

THE FAMILY'S PLAN & CROSSOVER CASES

by Robert Taniguchi

INTRODUCTION B.C. (BEFORE CROSSOVER)

What happens to a family when the parent(s) abuse alcohol, drugs and/or experiences domestic violence? What happens when those factors affect the parent's ability to secure and retain gainful employment? What ultimately happens when a child's safety and securing the basic necessities of life become an issue? Intellectually we know that there is a relationship between these issues but we have not sought ways to collectively participate in the resolution of these challenges. Welfare Reform has forced social service agencies to take a critical look at how they do business and provide the best services possible for the health, safety and welfare of its most vulnerable disenfranchised and abused residents.

No, these are not new issues for those in public sector social service, employment and behavioral health services. Nor are these new issues for the community-based organizations with whom we contract to provide services to our clients, participants and customers. We have all provided services in order to obtain a specific outcome related to our own individual missions. What has been missing is the deliberate linking of services and collaboration between divisions within social service departments, county departments and community resources necessary to help families become strong, safe, successful and not dependent on public assistance payments. Now with time limits and other restrictions governing the receipt of benefit pay-

ments, "Work First" is the mantra. We will need to work collectively to provide services to help sustain employment and self-sufficiency. This process will encourage personal responsibility, dignity, self-respect and life-long learning.

Those who believed a few years ago that Welfare Reform would become a reality opened a dialogue and began planning for major social policy changes. This planning state and dialogue would encompass significant issues around cultural change in the agency and in the community with emphasis on local control, plans, initiatives and creativity.

CULTURAL CHANGE

Why is it important to talk about cultural change when talking about crossover cases? Prior to welfare reform the existing paradigm in social services was to keep the benefits division and services division separate. They each had their own function and responsibility, the lines were rarely crossed. Now the divisions must work together to insure that gaps in services do not occur thus increasing the chances of success for the family to become self-sufficient.

Rebecca Proehl Ph.D. on Understanding Organizational Change, tells us that there are several characteristics for successful public sector change efforts.¹ These characteristics include: top managers supporting change but not imposing specifics; having a mission to provide direction; basing change on the strengths of the organizations;

* Robert Taniguchi is a Deputy Director for Services in the Monterey County Department of Social Services.

make change holistic as the functions of the agency are interrelated; change must be planned and have clearly defined outcomes; talents of staff must be respected by changing power relationships, information access and reward systems; stake holders must be identified and attention focused on serving their needs; collaboration must take place between agencies and the use of technology will enhance service provision.

As you will be able to see the Santa Cruz County Human Resources Agency (HRA) was one of those counties who did not wait until the final hour to prepare a plan for linking services and preparing the welfare reform. You will also see that they possessed many of the characteristics that were mentioned by Rebecca Proehl.

Last year at this time Bay Area Social Service Consortium (BASSC) participant Philip Naylor writes of two distinct islands or microcosms in Santa Cruz county². The North Island which consists of tourism, businesses, industry and the University, and the South Island with its agriculture and cultural diversity. Naylor concludes that in preparing for welfare reform the lessons learned by Santa Cruz HRA includes a realization that, “We are all in this together”, “Collaboration Works”, and finally that “Goodwill is the Key to Success”.

Santa Cruz HRA had the foresight to prepare for welfare reform knowing that the legislative changes were imminent. HRA had a mission for direction, stakeholders were being identified. In an effort to keep their staff informed about the impending changes, the director and assistant director would share what information they could secure from the meetings they attended. Managers would keep their staff apprised of new welfare reform information, as it became available. The Division Director for

Adult, Family and Children’s Services knew that it was important to not only learn of the possible impacts to her section, but it was also important to keep mindful of the continual flow of everyday responsibilities to provide social services as welfare reform created additional demands for time and attention. As written documents on welfare reform would become available she would have them distributed throughout the section. In addition she had the child welfare training coordinator facilitate some cross orientation meetings to share information on welfare reform efforts. The Division Director for Income Maintenance realized that for his employees to be a catalyst for change he needed to help his staff to learn to value themselves as an important part of a team with important contributions to make. His foresight helped staff to make the transition to welfare reform. He also noted that there was a few staff who chose not to make the transition and realized that they needed to pursue other employment opportunities.

