The Child and Family
Practice Model

IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS UNDER CONSTRUCTION
(w/Worksheets and Tip Sheet)

Implementation teams are core to effective implementation infrastructure, being the connection point between frontline staff who are delivering the practice and agency leadership who are providing needed resources, supports, and an enabling context for the model. The team is responsible for day-to-day implementation functions and ensures coordination across all implementation functions and teams. It acts as implementation's "grand central"—a place where all the various activities and information feed in so the implementation supports are coordinated, responsive to the needs of staff, and continually improved.

To coordinate and support the day-to-day implementation of the Practice Model and related system changes, and as an important link to leadership, an implementation team is generally led by one or two agency leaders with a natural intra-agency connection to executive leadership (such as a child welfare manager). The team is small enough to be nimble (3-5 full-time employees or FTEs), yet diverse enough to have the skills and competencies across the team to effectively coordinate and support CFPM implementation, system change, and partner engagement and involvement. To accomplish this, access to frequent and ongoing communication pathways (linking communication protocols) with teams and partners is important, ensuring that information and ideas can lift up from staff and partners and action and/or response back can occur timely. As a core accountability implementation structure, implementation teams usually meet together weekly and have ongoing, often daily, communication.

> When there are many hands in the right spirit, everything comes together.
>
> -Samoan saying,
> Author unknown

As implementation team members are identified and brought together, developing a Terms of Reference (TOR) (similar to a charter) will be helpful in clarifying team roles and objectives; how the team will work together; and how various agency teams, activities, and supports will be linked through communication protocols and feedback loops to support practice model implementation and system change. A sample TOR is provided in the printout resources on the following pages. While the document itself will be helpful once created, implementing jurisdictions that used this process early in implementation team development found it very valuable in enabling the new team to form and explore, develop understanding, and come to consensus about key areas of team functioning.

Even if the team does not create a TOR together, the sample wording included in the TOR may be helpful in forming the team as it contains important suggestions for type and frequency of team processes (such as weekly implementation team meetings and monthly leadership team meetings) and in ensuring systematic and intentional communication links and feedback loops with all levels of staff and with other key teams and groups working on implementation (supports such as community partnerships, recruitment and selection, training, coaching, fidelity assessment, and data support).

If a written TOR is created, it can be placed on letterhead or presented in a formal way to leadership, partners, and others to build recognition and understanding of the team's work and value. It is also an important resource for orienting new implementation team members as turnover and transitions occur. The TOR is not meant to "lock teams in." It is a living, changing, flexible document that reflects actual implementation team processes and linkages, so it changes and evolves over time just as implementation team membership and processes will. Thus the TOR is re-visited approximately every 6 months and updated to reflect current teamwork and team processes.

The TOR approach may be a helpful approach for other teams as well, such as the leadership team or a community partner advisory team. While the form and categories would be the same or similar, the content will be specific to the purpose, activities, and processes of the particular team with which it is developed. Additional TOR resource information can be found at http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/module-3/topic-5

To ensure connection and support for implementation across all levels of the agency and with agency and community partners, implementation teams work with practice model leadership to make sure that communication and feedback loops are developed early, strengthened, and improved in an ongoing way to coordinate, wraparound, and support readiness, capacity-building, and implementation of the Practice Model at all levels of the agency and system. These communication and feedback loops ensure not only that barriers and needs are identified and addressed by the right team or group, they also enable all levels of staff and leadership to be aware of and celebrate successes and to be kept apprised of progress in addressing implementation needs, system barriers, and other areas of alignment and support for the Practice Model.

Communication and feedback loops can take a variety of forms and can leverage existing meetings and forums or be embedded in new processes and structures, as long as they establish frequent, intentional, bi-directional connections between:

- Practice Model leadership and implementation teams working closely and continuously together and with community partners on implementation and system change
- The work of various individuals and teams who are taking responsibility for or are involved in implementation support functions, workgroups, and activities
- Frontline staff all the way up through executive leadership so that practice-level experience informs the development of supportive policy, and leadership guides agency policy development, system change, and alignment to effectively support use of the Practice Model through the agency and system

Because the implementation team is the hub coordinating and ensuring support for all local implementation activities and processes, the implementation team is at the center of the network of implementation-focused communication and feedback loops going up, down, and across the agency and system. For instance, when the implementation team brings forward an issue or action to leadership, how does it move forward from there? Who is involved in problem solving? How is the issue tracked? Who communicates back to the implementation team? What will ensure the implementation team communicates back to staff, partners, and others who lifted up or are affected by the issue? In developing these communication linkages, it may be helpful for the implementation team to plan and test communication linkages and protocols for several months.

