

THE LEADING EDGE

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7TH EDITION / JANUARY 2020

The DIRECTORS INSTITUTE aims to develop a cohort of strong, effective leaders to support and sustain local use of the California Child Welfare Core Practice Model (CPM). By January 2019, all County Child Welfare Directors (CWDs) will have the individual skills & organizational resources to systematically implement the CPM.

Director's Corner: Keep on Truckin'

It has been a while since we sent out an issue of "The Leading Edge," but that does not mean that we haven't been busy in supporting the great work that has been going on in counties across California. We continue to update the information that you will find on the CalSWEC website, including Fidelity Monitoring tools, and we are working closely with CDSS on their Practice Model implementation work (as highlighted in an article in this issue; please note that for CDSS, the Practice Model work is called ICPM in recognition of their mission to work in partnership with other state agencies, across child-serving disciplines). As always, much of our work revolves around our Learning Sessions, as described below:

In March, 2019, we hosted approximately 200 staff from over 40 counties in a session we entitled, "Widening the Circle." Our objective was to underscore the understanding of the Core Practice Model as a "unifying framework for practice and system improvement." The message that we have been trying to communicate throughout the development of the CPM is that it is not another initiative, but that it is a framework for implementing all of the important initiatives that are propelling our field forward. Sessions focus on topics such as, "*What Do We Mean by Integration,*" "*Assessing Fidelity to CPM Leadership Behaviors,*" "*CPM as the Framework for Practice & System Change,*" "*CPM as a Unifying Framework for Integration of Our Work,*" and "*Creating the Conditions for CPM to Thrive,*" along with interactive table exercises and topical and Regional break-out sessions, helped us achieve a common understanding of the essential role that CPM is playing in advancing Child Welfare practice in all 58 counties.

Directors Corner cont...

Our most recent session, “Adaptive and Courageous Leadership in Action,” in September 2019, had the following objectives:

- ⇒ Engage Child Welfare Directors in strengthening their capacity to practice, develop and apply the CPM Leadership Behaviors in their multiple roles
- ⇒ Learn from peer examples about what adaptive & courageous leadership looks like in the day-to-day work of Directors in advancing CPM locally
- ⇒ Provide Directors with the tools and shared peer examples of how CPM can be advanced incrementally through the day-to-day work of Child Welfare leaders at all levels

We were able to bring together 39 Child Welfare Directors to learn about concrete leadership tools that they could bring back to their counties to guide them in their CPM implementation work. This issue of the Leading Edge is devoted to bringing information about many of these essential tools to our readership, so in the following pages you will find great information about them. The tools that were presented were:

- ⇒ Creating and Maintaining a Healthy Organizational Culture
- ⇒ Daring Leadership
- ⇒ Adaptive Leadership: From Theory to Practice
- ⇒ Fidelity Monitoring: Experiences from the Field

Although these tools were presented to the Child Welfare Directors, we believe that they are valuable resources for leadership at all levels in the Child Welfare organizations. This issue of the Leading Edge is devoted to bringing information about these essential tools to our readership, so in the following pages you will find great information about them.

Because we are committed to the principles of the Core Practice Model in everything that we do, we hope that our sessions allow us to do more than just provide information—that we are also able to listen, to engage and to partner with one another in the work that we do. At LS VI, we were able to hear clearly from the Child Welfare Directors that we have, in the development of the CPM and the deployment of a range of tools, not always surfaced a specific focus on the themes of equity and inclusion in Child Welfare work. While our Theory of Change maintains that conditions for families in the Child Welfare System will improve with the implementation of the CPM, we have not called out racial equity and inclusion as specific conditions that we hope to improve.

Although we had intended for Learning Session VII to continue our work in “widening the circle” to focus on essential partnerships, we realized that we cannot take up that work until we have addressed the question of how the CPM supports the goals of equity and inclusion in the Child Welfare system. So our next session will once again invite Child Welfare Directors to come together to engage in courageous conversations about this critical topic. In this issue you will find an article on Equity and Inclusion that will help underscore the themes that we hope to address in the upcoming session.

