TRAINING PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

December 17, 2010
PCWTA Oceanside Training Site

NOTE: this meeting was an annual celebration of our work for the 2010 year. As a special event, we invited Peter Dahlin, one of our most experienced trainers, and certified to train the Casey Family Programs curriculum, “Knowing Who You Are”, to do a brief training on this topic. It was a lively and experiential presentation, giving us an overview of the content and a flavor of the full curriculum.

A summary of the curriculum is as follows:

**Knowing Who You Are... Helping Youth In Care Develop Their Racial and Ethnic Identity**

**Project Overview**
Youth of color are overrepresented in the child welfare system and consistently face institutional racism as evidenced by higher rates of removal, longer stays in care, more frequent placement changes, higher rates of non-relative placements and lower rates of reunification. All of these factors lead to poorer outcomes in all aspects of their lives as compared to their white counterparts. This curriculum serves to help professional social workers address issues of disproportionality through their work. The skills they learn lead them to increase and improve their work with birth families, make culturally appropriate service referrals and placement decisions and work with youth to help them develop a healthy racial and ethnic identity. Development of a healthy racial and ethnic identity is important in helping youth establish consistency in their life with regard to how they view themselves and can be an important anchor from which positive outcomes are possible. For youth in care this aspect of identity is often overlooked.

For child welfare social workers and other practitioners to support youth in this work they must have an understanding of their own racial and ethnic identity, investigate their assumptions and biases related to race and ethnicity and examine personal comfort levels around these issues.

The *Knowing Who You Are* project is designed to address these areas in addition to helping workers develop practical ways to integrate racial and ethnic identity work into day-to-day social work practice for all youth, regardless of their race and ethnicity.

The ultimate goal of the *Knowing Who You Are* project is to positively impact wellbeing outcomes for youth through the integration of learning experiences that provide social workers with awareness, knowledge, skills, tools and resources to engage and support youth in developing a healthy racial and ethnic identity. This includes working with youth to develop pride in their racial and ethnic heritage, establish skills around multicultural competence and prepare for racism and discrimination.

This curriculum is being used nation-wide by a variety of child welfare agencies, both public and
private. Casey currently has contracts with the public systems in Texas and Arizona to train all state social workers and is working on expanding the use of this curriculum across the country.

The full suite of products within this project includes a video, a web-based e-learning course and a two day in person learning event.

Project Vision
Youth in care develop a positive and healthy sense of their racial and ethnic identity including pride in their racial and ethnic heritage, multicultural competence and preparation for racism and discrimination.

Project Goal
To implement learning experiences that provide practitioners with knowledge, skills, tools, and resources supporting the engagement of youth in their racial and ethnic identity formation in day-to-day social work practice.

Engagement includes:
• Staff who are committed to assisting youth reach a developmentally appropriate, positive and healthy sense of racial and ethnic identity.
• Providing youth with the necessary supports opportunities and skills to reach their full racial and ethnic identity.

Target Audience:
The target audience for this project is social workers, social work supervisors, organization/agency administrators and other practitioners and stakeholders working in private/public child welfare and other organizations that serve youth in foster care.

Key Concepts:
• Learning through self-awareness
• Heart, mind, body and spirit
• Important for all youth, regardless of their race and ethnicity
• Integration into day-to-day practice

Project Components:
Video: The purpose of this component is to raise awareness about the importance of helping youth in care develop their racial and ethnic identity. It includes testimony from alumni, foster parents, child welfare social workers and administrators on why this work is important and their experiences in doing racial and ethnic identity work. It is intended to be a call to action. It does not include specific knowledge and skills that participants need to do this work, however its intent is to:
• Provide a common framework for learning about racial and ethnic identity formation and it’s impact on youth in out-of-home care
• Open a healthy dialogue about racial and ethnic identity formation and the many related topics that previously may have been ignored or considered “uncomfortable”
• Illustrate overt and subtle ways that prejudice and racism undermine an individual’s sense of self along with the particular challenges faced by youth in care.
• Initiate discussion about the role that individuals and organizations, particularly social workers and others in the child welfare system, can play in supporting the development of a healthy racial and ethnic identity formation for youth in care.
The video is accompanied by a facilitator/viewer study guide that provides information on use as well as background information, group discussion questions and suggestions for additional activities.

The approximate length of the video is 24 minutes.

**E-learning:** This tool is an interactive, self-paced online course to assist participants in developing the knowledge and skills needed to effectively help youth in care achieve a positive and healthy sense of racial and ethnic identity. The course provides participants with the opportunities to:

- Explore their own racial and ethnic identity and group membership
- Recognize influences and impacts on racial and ethnic identity — both their own and others
- Increase awareness around stereotypes, prejudice and racism
- Examine the realities of how race and ethnicity play out in our society, especially within large institutions such as the child welfare, health care, and education systems
- Begin to develop skills for talking about race and ethnicity, addressing racism and discrimination, and integrating this new knowledge and skills into day-today practice

The approximate length of the course is 2-4 hours per participant. The course is intended to be completed at one’s own pace in a series of sessions. Overall length is dependent on the amount of time individual users spend on activities and reflection. Once completed the course content can be used as future reference material.

**In Person Learning Event:** This is a two day, facilitated, in person event. Agenda includes large and small group activities and discussion to further enhance and build on awareness, knowledge and skills gained from the video and E-learning course with an emphasis on skill building and face-to-face practice and interaction. Some of the goals include helping participants be able to:

- Identify personal and professional assumptions and biases that hinder respect for and value of racial and ethnic differences; begin to challenge and propose strategies for addressing stereotypes and prejudice
- Understand how to support healthy racial and ethnic identity development.
- Engage in courageous conversations that demonstrate staying engaged, speaking our truth, experiencing discomfort and expecting/accepting non- closure.
- Apply practical opportunities and strategies for incorporating racial and ethnic identity development work into day-to-day practice with youth in care.

The in person event is intended to be completed over the course of two days. Participant prerequisites include viewing the video and completing the e-learning course. Where possible, the inclusion of constituents as participants (alumni of care, foster parents, birth parents, kinship caregivers, etc) is recommended.

**OTHER MEETING CONTENT:**

- San Diego CWS shared the toolkit they have developed for workers in the field. The toolkit includes several tools, including some taken from the Signs of Safety training for use in interviewing children. Cindy Jensen, CWS Manager, from San Diego shared.

**NEXT MEETING:** FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2011 AT THE PCWTA RIVERSIDE TRAINING SITE