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2017 Linking TANF Families to Employment and Economic Opportunities Meeting

Improving TANF Client Outcomes Through Coaching and a Intergenerational Approach

Presented by:

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2017 Linking TANF Families to Employment and Economic Opportunities Meeting

Agenda

- OFA Policy Academy
- Utah's Approach
- Understanding EF in context
- Tips for Implementation
- Next Steps & Opportunities
- Contacts



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OFA Policy Academy



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Office of Family Assistance Policy Academy

The Academy aimed to help strengthen TANF systems to:

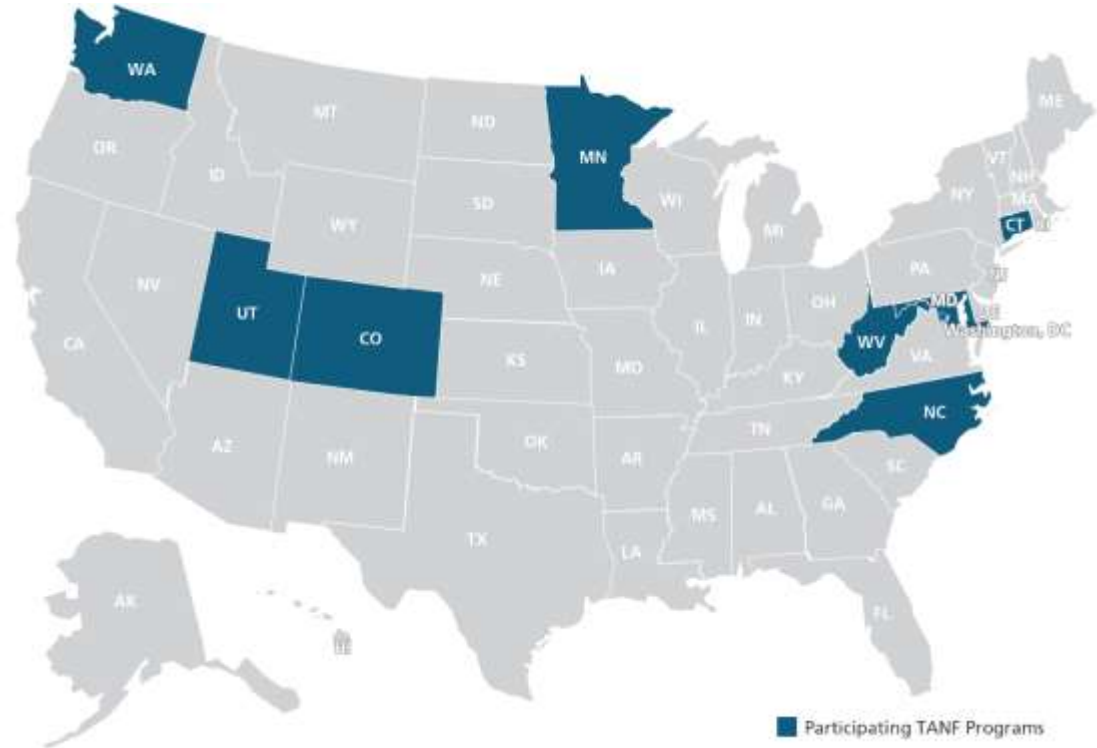
- Use innovative approaches to assess TANF participant needs and deliver more effective case management;
- Adopt job-driven training approaches, including career pathways, to provide participants with skills and resources to obtain and retain employment in promising occupations;
- Make improvements across the continuum of employment services from job search and job readiness to post-employment supports;
- Build programs that focus simultaneously on parental employment and child and family well-being;
- Improve TANF internal business processes and service delivery; and
- Incorporate practices informed by growing knowledge about executive functioning and trauma-informed care.



Office of Family Assistance Policy Academy

Participating TANF programs:

- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Maryland
- North Carolina
- Ramsey County (Minnesota)
- Utah
- Washington
- West Virginia



