

Engaging System Partners Tip Sheet

One of Webster's definitions of collaboration is, "To work with others toward a common goal." Another definition from Webster is, "To cooperate with an enemy who has invaded one's territory." We all would like to think the first definition is what all go by. We may think we do most of the time, but there are times we become territorial. How do we knock down these walls, so we can achieve the first definition? It is important to recognize the society and legal mandates of each child serving system and how these mandates shape the system and its workers. With every mandate, agency requirement, and society perception comes pressure to perform in a certain way.

Lead by example:

- Ask what they want for the family.
- What are the mandates or goals they are working on?
- Tell them how HFW can help them with their mandates/goals.

Some examples of engaging system partners may be:

- Engage in a conversation about experience they have working with youth and families. (Understanding their strengths and culture)
- Explain that their knowledge will help a youth and/or family you are working with.
- Accompany the youth and family if they are going to a session with a provider.
- Offer to send literature, give the provider your business card, and explain how HFW can work with them.
- The population of the youth and families we work with may require clinical professionals.
- Remember the Theory of Change and how it can be taught from the beginning.
- What is in it for them? There are many examples listed that you can share regarding the benefits of HFW.
- Create a list of comments from other providers on how this process has helped them.
- Explain how it can help them be more effective with the youth and/or family is warranted, along with how the process can help with meeting their goals and mandates.
- Define the role and responsibilities of system partner/providers on the HFW team in advance of the meeting will result in a more productive and engaging meeting.
- System partners may be able to participate with the team by helping with a goal even if they cannot attend the team meetings because of billing concerns or conflicts with schedules etc.
- If system partners are unable to attend the next meeting, ask if they have any brainstormed ideas or other comments for the team. Present ideas and concerns to team.
- Once the team meeting is over, a plan can be sent to them and reviewed.
- We want the system partner to feel engaged in the success of the team and begin to value the benefit of the team process.
- Solicit feedback from system partners who are on youth and family teams to ensure their needs are being met.
- We want to make sure that we are valuing every team member and their voice by evaluating the process through their eyes.