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We hope information in this manual will help child welfare professionals “design” their own design teams to ultimately improve services to children and families.

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1. INTRODUCTION
1.1 THE DESIGN TEAM MANUAL

Design Teams help agencies improve their workplace and cope with change through interventions designed and implemented by a team representing all agency levels. This manual provides information about how to implement Design Teams, the rationale of and research about Design Teams, examples of various documents related to Design Teams, and a variety of resources to assist with implementation.

The manual is divided into sections:

**SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**
A brief explanation of Design Teams and the Western Workforce Project, which provided support and funding for the development of this manual

**SECTION 2: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**
A brief summary of Design Teams and the research basis for their use

**SECTION 3: DESIGN TEAM BASICS**
Descriptions of various Design Team components

**SECTION 4: DESIGN TEAM FACILITATION**
Information about how to successfully facilitate Design Team meetings and navigate group dynamics

**SECTION 5: TOOLS AND EXAMPLES**
A variety of tools and examples to support introducing and implementing Design Teams

**SECTION 6: RESOURCES FOR DESIGN TEAMS**
A listing of relevant websites and national resources

**SECTION 7: REFERENCES**
A bibliography of research and resources cited in the manual

By their very nature, Design Teams adapt to various locations, agency sizes, and even personalities. Agencies may “design” a team most relevant to their unique circumstances by adapting the concepts described in this manual.
1.2 THE WESTERN WORKFORCE PROJECT

The Design Team intervention described in this manual was developed as one component of the Western Workforce Project; a project funded by the Children’s Bureau over a period of five years (2008 – 2013). The project’s purpose was to address workforce issues at sites in four locales: Denver County Human Services, Colorado; Natrona County Department of Family Services, Casper, Wyoming; and tribal child welfare agencies in North Dakota—the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara tribes of Fort Berthold (Three Affiliated), and the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. The Western Workforce Project’s overarching goal is to collaboratively develop and test a workforce intervention model for child welfare that responds effectively to diverse local needs.

A comprehensive organizational health assessment (COHA) was developed for the Western Workforce Project and subsequently conducted at each site in order to understand each agency’s strengths and areas needing attention. The COHA provided information about what was and was not working at the agency, so that teams at three agency levels—the Learning Circle (team level), the Design Team (agency level), and Macro Team (state/tribal/community level)—could develop strategies to address those issues. COHAs were conducted at baseline, mid-point, and the project’s conclusion to assess organizational health, inform interventions, and evaluate results. Design Teams functioned at the agency level to address agency-wide issues and consisted of representatives from throughout the agency. Also, as part of the Western Workforce Project, federal IV-E stipends were awarded to students at the project sites to further build project capacity and improve the workforce.

The Western Workforce Project tested the Design Team intervention and refined it over time. Lessons learned, templates, and examples from this project informed the content of this manual.
2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION
2.1 DESCRIPTION

Child welfare agencies constantly change to adapt to new staff, new administrations, new policies, and increased knowledge of effective practices. Yet that change, no matter the positive intent, can be challenging, partly because of the bureaucratic nature of child welfare agencies, and partly because of individuals’ personal reactions to adapting to change.

Child welfare agencies have often been characterized as hierarchical (Gillingham & Humphreys, 2010; Smith & Donovan, 2003), with decision making, program planning, and practice approaches emanating from the top tier of management and trickling down to frontline staff. Such a top-down approach helps ensure accountability and compliance but may leave staff feeling disempowered, leading to decreased job satisfaction and higher turnover rates. Distributive leadership, or including staff in decision making and management process, can contribute to a more democratic agency, leading to improved job satisfaction (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Research demonstrates that a more satisfied workforce is associated with an improved intent to stay, leading to reduced turnover (Bednar, 2003; Collins-Camargo, Ellett, & Lester, 2012; DePanfilis & Zlotnik, 2008; Strolin-Goltzman, 2010). Further, research also demonstrates the relationship between low turnover and improved client outcomes (Flower, McDonald, & Sumski, 2005; Kerman, Freundlich, Lee, & Brenner, 2012; National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2006).

One way to empower staff and involve them in agency decision making is through the use of an intervention known as a Design Team. Design Teams have also been called Recruitment and Retention committees, Employee Committees, Implementation Teams, and other names. Their intent is to improve the workplace through employee engagement and involvement.

Design Teams do just that—“design” interventions to address the issues deemed most important to an agency. Members of Design Teams include representatives from all levels of the agency, from case aides to executive level staff. Typical agency hierarchical structures are broken down within a Design Team so that everyone on the team contributes to the discussion and subsequent action planning to address common issues. Through solution-focused critical thinking, Design Teams develop action plans. Everyone on the Design Team then takes ownership to implement the solutions developed by the team. The Design Team approach mirrors a social work practice perspective using approaches that are based on solutions, empowerment, and strengths (Caringi et al., 2008; Kim-Berg & DeJong, 2002; Saleebey, 2006).
Typically, Design Teams start with some kind of comprehensive organizational assessment to understand the agency’s strengths and areas needing improvement. Based on assessment results, the Design Team

- prioritizes goals related to agency issues,
- brainstorms strategies,
- chooses strategies,
- implements those strategies,
- assesses results, and
- revises plans as appropriate.

Design Team members work together and collaborate with others to implement agency-specific workforce intervention plans. These plans are evolving in nature, using a constant “plan, act, reflect, adapt” (PARA) loop, also called “plan, do, study, act” in other forums (Berwick, 2008). Specific interventions may address a wide variety of issues identified by the organizational assessment (e.g., recruitment, worker preparation, retention issues, etc.) and may be short- or long-term strategies.

Design Teams are an effective strategy contributing to the development of a learning organization that is “skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights” (Garvin, 1998, p. 51). Schein (2004) said characteristics of a learning organization include the capacity to adapt to face internal and external challenges, a continuous learning environment, participation and sense of accountability by a significant number of staff, a culture of rapid communication, and knowledge sharing throughout the agency. Qualities associated with organizational learning include openness, planning, training, supportive leadership, and shared vision (Busch & Hostetter, 2009).


Design Teams work because they empower employees at all levels to take ownership of their work environment and make meaningful changes impacting everyone in the organization. Their effectiveness correlates with the effort to carefully implement them in a manner leading to long-term sustainability. Otherwise, the Design Team intervention becomes yet another tombstone in the agency’s initiative graveyard. This Design Team manual offers a blueprint for strategically implementing a Design Team intervention, with how-to explanations, tools, examples, and resources.
2.2 RESEARCH SUPPORTING THE USE OF DESIGN TEAMS

Design Teams originate from the concepts of action research (Greenwood & Levin, 1998) and action learning (Argyris, 1996). Action research gathers teams of people together and seeks to understand problems through research, then resolve them through a reflective, problem-solving process.

Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, and Barkdull (2002) studied Design Teams in their first appearance in the child welfare field and found that they successfully promoted practice and policy changes and enhanced service delivery. Results indicated positive change in attitudes about family-centered practice; enhanced service delivery; and improved collaboration, communication networks, and team building. Furthermore, participants experienced personal benefits, including self-growth, career advancements, personal learning, and a more supportive environment (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2002).

Strolin-Goltzman and her colleagues conducted a quasi-experimental design to study factors influencing retention at 12 county agencies (Strolin-Goltzman et al., 2009). The intervention was the use of a facilitated work team (a Design Team) consisting of employees at various levels of the agency and charged with improving agency commitment and job satisfaction, and reducing turnover, intent to leave, and burnout. This Design Team analyzed agency data and was led by a trained, external facilitator employed by a local university. They used a solution-focused process to identify and develop action strategies based on a logic model. Overall, results from both the quantitative and qualitative methods found positive impacts on workforce retention in the counties receiving the Design Team intervention. The study pointed out that while a Design Team intervention required a significant amount of investment in time, attention, and resources, it appeared to be worth the effort, given the positive effects (Strolin-Goltzman et al., 2009).

Design Teams work because they empower employees to take ownership over the issues that matter to them. In studies, empowered workers experience less burnout and improved organizational climate (Gilbert, Laschinger, & Leiter, 2010; Lee et al., 2013). Empowered workers tend to feel less psychological stress, an inherent by-product of child welfare work, and thus more readily cope with their environment. Such an emphasis on empowerment also models the parallel process of the desired goal of working with clients (Lee et al., 2013).

A project with Casey Family Services focusing on a new foster care philosophy and service approach used a Design Team-like approach. Some of the key findings were that organizational changes happen because of participation at all levels, that an agency culture
supports risk taking and tolerates mistakes, and finally, that robust communication from every angle facilitates that change (Kerman et al., 2012).

Design Teams’ signature feature is the representation of staff from multiple levels of the agency. Such positional diversity helps represent the various constituents within the agency, leading to more relevant agency-wide interventions (Higgins, Weiner, & Young, 2012). Representation should also include various organizational units and the agency’s informal work groups, cliques, and social networks (Caringi et al., 2008). Through the process, Design Team members develop cohesion and consensus through their interactions and solving problems together. Participation on the Design Team led to strong social relationships and increased social cohesion (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2002). Leadership during and after the intervention seems to have a powerful impact on the Design Team’s success or the lack thereof: “Agency leaders had the power to inspire, facilitate, constrain, and impede teams” (Strolin-Goltzman et al., 2009, p.160).

More information about the research related to Design Teams can be found directly from these sources. See the bibliography provided in the References section of this manual for complete citations.
3. DESIGN TEAM BASICS
3.1 GETTING STARTED WITH DESIGN TEAMS

The Design Teams described in this manual were nested within the broader Western Workforce Project. Several project teams were involved in planning and implementing the project to achieve the intended outcome of an improved child welfare workforce. Within the Western Workforce Project, the intervention was structured such that each site formed distinct teams, each tasked with a specific goal and function. While the teams within each site were distinct, membership and at times even functions of the teams also greatly overlapped (this was particularly true in sites with fewer staff members).

Information about each team is provided here as context for the Design Team intervention. However, agencies employing a Design Team approach may or may not also use the other teams depending on their individual needs. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of the project teams. Although the Design Team’s success is not dependent on the other teams, the other teams’ use and functionality can facilitate and enhance the Design Team’s efforts.

Figure 1. Types of Project Teams
### 3.1.1 START TEAMS

Who: Agency managers, supervisors, caseworkers, and key community stakeholders

START team members introduce the project to the agency and lay the groundwork for future implementation. They provide feedback on the development of the Comprehensive Organizational Assessment and then help facilitate the actual assessment. Once the assessment results are in, this group helps interpret findings and identify workforce issues needing targeted improvement. A START Team’s duration and scope of purpose are limited. Once the START Team concludes, members may migrate to either the Design or Macro Team, depending on their interest and availability to make a long-term commitment to workforce issues.

