

Engaging Diverse Families in Leadership for Systemic Change

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FAMILIES

For Children's Mental Health

“Leaderful” Organizations

- * Clear & compelling vision & mission
- * Passionate & engaged Board
- * Strategic approach to leadership development & engagement
- * Effective communications & marketing
- * Motivated, professional staff



Clear & compelling vision/mission



- * Vision/mission “set the stage” for an organization that values parent leadership development
- * What does your vision/mission statement tell:
 - * *Parents* about your expectations for their leadership?
 - * *Parents* about the opportunities for leadership?
 - * *Your staff* about their role in identifying, recruiting, preparing, & supporting diverse parent leaders?
 - * *Others* about the value you place on parent leadership?

Strategic Plan



- * Strategic plans provide the roadmap to achieving the vision & mission
- * What does your strategic plan do to:
 - * Integrate parent leadership as an integral component of each major strategic goal/direction?
 - * Support parent leadership development & engagement as a key activity/mechanism to achieve the goal?
 - * Ensure sufficient funding to sustain parent leadership development & engagement?

Communications/Marketing/Outreach



- * Communications/marketing/outreach activities:
 - * Let diverse parents know who you are, what you do, & how they can be involved
 - * Let communities understand the value you place on parent leadership
 - * Underscore to policymakers & professionals why parent leadership is - & should be – a core value
- * How effective is your communications/marketing/outreach plan in achieving these goals?

Financial Support

- * Fundraising activities (including grantwriting) secure the funds needed to fuel your leadership work
- * What do your grant applications tell funders about:
 - * Your commitment to diverse parent leadership as a core value?
 - * Your understanding about the resources needed to sustain effective parent leadership development & support?
- * How can you write parent leadership development & support into applications even when it is not a stated focus of the funding opportunity?

Staff & Board Recruitment



- * Your staff & Board provide the personnel needed to achieve your goals
- * How do your staff & Board recruitment policies & practices support your commitment to diverse parent leadership development & support?
- * How do you incorporate parent leadership development & support into Board & staff roles?
- * What does the composition of your Board & staff say to potential parent leaders?

Organizational Self-Assessment



- * Family-Centered Services Self-Assessment
- * Non-Profit Management Self-Assessment
- * Cultural & Linguistic Competence Self-Assessment for Family Organizations
- * Language Access Self-Assessment & Plan
- * Parent Leadership Self-Assessment

Parent Leadership “Formula”

- * Assess agency & staff readiness
- * Improve agency & staff readiness
- * Identify potential parent leaders
- * Recruit diverse parent leaders
- * Prepare diverse parent leaders
- * Provide meaningful leadership roles for parent leaders
- * Support parent leaders
- * Recognize parent leader contributions

Speak Up!
Take Action!
Create Change!

Engaging Families as Leaders

- * Involve those most affected
- * Reflect the society we are working for
- * Draw strength from/ be accountable to
- * Gain access & voice
- * Model collaboration
- * Hold selves to high standards



Building New Leadership

- * Nurture it
- * Have a plan to:
 - * Identify potential leaders
 - * Build capacity
- * Allow mistakes
- * Make the space
- * Provide support
- * Listen, respond



Pathways to Parent Leadership

- Critical supports:
 - Contact with other parents in leadership roles
 - Opportunities to take on leadership roles, however small, & safe settings to practice them
 - Relationship with respected & trusted person who provides feedback & support
 - Sense of belonging



The Planned Change Process



Key Leadership Qualities

- * Challenge the process
- * Inspire shared vision
- * Enable others to act
- * Model the way
- * Encourage the heart



Underlying Principles

- Strengths Based
- Family Centered
- Building empowerment not dependence
- Relationship-based
- Solution Focused
- Continuous Quality Improvement



Starting place

- * Identify small group of parents from targeted community & community cultural brokers
- * Ask for their help in:
 - * Understanding cultural, language, religious impacts (both sources of strength & potential barriers)
 - * Developing strategies to reach, engage, & support families from their background
 - * Implementing strategies
 - * Evaluating progress & planning next steps
- * Provide them with support



Why do parents get involved?

- The issue is important to them, their family, & their community
- They have something to contribute
- They believe that they will be listened to, their contributions respected, and their participation will make a difference



How do parent leaders stay involved?

