Integrating Innovative Employment & Economic Stability Strategies (IIEESS) Webinar Transcript

Peer-To-Peer Learning Opportunity: Integrating Coaching Strategies Beyond the TANF Program

Date: August 2, 2018

RUTHIE LIBERMAN: If you don't have your TANF coaching up and running, or if you haven't begun to have thought about how to spread the word about TANF coaching beyond the TANF program, that's perfectly fine. But we hope that by having a couple of your peers share their experiences in their state, it will open up some ideas to you. When we get to the conversation time, we really want this to be a give and take. It's not just question and answer. But any of you who have thought about expanding coaching beyond your TANF program or you've already taken steps, please share what you're doing. That's what this call is about today.

So, without further ado, I would like to welcome and thank our two presenters. So, Tina, you can move to the next slide, or whoever is moving the slides for us. The first up presenter that we're going to have is Wendy LeClair, and Wendy is the New Hampshire Employment Program Field Support Manager. I had the great pleasure of working very closely with Wendy in New Hampshire, and she can share with you how she and the leadership in her agency have been talking about coaching beyond the TANF program. And the second colleague that's going to be presenting is Kim Evans. She's the Deputy Director from the Family Support Division in Missouri Department of Social Services. I was just out in Missouri last week working with Kim and her entire team, and I can tell you that the concept of integration beyond the TANF program is very well-established in Missouri. There was a great cross-section of state agencies represented at our meetings, and Kim will be telling you about that. So, again, don't be shy in terms of sharing your experiences or asking questions. And at this time, I'm going to turn it over to my friend Wendy. And Tina, you can advance the slide again.

MEGAN YARBER: It looks like we're having just a slight technical difficulty getting Wendy's audio to work, so if you'll give us just a moment here. Ruthie, I don't know if you have any remarks on this slide that you'd like to go ahead and talk about?

RUTHIE: About the purpose slide? Yep, I actually went over that already. but while we're waiting for the technical difficulty, I wanted to share that we are going to have another Affinity call in a couple weeks, on August 16th, I believe it is. The topic is going to be on coaching in a TANF context, overlaid with the two generation context. And we're going to have some presenters from EMPath, as well as from the Washington, D.C. TANF program. So, if you haven't already responded and reserved your spot on that webinar, it's going to be the same format. August 16th, it will be at 2 p.m. Eastern time. The format will be: we'll have a few people share their experiences and then have an opportunity for a conversation, for states to share what they're thinking about in terms of Two-Gen, what's already going on in their state, and to ask each other questions and to share resources. So, are we all set with Wendy yet?

TINA: We're actually getting her on now. It'll be just a moment.

RUTHIE: Alright.

TINA: Hi Kim, if you want to go ahead, we can actually start with your portion of the presentation. Is that okay?

KIM EVANS: That's fine.

TINA: Okay, great. Thank you, Kim.

KIM: Good afternoon! My name is Kim Evans, and I am the Deputy Director for our income maintenance programs in the state of Missouri. I oversee our program and policy and our field operations, and also our new work initiatives that we are developing in Missouri. In Missouri, we are a little bit different in that we have moved to a statewide case load, so we have offices who do specialized processing. So when I talk about specialized, we have offices who do the Food Stamps processing, offices who do the processing for MAGI [Modified Adjusted Gross Income], and then for the adult Medicaid, and then our Temporary Assistance in Child Care is processed in one office. In each county, we have 114 counties across the state of Missouri, and then we also have the city of St. Louis, which is very large, and we maintain seven different resources centers in St. Louis City, along with a resource center in all of the 114 counties. In our resource centers, this is a place where individuals can walk in and they can ask questions; we can help them with accessing computers that we have for public access, where they can apply for our assistance online. They can go in and look up information, if they can. If they have a portal through their work employment, they can go on there and get their pay stubs for us and print them off, and you know, provide the information that way. If they need to provide us with banking information and they have…they can sign on to their account online, they can get the information to us that way.

