**THE PROCESS**

In a recent interview of LeBron James after several losses in a row on his first year back with Cleveland his response struck me as pertinent to our project: “you need to trust the process.” While child welfare is not the NBA, his response has parallels with our project: engagement > assessment > appropriate intervention. We will have other pressing issues that come up in each county that require attention (ex. influx of drugs or substance abuse needs); we may have surges in placement (due to an increase in abuse instances or other factors); and there will be difficulties with following the requirements of our project (ex. staff buy-in or evaluation activities). The key is to **trust the process** – engage, assess, and provide appropriate services. The project is a long-term journey that will work – trust the process!

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**EVALUATION UPDATE**

On October 21st and 22nd the Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) hosted a training session on the SPANS data collection process; facilitated by Robin Orlando and team of SPANS trainers from Allegheny County. This training session provided county participants with the framework of how to use the SPANS process with the CANS and FAST assessment tools, as well as hands-on training activities. In addition to the two-day training session, participants were provided with a flash-drive that contained resources and templates to aide in the understanding and implementation of the SPANS process. We thank Robin and her team for a very informative training! And if anyone has questions about this training, please contact Alexis Pigott (alp159@pitt.edu).

The Evidence-Based Practice Questionnaire (EBPQ) is currently being piloted in one of the Cohort One counties; with the implementation in the remaining counties to follow soon. The EBPQ evaluation activity will provide critical information to the evaluation around referral behavior and staff knowledge of EBPs. Additional Cohort One counties can soon expect to receive a request to begin gathering contact information pertaining to this activity; such as supervisor and staff emails. Stay tuned!

Cohort Two has completed the Key Informant Interview (KII) process. A big “Thank You!” goes out to all of those that participated in these interviews. Cohort Two is now currently participating in the ORC survey. The ORC survey is intended to supply the evaluation with information pertaining to the organization’s readiness to implement assessment and engagement strategies, as well as evidence-based practices. Cohort Two staff has until December 12th to complete the survey. Any questions pertaining to the ORC survey can be directed to Justin Donofrio (jdd63@pitt.edu). Lastly, Cohort Two can keep an eye out for upcoming information regarding supervisor and caseworker focus groups, which is another evaluation activity that will take place in the coming months.
CHILDREN’S BUREAU UPDATE (From Bethany Miller - ACF)

The Children’s Bureau recently awarded three new national technical assistance centers that began activities in fiscal year 2015. The centers are designed to build the capacities of agencies and courts in states, tribes, and territories to meet federal standards and requirements, improve child welfare practice and administration, and achieve better outcomes for children, youth, and families.

- National Capacity Building Center for Public Child Welfare Agencies
- National Child Welfare Capacity Building Center for Tribes
- National Center for Legal and Judicial Excellence in Child Welfare

These three centers will offer many of the services previously performed by the National Child Welfare Resource Centers and Child Welfare Implementation Centers. They will jointly plan activities; use evidence-informed approaches to training, consultation, adult education, and distance learning; and partner closely with Child Welfare Information Gateway to make all of their products, tools, and resources available through a single website.

SPANS TRAINING – A COUNTY PERSPECTIVE (ROBIN ORLANDO – ALLEGHENY)

Recently, representatives from the 6 CWDP counties; along with staff from the University of Pittsburgh, attended a two day training on the SPANS. The SPANS (Service Process Adherence to Needs and Strengths) is a fidelity tool that is used with the FAST (Family Advocacy and Support Tool) and CANS (Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment) assessments. The SPANS is a tool which measures the fidelity of the relationship between the assessment, service plan, service implementation, and the outcomes that a family or child experiences.

The two day training led by staff from Allegheny County focused on 4 areas: FAST/CANS review; SPANS training; SPANS implementation plan; and training and introducing SPANS through the train the trainer model. The FAST and CANS booster included a brief review of the assessments, ratings, and a reminder that the FAST/CANS should be a conversation and not a checklist or another form to complete. Training on the SPANS included review of the tool and rating system; and practice sessions for staff to practice completing portions of the SPANS. Also, use of the SPANS as both a monitoring/quality assurance tool and as a supervision tool was highlighted.

Day two of the training was spent on developing a SPANS implementation plan. Staff met in their county cohorts to brainstorm and begin identifying next steps, potential resources and barriers, and how aspects of the SPANS may be utilized both in supervision and monitoring. Finally, each county presented aspects of their implementation plan and discussed how they would introduce the SPANS to various stakeholders and staff in their counties. Staff were given jump drives so that the SPANS materials provided in the training could be replicated or adapted for each county cohort.
IMPLEMENTATION WORKGROUP UPDATE

The Implementation Workgroup convened on November 5, 2014 for a productive meeting with representatives from all participating counties, University of Pittsburgh, and OCYF. Each county presented a thorough update on the status and challenges facing each county as they continue with the engagement/assessment phases of the project and the implementation of their Evidence-Based Practices. An update was provided on the status of gathering baseline information from each county and the ongoing monitoring practices of each project component. A document was distributed from Allegheny County proposing solutions to ongoing monitoring questions. Dauphin County volunteered to host the next CANS/FAST Community of Practice Meeting. In addition, the county template for the January/2015 Semi-Annual Progress Report was distributed for county review.

UPCOMING PROJECT DUE DATES

Post Implementation:

- January 31, 2014  Semi-Annual Progress Report
- January 31, 2014  Program Monitoring Form

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

Update your calendar:

- November 10, 2014  Fiscal Workgroup Meeting
- November 24, 2014  Executive Committee Meeting
- January 3, 2015  Implementation Workgroup

Communication – we need articles: This newsletter is one mechanism utilized to report out on key accomplishments and communicate upcoming tasks and due dates. If anyone has information to include for future editions, please email Bill at wshutt@pcgus.com or one of our county newsletter representatives:

Lackawanna – Kerry Browning
Allegheny – Robin Orlando
Philadelphia – Brian Clapier
Dauphin – Kirsten Johnson
Venango – Amie Wood-Wessel
Crawford – Kelly Schwab

Our newsletter is a much more dynamic and useful newsletter when we get county contributions – please consider an article for next month!