

Georgia's Practice Model

Overview

The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement and the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections define a Practice Model as a conceptual map and organizational ideology of how agency workers, families, and community resources come together to plan for the safety, permanence, and well-being of maltreated children.

In its effort to transform the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) into a state of the art child welfare agency, Georgia will adopt a Practice Model and ensure its consistent implementation across the state. This is a direct outgrowth of the Child Welfare Reform Council, created by Governor Nathan Deal, whose mission is to improve Georgia's Child Welfare System and better protect its most vulnerable citizens. The council completed a comprehensive review of DFCS and recommended agency reforms and legislation to remedy several identified issues.

The Blueprint for Change outlines high-level, interdependent changes that will put DFCS on the path toward achieving our goals. The Model serves as a framework for an organization's overall approach to child welfare work — from vision to outcomes. The Practice Model's methodology will serve as a mechanism to strengthen Georgia's Child Welfare System in conjunction with the Blueprint for Change plan to improve our child welfare outcomes. As a result, outcomes related to children, youth and families are improved. A clearly articulated and defined practice model will benefit DFCS child welfare in the following ways:

- Apply a consistent framework across the organization
- Improve practices and outcomes
- Clarify what is expected from all levels of staff
- Retain staff and supervisors
- Integrate quality assurance (QA) practices & continuous quality improvement (CQI)
- Ensure fidelity to the Practice Model
- Resonate with staff and outline a clinical approach
- Reduce maltreatment recidivism rates
- Promote productive partnership with external stakeholders
- Identify system needs to support the Model's business process

Georgia's Practice Model includes guiding principles, values and evidenced-informed practices developed with input from staff and community stakeholders. Its vision, mission and guiding principles follow.

Vision: Safe Children. Strengthened Families. Stronger Communities.

Mission: We prioritize the safety of Georgia's children in the decisions we make and the actions we take. We strengthen families toward independence and build stronger communities with caring, effective and responsive service.

Guiding Principles: As the Division of Family and Children Services we...

- Demonstrate our commitment to the safety of our children in the decisions we make and the actions we take.
- Empower, strengthen and support families on their path toward independence.
- Serve with compassion.
- Provide caring, responsive and effective service.
- Engage, listen and respond to our constituents, communities and each other.
- Collaborate with our communities to create systems of support.
- Develop a competent, professional and efficient workforce that never stops learning and growing.



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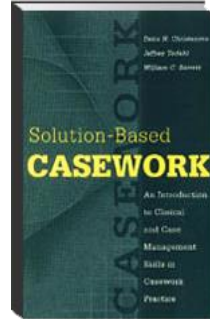
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SOLUTION-BASED CASEWORK

Georgia's Practice Model will ensure policy encompasses best practices and that technology consistently supports the work. Georgia's Practice Model is informed by Solution-Based Casework, as well as, Safety-Based and Trauma-Informed elements.



Solution-Based Casework (SBC) is an approach to safety assessment, case planning, and case management that combines clinical social work with sound social work practices. SBC is grounded in family-centered social work and draws from clinical approaches within social work and mental health. By integrating solution-focused approaches that form the clinical and social work traditions, treatment partnerships are more easily formed between family, caseworker, and service providers. SBC is a skill-based, practice-oriented model that provides the specific guidance practitioners need to quickly make sense of the complex tasks of assessment and case planning. SBC seeks to end adversarial relationships in casework.

It serves as a framework for integrating disparate segments of a response network; thereby, allowing all providers in a therapeutic system to work toward common goals. SBC is based on three theoretical foundations:

1. Family life cycle theory (Carter & McGoldrick, 1980)
2. Relapse prevention/CBT theory (Irwin, 1999, Marlatt & Gordon, 1985; Parks & Marlatt, 1999)
3. Solution-focused family therapy (Kelly & Berg 2000, Berg, 1994; deShazer, 1988)

These theoretical foundations translate to the following assumptions of casework:

1. That full partnership with the family is a critical and vital goal for each and every case
2. That the partnership for protection should focus on the patterns of everyday life of the family
3. That solutions should target the prevention skills needed to reduce the risk in those everyday life situations

DFCS will employ implementation science by focusing on three primary drivers:

1. Leadership – Commitment, Communication, Collaboration and Sustainability
2. Competency – Training, Coaching, Supervisory Capacity, Selection and Evaluation
3. Organization – Fidelity, Quality Assurance, Policies, Procedures, Resources, Caseload Standards, Service Arrays, Provider Contracts and Partnerships

SAFETY

SBC does not negate the critical assessment that must be done to ensure a child is safe; it helps accomplish that task while still preserving hope of a partnership with the family and a way to organize the work for a successful outcome. There are three elements of information that work together to help us assess safety levels.

