

Team Structure & Development

Establishing the Basis for Collaboration

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Child Sexual Abuse Response: Complex Interdependent Relationships

Legally mandated responsibilities & timelines

Separate funding, policy, training, supervision

Overlapping roles

Police & Children's Division

Complementary roles

Children's Division & Family Court

Police & Prosecutor's Office

Relying upon:

- **Medical evaluations by Children's Mercy Hospital**
- **Forensic evaluations & coordination at Child Protection Center**

Child Protection Center's Confused Decision-Making Forums

Community Council

Former Judges

Doctors

Former Prosecutors

Fundraisers

Activists

AND

Some members of the
Governance Group

Governance Group

Key Administrators from:

Children's Division

Kansas City Police

Family Court

Prosecutor's Office

“Case Collaboratives”

- **Primary means for negotiating overlapping or complementary roles & responsibilities**
- **Case-by-case means to integrate multi-system response but, composition & structure varied**
- **Relied upon trust developed between professionals**

Politically hot cases, funding cuts & staff turnover eroded this case-by-case approach to systems integration

Theory base for team development

**NIDRR studies by five universities of effective
teamwork in developmental disabilities
(Eno-Heineman, 1997)**

**Applied in CMHS-SAMHSA grants
in defining theory base for Wraparound
(Malysiak, Malysiak-Bertram, 1997-2001)
(Bertram & Bertram , 2003)**

**Never applied with administrators representing
multiple systems working with same population**

Systemic Team Development

- **Power & challenge of collaborative models of practice:
They bring together differing perspectives of a situation**
- **Team composition affects assessment and outcomes**
- **Clear structure maximizes team efficiency & efficacy**
- **Team structure: 4 evolving, inter-related sets of agreements**
- **Greater cohesion in agreements contributes to better performance**
- **Shared goals & rules are basis for collaboration**
- **Assessment is ecological & systemic, summarized by team agreement on current status that is used with goals to develop plan**
- **Evaluation of plan implementation informs changes to team composition & structure**

Team Structure

Goals

Rules of Operation

Information-sharing

Information needed

How to share it

Decision-making

Especially how to make decisions when not all agree

Conflict resolution

Assessment

Ecological

Competencies & Assets

Constraints & Challenges

Status agreement

Summary of assessment, places problems-in-context, brings assumptions forward

Used with goals to develop plan

Plan & evaluation

Strengths as levers for change

Lessons guide further team efforts

Team Composition

Differentiate!

One team with subsystems

Core

**Those who best know the situation
or who influence use of key resources**

Extended

**Those implementing plan strategies.
They provide service & information but are not team decision-makers**

Multi-system administrative team

- **Children's Division Regional Director**
- **Captain KCPD Special Victims Crime Unit**
- **Jackson County Prosecutor's Office**
- **Jackson County Family Court Chief Juvenile Officer**
- **Director of Social Work Children's Mercy Hospital**
- **Director Child Protection Center**
- **Chief Investigative Detective Independence Police**
- **Chief Investigative Detective Lees Summit Police**
- **Director of Community Development United Way**

Child Protection Network (CPN)

Goals

Administrators agreed they should be working together through the Child Protection Center to provide:

- *Timely, efficient, co-investigation of child sexual abuse allegations to better inform decisions each agency must make to support children and families in a culturally competent manner.*

Rules of operation

- 1. Agreed it was necessary to share information about practice with families, and about agency policy, resources, & projects**
- 2. Clarified discussions by whether they were confidential, simple information sharing, exploratory, or decision-making**
- 3. Decision-making rules: A menu of options
Dissenting perspectives recorded. If decision wasn't productive, dissenting viewpoints would be revisited.**
- 4. Conflict resolution procedures established**

Ecological systemic assessment

- **Direct practice with families**
Co-investigation, medical & forensic evaluation, family court, prosecution, family services, & case collaboratives
- **Administrative level guiding that practice**
Governance Group → Child Protection Network
- **Community advocacy: seeks changes in laws & funding**
Community Council (later became CPC board of directors)

Clarified composition, information needed, roles & responsibilities, assets & constraints for each level

Status agreement

- Summarizes assessment to help examine assumptions
- Ideally, a systemic hypothesis of problems-in-context
- Is used with overall team goals to develop action plan

CPN: “We lacked clarity for different levels of our activities. This contributed to confusion on roles & responsibilities. We lacked shared means to ensure systematic, efficient information gathering as well as shared guidelines for decision making. This compromised our best intentions to enhance our assets and address constraints.”

Child Protection Network: Initial action plan

- 1. Define best practice from hotline report, through investigation, forensic evaluation, & collaborative review for prosecution and services**
- 2. Clarify roles & timelines in that best practice protocol**
- 3. Write shared manual for detailed protocol guidance**
- 4. Provide joint training in new guidelines to all staff**
- 5. Identify QA data points for a shared database administrators review monthly in CPN meetings to evaluate practice fidelity & inform improvements**

Fully Accomplished in One Year

Participant Interviews

Prior to Systemic Team Development

- Little collaboration occurring
- Attempts to integrate roles & responsibilities failing
- Each agency advocated for its own perspective & goals
- No rules for information sharing or decision-making
- Assumed discussions would forge understanding
- Assumed voting would determine direction
- Decisions often revisited, stalling efforts
- Repeated failures raised suspicion
- Conflict clouded their vision
- They lacked trust
- No multi-systems strengths-based assessment

After Systemic Team Development

- Trust & a sense of influence emerged from developing shared goals & working within shared rules
- Shared goals & rules provided direction & structure for collaboration in assessment & planning
- Shared direction & structure improved assessment, clarified concerns & identified overlooked assets
- Previously pessimistic administrators found hope because there were assets from which to build
- Summarizing assessment with status agreement helped them consider why they had been stuck in conflict
- Planning based upon status agreement & shared goals contributed to "ownership" & to timely, successful implementation

Results & Next Steps

- **STD worked with administrators from multiple-systems exactly as designed in direct family practice**
- **Action plan fully completed in 1 year**
- **Shared database evaluating CPN protocol fidelity guides individual agency & multi-system adjustments, and may soon be used statewide**
- **Continuous quality improvement via data-informed revision of CPN goals, rules, assessment & plan**

Implications

Value-based principles & legal mandates do not ensure collaboration, integration, efficiency nor efficacy

Relationships & parliamentary procedure do not ensure collaboration, integration, efficiency, nor efficacy

Theory base that may better support collaboration & integration of efforts:

Systemic Team Development (STD)

Ecological Systems Theory