

Transforming Child Welfare and TANF

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What is “the Transformation”?

- Co-location?
- Family-centered practice?
- Strength-based practice?
- Jointly developed plans?
- Joint teams?
- Blended or braided funding?
- Better communication and coordination?

Where is “It” Underway or Under Consideration?

- El Paso County & Mesa County Colorado
- Arizona
- California -- counties
- Kentucky -- counties
- Idaho
- Minnesota -- local areas
- North Carolina -- counties
- Oregon -- local areas
- Pennsylvania -- local areas
- Virginia -- Hampton
- Washington -- local areas

“It” as a Philosophy, *Not Just* a Service Delivery Mechanism

- Vision provides the overarching framework
- Vision provides the blueprint to connect components and fill in the framework
- Vision is the core of the transformed structure
- Vision is necessary but not sufficient for the structure to stand

“It” as a Model of Service Delivery:

- Develop strong primary prevention that addresses conditions underlying or contributing to child abuse and neglect
- Develop intensive supports for families without requiring them to become involved with the child welfare system
- Narrow the focus of child welfare to deal only with most serious cases

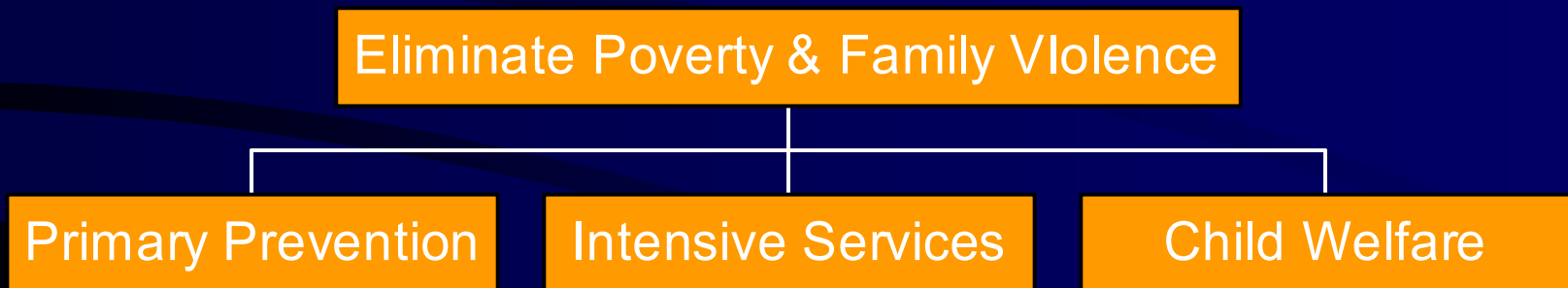
What is the Vision?

- Children and families don't come in pieces, must deal with them holistically
- Families know a lot about what they need *and* need help getting it
- Agencies and service providers are part of the team, but not the whole team, they must work together and with the families as *partners*

Vision and Mission Help:

- Coordinate the three structural, service delivery components and move them forward simultaneously
- Overcome fear and resistance to change
- Guide decision-making
- Tackle challenges -- e.g. funding silos, “this is how we’ve always done things,” confidentiality concerns, information sharing and IT issues

What is the Service Delivery Structure?



Primary Prevention:

- El Paso County -- TANF
- Comprehensive assessment of family's needs
- Diversion programs
- Work supports
- Addressing barriers
- Sanction prevention team

Child Welfare:

- Differential response to reports of maltreatment
- Intensive home-based services
- Community-based services in schools and community centers
- Community-based forensic child protection teams
- Less adversarial court responses

Intensive Services:

- El Paso -- Joint TANF & child welfare initiatives
- Coordinated case planning
- Kinship care program
- Project Direct Link

What Lessons Have We Learned?

So Far

A Multi-Pronged Approach is Necessary

- Must address poverty, substance abuse, mental health problems, violence, *and* child maltreatment
- Must address interactive effects of these challenges
- No agency can do it alone *and* no agency can afford to ignore any of these barriers

Must Address Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Domestic Violence

- They can interfere with ability to hold down a job
- They can interfere with ability to parent
- They can make getting needed help difficult
- They often combine to make life challenging in multiple ways

Poverty is also a Critical Factor

- Can be an added stressor -- “the straw that breaks the camel’s back”
- Can create a lack of resources to address problems and avoid harm -- e.g. child care
- Can be a result of the same underlying factors that contribute to child maltreatment -- substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, etc.
- Cannot be ignored

Strong Leadership is Essential

- To develop an initial vision
- To spread *and* incubate the vision in others
- To identify connections between various barriers families face
- To create participatory design, planning and decision-making -- for staff *and* families!
- To sustain momentum

Should the Initiative Start Big or Small?

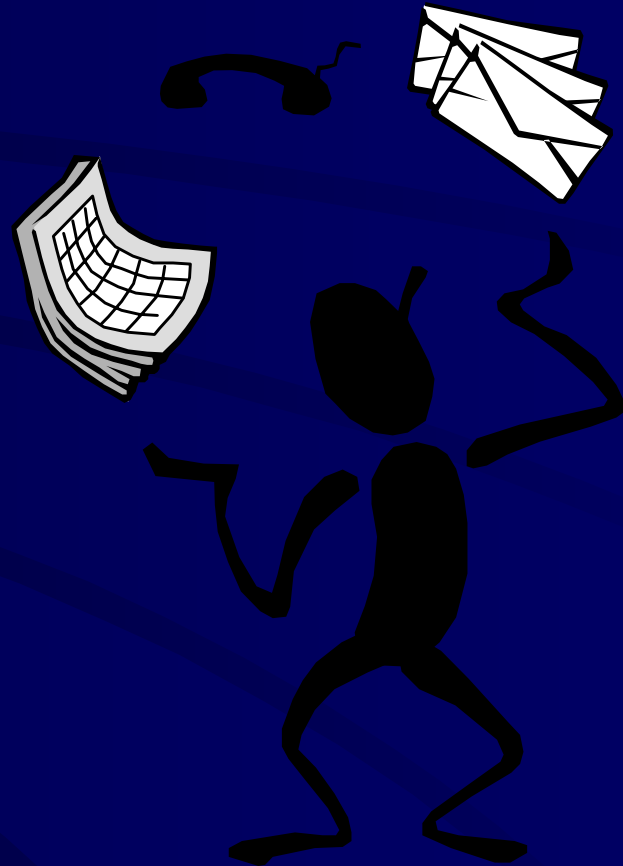
- Big initiatives can provide momentum
- Big initiatives can be overwhelming
- Incremental initiatives can be easier to manage
- Incremental initiatives can stifle development
- Big initiatives can create a needed sea change

“At Some Point Just Do It, Stop Planning and Start Trying”

- Trying to plan for everything can stop momentum
- It's impossible to plan for everything
- Participatory planning builds ownership and buy-in to the new way of doing business
- Need to be prepared to adjust and change as you go

Building a Solid Model Requires:

- A good blueprint -- a vision
- Sound components
- Flexibility & willingness to adjust
- A lot of juggling between the big picture & the details



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