1. Threat of Serious Harm

Threat is the underlying and/or contributing dynamic within the family system that is directly related to impending danger and insufficient protective capacities. This is important to distinguish because even though immediate safety concern may cease, the threat to safety can still exist.



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SAFETY (continued)

2. Protective Capacities

Protective capacities determine whether an individual and family is capable of protecting a child. The concept of protective capacities questions whether a caregiver can and will protect a child.

3. Child Vulnerability

Child vulnerability is the degree to which a child can avoid, negate or modify safety threats. It addresses a child's capacity for self-protection or to compensate for the caregiver's missing or insufficient protective capacities.

STAFF TRAINING FORMAT

Staff and supervisors receive an initial practice model overview lasting 2.5 – 3 days. Supervisors and managers receive an additional two days of training to assist them in their guidance role. The initial training is followed by a learning transfer phase that includes structured case consultations led by supervisors and is initially mentored by practice model coaches. Next steps include continuous consultations and reviews of work products that lead to certification of caseworkers, supervisors and managers. The goal is to achieve self-sufficiency and system-wide competence in the Georgia Practice Model. Below is a detailed description of the training format.

Training is expected to begin July 2016 in Regions 13 & 14 then rolled out to other regions over the course of one year. The start-up regions will begin their SBC Initial Trainings with DFCS Practice Model Coaches under the guidance of SBC Certified Trainers, who will be there to assist and mentor. These trainings will set the platform for the case consultation stage to begin immediately post training, which is followed by the SBC certification process. Each region of the rollout will follow this same basic pattern.



Pre-Training

1. **Pre-Training Assignments for all Staff:** All supervisors, managers, and regional leadership will complete the pre-training preparation activities that include both readings from SBC text and participation in discussion groups.
2. **Readiness Courses for all Staff:** DFCS Education and Training Staff will conduct a combination of face-to-face and web-based trainings on the following topics:
 - ✓ Intimate Partner Violence
 - ✓ Substance Abuse
 - ✓ Solution-Focused Interviewing



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3. **Georgia-Specific SBC Training Manuals:** DFCS will receive print-ready PDF files of the SBC Initial Training Participant's Manual, the SBC Supervisor's Manual, the SBC Trainer's Manual, and the SBC Certification Manual specifically tailored for GA DFCS.
4. **Training Observation and Feedback on Initial Training:** DFCS will receive assistance and mentoring in the delivery of the SBC initial training; utilizing a multi-faceted implementation approach. A select group of trainers will be designated to offer the SBC supervisor training. The mentoring and training for all trainers and coaches will initiate in the coach's institute. Here they will receive participate in a *walk in my shoes* simulation. This will be followed by advanced seminars where they will practice their training and consultation skills. They will then co-train with an SBC Certified Trainer from another jurisdiction and then train under observation of a Certified Trainer. During the second year of the project, the coaches and trainers will have monthly coaching calls with the Practice Model's developer supplemented by periodic on-site booster sessions as the rollout proceeds.
5. **Monthly Meetings and Conference Calls with Coaches and Trainers:** DFCS Trainers and Practice Coaches will have monthly meetings or conference calls with Dr. Christensen to enhance their SBC skills. This commenced during the summer of 2015 and will continue throughout the rollout.

Initial Training

Each SBC Initial Training Course will be 2.5 – 3 days long and co-conducted with an SBC Certified Trainer. After the initial training, coaches and trainers are observed by a certified trainer. This process allows the coaches and trainers to receive mentoring and eventually become certified as SBC Coaches prior to full roll-out.