And then also, we have a group that does nothing but phone interviews. Missouri has a waiver for an on-demand, and basically it's…instead of a setting of appointments, the individuals can call in between the first and the 15th for the re-certifications, and we will do the phone interview for them. This just allows for those who are working to be able to call when it's convenient for them. We open it at 7:30 and we run from 7:30 to 6:30, Monday through Friday, and then we also have a piece on this called a predictive dialer. So, as soon as a re-certification or an initial application is loaded into our system, what we will do the next day is this predictive dialer will cue up these calls, and we have staff who are on the phones, that we try to reach individuals to do their interviews, and so they will do the phone interviews without having to come to the offices. If they should present at one of the resource centers, then we have a bank of phones in each resource center that allows us to get them on with a customer service rep in the call center, who will do the interview for them there. So for individuals who may have limited minutes on their phones or have no access to a phone, this allows them a way to be able to complete that interview. Now, I will say, our processing centers, also… we do not see, we do not see the public in our processing centers. Those staff are just strictly processors.

In the resource center, it gives them a place, also, that individuals can come in and they can drop off their verification to us, and we have electronic content management that is shared across the state. So, if I am working in the St. Louis area and someone in Jefferson City scans in their information, as a worker I will get a task and I can pick that up and work that no matter where I am in the state. And then also, the administrative hearings for when they disagree with any decision that we may have made on eligibility, then they can come to the resource center and we will have a private place for them to come in and do their hearing.

We also run a merit-based call center. It has been three years now that we've switched. We did have a contracted call center, but now we are manning a merit-based call center. This allows us to be able to make changes on cases and actually do some casework on the phone with the individual and complete all of those Food Stamp interviews that we need to complete. We also have a contracted call center that works with nothing but our MAGI population. Through CMS [Content Management System] they have allowed us to—they take phone applications, they take phone annual renewals, they do changes of circumstance, they do address changes. The only thing they cannot do is they cannot make a final determination on a case. So they basically—someone comes in, calls in, the contracted call center will do all of the work, and then they will hand off that last piece of authorization off to a merit worker. And then we will review the work and then make sure that the eligibility is correct, and then we will go forward with the action that we need to take.

And then we have our new Work Engagement Unit. This is something that basically has come from our meetings that started, the meetings that we had in February in D.C., about work and around, you know, the Coaching for Success. What we realized in Missouri, is when we're working with a TA [Temporary Assistance] participant, the majority of the time you're going to be working with them in Food Stamps, also. Missouri has not—we are not a Medicaid expansion state, and we have not applied yet for any Medicaid work requirements. However, these are still the same families that were working together when we worked with these programs that have a work requirement. So, it just made sense to us to develop a Work Engagement Unit. We have been able to secure the funding to bring on 11 Work Engagement Specialists, who we will be placing in the 11 regions across the state to work with our providers who, or our vendors, who provide our case management. Their main focus is going to be just that liaison between the participants and the contracted vendor. We're also building into this piece, and I'll get into this a little bit more, but a monitoring piece, making sure that our vendors are meeting the requirements for the work participation. But it's also reaching out to the individual each month and saying, "Hey," you know, "How are things going?" If there happens to be an issue between the vendor and the participant, then this Work Engagement Specialist is going to be the one that's going to be trying to work through and making sure everybody's staying on that path to help this person become successfully employed, or go through their training—whatever program that we have made, or developed for them, that everyone is meeting their expectations. It's just sort of, "We're going to take them by hand and walk them down that path." So, each one of the Work Engagement Specialists will basically carry a case load of people that they will need to manage, along with the vendors. Okay, you can go to the next slide.