EXAMPLE OF TESTING COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK LOOPS

Leverage and develop the communication protocols and linkages that seem to be needed, and test them out for several months. At the end of each month, study the results of the testing as a team, and consider what needs to shift or expand to ensure effective communication and linkages for Practice Model implementation and system change. Questions for the team to consider:

- Are there linkages between important teams and activities?
- Are the right people involved?
- Do they have the time?
- What needs to change or be improved? How?

As adjustments are made, they can be reconsidered the next month to see if the solution was effective and what else is needed.

The printout resources below will be helpful in putting these various pieces and processes together to develop an effective implementation team that is linked with leadership, community partners, and other infrastructure resources and support for the Practice Model:

- *Implementation Team Exploration*—Guides exploration of resources and commitments needed for implementation team development
- *Implementation Team Development*—Provides guidance for forming an implementation team, i.e., team composition, size, and competencies
- *Implementation Team Terms of Reference*—Provides sample TOR for team roles, purpose, ways of working together and communicating with staff, leadership, and others involved in or supporting implementation
- *Communication and Feedback Loops Tip Sheet*—Provides tips for open communication with staff and partners and formal linkages between workgroups and teams involved in supporting and sustaining the Practice Model

The readiness and shared commitment that will be developed and demonstrated as jurisdictions go through these tools and processes will prepare the organization and system for the next implementation building block, Capacity Building and Installation of the Practice Model.

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM EXPLORATION: Shared Commitment to the Practice Model

System-wide implementation of a practice model requires an implementation team with time and resources dedicated to supporting day-to-day implementation and scaling functions. Explore each of the day-to-day functions below, and discuss positions or teams handling a similar function or that might be leveraged to handle it. *Note: The day-to-day functions are excerpted from the Active Implementation and Scaling Functions resource document in the Shared Commitment to the Practice Model chapter of this manual.*

Day-to-Day Functions	What positions or teams already handle these or similar functions?	If no responsible position or team, what existing resources might be leveraged for these functions?
• Ensure that the Practice Model is teachable/learnable/doable/assessable.		
• Assess and create ongoing buy-in and readiness across the agency.		
• Install and sustain implementation infrastructure and best practices.		
• Develop/implement action plans to manage stage-based implementation.		
• Use data (including fidelity and outcomes) for continuous improvement.		
• Involve key agency and community partners in implementation activities and decision making for improvement.		
• Organize/direct day-to-day flow of information to support implementation.		
• Identify/address implementation barriers, and ensure spread of solutions.		

Composition and characteristics of the team include:

- A core team of 3-5 staff members (or combined FTEs)
- Led by one or two identified leaders (who are part of the 3-5 FTEs)
- Responsible for day-to-day Practice Model implementation and scale-up functions
- Connected to leadership in an ongoing intentional way (agency and/or Practice Model leadership)
- Coordinated with others working on Practice Model training, coaching, fidelity assessment, data for decision making, and community partner engagement

Exploring Implementation Team Resources and Commitment:

1. Given current agency context, strengths and needs, is it feasible to form a local Practice Model implementation team at this time?

2. What concerns have come up or challenges are anticipated in forming a Practice Model implementation team? How could these be addressed or managed?

3. Is there a commitment by agency leadership to dedicate the needed resources to form an implementation team? If yes, what processes or approvals are needed before team members can be identified and brought together? If no, are there strategies that can help build the needed commitment?

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM DEVELOPMENT: Shared Commitment to the Practice Model

GUIDELINES AND PROCESSES:

- Leverage an existing team, or reorganize staff resources to form a local implementation team.
- Establish a team of 3-5 FTEs to ensure flexibility and coverage, support daily communication and weekly team meetings, and enable the team to respond quickly and adaptively as issues and needs arise.
- Identify at least one leader (such as CWS manager) to participate on the team and act as team lead.
- For team members that will continue to carry other agency duties and responsibilities, ensure they have dedicated time and effort (percentage of FTE) sufficient to support day-to-day implementation functions and needs.
- Identify team members with a blend of practice- and system-level competencies and experience. The overall team (not any one team member) will need the following competencies:
    - Fluency in the Practice Model
    - Skill in applying active implementation functions and strategies
    - Experience creating or managing system change to support a new practice or program
    - Comfort with and value for using data for quality improvement
- As you identify team members and percentage of FTEs to be dedicated to the local implementation team, list them below, and place an X in the columns that represent the competencies each brings. Multiple Xs in a column may indicate strong presence of that competency on the team while few Xs in a column may indicate gap areas that need more attention.

