

The Implementation Science at Work Podcast

Transcript - Episode 3: Co-creation in the California Foster Care System

Guests: Courtney Towne (Implementation Consultant, Triple P America), Sara van Driel (Implementation Consultant, Triple P America), & Gladys Hairston (Director of Learning Research and Evaluation, The John Rex Endowment).

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Meera Kumanan (00:00):

From The Impact Center at UNC's Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, this is 'Implementation Science at Work.'

Alexis Kirk (00:14):

Hi, I'm Alexis Kirk and implementation specialist with the Impact Center at FPG. Our guest today is Mark Lapid, who works in California as a program manager and a county government social services agency. With a master's degree in social work, Mark has been working in the field of social services for over 25 years, most of which have been in the field of child welfare. He's here to talk with us today about his experience being part of a collaborative partnership within his community that really shifted their agency's mindset and how they work and how they partner in their community. Welcome Mark.

Mark Lapid (00:50):

Thanks Alexis. It's great to be here.

Alexis Kirk (00:52):

So I know you were involved in a multi-year process to make a major change to the foster care system in California. And this process ended up leading to a new practice model that's still in place today. Could you start out telling us a little bit about the foster care system and explain to us exactly what the practice model is and why it's important?

Mark Lapid Sure. I'd be glad to. The child welfare system also known as the foster care system is really what historically has been thought of as child protective services. So we're really talking about children and families who need the intervention due to allegations of child abuse or neglect. In this case, we're talking about children and families who need our services and therefore enter the child welfare system. So for child welfare practice model provides detailed description that includes values, principles, and behaviors that guide social workers and their agencies on how to support implementing a theory towards change or improved outcomes. A frontline

practice approach includes core elements and practice behaviors that kind of guide all interactions with children, families, communities, tribes. So this also includes leadership behaviors that ensures that the model is demonstrated and reflected at all levels of the organization and system

Alexis Kirk (02:19):

Almost sounds like a practice model is good master blueprint of sorts for social workers and their agencies outlining core values of social workers and how they should operationalize those values when working with kids and families. And I'm curious, what made you guys prioritize the development of a practice model for California? What really sparked that interest?

Mark Lapiz (02:42):

This all kind of started with an initiative from the federal government designed to improve the outcomes for children in foster care. So these outcomes are really around permanency and that would be defined as children returning to the care of their biological parents or their parents or finding adoptive placements or legal guardianship. So again, these are outcomes regarding putting a child in a permanent home versus stories around children languishing in foster care from one foster home to another until they age out of this system at the age of 18. So the state of California applied for this grant with the idea of really looking at their own system issues around institutional bias and racism, and so how those could possibly impact the outcomes we're seeing. So this is how the practice model in California kind of started from.

Alexis Kirk (03:42):

Can you talk a little bit about your use of evidence and building this model and community context?

Mark Lapiz (03:48):

Yeah. So ,in child welfare at the time this grant came to us, there wasn't an evidence-based practice model out there. There was best practices that inform how to interact with families and children, but nothing evidence-based. And so, you know, there was four counties that were chosen to participate in this initiative, and that was kind of what first bubbled up for the project that there wasn't any evidence- based practice models out there.

Alexis Kirk (04:21):

So it sounds like you have this grant funding that you wanted to use to develop a practice model that would improve permanency. And it sounds like your first bump in the road that you hit was the lack of evidence to draw from. So your task then became creating your own practice model instead of implementing an existing evidence-based one. So it sounds like the focus of your work shifted a little bit. What was the first step

you took to really start that design process for your practice model?

Mark Lapiz (04:50):

Absolutely. The first step was looking at which communities were experiencing the worst outcomes regarding permanency, and statistically, it was identified that African ancestry communities, as well as our Native American communities, once they entered the child welfare system were not having the best outcomes. So from an evaluation standpoint, the project looked at those communities being the focal point. The first step was really identifying leaders in those communities and engaging them in that process to be partners in this grant. And so you know, through that engagement, through that kind of process of engaging these communities, I think is where the project really encountered their first 'aha' moment. We encountered a lot of resistance, a lot of misunderstanding, a lot of kind of in so many ways kind of defiance towards wanting to work with us. And it wasn't till we really took a step back and really heard from these communities as to what was getting in the way that we really started to unpack the historical trauma that systems such as child welfare have played in these communities.