So, promoting success. You know, as Ruthie said, we had agencies come in last week, and vendors, and it was really exciting to see the buy-in and the communication—open communication that started. It just makes sense to everybody that if we're working with them constantly in the programs, if a vendor in the field should be working with them just like FSD [Family Support Division] would, it lessens the confusion for our participants. It helps us to make clearer expectations for them. Because Family Support Division is saying the same thing to them that the vendors are saying to them in the field, when we're encouraging them and coaching them along the way of the path to self-sufficiency. So it just made sense to get everybody in the room, and let's start training this all together.

Some of the departments that we had with us was the Department of Workforce Development; we brought in our community action agencies, community colleges, our Missouri Works Association that works with the TA program. We had Services for the Blind, our newly developed Work Unit, and Department of Labor, along with myself and the Assistant Deputy Director to our Division Director—our Department Director, I'm sorry—Howard Hendrick. He has been very supportive of this, and we are promoting the success because we believe in this. We believe that it's going to take FSD working with our vendors to support the individuals as they go forward in this program. So we have already planned some additional training that we will be doing with the Family Support staff, along with our vendor staff, and this also spreads to our resource centers. Since they are the ones—the individuals sitting in the resource centers are the ones—who will see people who walk in off the street, it only makes sense to us to go ahead and train them so that they are saying, also saying, the same thing to them, as being said to them if they're working with an agency. Okay, you can go to the next page.

So, as I talked earlier, we're establishing a statewide Work Unit to work with the vendors, and also to monitor the vendors. What we have found out in some recent audits is that we need to be, we need to be paying a little bit closer attention, we need to be making sure that the monies are being spent where they should be, and that they are spending money on individuals. It's not just have they spent it incorrectly, but making sure that they're giving the services and not, you know, that people need and not just holding onto the money. We have found that in certain circumstances, also. But it's also making sure that they're engaging people in the right components, making sure they're recording that correctly so that we get good numbers. We are also training all of our Family Support Division staff in the Coaching for Success. We have rolled out right now to our works units, but we're taking this to our resource centers, to our processing centers, and to our call centers. And you know, as I said before, it just makes sense that we are working with participants all in the same way. We are actually rolling out another program, and Ruthie, I'm not sure if we talked to you about this or not, but we are actually starting next week a division-wide training called Heart of Coaching, and we will be taking that out to all of our staff, too. So, whether we're working with our own staff, or we're working with participants who receive our benefits, there is always a coaching piece that we can find to help people better themselves. And so we're rolling that piece out, also.

And then, as we said, there's always, there's going to be ongoing training sessions. Our vendors really wanted this. They wanted us to come in and talk to them about policy, and about how… different ways that we can interact with participants. And then one thing that we've just been encouraging everybody: think outside the box. It's really exciting that we are allowed to really think outside of the box in Missouri, and they encourage us to think about how… the different ways that we can reach individuals, and really there's not a crazy idea. It's, you know, how are we going to reach them and draw them into this program to make them want to do something for themselves. This is all about the participants, and it's helping them and their families become self-sufficient. Okay, you can go to the next slide.

And so, as I said, it was a very exciting time in that room. You could feel the electricity, everybody was on board, people were throwing ideas and, you know, expressing how appreciative they were that everyone was coming together. Because, I think, this was something that everybody wanted; they just didn't know how to pull us all together. The communication has—the open communication has been amazing, because we're doing a lot of work as an agency to get out there with our community partners and thinking about ways that we can do outreach and different… just different things that we can do. Okay, you can go to the next screen.

So, when we were in Washington, D.C., I know that Ruthie had a hard time, when we were sitting there trying to talk about TA, of keeping me just really focused on Temporary Assistance. Because I knew we had all of these work programs coming up, and in my mind I kept thinking, "Why do I have to limit this to pre-assistance?" So, I brought this back to our staff and they're like, "Oh no, let's provide this to all of our participants who have work requirements." And that's where our work unit, our Work Engagement Unit came from, in that we want to bring this in and we want to be consistent across the state, so that when they're working with these programs, it also helps us become more consistent with our vendors. We have started having more collaborative meetings between the agency and the vendors, and including them in some of our processes and development of how we will do referrals, helping them see the importance of the reporting that they do. Sometimes they didn't realize how important it was for them to keep really, really good records, and so we had to remind them and show them that actually some of the, you know, how the funding affected them, and they have become more engaged with us since we have been doing this.