Courageous Leadership: A Natural Fit for Advancing the CPM

Following the Directors' Institute in May, county child welfare directors met to discuss the support they needed to advance the CPM in their counties. A specific ask that emerged was to learn more about managing vulnerability in leading this initiative, while juggling competing demands and deadlines. Several directors referred to the research of Dr. Brené Brown and her latest book, *Dare to Lead*, as possible resources.

Dr. Brown has studied vulnerability for over a decade and has brought her research on emotions and experiences that give meaning to our lives to private, non-profit, and governmental leadership sectors. Her research with leaders and teams across the globe confirms that leaders are not immune to vulnerability—defined as risk, uncertainty, and emotional exposure--when they lead. And what matters most is how leaders lead by example and lean into courage as they lead their teams towards a common goal. This is what Dr. Brown calls Daring Leadership.

In order to prepare for Learning Session 6, CPM Faculty were trained in the *Dare to Lead* model and teamed to develop a presentation and table exercises intended to address the Directors' request to learn more about vulnerability. The presentation featured the Four Skill Sets of Courage--Rumbling with Vulnerability, Living into Our Values, Braving Trust, and Learning to Rise. Special focus was placed on Rumbling with Vulnerability, the "foundational" skill set of Daring Leadership and six vulnerability myths that shape our attitudes about it, i.e. "vulnerability is weakness." Participants were introduced to "armored leadership" behaviors that leaders sometimes resort to when they are not willing and able to "rumble with vulnerability." They also completed an Armored Leadership vs. Daring Leadership exercise and reviewed and discussed a cross-walk developed by CPM Faculty comparing and contrasting CPM leadership behaviors and Daring Leadership behaviors.

Directors **Cori Allen (Tuolumne)** and **Judy Weber (Ventura)** participated in a Q & A where they shared how they have used the *Dare to Lead* model to lead and offered examples of barriers to courage i.e. tough, but necessary conversations and perfectionism. They also shared their experiences of vulnerable leadership and how they have leaned into courage to challenge the myths of vulnerability. They also spoke to how they are using Daring Leadership behaviors to move the implementation of the CPM forward with their teams and offered examples of what Daring Leadership looks like in child welfare agencies. Their contributions helped to bridge the Daring Leadership research with the realities of agency life.

This presentation demonstrated that Daring Leadership is a "natural fit" for advancing the CPM and leaders "can't get to courage without rumbling with vulnerability." In summary, if leaders can brave the rumble, it can open the door to greater understanding about themselves and those they work with as they move together towards a common goal.

Information about *Dare to Lead* trainings can be found on the [Learning Session VI page](#) or by contacting Dr. Virginia Rondero Hernandez at vronderohernandez@gmail.com

"I define a leader as anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and processes, and who has the courage to develop that potential."

- Brené Brown

Equity and Inclusion: Core Elements of our Work

Ensuring fairness, equity, and inclusion while reducing and eliminating institutional racism, disparity, and disproportionality have become regularly discussed in child welfare for many years. Discussions about what ought to be done to eliminate disparity and disproportionality tied to institutional racism, and both personal and historical trauma are one thing; putting effective strategies into place are quite another. Still, this work should be at the very core of how we partner with our communities, team with our families, and how we nurture our organizations so that they systematically support fairness and equity. These questions remain; what do these look like at an organizational level when put into action? What do these words look like when put into action at the family level? What do these words really mean to our clients, co-workers, and community partners?

Our September Directors' Learning Session was an enlightening experience, as we took an earnest look at the vulnerability of leadership and the practical application of embracing this concept in our daily walk. As a segment of the discussion around practical application emerged, it was clear that at the nucleus of our roles as leaders, and because of the interconnectedness of how we do our work, is the call to promote cultural humility, race equity, fairness, and inclusion within our child welfare organizations. Embedded within our discussion were the stories of our own personal struggles with openly engaging in conversations about equity and race and how these systemic challenges and barriers stifle our work. We realize that the system is reliant upon leaders who will take on this work with intent and transparency. If we as the leaders are not the trailblazers, then who? Realizing that much of modeling and perpetuating equity rests on the shoulders of CWS leaders we readily acknowledge that we must also rely on co-workers, staff, community and partners to ensure that our service delivery and systems are fair and equitable.

