Partnership

Patricia Carlson, PhD, MSW, University of Connecticut, Mansfield, CT
Brenda Kurz, PhD, MSW, University of Connecticut, Mansfield, CT
Marc Winokur, PhD, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO
Kimberly Nilson, MSW, Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Hartford, CT
Laura Solomon, Colorado Department of Human Services, Denver, CO

In this workshop, researchers and practitioners will share what they have learned from differential response evaluations in two states, discuss the intersection of research and practice in differential response, and seek participant input on how research in this area can best serve practice and how practice can serve evaluation. Members of the evaluation teams from Colorado and Connecticut and their state partners will describe and present a summary of findings to date on their respective differential response programs. The panel will also discuss the challenges of evaluating differential response, such as data limitations and measuring outcomes. Finally, the panel will address how the evaluation results have informed and shaped practice and how information gained from practice has shaped evaluation. The workshop will use Web-based assessment and discussion tools to engage the participants in a conversation about how research can better address practice needs.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

The Parallel Process: How Colorado Has Improved the Developmental Screening Process

Matt Holtman, MSW, LCSW, Colorado Department of Human Services, Denver, CO
Lenita Hartman, MA, Colorado Department of Human Services, Denver, CO
Chris J. Miller, EdD, Colorado Department of Education, Denver, CO

In Colorado, county departments of human services, with supervision by the Colorado Department of Human Services, are responsible for referring children ages zero through four years for developmental screening. Local Community Centered Boards (CCBs) are responsible for responding to CAPTA referrals and local Special Education Administrative Units are responsible for conducting screening and/or evaluation to determine if a child has a significant delay so the CCB can determine them eligible for early intervention services through the Part C system. For children ages three through four years, there is no one agency or system responsible for responding to referrals from child welfare for developmental screening. By focusing on the experience of the families during this process and collaborating across systems, Colorado is working to simplify the process in order to increase the number of families who complete the eligibility process and engage in early intervention services.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Core Components of Practicing Fidelity

Charmaine Utz, MSW, YMCA of San Diego County, San Diego, CA
Danielle Zuniga, MS, YMCA of San Diego County, San Diego, CA
Bob Friend, LCSW, National Institute for Permanent Family Connectedness, Seneca Family of Agencies, Oakland, CA

This workshop (best suited for supervisors and administrative personnel) will outline core components that could be universally applied to any program to develop and maintain fidelity, including a tool, supervision, coaching, and consultation. Participants will hear about the experiences of leadership in a community-based organization that shifts the focus from working in silos to seeking alignment between child welfare and YMCA staff, integrating youth-led practices, and prioritizing relationships over placement. This approach is designed to create and support enduring family relationships and networks and is supported by partner experts (National Institute for Permanent Family Connectedness, Darla Henry & Associates [3-5-7 Model]) and Casey Family Programs through ongoing coaching and consultation to support model fidelity.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
Engaging youth in child welfare cases can be challenging in the best of times. When you add mental health issues into the mix, dealing with those challenges in addition to assessing for safety or crisis intervention and when there are worries about self-harm or suicidal ideation, engagement can feel downright intimidating. All too often it can feel easier to focus on parents rather than engaging the child. In this interactive session, we will look at the occurrence of four of the most common mental health disorders in child welfare cases: anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and ADHD. We will gain a basic understanding of common adolescent mental health disorders, learn to identify a person in crisis, explore warning signs and risk factors for suicide, learn how to engage and support a child who may be in crisis, and discuss how to guide the family in creating an effective safety plan or family plan. We will also review the importance of integrating community resources into the plan.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Is the Meeting Fitting the Family or Is the Family Fitting the Meeting?
Anita Horner, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO

Given the multitude of family decision making meetings that are being used to involve and actively include family groups in developing emergent and long-term plans for their loved ones, many questions may arise. How do we determine what type of meeting to offer? Should the same type of meeting be offered for all decisions and plans throughout the life of the family group’s involvement? How can more than one type of meeting be offered so that the meetings don’t compete with each other? What steps can be taken to provide family groups with the information they need in order to decide what type of meeting they would prefer? This learning circle will address these questions and others. Come join us for a stimulating discussion, ready to share your insights and learn from others!

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Learning Circle

Exploring the Benefits and Challenges of Semi-Structured, Monthly Family Team Meetings
Anna Rockhill, MPP, Portland State University, Portland, OR
Christine Cooper, Portland State University, Portland, OR

Follow-up meetings are a recommended feature of family group decision making practice, and meetings are increasingly used at multiple points during a case. However, little research has been done on the use of multiple or a series of family team meetings. This session will serve as a forum for exploring some of the benefits and challenges of multiple/frequent family team meetings, building on findings from an evaluation of monthly meetings implemented as part of a Title IV-E Waiver. Benefits include ongoing support and encouragement and positive relationships between parents and providers; challenges include questions regarding families’ control over the meeting process as well as time constraints for both families and providers. Session participants will be encouraged to offer their opinions regarding the practice of frequent/multiple meetings, and the group will brainstorm potential solutions.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
Compassion fatigue in child welfare is commonly accepted as an occupational hazard that individuals face, without much thought on the impact to the families we serve and the organizations we represent. Research shows wide-reaching benefits of building individual and organizational resilience, including an increased capacity to engage with families, increased productivity, and greater adaptability and creativity in stressful situations. Larimer County successfully implemented the FREE Resilience Alliance (RA) curriculum in 2014 to provide ongoing psychoeducation to combat the impact of compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress across all levels of the organization. Learn from our journey of implementing and sustaining this NCTSN, evidence-supported program, including lessons learned, commonly asked questions from agencies starting their own RA program, the effects on family engagement and workplace morale, and tips to move your agency from talking to talk to walking the walk!
RED Teams to Support Community Agency and Family Engagement

