

Ohio Child Welfare Practice Profiles  
Module 9 – Demonstrating Cultural and Diversity Competence

(Lindsay Williams)

Welcome to Module 9 of the Ohio Child Welfare Practice Profiles webinar series. My name is Lindsay Williams and I am here today with Shannon Harnichar, Erica Sabados and Sonia Tillman and we are actually – when we prerecorded this webinar, when we did our practice run for this webinar, we have some prerecorded pieces from Lashaun Carter who works for Franklin County Children's Services and we are going to try to integrate those in. We have done that once before. We have a few extra audio clips today so... hopefully, that will all work out well for us. So, Erica, Shannon and Sonia and I, we are all members of Ohio Statewide CQI Community Subcommittee and our topic today is Demonstrating Cultural Diversity and Competence. And to go with this month's theme of diversity, we have incorporated some diversity – some color into our slide shows today for a little bit of fun. So we want to get started by just going around and letting everybody kind of give you a brief introduction and kind of share their history and their experience being involved in the field of child welfare. So, Erica, would you like to go first?

(Erica Sabados)

Sure. Good morning, everybody. Happy to be with you for this webinar today. My name is Erica Sabados. I am with the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services. I am the administrator here for a performance evaluation innovation department. I have been in child welfare about 15 years and about 10 of those in supervision and administration. I have been very involved up here in our implementation of differential response and in, of course, our CQI efforts and on the committee with the state.

(Lindsay Williams)

Thanks, Erica.

(Shannon Harnichar)

My name is Shannon Harnichar. I am the Program Compliance Officer for Homes for Kids and Child and Family Solutions. We are a treatment foster care agency and mental health agency in Trumbull County. So, I have been with Homes for Kids for 24 years. My first 18 years were strictly with foster care so recruiting and licensing and supervising our foster care department. And then for the last eight years, I have been doing program compliance so that is I oversee COA accreditation, ODJFS, OMAS, ODYS certifications, HIPAA and client's rights.

(Lindsay Williams)

Wow. You are around.

(Shannon Harnichar)

So I am happy to share some of my experiences today with this topic.

(Lindsay Williams)

Well, we are glad to have you.

(Sonia Tillman)

Good morning, everyone. This is Sonia Tillman and I am the Differential Response and Special Projects manager here at ODJFS. I am entering or have entered into my 25<sup>th</sup> year in child welfare. Ten of those were providing direct service and supervision and now here at state assisting with some programming and policy and so I am just again happy to be here. We are – our leadership council is really, really focused on improving child welfare practice across our state. And so, we are really pleased that these Practice Profiles webinars are being featured and we have some edits that are going to be coming soon. So hopefully you will be hearing more about the Ohio Practice Profiles and the application across our entire child welfare system. So that is our goal.

(Lindsay Williams)

And this is Lindsay and I have going on 14 years' experience in child welfare. I spent about four years at a county agency as a caseworker and then doing casework supervision and then I have been with the state for almost ten years. I can't believe it already. And just, you know, you guys know this but we like to keep these webinars conversational and feel free to jump in and enter your questions and your comments at any point throughout the webinar. So let's see if I can change the slides here. Okay. Oh, and we have Lashaun's intro we want to play as well. I am sorry.

(Lashaun Carter)

Good afternoon. My name is Lashaun Carter. I am the director of Strategy, Diversity and Evaluation Services for Franklin County Children's Services. I have been working at Health and Human Services for the last 20 years. Most recently, I ran a collective impact nonprofit that partnered with Franklin County Children's Services. In the last year, I transitioned over to Franklin County Children's Services primarily to learn our strategy and our diversity inclusion.

(Lindsay Williams)

Okay. And that is Lashaun so we will be including his clips and his input as we go through today. Let's try again to change the slide here. Okay. So, we want to remind everyone as we do every month how to access our Ohio Practice Profiles booklet and the complete guide can be found on Forms Central as you know. These are currently being revised to incorporate trauma-informed care and to add an 11<sup>th</sup> profile of documenting. And we are getting closer and closer on that.

(Sonia Tillman)

Very soon. Very soon.