We decided that as we continue to carry out the work of CPM that we must have deeper discussions about how the CPM promotes fairness and equity. There is an ongoing need for the development and use of relevant tools and strategies in our four implementation domains of: Workforce Development, Quality Outcomes and System Improvement, Organizational Readiness and Building Partnerships and Community Engagement. We have a good foundation for continuing this work in that the CPM has been built on the important work that California Counties and the state have been engaged in for the past decade. Our participation in initiatives such as the Breakthrough Collaborative Series on Eliminating Racial Disparity and Disproportionality, Cultural Brokers, the Institutional Analysis, and the California Partners for Permanency have contributed to our deepening understanding and experience. These strategies have served as building blocks for us as we continue to strive in the work of improving outcomes for our children, families, and communities.

Being a daring leader and rumbling with vulnerability around the equity, race and privilege issue is not a "one and done" conversation, but much like adaptive leadership, mentoring/coaching, safety and permanency, the equity conversation should become natural and regularly reflected in our daily work. The CPM faculty will be reaching out to Directors for participation in developing future learning sessions, webinars, resources and tools to aid in continuing to lift the conversation up. We must view this as critical as there is a need to include the voice of those impacted; our staff and the greater community. Vulnerability has a variety of meanings based on one's life experiences, race and gender to name a few variables. Our goal is to meaningfully engage Directors in active participation in the CPM Advisory Committee and Ad-Hoc Meetings to ensure that these experiences and voices are heard.

CDSS Walking and Talking ICPM Implementation

Here in the Children and Family Services Division (CFSD) at the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), we are diligently working to walk the walk and talk the talk when it comes to the Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM). In April 2019, Mary Sheppard engaged CFSD staff, managers, bureau chiefs, and branch chiefs in the inaugural CFSD ICPM Implementation Team meeting. Team members represent each of the 9 branches and offices within CFSD.



We began our ICPM implementation journey by sharing our hopes and expectations of the team and completing of the CPM Implementation Snapshot. Seeing our *Where Are We Now?* scores at *less than halfway there* and seeing CFSD staff's understanding and practice of ICPM still very much emerging, we decided to start at the beginning - creating opportunities for the ICPM Implementation Team to learn and practice ICPM values, behaviors, and skills. Richard Knecht supported the team with an overview and discussion of the ICPM background, history, goals, vision, and behaviors. Allison Book, from the

Northern Academy, provided a presentation focusing on alignment between neurological development and research, Safety Organized Practice, and the Integrated Core Practice Model. Andrea Sobrado engaged the team around her experiences and expertise with the organizational and agency cultural components of ICPM implementation. Leslie Ann Hay walked with the team through the CPM Implementation Snapshot and co-developed some preliminary *Planning Priorities* and *Implementation Objectives*. A subset of the team jointly developed *ACL 19-87 - Quality Caseworker Visits And The Application Of Integrated Core Practice Model* as our first attempt to infuse ICPM values, behaviors, and language into policy. Most recently, our partners at the Child and Family Policy Institute of California (CFPIC), including Stuart Oppenheim, Danna Fabella, Juliet Webb, Leslie Ann Hay, Robin Jenkins, and Renee Boothroyd joined our team to begin more strategic development of ICPM implementation within CFSD and CFSD's role in ICPM implementation around the state.

