The Connect Effect: How a Community of Practice (CoP) Bridges Systems to Benefit Youth

Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Annual National Conference and
Council of SAGs’ Meeting
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The Connect Effect: How a COP Bridge Systems to Benefit Youth

- Joanne Cashman, IDEA Partnership at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education
- Claudette Fette, Occupational Therapist and family member
- Ed Morris, Chair of the Missouri Juvenile Justice Advisory Group
- Judith Storandt, National Disability Rights Network
Compelling Findings

• Approximately 33% of incarcerated youth have an identified special education disability (10% in the general population). Many more have unidentified needs.

• 70 - 87% of incarcerated youth have learning or emotional disabilities that interfere with their education.

• For youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities:
  ▪ 48% dropout in grades 9-12 vs. 24% of youth without disabilities.
  ▪ 73% of those who dropout are arrested within 3-5 years of leaving school.

(National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities, 2004)
Compelling Findings (cont’d)

• Delinquent behavior may be directly related to an unknown, untreated or inappropriately treated disability.

• Identifying disabilities and providing timely access to appropriate treatment and services can prevent further contact with the juvenile justice system.

• The average annual income for a H.S. dropout in 2005 was $17,299, compared to $26,933 for a H.S. graduate, a difference of $9,634 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006).

• If the students who dropped out of the class of 2008 had graduated, the nation’s economy would have benefited from an additional $319 billion in income over their lifetimes.
Once Upon A Time
In A Galaxy Far Away

- Missouri Alliance for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice – 1999
- Missouri MAYSI-2 Project – 2000
- Department of Mental Health Juvenile Justice Initiative - 2001
- Mo Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (SAG) – School Discipline Study
"Racial disparities in school discipline practices may contribute both indirectly and directly to disparities in the justice system.

Disparities in discipline practices can contribute to a community climate that is less favorable to minority youth, and an unfavorable community climate may be reflected in justice system practices.

More directly, once youth have a record of disciplinary actions, their chances of entering the justice system may increase as such practices often alienate youth from school, and they become labeled as troublemakers."
Shared Work and Shared Interests

- Mental Health, Schools, and Families Working Together for All Children and Youth: Toward a Shared Agenda – 2002
- Seed Grant States – 2003
- National Community of Practice on School Behavioral Health – October 2004
- 8 topics including juvenile justice became Practice Groups
Shared Interests

- School-Based Mental Health Conference
- School-Based Mental Health Conference strands determined by COP Practice Groups
- See Grant States supported Department of Education Mental Health Integration in Schools grants
- Moberly received DOE grant requiring MOA between Mental Health, Schools, and Juvenile Court
Our Time Together Today

• Ask
  o Can we learn to work across boundaries of roles, agencies and levels to solve critical problems?
  o Can an afford not to?

• Describe
  o The strategic advantage of partnerships with stakeholders
  o Kinds of partnerships
  o Communities of Practice (CoP)
Our Time Together Today

- Examine
  - Some examples Communities of Practice
  - Some scenarios that might be addressed through a CoP
  - Shared work with CJJ

We are glad to be here!
The IDEA Partnership

The US Department of Education’s Investment in stakeholder expertise.

• An affiliation of 55 national organizations
• Collaborating across roles and settings
• Translating research and policy to practice
• Solving persistent and complex problems
Common Terms

• Partnership
• Coalition
• Community of Practice

Critical Elements

• Duration
• Role
• Depth
• Strategic Value
• ‘Push’ or ‘Pull’
Knowledge Management (KM): The New Focus on Information and Experience

“Knowledge is an asset to be managed like other assets”

Etienne Wenger
Absolute and rigid constraints

Substantial constraints

Illusory constraints

Flexible constraints

Source: CA Dept of ED

IDEA Partnership@ NASDSE 2009
Where Is the **Value Added** in Engaging the Stakeholders?