Mark Lapiz (06:16):

And so these were emergent issues that really started us going down that road of how do we and I don't think we had the correct terms academic terms at the time, but it really highlighted the role of adaptive leadership that had to come into play with, you know, acknowledging historical trauma, trying to understand the impact of our systems that go back generations you know, to a time where many of us social resources weren't a part of, but we've inherited this and we've been not only inherited what we've done to these communities, but also inherited those practices. And again, really got back to the whole idea of what the goal was around institutional bias that was impacting us. So that's where we really got kind of started understanding what was kind of getting in the way.

Alexis Kirk (07:15):

Yeah, that's really interesting. Mark, you started out with this goal of wanting to create this practice model and since one didn't exist, let's partner with the community and see where we can make the most impact kind of where outcomes may be lagging behind and really partner with those communities. And it sounds like in setting up that way of working together, that even just that initial step kind of caused you guys to take pause based on where the community was at and really back up even further from the practice model, which was kind of that first goal you set out to tackle together and really think about some of these really complex historical trauma issues that you were seeing in your community. Can you talk a little bit about kind of that process of, it sounds like having to pump the brakes a little bit and shift from what was maybe first on your initial agenda to backing up a little bit?

Mark Lapiz (08:12):

Yeah, I think it was this idea that, you know, when I reflected back there was a lot of this idea of what partnership truly meant. And up until that point partnership really kind of meant we were going to be controlling everything and it really kind of they were just a seat at the table without really a voice. And so these were kind of these 'aha' moments we were having in terms of the, what we kind of coined the term business unusual that anytime we did a strategy or an engagement strategy that resulted in a way that we didn't we try to do our best to take a step back and realize maybe it's something we're doing versus something that, you know, our partners are just exhibiting for some random explanation. And so this kind of pumping the brakes, business unusual, going slow to go fast, help us to understand that there was a dance to this as almost like it was not one strategy that was just going to kind of unlock everything. It was going to take an enormous amount of time, energy and effort focused on our own behaviors and our own, you know, how do we become a little bit more humble around this? So, you know, this, these 'aha' moments didn't happen in what, at one time, I think it was over time, we started to realize what are these qualities that we're really trying to continuously practice that seemed to be helping us move the needle.

Alexis Kirk (09:57):

Yeah. That's really interesting to hear you talk about that. A couple of phrases that you use and made me think of something we talk about a lot in our work, which is co-creation, it really sounds like with these partnerships, you were trying to lean into a process of co-creation. And when we talk about that, so you mentioned kind of giving people a seat at the table. One of my favorite ways of thinking about co-creation is not just giving people a seat at the table who haven't historically had one, but also figuring out ways that once they have a seat at the table, how can you help meaningfully involve them? How can you lift up their voices so that they can really be kind of in partnership with you making meaningful contributions to the work and helping set the agenda? I'm curious if you could elaborate a little more on the relationship you were starting to develop with these communities in the context of co-creation and, and who you started to involve and how they started to come together.

Mark Lapiz (10:59):

Well, I think the project itself really started looking at partners or representatives from these communities that have also had an experience with our system. So there was this wide casted net regarding folks from community based organizations, foster parents, birth parents that had been involved in the system or former foster youth. So there was this kind of broad recruitment of consumers of our system, but from different kind of areas. And so there were these common themes of mistrust and these common themes of your, you know, you feel like you're engaging us by putting us all in the room, but we can come up with decisions. And in the end you have the ultimate yay or nay on those decisions. And so these are all themes that came out loud and clear. And part of the project where we did an institutional analysis of really understanding from those different perspectives, what their experiences were like with our system, and then

comparing those to our own perceptions around those same areas and seeing a big, huge disconnect.

Mark Lapiz (12:17):

So that was where the initial kind of engagement began. I think where the real transformation started happening was when the same community partners and the project teams from the different sites all got together and started diving into what would make good social work practice. And, you know, and I believe there was something like 500 different behaviors that were identified and put up on you know, the walls in this room in Sacramento. And then through a lot of exploration and discussion, it got narrowed down to 23 that really kind of set the tone for this. And I think it's something that, you know, myself and those folks that were a part of this always really highlight that this practice model was designed with the community and by the community and therefore anything around that practice to model almost has to have kind of like a copyright.