We continue to focus on planning and organizational readiness with Richard Knecht and CFPIC, who are official CFSD ICPM Implementation Team members and who provide much-needed support, coordination, and strategic planning to the team. Looking forward, the CPM Implementation Snapshot will be completed by CFSD staff every 6 months to consistently measure the progress of ICPM implementation, and skill and knowledge development. Our implementation plan is our living document that will be updated, based on Snapshot data and information, to guide our organization as ICPM implementation changes our culture and practices. We developed a charter to guide our Implementation Team, along with an ICPM elevator speech, and an interactive activity for each bureau to engage staff in the identification of current or potential leadership behaviors in action. We plan to engage our local and other

The California Integrated Core Practice Model for Children, Youth, And Families



CDSS Walking and Talking ICPM Implementation cont...

state-level partners in the develop of state-level leadership behaviors to guide our language, practices, and interactions with partners and stakeholders. We also plan more learning opportunities for CFSD staff through training, coaching, and practice, infusing the ICPM into conversations, meetings, workgroups, and policy letters.

As those of us at CDSS become more proficient in and closely integrated with the values and behaviors outlined in the ICPM, we hope you all, as our partners, see positive change reflected in our planning, our writing, our meeting and communication structures, and most importantly, our relationships. By embracing and embodying the ICPM we hope to help improve the lives of our children and families by better support you, our partners. We're excited to be on this ICPM implementation journey, walking and talking alongside you!

Creating and Testing Fidelity: Leadership Behavior Assessment

The Fidelity Assessment Design Team (FADT) has been working diligently on assessment tools with the expert guidance of our consultants, Anita Barbee, U of Louisville, KY, Robin Jenkins and Renee Boothroyd, UNC, FPG Impact Center, along with CPM Faculty, Crystal Luffberry, Chris Mathias, David Plassman, Gary Taylor, Deanna Avey-Motikeit, Andrea Sobrado and County representatives **Christine O'Neill, Shasta, Madeline Roachell, LA, Alice Kennedy, San Diego, Danny Morris, Madera and Mark Lapiz, Santa Clara.** The charge to the FADT is to:

- Design a practical, doable, efficient fidelity assessment process that achieves the goals of assessing *the implementation of the CPM* as well as *the practice model behaviors* of CPM
- Develop Assessment Tools that minimize the burden on agency resources, but achieve sufficient scope to adequately answer questions about CPM implementation processes as well as actual CPM leadership and practitioner behaviors.

Why is Fidelity important?

Fidelity assessment is a way to assess the behavior of an organization collectively and by its component parts to reveal the extent to which the organization is doing the things it expects or desires to do in implementing a practice. Specifically, the use of the Core Practice Model (CPM) fidelity measurement tools works to identify the extent to which the Leadership (and later the family level) CPM Behaviors and Implementation Supports are active.

It is important to distinguish between fidelity monitoring and performance evaluation; although individuals' performance is being assessed, it is for the purpose of understanding how the agency as a whole is performing. At the Social Worker, Supervisor, and Manager levels there is the option to report aggregated results at both the agency and position levels; although at the Director level the results stand alone, the assessment is still not a performance evaluation but a gauge of how the agency is

performing. The FADT, with guidance from the CPM Advisory committee, began their work by developing three (3) Leadership Behavior Fidelity Assessment Tools: one for Directors, one for Managers and one for Supervisors.

The Testing Process

Six (6) county Directors exhibited courage, vulnerability and leadership by agreeing to try out the tool, with David Plassman, CPM Faculty and Central RTA Trainer, providing direction and support. Not only did they have a chance to benefit from what they learned from the tool but they also provided feedback on the ways the tool worked well and some of the things that could be improved.

Support was provided to county Directors and their leadership teams in the process of testing the tools. The first step was an in-person meeting with the leadership team (typically the Director and Managers, however some teams included Supervisors or other management support positions). Each county leader learned what it means to consider an individual’s fidelity to a model when he or she is a member of a larger group (e.g. one of a number of supervisors). As noted above, it was important to understand that the intent is to aggregate results across the agency to reveal how the agency is doing as a whole. The teams also learned how supports can be developed to address areas that are under-developed, or to understand how to continue and spread efforts in areas where strength is evident.