Julie Lenhardt, MSSW, San Francisco City and County Human Service Agency, San Francisco, CA
Brenda Quintero, Instituto Familiar de la Raza, San Francisco, CA
Jill Duerr Berrick, University of California, Berkeley, CA

RED (Review, Evaluate, Direct) Teams have been utilized to screen for differential response (DR), but RED Teams have not yet been evaluated to determine their effect on increasing family engagement with DR. This workshop will showcase how one large public child welfare agency uses RED Teams to increase community agency involvement in family assessment and engagement. Lessons learned will be shared, including perceptions of benefits and drawbacks to RED Teams for agency staff and community agency providers. Staff will describe the mechanisms at play in promoting greater family engagement and the utilization of a consultation framework to collect and organize information. In addition to describing the model, findings from a pseudo-randomized trial comparing RED Teams to usual services will be presented. We examine whether RED Teams increase the proportion of families referred to and served by DR and whether children are less likely to be re-referred within six months.

A Window into Family Group Conferencing and Sustainability in New South Wales

Annette Smith, BSW, New South Wales, Australia

This presentation will provide an overview of FGC in Australia from 1992 to present. FGC is currently undergoing a rejuvenation in New South Wales, influenced by the growing numbers of children and young people not able to live with their families and entering care. Notions of permanency and family are forefront in dialogue. There is currently much verbal enthusiasm at political, structural, and practice levels to grow the model. There is, however, concern that FGC may continue to travel down the same road it has previously, with patchy uptake and poor outcomes, unless proper resources and attention are paid to quality implementation, model fidelity, and sustainability. This presentation will look at the history of FGC and analyze what is currently occurring, with acknowledgment of the importance of citizenship and purposeful engagement of workers and agencies with families. It will recognize the philosophical commonalities with family finding, lifelong links, and restorative justice.

Utilizing Peer Mentorship as a Form of Engagement and Strengthening Decision Making for Permanency

Lauren Zanotti, BSW, Arizona Department of Child Safety, Phoenix, AZ
Luis Fragoso, Peer Mentor, Arizona Department of Child Safety, Phoenix, AZ

The Arizona Department of Child Safety Fostering Sustainable Connections (FSC) Program strives to achieve its goal of reducing the amount of children/youth that are residing in congregate care. The FSC Peer Mentorship Program is designed to provide the youth valuable education or resources to assist them in making informed decisions to improve their future well-being, support permanency, and nurture meaningful connections.
Predicting Success for Promising Youth in Colorado

Adrianna Hernandez, MSW, Colorado Department of Human Services, Denver, CO
Lisa Mayer, LCSW, Colorado Department of Human Services, Denver, CO
Sheila Dalton, MPA, Colorado Department of Human Services, Denver, CO

Colorado is using two different analytic models to predict risk of reentry and aging out of the child welfare system. To improve our practice, the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) Division of Child Welfare is partnering with county departments, Casey Family Programs, National Implementation Research Network, and Eckerd to launch the Sustained Permanency Project. The objective of this project is to utilize implementation science to develop and implement a practice model to lessen the likelihood of reentry. The second model is Predictive Analytics For Legally Free Children and Youth, aimed to strengthen permanent connections and identify legal permanence. Research was conducted by CDHS in 2014 to identify distinct factors impacting permanency in this population. Using these predictive factors, an algorithm was created to calculate the risk of emancipation. This guides our practice efforts in assisting Colorado children and youth toward more successful outcomes.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Recovery Support Specialists as an Engagement Strategy for Families Affected by Substance Use Disorders and Child Welfare Involvement

Russ Bermejo, MSW, Children and Family Futures, Lake Forest, CA
Janelle Sanders, MA, Children and Family Futures, Lake Forest, CA

Families involved with the child welfare system who are affected by substance use disorders have complex needs that contribute to lower reunification rates and longer stays in out-of-home care for children. To improve outcomes for these families, a growing number of child welfare agencies and family court programs have integrated peers and recovery specialists into their service delivery models. This session will highlight the use of peers and recovery support specialists as an engagement strategy for families involved with child welfare services and affected by substance use disorders. This presentation will provide an overview of the Mentor Parent Program in Santa Clara, California (peer support model) and the Alcohol and Other Drug Waiver Demonstration Project in Illinois (recovery specialist model). The information will include details about each of the program’s organizational structure, outcomes, funding sources, and collaborative practice lessons.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Strategies for Family Engagement in 2019

Michael Danner, LCSW, Gardner Health Services, San Jose, CA
Bernadette Martinez, LCSW, Gardner Health Services, San Jose, CA

Together we will look at strengths, challenges, and strategies so that everyone leaves with something to take back and utilize when engaging families. We will also take a closer look at cultural humility: How is this different from competence, how does this impact engagement, do we have the linguistic competency, and how do we navigate this in 2019?

SESSION TRACK: Workforce
SESSION TYPE: Learning Circle
Sorting It All Out: Considerations in Engaging Undocumented and Asylum-Seeking Families in FGDM

Anita Martineau, LCSW, Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services, Alexandria, VA
Minerva Baladejo, LCSW, Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services, Alexandria, VA
Yocelyn Domínguez Cornelio, BSW, Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services, Alexandria, VA
Mercedes Leon De Leon, BSW, Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services, Alexandria, VA
Carmen M. Chavez, Esq. Casa Cornelia Law Center, San Diego, CA

Do you sometimes feel that engaging undocumented and asylum-seeking families is like building a bridge while you’re walking on it? Many service providers in the United States are questioning how to engage and meet the complex needs of these families from Mexico and the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. This learning circle will address the immigration experience, trauma, legal issues, and other considerations. Come join the conversation to share your experiences, concerns, and ideas as we undertake a joint quest to identify best practices for engaging this population in family group decision making.