- Multiple opportunities for participation
- The level of participation can vary as needed
- Families receive sufficient advance notice
- Family participation is facilitated
- Families are listened to; their ideas are supported & respected
- Families do not experience retribution as a result of their participation
- Family participation has an impact
- Family participation is consciously & visibly appreciated

Primary Supports Needed

- ▶ **Tangible** (stipends, provision of or reimbursement for childcare and transportation and reimbursement for lost wages).
- ▶ **Emotional** (respect, understanding, validation, and ongoing support to fulfill their roles, including times of transition and crisis).
- ▶ **Environmental** (training, equality with service providers, and full inclusion in activities)

Levels of Focus for Parent Leaders

- Level 1: Strengthening individual parent knowledge & skills
- Level 2: Promoting community education
- Level 3: Educating Providers
- Level 4: Fostering coalitions & networks
- Level 5: Changing organizational practices
- Level 6: Influencing policy & legislation

Token vs. Meaningful Involvement

- No preparation or information given prior to participation
- No meaningful role in meeting or forum
- Often one time only participation
- Professionals talk “around parents” using acronyms and terminology unfamiliar to them
- Adequate notice of the meeting and material supports are provided to assist parent attendance
- Materials and/or an orientation is provided prior to the meeting
- Parent input is valued and individuals work with parents to clarify terminology, systems and policies
- Follow-up is provided

Leaders Know Themselves

- * Who am I?
- * What am I doing here?
- * What are my:
 - * Goals, purposes, expectations, motivations
- * What strengths & challenges do I bring?
- * How can I best use my leadership skills?
- * How can I make space for others?



Advocacy Leadership Knowledge



- * Laws & regulations
- * How institutions work
- * Key decision-makers
- * Formal & informal decision-making
- * Facts; current status
- * Barriers & solutions
- * Qualities of effective systems
- * Existing resources

Focus on Empowerment

- * Educate
 - * Build knowledge
 - * Build skills
- * Engage
 - * Build trust
 - * Build self-confidence
- * Enhance effectiveness
 - * Build mentoring
 - * Build opportunities



Readiness Factors

Agencies:

- ▶ Explore past history
- ▶ Are you ready for full transparency
- ▶ Leadership support in all directions
- ▶ Willingness to be flexible
- ▶ **Your budget is your policy statement!**



Sustainability Strategies

- Commit to cultivating family leaders
- Articulate the value statement
- Clear expectations, roles and outcomes
- Flexible scheduling and meeting formats
- Engage in inter-agency data sharing



Sustainability Strategies

- Assure & continue to enhance competence
- Cross-agency impact reporting
- Implement corporate leadership strategies
- Leadership vs. Management
- Family leaders bring life to your mission
- Family engagement & leadership activities embedded in ALL grant proposals



Spheres of Conflict

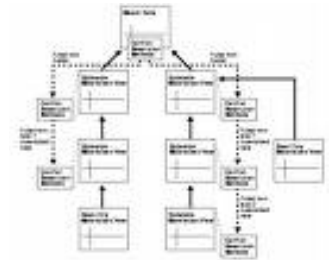


Structural
Conflicts

Value
Conflicts



Data
Conflicts



Interest
Conflicts

Relationship
Conflicts



Action Planning

- * What is our action plan for involvement?
- * We know the why, we need to plan the:
 - * Who?
 - * What?
 - * When?
 - * Where?
 - * How?



Action Planning

- Steps of Action Planning
 - Reaching out to parents to participate in the Action Planning process
 - Conduct the organizational self assessment with parent participation
 - Prioritize areas of needed improvement
 - Develop a plan, in partnership with families, to address prioritized needs



Making It Real

- Identify a potential parent leader
- How are they currently involved?
- What leadership characteristics do they have?
- What is one new leadership role to which you could immediately introduce this parent?
- What development or support will they need?
- What's the first step you will take - & when?

Speak Up!
Take Action!
Create Change!

Be the pebble in the pond... causing ripples that spread in all directions!



Debriefing

- ▶ What worked?
- ▶ What could have gone better?



What went well:



Even better if:

Key Resources

- * National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, & Community Empowerment: www.parentsatthetable.org
- * Serving on Groups Parent Leadership Development: www.servingongroups.org
- * Family Engagement Inventory: www.childwelfare.gov/fei/practice-strategies/
- * Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships: www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf
- * Parents Anonymous Shared Leadership: <http://parentsanonymous.org/parent-shared-leadership/>
- * The Partnership Way: Leading by Convening: www.ideapartnership.org/building-connections/the-partnership-way.html
- * Leading by Convening Rubrics to Assess and Shape Practice: <https://ncsi.wested.org/resources/leading-by-convening/rubrics-to-assess-and-shape-practice/> (see particularly Creating Active Engagement at <https://ncsi.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/LbC-Rubric-Creating-Active-Engagement.pdf>)
- * Community Toolbox: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/sustain/long-term-sustainability>
- * Program Sustainability Assessment Tool: <https://sustaintool.org/>
- * Family Leadership Rubric: www.annenberginstitute.org/sites/default/files/product/814/files/FamilyLeadershipRubric.pdf