

Once again this is Meghan Fitzgerald, training Coordinator at AOC, talking with you about the Best Practice Standard 1: organization and structure.

I would again like to acknowledge our funding and partners, feel free to peruse our website for more information about the grant we are using to fund this work.

Let's do a tiny check in on Best practice 1 so far. Our first provision focused on collaboration, the second on building partnerships and community support. This one focus on the relevance of a multidisciplinary team.

This multidisciplinary team is how we bring in the expertise needed to help families with a wide variety of needs. In our video discussion in Provision A, I introduced the partners we typically work with in FTCs and a few of the strategies needed to ensure good working conditions for each of those professional relationships. We will, in later modules, also discuss specifics about treatment, staffing, and policies and procedures that can ensure a multidisciplinary team is included in each step of building an effective family treatment court.

The next topic relevant to an effective multidisciplinary team is concerning selecting and hiring team members. While an FTC team often is not responsible directly for hiring, each of the team members watching this likely has some say in hiring individuals within your organization, as well as deciding who should join the FTC team when a new member is needed, so this a relevant discussion here as well.

I am going to focus here on a small portion of provision C. This is on page 16 of your best practice document which states that "implementation research suggests that individuals be selected to the values of an organization. An individual can be trained to do a particular job, but cannot necessarily be trained to believe in a particular value." Following this line of thought, this means that hiring practices should be built to assemble an FTC team that believes in family reunification, in strength-based recovery and court practices, and a team that values collaboration.

Values are something that are certainly more meaningful if they are coming directly from the group that is meant to carry them out, so does your FTC team have a shared mission and vision? A quiz will pop up asking you to answer that question.

Best Practice Standard 1, provision E gives evidence that a shared mission and vision statement can have a positive impact on organizational performance, and can increase organizational innovation

Writing these statements as a team can help solidify the focus of your court, make it clear what issues you consider most important and make sure that you are selecting a team on based on those values. Without a shared focus, hiring for values will be as challenging as a rowing team with no one to count time. A lot of work – not that much focus.

We also, of course, need a team with expertise in the needs of our families. SO the question here is what should that expertise look like? Some of this we've already discussed, or just know because of the work we do: that team should be bringing in the expertise of child welfare, SUD treatment, quality legal representation, ethical standards, and expertise in law amongst other things.

We also should have a team that is representative of the diversity, experiences and values of the population that we serve. The members of an FTC team that are the greatest asset in a strength-based family-centered and collaborative practice are those that are experts in the culture of the populations

we serve, understand the importance of representation, removing bias, and have a deep understanding of the families that we serve. You guessed it – having team members with lived experience in the foster system, in recovery, and in FTCs in particular are the best resource for our therapeutic courts.

In fact, because we are all working in Washington, and many of us within the state government, we should also consider our deepest value to be Equity and Justice for All. This familiar saying is one of the mottos and pledges of the newly formed Washington office of equity, which has resources and consultation on the website linked here. I would encourage you all to go to the site and look around.

Because this is a specific value of the AOC, your FYJP team, and your FTC team members here at AOC, I'm going to diverge a bit from the best practices here and talk a little about the research in hiring and equity.

One of the things that we're pretty well aware of at this point are that hiring practices often leave open areas for subjectivity. Which paves the way to implicit bias. Implicit bias is when we have attitudes towards people or associate stereotypes with them without being consciously aware that we are being biased. These are things that we do without even having to think about them with our active mind. I've added a link here where you can go and do a little test of your own implicit bias as part of a research study from Harvard University. It's well worth checking out if you haven't previously.

One of the most influential works on implicit bias in hiring was from a 2013 experiment. In this experiment, the researchers responded to 1300 employment ads and sent 500 resumes. Those were sent using two different personas that were created based on stereotypical names of African American individuals. As well as, stereotypical names and a personas based on White Individuals. The researchers then compared the success rate of those applications. So that's where this title comes from "Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal?" Looking at Results here, 50% more responses with individuals that had White names versus African American names. It is important to note to that this was a lot of applications, in two areas (Boston and Chicago), and this result was uniform across locations, occupations, and across industries. This isn't just a small scope that we are looking at. I've added a link to the original paper, if you're if you're interested in this work.