Connection: The Foundational Cornerstone for Coordinators/Facilitators

Anita Horner, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO
Marilee Sherry, MSW, RSW, Independent Consultant, Brantford, Ontario, Canada

The role of a coordinator/facilitator is complex and highly rewarding. Connecting with those who are invited to the meeting and with the systems staff is foundational. Without connection, no theory or tool will overcome this barrier. Coordinators/facilitators must have a clear understanding of the boundaries of the role while being empathic, transparent in the information being shared, and impartial. Forming connections quickly, answering questions clearly, and responding gently yet firmly when powerful emotions are being expressed are important aspects of connection. They need to be able to hold space for the child/youth and family group/community so that family group can assume leadership in the decisions being made. Working collaboratively with systems staff without taking over the direct service role is essential. Additionally, awareness of the impact of their own histories and biases is a powerful tool in forming connections. Join us for a thought-provoking learning circle about connection as the foundational cornerstone for coordinators/facilitators.

Intersections: Where Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse, and Mental Health Meet

David Mandel, MEd, Safe & Together Institute, Canton, CT

Many families impacted by domestic violence perpetrators’ behaviors have multiple, complex, intersecting issues. In the past, we might have referred to these as co-occurring issues. But the language of co-occurrence often doesn’t provide us with a sense of how these issues interact. For example, listing the family’s issues is not as powerful as explaining how the domestic violence perpetrator interfered with his partner’s recovery, for example. Listing that the family has experienced both domestic violence and child behavioral health issues is not as useful as describing how the perpetrator’s violence has produced anxiety and aggression in the children. Using an intersections framework, we increase perpetrator accountability, improve our ability to diagnosis and treat each member of the family, and improve our ability to help the adult and children survivors. This session will provide guidance in how to make the connections, or intersections, and make them work for us in our practice.
Seen and Kind of Heard? Embracing Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision Making

Paul Nixon, Social Work Consultant and Former Chief Social Worker New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand
Lisa Merkel-Holguin, MSW, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO

Family engagement practices that involve the family group in decision making have become more embedded in child welfare practice around the globe. What appears to be more challenging is the role of children and youth’s genuine, active, and meaningful participation in decision-making forums. Child welfare services often unrecognize children’s capacities, struggle to balance the notions of protection and participation, and implement decision-making environments that are child unfriendly. How can systems create fertile ground so that the rights of children and youth to voice their points of view are heard and taken seriously? In this session, we will discuss these tensions and opportunities for innovative children’s participation in decision making.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Next-Level Cultivation: Engaging Our Team So They Can Engage Families

Stephanie Beleal, MSW, LISW, Kinnect, Cleveland, OH

We all want superstar team members who engage families in an exemplary fashion, partner with their peers to get good work done, and are committed to our organization. However, our approaches to “getting” these superstars appear to be lacking. Why? Because superstars are not found—they are supported, nurtured, and cultivated. We need to transform our leadership methods in order to promote a workforce that provides the best possible family engagement. This workshop will discuss why we need to engage our workforce differently, what we can be doing differently, and how we can actually do it, starting today! Improving the climate and culture of our units and organizations will ultimately impact the children and families we are striving to serve. This workshop is for current supervisors, administrators, and those who aspire to be in leadership. Come learn, assess, and discuss how to prepare, foster, improve, and encourage our teams!
The Perfect Match: The Complementary Nature of Solution-Focused Practice and Building Coaching Competency Approach

María A. Gómez, LMSW, MA, Administration for Children Services Workforce Institute, New York, NY
Sharon Gibbs-Salisbury, LMSW, Administration for Children Services Workforce Institute, New York, NY
Chrysetta Patterson, MSW, Administration for Children Services Workforce Institute, New York, NY

If you are curious to explore the growing art of coaching in child welfare, this session is for you! In this workshop, participants will discover and reimagine the Solution-Focused approach to child welfare services through the lenses of the Building Coaching Competency approach. Facilitators will guide participants in a brief overview of the values, skills, and process of Solution-Focused and Building Coaching Competency approaches, focusing on their complementary nature. Parallel use of the approaches will be illustrated with the lived experiences of the use of coaching for staff skill building and system implementation of the family assessment response/differential response track in New York City. This workshop will provide participants with an experiential opportunity to practice a brief coaching session with the use of case scenarios or their own inquiries.

SESSION TRACK: Workforce
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Experiencing the Art of Human Achievement

Andrea Miklos, MA, Mesa County Department of Human Services Child Welfare, Grand Junction, CO
Rory Cornelison, BS, Mesa County Department of Human Services Child Welfare, Grand Junction, CO
Kari Miracle, BSW, Mesa County Department of Human Services Child Welfare, Grand Junction, CO

Tom Freston said, “Innovation is taking two things that already exist and putting them together in a new way.” When you empower others and contribute to their success, you express a brand of leadership that helps strengthen bonds, build teams, and transform relationships. Organizational culture defines value and develops internal and external leaders to provoke transformational change within the workplace. This workshop will provide you with competency and understanding on how our organization’s cultural competencies create value and opportunity for talent to lead from within. How leaders lead promotes opportunity to achieve greater success.