Meanwhile, the director and assistant director were working to facilitate community planning forums that would encourage participation, input and ongoing dialogue on welfare reform issues. These forums were as Naylor states, “...an integral part of the HRA’s collaborative planning process.” These planning forums included the business community; local community based organizations, city governments, State Employment Development Department, County Economic Development office and other individuals. Santa Cruz County’s CalWORK’s plan states that they will feature a “two-generational approach to welfare reform, focusing on both children and adults, as families transition to economic self-sufficiency.” In the Santa Cruz CalWORK’s, flowchart there is a box identified as “Intensive Case Management”³, it is here where a coordinated effort to work with the

family will occur through a type of multi-disciplinary team (MDT). It is anticipated that the core members of this actual MDT will be a JOB Division Social Worker, an Employment and Training Specialist and an Eligibility Worker. The Welfare-to-Work Intensive case service plan proposes to have the MDT responsible for the following:

- Working with participants to develop an individualized WTW Plan incorporating intervention and treatment activities.
- Identifying and coordinating services with contract service providers and/or other agencies and organizations working with the family (FIT, CPS, Healthy Start, Defensa, etc.).
- Multi-disciplinary team meetings to evaluate progress and activity levels and to update or amend the Individualized WTW Plan Activity Agreement as the family situation improves or changes.
- Active intervention (home visits, contact with primary case manager, conciliation plans, etc.). To prevent non-compliance based on the participant's failure to cooperate.
- If necessary, the ETS will initiate good cause, non-compliance and sanctions for families assigned to intensive services.

Santa Cruz was now set to prepare for the holistic approach to intensive case management and in particular the development of a crossover strategy.

CROSSOVER

How is crossover defined? Mark Holguin, child welfare supervisor, offered this definition to HRA

administration: All open CPS cases and referrals in which the family is receiving or likely to need Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) services. The latter are "potential" TANF clients. Those could include clients who were on TANF prior to the removal of their children, and likely to need TANF as transitional support when their children are being returned.

There are some statistics that help put this issue into context. According to Nancy Young and Sid Gardner⁴ "About half of the children in foster care in the United States are from families eligible for public assistance..." An interesting statistic they cite is that 60% to 80% of parents with children in the child welfare system have alcohol and other drug related problems. They further take these two statistics and surmise that by "Understanding the relationship between the AFDC-TANF population and the overlapping child welfare population is important in comprehending the effect of substance abuse on both groups."

Now enter welfare reform and the "Work First model. According to experts in the former GAIN programs, alcohol and other drug use is of the greatest barriers to sustained employment and self-sufficiency.

In crossover there are significant challenges to be met to facilitate self-sufficiency. The challenges go beyond the alcohol, drug, domestic violence and looking for employment. One such challenge is the number of plans that the family may be involved with at the time such as: the Welfare-to-Work plan, the Child Welfare plan, treatment plans and possibly others such as Individualized Educational Plans for special education. It is vitally important to coordinate the plans so they complement each other with little duplication and no conflicting messages

or expectations. Mr. Mark Lane the Division Director for Adult, Family and Children's Services has coined the phrase, "the Family Plan" reflecting the multi-faceted impact of the plans.

Mr. Lane emphasizes that we need to incorporate a family strength based model, which builds on strengths of the family. Some children's services strength based strategies may be utilized such as Wrap Around Services and Family Conferencing (based on the Family Unity Model).

Early in the process Mr. Holguin had prepared a concept paper that discussed impacts to Child Welfare and possible strategies for intervention. He discussed issues around coordination of services and case management. It is apparent that administration had supported creative strategizing from their staff.

Currently the Santa Cruz HRA holds regular planning/staffing meetings to discuss crossover policy issues and program development. This meeting includes but is not limited to members of the MDT and staff from training, FIT (Families in Transition) and Cal Learn. All levels of staffing attend this meeting including line staff, supervisors, managers and administrators.