Mark Lapiz (13:23):

It has to have their permission as to what we do with it. Both in terms of their training of it and assessing it with fidelity and coaching to it, to even marketing it. I think there has to be some, you know, because again, we would be practicing with systems often do is steal ideas from other folks and make it ours. It takes a conscientious effort and a group of folks who are willing to really keep their foot grounded in that idea of, of the partnership and the ownership that the community has with this.

Alexis Kirk (14:01):

I love how you described that as kind of once you took the time to really delve into some of those issues of mistrust and moved on to the next phase of the work, really figuring out what do. We want this practice model to be really having it be not just made in partnership with the community, but by the community. And I love that concept of like a copyright of, you know, the community has made this. It's truly community owned and what we do with it from here on now, you know, the community's going to have a say in that maybe you can talk a little bit about it. We've heard a lot about kind of how this process started and how there are a couple of points in time where you had to kind of back up and really dig into some of these historical systemic issues. I'm wondering if you can just talk a little bit about what the timeline for that.

Mark Lapiz (14:53):

I think it, I would say there was, you know, it's like it's hard to explain, but it's a lot like behavioral modification for a system. There's a very conscientious effort at the very beginning. And it does take time from the time of the beginning of the grant in 2010. The first cohorts that experienced a training of the practice model in our county didn't happen until the summer of 2012. So, you know, two and a half years that required the

partnership, the trust-building just between the project team and those involved at that level with these community partners in order to, to co-create design the practice model, not to mention how we were going to actually roll out the training and those sorts of things. And again, when going back to this kind of behavioral modification, so now, how to apply what you just learned and how to do it amongst a project team with these communities to now, how does that also adapt to when you roll out trainings with your staff?

Mark Lapiz (16:11):

Because now you're opening up the doors to bringing in those community partners to sit at the table. That was our strategies to bring these community partners, to sit at the table with staff to learn this practice model together. And that in and of itself was a lot of painstaking time trying to adjust to that. You know, our first cohort of, you know, about 20 social workers and their supervisors, you saw community partners at one table and the social workers at the other tables. And so the next cohort kind of going with that whole plan do study act and had to make it better as how do you now start incorporating those community partners at the table with social workers? Because again, it was bringing them all into the same room does not mean you're actually addressing that siloed kind of, 'yeah, I got a seat at the table, but I don't have a voice.'

Mark Lapiz (17:12):

So these events provided those opportunities of how do we apply this kind of partnership piece in everything that we do and understand that if we're going to try to do this differently, that has to be kind of a pillar to this practice model implementation at pretty much at every level at every meeting. So again though, you know, it took two and a half years to kind of get it going around the creation of the practice model, that was just kind of the very beginning of how do you now adapt it so it could apply to every other aspect of implementing.

Alexis Kirk (17:58):

So it sounds like, you know, that co-creation process of really working on this side by side with the community almost became second nature for how you all function kind of as an agency and as an organization.

Mark Lapiz (18:13):

Yeah. I mean, you know, when I even reflect back on the example of the training, I remember our implementation team sat there and said, well, we can't just start assigning community partners to sit at a table with staff, because even that would kind of align with that idea that we're telling them what to do again. So we brought a few of them in to a meeting and said, "Hey, how do you best think we can do this? Where we can have you all sit?" And so they came up with strategies and again, they refined those strategies because you would still have community partners for, for every right reason that they had feel comfortable sitting with each other and not feeling safe to sit with

social workers, some of whom they've had some contentious interactions with in the past. So that in itself, again, became part of that process that when we were stuck, we would, you know, and especially with regards to them, we would bring them to the table. And that evolved into every work group. Every meeting again was always, they need to be here. Like it wasn't even, they need to be here as it was, you know, just kind of an expectation that the invitation would go on.

Alexis Kirk (19:39):

Our guest today is Mark Lapis a program manager and accounting government social services agency in California. He's been sharing with us, his experience being part of a collaborative process that changed the practice model and the foster care system in California. Mark, I want to go back a little bit to something that you started to touch on earlier, and really just get you to talk a little more about how co-creation shaped the core values and philosophies of how your agency operated, beyond the development of the practice model that you were working on. Can you talk a little bit more about how co-creation took you from kind of business as usual to business unusual?

