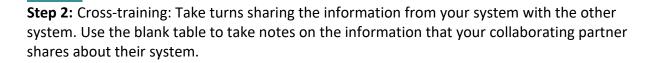# System Comparison of Values and Principles

Purpose: Understanding your collaborating partners' system is essential for building strong working relationships and clear communication. Each system may possess overlapping and divergent values and operations that may impact effective collaboration. Exploring these features is a prerequisite for identifying issues and designing effective solutions.

Step 1: Working with colleagues from the same system, fill out the table below. Each system should complete the table.

System Name:

Mission	
Primary value(s)	
Who is your client?	
What misconceptions, stigmas, or negative perceptions are associated with your system?	
Mandates associated with your system	
Timeframes associated with your system	
Practice philosophies that inform how you approach your work	
Beliefs about best practices to help families/consumers	

Step 2: Cross-training: Take turns sharing the information from your system with the other system. Use the blank table to take notes on the information that your collaborating partner shares about their system.

System Name:

Mission	
Primary value(s)	
Who is your client?	
What misconceptions, stigmas, or negative perceptions are associated with your system?	
Mandates associated with your system	
Timeframes associated with your system	
Practice philosophies that inform how you approach your work	
Beliefs about best practices to help families/consumers	

Step 3: Discuss the following questions as a group.

Differences
- What differences are present in our systems' mission and values?
- What other important differences between systems may impact our partnerships and/or service to families/consumers?
- What was your reaction to the misconceptions about their system that the other team shared?

Commonalities
- What commonalities are there in our systems' mission and values?
- What other important commonalities exist across our systems?

Step 4: To work collaboratively, it is helpful to reinforce the values we hold in common and develop share principles to guide the work. Although structural and philosophical differences exist between systems, professionals from all systems share several core values. Brainstorm a list of shared principles.

Examples of shared principles for a child welfare system and a behavioral health/human service system could include:

- Services should be tailored to specific needs of individual or family
- Provide services in a timely manner
- Provide services in a manner appropriate for the gender and culture of the individual/family
- Plans incorporate family input
- Keep children safe from harm
- Keep families together when possible (and safe)