LEADERSHIP AS THE DRIVING FORCE IN IMPLEMENTATION

Building on a foundation of active involved community partnerships, the implementation building block of *Shared Commitment to the Practice Model* brings the work of building readiness and supportive infrastructure for the Child and Family Practice Model into focus. Strong leadership and shared commitment ensure that staff perspectives are valued in implementation planning and processes, that one cohesive approach to practice is adopted by the agency and communicated by leadership, and that leadership is prepared to work collaboratively with staff and community partners to guide and support the development of key infrastructure and resources for effective practice model implementation and system change.

While many factors within and outside the agency will affect implementation, in the experience of sites who have implemented the CFPM, child welfare agency leadership emerged as the driving force for organizational change and agency support of practice model implementation, resulting in more engaged and active community partnerships and more effective and efficient implementation infrastructure and system supports for practice and system changes. This strong leadership buy-in and support was associated with leaders having greater accountability to the community and being able to mobilize significant infrastructure resources to ensure strong communication protocols and linkages between staff, leadership, partners, and implementation team members. Knowingly or unknowingly, these successful practice model leaders mobilized linked leadership and implementation team structures and processes within the organization and system to support and sustain the Practice Model.

For example, leaders in one jurisdiction worked with peers in the social service agency (SSA), and agreements were made to dedicate several SSA positions to a Practice Model implementation team in the child welfare agency. A leader was also identified in the child welfare agency to participate on the team. In addition, the message that "everyone's involved and empowered" was continually reinforced with the child welfare management team, effectively leveraging the strengths, creativity, influence and skills of everyone on the management team in working collaboratively with the implementation team to support and sustain the practice.

Another jurisdiction combined a 1-2 child welfare managers with a CQI supervisor in the agency as well as a training/coaching partner who had a significant portion of their FTE portion dedicated to child welfare/practice model work in the agency. They met weekly and connected with many others in the organization to coordinate and support practice model implementation.

Transformational CFPM Leadership: *Leaning In and Staying In*

Strong leadership and sustained commitment are the driving force for change in the effective implementation of the Child and Family Practice Model. System leaders are needed to ensure all parts of the organization and system are working in concert and supporting the necessary changes at both practice and system levels in order to realize improved and long-lasting outcomes for children and families. This is a rewarding but challenging process that takes time, patience, dedication and determination to realize the lasting benefits.

In adopting the Child and Family Practice Model as the central framework for local work with children and families, leadership makes a commitment to the values, principles and front-line practice approach in the model and translates this into action with staff, partners, youth families, communities and tribes. Leaders who demonstrate the actions illustrated in the chart below continuously communicate their commitment to the Practice Model at all levels of the organization and system through interactions that Lean In, Lift Up, and Connect to Culture:

- o **Lean In**: *Listening* with respect, *Engaging* community and tribal partners and *Exploring* for deeper understanding
- o **Lift Up**: *Strengthening* systems*, Affirming* contributions and competency and *Developing* opportunities for meaningful involvement
- o **Connect**:   *Organizing* feedback loops with staff and partners, *Energizing Teamwork* by resourcing teams and supporting team decisions
- o **Culture**: *Promoting Healing Relationships* by creating opportunities to address injustices and *Supporting* cultural sensitivities and the use of cultural practices and traditions

System and organization leaders accept and embrace the notion that their problems are complex, the process is messy and solutions do not take place overnight. They understand Leadership is not a one-time decision and it is important to Stay In:

- o **S**upport and engage system stakeholders and partners to participate and contribute to the development of solutions.
- o **T**ake time – this is a developmental process of building relationships and trust that sometimes gets worse before it gets better.
- o **A**cknowledge and address historical issues of anger and mistrust, understanding this is necessary and can be uncomfortable and challenging.
- o **Y**ield to uncertainty and embrace ambiguity in partnership and change processes - let go of the idea that you have the answers.
- o **IN**vite the meaningful involvement of individuals from local communities and Tribes and from many parts of the organization and system.

Ultimately, system and organization leaders play a critical role in developing and supporting an organizational culture of coaching, continuous learning and development. Thoughtful, flexible, and sustained leadership that consistently demonstrates the behaviors on the following page is an essential element of change and is key to ensuring the success of the practice model and improving outcomes for children and families.

LEANING IN and STAYING IN

Leadership and System Behaviors

Demonstrating commitment to the Child and Family Practice Model in interactions with staff, partners, youth, families, communities, and Tribes

L E A N I N *Listen, Engage and Explore*	**L I F T U P** *Strengthen, Affirm and Develop*	**C O N N E C T** *to* *Organize and Energize Teamwork*	**C U L T U R E** *Promote Healing Relationships and Supports*
• Model the practice behaviors expected of staff at all levels of the organization and communicate in clear, honest and respectful ways • Explore complaints, events and situations through inquiry, listening to those involved, and reviewing other data and information in order to make balanced assessments and informed decisions • Engage cultural, community and Tribal partners as key advisors in local practice and system changes to advocate for and support improvements • Reflect on one's own beliefs, biases, and assumptions and the impact on staff, partners, organizational processes, and decision-making	• Find opportunities to affirm staff, partners, and organizational strengths in everyday work; pause and take time to use the practice model to guide response and interaction even in times of crisis • Ensure staff and partners have the training, coaching and system supports needed to effectively implement the practice model • Promote system alignment with the practice model, including creating and modeling a culture of teaching, learning, reflection, and development at all levels of the organization and system • Provide opportunities for staff, youth, families, communities and Tribes to actively share their voice and play meaningful roles in designing and implementing all practice and system changes	• Actively and routinely seek feedback from staff and partners regarding the practice model, implementation supports, agency policy, and systemic barriers, then respond and regularly update regarding action steps taken • Involve the management team in making, communicating, and supporting all decisions that will affect staff implementation, system alignment, and support of the practice model • Support staff and partners to move forward plans identified by families and their teams, including resourcing and developing culturally sensitive supports and services • Resource, strengthen, support, and reinforce the roles and activities of the Implementation, Supervisory and Leadership Teams in implementing and sustaining high fidelity use of the practice model	• Provide community and Tribal partners with space for testimony on behalf of themselves, their community, and their ancestry; • Through sincere words and actions acknowledge and apologize for ways that the system may have contributed to past harm and injustices to children and families and partner to create solutions • Follow through with agreements and representations made to staff and partners. Admit and take responsibility for one's own biases, missteps and mistakes, modeling this as an opportunity for learning and making adjustments in one's interactions • Infuse cultural sensitivity in all interactions with staff and partners and support the development and use of cultural practices and traditions as well as evidence-based practices that can assist local families with loss, grief, hurt, pain, healing and recovery