### 3.1.2 DESIGN TEAMS

Who: Child welfare managers, supervisors, caseworkers, case aides, and other support staff; key community stakeholders; and university partners

Design Team members become workforce leaders. They championed the Western Workforce Project within the agency. Based on COHA results, the Design Team prioritizes goals related to workforce issues, chooses strategies, implements those strategies, assesses results, and revises plans as appropriate. Membership within the Design Team reflects all agency levels, from the agency manager or director to case aides. As appropriate for the agency, Design Teams may also choose to invite others outside the agency. Design Team members work together to implement agency-specific plans using a constant “plan, act, reflect, adapt” loop (the “PARA” process).

### 3.1.3 MACRO TEAMS

Who: State-agency, county-agency or tribal leaders, university partners, community stakeholders and family representatives

The Macro Team’s goal is to focus systemically on external agency relations and address policy and macro barriers that may inhibit implementation plans related to workforce issues that can only be addressed at the macro level. Interventions focus on issues that impact the workforce (e.g., centralized recruitment efforts or the establishment of better relationships with the court), across the state or a large county. Strategies emanating from the macro team may address cross-cutting policy and possibly even legislative issues impacting the entire workforce.
3.1.4 LEARNING CIRCLES
Who: Supervisors and their workers together in learning teams

The intent of Learning Circles is to build a learning culture through frequent meetings on improving organizational climate and implementing best-practice approaches at the supervisor and worker unit level. Topics addressed in Learning Circles include such diverse areas as on-call scheduling, team cohesion, foster parent engagement, and office cleanliness. If appropriate, participants send ideas to the Design Team and Macro Team to support organizational change.

3.1.5 STIPEND COMMITTEE
Who: Agency representatives, university representatives, and stipend students

The stipend committee recruits and selects child welfare stipend students, provides oversight of the Western Workforce Project stipend students’ program, and helps implement internship programs to meet the needs of agencies, students, and universities or colleges at the child welfare sites. For the recruitment phase, the committee develops a marketing plan to generate BSW and M.S.W. applicants from students, the agency, and the community. During the selection process, the committee develops an application format and procedures, and sets criteria for awarding stipends. Sites specify selection criteria, such as academic achievement, experience, or particular need or relevance to the needs of a segment of the child-welfare population based on language, diversity, or geography. Additionally, the stipend committee develops the student internship program, monitors student compliance, offers input to the curriculum, and when requested, facilitates problem solving and arbitration for students and agencies.

The following sections explore other basics of Design Teams, starting with membership.
3.2 DESIGN TEAM MEMBERSHIP

3.2.1 REPRESENTATION
Membership reflects all agency levels, from the agency manager or director to case aides, and representation from all units (e.g., adoptions, foster care, child protection, etc.). Design Team membership varies in size depending on the agency. For smaller agencies (less than 50 staff members), a size of 8-12 people is sufficient. For larger agencies (more than 200 staff members), membership may consist of 25-40 members, with attendance typically averaging about 15-20 members. Membership should include any persons deemed as significant stakeholders. Potential members include:

- Caseworkers
- Supervisors
- Executive staff
- Case aides
- Business office staff
- Human resources staff
- Legal department representatives
- Other stakeholders

3.2.2 MEMBER SELECTION
Participation is voluntary and any staff member who has an interest or stake in the overall functioning of the agency could be included in the Design Team membership. However, if the demand for inclusion is too great, consider ways to ensure a broad range of participants without making the Design Team too large to be effective. For example, employ a lottery system to draw names for participation or limit membership to the first 30 respondents and create a “wait list” to open up slots for the remaining respondents. Not everyone will be able to participate in every meeting, so having a large initial team will help ensure that each meeting will have sufficient attendance to be productive and prevent any hard feelings in anyone excluded from participating.

3.2.3 MEMBERSHIP TERMS
Design Team members commit to the team for at least one year. Yearly, members are offered the opportunity to renew their participation or rotate out of membership. New members often help rejuvenate the Design Team and keep the process fresh and invigorated.
3.2.4 AGENCY LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

Agency leaders play a pivotal role in the introduction, integration, and sustainability of Design Teams. Design Team members seem to appreciate their presence at the beginning of the process and then intermittently show ongoing support. Leadership attendance may not be necessary at every meeting, as their presence may inhibit conversation, or worse, send an unintended message that members are not empowered to act independently or are not capable of generating solutions and designing plans.
3.3 DESIGN TEAM PRINCIPLES

Design Teams manifest a set of values about worker empowerment and organizational culture. Values then translate into specific principles guiding Design Teams’ functioning and structure. For example, the Western Workforce Project Design Teams were guided by the following principles:

- Create organizational change through solution-focused discussions and subsequent actions using a team approach for the benefit of the entire agency.
- Inspire a learning organization committed to improved practices and functioning.
- Connect interventions to the agency’s mission, values, and practice model.
- Employ interventions based on careful assessment of the current situation.
- Empower staff from all agency levels to improve their agency for the benefit of all agency members.
- Share tasks and activities amongst Design Team members to achieve action plan goals.
- Use strengths-focused interventions.
- Embody a culturally responsive approach.
- Use comprehensive, incremental interventions for long-term sustainability.
- Expect full, open, and unbiased participation that encourages communication by the team.

While these are basic principles, each agency may and should adapt the principles for their organizational culture, agency setting, and goals.
3.4 DESIGN TEAM CHARTERS

Each group should determine how it will operate as a group, paying attention to all of the areas listed in this section. One such way is to develop a “charter” or guidelines to inform how the Design Team functions. Areas to articulate in a charter are:

1. Scope, objectives, and expected outcomes
2. Membership and term
3. Leadership, roles, and functions
4. Boundaries, limitations, authority, and accountability
5. Decision-making processes
6. Values and expectations

See Figure 2 for the Design Team Charter developed for Denver County’s Department of Human Services as part of the Western Workforce Project.

Figure 2. Charter of the Denver Department of Human Services Design Team

I. Scope, Objectives, and Expected Outcomes
The Denver Design Team will continue the work of the Start Team by examining the agency issues identified in COHA results meetings and developing strategies and solutions to address those issues at all levels of the child welfare agency. Objectives of the Design Team include:
- Review the recommendation of the Start Team COHA and other relevant result reports.
- Identify goals and objectives based upon agreed-upon priorities.
- Develop and engage in action planning to address the targeted issues.

II. Membership and Term
The Design Team comprises individuals at all levels of the Denver Department of Human Services Child Welfare Division. Diversity of position, unit type, etc. from all areas of the Division will be sought.
- The membership commitment will vary due to limited time constraints on certain members, but for the majority of the workgroup, the commitment will be for one year. It may be possible to split the commitment between two individuals from the same unit as long as there is good communication between the individuals.

III. Leadership Roles and Functions
A brief description of the role of the Design Team is provided below, with roles being flexible throughout the life of the project in order to maximize resources and attend to emerging issues. Design Team Members will:
- Make decisions and recommendations while considering activities, needs, and requirements of the Denver Department of Human Services, Division of Child Welfare Services.
IV. Boundaries, Limitations, Authority, and Accountability

- The Design Team will work in conjunction with the Macro Team and possibly the Learning Circles.
- The Design Team will adhere to policies in Volume VII.

V. Decision-Making Processes

- Decisions will be made by consensus.
- Workgroups will bring back information to the Design Team, who will make final decisions on direction.

VI. Values and Expectations

Several core values guide the work of the Design Team:

- The Design Team is a collaborative entity. Transparency is valued and expected.
- The Design Team is committed to providing the best options for addressing the needs of the Denver Department of Human Services Child Welfare Division.
- The Design Team values innovation and excellence.
- Design Team members are expected to commit the time to review materials and to attend meetings prepared to discuss the topics at hand, and participate fully, including completing assigned tasks.
- Design Team members respect the sanctity of meeting time and will keep interruptions to a minimum and refrain from texting and emailing during meetings.
- Members are accountable to each other.
3.5 MEETING FREQUENCY AND TIMELINE

3.5.1 FREQUENCY
Design Teams meet approximately once per month for at least 18-24 months, but the intent is to make it an ongoing agency team meeting. Design Teams may decide to meet frequently, depending on their personal preferences and the work to be accomplished.

3.5.2 TIMELINE
Design Team activities unfold in a consistent manner. Table 1 suggests a typical sequence of events, which may change depending on individual situations. The timeline presumes the process for an assessment has already occurred and begins with the first invitation to the Design Team.

Table 1. Sample Design Team Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Invite all agency staff members to participate in the Design Team. See Section 5: Tools and Examples for a sample invitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Hold an agency kickoff meeting to introduce the concept of Design Teams. Provide basic information on the concept and commitment expected of members. Sign up Design Team members at this meeting. Follow up with directed invitations to ensure wide representation on the team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Conduct a one-day planning meeting/retreat. During this meeting, review the organizational health assessment results and develop a preliminary action plan. Also develop a plan for when and where meetings will be held. See a sample annotated agenda in Section 5: Tools and Examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Begin regular Design Team meetings. At each meeting, review the plan, assign tasks, discuss barriers, develop strategies for overcoming barriers, and most importantly, celebrate successes. See Section 5: Tools and Examples for a sample agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 8-52</td>
<td>Conduct regular Design Team meetings at least once monthly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 26</td>
<td>Conduct a 6-month Design Team evaluation. See Section 5: Tools and Examples for an evaluation instrument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 48</td>
<td>Conduct an organizational health assessment to understand the current organizational climate and culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 52</td>
<td>Conduct a 12-month Design Team evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 54</td>
<td>Hold another retreat to react to new information from an organizational assessment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 55</td>
<td>Begin the cycle anew.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 ASSESSMENT FOR DESIGN TEAM INTERVENTION

The Design Team approach presumes an assessment phase to understand the agency’s issues. For the Western Workforce Project, the Butler Institute conducted a Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment (COHA), including surveys and focus groups to inform the Design Team interventions. For the COHA, organizational health is composed of organization, unit, and individual factors and is further broken down into multiple scales. See Figure 3 for a full listing of the scales used in the Butler Institute COHA. The COHA provided a comprehensive view of the strengths and challenges of the agency to inform the Design Team’s approach.

Since the Design Team is composed of representatives of the agency, reliance on the COHA helps ensure all voices within the agency are heard and considered when developing a plan or plans for intervention. Otherwise, individual Design Team members could push for attention to the issues that matter most to them individually, rather than those more relevant to the broader agency. Such an effort may not be possible at your agency, but some sort of assessment is recommended to uncover the issues and the strengths that can be drawn on to address the issues, while minimizing individual biases.