Staff Name or Position	% FTE for Implementation Team Work	**Competencies for Implementation Team Members** *Current expertise and rationale for inclusion to be noted with an "X".*			
		Know & apply the Practice Model	Know & apply implementation functions/ strategies	Know & apply system change strategies	Know & apply data and improvement cycles
	Total FTEs =				

TERMS OF REFERENCE: Shared Commitment to the Practice Model

SAMPLE TERMS OF REFERENCE

PRACTICE MODEL IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Shared Vision *[What is this team's vision for its Practice Model work?]*

Sample Vision: *All levels of staff use the Practice Model in a way that strengthens and empowers families and their supportive communities and Tribes. Families are connected to natural networks of support and to cultural/ community traditions and services, positively affecting child and family outcomes and reducing disparities.*

Mission *[What is the mission for this team?]*

Sample Mission: *The Implementation Team partners with the Leadership Team to drive forward Practice Model implementation and system change. This includes ensuring implementation of the Practice Model at all levels within the agency and creating internal and external partnerships to improve services and to strengthen supports for children and families being served.*

Team Objective and Functions *[Include day-to-day implementation functions and any other functions that will belong to the Implementation Team.]*

Sample Objective/Functions*: Provide day-to-day support for ensuring the implementation and sustainability of the Practice Model. This involves ongoing attention to the following implementation-support functions:*

[*List relevant team functions from Active Implementation and Scaling Functions resource document]*

Team Operating Values and Principles *[What are the values and principles for the work of this team?]*

Sample Values/Principles*: Partnership, cultural humility, and responsiveness to the children, families, and communities that the agency serves; listening to and seeking to learn from and support staff at all levels; respect for and openness to all team members; following through with action plans and commitments in all teamwork; ongoing commitment to implementation strategies and the need for system change.*

Team Competencies [*What are the competencies of this team (not each individual on the team)?]*

Sample Competencies [see Implementation Team Development worksheet]*:*
Across the team, members are characterized by:

- *Fluency in the Practice Model*
- *Skill in applying active implementation functions and strategies*
- *Experience creating or managing system change to support a new practice or program*
- *Comfort with and value for using data for quality improvement*

Team Membership *[Who is on this team? Include positions and percentage of FTE dedicated to the team.]*

Sample Team Membership: *Team members include and are not limited to:*

- *Social Services Manager/Team Lead (Randy L.) – 100%*
- *Children's Services Analyst (Crystal A.) – 100%*
- *Continuing Services Manager (Darla P.) – 30%*
- *Training Manager (Karen R.) – 30%*
- *Trainer/Coach (Susan A.) – 100%*
- *Cultural Broker Program Lead (Margaret J.) – 50%*

Team Communications *[Who/how will this team regularly connect and communicate with others?)*

Sample Team Communications: *Team members will coordinate and communicate daily to keep the work coordinated and moving forward. The team will meet weekly in person with an intentional and focused purpose to share and communicate about improvement cycles (PDSAs), to test and refine implementation supports, to share what's working well, and to identify and problem solve who/how to manage/address implementation and system challenges and barriers. The current Implementation Team Meeting is 2-4 pm Wednesdays (except 3rd Wednesday when team members conduct the Practice Model Leadership Team meeting).*

Communications with other implementation support teams include:

- ***Practice Model Leadership Team:** Monthly mtg – All team members attend. (3rd Wed, 9-10:30 AM)*
- ***Regional Implementation Team:** Monthly mtg - Team Lead (Randy L.) and Training Mgr (Karen R.) attend (4th Wed,12-2 PM)*
- ***Coaching Workgroup**: Monthly mtg – Training Mgr (Karen R.) and Trainer/Coach (Susan A.) attends. (1st Wed, 9:30-12:30PM)*
- ***Community Partner Advisory**: Monthly mtg - Team Lead (Randy L., and Cultural Broker Lead (Margaret J.) attend (4th Thur, 1-4PM)*
- ***Bench Collaborative** – Monthly mtg – Team Lead (Randy L.) and Continuing Services Mgr(Darla P.) attend (2nd Tues, 12-1:30PM)*

In addition, team members regularly seek information on successes, challenges, and barriers and on improving implementation supports, as well as provide relevant updates at General Staff/Unit/Supervisor/Management meetings and at Labor Mgmt Committee meetings.