**First Thoughts**

- Build relationships that undergird real change
- Develop connections to extensive and deep networks
- Create customized messages
- Share aligned messages
- Extend the capacity to the state staff efforts by drawing on the reach of *existing* networks

**Emerging**

- Sense issues *before* critical points
- Specify the dimensions of an issue with those impacted
- Identify shared interests
- Move beyond organizational positions to shared interests
- Unite the state and the stakeholders around common goals
- Introduce *two-way* learning
Two-Way Learning: Partnering to Learn What Works

Decisionmakers

Implementers and Consumers
Communities of Practice: The Evolution of Knowledge Management

• Untapped knowledge resides with those that are closest to the work

• To reveal opportunities and gaps, leaders need to engage those that have a role in resolving persistent problems

• *Real* change requires that leaders, implementers and consumers build a shared sense of purpose around the change
What Do You Think?

Can this style of leadership be learned?

Will ‘authority’ learn to share leadership?
Can This Leadership Style Be Learned?

• Belief (*in ‘Smart Power’*)
• Leading by convening
• Using *authority position* to legitimize and propel
• Convey that the decisionmakers *cannot* abdicate responsibility and oversight while demonstrating a willing to use other, more collaborative, strategies.
• Intentionality
• Practice, practice, practice!
• Communicate, communicate, communicate!
What are Communities of Practice?

A way of working
• Involving those who do shared work
• Involving those that share issues
• Always asking “who isn’t here?”

A way of learning
• To create new knowledge grounded in ‘doing the work’
• With those who can advocate for and make change
What Do Communities Do?

- Seek and invite others doing shared work
- Share learnings within organizations, agencies and roles
- Share learnings across organizations, agencies and roles
- Decide to go things together that will address a shared concern
- Create new knowledge grounded in ‘doing’ the work
Why Are Communities of Value?

• Provide the support that individuals need
• Respect the ‘expertise’ that individuals bring
• Recognize the differences in the settings where people do their work
• Seek commonality within differing viewpoints
• Unite individuals in action
• Focus on ‘learning’
• Use ‘learning’ to transform practice
How Do Communities Make a Difference?

- Use the natural bonds between people that do common work
- Maintain communication that strengthen natural bonds
- Keep community members focused on outcomes
- Use the ‘community status’ to bring attention to issues
- Use the ‘community status’ to engage the people that can help move the issues
- Move change to the ‘Tipping Point’
We Need to be Able to Operate at the Intersection of Research, Policy and Practice

- States as leverage points
- Stakeholders as partners
- Federal agencies as collaborators
- Federal investments as resources
- Learning within states with the stakeholders
- Learning across states with peers

*NASDSE, 2002*
Understanding Shared Work

- Who is interested in this issue and why?
- What efforts are underway separately to address the work?
- What will make the shared work need fulfilling for others?
- How can we build new connections? What venues and communication vehicles will deepen connections?
- What ‘real work’ goal could unite us?

Reach out and invite!
How Can Separate Work Become Shared Work?

- Cross-walk initiatives
- Map current efforts
- Examine your networks
- Commit to building a ‘Community’
- Demonstrate the strategic advantage to the community to maintain their engagement
- Demonstrate the strategic advantage of the community to help build the culture for collaboration in the state agencies
What Does a CoP Look Like...

• In states

• Around issues

• www.sharedwork.org
My experience

• Aaron’s mom
• Power of Doing & Occupational Therapy
• The Importance of Connections
• Community of Practice
Aaron’s mom
Power of Doing & Occupational Therapy

• Giving personal experience meaning

• Importance of strengths

• Adaptive responses
The Importance of Connections

- Texas Federation of Families
- National Community of Practice for School Behavioral Health
National Community of Practice for School Behavioral Health
National Community of Practice for School Behavioral Health

• **Dialogue Guides** and consensus as a vehicle to reengage a discipline
  – AOTA communities in organizations page on [www.sharedwork.org](http://www.sharedwork.org)

• Dissertation Research
Sampler: Spatiotemporal Model of Family Engagement & Dialogue Guide

- Model is about the process of engagement/disengagement with front rungs increasing and back rungs decreasing engagement.