SESSION TRACK: Workforce
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
Collaborative Family Engagement: Lessons Learned from Four Years of Statewide Implementation

Candice Dosman, Texas CASA Inc., Austin, TX
Leslie Cocke, Texas CASA Inc., Austin, TX
Maria McCord, Texas CASA Inc., Austin, TX
Jennifer Huffman, MPAff, Child and Family Research Partnership, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX

We've learned a few things along the way in our journey to statewide implementation of Texas’s family finding model, Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE). CFE is a collaborative effort by child protective services and court-appointed special advocates (CASAs) to engage families and form lifetime networks for them and the children/youth in foster care. Join us to learn what has worked and what hasn’t, the ups and downs of evaluation, the pros and cons of a coaching approach, and adaptations we’ve made along the way in our journey to shift child protective and CASA philosophies to be more family centered and connection based. Spoiler alert: we are making great and real progress!

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

11:45 AM – 1:15 PM, LUNCH AND PLENARY SESSION

Strengthening Families through Primary Prevention

Jerry Milner

Jerry Milner is the Associate Commissioner at the Children’s Bureau, the Acting Associate Commissioner at the Family and Youth Services Bureau, and the Acting Commissioner for the Administration on Children, Youth and Families. Jerry began his career as a case carrying social worker, served as the state child welfare agency director in Alabama, and previously worked for the Children’s Bureau designing and implementing the CFSR. Immediately prior to his appointment, he served as the Vice President for Child Welfare Practice at the Center for the Support of Families.
Nothing about Us without Us: Engaging Youth Voice in Planning for Legal Permanence
Rosina Hunter, BSW, Jefferson County Division of Children, Youth and Families and Adult Protection, Golden, CO
Courtney Bonde, BA, Jefferson County Division of Children, Youth and Families and Adult Protection, Golden, CO
Amy Tedesco, BS, Jefferson County Division of Children, Youth and Families and Adult Protection, Golden, CO

The presenters will primarily focus on permanency round tables, however, the material learned may be used to engage youth and their supports in any facilitated meeting setting. Key components of this session will include busting barriers to permanency; engaging youth, families, and system partners in successful planning for their future by using strengths-based questions; and unpacking the “no” in regard to permanency. This workshop will include what it takes to expedite legal permanency, promote relational permanency, and identify systematic barriers to timely permanency. Jefferson County is committed to their mission that all children thrive in families.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Partnering with Families: Resources from Federally Funded Programs
Penny Putnam Collins, MPA, Child Welfare Information Gateway, Atlanta, GA

Family engagement is establishing relationships with families and accomplishing change together. At the practice level, this includes setting goals, developing case plans, making joint decisions, and working with families to ensure their children’s safety, permanency, and well-being. It is the inclusion of children, youth, and adult family members in these case activities and involves supporting the development of relationships between resource and biological families. At a system level, it is including families as key stakeholders and advisors in policy development, service design, and program and service evaluation. Child Welfare Information Gateway, a service of the Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services, covers a wide range of child welfare topics from prevention to permanency. This session explores the various resources on family engagement available from Child Welfare Information Gateway and other federally funded programs.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
Professionals Behaving Badly in Family Engagement Meetings
Valerie Ryan, BS, Denver Human Services, Denver, CO
Megan Brennan, BS, Denver Human Services, Denver, CO

The goal of this workshop is to enhance facilitator skills in navigating inappropriate behaviors by professionals in family engagement meetings. In this interactive workshop, there will be the opportunity for audience members to share their personal experience and learn creative solutions on collaborative engagement. The purpose of addressing these behaviors is to strengthen the family’s voice, empower the process, and develop a plan that is in the best interest of children and youth in the child welfare system. Participants will walk away with fresh ideas and tools to address unproductive dialog and professionals behaving badly.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Into Me I See—Exploring My Relationship with Racism
Michelle Howard, MS, LPC, ORSCC, DWCF, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO

Racism has been a consistent, long-enduring structural infection in our society. In fact, the need to make “other” out of our commonality as human beings has existed since the beginning of time. It is easy to fall prey to the normalcy of this structural infection and accept it as just a part of our society, a part of the human condition. But is that the way we want to be? Is there a way we can all be in better appreciation and guardians of each other? This experience will help create awareness of your relationship with racism—and yes, we all have a relationship with it. What we may not have is an understanding of how our relationship with racism influences our choices in private places, public spaces, and the workplace. What we may not have is an understanding of the impact of those choices. This workshop will call you forward to a knowing and a doing when it comes to responding to issues related to racism, recognizing that whatever choice is made, you will no longer be in the unknown about the impact of that choice in the consequences that survive far past the moment.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Courageous Leadership
Kasey Matz, MA, ORSCC, ACC, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO
Ashley Andersen, MSW, ACC, CDWF, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO

Leadership begins with the courage to be yourself, in turn inviting those you lead to do the same. We believe and have experienced that the most transformative way to transform practice in human services is to transform people—through a top-down, inside-out approach. This workshop will support you to initiate a person-centered approach to leadership by first courageously identifying how to leverage your most authentic self as a leader.

SESSION TRACK: Workforce
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Giving from an Empty Cup
Shirlyn Garrett, EdD, LCPC, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Chicago, IL
Lee Annes, MA, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Chicago, IL
Dondieneita Fleary-Simmons, MSW, Strategic Development Consultant, Madison, WI

Repositioning the family or youth as leaders, or even partners in their own decision making, has the impact of disorienting providers. In child welfare, providers at the casework level share many of the oppressions felt by families. They are pressured by the courts and their own agencies to compel families and youth to achieve predefined goals. Sometimes these goals are inconsistent with desires, motivations, and capacities of the family. Sometimes the worker feels caught between the culture of the family and the system. Sometimes providers are overwhelmed and exhausted. In order for the planning to be effective, the provider needs to feel empowered and effective. When they do not, behaviors associated with secondary trauma come to the table. This discussion will focus on how to ensure that providers have the support that they need to be effective with families. Agency policy, supervision, peer support, and managing expectations are parts of this critical team engagement.

