 

**WCWPDS Steering Committee Meeting Notes**

Tuesday, July 12, 2022, from 1:00pm-4:30pm

**Discussion/Decision Items**

1. **Welcome & Introductions**

**Meeting Attendees**: Mika Makarovich (DMCPS), Fred Naatz (Grant County), Vicki Tylka (Marathon County), Mandy Stanley (Marquette County), Lisa Roberts (Waukesha County), John Elliott (DCF), Becky Yang (DCF), Emily Erickson (DCF), Michelle Rawlings (DCF), Darin Smith (WCWPDS-Madison), Stephanie Reilly (WCWPDS-Madison), Julie Brown (WCWPDS-Milwaukee), Tania Cornelius (DCF), Teresa Kovach (Portage County), Shelby McCulley (DCF), David Harkins (DCF), Jen Heil (WCWPDS-Madison), Raj Kamal (DCF), Shannon Braden (DCF), Diane Cable (Eau Claire County), Stacy Ledvina (Manitowoc County), Charles Stephens (DCF), Brent Ruehlow (Jefferson County), Ellen Smith (UW Madison)

**Overview of Agenda**

**Updates**

Staffing: WCWPDS-Madison introduced Jen Heil in her new associate director position and David Harkins who will begin on July 18th in the Budget & Finance Manager role.

1. **New Worker Training Update**

Presentation by DCF on the changes to the safety model and how they will impact the Analytic Process of Safety Decision making element within the WiLearn program. As a result of substantive changes scheduled for 2023 the decision was made to remove majority of present danger information from that element. Presentation went over potential foundation training options moving forward as a result of the changes to offerings within the WiLearn process.

Discussion regarding what foundation requirements should potentially look like starting in January 2023 as the WiLearn program begins. All options presented included having Safety in CPS Present and Impending Danger as well as Case Practice with American Indian Tribes Day 2 required along with all the components of WiLearn. Within 2 of the options the Safety in CPS Present Danger would become part of the WiLearn program with staff proxy enrolled automatically with their cohort to occur after the last foundational element is completed. A secondary requirement of additional hours satisfied by selecting menu offering trainings at local agency discretion was also presented in two of the options. ***(See Additional Document WiLearn and Foundation Training)***

Initial steering committee members feedback seemed to support option 2b which would include Safety in CPS Present Danger as an automatic portion of the WiLearn Program to occur within the first 6 months of employment. Members believed that Present Danger was one of the trainings staff should have prior to moving off of the 50% caseload requirement whenever possible. Additional trainings beyond the required offerings would be taken at an amount and time frame to be determine by the local agency with no formal requirements. Steering Committee Members were asked to take the options and information back to their respective regional meetings to elicit further feedback with the item being brought for a formal decision at the October Steering Committee Meeting.

1. **Secondary Traumatic Stress**

One of the 2022 county priorities identified by the Steering Committee was the need for secondary traumatic stress (STS) training and resources. To develop recommendations related to the current need for STS training and resources, the Steering Committee supported the formation of a focus group that would meet with WCWPDS staff for a brainstorming session. WCHSA solicited five county representatives, one from each region, to partake in the focus group meeting. Stephanie Reilly presented a summary of the work the focus group has done helping to provide further clarity to this 2022 county identified priority.

During the focus group session, themes immerged that began to identify the county specific needs. While STS was acknowledged as an issue for child welfare professionals, the discussion shifted into a greater need to address well-being in county culture. The focus group members identified that the current needs are not really *secondary stress* because child welfare professionals are directly experiencing it themselves. Those Themes Include:

* Staff shortages have created issues across county systems.
* There are not enough applicants for open positions, resulting in increased workload for the remaining direct practice staff. Provider shortages have also led to more work being placed on child welfare professionals.
* The pandemic has created loss of staff due to retirement and choosing jobs with more flexibility and less stress. New applicants and current child welfare professionals have expressed the desire for flexible hours and adjusted schedules within a 40- hour work week.
* When staff worked remotely, they missed the connection with their colleagues and the “space to process” work with families. However, they did think that the workload was manageable
* during COVID. Counties learned to work from home and staff felt more supported by leadership because they were treated with flexibility and willingness to adapt.
* Stressors center around tensions from working in a tense political environment and blame from other non-human services county staff. There is also stress from other community partners; an example given was the need for child welfare professionals to communicate the change of practice from the Family First roll-out to school district staff, law enforcement, judges, and elected county officials.
* Drug use and deaths with families have increased, while experiencing provider shortages.