During the meetings the team discuss cases that have been identified as crossover cases. The MDT process provides a multi-dimensional perspective, which helps with the problem solving process. It is also evident that in the Santa Cruz crossover staffing there is an impressive amount of respect for the opinions of others and that participants value the input of others. I believe that this is a result of the cultural change work utilized early in the change management process. In this meeting the members of the team exchange information that will

help to provide a structure for future crossover meetings. It should be noted that policy development, staffing processes and strategies are all in the developmental stage and that the process is dynamic to develop the best implementation strategy. Other community members and family may be included in future case staffing but confidentiality and other structural issues need to be ironed out.

Finally, in order to help research and develop crossover, fellow BASSC participant Mark Holguin will be visiting San Mateo County to study their crossover processes and will make recommendations to Santa Cruz HRA on his findings.

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
SERVICES (CDSS)
CALIFORNIA WELFARE DIRECTOR'S
ASSOCIATION (CWDA)
CROSSOVER MEETING**

On March 11, 1998 a meeting on the interface between CalWORK's and Child Welfare Services was convened in Sacramento, California. CDSS made a presentation encouraging the collaboration between CalWORK's and Child Welfare Divisions. The CDSS departments gave mini welfare reform presentations and the CDSS Research

Branch shared statistical information. San Mateo County, Placer County and Santa Cruz County gave presentations on program strategies dealing with crossover. There was discussion about the impact of CalWORK's and discussions were held to discuss priorities in dealing with the impacts. It was recommended that there continue to be a dialogue between the State and the counties to discuss crossover and that the information be shared on a broader basis.

The one critique that I would offer about the presentation made by Santa Cruz is the panel should have included the Benefits Division Director Lynn Miller. I believe that his presence on the panel would have demonstrated the collaboration that had actually occurred in Santa Cruz. It was unfortunate that only a few minutes were left for the Santa Cruz to present their work, but the family strength based message was powerful.

CONCLUSIONS

I embarked upon what I thought was a plan to take a critical look at the crossover processes of Santa Cruz County. What I found is that I came into the process with too rigid of an expectation. I treated crossover as though it was a staffing process that had been in effect for years. When I first discussed my plans with my sponsor Dianne Maynez, Assistant Director for Santa Cruz HRA, I had an outline of what I was going to study. Once immersed in the project I realized that the crossover process was in its infancy and it may be more valuable to look at how the county began its process and where they are at this time. When you change horses in the middle of the stream, you get a little wet.

Process in planning is important. Crossover issues require a change in perspective and practice. The process of crossover staffing is important but equally important is how you got to that point. Preparing for change was an important investment in time and energy. The cooperation and creativity experienced in the crossover planning group is a result of good process, good will and collaboration. Santa Cruz HRA did a good job of preparing for crossover. Their current efforts to develop policy and refine their strategy to facilitate crossover is equally good.

I know that change is not an easy process and I am sure that Santa Cruz like other counties experienced hardships but to see the progress to this date, you would think that Santa Cruz HRA prepared for change every day.

FINDINGS

1. Santa Cruz County's preparation for welfare reform helped them to get an early start in discussing issues of impact to the department.
2. Santa Cruz County prepared for cultural change, which enhanced the relationship between divisions within the department, lending value to the input of all involved.
3. Santa Cruz County has resources for services that may not be available in other Counties.
4. The use of a Multi-disciplinary approach lends itself to many perspectives. Crossover remains an important issue for Santa Cruz and a priority for the Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Monterey County must begin a dialogue between divisions to highlight the issues involved with crossover.
2. The Deputy Directors of Monterey County (both BASSC participants) should give a presentation on crossover to the administration, managers, analysts, key supervisors and staff.
3. A workgroup should be identified and created to begin the development policy and a structure for crossover to occur.

