



WHY A PRACTICE MODEL?

While efforts had been moved forward for many years in various California counties to address issues of disproportionality and disparities, most did not systematically work to address both practice- and system-level change in partnership with the affected communities and simultaneously to employ implementation best practices that could institutionalize the practice and system changes being made so that reductions in disproportionality and disparities would continue to be supported over time.

A practice model was identified as the type of intervention that could provide all of the necessary components for supporting change at both *practice* and *system* levels because it (1) defines a consistent theoretical framework and a set of values and principles to guide the work of the child welfare agency and its partners; (2) articulates and operationalizes specific skills and practices that child welfare workers and staff in partner organizations use to engage families, youth, the community, and Tribes in developing and delivering services that meet the unique needs of those served; and (3) is capable of being fully integrated into and supported by the child welfare agency and its partners.¹

While the need to bring promising practices together in a practice model to address disparities in outcomes and to support positive outcomes for *all* children and families being served was recognized, it was clear that an effective practice model could not be developed without first engaging and then continuously involving the communities and Tribes whose children were being impacted by the local child welfare practice and system. While this certainly slowed down development of the model, it was an essential step for creating a practice model that all partners agreed could achieve shared agency and community goals and outcomes. It also provided the necessary foundation for the meaningful involvement of community partners in all subsequent practice model implementation, evaluation, and system change activities.

Partnership is not an event that occurs at one point in the Practice Model development or implementation process.

Partnership is interwoven throughout the entire fabric of the agency's Practice Model implementation, evaluation, and system change.

California Partners for Permanency

¹ American Public Human Services Association (2011). *Practice Model Guidance*. Retrieved from [http://www.aphsa.org/content/dam/aphsa/PPCWG/Reflective%20thinking%20guide/Practice%20Model/Practice%20Model%20Guidance\(4\)%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.aphsa.org/content/dam/aphsa/PPCWG/Reflective%20thinking%20guide/Practice%20Model/Practice%20Model%20Guidance(4)%20(1).pdf). Barbee, A. P., Christensen, D., Antle, B., Wandersman, A., & Cahn, Katharine. (2011). Successful adoption and implementation of a comprehensive casework practice model in a public child welfare agency: Application of the Getting to Outcomes (GTO) model. *Child and Youth Services Review*, 33(5), 622-633.