SESSION TRACK: Workforce
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
Engaging Families through Alternative Response: Takeaways from Nebraska’s IV-E Waiver Demonstration

Kate Stephenson, MS, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Center on Children, Families and the Law, Lincoln, NE
Stephanie Weddington, MA, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Center on Children, Families and the Law, Lincoln, NE
Toby Burnham, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Center on Children, Families and the Law, Lincoln, NE
Michelle Graef, PhD, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Center on Children, Families and the Law, Lincoln, NE

In an effort to increase family engagement and reduce instances of families returning to the child welfare system, Nebraska implemented alternative response as part of its IV-E Waiver Demonstration. This workshop will provide an overview of the components of the program and evaluation design, which included specific criteria for inclusion and random assignment of families to either an alternative response or traditional response approach. We will examine how aspects of case practice, such as amount of time workers spent directly working with families and the type and timeliness of services provided, and associated implementation costs differed among experimental and control conditions. We will also share evaluation results testing the effectiveness of alternative response for enhancing family engagement, family protective factors, and well-being, as assessed through surveys of families and workers. Lessons learned for evaluating a prevention program of this scale will be discussed.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

The Connect Parent Program: Healing Relationships between Parent and Teens

Gina Whiteside, Denver Human Services, Denver, CO
Tamara Smith, MSW, LSW, Denver Human Services, Denver, CO
Francisco Garza-Ortiz, Denver Human Services, Denver, CO

Connect targets parents who have children/youth (ages 8 to 18) with significant behavioral and mental health challenges. There are few education/support resources for these parents. Much of the advice of parenting programs tends to focus on behavior management strategies. These rarely are sensitive to the unique developmental needs of adolescents and do not usually generalize over time as other challenges emerge. Connect is an attachment-based, trauma-informed group model for parents. Initially for birth parents, an adaptation focuses on foster parents. Connect can be used as a front-end prevention strategy to strengthen family functioning and prevent foster care placement. It can also be used to help stabilize foster placements and provide supports that help promote achievement of permanency versus the repeated crises of placement disruptions. It can also be used toward the back-end of the system, as youth transition to reunification or other permanent placement.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Growing a Practice Model: From Stakeholder Engagement to Implementation to CQI and Evaluation

Sarah Kneeland, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency Child Welfare Services, San Diego, CA
Laura Krzywicki, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency Child Welfare Services, San Diego CA
Phil Decter, MSW, NCCD Children’s Research Center, Madison, WI
Heather Meitner, MSW, NCCD Children’s Research Center, Madison, WI

San Diego Child Welfare Services collaborated with a national partner, NCCD, to facilitate a Practice Framework Development Team (PFDT) comprising former foster youth, parent partners, resource parents, and county staff. This PFDT was responsible for developing the vision for our child welfare practice framework, including the mission, values, priorities, and even the name. Engaging and incorporating the voice of staff, youth, families, and other community partners was vital to ensuring the authenticity and meaning of our practice framework going deeper than the surface. This practice framework has now been implemented for four years and now can be rigorously evaluated to ensure it goes beyond words on paper and leads to tangible positive outcomes for children, youth, and families in San Diego. Participants will be shown the original process for engagement and implementation and the current evaluation tools and current outcomes.

SESSION TRACK: Research/Evaluation
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
Engagement as a Dynamic Phenomenon
Nicole Lauzus, MSW, Portland State University, Portland, OR
Carrie J. Furrer, PhD, Portland State University, Portland, OR

We often think of engagement as a static state where a person is either engaged or not engaged. In this session, we will explore the possibility of considering engagement as a dynamic phenomenon where a person might be at various points in a cycle of engaged, disaffected, and reengaged. An individual’s level of engagement may increase, decrease, or fluctuate over time. We will consider the implications for changing how one thinks about engagement using the example of Oregon’s Title IV-E Waiver demonstration project, Leveraging Intensive Family Engagement (LIFE). The LIFE model incorporates monthly family team meetings that present ongoing opportunities for all family members to engage with child welfare services and decision making. Participants will leave this session with an understanding of how this new approach to engagement as dynamic helps families, especially for marginalized people who may be hesitant to engage with the child welfare system.

No Place Like Home: Repairing Family Relationships for LGBTQ+ Youth in the Child Welfare System
Laura S. Anderson, PsyD, Family Builders by Adoption, Oakland, CA
Amber Merziotis, MSW, Family Builders by Adoption, Oakland, CA

Youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) are overrepresented in the child welfare system. Often, these youth have strained or ruptured connections to family and caregivers who struggle to accept their sexual orientation or gender identity. We have developed a family engagement model that meets caregivers where they are and identifies the fears, guilt, and grief behind rejecting beliefs and behaviors. Research shows that family affirmation is perhaps the most critical factor in the health and happiness of LGBTQ+ youth. In our programs we have successfully engaged families, repaired ruptured relationships, and supported caregivers to be the informed, affirming, and advocating caregivers that LGBTQ+ youth need. This workshop will introduce our model and strengthen clinician skills for working with families and caregivers of LGBTQ+ youth.