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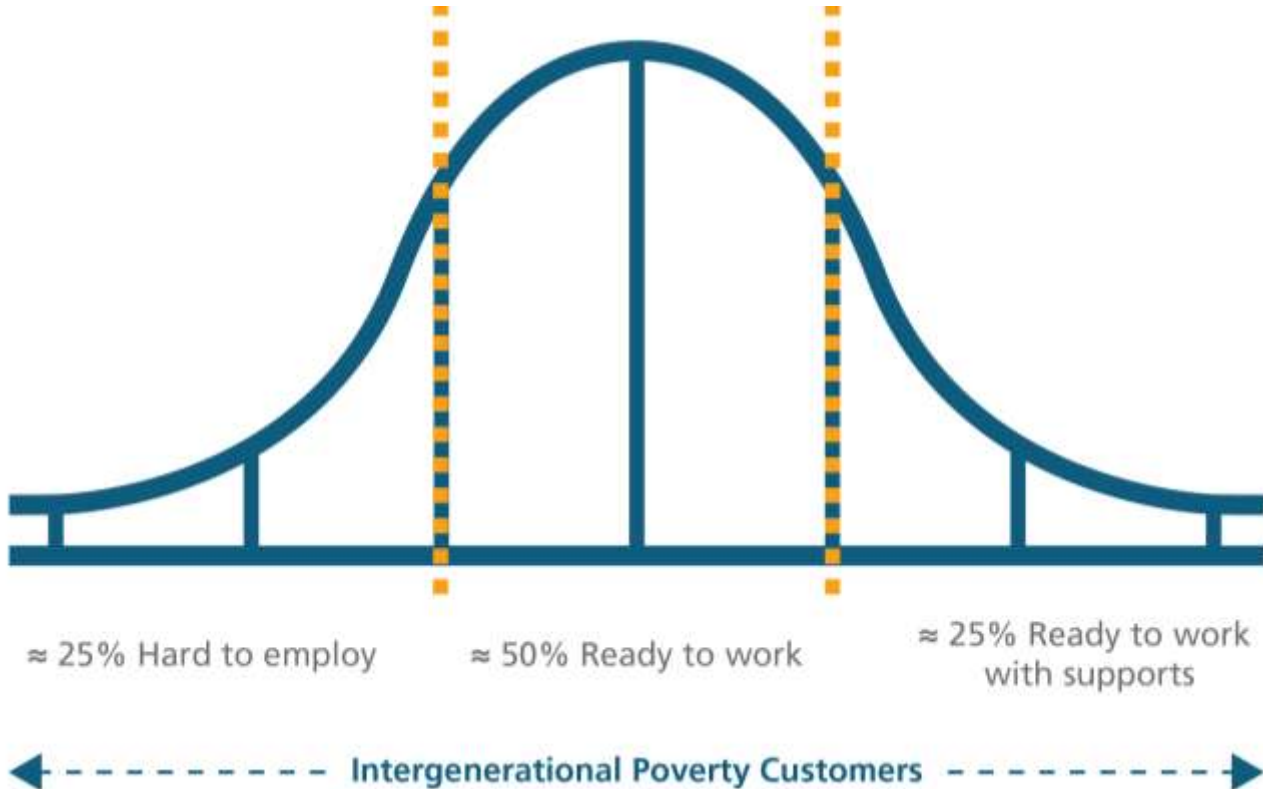
Utah's Approach



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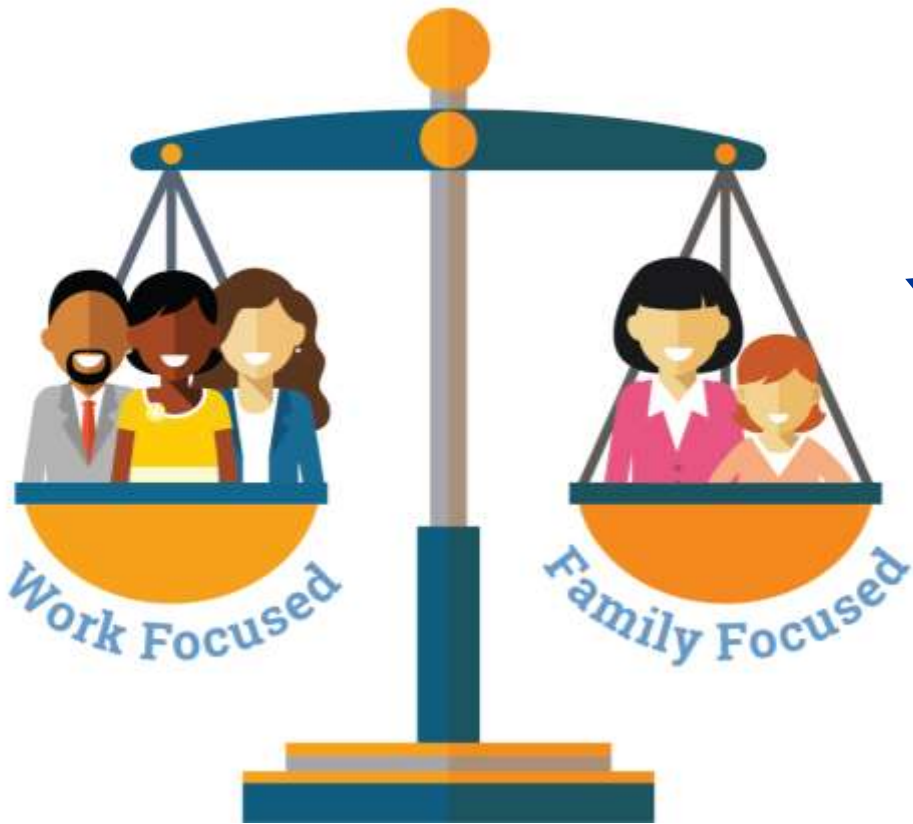
Family Employment Program (FEP) Customer Groupings



