



Program Quality and Professional Development Action Team Meeting #3
Friday, June 24th, 2016

Attendance: Derek Brumfield, FFLIC; Antonio Travis, FFLIC; Jon Cospers, Young Audiences; Chandler Nutik, Community Works; Alan Brickman, Brickman Nonprofit Solutions; April Johnson, RSD YOC; Marti Dumas, Consultant; Tom Trouve, Community Member; Sherah Alaimo, NOKP; Jean Pinney, CIS; Denali Lander, Youth Run NOLA; Andrew Yaspan, Invisible Institute/Visitor; Holly Bell, LEH; Gina Womack, FFLIC; Kirsten Breckinridge, YouthShift; Hamilton Simons-Jones, Converge Consulting

Action Team Objective: By August 31, 2016, prepare an action plan for how to coordinate, expand and sustain efforts to define, measure and support quality in programs and services for New Orleans children and youth. *(Note that deadline has been extended from July 31 to August 31)*

Meeting #3 Objectives:

1. To review our Action Team's objective, proposed process, and progress to date
2. To continue to establish a sense of team among Action Team members
3. To better understand how and why it matters who defines Quality

1. Review of Agenda and YouthShift update

- New timeline is included in the agenda; work is picking up where we stopped but we are now working towards an August 31st deadline
- YouthShift Steering Committee decided to pause for a few weeks and held multiple conversations about how it aims to address the work of engagement and inclusion – both now and going forward after the Action Team work is done
- In terms of representing young people and ensuring representation of constituents that service-providers hope to reach, Hamilton has reached out to Friends and Family of Louisiana Incarcerated Children to see if young adult members can play more of a leadership role in meetings. This includes a potential presentation from team members in August.
- New meeting times and locations are included on the back of the agenda: Team will be meeting at Propeller (4035 Washington Ave) in July and will switch back to Broadmoor Arts and Wellness Center in August after their summer program ends.
- Question: What is the status of the other YouthShift Action Teams? Answer: All Action Team facilitators and Steering Committee members explored their work plans and team member response to first meetings. The inclusion/engagement, quality, and intermediary action teams are continuing their work. The data and policy action teams will continue work but in a different way that will not involve future meetings (i.e. facilitators delivering a written document)

2. "What is Quality" Castle Building Activity

- 5 teams were created and given supplies and instructions to build a “quality castle”. Some teams were asked to define what quality meant themselves. Some were asked to use a pre-determined definition of quality. Some were given ample supplies, some were given fewer supplies. The teams built their castles and then rated each castle on a scale of 1 to 5 based on its “quality” vis-a-vis the definition provided.
- Results from the Castle Rating exercise:

Group	Total Score	Description
1	64	Group developed own definition of quality BEFORE building castle
2	70	Group developed own definition of quality AFTER building castle.
3	60	Quality focused on security
4	61	Quality focused on security but had fewer resources.
5	63	Quality included aesthetics, quality of life for residents and security.

3. Castle Building Activity Discussion

Debrief on the Activity

- Time was an issue – pressure to design and build quickly influenced the outcomes – not a lot of time for discussion or pre-planning
- The group that got to define quality after they built their castle was able to match their definition exactly to the built structure
- "Beauty" was not in all quality definitions- created an issue when scoring, set expectations that it should be a consideration
- Materials were an issue – the quality and number of materials per group factored into how the castles were designed and built. Some had too many and didn’t use them all, others had sub-par materials (i.e. only paper, no cardboard) and the result wasn’t as secure or sturdy as those groups who had better materials
- Group dynamic might have also influenced the outcome – how did the team get along? What was the team’s focus?

How does this relate to the work our group is charged to do?