How Sitting in Grief and Loss Helps Activate Youth Voice in Decision Making
Jesus M. Espinosa, YMCA of San Diego County, San Diego, CA
Cori Dunton, YMCA of San Diego County, San Diego, CA
Keziyah Mack, YMCA of San Diego County, San Diego, CA

This workshop (facilitated by direct service staff in the YMCA of San Diego Permanent Connections program) will explore the incorporation of youth voice into an expanded view of the decision-making process in child welfare and family meetings, honoring that decisions are present throughout the duration of each child’s case. Staff will highlight the integration of Darla Henry’s 3-5-7 Grief and Loss Model with Kevin Campbell’s Family Finding Model and family group conferencing as essential to helping youth feel more connected to themselves and others. Attendees can expect to learn how this approach to engagement has shown a natural and fluid progression of the youth’s self-realization and preparedness for relationships. Staff will share their observed correlation between this approach and increased cohesion among multidisciplinary teams, prioritization of youth input in decisions, and strengthening of families’ ability to network as a result of knowing more about the youth’s experience.
Unlocking the Barriers and Engaging Incarcerated Parents
Tess Mahnken-Weatherpoon, LMSW, MPA. Hillside Children’s Center, Rochester, NY

This workshop will present strategies for engaging and working with incarcerated parents. The presenter has extensive experience working with incarcerated parents in a wide array of correctional facilities throughout New York State, including local jails, medium and maximum security prisons, and a super-maximum security prison. The workshop will present specific techniques for reaching and engaging incarcerated parents and will share barriers to engagement and ways to overcome these barriers. The workshop will include use of case scenarios that demonstrate effective ways to engage parents who are incarcerated and how to keep these parents connected and involved in the lives of their children.

SESSION TRACK: Practice
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

A State Framework for Family Partnerships in Education
Chris J. Miller, EdD. Colorado Department of Education, Denver, CO
Darcy Hutchins, PhD. Colorado Department of Education, Denver, CO

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE), along with a national consortium of states, has embarked on an eighteen-month professional development to create a preschool-through-twelfth-grade family engagement framework. The framework is intended for use in all 179 school districts in Colorado. In order for this systems innovation to be implemented within the State Education Agency and throughout all school districts, it must be informed by a broad spectrum of stakeholders, not least of which includes families. This session will use the completed framework as a backdrop to highlight how it was built, lessons learned, and next steps. Additionally, the presenters will demonstrate how to incorporate parent voices into this systems approach to properly emphasize a mindset-before-methods approach. Participants will have an opportunity to consider this framework approach in their own agencies through a facilitated discussion. A question-and-answer period will conclude this session.

SESSION TRACK: Systems
SESSION TYPE: Workshop

Creating a CQI System from a Theory of Change: Improving Family Assessment Response in New York City
Sandra Davidson, MSW. New York City Administration for Children’s Services, New York, NY
Carissa Mae Smith, LMSW. New York City Administration for Children’s Services, New York, NY
Krista Thomas, PhD. Chapin Hall, Chicago, IL
Theresa Costello. Action for Child Protection, Albuquerque, NM

A sound theory of change (TOC) represents the foundation of a successful child welfare system improvement strategy. Rooted in the TOC, stakeholders can then design continuous quality improvement (CQI) processes designed to assess the extent to which the identified intervention is being implemented with fidelity and in alignment with the TOC, as well as whether it is achieving its intended outcomes. Participants in this session will learn about New York City’s journey to cocreate a theory of change for Family Assessment Response (FAR-NYC) with diverse stakeholders, then use the TOC to establish meaningful CQI strategies, including the use of administrative data, case reviews, and, most recently, a family engagement survey. Findings from ACS CQI activities will also be discussed, together with how the information is being used to inform practice improvement.

SESSION TRACK: Research/Evaluation
SESSION TYPE: Workshop
Beyond the Bubble Bath: Using the Secondary Traumatic Stress Toolkit to Increase Worker Engagement

Hilary Cobb, LCSW, Still Waters Training and Consulting, LLC
Melissa Wallace Bernier, LCSW, Still Waters Training and Consulting, LLC

A growing body of research shows that individual workers affected by secondary traumatic stress (STS) have increased rates of physical and mental health issues, burnout, ethical violations, as well as decreased productivity. As a result, organizations experience increased turnover, absenteeism, and organizational costs, all of which reduce program effectiveness and engagement with clients and stakeholders. Traditional interventions for STS have focused on individuals rather than systematic change. Participants attending this workshop will be introduced to the Secondary Traumatic Stress Toolkit as a comprehensive approach for organizations to evaluate and address the impact of STS on workers and the organization.

Creating a CSEC Collaborative Court: San Diego County Juvenile RISE Court Model

Charisma De Los Reyes, MSW, Child Welfare Services, San Diego, CA
Honorable Judge Marian Gaston, RISE Court Judge, San Diego, CA
Fanny Yu, JD, Deputy District Attorney, San Diego, CA
Cynthia Gamboa, Supervising Probation Officer, RISE Unit, San Diego, CA
Wilnisha Sutton, STARS Case Manager, San Diego Youth Services, San Diego, CA

Presenters will explain how San Diego County created its RISE (Resiliency is Strength and Empowerment) Court, a collaborative, engaged, and informed program that uses a multidisciplinary approach to address the needs of delinquent youth who are or at risk of becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Creating a CSEC court begins with various county agencies such as probation, child welfare services, behavioral health services, district attorney’s and public defender’s offices, and the superior court partnering with survivor leaders and direct victim services providers to develop the mission statement, screening and eligibility process, and curriculum program to serve our CSEC population. Presenters will also discuss the trauma-focused and harm-reduction approach to case planning and resources for building inner strength and empowering CSEC youth and their caregivers. Also presented will be the data domain that RISE Court collects when a youth is accepted into RISE, during RISE, and after participation in RISE Court.