Teams also learned why it is important to begin by looking at fidelity at the leadership level. Measuring fidelity (either through self-assessment or through assessment by others), can be uncomfortable. Nurturing a learning organization can help allay those concerns. If agency staff see the process starting at the top and realize its value in helping leaders grow and change, without being punitive, they may be more eager to embrace the process when it is their turn to participate in it. Additionally, leadership that has participated in the process will be more likely to promote it as an important element of a learning organization if they, themselves, have participated in the process.



The testing occurred in phases, with **Madera, Santa Barbara, and Monterey** counties in the first phase. The later phase included Napa, San Francisco, and Yuba counties. A scoring process was developed for the initial phase of the testing and was modified as the testing unfolded across the six counties. **Shasta County** chose to engage in the process on their own and provided valuable input that helped improve the tools. The tools used in the testing process encompassed Leadership Behaviors (rather than the Practice Behaviors that families would experience in their interactions with social workers). The three tools (for Director, Managers and Supervisors) consisted of the same 14 leadership areas, but in each area there were four behavioral descriptors that were nuanced to indicate the activity or interaction that someone (Supervisor, Manager or Director) in that role would exhibit. For example, a Director would be dealing with broader agency concerns while a Supervisor would be engaged in activities with staff who were themselves employing CPM Practice Behaviors with families. In the final version, the tool rated the four behavioral descriptors as follows: (C) Consistently, (S) Sometimes, or (N) Not At All, and O (Outside the Scope of My Interaction). These ratings are then translated into numbers for each of the 14 leadership areas. The total of those 14 numbers provides an overall fidelity score, which indicates the following.

Accomplished range	Acquiring range	Emerging range	Practice Not Yet Evident range
43–56	25–42	8–12	0–7

Testing Fidelity cont...

The intention in using these scores is to develop a report to be used in subsequent meetings to help the team focus on areas for further development.

Regional Training Academies are developing their capacity to support counties in the use of these tools and in understanding the scoring mechanism and potential supports that they can provide to assist county teams in using the tools as part of their own organizational development in the implementation of the Core Practice Model. In addition there will soon be a guidance document "Talking About Fidelity" posted on the CalSWEC CPM site, which will assist counties in understanding and using these tools.

We thank all of our testing counties and hope that now that the tools are posted other counties will consider using the Tools to see how Leadership Behaviors are evident to others in their organizations. We will be working with the Regional Training Academies to build their capacity to support counties.

Adaptive Leadership

Implementation of the CPM can present emergent problems and unpredictable circumstances where there are no identified or known solutions to the problems. In systems, such as Child Welfare, the role of Adaptive Leadership can be extremely useful when tackling these "wicked" problems.

During Day 1's afternoon session of the September Director's Institute Learning Session, our County Directors listened to a presentation and panel sharing exercise regarding the role of Adaptive Leadership in supporting the use of the Core Practice Model in their agencies.

Dr. Robin Jenkins opened the session with an introduction and overview of Heifetz' Model of Adaptive Leadership framework that helps individuals and organizations adapt to changing environments and utilize 6 key strategies responding to "emerging problems." Adaptive Leaders:

- 1) Get on the Balcony
- 2) Identify the Adaptive Challenge
- 3) Regulate Distress
- 4) Maintain Disciplined Attention
- 5) Give the Work Back to the People
- 6) Protect Leadership Voices from Below

Here are a few things that the Directors who tested the tool are saying:

What do you think is important for your colleagues to think about?

"We are mirrors of the practice we want to reflect, so we must reflect the practice we expect staff to perform. When we slip and not demonstrate the behaviors we expect, we must acknowledge our shortfall and identify as an area we must improve." - Danny Morris, Madera County

What is the most important thing you learned from the testing?

"Starting from the top down really resonated with me and I think it was important for staff to see that the leadership has made a commitment to demonstrating leadership behaviors before we ask staff to demonstrate practice behaviors." - Amy Krueger, Santa Barbara

Now that you are the Agency Director, how do you see yourself championing this work across the agency or at CWDA?