(Lindsay Williams)

And then as always, we just want to kind of do a quick reminder of the principals of CPS intervention and highlight a few of these. Of course, safety comes first. We want to emphasize that family engagement in all aspects of our practice. We want to be strength based while we are addressing those underlying factors that are impacting child safety and as always, we feel that safety is best achieved through that active collaboration and respectful engagement with our families. And then as a differential response system, we are designed to identify family needs and work with them to find creative solutions and informal support as much as the formal

support ensuring that child's safety. And we want to respect families' choices. That really is going to fit into a lot of what we are talking about today with demonstrating cultural and diversity competence and then, of course, you know with our primary goal of being ensuring safety. Sometimes it is necessary to involve courts or extended families or others to ensure appropriate protection for our children. Okay, so this is a list of our workers skillsets and I just want to highlight that the first several skillsets really demonstrate our CQI cycle. So you know we allow to partner with families. We engage with them. Then we assess their needs and what is going on in the home. We partner with them to and really it is that respectful collaboration piece to kind of figure out what is going on in there and include them then in the planning process and to join with them to develop strategies and outline tasks to accomplish our goals that were derived through, you know, the engaging, assessing and partnering pieces. And then we work with them to implement that change. And then, finally, we evaluate what we have been doing and that kind of starts our whole CQI cycle again. Now these last profiles are more things that we apply throughout our work with families and children. So, last month we talked about advocating for our clients and for families and for children. And this month, we are talking about how to demonstrate cultural diversity competence, which really goes along with all of these of other skillsets.

(Sonia Tillman)

So we are going to start off just by talking with you and giving a very broad definition of demonstrating cultural and diversity competence. You may hear a couple of definitions throughout this webinar but we wanted to at least start out with what is listed in the Practice Profiles book. So here is what you have. It is really just about interacting with families without making assumptions and judgments. Being able to respect and learn from their unique characteristics and find out more about the strengths of that family while acknowledging and honoring their diversity within and across the culture. And then what you do is take all of those skills together and help build a partnership with that family so that you can best provide them with the services and help resolve the concerns that brought them to our attention. And so I know that is a huge definition, but if you think about it, it is what we have been talking about all of these months, every last one of these skills. Engage and interact, don't have judgments while you are assessing, respect them and collaborate and communicate respectfully so that you can best understand the dynamics of their family so that we can again help to resolve the concern. Would any of my panelists like to give some insight on their impression or definition of diversity competence?

(NEW SPEAKER)

Well I know you know as I have worked with families in the past, I feel that we have hit a point where we were getting comfortable with each other. I know I always like to ask questions about their beliefs and values and their background and not make assumptions. Sonia, you were saying better to ask than to assume. That's true. And I think families appreciate that.

(Sonia Tillman)

Absolutely. I think you are 100% correct. I would rather – ask me if you are not certain than to just assume something that may not be accurate. I think we have a clip from Lashaun. Can you queue up number 2 for us?

(Lashaun Carter)

Well, Sonia, I'll jump right in and say that the definition reads well, but one of the ways we felt about this in our work and also just in relationship with ethnicity and diversity inclusion research is that you are really saying you are honoring the lived experience of the children of the family and that lived experience can be varied and there can be multiple ways within even a singular family. You know the research around intersectionality was shared with us that as an individual you have many different ways that you will need a worker to be responsive. In order for the worker to give their best effort, they should be sensitive to those many needs. So this definition broadly covers that but more specifically you are talking about the ability to respond in a culturally sensitive way to the unique needs of the individual.

(Sonia Tillman)

Absolutely.

(Lindsay Williams)

Now I think about this in terms of being respectfully curious. So you are trying to understand what life is like from that family's perspective within their unique set of cultural experiences and their lifestyle. Okay, thank you.

(Sonia Tillman)

So as we are talking about diversity competence, it really is an ongoing developmental process. It is not something that I went to a training. I learned all about diversity and I have got it. It really is an acquired understanding of the patterns and potential dynamics of a group and how you then can use that again to influence and help create some change and help improve their situation. And so the ability to use and manage this information really allows for us to be more effective with all people. And so you have to kind of think about it as an ongoing process. I don't think you can ever feel too competent. And so let's take a minute to do a poll. We love to have polling questions. And so let's just kind of do a self-assessment. And think about the last time that you assessed your own cultural and diversity competence.