So what can we do to value the experience of applicants from a more culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse pool? We can reflect and work to improve our implicit biases, of course, but much better to take the subjectivity out of the equation as much as possible. It's ideal to use a system that doesn't require you to be a good human, necessarily, to choose the right candidate. Instead, we might think a little bit more clearly about what the criteria are that are necessary to do the work. Place value of knowledge and understanding of equity. Before joining the team, we would ask potential team members questions about equity and inclusion directly. We might also use a rubric and a scoring system that's decided prior to seeing application materials or deciding on a candidate and that way we know that our subjectivity are implicit bias or explicit bias. Is it changing how we might score or put one candidate ahead of another?

Here's some examples of some hiring questions that we might use in order to get a more diverse pool of applicants or interviewees and to value a little bit more of that diverse experience. This first question asked how would a person's background impact their success in navigating the child welfare system? It doesn't ask specifically about a particular cultural background or ask about anything related to DEI or diversity, equity and inclusion work directly. However, from those potential answers we might make up

a rubric to give someone basic points for just understanding that a person's background can certainly impact their success in life. The opportunities that they're given can always make a difference, but maybe we'd give them additional points if they have an understanding about how different demographic groups are more likely to enter into the child welfare system. How the impact of systemic racism means that we're far more likely to see someone, for instance, who is black or Native American coming across our child welfare system, coming to the courts and how we might work to ameliorate that issue.

There is of course, nuance here. There's no one way that everyone is going to answer this particular question, but if you say that you'll give more points in your scoring system for someone who has certain values incorporated into their answer, like for instance. Equity might be one of those values. Then it makes it a little bit easier to make sure that you're valuing or that you're honoring your value system and that you're giving someone that has those values similar values to you high scores in that rubric.

I'm going to say one more thing before moving on from these hiring or committee member discussions, and that is about "being a good fit." This is a statement that we hear often in hiring discussions and deciding who should be on a steering committee or team. And it is really important because, you know, I'm a firm believer that trusting our intuition is really valuable. In some cases. However, when it comes to hiring, it also introduces this gray area of subjectivity that can allow that bias to creep in. Often being a good fit means someone who fits with the team. However, challenging a team can be a great strength, especially when it's challenging stereotypes or bias. So if you're thinking about being a good fit, it's really important to check your bias. Check your stereotypes. Just think about those, consider those as you're thinking about what makes a person a good fit those. Breakdowns of those good fit or not, see if that's something that you can quantify. Why is this person a good fit is because they're so similar to me? And is that something that we need and value on our team.

On this slide I'm just giving you a couple of examples of some well documented stereotypes that we see in our society today. The first we consider the stereotype of an angry black woman the anger that exists pressed by black women in the workplace is found to be more likely to result in a negative performance evaluation and negative assessment of leadership capability. So I've added a link to that study. Here you can go and read it directly and see about all of the details of their methodology if you're interested.

Another is this idea of an emotional Latina or Latino person, particularly Latino, who's told to conform more to get ahead. The study that I have linked here found that 76% of Latinos repressed some portion of their personas at work. Some of the comments that were really common are here to express if you need to tone down the hands a little bit. Similar situation that I've been in personally and I know a lot of other really expressive individuals we've seen is the use of exclamation points. We often think and look down and have some sort of bias or emotional reaction to someone that's very passionate about their work. It's not really something that we should be looking against, even if it's true. Can someone be passionate and also be professional? Are we just relying on a bias to make our decisions about that particular personality trait that happens to be considered to be more common in certain cultures?

