THE BREAKTHROUGH SERIES COLLABORATIVE METHODOLOGY

WEBCONFERENCE #3

WITH

Gerald P. Mallon, DSW
Associate Professor and Executive Director, NRCFCPP

Jen Agosti
President
JRA Consulting, Ltd.

Susan Dougherty
Consultant
Dougherty Consultants

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http://event.netbriefings.com/event/nrcfcpp/live/hunternrcfcpp3/
INTRODUCTION

Planning for change is a vital, but often daunting, undertaking in the agency setting. The Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) presents a groundbreaking framework for making planned change that is accessible, manageable and can produce immediate successful results at all levels of the agency. This presentation will focus on the key elements of the BSC methodology and highlight the ways it can be incorporated into ongoing planning efforts.

The BSC, used extensively by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), is a quality improvement methodology that uses small-scale rapid tests of change. This means that instead of making a change throughout the entire system that requires years of planning for implementation, changes are made quickly in very small increments - in other words, what can you do by next Tuesday? These changes are measured and monitored closely so that successes can be expanded quickly and failures are not replicated.

From January 2001 to April 2002 Casey Family Programs partnered with the IHI to conduct a BSC for public child welfare agencies for "Improving Healthcare for Children in Foster Care." Recently, they extended this effort with 22 public child welfare agencies across the country on "Recruiting and Retaining Resource Families." Both panelists, Susan Dougherty and Jen Agosti, participated in this effort and will incorporate their experiences in describing the benefits of the BSC process and how it can work for your agency.

Have a question for the panelists?

During the webconference, call (212)452-7108 or fax your question to (212)452-7485

After the webconference you can call or email......

Gerald P. Mallon, DSW      Jen Agosti         Susan Dougherty
(212) 452-7043             (978) 689-7755      (610) 328-4920
mrengmal@aol.com          jen@jraconsultingltd.com   susan@doughertyconsultants.com
Susan Dougherty participated in the BSC on Recruiting and Retaining Resource Families sponsored by Casey Family Programs. She developed the procedures for introducing Learning Circles into the BSC as a way for teams to continue their work after the conclusion of the formal collaborative process.

Susan has nineteen years of experience writing in the field of child welfare, with a primary focus on practice issues in child protective services and foster care. She has designed curricula for both resource families and child welfare staff in several states. Susan is a consultant for the National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning.

Jen Agosti is a child welfare consultant based in Massachusetts. She is currently providing consulting services through the National Resource Centers and to public and private child welfare agencies across the country focused on developing and applying quality improvement methods to child welfare practice.

Prior to private consulting, Jen was the Senior Manager of Systems Improvement Measurement at Casey Family Programs. Jen developed and wrote Partners: Working with the Business Community to Recruit Resource Families.

Jen was also the Director of the Office of Management, Planning and Analysis for the Massachusetts Department of Social Services.
The National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning - a service of The Children's Bureau/ACF/DHHS - is committed to increasing the capacity and resources of State, Tribal and other publicly supported child welfare agencies to achieve permanency for youth and children in out-of-home care. To do this, we advocate for a mix of…

- Family-centered and strengths/needs-based practice approaches
- Community-based service delivery
- Cultural competency and respect for all families
- Open and inclusive practice
- Non-adversarial approaches to problem-solving and decision-making
- Concurrent rather than sequential consideration of all permanency options

The NRCFCPP is focused on assisting the states in response to the Child and Family Services Review process by providing technical assistance, training and information services in achieving permanency for children in foster care. To that end we have many products available for free from our website (www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp). The NRCFCPP also publishes a weekly update on information and events related to policy, programs and practices in foster care.

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National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning
Hunter College School of Social Work
129 E. 79th Street - New York, NY 10021
Phone: 212/452-7053 Fax: 212/452-7051
www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp

A Service of The Children's Bureau/ACF/DHHS

Gerald P. Mallon, DSW
Associate Professor and Executive Director

Stephanie Boyd-Serafin, ACSW
Associate Director

Judy Blunt, MSW, JD
Assistant Director

Ilze Earner, CSW
Senior Policy Analyst

Mayra Lairos
Administrative Assistant

Irene Stater
Grants Coordinator
What Makes a Breakthrough Series Collaborative Different?