Figure 3. Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment (COHA) Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COHA Scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Job Satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Supervision (Knowledge, Support and Skill)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Professional Sharing and Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Team Cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Shared Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Leadership (Distributive, Adaptive, Inclusive, and Outcome-Focused)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Readiness for Change (Response to Change, Learning Culture, and Change Management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Professional Development and Preparation for Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Inclusivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Systems of Care Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Cultural Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Addressing Disproportionality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Physical Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Community Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Public Perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Intent to Stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Time Pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Self-Efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Coping Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Vicarious Traumatization Scale (VTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Historical Trauma (Tribal Sites Only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Secondary Trauma Scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Determining what findings and results to prioritize and focus attention on will depend on what data resonates with the Design Team members regarding the overarching practice or outcome area they have chosen to address in their targeted interventions. Assessment information can support a hunch or intuition, or provide concrete evidence verifying a unit or outcome issue needing to be targeted. It can also provide Design Team members with a practice area or domain to research prior to developing an action plan.

When critically thinking through the reports and other information collected in the assessment, Design Team members should ask questions such as:

- What does this information tell us about our agency?
- What does this information tell us about child and family outcomes?
- What other contextual factors (external or internal) may be related to the results?
- What information is most important to consider?
- How does the information connect?

Even without a formal COHA, the agency will have current data and evaluation reports generated for other uses that may inform the Design Team’s work. These reports may contain valuable information about the organization, the staff, their practice, and child and family outcomes that could provide fundamental context for Design Team members when planning and developing action plans.

Agency management will be another source of information. They have extensive information about what has worked in the past and what has not, as well as important contextual information for implementing strategies.

Many other sources of information may inform the Design Team’s efforts on an ongoing basis. Design Team members should become adept at identifying available reports relevant to their intervention work. In addition, if the agency has data or research analyst capacity, the Design Team members should try to use this resource to develop reports that monitor and track progress on an intervention’s specific outcomes as the Design Team moves forward on its action plans.

Design Teams are all about expanding the knowledge base and applying new strategies to issues that the agency faces. Design Teams should avail themselves of all the resources available to help facilitate that process.
3.7 DESIGN TEAM FACILITATION

3.7.1 DESIGN TEAM FACILITATOR

In order to create momentum for Design Teams, at least initially, an outside facilitator should facilitate the meetings with the goal of the agency sustaining the project through an internal facilitator. An outside facilitator offers many benefits:

- Neutrality—An outside facilitator should set aside his or her own opinions about the team’s focus or interpretation of information.
- Skills—An outside facilitator specially trained in group process and facilitation can more easily keep the group focused and moving forward.
- Motivation—An outside facilitator’s job is to facilitate the meetings, so he or she will not be pulled in different directions.

Design Team facilitators create and foster a safe environment for solution-focused problem solving and action planning. Facilitators must balance the team-building processes with task-oriented problem solving in order to keep the group moving while building relationships. For more information on facilitation skills and techniques, see Section 4: Design Team Facilitation.

3.7.2 MEETING NOTES

Design Teams should designate a note taker to comprehensively record:

- a summary of the comments;
- agreed-on tasks, activities, timelines, and person(s) responsible for those tasks and activities; and
- the date and location for the next meeting.

It is recommended that the notes be de-identified so individual comments are not recorded or attributed to specific persons, but rather a summary of the conversation provided. All notes should be distributed to the meeting members soon after the meeting, posted to a central network file, and if appropriate, distributed more widely throughout the agency.

Comprehensive notes and a written record help facilitate communication across agency staff, make transparent the discussion and decisions, and create accountability by documenting agreed-on actions, timeframes, and responsible individual(s).

See Figure 4: Tips for Meeting Note Takers, a tip sheet for meeting note takers to reproduce and follow.
Figure 4. Tips for Meeting Note Takers

If possible, take notes on a laptop or tablet, as it’s usually faster to type than to write by hand. This way you can more easily edit your notes.

- Briefly summarize the key points of the discussion by agenda item.

- Do not identify the speaker of each statement made at the meeting unless it’s relevant. For example, “Karen volunteered to contact....”

- Focus on the most important components of the discussion, rather than every point made.
  - For example, “The group discussed the pros and cons of the ___________ approach.”

- Identify key decisions made by the group.
  - For example: “The group decided to adopt the interview questions and disseminate to the counties.”

- Always identify action items with the person responsible and when the action item will be completed.

- Send meeting notes to all Design Team members within 5 business days. The notes help remind meeting participants of tasks assigned and decisions made. Plus, it’s much easier to edit the notes when the meeting is still fresh in the note taker’s mind.

- Post the meeting notes on a network or website for wider dissemination.

Remember, comprehensive notes help make sure that all of the good work of a meeting is disseminated and the action items committed to actually happen.
3.8 DESIGN TEAM INTERVENTIONS

3.8.1 ISSUES AND INTERVENTIONS

By their very nature, Design Teams design and then implement interventions appropriate for the issues most relevant to the agency in addressing capacity and organizational culture. Typically, interventions are low- or no-cost and are within the scope of the Design Team’s ability to implement. As necessary, agency administration should be consulted and informed about potential interventions. Some interventions may require a more extensive approval process, such as moving team members to different office spaces, while others, such as holiday events, may only require sharing of information. Regardless, it is always a good idea to keep agency management fully in the communication loop by sending meeting minutes, holding periodic briefings, and asking them to occasionally attend Design Team meetings.

Interventions vary greatly across Design Teams and are best implemented when ideas come from Design Team members. However, sometimes Design Team members need a brief spark of an idea to latch onto and make their own. Table 2 provides a sampling of issues and corresponding interventions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Potential Design Team interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supervision</strong></td>
<td>• Coaching&lt;br&gt;• Supervisor Practice Model development and implementation&lt;br&gt;• Regular meetings among supervisors&lt;br&gt;• Supervisor book group&lt;br&gt;• Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team cohesion</strong></td>
<td>• Regular team meetings&lt;br&gt;• Retreat days&lt;br&gt;• Learning circles&lt;br&gt;• Team building activities&lt;br&gt;• Move team members to same area so all team members are together&lt;br&gt;• Lunch-and-Learns&lt;br&gt;• Cubicle maps with “streets” named by teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>• Note taking at each meeting&lt;br&gt;• Central repository of all meeting notes&lt;br&gt;• Internal newsletter&lt;br&gt;• Blog by agency director&lt;br&gt;• Bulletin boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job satisfaction</strong></td>
<td>• Morale workgroup&lt;br&gt;• Retreats&lt;br&gt;• Volunteer/community service days&lt;br&gt;• Employee appreciation events&lt;br&gt;• Holiday events&lt;br&gt;• Recognition awards&lt;br&gt;• Work-at-home policies&lt;br&gt;• Strategies for sharing good news&lt;br&gt;• Job rotation policy/program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary trauma/compassion fatigue</strong></td>
<td>• Self-care fair&lt;br&gt;• Compassion fatigue training&lt;br&gt;• Personal safety training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical environment</strong></td>
<td>• Unit area or storage clean-up days&lt;br&gt;• New paint&lt;br&gt;• Cheerful murals&lt;br&gt;• Filing/organizing events&lt;br&gt;• Technology upgrade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural responsiveness</strong></td>
<td>• Training&lt;br&gt;• Lunch-and-Learns&lt;br&gt;• Culture fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community relationships</strong></td>
<td>• Community resource fairs&lt;br&gt;• Lunch-and-Learns&lt;br&gt;• Community tours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Internet also offers a whole web of ideas for addressing issues that an agency faces. See Section 6: Resources for Design Teams for more ideas and sources of information.

### 3.8.2 ACTION PLANS

Design Teams are all about action—that is, taking action by designing strategies to address organizational issues for an action plan. Members develop goals, objectives, and tasks for each specified area within the action plan. Action plans drive subsequent activities, as shown in Figure 5. Action plans contain the following components:

- **Goals**: The desired outcomes stated in concrete terms. For example, Employees are satisfied with their jobs.
- **Objectives**: The strategy is articulated in an action statement starting with a verb. For example, Develop a morale committee to plan agency activities.
- **Tasks**: A list of tasks necessary to achieve the objective. Together, the tasks result in completion of the objective. Tasks include the activity, the person responsible, and the time frame. Task assignments and due dates can be made by task groupings or individual tasks.
Figure 5: Example of an Action Plan

Goal 1: Job satisfaction for employees will improve.

Objectives and Tasks

Objective 1.1: Create a team to promote a positive organizational climate through sponsoring activities and other ways of recognizing employees.

Tasks:
1. Recruit team members.
2. Name team.
3. Convene monthly meetings.
4. Report progress back to Design Team.
   *Who:* (List here)
   *When:* (Insert start and end dates)

Objective 1.2: Provide opportunities for cross-unit transfers for workers.

Tasks:
1. Develop criteria for cross-unit transfers.
2. Submit proposal to management team.
3. After approval, develop and advertise opportunities to staff.
4. Place workers in cross-unit transfer.
5. Showcase experiences at all-agency staff meeting.
   *Who:* (List here)
   *When:* (Insert start and end dates)

Objective 1.3: Promote open dialogue and feedback from staff to management.

Tasks:
1. Publish a monthly newsletter.
2. Create an “Ask the Manager” column in the newsletter and solicit questions from staff.
3. Place a suggestion box in the break room.
4. Report back to staff on suggestions from suggestion box.
   *Who:* (List here)
   *When:* (Insert start and end dates)

Action plans should be developed as a group but in the interest of time, documents may be fleshed out by a sub-group or individual, as long as all objectives and tasks were previously agreed on by the group.

Action plans then guide future meetings as Design Team members monitor the progress of the proposed activities and adapt as appropriate. Topics within the action plan become the agenda items for Design Team meetings. Typically, the Design Team will start at the beginning of the plan and then proceed through each goal and objective to update members on the status. Sometimes the action plan items at the end of the plan are neglected due to lack of time, so every once in a while, move backwards through the action plan so that each item is sufficiently addressed.
3.9 EVALUATION

Design Teams employ a constant loop of information to enlighten and assess the success of their work and the quality of their functioning. This is how and why Design Teams contribute to the development of a learning organization. See Section 5: Tools and Examples for a sample instrument from the Western Workforce Project to evaluate the effectiveness of Design Teams. Several questions are specific to the Western Workforce Project but can easily be adapted for another agency’s use. It is recommended that a third party conduct evaluations to ensure confidentiality for participants. During the first year, Design Teams should be evaluated every six months and then yearly thereafter. Evaluation results should be fully shared with all Design Team members and used to make adjustments to the Design Team’s approach.
4. DESIGN TEAM FACILITATION
Effective Design Teams require effective management of a group process to successfully engage team members. The group’s developmental stage may affect the dynamics within the group. Newer groups may experience friction as they learn to work together, while long-standing groups may have established norms to address differences in point of view. Regardless of how long team members have worked together, the Design Team dynamics will change along with the membership. A person who is a skillful mediator might join and positively impact the group or conversely, an individual with poor skills in constructive dialogue may undermine the focus of the meetings. Effective facilitation skills help capitalize on opportunities and minimize threats to the group’s functioning.