I mentioned earlier we're doing Heart of Coaching; it has been very successful in our Children's Division and we're now bringing it over to Family Support Division, and where we will be taking that out to our vendors, also. We are developing more robust reporting methods. We are wanting to show we're setting our benchmarks and we're now looking at going forward, that we have a price match initiative that was established by the governor, and work requirements and increasing the numbers were part of our Family Support Division's initiative, and so we're working to get better results. The other thing that has come up is that, when we've been in our meetings, is talking about the fiscal cliff effect and, you know, our individuals who are receiving benefits, it scares them to go to work because what's going to happen to me? And their fear is they're going to lose all of their benefits. So what we're working on is developing materials right now to address this and do a better job of educating individuals of the services they still may be eligible for, and making sure that they know about the wraparound services that can support them as they go to work, and just looking at different things that we do as an agency and our processes to help people, to help individuals understand and also to educate the community so that they know exactly what is going on as we push out these efforts on the work requirements. Basically, the way we look at this is the sky's the limit. This is something huge and big, and we can just… we're right now given the latitude to move forward and do what we need to do and think outside the box. So for us, we're really excited about getting this going, and I really appreciate all the efforts that have been given to us and assisted this along the way.

RUTHIE: Thank you so much, Kim. That was great. I learned something, and I thought I knew all that, so thank you so much. And you all will have a chance to chat with Kim a little bit later, share what's similar in your state, what might be different. Right now, we're hoping that Wendy's all set up to share their experience in New Hampshire.

WENDY LECLAIR: Yes, can you hear me?

RUTHIE: Yes, you sound great, Wendy. Thank you.

TINA: Wendy, you can continue with the presentation. We have your New Hampshire slide available for you to start.

WENDY: Can you hear me now?

TINA: Yes, ma'am.

WENDY: Okay, thank you. Had a few technical difficulties today, so thank you very much for walking us through those. Appreciate the time to talk about what we're doing in New Hampshire. It's been a very exciting time for us as well. It was really great to hear you, Kim, and everything that's going on in your state. It's very helpful to have these types of peer interactions to really gain knowledge and tips from other folks that are going through this, or have already started the process and are ahead of us. So, I really appreciate that. Thank you, Kim.

From the beginning, about a year ago we did attend that Enhancing Economic Security conference in Washington, and we were so intrigued by the Mobility Mentoring model and the concepts surrounding coaching and the mentoring practices. So, we were very excited to put a plan into place, a very comprehensive plan, two to three year look-out, to do this some of this and incorporate it into our existing Motivational Interviewing (MI) case management practices. So we had presented a plan to our director, around November of 2017, about implementing coaching in conjunction with MI, and we did receive full support to proceed. We wanted to really follow a model of complete immersion into coaching, top to bottom. So, full ownership in a systemic culture shift, because we really felt that this was a real change and an addition to the type of case management we'd been doing before. It was something we had been looking for as well—I heard Kim mention that, that it fills a need that we were seeing expressed by our staff, clients, and our administration, so it was a good step. So we, in the meantime, started experiencing a reorganizational structure, and the timing has been incredibly fortunate because the new administration is really all about holistic family approach and integration of our agencies and departments, that we all work with the same people. That they should have one entry that they can come in, be asked relevant questions, and be assisted to the services that they need, and streamline the process. That really went along well with what was presented in Washington. So we're very excited to say that we wanted to get started.