Overview of Our Agenda

1. Introduction to the Solution Based Casework Practice Model
2. Overview of the 4 Milestones of Case Organization
 - Milestone 1: Sorting out (Assessment)
 - Milestone 2: Getting Organized (Case Plan Outcomes)
 - Milestone 3: Getting Specific (Behavioral Change)
 - Milestone 4: Noticing, Documenting Change (Casework)
3. Implementation: System Change

Training Outline:

1. Overview of SBC that includes why it was developed, research conducted, theories utilized and the focus on safety
2. Brief discussion around the four milestones
3. Milestone One
 - Benefit of partnerships for gathering safety information
 - Stages of family life
 - Defining problems in relation to situations in everyday life, tracking of these situations and finding the exceptions
 - Family vs. individual issues and plans and why we need both
 - Interviewing techniques for building a consensus
 - Building a consensus summary
 - Problem-based vs. Solution-based



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4. Milestone Two
 - ✓ Safety outcomes vs. compliance with services
 - ✓ Writing an SBC outcome
 - ✓ Special guidelines for outcomes in Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Cases
 - ✓ Standard tasks for starting the work
5. Milestone Three
 - ✓ Developing action plans
 - ✓ Relapse prevention skills
 - ✓ Practice with action plans
6. Milestone Four
 - ✓ Documenting behavior change
 - ✓ Celebrating behavior change
7. Implementation
 - ✓ Case consultation
 - ✓ Field practice/proficiency
8. Concept review and exam

Post and Ongoing Training for Certification

1. **Case Consultation:** Supervisors with their teams facilitate case consultations. Practice model coaches will assist and provide mentorship to supervisors during this process. These consultations will look at:

- ✓ Family Composition –Genograms will be utilized. It is a graphic way of organizing the information gathered during a family assessment to find patterns in the family system.
- ✓ Family Issues – Here we will look at everyday life situations and track the sequence of events to determine what is working and what is not working, as well as areas that need further exploration.
- ✓ Individual issues
- ✓ Family strengths and skills
- ✓ Consensus Building – Do we have a consensus about direction? (Milestone 1) At this point we can also work on developing tentative outcomes for practice if necessary. (Milestone 2)
- ✓ Action Plans – Do we have action plans in place yet? If the case has reached Milestone 3 and there are co-developed action plans: What are the tasks? Are they behavioral? Are they specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time limited? Can they be documented and celebrated to notice change.

The number of steps taken in this process varies upon the uniqueness of the case. A slightly different format is utilized for certain cases (e.g. transitional youth).

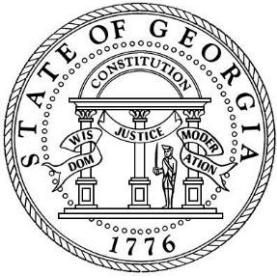
2. **Work Product Review:** In-office monthly consultations conducted by supervisors and mentored by Practice Model coaches will be followed by a review of work products determined for each program area. These reviews will result in a rating of *proficient* or *not proficient*. Once all required work products have been demonstrated as *proficient*, a worker becomes certified in SBC. Supervisors’ certification is contingent upon their worker’s certification.

CPS

- Genogram
- Safety Plan
- Solution Focused Interviewing
- Case Transfer Summary
- Milestone 1 Observation

Ongoing

- Genogram
- Solution Focused Interviewing
- Initial Progress Notes
- Family Agreement
- Milestone 3 Action Plan
- Ongoing Progress Note
- Milestone 4 Action Plan
- M-1 ObservationM-2, 3, or 4 Observation



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INFRASTRUCTURE and DEVELOPMENT

Practice Model Workgroups

Practice Model Workgroups provide the structure for completing the work involving a larger group of staff and stakeholders. The workgroups are comprised of internal and external stakeholders to ensure our messaging and components comply with Georgia's regulations and standards. To ensure successful execution of major project deliverables, DFCS identified and appointed members to Practice Model Workgroups, which includes field staff, external stakeholders and an External Advisory Board.