Mark Lapis (20:19):

Yeah. Great question. We've talked about co-creation, you know, up until this point in the context of work, working with community partners, I think there was also this real big emphasis on the idea of co-creation even within our implementation team. Our implementation team was constructed kind of by grabbing folks seem to fit the mold of a kind of what we were asked. You know, it could involve people around training, some people around evaluation. And so, we members of the original implementation team had never worked together. And we were of different classifications and work in a system where classifications impact kind of this privilege and power dynamic in and of itself. And I think it required a lot of humility within that team and relationship building to put those kinds of titles aside, which was very parallel to this idea of working with community, in that we came in and had to be very aware of our own privilege and status when we walked in their room especially how it impacted these community, you know, our communities we've worked with.

Mark Lapis (21:35):

And so we ourselves and an implementation team really identified and worked through this idea of relationship building and partnership to kind of set the foundation, as we now know, of co-creation, especially given that much of what we are being asked to do in the spirit of implementation and implementation science was beyond anything we had experienced before. So that in and of itself helps set a tone amongst the implementation team members of how do we engage each other of how to engage the staff that we were supporting and exploring. We had, you know, these 'aha' moments ourselves and a commitment amongst the team members to say, if we truly want our staff to know what it feels like to be interacting with the use of this practice model, we

have to embody that practice model in the way we interact with them. So there was a lot of trust being built and practice outside of working with community partners to amongst our own selves, to really understand how do we identify the problems?

Mark Lapiz (22:53):

How do we work through these adaptive issues? How do we really engage the different drivers of leadership and leadership to help, you know, support us to break barriers? There was all of these kinds of things that the four, there was four of us at the time, look to each other and just said, what do we got to lose, if we want to do it in the spirit of what we're trying to create? And so I think that became very much our own area of practicing all of the foundational aspects that led to this ability to do co-creation with our community partners. And so that's where I think this idea of understanding what business unusual really felt like it looked like it was, you know, it really required a group of folks to be very committed to this idea of being curious, having courageous conversations, saying we don't know the answer to it, and let's try to figure this out together.

Mark Lapiz (24:00):

And I think once we understood or started feeling more comfortable with each other, doing that, it's kind of like that whole idea of let's just practice it at home before we practice it out with other folks. And so that's where it was and I think, you know, every time we interacted with the community partners and they brought that to our attention, we had to come back to the drawing board and work it out together and vice versa, whatever we decided together as group, we would inform the community partners that we don't know if this is going to work, but what do y'all think? This is what we think might, might be a strategy, and if it doesn't work, what do you all think we should do? So those were kind of the common themes of how we got started to get better at the time. It wasn't identified as co-creation, it was just trying to figure it out.

Alexis Kirk (24:51):

I really appreciate you kind of drawing out the parallel experiences of what you guys went through internally in your own team. And that's something that we talk about all the time kind of working with community partners is parallel processes. And it sounds like the whole idea behind co-creation is really engaging community partners and kind of dealing with these tough issues of power and hierarchies and autonomy. And it sounds like while you were tackling that with your community, you are also working on it internally as well, to take your titles and your roles and your physicians that you came into the implementation team with, and really work through kind of setting those aside and really focusing on, okay, how can we just think differently? How can we get outside of our box, really challenge the status quo of whatever bureaucracy may exist and whatever power dynamics may exist and really embody and embrace that business unusual attitude.

Alexis Kirk (25:54):

And I just, I love hearing that part of your story. So I'm wondering, you know, it's one thing to talk about unearthing these issues of powers and stepping outside of our current roles and taking off whatever hats we may have been wearing for decades from our position. It's one thing to kind of talk about that, but I'm sure it's another thing to practice it, and I'm sure that it's sometimes caused some friction and really, you know, had you guys having to lean into that, go slow to go fast to really appropriately manage some of that friction that may have been coming up. Can you talk a little bit more about your experience there?