First thing we did was we invited our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) team to come with us and learn and be co-facilitators for trainings, for administration and supervisory staff. Because EAP had helped us in the past when we got Motivational Interviewing off the ground, and they were extremely helpful with change management. They had some really professional staff that had a lot of experience with the kinds of obstacles that people can face. You know, we know that if we see push-back or resistance in our own staff, we're going to see the same types of things across the board, you know. So dealing with those things and learning how to try to get buy-ins and excitement about why this is so vital for the changes that we needed to make was key. So, we kept that in mind all the way along, so far. The fact there's going to be person-centered, strengths-based approach fit so well for EAP too, so I do believe that they are going to utilize some of this training. They work all through the state with other agencies and so forth, so they're very excited to be on board, and we're glad to have them. We attended more additional trainings in February in Texas, we had some EAP staff go, and we had some of our own staff go, again, back to Washington for the kickoff for Coaching for Success. We included a supervisor from our Assessment and Intervention unit to that team, which was dynamic because they deal with clients with mental heath, behavioral health issues, domestic violence, substance use. So having that type of interaction with our team was dynamic.

So, we talked to our bureau chief and we had incredible support from our bureau chief as well. We dedicated some resources from our administrative group that was meeting on a weekly basis about best practices and program design. We renamed them the TANF approaching model. We were able to meet on a weekly basis and create our training and implementation plan and revise front-end processes. We saw this as being a two- to three-year process. We also incorporated all our middle management and our supervisory and our quality assurance staff that do reviews and edits, and had everyone involved in pieces of this along the way. Again, that's immersion that we felt needed to happen, to get buy-in from everyone involved. Another team in play is our technological business systems analysts and our programmers, who we're working with so we can integrate streamlined software changes, and include our coaching tools and assessments, so that's another dynamic. Finally, and not last, a training unit who works to assist us with creating all these training plans and events. Very comprehensive projects moving forward.

One of the first things we decided was that we really needed to have an informational session for our administration and other contracted partners, and other bureau staff and agency directors. So that we could get their interest and invite them along with our own supervisors, so that they could learn about what we're talking about. So we did a piece in May, we did an informational training session for the day, and we have a flyer included in here that talks about it. We sent that out to everyone that was invited, with some homework to do ahead of time, so that they were looking at pieces of executive function, some good materials about this, so that they were well-informed when they came in for the day about where this was going. It was very well-received, and we had some excellent feedback from our evaluation. We used all that feedback to think about and, when we were starting to put together a training package, to do the same thing with our own staff, our field staff. We were able to utilize that information from the first training to then move forward to that second training. So we held our staff statewide in July, and we included our contract department that we work with, and other bureau and division staff came as well. We did an introduction to executive function skills analysis and a teaser about coaching. The next piece we'll do is around November, where we'll do an MI refresher and an introduction to coaching. So, we feel that this is being good, because it's well-received to have it sort of in a layered fashion, and really get the ideas and the information out there, so people can mull them over and understand what we're talking about. So it's not a one and done type of a training atmosphere, but this is really ground-changing, culture-shifting, all the way through.

It did work out well to have that, so we did, again, some extensive feedback from our field staff and it was primarily quite positive, and we provided a summation to everyone who attended about how they feel. We were always gauging change readiness, just be aware of where we were with our people. The result of this, this integrated approach, thus far, has been exactly what we we're hoping for: interest and engagement and buy-in. We're working on some projects with other bureaus and divisions that work with the same clients as us to have a streamlined process for assessments, so that they can request assistance and get appropriate referrals and contacts. This is just the beginning of this integration model that we're starting to see here, and it's very exciting that everyone seems to be on the same page. You will always have some folks that feel change is a little threatening, that they kind of, you know, continue to like to do case management the same way that they had always done it, but those are few and far between. What was exciting for us, was this last round of the statewide, we did have some of those experienced, seasoned counselors who've said, you know, I think this is great. I think I would love to use this with our clients." That's exactly what we were hoping to see, some real culture shifts about how we treat our clients, and how we go about assisting them with all the services that we have. So, I'm grateful, and our whole team is grateful, for the assistance and help we've had thus far, and continued to get from Public Stategies and EMPath. It has been phenomenal to see the growth that we've had already. And we're very interested in seeing this right through to the end, for these changes to be implemented. Thank you.