Most agencies have conducted a pilot project before. Thus, many agencies expect a Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) to be similar to other pilot projects they have done in the past. But a BSC is different. This document highlights some of the key differences between a BSC and a typical pilot project. It also introduces many of the key concepts that define the BSC.

1. **Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycles Are Used:** The most noteworthy difference between a Breakthrough Series Collaborative and the usual work done by public agencies is in the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles that are used to test and implement changes. Public agencies tend to be very good at planning for changes. They typically spend a significant amount of time planning (several months to several years, depending on the scope of the change) and then they move straight to implementing. The PDSA method allows ideas to be tested in small increments, where the consequences are minimized before a change is rolled out to an entire jurisdiction. In fact, teams are encouraged to try new ideas immediately, without any planning effort. One of the mantras in the BSC is “never plan more than you can do.” Because small ideas are tested in rapid succession, and often simultaneously, less time is spent on the abstractness of planning, and more time is spent learning from real practice in action.

2. **Anyone Can Have and Test Ideas:** Every agency participating in a BSC has a core team comprised of four to six people (depending on the topic.) But we know that everyone in the agency has good ideas – not just these four to six individuals. The BSC encourages anyone with an idea to test it out and see what happens. Having multiple people testing their own ideas fosters creativity, generates great synergy among staff and accelerates the speed at which changes can be made. The more people in an agency who engage in the PDSA process, the faster buy-in will occur as tests achieve successful results.

3. **Consensus Is NOT Needed:** Unlike most planning processes, where consensus and buy-in are critical steps to moving forward, consensus is NOT needed for someone to test an idea. As a matter of fact, testing an idea without spending an enormous amount of time discussing it first often generates consensus in the long run, because the results from the test can speak for themselves. Because consensus is not required prior to testing an idea, more ideas can be tested at any one time and less time is spent in meetings trying to resolve opposing viewpoints.

4. **Changes Happen at all Levels (not just the top):** Using the BSC methodology, changes are tested at all levels of the agency at once. This is not a sequential process, and teams find that while workers at the field level are focusing on one set of changes and trying to determine what will work best, managers may be testing ways to spread a different set of changes across the entire jurisdiction. Work in the BSC is dynamic rather than linear.

5. **All Framework Components Must Be Addressed:** Each BSC is guided by a nationally developed Framework for change. The Framework typically consists of six to nine key component areas that involve the entire system. Teams neither select a single component on which to focus for the entire BSC, nor do they work sequentially through each of the components. All teams are required to address all of the Framework components.
simultaneously. These components are inter-related, and often one change will touch upon two or more of the Framework components. In order to affect true system-wide changes, all key component areas must be addressed in a BSC.

6. **Ideas Are Stolen Shamelessly**: This methodology is called a “Collaborative” for a very distinct reason. Each participating team has strengths and every team in the BSC can benefit greatly from the strengths of all the others. The Learning Sessions, the Extranet and the conference calls all present opportunities for teams to capitalize on the successes of others and learn from their mistakes. If one team designs a tool to help it accomplish a goal, there is no reason that other participating teams should not customize this tool and begin testing it in their pilot sites the following day. If all teams in the BSC share their learnings in real time, each team involved reaps the rewards by accelerating its progress further.

7. **Successes Are Spread Quickly**: Many pilot projects begin and then remain in a pilot site. The BSC does not. Once a change has been made successfully in the Pilot Site, the Day-to-Day Manager and Senior Leader are responsible for spreading that change throughout the entire jurisdiction immediately. Once again, this is not done through workgroups, committees, task forces, or lengthy planning processes; it is done through focused and rapid PDSA cycles.