Mark Lapid (26:35):

Sure. You know, it's kind of, when you look at how I describe practice models in terms of the different layers of how a system interacts with each other, as well as with their children and families for a desired outcome, you know, I think it's, you know, underlying that all is requiring us as individuals to make changes. One of several wonderful things I learned from our community partners that has always stuck with me was this idea that a community partner once said, "Systems are comprised of individuals. And if individuals don't want to change the systems won't change either." And so there was one of those aha moments where we as leaders, however you define it, have to look at our own personal behavior, figure out our behaviors perpetuating that of which were what we're trying to eliminate and really trying to figure out what are those behaviors that we're exhibiting that are in alignment with the power dynamic and what do we need to change?

Mark Lapid (27:43):

So those were a lot of the things that bubbled up for myself and the folks around me that were in charge or responsible for implementation around this kind of self-reflective piece around change. But then how did that come about when we interacted with our staff, because there were moments where even those staff really bought into the practice model, everything about it, they themselves still had hadn't come to, and I don't know if they ever will, but we're still on a different part of the journey where it had kind of landed on to where my own privilege and power also intersects with the way I think about the people I interact with. And so there were moments where, you know, I would have to meet with staff who would complain about how our community partners behaved in meetings, how they express themselves.

Mark Lapid (28:44):

And there were these opportunities of listening to them and then also pointing out how do we, where do we leave space for people to come to their own conclusion that they may have made a mistake, or they have made a misstep, where do we, ourselves, as part of the system, get to decide a person misbehave based on the fact that we didn't like their reaction, or is it truly something that was inappropriate? So, you know, these

were from the macro to the micro, to the internal to the external things that myself and the implementation team members and even our community partners and the champions behind our practice model really started truly trying to understand. And so I think this practice model and implementation science and co-creation, you know, I really can honestly say that is a very transformational approach to assist them because it doesn't just transform this system itself. It transforms the individuals within the system again, to make that change.

Alexis Kirk (29:58):

And it sounds like, you know, although it is very transformative and clearly had a broad impact on not just the single project of putting together your practice model, but just how your whole agency operates in general and your philosophies. It sounds like even though it was super transformative, it wasn't a process that was easy for you guys, that there were lots of struggles along the way.

Mark Lapiz (30:25):

Yeah, absolutely. I think with these struggles and with these courageous conversations, if I were to really look at what can get you through all that is fundamentally comes down to relationships and building those relationships and taking the time. I think we look at our experience with this implementation science and co-creation, and kind of to put academic terms, these theoretical frameworks to them. But I think one of the things that we really understood through this project around working with diverse communities was understanding that communities themselves have answers to these questions based on the fact that how they behave, that we have totally disregarded for in these larger systems communities that we worked with are all based on relationships. They are very self-reliant and very open with each other about when they have problems and struggles and find ways to make that happen. And I think that was always kind of part of this kind of focus on co-creation was let's look to them to guide us through this process, especially these four implementation team members who were kind of just brought together to do this without really anybody else understanding in our system how to do it.

Mark Lapiz (31:52):

So we really took it upon ourselves to exhibit humility and come alongside our community partners and say, how would you have done it in your community? And how can we apply it in this framework or in this system too. So what we were really trying to do in a lot of ways around co-creation was may have been new to a system such as child welfare, but it's not new to the way communities operate. And so I think for many of us, there was for my own self and transformation, there was like a liberating moment to say there's much of who I am as a person in my community that now is really being integrated and intersecting with who I am as a professional and being recognized and celebrated.

Alexis Kirk (32:38):

Yeah. So once you started, you know, really thinking about that recognition and celebration within your communities, what was the type of feedback you started hearing from community members and from other partners about how you guys were using co-creation and how it started to change your organizational culture or other things?

Mark Lapiz (32:49):

Yeah, I mean, they, you know, our community partners, you know, felt like there was a lot of trust with our implementation team. Things such as changing our policies and processes started to really occur. Things like, if they were coming to a meeting why weren't they financially compensated much like the rest of us from a system. We get paid to attend a meeting and they don't. So, and then we would look at our processes within our system to say, how would we be able to make that happen? And so we started really understanding that there had to be this sense of kind of equity and fairness across because the contributions from them were probably more valuable than us and we were getting financially compensated for it.

