

LARIMER COUNTY: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



WOOP

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WHAT IS WOOP?

What is WOOP?

- Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan (WOOP) is an evidence-based strategy that uses imagery, mental contrasting and implementation intentions for positive behavioral change and goal setting.
- When applied with fidelity, WOOP has demonstrated its ability to increase the likelihood that individuals identify, commit to, and achieve their goals (i.e., wishes).
- WOOP was developed and researched by Dr. Gabriele Oettingen, psychology professor at New York University. Her research is showcased in her book: *Rethinking Positive Thinking*

WHY USE WOOP?

Brief background

- Larimer County underwent a series of significant budget reductions. We knew we wanted and needed to serve program participants more effectively and efficiently.
- In 2016, The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, and Mathematica selected three programs in the United States to serve as demonstration sites for an innovative application of WOOP. The goal was to inform the viability of WOOP for employment programs. The sites included Larimer County, Colorado, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Lebanon, Oregon.
- We continue to experience ongoing budget reductions.

WHY USE WOOP?

How has using WOOP changed us?

- Using WOOP led us to a process that was more evocative and less directive.
- We learned to ask better questions, and more follow-ups to dig deeper.
- It is person-centric. We got better at uncovering our participants' goals and true motivations.
- It helped us acquire a new lens on how we could move forward with our program.
- We learned that patience and letting the process unfold provided benefit.
- It supported our movement to a goal-achievement coaching model.
- It was healthy for our team to take the risk, try something new, and grow our skills.
- WOOP was our introduction to an evidence-based tool.

HOW DID WE IMPLEMENT WOOP?

How did we implement WOOP?

- Staff members were trained in administering WOOP and began practicing on peers, family members and friends before using it with program participants.
- Larimer County engaged in three road tests using WOOP in group settings and one-on-one. We wanted to learn how WOOP would work best for us.
- We conducted a focus group with participants to hear from them.

LEARNING FROM ROAD TESTS

What did we learn from the road tests?

- Practice for staff was critical to feeling comfortable. We needed to practice individually and as a group. As a result, we built in WOOPs at team meetings and scheduled other practice times.
- Participants found value in the WOOP process (focus group).
- We determined that WOOP tends to work best for participants who are “stuck”.
- Team or agency champions can make the difference in practice adoption.
- It is critical to start with leadership when adopting new practices if you want them to “stick” and be supported. Including frontline is equally important.

HEARING FROM OTHERS WHO HAVE USED WOOP.

Voices of WOOP

- <https://vimeo.com/262964608>

WHAT ELSE HAVE WE LEARNED?

What else have we learned:

- Physical space is important. You need quiet and calm.
- Identifying a wish that is near and dear, achievable but challenging is critical. WOOP is very effective on those deeper wishes.
- WOOP has a very specific process. Follow it.
- Don't rush the process. Silence on the part of the person guiding the WOOP is necessary at certain points of the WOOP. You may feel uncomfortable with the silence but the person doing the WOOP needs it.
- A trusting relationship is key. Participants were more open than expected.

WHAT ELSE HAVE WE LEARNED?

What else have we learned:

- People often default to obstacles outside their control. Keep guiding the WOOP and reminding them it is an inner obstacle.
- It is important that the person guiding the WOOP not interject his/her suggestions to the person doing the WOOP.
- We found that having an accountability partner supported individuals (staff members and participants alike) in fulfilling their wishes.

TOOLS AND MORE INFORMATION

Tools and where can you go to find more information on WOOP

<http://woopmylife.org/>

<https://www.woopmylifetoolbox.org/>

Let's WOOP!

QUESTIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions?

Thank you!

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