The next section offers information about teams and facilitation skills to encourage healthy team development and successful team meetings.

4.1 THE NATURE OF TEAMS

Teams engage differently and may perform at varying levels. Understanding what contributes to a team’s performance is especially important for the long-term success of the Design Team. According to Wheelan (2005), in high-performing teams:

1. Members are clear about and agree with the team’s goals.
2. Tasks are appropriate to team solutions rather than individual solutions.
3. Members are clear about and accept their roles.
4. Role assignments match members’ abilities.
5. The leadership style matches the team’s developmental level.
6. An open communication structure allows all members to participate.
7. The team gets, gives, and uses feedback about its effectiveness and productivity.
8. The team spends time defining and discussing problems it must solve or decisions it must make.
9. Members spend time planning how they will solve problems and make decisions.
10. The team uses effective decision-making strategies.
11. The team implements and evaluates its solutions and decisions.
12. Team norms encourage high performance, quality, success, and innovation.
13. Subgroups are integrated into the team as a whole.
14. The team contains the smallest number of members necessary to accomplish its goals.
15. The team is highly cohesive and cooperative.
16. Periods of conflict are frequent but brief, and the group has effective conflict-management strategies.

In order to be productive and function well, teams have needs that must be met. See Figure 6 for a depiction of a team’s multiple needs.
Meeting these needs is important to all Design Team members equally and it is important to routinely ask, “Are all of our team members’ needs being met?” If not, figure out with members how to address those needs, either within the Design Team or outside of it.
4.2 FACILITATION SKILLS

A skilled facilitator can use many techniques to encourage discussion within the group. These techniques can be grouped into four main areas:

- **Transforms the Environment**: Sets the context and fosters an environment conducive to interaction.
- **Engages Team Members**: Encourages participation by all team members.
- **Acts as a Leader**: Models desired behavior and inspires the group.
- **Manages Behaviors**: Skillfully manages troublesome behaviors to keep the group focused.

Note that these four areas spell the acronym TEAM. The ultimate goal of developing group facilitation skills is to build the TEAM. Each area prescribes specific behaviors and strategies related to achieving the goals for that area. Behaviors associated with each TEAM area include:

**Transforms the Environment**
- Maintains a climate conducive to participating, listening, understanding, learning, and creating.
- Listens actively.
- Creates a safe environment for thinking and learning together.
- Knows how to help people focus.
- Asks questions and listens to the entire response.
- Reserves judgment and keeps an open mind.
- Provides structure and guidance to increase the likelihood that objectives will be accomplished.
- Suggests and directs processes that empower and mobilize the group to do its work.
- Encourages the group to evaluate its own progress or development.
- Helps people arrive at consensus.

**Engages Team Members**
- Encourages dialogue and interaction among participants.
- Capitalizes on differences among group members for the common good of the group.
- Affirms responses (“Yes,” “Exactly,” “Say more,” “Good example”).
- Respects all participants and their opinions (unless this is detrimental to the group).
- Calls on specific people (“Jacob, what are your thoughts on this?”) as well as a variety of people (avoids calling on the same people repeatedly).
• Engages the group through questions.
• Waits for silence after asking a question (“I’m patient,” “You’re a thoughtful group today”).
• Pays attention and responds to the group.
• Uses humor.
• Connects participants’ personal experience (work, life, etc.) to the subject.
• Genuinely values the knowledge, information, and expertise of every team member and knows how to draw out that knowledge.
• Invites diverse viewpoints.

Acts as a Leader
• Helps the group establish and accomplish its own objectives.
• Keeps the group focused on its objectives.
• Validates and engages the expertise in the room (“Kyle, you were a therapist for many years. What are your thoughts on this approach?”).
• Models desired behavior.
• Pitches in and does some of what team members do, when necessary.
• Knows how to coach and inspire.
• Comfortably relies on the expertise of others.
• Understands and anticipates change.
• Teaches others how to solve problems without solving them him- or herself. (Asks team members for their ideas, even if he or she has a good one in mind).
• Shares credit with team members and ensures that credit goes where credit is due.
• Encourages team members to take responsibility for issues, problems, actions, and projects.
• Understands and acknowledges that people’s individual needs (social, personal, career, lifestyle, work preference) affect teamwork and works with, not against those needs.

Manages Behaviors
• Defuses tension in the room.
• Attends to distractions (“Let’s all put our phones on vibrate”).
• Addresses conflict.
• Confronts troublesome behaviors.
• Notices when team members are restless or lethargic.
• Attends to side conversations and manages them.

Building these essential skills results in more effective Design Team meetings.
For an abbreviated version of pointers for facilitators, see Figure 7. This sheet may also be laminated to have present when facilitating meetings.

**Figure 7. Facilitator Pointers**

During the meeting, you will be managing the discussion. Keep in mind the following pointers as you facilitate.

- Remind participants of the group’s shared norms or “rules.”
- Review the agenda next. Ask if anyone has additional items.
- Follow the agenda.
- Give *everyone* a voice. If you notice some people are not participating, ask each person (or persons who have not participated yet) for input.
- Listen more; talk less. Your opinion is valid, but your main job is to facilitate the meeting.
- Ask questions and listen to the entire response. Restate what you hear to make sure you and others understand correctly.
- Encourage participation among participants.
- Invite diverse viewpoints.
- Reserve judgment and keep an open mind.
- Keep the conversation on track.
  - Remind the group of the topic under discussion.
  - Review the shared group norms, if necessary, to bring focus back on track.
  - Politely interrupt, acknowledge the concern for the issue, and then remind them of the topic under discussion (“Excuse me. Now that’s a great topic for discussion, but it seems like we’re straying. Can we table this for a later time?”).
  - Make statements such as: “We seem to be drifting here,” or “We seem to be stuck on this point” to refocus the discussion.
  - Use a “parking lot” to document topics beyond the scope of the meeting.
- Address tension and disagreements candidly (“I’m sensing different opinions here”).
- Affirm responses (“Yes,” “Exactly,” “Say more,” “Good example”).
- Genuinely value the knowledge, information, and expertise of every team member.
- Check for understanding on decisions, key terms, etc.
• Share credit with team members and ensure credit goes where credit is due.

• Conclude each meeting with a summary of what has been decided and who is doing what and when.

• Conclude each meeting with “What is our message to the field (our office)?” This will help with communication.

• Thank and express appreciation to the group for all their efforts.
4.3 CREATING GROUP NORMS

At the very beginning of the process, Design Teams create group norms to structure the group’s interactions and maintain a safe environment for all members. Dimensions of group norms include:

- Attendance
- Promptness
- Participation
- Interruptions (e.g., phone calls)
- Basic conversational courtesies (e.g., listen respectfully, one conversation at a time)
- Confidentiality
- Assignments
- Meeting time and place

Group norms should be reviewed frequently, even as much as every meeting, at least initially, to remind people of the agreements they developed together to guide the meetings. Group norms can be recollected as a strategy for dealing with meeting interruptions or disruptive behavior. See Figure 8 for an example of the group norms developed by one agency to guide their Design Team.

Figure 8. Example of Group Norms

- Keep in mind the things the group can change and don’t spend time on things that cannot be changed.
- Be consistent in the group, participate, and show up for meetings.
- Be respectful of people and their opinions.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Everyone gets a voice.
- Maintain a level of safety.
- Inspire hope.
- Keep an open mind.
- Check personal agendas at door.
- No texting or emailing while in the meeting.
- Be present, keep emergencies and interruptions to a minimum.
- Enjoy ourselves, use humor.
4.4 FACILITATION CHALLENGES

Keeping meetings on track starts with good preparation. But even with the best preparation, facilitators may not always anticipate every dynamic that might arise. Making sure participants understand the meeting agenda and ground rules provides a basis not only for participants to stay focused on the goals and the process but also for the facilitator to intervene to help the team stay on track. The facilitator’s goal is always to keep the process moving forward with all participants engaged, making the best use of time and resources, and supporting the participants in achieving their desired outcomes.

When facilitating Design Teams, all kinds of situations may be encountered. As a guideline, always start with the lowest level of intervention, which is the least obvious and least threatening to the individual or group.

Table 3 provides examples of common situations requiring interventions to keep a meeting on track. Next to each situation are suggestions on how to intervene. Keep these ideas in mind while facilitating Design Team meetings.
## Table 3. Strategies for Keeping a Meeting on Track