So to bring those sort of big picture theoretical ideas down to a more local level, we can look at the population that we're actually serving. These are data from the 2020 Interactive dependency dashboard. There's a link there, so you have access to this dependency data for things that are happening currently. Right now in Washington. It's a little bit small, so I'm going to make it a tiny bit bigger for you here, but essentially what we're seeing here is some examples. Each county has demographic data that's being

mapped to their proportion of dependencies that are happening in that case. And to pull out a few counties that we know have family treatment courts in this area are 47% Hispanic, Latino? And that's the population of Hispanic or Latino folks who are in dependency cases. The demographics of the dependency cases that were working with and. King County is 21% African American or black and Clallam County. We're looking about 70% multiracial American Indian American native. So it's actually an additional 5% that are non-multiracial American Indian, Alaska natives. So we're just thinking about what the population of people is that's coming into our courts. Do they have representation in the teams that are governing websites or what's decided in those cases? I'm not saying that these numbers should match exactly, but knowing those demographics, knowing what populations were serving means that these are some things that we should probably. Got some consideration for her in terms of the cultural awareness, the cultural competency we need in order to serve those families that may make up a significant portion of the families that are coming into our courtrooms.

I'm just going to bring you back to that original slide so you can get that link to the interactive dependency dashboard. If you haven't had a chance to look at that yet and just, you know, consider in your in your future decision making that being culturally understood and represented by an FTC court team may well be more important than a bachelor's degree. Justice court. Her standing of Microsoft Office when it comes to being a culturally competent and functional FTC team.

Alright, so let's bring this back to best practice one structure and organization and just remember that a multidisciplinary team is built on the values of your court. These are values you should be deciding with your mission and vision, and one of those values is a diverse team that has the expertise that families. In order to be successful in your family treatment court. So again, we're going to go back to a provision to check in as I was doing those provisions, I skipped ahead a little bit, and I talked about mission and vision before talking about governance structure. So I'm going to just add a little bit of discussion about governance structure here.

At the state level your FTC grant team and partners have come together with a wonderful group of steering committee members, all from a variety of expertise areas that can be allies to our FTCs. The steering committee is very excited to help families to reach the levels of growth and development that they need in order change their stories.

At the local level, best practice considers a multi-committee approach to effective FTC teams. This diagram shows us each of those levels.

Currently, many of our local teams are working with only an operational team, these are the folks meeting regularly for staffing, maybe for occasional policy discussions. Sometimes all of that policy and research work is falling just on one person, often the coordinator, or the judicial officer. In the short term, this can be functional, but teams who distribute the work can help families more effectively and avoid burnout. That local operational team is already providing direct services to families and doing work specific to their role on the team, but also is organizing and attending staffing. Providing info for, or organizing reports for staffing and committees, problems solving between sessions, and collecting and submitting success data.

Best practices also suggest an oversight or policy committee.

This committee will regularly make decisions about policies and procedures of the FTC and update a written policy and procedure manual regularly (for professionals, rather than for participants). This committee might meet monthly if you're having challenges in the structure of your court, or quarterly to check in when things are running more smoothly.

And our last committee is formed of the judicial officer and community stakeholders who might be involved in community decision making or services in the area. These stakeholders are generally anyone with the power to make decisions that could impact FTC families. This group might include local government, SUD treatment center executives, Leaders in local child welfare policy, etc. The focus here is problem solving and communication of needs so policy can be shaped accordingly.

These different committees may have overlapping membership - a Governance structure could be made up in a few different ways, this is just the suggested structure from best practice. At the very least an FTC should have one committee meeting regularly outside of staffing to be sure your work is serving families in positive ways. Therapeutic courts are really reliant on being a part of the community and in collaboration at all levels, which is why having a multi-level governance structure is a best practice. I will be adding some resources, linked to underneath this video so you can check on them after you're done with the video here.

Thank you so much for watching this best practice one provisions c through e video. Remember again, best practice one is the longest of them, but it will be done soon and then we'll move on to some of the much shorter best practice modules in this series. Thanks!