

Leading Together: Cultural Diversity Workgroup
Meeting Notes
July 6, 2015

Participants: Rachel Crites, Pat Erving, Darryl Hall, Susan Latton, Laurice Lincoln, Molly McGregor, David O'Connor, Hector Portillo

1. Welcome, Introductions (Darryl Hall)

Exercise – Ice breaker, two columns page with “I am “But” I am not”

What do we mean by diversity?

2/3. Review Leading Together Goals (Susan Latton)

Proposed Workgroup Goal:

“To prioritize and then structure our collective learning opportunities – in order to strengthen our capacity and skills to both outreach, partner and support family engagement and leadership among diverse cultures in Wisconsin”

Discussion: How do we improve our work - strengthen our voice.

- Though proud of services in the state, the systems are also fragmented and overwhelmed – there are a lot of services but difficult to access. Difficult getting a return phone call from people at Milwaukee County.
- Milwaukee County concerns – regarding children’s services. Gaps in services and gaps in resources. As a parent, on the phone, you don’t know what the barriers are – if it is staffing or skills. Families feel that they have done what they are supposed to do and don’t understand who dropped the ball.
- We need to work more closely with special education directors at the public schools districts.
- Develop the outreach capacity to ensure that the underserved are given that access.
- In Katie Beckett, there is an expectation/requirement for timing of response. There is a sense that the system of services is not provided consistently across the state. How can we do a better job of receiving families wherever they are.

Potential Action Item: We may need to do a survey of the larger group to assess what the organization’s needs are in this area.

- I heard the participants on the 29th, and I don’t really think they feel families need to be involved.
- I could engage more of my family members to participate, but this is a very stressful time for them while they are dealing with children with special needs. I would be interested in mentoring new families, so they are prepared for roles as leaders/advocates. Family members are coming with a specific skill set and they need to have support.

- I reflect on the parent leadership work I have done, and can see the outcomes, years later – an accessible playgrounds, for instance.

4. Do we have the right people around the table?

- We have family members around the table who also have professional roles in organizations. We would like to have more diverse family participation/input from those who are not in professional roles as we plan this work.
- Local Program Managers - systems – look at themselves and determine how to structure their requirements around the needs of the families they serve.
- Identifying what groups or agencies we need to reach out to in order to support change in the program.
 - Milwaukee County
 - Milwaukee Public Schools
 - The Cultural Competence Exchange -

5. What Experience and Resources Does the Collective Group Bring:

- Interagency Coordinating Advisory Board – Meets quarterly – workgroup that meets 8 times a year including the 4 quarterly meetings. They have a live webcast that is sponsored at Milwaukee County
 - Supporting Families Together – supporting early education child care professionals.
 - Are we looking for Professional development opportunities to improve the interactions and engagement of families?
 - Identify some existing resources to build -
 - FACETS and WISPE Family on boarding – how to serve on a board:
 - We need a facilitator for the larger meetings, who is skilled in facilitating conversations that may be uncomfortable.
 - WCA – cultural diversity training.
 - YWCA – of Greater Milwaukee – mission “Eliminating Racism”.
(http://www.ywcasew.org/site/c.7oJELQPwFhJWG/b.8083605/k.9A7C/Racial_Justice.htm)
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- What families receive in their home looks totally different – The ideal that people working with different cultural groups, are not looking at those cultures as having a deficit.
 - We are missing the Hmong population – several opportunities to bridge that gap.
 - We need to represent the population that is north of Wisconsin Dells, north of Wausau – what people sometime perceive is ‘north’.
 - The needs of rural populations. I work with counties where services are 50 miles away. There are well-meaning people in service delivery roles that need to hear from families. We need to incorporate it into our contract language.
 - We need to represent the issues of communities like Milwaukee – but also have participation from cultural groups in Madison, Green Bay, Oshkosh – Casa Del Alba, the Directors of organizations in places like Delavan, S. Beloit.