How Family Engagement Principles Are Guiding Child Protection Practice: A Case Study from LA County

Jennie Feria, LCSW, Department of Children and Family Services, Los Angeles, CA
Ivonne Molina, MSW, Department of Children and Family Services, Los Angeles, CA
Jacquelyn McCroskey, DSW, University of Southern California, School of Social Work, Los Angeles, CA
Carrie Miller, PhD, Office of Child Protection, Los Angeles, CA
Michelle Rosemond, MS, Prototypes, Los Angeles, CA

This workshop highlights a model underway in Los Angeles County where deep and true teaming occurs between our child protection department and community-based agencies, preparing the community agencies for more effective engagement and interaction with families and creating real relationships between the public and private sectors. We demonstrate how these relationships are critical to systems change and pave the way to better overall practice—something frequently talked about but not as often seen. Although this differential response model has almost doubled the acceptance rate of support services by families, reducing their likelihood, we hope, of being re-referred to child protective services, the program is not yet where we would like it to be. Come learn what we’ve done and share your ideas to make it better, improving practice across all our jurisdictions.
Learn how in Tulare County, Child Welfare Services partners with the Family Resource Center Network members to provide funding, support, and collaboration to maximize differential response services. Tulare County will provide an overview of how partnership assists families through crisis and builds relationships to maximize support services during the family’s development. Through partnerships, families learn to work through processes and systems in the community to equip and prepare them beyond the differential response referral. Key takeaways will be how Tulare County is strengthening families beyond the DR referral; how to build and strengthen relationships with other agencies that can have meaningful, positive impact on the future of the families you serve; and successful techniques to enhance collaborations and networking with local CBO’s to maximize resources for families.
Think Tank on Children and Youth Participation in Child Welfare Decision Making

Anita Horner, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO
Lisa Merkel-Holguin, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO
Paul Nixon, Social Work Consultant and Former Chief Social Worker, Wellington, New Zealand

The phrase “nothing about me without me” is widely used by child welfare professionals to describe how they aspire to engage children and youth involved within their systems. Yet the child welfare system in the United States lags behind child welfare systems in other countries regarding the extent to which we involve children and youth in decision making about their own lives. The Kempe Center is launching a national initiative on the role of children and youth in child welfare decision making. We are seeking a select number of thought partners to join us for a four-hour interactive session where we appraise system barriers, existing values, and current practices that discourage their active role in decision making. The results of this think tank session will inform the direction of the Kempe Center’s initiative.

The Science of Happiness: Building A Positive Work Culture and Lowering Turnover

Dan Comer, MA, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO

This session will have learners using the new science of happiness to build engaged and resilient teams. Learners will develop creative action plans for themselves and their teams as they explore and experience the various components (meditation, gratitude, acts of kindness, physical well-being, journaling, and social connection) of the science of happiness. You will leave engaged, energized, encouraged, and ready to bring these ideas back to your organization!

Effective Facilitation Skills for Case Consultation and Family Meetings

Philip Decter, MSW, NCCD Children’s Research Center, Madison, WI
Heather Meitner, MSW, NCCD Children’s Research Center, Madison, WI

This three-hour workshop is an experiential training for facilitators of case consultation and family meetings across settings in social service agencies. The purpose of case consultation is to help agency staff organize facts, think critically through key decisions, and get on the same page as to how best to support a family moving forward. The purpose of family meetings is to build agreements on plans between the department, families, tribes, providers, and informal helping networks. Regardless of your meeting purpose and desired outcome, you will learn or be reintroduced to key strategies and skills for helping groups solve problems in difficult moments and how to build agreements that enhance the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children, youth, and families you serve. Participants will deepen their existing facilitation strategies and develop new approaches for creating collaborative conversations that still hold important bottom lines.

Dare to Lead

Kasey Matz, MSW, PCC, ORCS, CDWF, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO
Michelle Howard, MS, LPC, CDWF, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO
Ashley Andersen, MSW, ACC, CDWF, Kempe Center, Aurora, CO

What does it mean to be a leader? Brené Brown says a leader is “someone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and has the courage to develop that potential.” This means that if you work in child welfare, you are a leader! What then is effective leadership? Some say it means holding others accountable, while others believe it’s about the ability to engage in difficult conversations or having skills to navigate agency politics. The answer is YES to all. Being a leader means being and growing in the direction of mastery with people, process, policy, and procedural skills—which means being brave enough to choose courage over comfort! From Brené Brown’s groundbreaking research, this Dare to Lead workshop will have you recognizing what it takes for you to dare greatly as a leader. It will compel you to shift limiting beliefs and behaviors and inspire you to lean into vulnerability. It will dare you to lead as your most authentic and courageous self!
conference venue and logistics

About San Diego

With a temperate year-round climate, more than 70 miles of beaches waiting to be enjoyed, and a wide variety of attractions, San Diego is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. "America's finest city" is a haven for surfers, boaters, and other outdoor aficionados, but urban enthusiasts also find plenty of entertaining options in the city's many eclectic neighborhoods. Balboa Park, the largest urban cultural park in the US, is the heart and soul of San Diego, and the city is home to Coronado Beach, one of the top ten beaches in America, according to the Travel Channel. Guests will find fifteen museums, several art galleries, gardens, the award-winning Old Globe Theatre, and the San Diego Zoo. For more information on local San Diego attractions, visit the Marriott's website.

Weather

November is the beginning of San Diego's rainy season. The average high temperature is typically between 60 and 70 degrees, with average lows between 50 and 55 degrees. We suggest you check the weather before traveling.