"I am constantly talking about CPM and my recent experience with Fidelity Assessment Testing. I carry around tools that provide opportunities to discuss CPM, and now some of my critical partners across disciplines are walking around with our tools as examples of how to create a common language and expectations." - Lori Media, Monterey County



Dr. Jenkins helped distinguish between this framework being focused on specific strategies to support emergent issues with implementation versus an individual being flexible and adaptable when interacting or leading other individuals. A key point highlighted -- Heifetz and colleagues emphasize that leadership exists in many roles and opportunities throughout levels in organizations; and adaptive organizations create environments where adaptive leaders can bring diverse voices to solving complex problems while working in and with those who are most directly affected by the problems.

The session also included a panel discussion that featured County Child Welfare Directors, **Christine Huber (Stanislaus)**, **Melissa Lloyd (Sacramento)**, **Michelle Love (Alameda)**, **Judy Webber (Ventura)** and was moderated by CPM Faculty Members Jennifer Buchholz and Aprille Flint. The directors shared their experiences with utilizing Adaptive Leadership Strategies in tackling various implementation issues in their respective counties. Each of them provided examples of how they identified and developed their staff to create teams who had the support and expertise to address adaptive issues in implementing various initiatives in their respective counties - examples of giving the work back to the people, lifting up and protecting all voices. **Christine Huber** shared how **Stanislaus County** created 5 teams tasked with developing their own strategies to improve workplace culture. This adaptive leadership approach produced multiple strategies to tackle the initiative, as well as resulted in identifying natural leaders and positively impacted job satisfaction. The directors shared experiences of how they applied adaptive thinking and problem-solving strategies to areas where they previously applied technical solutions and shared its impact on staff and partners. In **Alameda County**, where work on an Equity and Inclusion Fellowship has been going on for over two years, **Michelle Love** described how the adaptive leadership approach has had a positive impact on internal teaming and morale. Strategies were also presented regarding the directors' own application of adaptive leadership skills in order to support the CPM core elements of partnership. This conversation highlighted aspects of using CPM Leadership Behaviors in service to using Adaptive Leadership strategies for organizational change. **Sacramento County** utilized a cross-section of its staff that included Managers, Supervisors and Direct Service staff to support addressing complexities they were experiencing with their Emergency Response Investigations. **Melissa** shared how this teaming and partnership approach resulted in staff feeling "valued and heard" and helped to further develop leadership capacities amongst the staff (further example of empowering adaptive and more directly involved day-to-day leaders at multiple levels in the work).

CPM Faculty Member Mark Lapiz closed the session with a few words of how the Adaptive Leadership approach aligns naturally with the earlier sessions during the day that were focused on Brene Brown's work on Courageous Leadership.

PROGRESS ON PROBLEMS IS THE MEASURE
OF LEADERSHIP; LEADERS MOBILIZE PEOPLE
TO FACE PROBLEMS, AND COMMUNITIES
MAKE PROGRESS ON PROBLEMS BECAUSE
LEADERS CHALLENGE THEM AND HELP THEM
TO DO SO.

- RONALD HEIFETZ -

Child Welfare Core Practice Model

Directors Institute



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www.cwda.org

Child and Family Policy Institute of CA
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calswec.berkeley.edu

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humanservices.ucdavis.edu

Central California Training Academy
fresnostate.edu/chhs/ccta

The Academy for Professional Excellence
theacademy.sdsu.edu

Calendar of Events

Learning Session VII

The Role of Leadership in using CPM to Address Race, Equity and Inclusion: Making this Work Our Own

May 19-20, 2020

Lake Natoma Inn, Folsom CA

Hotel reservations can be made by phone by calling 916-351-1500 or by emailing reservations@lakenatomainn.com. Guests should ask for CHILD WELFARE DIRECTORS LEARNING SESSION VII.

[REGISTER FOR THE EVENT HERE](#)



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