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Intervention strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sidebar conversations</td>
<td>A member of the group is having side conversations</td>
<td>• A friendly reminder: “Just a reminder, we agreed to one conversation at a time in our ground rules today.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Direct the reminder: Make eye contact with the person and restate, “One conversation at a time, please.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Personalize it: “Susan, do you have a clarification question?” Or “Susan, I can see that you have something to contribute, when Joe has finished we’ll hear from you.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Talk to the person at a break, one on one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many people are interrupting or having side conversations</td>
<td>• Put the process on hold and ask the group, “Do we need to take a break?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping the conversation on track, on task, following the agenda, and keeping to the timeframe</td>
<td>The group has a lot of material to cover but they seem to go down rabbit holes and many veer off into other topics</td>
<td>• Invoke the “keep focused” ground rule. Suggest the use of a “parking lot” to capture items that need to be discussed or pursued but are not the focal points for this meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Specifically refocus on the particular topic or agenda item: “I’d just like to remind you that we are discussing item four: the budget, so please hold discussion on other topics until we get to them.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The discussion has continued for some time, time is running out, and no decision has been made</td>
<td>• Try to get closure on the item and if a decision can’t be made, then get the group to come up with an action step for how to move the item forward: “Team, we have 10 minutes remaining for this item. What do we still need to discuss to conclude this item?” Or “We are almost out of time for this item and there appears to be more discussion required. Is that true?” Follow up a yes response with, “What do you need in order to close on this item?” or “Why are we unable to close on this item?” or “What action steps do we need to move this item forward?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The item is very important and wasn’t given sufficient time for the necessary discussion and action</td>
<td>• Give participants a choice on how they spend their meeting time: “Is this item more important than the remaining items on the agenda and if so, when will you address the other items?” (The group should not keep going on this item unless they decide they cannot move on until they make a decision on this item.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>Intervention strategies</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning from breaks</td>
<td>Participants are late returning</td>
<td>• Before the break, lightly remind the group: “Remember, you agreed to return from breaks on time because we can then finish on time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>from breaks</td>
<td>• If one or two people remain outside the meeting room, you can send one of the “leaders” outside to round up the stragglers. Or you can pop your head outside the door and let them know the meeting is starting again and you really need their participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team members are chronically late</td>
<td>• Talk to individuals privately and tell them their participation is needed to move the agenda forward. If a number of members are routinely late or it is never the same individuals, bring it up with the large group: “We have a ground rule about returning from breaks on time, but folks are consistently late. What do we need to do for this to work?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>returning from breaks</td>
<td>• Ask the group: “Are breaks too short? Not enough breaks?” Members might need some flexibility from time to time to accommodate needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neverending discussions</td>
<td>Information barriers</td>
<td>• Sometimes a discussion will not come to closure, usually because information is insufficient, inaccurate, or unreliable. Help the group figure out if there is sufficient information to move on or if an item can be parked for another meeting. If the remainder of the meeting depends on completing this item, then reschedule the meeting with action items to ensure that participants bring whatever is required next time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Topic | Situation | Intervention strategies
--- | --- | ---
Personal agenda, “war stories” or “hobby horse” | Gentle interruption: Once you have determined that an individual is talking in a specific mode and what’s being said does not appear to contribute to the item under discussion, there are a few things you can do:  
- Stand up and walk behind the talker who then cannot direct his or her attention to you.  
- Then state something or summarize what has been discussed so far that refocuses the conversation on the agenda item.  
- If the person persists, you can talk with him or her at a break or gently ask, “Frank, excuse my interruption, but I’m not sure how this fits with our topic. Can you clarify for me?”  
- Or you can say, “These stories are very interesting, but now we have to focus on agenda item X, and if there is time at the end of the session, we could carve out some time to learn more about X.”  
- Personalize the request: “Frank, we agreed that this item (or our war stories) would remain parked (or off-topic). Has anything changed in status? Or how about if I write down this item in the parking lot so we can capture your issue, and that will allow us to focus on agenda item X.” |  
In the rare case in which the individual cannot let go | Talk to the person privately at a break. Gently give feedback about the effect his or her comment or behavior is having on the group and the session. Ask for his or her help in keeping the session moving forward. |  
The “non-talker” | One person in a group never talks or contributes | In a group, you can say, “I’d like to hear from everyone on this question,” and look to the person who hasn’t yet talked.  
- Break into pairs to discuss an issue. This allows a shy or reluctant person to contribute in other ways. |  
Getting everyone’s participation | A larger group (of 15 or more) | Design your facilitation to include small group work or work in pairs, to collect lots of ideas quickly and ensure everyone’s ideas are heard. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Intervention strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Power differentials           | A participant has more power than others in the room, which can cause some to not speak candidly, or the participant with more power wields it over the others | • Ask others for their opinion. “What does the child welfare staff think?” “What do the workers in the group think?”  
• Talk to the person during a break.  
• Refer to the ground rules: All voices are equal. |
| The elephant in the room      | An issue comes up that you weren’t aware of and is of critical importance for moving the meeting forward | • Ask the group about what has been said. (e.g. “Do we need to discuss this before we move on?”) |
| Naysayers                     | One or more participants are always saying why something won’t work or isn’t a good idea | • Acknowledge the person’s comment with a “thanks” and redirect the conversation to focus on another idea. |
| Helping participants avoid    | Some participants have preset conclusions                                 | • Split into groups to discuss the issue.  
• Ask the group if they have enough information to make a decision or move forward with an issue (often there is not enough information).  
• Address the potential for preset conclusions in the ground rules.  
• If one individual has preset ideas, say, “It sounds like you have a sense of where you think this issue should go. My job as facilitator is to get input from everyone and explore options before we make a final decision.” |
| their preset conclusions      |                                                                           |                                           |
### Topic

The “texters”—when technology interferes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Intervention strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Someone is texting, using their iPad or iPhone, or supposedly “taking notes” on their computer</td>
<td>• Include a ground rule for texting and technology use. Recognize that individuals are very busy and have work responsibilities, but explain that when people text and use computers is it difficult for you, as the facilitator, to focus. Explain that there have been several breaks scheduled throughout the meeting so people can check their emails, etc. You can also state that IF someone must have their phone on, then please keep it silent and step out of the room if they need to talk, text, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conflict:

personal attacks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Intervention strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Participant is hostile toward another participant, the facilitator, or the group | • Say nothing the first time unless you are sure that it was intentional.  
• Restate the ground rules. Make eye contact with the person making a comment and say, “Our ground rules clearly state that…. We welcome all ideas, comments that build or clarify ideas, etc., but not negativity.”  
• Talk one on one with the person at a break. |

4.5 STRATEGIES FOR ATTENDING TO DIVERSITY

By definition, Design Teams possess diversity. In fact, diversity is what gives the team such strength. But with diversity come challenges. Addressing the challenges in an overt way allows the strengths of diversity to shine rather than the differences to inhibit or constrain the group. Employ the following strategies to encourage and maintain diversity within a group.

- Encourage an equal sense of power—strive to ensure that all participants see the process is fair and balanced.
- Know and understand formal and informal power dynamics.
- Refer to the ground rules when participants monopolize discussion time or interrupt.
- Recognize newcomers—they may perceive themselves as different or feel disadvantaged or excluded from the group.
- Recognize “empty chairs” or “silent voices”—acknowledge who may not be present and work toward their inclusion at the next meeting.

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1 www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/citizenship/dh7435.html#fac
4.6 FINDING CONSENSUS

Some Design Team discussions will easily result in a consensus of opinion among members. Other decisions may require a more formal method to agree on a strategy or direction. Ways to arrive at consensus through voting include:

- **Hand vote**—People vote by simply raising their hands.
- **Dot method (counting approach)**—Distribute peel-off dots or colored markers and ask participants to place a dot or make a mark next to a favorite idea or solution.
- **Dot method (scoring approach)**—Write the options on chart paper and post. Determine the criteria for evaluating an idea or solution. Assign a point value to peel-off dots (blue = 4 points, green = 3 points, yellow = 2 points, red = 1 point). Give people a strip of each color dot (distribute an equal number of dots to each person) and ask them to place their votes next to each of their choices. They can put all of their votes (dots) on one item or spread them across ideas. Tally up the scores.
- **Hash marks on chart**—A pure vote on the topics listed on chart paper. Everyone gets one vote, placing a hash mark on the chart paper.

Use the method that works best for the situation and the team.

Facilitation can make or break a Design Team. Good facilitators will harness the creativity and experiences of the Design Team to develop new ideas for the issues the agency faces, while at the same time building collegiality and social capital to meet future challenges.
5 TOOLS AND EXAMPLES
This section contains tools and examples that were developed for and by participants on the Western Workforce Project. Although developed for specific sites, they may be helpful when implementing Design Teams.

Adapt as necessary to your agency, office, and locale. Examples include annotated agendas, actions plans, fliers announcing events and seeking participation, and copies of emails sent on behalf of Design Teams for a variety of reasons.

5.1 DESIGN TEAM SURVEY

This survey is used to assess the Design Team’s effectiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design Team Survey</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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<td>Site:</td>
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</table>

SECTION 1: DESIGN TEAM PROCESS AND PROGRESS

1) Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

(\textit{SD}=\textit{Strongly Disagree}, \textit{D}=\textit{Disagree}, \textit{N}=\textit{Neither Agree nor Disagree}, \textit{A}=\textit{Agree}, \textit{SA}=\textit{Strongly Agree})

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>We work collectively using the Western Workforce Project process to address our challenges.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Communication across different levels of the organization has improved because of the Design Team’s work.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>The Design team has positively changed the way we address organizational challenges.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Participating on the design team has changed how we interact with each other for the better.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Learning circles and the design team have worked effectively together to achieve their goals.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>The macro team and the design team have worked effectively together to achieve their goals.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Leadership in our agency allow us to work on the Design Team topics of our choice.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>I feel effective as a member of the design team.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>I feel confident that agency leadership support the work of the Design Team.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SECTION 5: PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WESTERN WORKFORCE PROJECT

2) What do you like about the way the design team functions?

3) What could be improved about the way the Design Team functions?

#### SECTION 2: PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WESTERN WORKFORCE PROJECT

4) Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The support we received from Butler Institute staff has helped us achieve our Design Team’s goals.</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>The Western Workforce Project has built our organization’s capacity to work effectively.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>The Western Workforce Project helped us achieve positive outcomes at the unit level.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>The Western Workforce Project has helped us achieve positive outcomes at the organizational/agency level.</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>The Western Workforce Project has helped our organization maintain a Systems of Care approach (e.g., strengths-focused, family involvement, collaboration.)</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5) With this project, the agency is making progress toward becoming a “learning organization.”

- No, not really  
- Baby steps  
- Substantial progress  
- We are almost there!

6) We have made some significant movement toward improving child welfare practice.

- No, not really  
- Baby steps  
- Substantial progress  
- We are almost there!
7) With what we have accomplished through this project, I have seen evidence of some significant improvements in outcomes for children and families.

- No, not really
- Baby steps
- Substantial progress
- We are almost there!

8) What have been the greatest accomplishments so far resulting from the Design Team?

9) What have been some unintended consequences of the Design Team (i.e., what has occurred, either positive or negative, that you were not expecting?)

10) Please describe the Design Team’s interaction, collaboration, and communication with the Learning Circles.

11) Please describe the Design Team’s interaction, collaboration, and communication with the Macro Team.

12) What suggestions do you have for improving collaboration and communication across these Western Workforce Project teams?
5.2 AGENDAS

The following pages contain sample annotated and simple agendas for Design Team meetings to review COHA results. An annotated agenda provides a basic structure to the meeting, like a simple agenda, but also includes some brief instructions for how to facilitate each part of the meeting. Simple agendas are distributed to group members.

Sample 1. Annotated Agenda for Initial Design Team Meeting

---

9:00 – 9:15 INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions of all attendees. Provide an example of how an intervention can impact workforce. Establish rules of the road and set up a “parking lot.” Acknowledge that the COHA document may evoke emotions. Sprinkle pictures on the table. Ask participants to select a picture and write in a thought bubble what the family would tell us to remember as we seek to understand COHA results. Post the pictures on the wall.

9:15 – 9:30 QUICK WALK-THROUGH OF THE COHA BRIEF BY THE BUTLER INSTITUTE TEAM

Orient meeting participants to the basic components of the document. Explain the color schema, order, etc.

9:30 – 10:00 REVIEW THE COHA BRIEF INDIVIDUALLY

Review the COHA document individually. Refer participants to Worksheet 1: Individual COHA Review. During this time, consider the following questions and jot down some notes.