(Lindsay Williams)

Everybody should see the poll on the screen now.

(Sonia Tillman)

And so our question is: when was the last time that you self-assessed your cultural and diversity competence? Your options are: that I never thought about it, it has been a long time, within the last six to 12 months, within the last three to six months or within the last three months.

(Lindsay Williams)

Or constantly.

(Sonia Tillman)

Or constantly. That's right. I am constantly assessing my cultural diversity skill.

(Lindsay Williams)

We have about 70% of you that voted. We will give it another few seconds and then we will close the poll. See if we can get up to 80% participation. We are at 78%. It might be all we have got. Now I got 81%. Okay, we are going to go ahead and close the poll. And share the results. Can everybody see that? So we do have quite a few of you that say that this is constantly, 47% that this constantly something you think about.

(Sonia Tillman)

Excellent. And with our changing world, you have to always stay on top of the population that you are serving. New dynamics and new things are happening regularly in our lives and so we need to make sure that we are really tapped into that. We did have some great feedback from Lashaun on this one. Gaye, can you pull up number 4 for us?

(NEW SPEAKER)

Sonia, I wasn't ready for 4, I was ready for 3. Do you want 3 or 4?

(Sonia Tillman)

I said 4. I am sorry.

(NEW SPEAKER)

You want 4?

(Sonia Tillman)

Yes, please. Lashaun gave some great insight on why self-assessment was important and talked a little about intersectionality.

(Lashaun Carter)

Why this is so important is because self-assessment is critical to being able to provide the best service possible. What is also true about self-assessment is that the consequence of not self-assessing is greater for those who are already under-represented. The consequence of you not being reflected is intensified for those who are under-represented or identify as a minority no matter what subclass they identify with. So it is always important for the majority class or those who are seen as majority to be reflected because quite honestly if you are not, the impact on you is not as great as it is on our children.

(Sonia Tillman)

And those of us that are seen in levels of authority because a family sees us as an authoritative person coming in. And so... absolutely. Even if we are of the same class or race or gender, you still have some and that is going to lead us to the next part of it – you still have some unintended authority that you are presenting with.

(Lashaun Carter)

Well, depending on how you identify, you are going to find yourself on the spectrum of where you live and the majority class, right? So if we are talking about, you know, our sexuality, then as a first gender male, I am in the majority class, right? But that is how intersectionality plays into it because as a first gender male but as an African-American man, there is a complexity. There is a nuance to that. And being able to self-reflect and understand that nuance and what

positions of authority you might hold, empower you to make a different choice when you are working with children.

(Lindsay Williams)

Now, Lashaun. Just for some of our audience, because the term intersectionality is a little bit new to me. Can you kind of give us a little bit of a one on one lesson on some of the terms you were using?

(Lashaun Carter)

Wow, okay. So intersectionality 101 is, okay, so intersectionality is basically the whole idea in – I know there is some researchers on here that want to kill me on this but it is the whole idea that as an individual I represent more than just one thing, right? So if we are talking race, right, and as a black male, I represent not only being black but I also represent being male. And as each nuance of me is added, that adds another layer of intersectionality. So if I was a gay black male, those are three layers of intersectionality that we would need to consider in order to work with me, right? And so the same is true with our children. The same is true with our families. Every family has some level of intersectionality and it is our responsibility to be able to drill in to uncover what those are and be flexible enough to navigate those with validity in order to provide the best service possible. Does that get it?

(Lindsay Williams)

It does, absolutely. I think that will be helpful for everybody listening out there. I think that is a newer term and kind of a newer framework for some of us that have maybe been out of school for a while.

(Lashaun Carter)

And so what I will say is if I was prepared, I would have provided you with the research. There is an entire of body of work and I am slapping myself for not having the name right off the top of my head but, there is an entire body of work on intersectionality that I would encourage everyone to follow up on.

(Lindsay Williams)

Great, thank you so much.

(Sonia Tillman)

And we often describe . . .

(Lindsay Williams)

Okay. That was some good stuff, that clip.

