

Welcome to

**Narrative Approaches to
Organizational Development:
A Case Study of Implementation of
Collaborative Helping**

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Introductions

- Contact before Content -

- Name, where you're from, and your work context
- Very briefly, what led you to be interested in this conversation today?

My Hopes for Today

- Some material to ground our conversation
- Questions that you and I have
- Conversation about those Questions
- Next Steps

Collaborative Helping Map

Hopes and Vision

Where do you want to be headed in your life?

Obstacles

*What gets in the way
of hopes and vision?*

Supports

*What contributes to
hopes and vision?*

Next Steps

*What needs to happen?
Drawing on Supports to address Obstacles
to get to Vision*

Organizational Climate and Outcomes for Families

- 3 year study of 250 children served by 32 public children's service offices in 32 counties in Tennessee. - Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998
- Organizational climate (low conflict, cooperation, role clarity and personal relationships) was the primary predictor of positive service outcomes (children's improved psychosocial functioning) and a significant predictor of service quality.

Organizational Climate, Turnover and New Program Sustainability

Nationwide study of 100 mental health clinics in 26 states in the U.S. - Glisson, et. al 2008

- Organizations with strong organizational climates and cultures had *half* the employee turnover and sustained new programs for *twice* as long as organizations with weaker organizational climates and cultures.

Strong Organizational Climates

- Glisson et al. 2008 -

- Strong organizational climates and cultures were characterized by high expectations of workers who had input into management decisions, had discretion and flexibility to do their work, and were encouraged to seek out new and innovative ways of working. Workers had a clear sense of how they fit in the organization, a sense of support in their work, and buffers against work overload and emotional exhaustion.

Construction of Org Culture

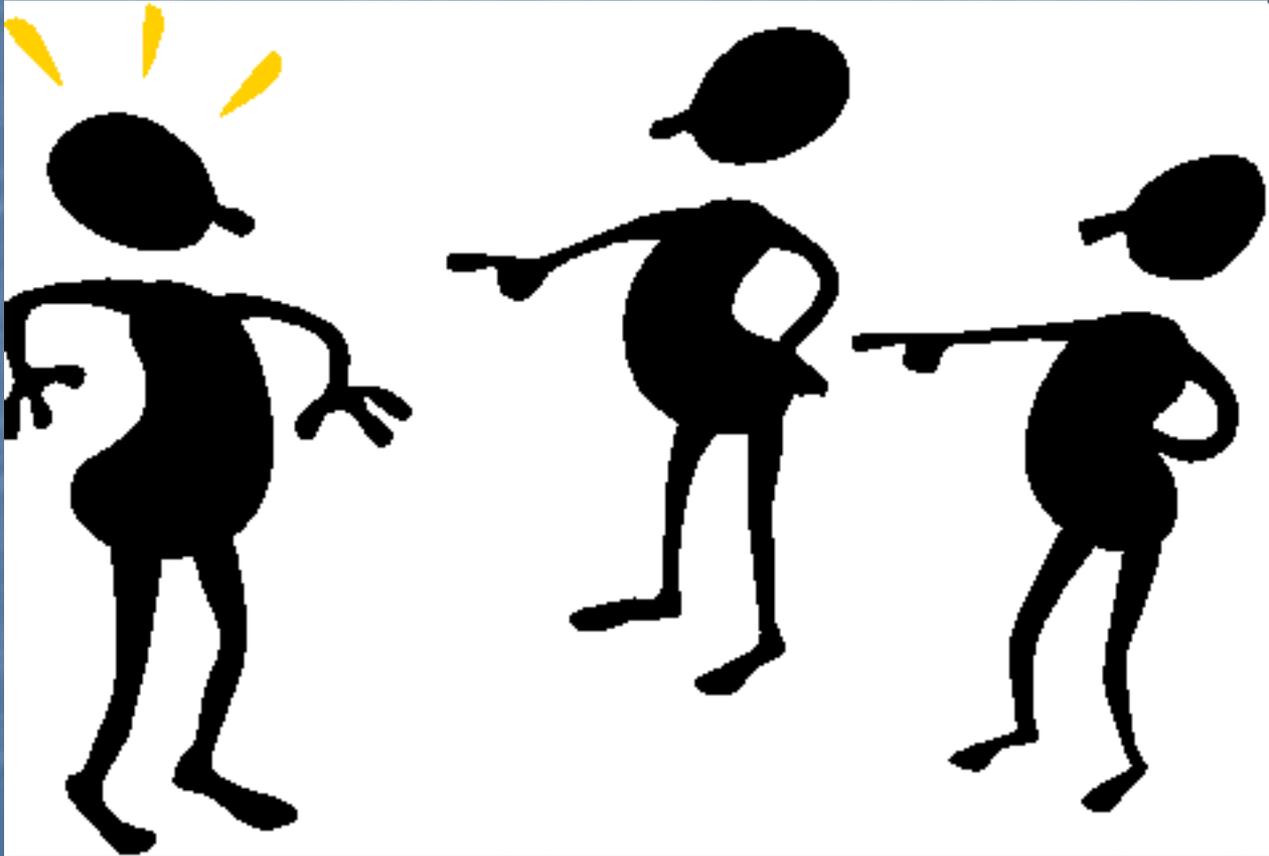


*Child Welfare internationally occurs
against a backdrop of urgency,
blame and defensive practice.*