Questions on worksheet:

- Which areas are of the greatest concern and strength according to the brief?
  - Does this match what you know about the organization?
  - What surprises you?
- Among those areas of great concern:
  - Which would be easiest to begin work on? Which would be more difficult?
  - Which would you consider to need immediate attention and why?
  - How do the qualitative findings support your thoughts?

10:00 – 10:15

10:15 – 11:00: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Break participants into two or three small groups. Send participants to different areas of the room or building. Refer participants to Worksheet 2: Small Group COHA Review. Provide the following instructions:
• In small groups, take turns telling each other your impressions and responses to the questions above.
• Discuss your interpretation of the survey assessment findings. Discuss the interview findings and what they mean.
• Additionally, address the following questions (on the worksheet):
  o Which areas do group members agree are the greatest concerns/challenges?
  o From the greatest concerns, assign a pair to “champion” an area of high concern.
    ▪ Each pair identifies an area in which they believe would be best to begin work immediately.
    ▪ Then the pair can develop a convincing rationale regarding why the area needs to be worked on and use evidence from the brief and the discussion questions.
    ▪ Identify strength areas that would help in your work in the challenge area.

11:00 – 12:00 FULL GROUP DISCUSSION

Reconvene all participants. Ask each pair to present their rationale to the group. Record issues or areas of focus on flip chart.

Once all pairs present, review issues from flip chart. Explain that we will now be voting on the most important areas to work on.

Vote with dots to determine the importance of issues. Give each person strips of dots and tell them they can have one set of dots: Blue = Most important issue (4 points); Green = Very important issue (3 points); Yellow = Somewhat important issue (2 points); Red = important issue (1 point). Ask them to rank in order their four most important issues. (Write the point values on flip chart). During lunch, facilitators will tally scores.

12:00 – 12:30 LUNCH

12:30 – 12:45 ENERGIZING ACTIVITY

12:45 – 1:45 CREATE A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the typical evaluation report we would summarize our key findings and create a set of recommendations. As this process is intended to be driven by the agency, rather than the evaluation team, we would like for you to go through this process. In small groups, please complete, Worksheet 3: Summary Form and develop a set of recommendations based on these COHA findings and your knowledge of the organization’s top needs.

1:45 – 2:45 NEXT STEPS

Refer participants to Worksheet 4: Next Steps. Use your summary and set of recommendations to prioritize how to approach the work ahead.
### Sample 2. Annotated Agenda for COHA Results Design Team Planning Meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 9:45</td>
<td>Western Workforce Project Description—Describe the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45 – 10:30</td>
<td>Presentation of COHA Results including comparison from 2009 COHA—Present with PowerPoint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 – 10:50</td>
<td>Large Group Discussion of Results—Ask questions such as first impressions, thoughts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50 – 11:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:45</td>
<td>Small Group Work—What’s significant? What are the implications?—Count off into four groups. Respond to the following questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are the agency’s strengths from your perspective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are the top three areas you think should be the prioritized focus of the agency?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What would success look like? How would things be different at the agency?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 12:00</td>
<td>Small Group Report Out—What will be different at this agency? Write an outcome statement about two things that you would like to be different by the next COHA?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 12:45</td>
<td>Lunch—Learning Circle Discussion—Review Learning Circle principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45 – 1:30</td>
<td>Prioritizing Goals/Objectives, Next Steps—Prioritize the goals by asking participants to vote on those that are most important.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample 3. Annotated Agenda for COHA Results Meeting

8:30 – 9:00  Introductions—Walk around and review family pictures with quotes. Ask participants as they introduce themselves, “What is the one thing you want to get out of this meeting?”

9:00 – 9:30  Review results from last meeting (handout)

9:30 – 9:45  Butler Picks (see below, write those areas Butler staff picked as areas to address from the COHA on the prepared chart)

9:45 – 10:15  CFSR Review—Briefly review the CFSR findings from the last review. Highlight main points.

10:15 – 10:30 Break

10:30 – 11:00  Small Group activity—How does this information connect to the areas that were identified in COHA? Discuss in small groups for 10 minutes. Groups present their results.

11:00 – 12:00  Goal Development—Put participants into small groups. Ask them to develop goals for each of the ideas identified earlier (provide the list). Assign 2-3 goals per group. Put topics on index cards that they draw out of a bag (or basket). Write goals on chart paper and post on the wall.

12:00 – 12:30 Lunch

12:30 – 1:30  Walk-around activity with your group—Write feedback about each of the other groups’ goals on the chart paper next to it. As a group, come to consensus: Would you word anything differently? Once all groups have provided feedback, original group goes back and incorporates feedback (or can discuss as a large group).

1:30 – 2:00 Large-group discussion—Conduct preliminary strategy brainstorming; What strategies could address these goals?

2:00 – 2:30  Bridge to Design and Macro Teams—Ask large group, who’s on each team? What goal or part of a goal should be assigned to each team (post two flip chart papers, ask them to go through their lists of topics). What timeframe for getting together?

2:30  Adjourn
Sample 4. Annotated Agenda for COHA Retreat Meeting, Year 4

9:00 – 9:20  Introductions and Goals for the Day. Establish some “Rules of the Road” to get started.

9:20 – 9:50  Question Basket Activity—People stand in a circle, select one question from the basket and respond to the question or do as requested on the slip (e.g., give a compliment to the person on your left).

9:50 – 10:00  Review project goals, how issues from first COHA were addressed (provide samples), review learning organization definition.

10:00 – 10:30  Presentation of COHA Results Including Comparison from 2010 COHA (this is a brief review).

10:30 – 10:50  Large Group Discussion of Results—Basic impressions, thoughts?

10:50 – 11:00  Break

11:00 – 11:45  Small Group Work—What’s significant? What are the implications? Count off into four groups. Each group writes findings onto one handout and returns it to the facilitator. Facilitator tabulates top three areas and lists on flip chart paper during lunch break.
  ▶ What are the agency’s strengths from your perspective?
  ▶ What are the top three areas that you think should be the focus for the next Action Plan?
  ▶ What would success look like? How would things be different at the agency?

11:45 – 12:00  Small Group Report—What will be different at this agency? Each person writes two outcome statements on Post-it notes about two things that they would like to be different by the next COHA. Facilitators will organize these during lunch and compare against the top three issues.

12:00 – 12:40  Lunch

12:40 – 1:30  Prioritizing Goals/Objectives, Next Steps. Use the dot method to determine priorities.

1:30 – 2:00  Conduct a team-building activity to promote cohesion within the group.
The next set of agendas are “simple” agendas—those that would be provided to Design Team members at the beginning of meetings. Timeframes are not typically presented in these agendas to allow for more flexibility during the meeting.

Sample A. Kick-Off Meeting

Design Team Meeting Agenda

- Overview/review of Western Workforce Project
- Role of the Design Team
  - Expectations for participation
- Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment (COHA)
  - Work of the Start Team
  - General themes
  - Where to go
- Connecting the Design Team to other Denver initiatives, programs, and CSFR
- Next steps—getting the team off the ground
Sample B. Ongoing Meeting

Design Team Meeting Agenda

- Introductions and charter review

- Update on subcommittees
  a. Foster care Committee
  b. Community Partners
  c. Documentation
  d. Secretarial Committee
  e. Morale Committee
  f. Supervision
  g. Job Satisfaction

- Planning for COHA Results Committee meeting

- Next steps
Sample C. Ongoing Meeting

Design Team Meeting Agenda

- Introductions, review agenda
- Review the HR/CSA info to respond to questions
- Gather questions for HR
- Supervisor practice model
- Clean Team
- Setting new dates for meetings
- Go back to notes from September 23, review the issues, brainstorm other strategies
- Brainstorm communication plan for communicating strategies
- Next steps
5.3 ACTION PLAN EXAMPLE
The following pages contain a sample action plan. This is a real plan, but names have been changed and dates removed.

Design Team Action Plan

Revised: January 20XX

Supervision

Goal: Supervisors provide consistent, supportive, and competent supervision.

Objective 1: Develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) manual to improve consistency.
  Tasks:
  1. Develop an SOP outline. (Rick, November)
  2. Collect information for SOP. (Rick, Carol, January)
  3. Pull together all information for SOP in written document and disseminate. (Rick, March)

Objective 2: Provide supervisors with personal coaching.
  Tasks:
  1. Develop a coaching protocol to implement as part of the Western Workforce Project.
     (Andrea, Jane, March)
  2. Implement personal one-on-one coaching for county DFS supervisors. (Andrea, April)

Objective 3: Utilize lead workers and develop a succession plan.
  Tasks:
  1. Investigate criteria and competencies for lead workers. (Jennifer, Jason, December)
  2. Discuss the pros/cons of instituting a lead worker position. (Jennifer, Jason, Lori, January)
  3. Check in with the state office regarding implementing lead workers. (Jennifer, January)
  4. Implement the use of lead workers if found viable. (Supervisor Team, February)

Objective 4: Improve supervisor cohesion and consistency through regular meetings.
  Tasks:
  1. Set a supervisor meeting schedule (weekly lunch or monthly meetings) and announce to
     staff. (Phillip, Lori, Glen, Carol, January)

Objective 5: Institutionalize use of regular case reviews.
  Tasks:
  1. Combine, revise, review checklist forms to make them consistent (PC checklist, case review
     checklist). (Glen, Carol, Lori, January)
  2. Notify staff of available times for case reviews. (Carol, Lori, Glenn, January)
  3. Conduct standard case reviews. (Carol, Glenn, Beth, start February)
  4. Conduct field observations. (Carol, Glenn, Beth, start March)
  5. Use peer reviews more formally. (Carol, Glenn, Beth, start March)
**Job Satisfaction**

**Goal:** All county staff members experience satisfaction.

**Objective 1:** Maintain a Morale Committee to improve the agency's organizational climate.

*Tasks:*
1. Morale Committee meets monthly to plan and implement activities. (Carol, Jane, Bob, Jason, October and ongoing)
2. Seek contributions from office staff to support committee activities. (Jane, Bob, October)

**Objective 2:** Provide sufficient new worker and ongoing training to county DFS staff.

*Tasks:*
1. Provide presentations on intake; assessment; investigations; FSP; interviewing; interacting with clients and children, ICWA, and ASFA. (Rebecca, Jane, Jason, November)
2. List training priorities for family-based aide investigations. (Rebecca, Jane, Jason, November)
3. Determine best modality for the training based on the competencies and policy. (Rebecca, Jane, Jason, November)
4. Identify workers able to train on these competencies. (Rebecca, Jane, November)