8. **Measurement Is for Improvement, NOT for Research**: Public agencies are accustomed to reporting in an almost scientific manner. Many measures are either federally or state mandated and their precision is critical. The BSC strives to gauge improvements over time, rather than look at point-in-time snapshots. While measurement is a critical aspect of the BSC and all required measures are reported on a monthly basis, the BSC is not about measurement. It is about improvement. The purpose of the measurement is simply to guide the improvements.

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*Adapted from Casey Family Programs*
The Breakthrough Series Collaborative Methodology

National Webcast
January 29, 2004

Webcast Objectives

- Learn the key elements of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) methodology
- Understand what the BSC methodology entails
- See how this methodology will be used by the National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning to provide technical assistance to states

The Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) Methodology

An Overview
Background of Breakthrough Series Collaborative Methodology

- Developed in 1995 by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and Associates in Process Improvement (API)
- Used extensively in health care realm
- Casey Family Programs (CFP) joined with the IHI in 2000 to learn the BSC methodology
- CFP co-sponsored a BSC with the Packard Foundation in 2002 on Recruiting and Retaining Resource Families

Key Premises of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) Model

- There is a gap between knowledge and practice.
- There is significant variation in practice in the field.
- All improvement requires change, but not all changes lead to improvement.
- “Every system is perfectly designed to achieve the results it gets.”
- We can learn more from collaborating than from working alone.

The Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) Methodology

Unbundling the Method
Key Elements of a BSC

- Framework & Measures
- Collaborative Conference Calls
- Extranet
- Learning Circles
- Measuring Results

Framework

- Identify key components of ideal system
  - Ideal system based on existing best practices, research, evidence
  - Not prescriptive
  - Breaks system down into manageable parts
  - Allows targeted focus on specific aspects of system

Measures

- Identify key measures to monitor progress
  - Outcome measures
  - Process measures
Collaborative Conference Calls

- Regularly scheduled calls (1x / month)
- Include all participants
- Focus on key issues
- Share successes, ask questions, brainstorm challenges
- A place to “steal shamelessly”

Collaborative Extranet

- Password protected internet site
- Discussion boards
- Document library
- Surveys
- Another place for “stealing shamelessly”

Learning Circles

- Topically-focused, self-selected groups
- “Mini-collaboratives” within the Collaborative
- Self-facilitated and supported
Measuring Results

- Required measures across the BSC
- Measurement for improvement
- Monthly reporting
- Precision is not required

The Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) Methodology

A Chronology

Chronology of Events in a BSC

- Expert Meeting
- Pre-Work
- Learning Sessions
- Action Periods

Pre-work
Month 2  LS1  Month 5  LS2  Month 8  LS3  Month 15
Expert Meeting

- Group of national experts representing various expertise
- Identify key components of ideal system ("framework")
- Identify key measures to monitor progress
- Select faculty to support teams throughout BSC

Pre-Work

- Orient teams to BSC
- Conduct self-assessment based on Framework
- Help teams prioritize work
- Build sense of team
- Build sense of collaboration across teams

Learning Sessions

- Learn the BSC methodology and practice applying it
- Develop plans for testing new ideas using the BSC methodology
- Share successes and challenges with faculty and other teams
- Share strategies for spreading successful changes
- Leave ready to test ideas "by next Tuesday"
Action Periods: Where the Real Work Happens

- Use Framework as a guide to test changes
- Extranet – Teams share successes and challenges in "real time"
- Conference calls – Teams check-in and discuss specific topics as a large group
- Learning Circles – Participants talk across teams about specific topics
- Monthly reports – Teams report their progress on required measures

The Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) Methodology

Testing Changes

What Makes a BSC Different?

- Anyone can have and test ideas
- Consensus is NOT needed
- Changes happen at all levels (not just the top)
- All Framework components must be addressed
- Ideas are stolen shamelessly
- Successes are spread quickly
- Measurement is for improvement
- Rapid Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles are used
Testing Changes: What Is a PDSA?