(Sonia Tillman)

So it is great that everyone is assessing and doing some internal self-assessment of your own level of diversity competence. We really like to make sure that it is important to take careful consideration of your own beliefs and your own emotions and things that are embedded within us as we are doing this work to serve families. Recognizing and acknowledging your own blind

spots will also help to improve that. And so we really encourage you to continue to do that.

(Lindsay Williams)

Right. And one of the reasons that it is important to do that is because sometimes we have, you know, different biases that may come into play and some that we are aware of and some that we are not aware of. So we actually have a full question, so it is kind of a fun “do you know” question that is going to kind of lead into our next slide. So the question is: which of the following types of biases refer to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions or decisions but in an unconscious manner? So is that (a) confirmation bias; (b) developmental bias; (c) implicit bias; or (d) stereotypical bias? We will see how smart you guys are. It looks like you are pretty smart from the answers I see coming in. We have about 33% that have voted. Try to get to 80% again. Don't worry about being wrong on this. This is – unless you are really familiar with different kinds of biases, this is not one that is going to jump out at you easily.

(Sonia Tillman)

And that is why we are doing the webinar, right? To get the information out.

(Lindsay Williams)

So we are just under 70%. We will give it a few more seconds and then we will close the poll. So this is your last chance to vote. Okay, we are going to go ahead and close the poll. Share the results and actually almost 60% of you got it correct. The answer would be implicit bias. And those are those unconscious biases that we are not even aware that we are carrying around with us. So I am going to go ahead and hide the slide so we can go on and give you our definition. So, even if we do check ourselves regularly on our own beliefs and our values and attitudes which, as you just saw, is one of our great ideal practices to do. It doesn't completely free us from being successful to those biases. So implicit bias or implicit social cognition, it refers to, you know, attitudes and stereotypes that can affect us not on a conscious level but on an unconscious level and these biases are activated involuntarily without you even being aware that you have these biases potentially and they were like kind of on the deep subconscious level and they are different from known biases. The known biases are biases that you recognize that you have and people can choose consciously to conceal, you know, for the purpose of political or social correctness. So implicit biases, you know, can be even a little bit more dangerous because we don't even recognize that they are there. And I wanted to give you guys some resources here. So at the Ohio State University, they have the Kirwan Institution for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. We wanted to provide you with that website. They do, if you are local to Columbus or you are near Columbus, they do a lot of free workshops on different subject matter relating to diversity and cultural competence. And then Harvard University has done this study and actually you can go to this website and do this implicit bias test on yourself. It is called Project Implicit and they give you an implicit association test and it is really, it is kind of tapping on the keyboard and matching different kinds of things and they have it for a variety of different subjects. You know it is not just on race and ethnicity, but also mental health bias, like socioeconomic status. So it is really interesting and for those of you that want to spend a little bit more time on kind of self-reflecting on your own biases and doing some more of that self-assessment these are both excellent resources. And we actually have a little clip from Lashaun that we are going to queue here. Gaye, can you queue 5 please?

(Lashaun Carter)

And what I would also say is that most bias is socialized in some type of institutional frame and so many of our policies, many of the things, many of our natural practices could unintentionally keep moving forward some of these things that were implicit in nature, depending upon who is in the room and who is developing whatever strategy or policy you are creating. And what is also true about implicit social cognition is that once you become made aware of something and it becomes an aware bias if you are not careful and self-reflective, that implicit bias can become a confirmation bias. And that confirmation bias is when you enter into a situation with the notion or the belief about a group and you are looking for examples for that to be true. Instead of going in with that open curiosity trying to find reasons, try to find the humanity and find the things that norms the family as opposed to others.

(Lindsay Williams)

And that can go even past the confirmation bias – even past culture and diversity in terms of “I like this family. This family has always done well.” Some way with that. And so as new information, new risk factors might be added. You are looking through it as the lens of “Well, they have always managed to take care of their kids. Yeah, they may be, you know, might do a marginal parenting job but, you know, they have always managed.” And so we should be aware of that as well.

(Lashaun Carter)

Absolutely.

(Lindsay Williams)

Thank you, Gaye.