- Dialogue Guide process is about hearing everyone and then identifying where our agendas overlap and opportunities to work together.
Dialogue Guides

• Are models for conducting interactive discussions across stakeholders

• Examine assumptions held

• Seek common ground

• Support consensus

• Encourage application

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## Dialogue Guides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debate</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepts assumptions as Truth</td>
<td>Surfaces various assumptions</td>
<td>Examines assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point – Counterpoint</td>
<td>Majority rules; agree to disagree</td>
<td>Seeks common ground; supports consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuasive</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>Reflective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Components of Dialogue Guides

- **DG Topic Brief**
  - Policy or research available now to the field
  - Brief article or summary

- **Reaction Questions**
  - Acknowledgement of differing perspectives

- **Application Questions**
  - Implications for advancing practice together
Reaction Questions

• Thinking about the developmental process of family engagement, where is my agency?

• What are the issues that seem most critical for my agency in engaging families? How do the concepts just before and after this on the spiral relate?

• What are the areas in which my agency is doing well regarding family engagement and how does this relate to the spiral?
Application Questions

• Given where my agency’s critical issues are on the developmental spiral, what can we do to support increased engagement?

• How can we demonstrate Taking Initiative with families whose children are adjudicated at various stages of the process?

• What are the barriers that families face in providing family to family support in our systems and how could we engage them in helping us develop solutions?
National Community of Practice (CoP) on School Behavioral Health

CoP: PRACTICE GROUP

“Connecting School Mental Health with Juvenile Justice and Dropout Prevention”
Connecting SMH with JJ/DOP

LEADERSHIP TEAM

- **Mark Ferrante**, Coalition for Juvenile Justice
- **Nancy Lever, PhD**, Center for School Mental Health
- **Judith Storandt, JD**, National Disability Rights Network
- **Barbara Brady Ashcraft**, School Counseling Coordinator, West Virginia Dept. of Education
- **Jerry Hime** (retired school administrator) Executive Committee, Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE)
- **JoAnne Malloy, MSW**, Dropout Project Coordinator, Institute on Disability/UCED, Univ. of New Hampshire
Mission

Committed to working across stakeholders to advance knowledge and best practice related to effectively integrating school mental health with juvenile justice and dropout prevention.
Key Priorities

Identify knowledge, resources, and strategies to promote and advance effective practices that:

✓ reduce suspensions and expulsions.
✓ reduce dropout and delinquency.
✓ improve the school reentry process.
✓ improve mental health related professional development.
Range of Activities

- Problem-solving
- Peer to peer learning
- Learning across stakeholder groups
- Sharing knowledge, skills, and resources
- Critical discussions
- New collaborations
- Coordination & synergy
- Identifying gaps
- Informing best practice

Moving Beyond a Train and Hope Model
Connecting SMH with JJ/DOP

- Our Practice Group webpage is located on: www.sharedwork.org

- Our Practice Group Listserv: SMH_JJ/DOP@yahoogroups.com

Give me your business card if you would like to sign up on a trial basis (I only need your name & email address).
Connecting SMH with JJ/DOP

Current Projects

- **Creating a network** via a Listserv (email group) for communication **with and between** practice group members.
- **Compiling Resources lists** for key issues relevant to the practice group (e.g., dropout prevention, truancy, reentry, STPP)
- **Developing “Dialogue Guides”** for interactive discussions across shareholders.
- Participating in the Annual **“Advancing School Mental Health”** Conference.
- Identifying and defining **principles of best practices** in connecting school mental health with juvenile justice & dropout prevention.
Protection & Advocacy (P&A) System

History & Overview

• Largest provider of legally-based advocacy services for persons with disabilities.

• Jurisdiction includes all types of disabilities – physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, etc.

