

Alexis Kirk ([00:00](#)):

So I'm curious to just hear, you know, all of this started with your grant to really think about developing this practice model. And through that you really kind of dug deep into these co-creation processes and partnerships with your community. I wanna go back to the practice model and really hear some more about how you ended up rolling this out for social workers.

Mark Lapiz ([00:26](#)):

Sure. You know, we did a stage-based approach. A lot of it had to do with context of a system itself, but then also it allowed us the flexibility to do what many folks kind of coin as "continuous quality improvement." So, you know, in the field of child welfare, it's hard to take a large group of folks offline to do a mass training. Especially with our training. It was three full days. And so we had to think creatively of how to bring, you know, social workers offline to attended training and have the least amount of impact on their workload. So by nature of creating that kind of that work, it allowed for us to then do the work in between which we started understanding was the, you know, part of the real work around stage-based work, PDSA cycles transformational zones kind of thing.

Mark Lapiz ([01:28](#)):

So, you know, I think we first established in that we were scheduled out for six cohorts. And after the first cohort, which involved two units, traditionally, we probably would've just said, Okay, well let's get prepared for the next cohort that's gonna be up in two months. But through this idea of utilizing the practice model and the principles of implementation science and really going out and finding and coaching folks and finding out what's working and what's not working, we really started identifying some implementation barriers that if we didn't address now, we were gonna have a much larger problem later. And some of those that really first surface were the idea that workers really enjoyed the practice model and what its intentions were designed to do. However, in application of this of going themselves slow to go fast and teaming with families in a different way as well as service providers, there was gonna be changes in recommendations that now were gonna butt up against other system processes that were designed for this new way of thinking or practicing.

Mark Lapiz ([02:44](#)):

And so we had social workers telling us that they were having longer conversations with attorneys because now they were changing recommendations. We now had service providers questioning how did this all come about? And so we really had to look at asking them, what would help you moving forward to be able to do this practice model better or get better at it? So they started identifying we have what we call social worker ones or case aids that help case management social workers with different tasks. And so we started looking at, well, if they were informed of, of what we were doing differently, it might help us with being able to apply the practice model if we can get some of our service providers into this training to have at least them gain an understanding of how our practices were gonna change. So then we started tweaking with our schedules.

Mark Lapiz ([03:45](#)):

We kind of took the next cohort and originally I think we had three units going through. We paired it down to one unit and then instead we substituted our social worker one units to get involved with what their, what they will be supporting. Right. So that started kind of that first real, for me at least, experience with stage-based improvement or implementation and what you do in between each stage of how you can make different changes in modifications and always paying attention to that. So that's

where, you know, I, at least in my reflection, can think back to those first early kind of aha moments of what stage based work PDSA cycles transformational zones started happening. Because with, even with the discussions of how to modify the trainings, there were smaller kind of PSA cycles and transformational zones coming in to it.

Alexis Kirk ([04:46](#)):

That's really helpful, Mark. And it, it almost sounds like another parallel process. You know, we've talked a lot about going slow to go fast with respect and co-creation and using that as a way to engage in work with communities. And it sounds like kind of this stage-based approach to implementation was very similar in that it was you know, start small to go big. You know, start out in, in little phases, be really conscious and deliberate about what's working, what's not, what can we improve upon? And really just again, having that comfort with change and uncertainty and kind of thinking outside the box to say, Hey, we know we're not gonna get this exactly right the first time. Let's just make sure that we're having good conversations with each other and really taking this learning and improvement lens to this roll out of this thing instead of just doing it all at once. Kind of a, across all of your social workers.

Mark Lapiz ([05:47](#)):

Yeah, I think it really aligns with this concept of being a learning organization that, you know, that I've come to understand over the years that true learning organizations have to really embrace that concept of failure of understanding why something didn't work versus pointing fingers at it. And the only way you can kind of do this and manage it well is by doing in small bite-sized chunks, while at the same time going back to that, that level of trust, humility, and relationship building to help absorb through a process of partnership in groups. This idea that hey, we're gonna be right and let's try to figure out how to make this better the next time. And at the same time, what did we learn that was positive from this that could help us move us to the next phase? So yeah. So definitely, you know, there's a lot of parallels from the parallel processes that from the small interactions of one-on-one to the larger group dynamic kind of stuff that are very transformative.