Lodging

This year’s conference will be held at the San Diego Marriott Mission Valley Resort—located in Mission Valley, the ideal location to experience the best of San Diego. The hotel hosts a number of amenities and services, from views and casual dining to a fully equipped fitness center and outdoor pool with a waterfall. Enjoy easy access to the city's eclectic neighborhoods; the hotel is just steps from one of the city’s historic trolley stops, making it a perfect base while in town. We have secured a limited number of standard hotel rooms at the GSA per diem rate (currently $160/night, though rates may change after 9/30/19) plus taxes. Complimentary in-room Internet is included. Room rates booked outside the room block will be at the hotel's discretion and available space. The group rate is guaranteed for reservations made on or before Friday, October 25, 2019, at which time a one-night deposit will be charged. Any reservations made after Friday, October 25, 2019, shall be at the hotel's then current available rate. If your reservation is canceled after Friday, October 25, 2019, you will forfeit the deposit equal to one night room and tax. All attendee reservations must be accompanied by a first-night room deposit or guaranteed with a major credit card—the hotel will not hold any reservations unless secured by one of these methods. A cancellation less than 72 hours prior to arrival will result in a charge equal to one night room and tax. Early departures and no-shows will result in the same charge and consequence. You may make your reservation online at the following link: Hotel Room Reservations for Kempe Conference or by calling 800-228-9290.
Attire

Business casual attire is encouraged at this event. The temperatures in the conference rooms will be monitored for your comfort, but we do recommend that you bring a shawl or sweater with you, as it does take a while to adjust the temperatures, and the conference rooms are often quite cool at the beginning of the day.

Exhibitors

Are you interested in exhibiting at the conference? With hundreds of professionals in child welfare in attendance, the conference is a wonderful way to share your resources, knowledge, and professional services! Exhibitors will be charged $500 (non-profit) or $600 (for profit). This fee covers one booth in the center of the conference activities, a listing in the conference program, and conference registration for one participant. Detailed information, along with the exhibitor registration form, can be found at www.KempeConference.org.

Room Monitor Scholarship

We are offering ten scholarships that cover the conference registration fee for the main conference, November 19–21. The scholarship does NOT include any travel costs. In exchange for the scholarship, recipients agree to serve as room monitors for eight conference sessions that occur from Tuesday through Thursday. Responsibilities will include monitoring room temperature, calling IT support for AV challenges, distributing speakers’ handouts, and supporting the collection of session evaluations. Priority will be given to students and first-time conference attendees. If you wish to be considered for this scholarship, please send an email by Friday, August 30, to kempeconference@ucdenver.edu and express your interest in this conference, what you hope to gain, and how the learning applies to your work.

Continuing Education Units

Participants may earn up to 17 CEUs provided by the Washington Chapter, National Association of Social Workers (NASW) for Licensed Social Workers, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapists, and Licensed Mental Health Counselors. CEUs are available for a one-time fee of $30. Participants will be required to collect a presenter’s signature at each session they attend and return the CEU signature sheet prior to leaving the conference in order to receive the CEUs.
**Conference Registration**

- **Early Bird Registration** (Sales end on 10/14/2019) — $385.00
- **Advance Registration** (10/15/2019–11/12/19) — $435.00
- **On-Site Registration** (Available at conference check-in) — $460.00

**All conference registrations include**
- attendance to all conference sessions Tuesday–Thursday
- all conference materials
- two meals (Wednesday breakfast and Thursday lunch), and
- one reception during the event.

**Payments**

Payments may be paid by credit card or check. Checks must be made payable to “The Regents of the University of Colorado”. Please mail checks to the address below with your order ID from your completed registration form in the memo:

Kempe Center Attn: Mary Gangel  
13123 East 16th Avenue, B390  
Aurora, CO 80045

**QUESTIONS?**

Contact the Kempe Conference Team at kempeconference@ucdenver.edu.

**Cancellation Policy**

Any request for a refund must be submitted in writing to the Kempe Center by October 15, 2019. A service fee of $100 will be charged for all cancellations received by October 15, 2019. Cancellations after October 15, 2019, and by November 8, 2019, will be charged one-half the conference registration fee. Cancellation notifications received after November 8, 2019, are not eligible for refunds. You may transfer your registration to another person without charge. Please send substitutions and cancellation notices to kempeconference@ucdenver.edu.

**Post-Conference Special Sessions**

This year we are offering four post-conference sessions that will occur on Friday, 11/22/19, 8:30 AM–12:00 PM. These special sessions will focus on topics including a think tank on child and youth participation in decision making, the science of happiness, leadership, and effective facilitation skills for case consultation and family meetings. Sessions are open to all conference participants at an additional fee of $25 per person. Some of the sessions have a capped number of participants; once the maximum number of participants is reached, the online registration system will alert you that the session has reached capacity.
Thank you for your interest in the 2019 International Conference on Innovations in Family Engagement! If you have any questions about the conference, please contact Kempe using the information below.

ABOUT THE KEMPE CENTER

The Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect strives to improve the care and well-being of all children by strengthening families, communities, and the systems that serve them. We believe abuse and neglect are preventable, children are resilient, and supportive care can bring health and hope. The Kempe Center was the first of its kind, established in 1972 to better understand and prevent child maltreatment and to serve affected children and their families. For more than 45 years, Kempe has promoted understanding, knowledge, and best practices to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect locally, nationally, and internationally. Kempe fulfills its mission through the four pillars of research and evaluation; training, technical assistance, and education; clinical service delivery; and advocacy. Through their work across these four pillars, Kempe Center faculty support innovation in systems and communities that work with vulnerable children, youth, and families in a variety of ways. Kempe is proud to house innovative efforts around family group decision making (FGDM) and differential response (DR), in addition to many others.

2019 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON Innovations in Family Engagement

November 19-22, 2019

www.kempeconference.org

Contact

KempeConference@ucdenver.edu