• Mandated and funded by Congress since 1975.

• One in every state, DC, US Territories, and a Native American P&A (57 P&A agencies).

• Independent advocacy to protect rights, including right to be free from abuse and neglect.
P&A System - Expertise and Access

Broad range of expertise: mental health, special education, de-institutionalization, discharge planning, employment, housing, Social Security, health care, assistive technology, traumatic brain injury (TBI), ADA accommodations, etc.

Broad P&A authority to access people, places, and records: including JJ facilities, jails, and prisons.
Broad range of P&A services - examples:

- Information & referral
- Short-term assistance
- Training and technical assistance
- Inform legislators and other policy makers
- Raise public awareness
- Monitor facilities and community settings
- Investigate and issue special reports
- Serve on task forces & collaboratives
- Administrative and legal proceeding
P&A System - Guiding Principles

P&As promote and advocate for:

- Early identification and intervention
- Least restrictive setting (community integration, independence, etc.)
- Cultural, developmental, gender, and linguistic competency
- Child and family centered service systems (self-determination, strength-based, etc.)
P&A System - Juvenile Justice Reform

• School-to-Prison Pipeline advocacy ➔ promoting:
  ✓ reducing suspensions & expulsions using educational rights under federal & state law
  ✓ reducing seclusion & restraints

• Court-based advocacy ➔ promoting:
  ✓ quality of legal representation
  ✓ diversion
  ✓ alternatives

• Facility-based advocacy ➔ promoting:
  ✓ identification and intervention
  ✓ minimal LOS necessary
  ✓ effective re-entry, aftercare & school re-enrollment
P&A Agencies

Contact information for each of the 57 P&A agencies is available on:

www.NDRN.org

Using the “choose your state” dropdown list

NDRN is the national membership association for P&A agencies.
Contact for more information ...

Judith (“Judie”) Storandt
Senior Staff Attorney
National Disability Rights Network
Washington, DC
Phone: 202-567-3518
Email: judith.storandt@ndrn.org
Website: www.ndrn.org
Common Scenarios that ‘Beg’ for Community Approaches.

What Would You Do?
Scenario 1

- States and national organizations have formed a CoP to bridge shared issues across agencies, and organizations. They have a focus on behavior health and have identified JJ as a key connection. Although they have many members that work in JJ related fields, they want to connect with the expertise and commitment of the CJJ.

✓ What would make the relationship fulfilling for CJJ members?
✓ What shared work might unite us?
✓ How might we build new connections?
Scenario 2

- The State Education Agency (SEA) has invested in a large scale behavioral support program that is very effective for most students. Increasingly though, local schools are reporting that more students are requiring interventions that are beyond the current scope of school resources. The SEA wants to define current relationships and build new strategies with state-level human services agencies that operate at the local level.

✓ How could a CoP on Behavioral Health address this problem?
✓ Where is this problem situated at the state, local, school level...all levels?
✓ Who needs to be involved in the CoP?
Scenario 3

- One district has several schools identified as being “persistently dangerous.” One intervention has been the introduction of School Resource Officers (SROs). The logic behind the decision was that SROs could diffuse situations that occur in the school setting and reduce violent outbursts. In actuality, SROs are increasing called in after the interchange has escalated to ‘remove the student’. This often results in physical confrontation.

✓ How could a CoP on School Safety address this problem?
✓ Where is this problem situated at the state, local, school level...all levels?
✓ Who needs to be involved in the CoP?
Scenario 4

- 70 - 87% of incarcerated youth have learning or emotional disabilities that interfere with their education.
  For youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities:
  - 48% dropout in grades 9-12 vs. 24% of youth without disabilities.
  - 73% of those who dropout are arrested within 3-5 years of leaving school.
  
  (National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities, 2004)

✓ What problems do these data reveal?
✓ What would a state CoP that addresses this issue look like?
✓ What would a local or regional CoP that addresses this issue look like?