In addition to the themes identified the focus group created a list of recommendations to address the issues identified. They were as follows:

# Relationship Enhancement/Diversity Series

* + DEI Training series at all levels
	+ Help staff understand the impact of mental health and substance abuse disorders, especially when engaging with families
	+ Guest speaker series-diversity topics

# Staff Empowerment-Peer Support

* + Peer support training and support
	+ Strategies to build in staff supports in existing agency processes

# Staff Empowerment-Management Support

* + Training on ways to build positive culture (including support staff)
	+ Development of Workforce Well-being tools/resources for supervisors and managers to with staff and in supervision
	+ Supervisor/manager session on supporting staff
	+ Director Training on Workforce Wellbeing-to learn from each other and create agency plan

# Staff Empowerment, both Peer and Management Support

* + Connectivity and self-care workshops
	+ Education on self-care
	+ Staff support and believing in staff’s good intentions *(described as peer support, recognizing good intentions and what everyone brings to the table)*

# Cross System Development

* + Training to help court system understand the placement climate and barriers that departments are facing
	+ Training that involves an agency bringing a team to develop their own for responding to STS and/or Workforce Wellbeing
	+ How to build effective STS workgroup within the agency
	+ How to engage the greater county structure to get buy-in on prioritizing self-care, i.e. at the SS board, HR and County board levels

# Collaboration and Communication

* + Joint trainings that include others beyond CW staff (foster parents, providers, support staff, other agency staff)
* Educating staff on working with individuals who do not agree with them or do not
* understand their role- how to support them through these conversations
* Training on crucial conversations *(use Crucial Conversations series, link with having conversations when disagree)*
* Specific training to responses to the court environment and tools
* Training on connectivity and professional relationship building-with child welfare and behavioral health staff
* Leadership communication strategies in crisis situations

# Resources

* Opportunities for staff-led trainings (Train the Trainer track-staff leading peer support training, etc.)
* Build more in person trainings
* Monthly newsletter or training sheet that goes out
* Weekly podcast on well-being, strengths, or communication
* Create STS and Well-Being toolboxes

Due to the large number of recommendations and the wide array of overarching topic areas the steering committee members were asked to take this information back to their respective regions to elicit further feedback on which recommendations seem to have the most support and bring back as part of the 2023 priority setting process.

1. **2023 Priority Setting**

Discussed 2023 Priority Setting Process and information to be requested from regional meetings. Group elected to utilize the areas identified by the secondary traumatic stress focus group as a starting point in determining 2023 priorities. Darin will create a document containing that information and disseminate to members for them to utilize in the regional conversations. Priorities identified should be returned by mid-September in order to prepare for further conversation at the October 4th steering committee meeting.

1. **Member Terms – OE Project Item**

Spreadsheet was handed out defining current member terms which have been defined as 3 year commitments. Member term end dates are not to be utilized as a required cessation of an individual’s term on the WCWPDS Steering Committee. Rather, they are utilized to indicate the time in which a member may voluntarily choose to end their membership, leave the committee and have a replacement from that representative’s region identified. If members choose to remain on the committee past their identified term end date the new term end date for that member will move forward 3 additional years. Discussed the process to replace members should they choose to end their time. Procedure should include a request to WCHSA to assist with the identification of subsequent members.

**6. Key Messages from the 4/5/2022 Steering Committee Meeting**

* 2023 Priority Setting Process
* Foundation Training Change Options
* WCWPDS Steering Committee Term Expirations
* WiLearn Institute at PCW Conference on 9-15-22