Available Team Resources *[Who/what is available to support this team's ongoing work?]*

Sample Team Resources:

- *Team meeting space (CWS Room 421)*
- *Team docking space with computer, supplies, and phone (FF Space 24)*
- *Conference call access (arranged through Admin Support-Karen H)*
- *TA Consultant: Provides guidance and support in applying active implementation and scaling functions and in developing implementation infrastructure and platforms/plans for implementation drivers using best practices for implementation and supporting system changes*
- *Cultural Resource Center: External coaches to coach system leaders in system alignment with the Practice Model and to provide consultation/support to aid supervisory/manager coaching support for staff. Also assisting in local system review and analysis of barriers to improved outcomes for disproportionately represented children in our system.*

Deliverables and Timelines

Sample Deliverables and Timelines:

- *By December 2016:*
    - ◊ *Written Practice Model training rollout plan by unit developed and coordinated with unit supervisors who will assist with follow-up modules provided to their unit*
    - ◊ *Curriculum for Overview Training and follow-up modules finalized*
    - ◊ *Written Practice Model Coaching Service Delivery Plan in place and ready to be implemented*
    - ◊ *Coaching Institute has been provided to all supervisors and managers to build general coaching capacity*
    - ◊ *Data workgroup has drafted plan for practical and efficient data collection processes ;being reviewed by Leadership Team*
    - ◊ *Resources and plan for fidelity assessments being worked on*
- *In-person Practice Model Overview Training for agency and community partners provided monthly (ongoing)*
- *Training rollout and coaching service delivery plan being implemented (ongoing starting Jan 2017)*
- *March 2017: Plan for collecting/reporting out data for improvement finalized and being implemented*
- *June 2017: Written plan for fidelity assessment, including communications and messaging to staff and partners, completed. Staff and community partners receive overview and preparation for fidelity assessment (ongoing).*
- *Fidelity assessments for trained workers begin in January 2018 and are done annually (ongoing).*
- *Frequent review of implementation and outcome data to guide decision making and improvement (ongoing)*
- *Synthesize information from all levels of staff and from partners regarding practice, implementation, and system barriers; communicate issue to appropriate level or team and/or take timely action; keep staff and partners advised of progress (ongoing)*

Team Authority and Boundaries

Sample Authority and Boundaries: *The Implementation Team supports day-to-day implementation of the Practice Model consistent with existing agency policy and leadership directives. As implementation needs, systemic challenges, and areas for policy or system alignment are identified, the information is provided to agency leadership, sometimes with recommendations or possible solutions. Policy decisions are not made by the Implementation Team; rather, they are made at appropriate leadership levels within the agency and system.*

The Child and Family Practice Model

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK LOOPS

Tips for: Open Communication with Staff and Partners; Formal Linkages and Feedback Loops among Teams

Why: All parts of the child welfare system, from frontline staff to leadership to community partners, bring valuable perspectives to the implementation of a Practice Model. By providing staff and partners with information and seeking out and using their input, communication and feedback loops are established to celebrate successes and to address needs and concerns in real time. While this type of communication may seem "everyday," when used in a **systematic and intentional way** to support implementation, practice is able to inform policy, and policy and systems are better able to align and support practice.

Who: Develop communication and feedback loops with **those who are playing or will play a role in supporting families** being served by the Practice Model, for example, social workers, caregivers, parent partners, and cultural and community partners. Ensure frequent ongoing communication and feedback loops with the **teams and groups involved in guiding and supporting implementation** within the agency, including staff and groups involved in CFPM training, coaching, fidelity, data, and community partnerships.

Where: Find **existing meetings and forums** where those with whom you want to connect will be (such as staff meetings, unit meetings, agency/foster parent mixers, community partner advisory groups) and/or partner to **develop new forums** if there are important feedback and perspectives missing.

HOW

To encourage people to talk and share implementation ideas and information with you, yield to uncertainty and embrace ambiguity in system change processes. Let go of the idea that you are the expert or have the answers. **MODEL HUMILITY!** ***Listen*** to others' perspectives; ***Ask*** to learn about *their* feedback and solutions; ***Offer*** information and updates in ways that are simple, accessible, and meaningful for those being engaging.

Think about ways to ***create a safe space*** for staff and partners for whom this level of openness and reflection with a system representative may be a new experience or who may have some distrust or reluctance due to negative past experiences with the system, its representatives, or authority in general.

Listen for and be sensitive to trauma. Our child welfare workforce comes from our communities. Children, families, communities, *and staff* are impacted by institutional racism. Staff also experiences trauma as a result of repeatedly serving families in crisis. If you are met with anger or resistance, stay in the conversation with openness, respect, and humility. Creating a safe space for discussions about trauma to emerge is an important communication and feedback loop for a practice model and system that is truly responsive to trauma.

Model Humility

Humility invites essential perspectives and wisdom from staff and community who are most connected to how to best serve and support children and families. Practicing humility does not mean that one's perspective is not valuable; rather, it demonstrates openness and an understanding that others' perspectives are equally as valuable.