RUTHIE: Wendy and Kim, thank you so much. I loved your presentations, and I'm sure that the group on here loved them as well. We have an opportunity now for you all on the call to share what you're doing. Are you helping to spread the coaching model, the coaching idea to other state agencies and partners? How is it going? Tina, can you remind people how they can raise their hand so that they can speak?

TINA: Yes, if you guys notice in the right corner, if you raise your hand, just say your name and who you're with, and click the icon. That way we'll know who actually raised their hand. Once we unmute you, just say your name and who you're with, and resume with your question.

RUTHIE: Great, and I'm going to take the liberty of asking the first question, because I have a lot to ask. But Kim and Wendy, I'm curious to know if you had any unanticipated results that came out of these efforts to spread coaching? Anything that you didn't expect.

KIM: Hmm.

RUTHIE: And it could be positive or not positive.

KIM: Well, I think from—this is Kim—I think from Missouri, you know, we're just really getting everyone on board and going forward with this. But I think we had to remind ourselves to be very deliberate and make sure, you know, who are we… who are the immediate players that we needed? And making sure that the message came across in the right manner. And working with our staff, also, to understand the benefits. It's a little bit hard—sometimes it feels like we're pushing people off benefits when we're trying to engage them to go to work. So, just fostering that mindset that this is helping some families become self-sufficient, it's helping them better themselves, and it's not just a push-off of the program, was probably one of the things that I was little surprised with our staff when saying that. But just bridging that gap between the vendor world of working, you know, with the individual, versus the policy world.

RUTHIE: Mm-hm, yeah, thanks. So, I'm not able to see the hands on my screen. Tina, do we have anybody who'd like to talk?

TINA: No, at this time I don't see anyone raising their hand.

RUTHIE: Okay.

TINA: Miss Ruthie, we actually have one.

RUTHIE: Okay, great.

TINA: Sanje?

SANJE: Hi, this is Sanje from Region Three TANF. How is everyone?

RUTHIE: Great. Thanks for joining us!

SANJE: Okay. Yeah, I've been involved pretty much for the last year with the development of the coaching strategies going out throughout the states. I work with West Virginia; it's one of my states that is adopting this. One of the common themes that I hear over and over again is that resistance to change by staff, and that's a normal reaction. What I'm curious to know is how do states sustain the change? Once you start implementing the change, how do you build this into your culture as an agency? And are there any kind of policy things that you do, specifically that help sustain these types of changes?

RUTHIE: That's a great question. I know, Kim and Wendy, that you're just starting off, but in both of your states you have other initiatives that you started a while ago. Like New Hampshire with the Motivational Interviewing, so if you want to talk about that as an example, that would be fine.

WENDY: Sure, I could speak to that from New Hampshire. The real key is to have this sustainable and repeatable, and to keep immersion consistent through the whole program. So we have expectations set in for performance measures that include these pieces. That's what we did with MI to start making sure that these expectations were being met. That part of their review, we had continual refresher trainings along the way. We hope to do the same sort of thing with coaching, where we would sustain that, to have some monthly tip sheets we'd send out, or just really keep that interest high, we would make sure that that's incorporated all the way through. So, you are so right. People can, you know, even be excited and be on board, who can get halfway through and start feeling like you're losing some steam. So you do have to have some ideas in place ahead of time, like putting this into your… these coaching techniques into your strategic plan. Things so that people know that this is a permanent change, and that this is something that we really are shifting to. It's not a passing interest; it's something that we really want incorporated in a permanent way.