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Family Focused Case Management: Overarching Goal of FEP Refocus



“Work with families so that the children on today’s FEP cases will not need to access cash assistance as adults”



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Academy Process

- Preparation (prep) lesson: Get them thinking; surface questions/concerns/fears
- In Person Training/Experience Module
- Survey Post Module for satisfaction and knowledge
- Follow-up activities
- Through-put rounds
- Reinforcement in subsequent modules



*One moment in time for staff
One lifetime of opportunity for families*



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FEP Refocus Training Modules

- Coaching Training – All Supervisors/Managers
 - Command Center Training Structure
- Introduction to Human Development
- Case Management I, II, III
- Motivational Interviewing I, II, III
- **Executive Functioning**
- Trauma Awareness



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Executive Functioning Module Format

Training conducted by Internal Licensed Clinical Therapists (LCTs)

- Overview of Executive Functioning by Experts
 - PCG Video #1
 - Group Discussion
- Behavioral Indicators of Executive Functioning Challenges Discussion
- Sharing Opportunities on Interventions and Strategies
 - What are we already doing/using?
- Additional Tools and Interventions
 - Sections of PCG Video #2
 - LCT Developed Tools
 - Suggested Interventions



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Understanding EF in context



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Make Executive Function relatable

- Executive function is a lens through which case workers and front line staff can better understand human behavior.
- Learning about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) was powerful for helping Employment Counselors build empathy and compassion for their customers.



Make Executive Function relatable

Concept of “Limited bandwidth” resonates – it is relatable



Crisis and stress impact executive skills...



... and sometimes you just don't have enough bandwidth to deal with the cognitive load.



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Understanding Executive Skills

We all have strengths and weaknesses

Impulse Control

Emotional
Control

Flexible Thinking

Working Memory

Self Monitoring

Planning &
Prioritization

Task Initiation

Organization

*From Dick Guare
(May 2014)*



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How we think our mornings should look



How they really look!



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Crisis and stress impact Executive Skills

- You are struggling to balance work duties and home responsibilities
- Your child gets sick
- Your car breaks down or your train is late and you cannot make it to work on time.
- You forgot to pay a bill
- The school calls because your child is misbehaving
- Your furnace breaks in the middle of winter
- Your child care provider is closed but you have to work



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Make it concrete: Task Initiation



Everyday Example: Household chores

- The idea of cleaning the entire house can be very overwhelming and daunting.
- But if you break down the task into smaller pieces – vacuum the floors, clean the bathrooms – and make a to-do list, it is easier to get started on these small tasks.

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Make it concrete: Task Initiation



TANF Example: Writing a Resume

- Writing a resume can be equally intimidating.
- Help your clients by breaking the process into pieces: have them write down their previous jobs and skills in a list as a starting point.

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Video

These techniques sound a bit theoretical. How does this happen in real life?



[Transcript](#)



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The Brain Architecture Game



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The Brain Architecture Game

- The goal is to build a brain that is tall, which represents functional brain ability, but also as strong as possible so that it won't collapse in later years under the burdens of stress
- Materials
 - Pipe Cleaners (weak building material);
 - Straws (used to make building material stronger);
 - Weights;
 - Die;
 - Life Experience Cards (Positive, Tolerable, or toxic developing brains);
 - Life Journal



The Brain Architecture Game

- BUILD THE FOUNDATION
 - The Base has been created
 - One with the most support
 - One with the least support
- SOCIAL SUPPORTS – Straws represent the social supports available to the brain at the time of birth – can be used any time during the game
 - Each “architect” has been given 4
- FIRST LIFE EXPERIENCE
 - Draw one card at random from Year 1 and read
 - **Blue Card** – Positive – Take one pipe cleaner and thread it through one straw
 - **Red Card** – Toxic Stress – Take one pipe cleaner
 - **Orange Card** – Tolerable Stress – Roll Die (2,4,6 = Pipe cleaner + Straw; 1,3,5 = Pipe cleaner only)