The workgroups identify and execute implementation tasks while building enthusiasm for the Georgia Practice Model. The project is monitored and tracked by the DFCS Project Management Office (PMO). Project Managers and Business Analysts ensure deliverables are consistent with the objectives and business requirements. A Project Manager is directly responsible and accountable for the overall project success.

The chart below defines each workgroup and identifies the workgroup lead.

Workgroups	Workgroup Charge	Workgroup Lead
Design/Construction	Core leadership team that designs and organizes the components of the Practice Model. Assess current practice model business process to recommend modifications or enhancements for implementation of new model.	Director of Knowledge Management
Policy	Rewrite organizational policy to inform new business practices and design needs relating to the Practice Model.	Director of Policy
GA SHINES/Technology	Build and/or enhance elements of the SHINES system according to specified requirements determined by the Design workgroup.	Director of GA SHINES
Training & Professional Development	Ensure staff competence by providing the necessary training and resources to perform Practice Model-related job functions.	Director of Education and Training Services
Quality Assurance & Fidelity	Ensure prescribed standards and overall expectations are met throughout all stages of the Practice Model design.	Director of Quality Assurance
Organizational Readiness	Identify business areas of impact within the organization (Field and State levels) to ensure Practice Model operational readiness.	Deputy Director of Field Operations
Constituent Engagement	Develop and implement a communications strategy that will increase awareness among stakeholders and constituents, both internally and externally.	Director of Communications
Selection & Performance Assessment	Recruit the right talent at the right time and evaluate the skills of current staff to ensure adequate staffing support of the Practice Model.	Director of OHRMD
Advisory Board	External community stakeholders selected by DFCS Director and Deputy Director.	Director of Knowledge Management



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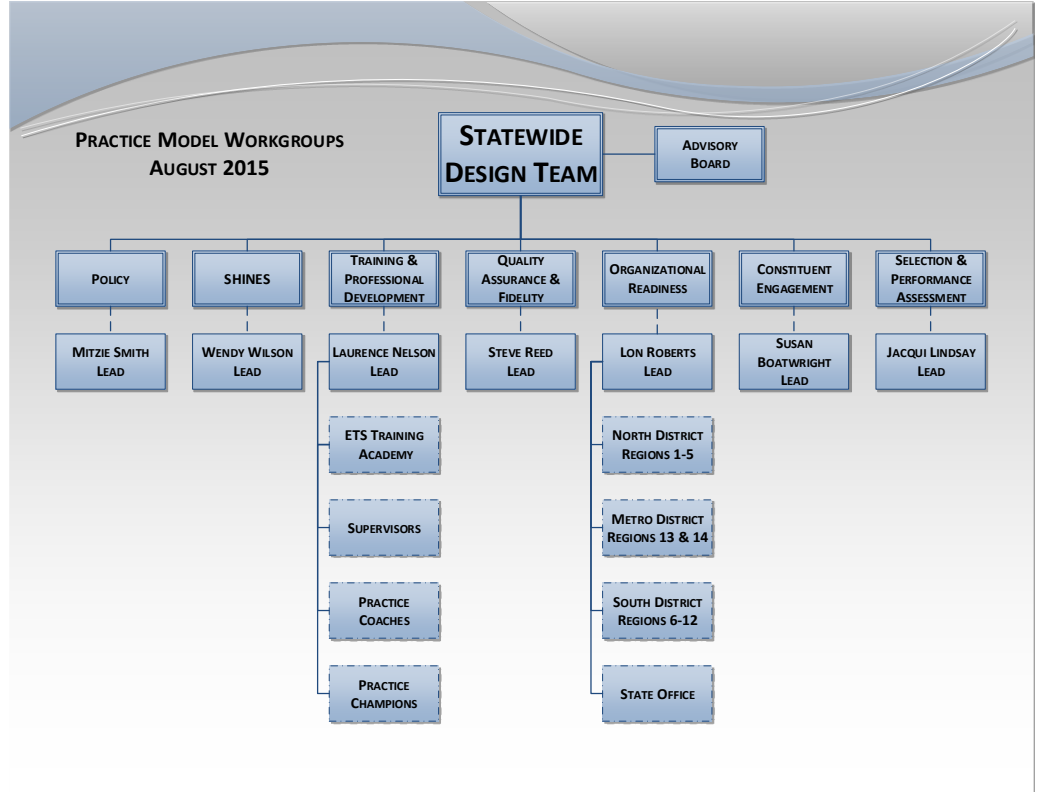
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INFRASTRUCTURE and DEVELOPMENT