RUTHIE: Yeah, and I have to add, when I came up for a site visit in New Hampshire, it was kind of funny, because I asked the staff when they had first rolled out the Motivational Interviewing. They were surprised at how long ago it was because it still seems, kind of, so new and fresh to them. So clearly New Hampshire does something to keep it in the forefront and to keep training. It wasn't something like… sometimes you raise an initiative from the past and people can barely remember it, but this was like it happened yesterday. So that was pretty telling of the kind of ongoing reinforcement that you guys do there. Kim, do you have anything that you wanted to add?

KIM: I do. You know, we have been through a lot of changes since 2014, with reorganizing the way we do work. What we have found is staff involvement, and getting out there early and letting them know what the changes are and including them in the changes, has really helped open the communication lines. We're seeing this is the same way with the vendors that we use. You know, we went out early saying, "Hey we're going to do this" and "Expect this," and they've just been real receptive to that. We just find, like you know, really getting out there saying, "Hey, the changes are coming," involving them with some of the decision making and the process planning, and how well our trainings go, has been very helpful with everyone receiving the change and accepting it, and actually giving input.

RUTHIE: Great—

WENDY: That’s so true—

RUTHIE: Do we have any other hands raised, Tina?

TINA: No, ma'am. I don't see any more hands at this time.

RUTHIE: Okay. Anyone on the call thinking about this: Have you, in any of your introductory meetings… I actually believe, in West Virginia, when you had some kickoff meetings, you had some other state agency partners. Have any of you had meetings where you've invited state agency partners, and can you tell us about it? How did you set it up? What was their reaction? Did they want to come? Did they see this as extra work? Quiet out there. Alright, well, that question's going to stay out there, but I do want to ask Wendy and Kim: if you could share with us who some of your biggest champions have been in terms of bringing in these other state partners?

KIM: For Missouri, it really has started at the very, very top with our governor and the initiatives that he has, you know, that he started with our agencies. This is department-wide, or it's state-wide, because in every department they have challenged us to break down our silos and, you know, work with the different departments. For us it's working with Department of Corrections, working with Department of Education, working with Department of Labor. We have seen a change, where more and more people are coming to the table and working together to come up with a solution and ideas where we can help Missourians. So I would have to say, you know, Dr. Corsi, our Director, has been very vital. He's very supportive; he pushes us to think outside the box. Howard Hendrick, who is his assistant, Designated Principal Assistant— he is always challenging me to think of new ways and thinking about things that we can do to encourage individuals. And then the Division Director, Patrick Luebbering— I would just have to say that all the way at the top we are getting support, and it reaches across the state of Missouri. So I don't think we could ask for any better support.

RUTHIE: And I just want to add my comment there, and then I have another hand raised, but that both Kim and Howard Hendrick attended a good chunk of the convening that we had last week. That, to me, was such a strong indication of the leadership’s enthusiasm and support. Because a lot of times you go to something like this, and the top folks show up and welcome everybody, and then they're off. Understandably, they're very busy, but Kim and Howard spent a lot of time and interacted and talked to people, and really showed how important this initiative was. So I see that Karen Skinner from Alabama wants to make a comment. So, Karen, why don't you chime in?

TINA: Karen, are you there?

RUTHIE: Can someone unmute Karen? It looks like she's still muted.

TINA: Karen, are you there? You're unmuted.

MEGAN: Karen, it looks like you have your phone possibly muted at the time, at this time. Can you hear us?

RUTHIE: Okay. Well, Karen, just jump in when you get that technology fixed. Wendy, I'm wondering did you have any comments on who were your biggest champions in New Hampshire?

