Integrating Evaluation Policy and Practice: Utilizing Organizational Self Study for Learning and Change

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Goals

• Recognize potential for the utilization of self-study to:
  – Combat negative view of evaluation (Patton, 2008)
  – Foster critical self-reflection
  – Facilitate organizational learning and focus change efforts (Cherin & Meezan, 1998; Dodd & Meezan, 2009; Fetterman, Kaftarian & Wandersman, 1996; Patton, 2008).
Self-Study Purpose

Organizational self-study on particular critical concept areas allow an agency to:

• Assess readiness for training and technical assistance (T/TA)
• Actively reflect on current practice
• Facilitates the targeting of T/TA
• Helps to prioritize next steps
• Identifies barriers to practice and change
Self-Study Format

• The self-studies are formatted like a survey with open-ended and closed-ended questions
• There are also task-centered questions asking for particular policies and documents to be identified and reviewed
• Questions ask about organizational capacity, norms, and practices related to core competencies for the specific practice area
Self-Studies Currently Available

• Family Engagement – http://www.nrcpfc.org/fewpt/self_study.htm
• Educational Stability – http://www.nrcpfc.org
• Parent-Child and Sibling Visits – http://www.nrcpfc.org
• Examples of self assessment tools

Organizational Self Study on Concurrent Planning

This self study assessment tool can be used to review concurrent planning policies and practices. The tool is designed to review overall administrative policies, strengths and challenges in implementing concurrent planning and identity training and technical assistance needs.

ADMINISTRATIVE: POLICY/STRUCTURE

Does your agency have a definition of concurrent planning? ___Yes ___No

If yes, how is it defined?

________________________________________________________________________

Does your agency have written policy on concurrent planning? ___ Yes ___No

If yes, what is it?

________________________________________________________________________

Has it been communicated to agency staff ___Yes ___No

If yes, in what ways has staff been informed of the policy?

________________________________________________________________________

To what extent has administration placed a clear priority on concurrent planning?

___Very clear priority
___Clear priority
___Vague priority
___Unclear priority

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

How many children came into care during the last fiscal year? ________

How many of these children are sibling groups? ______

What percentage of these children are reunified with their families?

____ 76-100%
• Examples of self assessment tools

**Setting Clear Time Lines for Permanency Decisions:**

Does practice include firm timelines for permanency decision making?

__Yes  __No

Do services focus on parent’s ability and willingness to make changes to undertake caretaking responsibilities?  __Yes  __No

**Transparent Written Agreements and Documentation:**

In your current case review practice, how do you focus on treatment plans and visitation?


What are the requirements for written documentation in concurrent planning cases?


**Collaboration:**

Rate your current relationship with the following collaborators in working on concurrent case practice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Strong</th>
<th>Very Weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Court</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASA Volunteer</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Professional</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and Drug Treatment</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Specific Recruitment, Training, and Retention of Resource Families**

How will the agency recruit families who are interested in participating in a concurrent planning program?
Benefits

- Increases feelings of autonomy in the self study process, which creates investment in both the evaluation and T/TA process
- Decreases sense of “being judged”
- Creates baseline information
- Informs and helps target T/TA
- Informs policy and practice decision-making
Successes

• Has fostered organizational learning by
  – Generating realistic assessment of specific T/TA needs, especially helpful to guide initial conversation
  – Facilitating identification of strengths to build on and barriers to address
  – Facilitating prioritization of next steps
SUCCESES

• Has fostered organizational learning by:

  – Increasing engagement in the T/TA process (understanding their own strengths and needs through a competencies lens increases understanding of and motivation for engaging in the T/TA process)

  – Fostering ownership of the evaluation and change process
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