**Objective 3:** Provide community training.

*Tasks:*
1. Determine topics for training (e.g., intakes, investigations, presentations to nursing homes). (Rebecca, Bob, December)
2. Determine who should do the training. (Rebecca, Bob, December)
3. Provide a training on how to do outside training. (Rebecca, January)
4. Let Child Protection Team know what topics we could provide training on. (Rick, January)

**Secondary Trauma**

**Goal:** County DFS staff addresses and resolves secondary trauma resulting from their work.

**Objective 1:** Provide self-defense training for DFS staff.

*Tasks:*
1. Research self-defense training. (Lauren, January)
2. Call Casper PD to find out about their self-defense training. (Jennifer, May)

**Objective 2:** Supervisors participate in Butler Institute-sponsored “Compassion Fatigue” training.

*Tasks:*
1. Talk to state office about providing training for all state CPS supervisors. (Andrea, December)
2. Supervisors attend Compassion Fatigue training. (April)

**Objective 3:** Team difficult cases.

*Tasks:*
1. Develop guidelines for teaming difficult cases. (Beth and Rebecca, February)
2. Present to management (Beth and Rebecca, March 1)
3. Implement case teaming (Supervisor team, all staff, March)

**Time Management**

**Goal:** County DFS staff manages their time effectively.

**Objective 1:** Improve use of technology. *(Pending depending upon state budget cuts)*

**Tasks:**
1. Provide more iPads in the office (Tom, pending).
2. Look for grants for iPads (Jennifer, December).
3. Send out an email for suggestions regarding technology (Jennifer, November).
4. Meet up with computer people and different offices at Cheyenne to improve how to utilize technology, what’s available, who is doing what (Jennifer, Lauren, February).

**Objective 2:** Implement a telecommuting/work-from-home policy.

**Tasks:**
1. Convene a work group to discuss pros and cons as well as make recommendations for guidelines. (Wendy, Beth, Rebecca, Jennifer, Glenn, January).
   a. Determine a way to ensure accountability.
   b. Determine maximum hours allowed.
   c. Determine how to document.
   d. Determine tasks allowed (e.g., narratives, home visits, interviewing).
   e. Determine the necessary technology (e.g., zip drive).
   f. Look up policy rules regarding working from home.
2. Resolve issues brought forward by the work group. (Beth, Rebecca, Jennifer, March)
3. Implement telecommuting/work-from-home policy. (All staff, March)

**Objective 3:** More effectively clean and organize office environment.

**Tasks:**
1. Ask a CASA volunteer to organize the car seat room and maintain foster parent closet. (Wendy, February)
2. Ask Morale Committee to take on “Cleaning Day” project. (Andrea, Rick, Bob, January)
3. Investigate other approaches to “Cleaning Day.” (Andrea, December)
4. Organize computer, review programs. (Carol, December)
5. Organize office space. (Andrea leads, All staff, February)
6. Put unused stuff in storage. (Bob, Cleaning Team, February)
7. Decorate the walls. (Morale Committee, March)

**Cultural Competence**

**Goal:** County staff engages in culturally competent practice.

**Objective 1:** Remind all staff and clients about our mission.
Tasks:
1. Put mission statement on business cards. (Jennifer, January)
2. Distribute to staff. (Jennifer, January)
3. Post mission on walls throughout the office. (Jennifer, February)

Objective 2: Provide ongoing training on cultural competence.
Tasks:
1. Investigate how to provide the “Bridges of Poverty” training to staff. (Lauren, January)
2. Determine cost of training. (Lauren, January)
3. Set schedule and location. (Lauren, February)
4. Investigate online training related to cultural competence. (Andrea, January)
5. Provide webinar on cultural humility to the balance of staff. (Rick, April)
6. Provide cultural awareness training. (Rick, March)
7. Put up information on the training board. (Lori’s training board)
8. Contact Casper College. (Lauren, February)
9. Provide in-house training. (Lauren, Rick, April)
10. Provide information on caring for children of different races. (Rick might be covering this as well)
11. Offer diversity class in foster parent training (Rose, Rebecca, May)

Community Partners

Goal: County DHS staff experiences positive and productive relationships with community partners.

Objective 1: Improve relationships with community partners.
Tasks:
1. Identify topics of concern. (Carol, Rebecca, December)
2. Identify community partners we want involved. (Carol, Rebecca, December)
3. Schedule roundtables. (Jennifer, January)

Objective 2: Visit community resources.
Tasks:
1. Come up with a meeting plan. (Jennifer, Bob, January)
2. Implement meeting plan. (Jennifer, Bob, February)

Objective 3: Always present as professionals.
Tasks:
1. Post inspiring signs around the office. (Andrea, February)
2. Discuss at staff meeting about talking positively to other professionals to maintain a “got your back” mentality. (Beth, Jennifer, January)

Table 4 shows an example of a summary of work indicating the outcomes of each objective. Work summaries can be helpful to show the Design Team members the successes the group achieved as well as work yet to do. Summaries may also be shared with the larger agency and even stakeholders.
Table 4. Example of a Summary of Progress on an Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Supervisors provide consistent, supportive, and competent supervision.| 1. Develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) manual to improve consistency.  
2. Provide supervisors with personal coaching.  
3. Utilize lead workers and develop a succession plan.  
4. Improve supervisor cohesion and consistency through regular meetings.  
5. Institutionalize use of regular case reviews.                                                                                       | 1. A draft has been produced.  
2. All supervisors (including new supervisors) had the opportunity to receive personal coaching over the last 12 months.  
3. A document for utilizing lead workers was developed. Succession planning is still developing.  
4. Regular supervisory meetings occur.  
5. A case review document has been implemented.                                                                                         |
| All county staff members experience satisfaction.                     | 1. Maintain a Morale Committee to improve the agency’s organizational climate.  
2. Provide sufficient new worker and ongoing training to county DFS staff.  
3. Provide community training.                                                                                                                                                           | 1. Morale Committee holds multiple events throughout the year.  
2. Developed a year-long calendar for all training. Also conducting some Casper in-service trainings.  
3. Staff members regularly present at community meetings. Working on a master calendar for community trainings.                        |
| County staff addresses and resolves secondary trauma resulting from their work.                                               | 1. Provide self-defense training for DHS staff.  
2. Supervisors participate in Butler Institute-sponsored “Compassion Fatigue” training.  
3. Team difficult cases.                                                                                                                                                                | 1. Self-defense training held.  
2. “Compassion Fatigue” training presented to staff.  
3. Guidelines were developed and operationalized as appropriate.                                                                                |
5.4 SAMPLE EMAILS

The following emails were sent to staff to announce the creation of the Design Team and recruit new members.

Greetings,

The Western Workforce Project is underway and you are invited to join the Design Team to help “Design” new ways to improve our workforce. The WW Project is led by the Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver in partnership with the Native American Training Institute, Bismarck, North Dakota and is supported by the Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, Department of Health & Human Services.

The first meeting of the Design Team will be held March 18th, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm at the Casper Department of Family Services, 851 Werner Ct., Suite 200. The overarching goal for the Western Workforce Project is to collaboratively develop and test a workforce intervention model for child welfare that responds effectively to diverse local needs.

During this meeting, we will introduce you to the project, explain the project teams, provide expectations for involvement, and describe the various aspects of the project. We will also be seeking your feedback on important project components.

Refreshments and lunch will be served during the meeting. Please let us know whether you will attend by responding back to this email. The Western Workforce Project is all about the child welfare workforce, and together, we can make it work!

If you have any questions, please email Charmaine Brittain at Charmaine.Brittain@du.edu. Thank you in advance for your participation in the Western Workforce Project.
You’re invited to join the Design Team!

The Western Workforce Project Design Team is about to enter the second year in Denver County. We are looking for representatives from all sections, including the Family Crisis Center and the East Office.

Notable Design Team accomplishments from this first year include: Move Plan, Clean Team, and the Staff Appreciation Event.

We are looking for new members who are excited about participating in the Design Team. Upcoming topics that the team will be tackling are:

- Communication Planning
- Implementing a Supervisor Model

Other topics will be selected by the Design Team based on results from the Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment.

The next meeting for new members to join the Design Team will be September 29 at 11:30 – 1:30. If you are interested in joining, or need more information before deciding, please contact Linda Metsger.
The following are sample email reminders about upcoming meetings.

Hello Design Team!

Just a reminder that our Design Team meeting is tomorrow from 11:30 to 1:00 in Room 4018A. For our meeting, please:

- Review the attached communication plan and be prepared to figure out a way to either divide into subgroups or to complete the plan as a large group.
- Review the attached supervisor model notes and provide feedback to the subcommittee.
- Review the meeting minutes from September 23, 2010, in order to figure out what to work on. Check to see what has been accomplished to date.
- Check with co-workers about the support for a “12 days of the holidays” celebration.

Looking forward to seeing you

Good morning Casper Design Team,

Our next meeting will be an in-person meeting on June 22nd, 9 – 12:30 and the Butler Institute will include lunch. Supervisors, we will hold a separate check-in meeting from 8:00 to 9:00.

We will be thoroughly reviewing the action plan to assess our progress and plan for the future. We’d especially like to spend some time on community partnerships and determine how we can improve their participation in this process.

Hello!

We have a virtual Design Team meeting tomorrow from 9 to 11. Attached are the meeting notes from our last meeting. As always, please be prepared to report back on any action items that you volunteered to take responsibility for. See you then.
5.5 SAMPLE DESIGN TEAM FLYERS

Do you want to see some CHANGE around here?
(Good. Then we need your help.)

Become a member of the Design Team.

Staff from all levels of Denver County are needed.

You’ll continue the work of the Western Workforce Project by examining agency issues and designing solutions. You will be able to help develop strategies and solutions to address issues at all levels of the child welfare agency.

Meetings will be held approximately every 6 weeks.

First Meeting & Information Session:
August 17, 2010
1:00pm - 3:00pm | Room 4097

Want to join or have questions?
Email Linda.Metsger@du.edu or Melissa.Carson@denvergov.org

(Designed by Melissa Thompson, Butler Institute for Families, University of Denver)
The following are sample fliers for various events hosted or sponsored by the Design Team. All of the following fliers were designed by Peter Clarke, Denver County Department of Human Services.

![Flier 1]

**WARNING**

*Even responding with a “No” to the e-mail counts as a response. Let your opinion be known! The survey is confidential and reflects staff concerns and morale. (Free Target gift cards still available.)*
YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO SAY WHAT YOU THINK IS CLOSING!

ANSWER THE COHA SURVEY!
YOUR CONFIDENTIAL RESPONSES ARE COLLECTED BY THE WESTERN WORKFORCE AT THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TO EVALUATE MORALE AND STAFF RETENTION.
THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO SAY WHAT YOU THINK IS WORKING AND WHAT IS NOT!
DON’T THROW AWAY THIS OPPORTUNITY.
THE CLEAN TEAM WAS HERE!