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The Brain Architecture Game

- BUILDING YEARS 1 – 5
 - Draw 1 more card from Year 1
 - **Blue Card** – Positive – Take one pipe cleaner and one straw; insert the pipe cleaner in the straw – attach anywhere
 - **Red Card** – Toxic Stress – Take one pipe cleaner – if you received straws at the beginning of the game, you may use them to reinforce a pipe cleaner at any time
 - **Orange Card** – Tolerable Stress – Count the number of positive and toxic stress events on your life Journal. Take building materials for the type of experience your brain has experienced the most so far – attach anywhere

**** ATTACH ALL YEAR 1 MATERIALS TO THE BASE STRUCTURE BEFORE MOVING TO YEAR 2, ETC. ****

- For each year that follows, draw one card within each year, one card at a time, attach the building materials to the brain structure

**** DO NOT REMOVE ANY MATERIAL OR REMODEL ****

**** ALL PIPE CLEANERS MUST BE ATTACHED AT BOTH ENDS ****



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The Brain Architecture Game

- BUILDING YEARS 6 – 8

** RULE CHANGE – NO MORE STRAWS – WEIGHTS ADDED **

- Continue to draw one card per year and build your structure – weights must be added when received
 - **Blue Card** – Positive – Take one pipe cleaner – attach anywhere
 - **Red Card** – Toxic Stress – Hang a weight from the tallest part of your structure
 - **Orange Card** – Tolerable Stress – Count the number of positive and toxic stress events on your life Journal. Take building materials for the type of experience your brain has experienced the most so far – attach anywhere
- Game ends at end of Year 8 OR when your brain structure collapses, whichever comes first



Tips for Implementation



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Tips for Implementation

- Involving staff at all levels in development and delivery of the new model is an effective way to build buy-in.
 - Change management has to be incorporated into all program designs for them to become a part of the culture, including encouraging and leveraging buy-in from key stakeholders (e.g., supervisors, front line staff, etc.).
 - Sustaining the culture change will take more work, and DWS needs to find ways to build accountability for new behaviors.
- When an initiative like this is an add-on to existing responsibilities, make sure that goals and lines of authority are clear.
- Follow-up and practice is key to engraining new behaviors, as is reinforcement from supervisors.
- Don't try to do this on your own – find what's out there and make it your own



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“With our new information of including family back stories and ACE’s when meeting with clients and also using the family focus model, I have seen customers be more willing to share with me their struggles and be more honest. I feel that now relationships are more focused on partnering and really helping customers with their true and deep seated struggles. We as counselors are making better connections of trust and we are able to help with other supportive services in the areas that the family is struggling with. With this new case management style, we are seeing less resistance with the customers and more success.”

– Utah FEP Employment Counselor



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Next Steps & Opportunities



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Next Steps & Opportunities

- Grants.gov forecast opportunity: “TANF Policy Academy for Innovative Employment Strategies”
 - <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=293925>
- Utah Training videos from PCG posted on the PeerTA Web site
 - <https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/content/executive-functioning-training-videos>
- PCG planning to recruit stakeholder to review coaching eLearning modules in development for ACF



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Contact us



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Slide 20 Video Transcript

Female narrator: These techniques sound a bit theoretical. How does this happen in real life? They happen naturally when someone is motivated to make a change and succeed. The skills you've learned in motivational interviewing and coaching will allow you to help your customer find their motivation for each task, and motivation is key.

For example, this is my dad: He's a smart man, a lawyer, but he and technology are not the best of friends. In 2013, I think he had a flip phone, and he definitely didn't know how to send a text message. And then I had twins. He quickly had to learn about Skype, Google Hangouts, and all the things smartphones could do to enhance his relationships with his granddaughters. For my dad, this was a natural way to build a skill. He had a goal—to see his granddaughters grow—and, given the distance between us, he has few options but to learn how to use his smartphone more efficiently.

Now let's talk about applying this to our customers. A human services professional could coach clients in something as simple as how to make a grocery list before going to the store. They could help them find their motivation for making the list, be it healthy eating, organization, fewer trips to the store, or saving money.

Making a list is a practical way that customers can practice developing many executive skills at once. They are taking the first step by creating the list. They're more organized and have planned for the week ahead. They can use their time more efficiently by making the trip shorter. They can stay within budget by buying only what's on their list. And it can help with impulse control by reducing spontaneous purchases. A simple task like making a grocery list is a natural way to develop skills that are key to success in the workplace without calling attention to executive skills deficiencies.

Now I know it's probably not part of the job of most human services professionals to help make grocery lists with their customers, but you can see in this example that by breaking tasks down, even everyday tasks, you can help your customers build their executive skills in a natural, practical way.

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[End]

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