Partners in Change:
A New Perspective on CPS

Dan Comer
dancomer@bellsouth.net

2015 International Conference
On Innovations In Family Engagement
Where do you fit right now?
Inside-Out Learning

- Personal/feeling level to work application
- Gets learner’s attention
- Particularly useful for “attitude change”
- People are moved/changed by experience, not by theories
- Longer lasting learning
- Active (mind/body/emotions)
- “Guide on the side” vs. “Sage on the stage”
- Guided self-discovery
Who’s Here?

- Caseworkers?
- Supervisors?
- Administrators?
- Staff Development?
- Hotel Staff?
Partners in Change

... working in partnership with the individuals and families we serve is likely to lead to better outcomes and more lasting change. ...moving away from being the “expert” and the “authority” requires not only a shift in perspective for workers and systems, but also a great deal more skills and tools...proven curriculum that not only gives front-line staff the tools they desire, but, through “inside-out” training strategies, allows them to experience and feel the real mind-shift necessary to truly partner with the families they serve.
Purposes

- History of providing training for DR implementation in several states
- Telling Ain’t Training
- Experiences with the curriculum
- Yours??
Assessment

- Partner or small groups – 5 minutes
- Share answers to the following:
  - What is Family-Centered Practice/Differential Response?
  - In a Differential Response case, what would you see/hear workers doing?
  - Do caseworkers, in general, already believe they practice in alignment with DR principles/practice?
  - In general, are they?
The Dunning-Kruger Effect

- People tend to do a very poor job of identifying gaps in their knowledge and skill.

- Worse, they often believe they understand things that they don’t, and believe they are skilled in areas where they are not.
Principles of Partnership

- Everyone Desires Respect
- Everyone Needs to be Heard
- Everyone Has Strengths
- Judgments Can Wait
- Partners Share Power
- Partnership is a Process
Principles

- Provide a common language
- Benchmarks
- Easily understood belief and behavior system
- Inherent power and flexibility
We now have a common language

The principles are easy to remember but difficult to do—it’s a challenge

When I give my attention to these principles and actually practice them, I see magical things happen...
Principles of Partnership

- Supervisor training
- Worker training
- Cultural competence
- Systems collaboration
- Customer service
From the National Quality Improvement Center on Differential Response in Child Welfare
http://www.differentialresponseqic.org/resources
Everyone Desires Respect

Tools for this principle:

Model the respect you would like to receive

Meet people where they are (Explorer, Vacationer, Prisoner)

Look for positive intent

Respect and incorporate ideas

Move slowly and make small adjustments where possible

“I'm not concerned with your liking or disliking me... All I ask is that you respect me as a human being.”

- Jackie Robinson

Everyone Desires Respect
“Genuine listening means suspending memory, desire, and judgment – and, for a moment at least, existing for the other person.”

- Michael Nichols

Everyone Needs to be Heard
Tools for this principle:

Be intentional and genuine in your search for strengths:

- Observation
- Ask the right questions
- Have a broad definition

Utilize the strengths you find to build solutions.

Look for exceptions to the problem or issue.

“"It is not our purpose to become each other; it is to recognize each other, to learn to see the other and honor him for what he is.”

- Hermann Hesse
Tools for the this principle:

- Hold judgments lightly
- Seek alternative explanations
- Not knowing stance
- Scaling

“From a worldly point of view, there is no mistake so great as that of being always right.”
- Samuel Butler

Judgments Can Wait
“Compliance isn’t change. “

Richard Gelles

Tools for this principle:
Consider the power, both real and perceived, that you have in a family’s life.

Strive to share that power through your words and actions.
“Life is a process of becoming, a combination of states we have to go through. Where people fail is that they wish to elect a state and remain in it. This is a kind of death.”

Anais Nin

Tools for this principle:

- Be intentional
- Pay attention
- Honor yourself and others—in any process—by compassionately applying these principles

Partnership is a Process
Skills Practice

- Put the principles into practice
- Initiate contact using a customized approach
- Try out tools
- Experiment with language
Fun and Easy (and Useful) Skills Practice

- Plan before practice
- Work as a team
- Stop and start over if needed
- Practice only with your group
Features:

- Play
- Pause
- Rewind
- Satellite Assistance

Remote Control
Making Numbers......

- I am going to make numbers in one of the oldest ways possible
- I am going to use these markers but really they are irrelevant
- Make sure you can see my hands on the table
- When you think you know the number, say what you think it is but don’t say how you got your answer
- Oh yea, and by the way I am going to try and fool you!
Resources

- Protecting Children Volume 23 Numbers 1 & 2, 2008
- References from the various states
- dancomer@bellsouth.net