We're the Design Team. We take action. High Worker morale is our goal!
To find out more contact:
michelle.lopez@denvergov.org, nicole.abeyta@denvergov.org,
peter.clarker@denvergov.org, denverdesignteam1@gmail.com

DID YOU NOTICE?
YOUR WORK-SPACE HAS BEEN SANITIZED FOR YOUR PROTECTION!

We're the Design Team. High Worker morale is our goal!
We're not only about cleaning. Please consider joining us. (Yes, Really!)

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT US!
denverdesignteam@gmail.com
michelle.lopez@denvergov.org
nicole.abeyta@denvergov.org
peter.clarker@denvergov.org
YOUR OPINION COUNTS!
ANSWER THE COHA SURVEY!
LET YOUR THOUGHTS BE KNOWN!
It’s confidential and worth your time!

DON’T LIKE THE STATUS QUO?
DESIGN A NEW ONE.
JOIN THE TEAM.

THE DENVER DESIGN TEAM
Staking a claim in the work we do.
BURIED ALIVE BY PAPERWORK?
OUT OF TIME AND OVERDUE?
Try FILE-O-RAMA!
The surefire cure for a messy desk!

COMING AND SPEND THE EVENING OF
MARCH 21st
from 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
EAT PIZZA (ON US!), PLAY TUNES, WRITE REPORTS, FILE YOUR GALDURNED STUFF!

Do you have overdue Court Reports?
Unfinished Child Studies?
Late 5-A's?
Trails notes due?
90-Day Reviews coming up?
A pile of filing that reaches the ceiling?

The Denver Design Team
presents
FILE-O-RAMA!
To the rescue!
The building will be open until
8:30 p.m. on May 10th. Pizza and
soft drinks will be provided.
Crank your tunes, work, and visit
with colleagues. Aim for FUN!
You Are Invited!

Thursday, April 11, 2013
12:00 PM-4:00 PM
Room 3110-3112

Self Care Fair

Compassion Fatigue, Burn Out, Overload all are common consequences of the work that we do. We invite you to attend the Self Care Fair to find new ways of taking care of yourself while you are taking care of others. Check out available services from Traditional and Alternative self-care practitioners. Some Highlighted services include:

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Some of our Guest Providers

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Denver Human Services

"Helping and protecting people of all ages."
5.6 RECRUITMENT TALKING POINTS

The following talking points were used by Design Team members to recruit new members at a staff meeting.

Hello! We are Design Team Members!

We wanted to take this time to share a couple of events that are currently happening.

- **Communication Plan**—Was created as a result of the COHA (survey). We received information that staff needed to have a communication plan in place. Design Team members will be coming to each unit to share the plan. At that time you have an opportunity to add input, concerns or additions to the plan.

- **File-0-Rama**—Happening tonight from 430 to 830 pm. This is an opportunity to catch up on things within your workload.
  - Child Welfare Business Office staff will be available in Room 3124 from 4:30 to 8:30 pm to assist you with Trails, WMS and Trails Compliance/Alerts
  - Substance Abuse Services will be available to locate reports, test results, or any other missing documentation relating to substance abuse treatment and answer questions regarding substance abuse/treatment on your cases.
  - Schedule and authorize one-time UAs for your clients.
  - Pizza will be available tonight at 5:30 in the admin area.

- **Clean Team**—The May 18th Design Team will be starting on the South side of the building. This is an opportunity to tidy things up in your area. It is important to label all items that are not located near your desk. Items that are not labeled will be donated. Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional assistance on this day. A clean team email will be coming out today as a reminder.

We are in need of more members on the Design Team. If you are interested, please see me after All-staff today. As an incentive we have a t-shirt for you!

- *June 21st Re-dedication Day!

Thanks!
6. RESOURCES FOR DESIGN TEAMS
Design Teams develop action plans with new strategies for addressing the issues within their agency. In order to find those new strategies, Design Teams may need to look both inside and outside their agencies for inspiration and resources. Some of the best information will likely not exist in written format but will be the experiences of other individuals and agencies that have faced similar challenges. Many resources, including websites, downloadable resources, and books, are available to spark ideas. Use the websites below to find information.

**6.1 WEBSITES WITH SEARCHABLE LIBRARIES**

- The Campbell Collaboration Library of Systematic Reviews (The Campbell Library)
  [www.campbellcollaboration.org/library.php](http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/library.php)

  [www.childwelfare.gov/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/)

- The National Guideline Clearinghouse (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality)

- Promising Practices Network on Children, Families and Communities
  [www.promisingpractices.net](http://www.promisingpractices.net)

- SAMHSA’S National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP)
6.2 TARGETED WEBPAGES (SOME WITH RESOURCE LISTINGS)

- California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare
  www.cebc4cw.org/importance-of-evidence-based-practice

- Child Welfare League of America—Research to Practice (R2P) Toolkit Series
  www.cwla.org/programs/r2p/toolkit.htm

- Health Youth Colorado—Resources List
  www.cdphe.state.co.us/ps/adoleschool/healthyyouthcolorado/resources.html

- Keeping Up With New Research
  www.socialworkers.org/research/naswResearch/0108KeepingUp/default.asp

- Social Programs That Work (Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy)
  http://evidencebasedprograms.org/wordpress/
6.3 NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE RESOURCE CENTERS

- **Child Welfare Information Gateway** ([www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov))
  
  A service of the Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this comprehensive website provides access to print and electronic publications, websites, and online databases covering a wide range of child welfare topics from prevention to permanency, including child welfare, child abuse and neglect, adoption, search and reunion, and much more. To find specific material, go to the “Library Search” link in the right-side panel.

- **AdoptUSKids** ([www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org)) provides training and technical assistance to states and tribes in connection with the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) on issues that pertain to developing and implementing quality recruitment and retention services for foster and adoptive families.

- **The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare** ([www.cachildwelfareclearinghouse.org/](http://www.cachildwelfareclearinghouse.org/)) provides child welfare professionals with easy access to vital information about selected child welfare-related programs. The primary task of the CEBC is to inform the child welfare community about the research evidence for programs being used or marketed in California, but anyone can use this website. The research for each program is reviewed and rated, if applicable, using the CEBC Scientific Rating Scale to determine the level of research evidence for the program. The programs rated on the Scientific Rating Scale are then also rated on a Relevance to Child Welfare Rating Scale.

- **The Child Welfare League of America: Linking Research to Practice** ([www.cwla.org/programs/r2p/default.htm](http://www.cwla.org/programs/r2p/default.htm)). The Research to Practice (R2P) effort is focused on discovering and presenting to the child welfare community relevant information regarding programs and practices involved in any of the levels of research rigor.

- **FRIENDS, The National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention** ([www.friendsnrc.org](http://www.friendsnrc.org)) offers knowledge and expertise in implementing family-support strategies in a variety of settings and for many purposes. It provides CFSR assistance, including network building, data collection, and promoting stakeholder involvement.
• **The National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center** ([http://aia.berkeley.edu](http://aia.berkeley.edu)) works to enhance the quality of social and health services delivered to children who are abandoned or at risk of abandonment due to the presence of drugs and/or HIV in the family.

• **The National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare** ([www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov](http://www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov)) works to develop knowledge and provide technical assistance to federal, state, and local agencies and tribes to improve outcomes for families in the child welfare and family court systems who have substance use disorders.

• **The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement** ([www.nrcoi.org](http://www.nrcoi.org)) offers technical assistance, training, teleconferences, and publications to assist states with the Child and Family Services Reviews CFSRs, including strategic planning, quality improvement, evaluation of outcomes, facilitating stakeholder involvement, and improving training and workforce development.

• **The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes** ([www.nrc4tribes.org](http://www.nrc4tribes.org)) engages tribes to increase their access to and use of the Training & Technical Assistance (T&TA) Network, brokers T&TA, helps provide T&TA, facilitates peer-to-peer consultation among tribes on child welfare issues, and increases cultural competence and sensitivity to tribal voices in the T&TA Network and in state child welfare systems.

• **The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development** ([www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/h](http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/h)) provides states with CFSR assistance, including promotion of stakeholder involvement, technical assistance, training, and information services. It also offers states, tribes, and other youth-serving organizations assistance in effectively implementing the Chafee Foster Care Independence and the Education and Training Voucher programs and supporting youth engagement in child welfare policy, planning, and program development.

• **The National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues** ([www.abanet.org/child/](http://www.abanet.org/child/)) offers states assistance with their CFSRs, including collecting and analyzing data, analyzing legal and judicial issues, promoting stakeholder involvement, action planning, and implementing program improvement plans.
• **National Child Welfare Workforce Institute** ([www.ncwwi.org/](http://www.ncwwi.org/)) builds the capacity of the nation’s child welfare workforce and improve outcomes for children and families through activities that support the development of skilled child welfare leaders in public, private, and tribal child welfare systems. NCWWI’s workforce development activities promote:

**Learning:** Fostering continuous learning that is interactive, reflective, and relevant.

**Leading:** Cultivating diverse leadership at multiple levels within public, private, and tribal child welfare agencies.

**Changing:** Supporting change through workforce development and organizational capacity building.

• **The National Resource Center for Adoption** ([www.nrcadoption.org](http://www.nrcadoption.org)) partners with states, tribes, and other National Resource Centers to offer support in all phases of the CFSR process, including analyzing adoption and permanency options, exploring systemic factors, building cultural responsiveness, and promoting stakeholder involvement.

• **The National Resource Center for Child Protective Services** ([www.nrccps.org](http://www.nrccps.org)) focuses on building state, local, and tribal capacity through training and technical assistance in CPS, including meeting federal requirements, strengthening programs, determining eligibility for the CAPTA grant, providing support to state liaison officers, and collaborating with other National Resource Centers (NRCs).

• **The National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology** ([www.nrccwdt.org](http://www.nrccwdt.org)) addresses a broad range of program and technical issues (including tribal and court child welfare issues) in assisting with the CFSR process. Services include training on data use and management, assistance with the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), coordination of peer consultation, and preparation and use of state data profiles.

• **The National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections** ([www.nrcpfc.org](http://www.nrcpfc.org)) focuses on increasing the capacity and resources of state, tribal, and other publicly supported child welfare agencies to promote family-centered practices that contribute to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, while meeting the needs of their families. The NRCPFC helps states and tribes to implement strategies to expand knowledge, increase competencies, and change attitudes of child welfare professionals at all levels, with the goal of infusing family-centered principles and practices in their work with children, youth, and families who enter the child welfare system.