Urgency



Blame



Defensive Practice



**“Anxiety runs like a vein through
CPS organizations.”**

Tony Morrison (1999), *Emotionally
competent child protection organizations:
Fallacy, fiction or necessity?*

Implementation amidst Urgency, Blame and CYA

- In that context, implementation of new practices are often seen as “corrective instruction” and provoke suspicion and defensiveness.
- Critical thinking is hard to cultivate in the midst of a “fight or flight” response.

RASL

- Development of an organizational culture grounded in a spirit of reflection, appreciation, and shared learning help to buffer organizational members from the effects of urgency, blame and CYA pressures.

Components of a Collaborative Consultation Approach

- Stories from the Field – Eliciting existing Best Practices
- Clinical Training and Coaching
- Leadership Coaching and Organizational Consultation

Stories from the Field

Appreciative Inquiry Focus Groups

- AI – Drawing on the “best of what is” to envision “what could be” and develop “what will be”
- Complaint to Commitment – Drawing on the “worst of what has been” to envision what “could be” and develop that.

Training and Coaching

- While training is often seen as a solution to many different organizational problems, research suggests only 10-13% of learning from traditional trainings transfer to the job.
- “Stand and Deliver” training can offer an opportunity to develop a common experience that provides inspiration and shared language for ongoing efforts that coaching can build on.

Leadership Coaching

- Margaret Wheatley -

- Hero Leadership –
 - Command and control approach. Leaders have answers. They know what to do and workers will do what they're told.
- Host Leadership –
 - Facilitative approach. Leaders have expertise in asking questions that help workers think their way through complex situations while also holding bottom lines.

Technical and Adaptive Problems

(Ronald Heifetz – Leadership without Easy Answers)

- A **technical problem** yields a right answer through the application of an appropriate and pre-made plan. Most textbook problem sets in mathematics, science, engineering, or business feature technical problems that have right answers that “fit” the problem.
- An **adaptive problem** doesn't have a clear, pre-made particular or certain answer. Adaptive problems are real world problems where data is conflicting or ambiguous, where disputants reasonably disagree about appropriate actions to resolve the problem, or where values are in conflict.

Technical Problems

- How do you transport large quantities of food to impoverished areas of the world?
- How do you fix a clutch for a car?
- How do you take care of a broken leg?
- How do you collect demographic information on people served?

With technical problems, the solution is, for the most part, already known. Technical problems were once adaptive problems that now have clear answers. The process here is knowing what technical solution is needed and putting into action.

Adaptive Problems

- How will we get the economy moving again?
- How can/should we respond to terrorism today?
- How should I respond to my son or daughter being teased at school?
- How do you respond to a teenage girl who alleges incest and then recants?

With adaptive problems, the "terrain" of the problem may be shifting, and an approach to learning about the problem may be as important as anything else. Encouraging an environment of learning and experimentation is key.

Making the distinction

“There is nothing trivial about solving technical problems. Technical challenges can be life threatening and technical problem-solving can be life-saving. But the urgency or importance of the challenge is not what distinguishes an adaptive problem from a technical one. An adaptive challenge is primarily one that requires people to develop brand new ways of thinking or doing things.”

Heifetz

Building Institutional Structures to Support Collaborative Practice

- Re-thinking administrative and clinical paperwork
- Re-thinking formats for clinical discussions
- Re-thinking staff and program evaluations
- Re-thinking outcome measures
- Building quality assurance efforts to support more respectful and responsive ways of interacting with families.

From: Madsen, W.C. (2007). Collaborative Therapy with Multi-Stressed Families (2nd ed). New York, Guilford Press.

Reflections and Questions

- How do you engage organizations mired in a culture of urgency, blame and defensive practice to consider new ways of working?
- What are some concrete steps towards building an organizational culture of reflection, appreciation and shared learning that supports new ways of working?
- How can we in a consulting role support the development of an internal infrastructure that can sustain such an organizational culture?

Some Useful References

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Articles available on www.collaborativehelping.org