WENDY: Yeah, I think that we have are just so fortunate that we have some very talented people in our teams, in our administration, in our middle management, in our field staff. You know, the enthusiasm has come from many different places. You said, you know, were you surprised? And it is surprising, because sometimes you're not quite sure. You know, I can get very excited about something, but knowing that someone else is as excited as I am is very, you know, enlightening. So, that doesn't always occur right away, but in this case we had that, and we did have that support from above, but we also have interest, keen interest, from our field staff who work with clients who say, "We need a better way to help them with their goal achievement, to build small successes one at a time, to make the case management that we provide feel that it is in their hands, that they are in control and they have the ability to change and grow, and to be the change in their own life." And so that was very enlightening for me, to see all the feedback that came from our staff. I was so pleased and so proud to see the talent that we have, and the people out there, and the strength that they're willing to put into this. Because it's a great program, but to have it work, it's got to be believable and it's got to be genuine. So, I think we have those pieces in place, and I think we're very fortunate in our state.

RUTHIE: Thanks. So I have one more question, but I don't know if anybody else has a question? You can type it in the Q and A box if you want, or you can raise your hand. I don't want to monopolize the whole conversation, but I will go ahead and ask my question, and if we see any responses, we'll be happy to interrupt. So my last question is: If you could do something differently with the roll-out of coaching, either within your own program or across the various departments, what would it be? Like, if you had… if it was easier to do something, or if you had a different set of resources possibly? Do you have enough time for this? Those are the kinds of things I'm wondering about. Kind of a wish— what do you wish you had? Wendy, Kim, are you still there?

WENDY: Sure, I'll go.

RUTHIE: Okay.

WENDY: If we had given all the resources, you know, in the world, it would be great to just to be able to design our own system that would completely incorporate all of these pieces and just have everything at our fingertips when we'd like, but that's not reality.

RUTHIE: Right.

WENDY: We have a lot of competing resources for time, and you know, sometimes we just have to make the best of the situation that we have and do the best we can with what we have. Many states find themselves in those situations, I am sure. So, you know, wishing that you had more than you have is probably a common feeling, but knowing that a lot of this can be incorporated without having to have more, as far as resources implemented. I think some of the myths that we saw— people thought that trying to use the coaching in the case management is just going to take a lot of time. It's going to take longer. And I don't feel that that's true now. I don't feel that that… there's no myths out there anymore, that I think people understand, "Oh, well in asking these questions in a different way, these things can be achieved in about the same time frame that we had." So, our resources, you know… it's doable with what we have. But it's always great to think about if we had everything right at our fingertips, it would be just, you know, so much easier. But we have to work with what we've got.

RUTHIE: Yeah, and I know with both Missouri and New Hampshire, you've taken a lot of—you've taken advantage of various opportunities that have been given to you to be on projects. But it has sometimes led you to have to work with different folks and to kind of change mid-stream in order to get that support. So, I kind of hear what you're saying. It's hard to… when you're trying to build a unified system from your end, and you're getting your support from all, wherever you can get it, it can get complicated, right?

WENDY: Definitely. Yeah.

RUTHIE: Kim, do you have any closing thoughts on that question or anything else?

KIM: I just have to agree with Wendy. If I were… someone would say, you know, all your wishes would be granted, the wonderful technology and the time to have everything just perfect, and the resources to be able to just do everything, that would be wonderful. But like Wendy said, we don't have that, and sometimes you just have to do what you have to do. But it will get done and it is very doable. You just have to put a little bit of thought into it, and it actually starts falling into place.

RUTHIE: Great. Well, we are going to conclude this call. I thank both Kim and Wendy so much for preparing for this call, doing such a great job. We had a big crowd on today, and I really appreciate your time. I hope that many of you will join us at our next call. Go back to your e-mails and look for an invite. Probably another invite will be sent again. If you have any suggestions about topics that you'd like to have covered, please share them with the folks that you're working with in your state, from the Coaching for Success team. So, thank you and have a great afternoon, everyone. Take care.

KIM: Thank you!

WENDY: Thank you!

RUTHIE: Bye!

TINA: Thank you all for joining today's webinar. We appreciate your time and attention. Just as a reminder, this webinar has been recorded and will be available soon on FastTRAC. If you have any questions related to the presentation, please submit them to your TTA provider. Thank you again, and have a great day.