Mark Lapiz (33:53):

So, you know, I don't think there was an expectation from them that they were going to get paid for everything to do, but they, I think there was a sense of trust that we were going to take care of them as much as they were going to take care of us. You know, they would make space when we came up with problems, we would bring it to them and we would allow them to, to identify the solutions to some of these technical issues that we couldn't think of. And so, there definitely felt like at least from my perspective that they were true partners and that at least with the folks in our system, that they had built relationships with, there could be true, honest communication, back and forth about things that we could solve and the things that we couldn't solve, the things that were easy to fix and things that were too complicated to fix, but at least they knew that they could communicate with those leaders, those implementation team members and those folks that were kind of trusted with this practice model, that they co-designed to have those kinds of conversations.

Mark Lapiz (35:08):

And many of the issues that we were able to at least adaptively address were because they were the ones that trusted us to bring those ideas to us.

AK (35:22):

Mark, hearing you talk just then you kept on using the word trust. And it really made me think back to earlier in our conversation when you first started talking about the early stages of engaging in this co-creation process and that issues of mistrust or real barrier for you. And so it sounds like through all of these efforts and through taking the time to really build relationships with partners that you were able to, at least between

your team and your community partners really build some trust where before there had been this really great mistrust between social services and the communities. 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 want to go back to the practice model and really hear some more about how you ended up rolling this out for social workers.

Mark Lapiz (36:27):

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 is 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 attend a 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 to understanding was the, the, you know, part of the real work around stage base where PDSA cycles transformational zones kind of thing.

Mark Lapiz (37:30):

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 would probably would have just said, okay, well, let's get prepared for the next cohort. That's going to 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 going to have a much larger problem later. And some of those are really first surface where the idea that workers really enjoyed the practice model and what its intentions were designed to do. However, in an 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 going to be changes in recommendations that now we're going to butt up against other system processes that weren't designed for this new way of thinking or practicing.

Mark Lapiz (38:37):

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 about 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 going to change.

Mark Lapiz (39:44):

So then we started tweaking with our schedules. 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 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 they can make different changes and 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 base work PDSA cycles, transformational stones started happening. Because even within the discussions of how to modify the trainings, there were smaller kind of PDSA cycles and transformational zones coming in to it.

Alexis Kirk (40:48):

That's really helpful Mark, and it almost sounds like another parallel process. You know, we've talked a lot about going slow to go fast with respect to 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 and that it was you know, start small to go big, you know, start out 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 going to 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 across all of your social workers.

Mark Lapiz (41:48):

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 small bite-sized chunks. While at the same time, going back to that level of trust, humility to relationship building, to help absorb through a process of partnership in groups, this idea that, Hey, we're going to be all 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.

Alexis Kirk (43:00):

You guys started this journey almost a decade ago. What are some of the benefits that you've seen from this process?

Mark Lapid (43:08):

Yeah, I think, you know, this initiative really helps set the stage for the state of California and their design and implementation of a statewide practice model. You know, kind of again, in a parallel process of stage based work and starting small to go to get bigger and better and go slow to go fast. I think there was this, now we've understood and applied, you know, a practice model, understood what it takes to partner, the use of the implementation science approaches, principles and frameworks, and now have taken it upon the state to design and implement a statewide core practice model, which is very, very exciting to think of that I did at, you know, whatever county or municipality or city you may be involved with child welfare, that theoretically you would be experiencing the same types of interactions you would across the state. And then at the same time, you know, building that capacity and infrastructure within those jurisdictions of how to do stage-based work, how build trust and partnership, how do you rely on the idea of co-creation with community partners to solve problems that you never even thought were problems to begin with in the first place? So that's the real exciting work that's happening now. I'm, you know, very hopeful that our state can really shift this idea of handing the work back to the people who know best how to do it.

Alexis Kirk (45:08):

Yeah. I hope that we'll be able to interview you maybe in another decade and see if the state of California has become a model for the nation. So we'll see. Stay tuned.

Mark Lapid (45:20):

Thanks for having me.

Alexis Kirk (45:21):

Thank you so much for being here today, mark. This was great.

Mark Lapid (45:36):

To learn more about The Impact Center's initiatives, visit impact.fpg.unc.edu, and stay tuned for episodes to come.

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