- In the Native American community, I am always reminded that I need to look to the people who have been doing with work for a long time and have historical knowledge.
 - I believe the best work is grassroots work that is begun by communities, and we can learn by highlighting those successful community-based examples.
 - We need people to present who they are and what they do, because families don't necessarily understand the participating organization's roles.
 - From April 29th Notes, a national Resource was highlighted Georgetown University's National Center for Cultural Competence (<http://nccc.georgetown.edu/>), other suggested experts were mentioned, Pat Parker – UW-M, Child Welfare Partnership (<https://www4.uwm.edu/mcwp/people/>), Ruth Cronje on health disparities, UW-Eau Claire, (http://www.uwec.edu/English/about/ruth_cronje.htm)
 - Dr. Aronson, who used to be at DHS, was very committed to this work. I remember an exercise, when he asked professionals to recount something their parents had told them about another culture that turned out not to be true. (<https://www.amherst.edu/users/A/raaronson69>)
 - There has been a lot of interest in learning about trauma informed care...and ACES, and this might be a cross-cultural approach to learning how to improve our work with families.
 - Other resource names mentioned included Dr. Bonne (?), Brenda Bell-White, Dr. McManus, Maggie Butterfield had done a panel.
 - We need to survey what organization's identify as their needs.
 - Should that be a paper/electronic survey or phone interview survey conducted by the Workgroup members?
6. What do we identify as our individual and professional needs?
- Culturally brave – how do we talk about the elephant in the room? Here is an example, where I stepped forward and identified an organizational practice that I believe is insensitive, and several years later that practice remains in effect. How do we move and change organizational practices, and learn effective strategies for change.
 - Are we looking for resources for professional development?
 - There was a lot of interest in “Serving on Groups” training for families (<http://servingongroups.org/>).
 - We need a layered approach. What is the outcome we are hoping for? We need to be able to measure that. It might be an increase in the number of family partnerships or served.
 - What does my organizations need to be more diverse –
 - People need to feel safe – valued and we need to help them identify areas of change that have a measurable result no matter how small.
 - We need to be mindful of the growing Hispanic population. Our school districts will look entirely differently five years from now.
 - We need to be able to trust individuals within the groups – basic communication.
 - Create opportunities for people to share the values and culture of the community.

- What happens inside, outside and behind the family – with a facilitator - see discover commonalities in the group.

A lot of time what's missing in trainings is the idea of power dynamics and the importance of recognizing the "power" relationships that each person brings to the relationship, when working with any family but especially those who have some struggles – and especially when you bring that dynamic into the home, power differentials, race issues, education levels. Families experience the constant barrage of micro-aggression through-out the day, and then when someone comes into the home, to experience it again - is very difficult. It is an issue in the schools. And educators have acknowledged that they haven't learned what they need to work successfully with diverse families.

- Professional facilitation – we need to use that guidance.
- We need to understand that each tribal nation is different in structure and government. Even though I am from one of those tribes I am still a guest when I come there.
- We want a layered level of training, and self-reflection, are you going to make it a part of your organization long-term so it becomes part of the practices of your organization.
- Georgetown trains in the use of several different self-assessment tools – and believes this is an important strategy to instill long-term work in this area, a continual process of self-assessment and goal identification. This also helps address issues like leadership and staff turn-over. It would be amazing if many of us would embark on a common process of quality improvement in this way. WI-DHS has recently done an assessment and established some professional development goals.

Summary Highlights

- Create a safe environment and have a conversation
- Develop a follow-up plan for Hmong participation
- Compassion in work
- Leaders don't always know the answers
- Meeting families where they are
- Include fathers, Father outreach
- Value everyone as a measurable competency
- Show commitment
- If we could identify a measureable outcome of this work, even if it is small
 - A 2% increase in referalls
 - An increase in satisfaction
- Out of the box oucomes
 - If families attend – 6 sessions, and can identify their learning or contributions to learning of others
- Communication challenges,
- Example: Workshop on the Latino community, history, current life ,cultural learning, with a facilitator
- Often our school districts have unique needs and solutions
 - Tap into stakeholders
 - Ex. Menominee School District, learn by celebrating others successes