Organizational chart illustration of the Practice Model Workgroups





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ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS TEAMS

The Practice Model Readiness Team is responsible for ensuring ongoing readiness and strategies aligned with the goals of the statewide design team. This team is responsible for the development of the Readiness Assessment; as well as, providing the regions with guidance and technical assistance throughout all implementation stages.

Practice Model Readiness Teams are comprised of district and regional champions, administrators, state CQI, social services supervisors and social services case managers. Members of these teams were chosen from each county and includes the following groups:

- CPS Investigations
- Permanency and Foster Care
- Family Preservation

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Develop a readiness assessment
- Maintain community engagement and awareness
- Ensure district and regional activities are aligned with statewide goals
- Provide guidance and technical assistance
- Establish guidelines to assist the regions in developing their local implementation teams and strategies
- Partner with Education and Training Services, Practice Coaches and CQI to ensure training activities are aligned with identified needs
- Establish an evaluation process to ensure fidelity of the readiness assessment
- Partner with statewide field readiness committee to ensure policies align with operational needs during implementation

MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Serves as implementation lead
- Ensure ongoing communication to internal and external partners
- Determine district specific training opportunities
- Assist other regions during readiness assessments and implementation
- Provide ongoing technical assistance
- Identify district staff to participate in train-the-trainer and other staff to serve as subject matter experts



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Strategies: Pre-Implementation Education for Stakeholders

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- A focused effort to communicate awareness of the Blueprint for Change Plan.
- County, regional and state leadership will collaborate to engage priority groups and ensure a variety communication efforts are utilized including the following:
 - Craft and display a banner message on DFCS website regarding Practice Model implementation
 - Create a Georgia's Practice Model Website Microsite (an auxiliary website with independent links and addresses that are accessed from a larger site)
 - Communicate face-to-face at monthly staff, supervisor and leadership meetings, as well as community stakeholder meetings
 - Notified general public via an initial press release announcing the adoption of a practice model, to include the vision, mission and guiding principles, as well as the tenets of SBC
 - Identifying local stakeholders to include judges, law enforcement and partners
- Develop internal and external communication material with clear and consistent messaging
- Distribute brochure and fact sheet to stakeholders and families
- Create SBC overview podcasts
- Establish presence on social networking
- Develop one-pager SBC overview
- Work with practice coaches to conduct informational sessions via WebEx
- Create a monthly newsletter update
- Develop canned PowerPoint presentation and talking
- Develop and implement E-blasts



MILESTONE LIST

The Project Manager will follow and track the project schedule using MS Project and validate the schedule with the Project Team, Stakeholders, and Project Sponsor, as well facilitate workgroup assignments, sequencing, task durations and resources.

The following milestones reflect the project schedule:

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Milestone	Dates	Status
Define Key Components	1/1/15 – 11/5/15	Completed
Establish Workgroups	6/1/15 – 11/6/15	Completed
Gain Approval of Key Components	11/5/15	Completed
SBC Overview Staff Trainings	6/1/15 – 12/18/15	Completed
Training and Professional Development Plan	1/15/15 – 7/8/16	On Plan
Policy Plan	8/10/15 – 3/4/16	On Plan
Constituent Engagement Plan	9/7/15 – 6/3/16	On Plan
QA & Fidelity Review Plan	12/14/15 – 2/5/16	On Plan
SHINES Plan	12/14/15 – 7/29/16	On Plan
Leadership Approval of Policy	3/4/16	TBD
Leadership Approval of Fidelity Review	6/3/16	TBD
Training Rollout (Implementation)	7/25/16 – 4/6/18	TBD
Baselined Project Schedule	TBD	TBD
Project Implementation	TBD	TBD
Acceptance of Final Deliverables	TBD	TBD
Project Close Out	4/6/18	TBD



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GA Practice Model Timeline as of November 16, 2015