**PLAN**
- Determine objective, questions, & predictions
- Create plan to test idea (who, what, where, when, how?)

**DO**
- Carry out the plan
- Document problems and unexpected results
- Begin analysis of data

**STUDY**
- Complete analysis of data
- Compare data to predictions
- Summarize what was learned

**ACT**
- Make adjustments
- Ensure that the next cycle reflects the learnings

Designing a PDSA: An Example

**BSC Topic**
Improving the Way We Recruit and Retain Resource Families

**Framework Component**
Prepare Youth and Resource Families for Placement

**Strategy**
Share information about resource families with youth prior to placement

First PDSA
Develop form to collect information about resource families that can be shared with youth prior to placement

Multiple Cycles of a PDSA: An Example

**INFORMATION ON RESOURCE FAMILIES FOR YOUTH ENTERING PLACEMENT**

First PDSA
The Test: Tried collecting basic information about one resource family to share with a youth entering placement using a form developed by a youth.

Lessons: Resource family liked form and suggested adding a few additional questions, a narrative section, and a picture of themselves and their house.
**Multiple Cycles of a PDSA: An Example**

**First PDSA**

**INFORMATION ON RESOURCE FAMILIES FOR YOUTH ENTERING PLACEMENT**

The Test: Tried collecting basic information about one resource family to share with a youth entering placement using a form developed by a youth.

Lessons: Resource family liked form and suggested adding a few additional questions, a narrative section, and a picture of themselves and their house.

**Second PDSA**

The Test: Collected information from 5 resource families using the revised form, including pictures of the family and their house.

Lessons: Resource families liked the form and the concept. They suggested that new families complete this immediately upon licensure.

**Third PDSA**

The Test: Had all families complete the form immediately upon licensure and gave the information to a youth prior to entering placement.

Lessons: Youth appreciated receiving this information prior to placement. Suggested that they would like to give something about themselves to resource families prior to entering placement, as well.

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**Key Benefits of PDSAs**

- Test ideas quickly
- Obtain results on ideas quickly
- Multiple ideas can be tested simultaneously
- Identify problems while they have minimal impact
- Failure is allowed
- Get buy-in as you go based on proof of success
- Small changes may have large impacts

Adapted from © 2001 Institute for Healthcare Improvement
Small Test of Change

- Can be accomplished quickly
- No over-planning (Plan only as much as can Do)
- Consensus not required
- Adapt known results and tools
- Base on learning from prior cycle
- Is an actual change in practice, not a meeting, survey, focus group, or development of workgroup

Keys to Breakthrough Series Collaborative

- Keep tests small: "Never plan more than you can do."
- Keep tests rapid: "What can you do by next Tuesday?"
- Gather data for learning, not research: "Change for the sake of improvement, not just for the sake of change."
- Share with other teams and learn from other teams: "Steal shamelessly!!!"

BSC Compared to "Business as Usual"

- Avoid "crisis-thinking" ("trial by learning" rather than "trial by error")
- Focus on doing and action rather than discussing, meeting, and planning
- Highlight issues needing attention in real time through monthly reporting
- "PDSA" approach applied to other projects and initiatives in the agency
- Develop a culture of "micro-innovation" throughout the agency
The Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) Methodology

A Tool for Technical Assistance

Where We Are in the Process: Topic

- Permanence for Older Youth
  - Issue identified in CFSRs
  - Focus area for many states

Where We Are in the Process: Teams

- Pilot in the New England Region
- Open to working with other regions
- Contact Gary Mallon at NRCFCPP if interested
Where We Are in the Process: Learning Sessions

- Three in-person meetings
- Meetings by region (regardless of how many regions participate)

Where We Are in the Process: Action Periods

- Extranet available to all participating teams
- Conference calls involving all participating teams
- Learning Circles involving all participating teams

  Collaboration will be supported across all participating teams – not just within regions!

What’s Next?

- Conduct expert meeting to develop framework and measures
- Work with other interested regions about possible involvement
- Develop extranet site to allow for national sharing and stealing shamelessly