4. A strategy to address the cultural change issues should be developed and implemented.

5. Monterey County should continue participation in statewide discussions dealing with crossover.

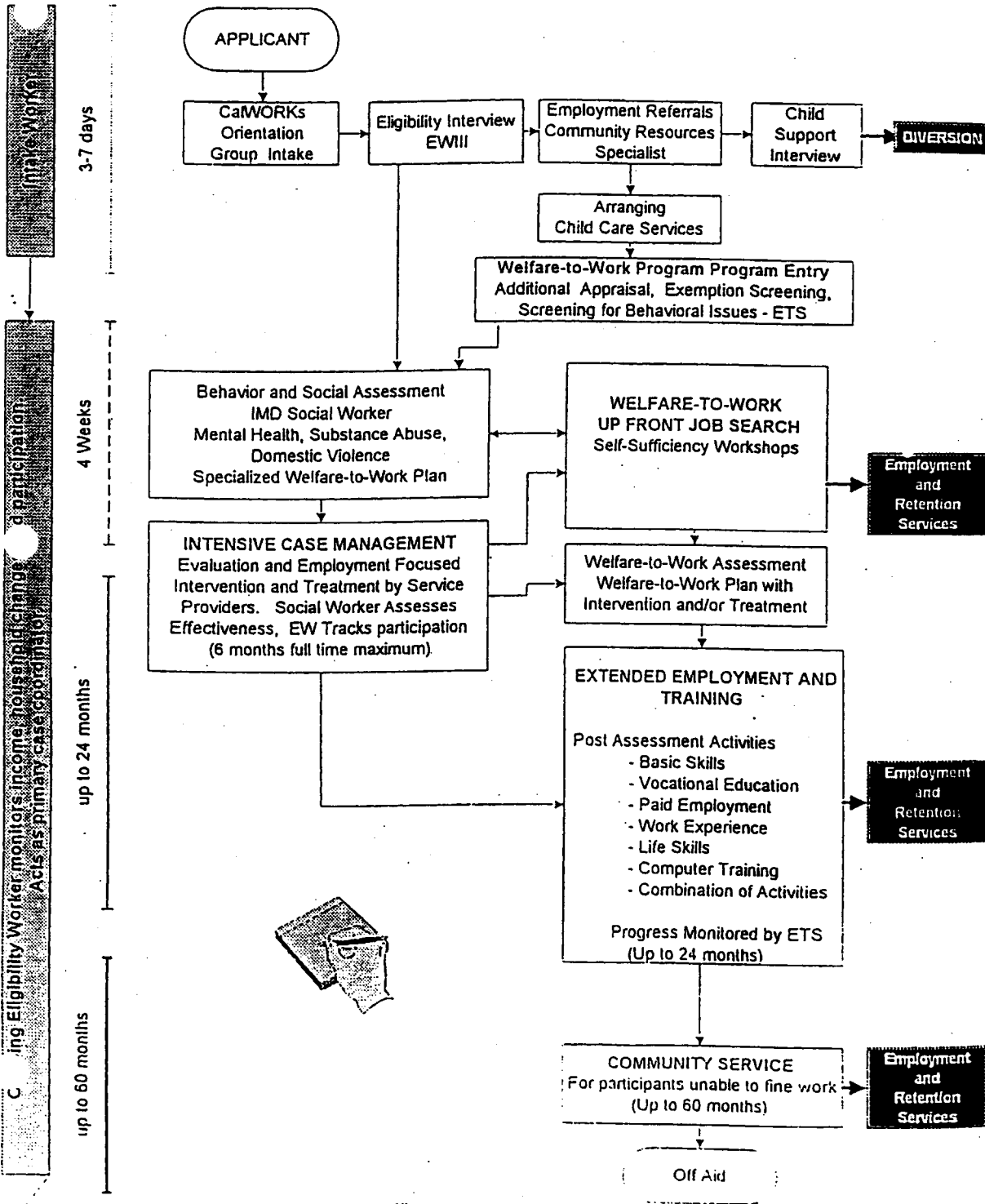
¹ Proehl, Rebecca Ph.D. Understanding Organizational Change, BASSC Executive Development in the Human Services. December 3, 1997.

² Naylor, Phillip Guiding Organizational Change at the Santa Cruz County Human Resources Agency: An Island Awash in a Sea of Change.

³ Intensive Case Services Overview, Santa Cruz HRA, February 26, 1998

⁴ Gardner, Sid & Nancy Young, Children at the Crossroads, Public Welfare, Winter 1998

CALWORKS PROGRAM FLOW FOR INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT AND WELFARE-TO-WORK UP FRONT JOB SEARCH



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