- For some, quality is simply about safety
- Skills of builders (youth workers, educators, managers) matter
- Expectations of quality are different based on who the assessor is even when they are using the same rubric
- Group dynamics affect quality
- History matters -> even in "being research-based." Whose research is it? How is research used to empower particular definitions or points of view about quality over others?
- The discussion about what is quality matters; it is an important component to engage people in
- Resources are different. The quality of resources and materials matter, but more resources doesn’t always mean better quality or better outcomes.
- Measuring sticks are different, depending on who you are and how you define quality
- Racism plays into understandings, definitions and values around quality and implementation of quality assessment and improvement efforts.
- Cultural expectations may be different, which affects what matters and how quality is defined
- We need to understand why do different people think something is quality

- Assessment tool and process matters. Do we take averages? How are the ratings weighted? Did we test how people were rating (reliability)?
- What the point of the rating instrument is matters. Is it about safety and compliance and protecting an agency from a lawsuit? Is it about supporting folks in improving?
- Did teams use all resources available to them?
- How much does a program's own explanation of quality matter?
- What are the incentives for doing quality? What are the consequences and stakes?
- It can be hard to change people's expectations, they want to win
- One team had a really rich conversation about "what castle model" is quality (i.e. is the historic, European stereotype of a castle really quality? By whose standards?). Who gets to set our own standards of quality for youth work and what are they based on?
- Who gets to set the quality definitions and standards – this has a racial component to it
- Skills of the people in the groups effected outcome too - especially in aesthetic development
- Like real life - some people have more resources than others, have to try to make do with what you have, some may have unfair advantages
- Measuring stick is not always the same in the real world - consequences may be different among races or cultures
- Definitions vary so much - e.g. 3,4 focused on safety, 5,1, etc. focus on structure and aesthetics; is it fair to compare them?
- Groups having 2 different resources is very realistic - e.g. people convince themselves that resources are the same but duct tape is very different than masking tape, etc.
- Cultural and background expectations can be so different (e.g. situation described where case workers with different backgrounds assessing home safety looked at a family's lack of air conditioning and it led to two completely different ratings in terms of child's safety)
- Discussed the incentives for achieving quality. This was a low stakes activity with only bragging rights being offered – some teams were very competitive, others weren't. What if stakes were higher? It can be hard to change some one's expectations so that they want to "win" (i.e. want to implement quality) and it depends again on who is defining it & driving quality improvements
- Rating instrument was interesting – it wasn't very succinct, a little vague. Participants weren't given a lot of instruction on how to complete it. Not sure if people's scoring was on the same scale? Individual scores ranged by 1 to 3 points – how to account for that?
- How much does self-definition or self-justification matter when assessing quality? Teams that got to define what quality meant benefited. In presentation, teams got to "sell" their castles on how they met quality but there wasn't any test to see if claims were true.

4. Closing Discussion

- Team members generally agreed that the issue of quality is complicated and identifying a definition of quality for our work is tough
- Team members were about split in terms of feeling we were on track to meet our goals by August – those who felt unsure said they were still absorbing the information and would like more statistics or reports, examples
- There was a request for what our NOLA community's current understanding of quality is

- There was also a request for moving from theoretical to concrete – what does this look like? Especially in New Orleans? This is on the agenda for our next meeting.

Updated Action Team Meeting Schedule

Meeting	Date	Time	Topics	Location
1	Friday, March 18	12:00 – 1:30 pm	Overview and Data Needs	Broadmoor Arts & Wellness Center
2	Friday, April 8	12:00 – 1:30 pm	Review of National Information on What Works	Broadmoor Arts & Wellness Center
3	Friday, June 24	12:00 – 1:30 pm	Discuss adjustments to Action Team and Impact of Who Defines Quality	Propeller Incubator
4	Friday, July 15	12:00 – 1:30 pm	Review of Local Data, Local Context and Discussion of Barriers	Propeller Incubator
5	Friday, August 5	12:00 – 1:30 pm	Youth Presentation, Action Plan/Recommendation Development	Broadmoor Arts & Wellness Center
6	Friday, August 19	12:00 – 1:30 pm	Finalize Action Plan Recommendations	Broadmoor Arts & Wellness Center