(NEW SPEAKER)

Okay, so I am going to talk about demonstrating cultural diversity in competence. And what does that mean? So you know it is leaning to make a significant effort to learn about the lives and the unique experiences that every family brings to the table and making sure that you are keeping that at the forefront when you are, you know, having discussions with the family, making decisions with them and helping them through service planning. And, you know, we need to remember there are numerous resources where we can educate ourselves. So Lindsay had just shared the two resources in the slide before and then also there is community organizations. There is community events and gatherings that allow yourself, you know, you could attend, observe and use those to educate yourself. And it is also important to remember that just because you are working with two families that share the same ethnicity, cultural background, there are differences between every family in their values, their beliefs, their family dynamics. So please take the time to get to know each family and appreciate their uniqueness. And the services and how you need to approach that family. And, you know, I have been working with foster parents for years, whether it is training them, retraining them, working through issues with them as they take foster children into their home. And, you know, we actually have discussions and I'd ask questions about their traditions and their beliefs so to educate myself and take it back to my staff. Many times the prospective foster parents appreciate and respect that you are giving them and your willingness to learn about them. Now something that some of you brought up earlier is our changing world, our changing communities.

There are so many – we are in this fast paced world. Our communities are changing every day. So ideal practice calls for us to view these families again as having their unique experiences and values. And that doesn't just mean the families involved with CPS but our families and individuals that we are recruiting and training to become foster parents. So we need to keep this constant change in mind when we are recruiting foster parents and as we are training our foster parents. You know, when we are training our foster parents on these sensitive issues that, you know, when we place foster children in their home it brings to the forefront, it can get kind of tricky in trainings because you have different foster parents who have different values and beliefs and some of them are very vocal about their beliefs and so as a trainer, you have to be in that room. You have to be ready to diffuse that, maybe taking families to the side and saying, “I understand you feel strongly about this. However, there are other foster parents in the room who have maybe different beliefs and values and we need to respect each other.” And that is a big part of foster parenting. And or they may have youth in their home that have different values and came from different lifestyles. They need to also be open to understanding those perspectives.

(Lindsay Williams)

You have to have them look in both directions, have them look in the direction of what their values are as a family, as a foster family or an adoptive family and also how you can work with them to be respectful of the uniqueness and the differences and the diversity of the children that they're fostering.

(NEW SPEAKER)

Which takes us to the next slide. So necessary conversations in foster parent recruitment. Again, you are asking them to take an inventory of their beliefs and values, also keeping yours in mind. But foster parents when they come to the table, they have engrained values and thoughts about discipline, religion, cultural traditions, sexual identify, involvement with bio family and current events that are going on in the world. So I really tell foster parents to use the child characteristic checklist when they become a foster parent because that is their opportunity to say, “What kind of children am I comfortable in working with?” And not to just put answers down on the paper that weigh things that even the agency will be happy so they don't get judged. There is no judging here. I don't want you to take in a child if you feel very strongly about certain religions and you don't want a child of a certain religion placed with you, please tell us that. Because not only are they going to be uncomfortable, the child is going to sense that. And these children – they have rights. One of the other topics that have been coming up a lot lately is you – we have foster parents who don't understand how vocal teens are becoming. Teens are becoming very empowered, which is wonderful and we teach our kids, “You can speak – just do it in a respectful way. You can voice your opinion. Do that in a respectful way.” But you have foster parents who – “I am not ready for this.” You know, so we are constantly, constantly doing self-reflecting with our foster parents. And sometimes foster parents that are with us, they actually evolve and become more open minded or change in a certain way. And then sometimes they don't. So that is what that child characteristic checklist is for. They need to be honest for their own sake and for the foster children to feel comfortable.

(Lindsay Williams)

So as a licensing specialist with several having some of these difficult conversations, do you have any recommendations or tips if I am out there listening to this webinar and I am a licensing specialist on how to kind of approach these sensitive topics with prospective foster adoptive parents?

(NEW SPEAKER)

Well, I really pick up on the non-verbal cues in training. And then there is the verbal comments that are made. But, you know, I always tell foster parents, “we will talk after training.” Or if you are making your home visits. So you want to actually when you are out at the home or you have them in private, you want to clarify what you saw or what you have heard. Make sure that you are taking that information in the right way. Maybe they didn't mean what they said in a certain way. You know, so you want to clarify it and I always try to be honest with them. Then there are some things from an ODJFS Ohio law perspective, we can't back off. Physical discipline. There is no physical disciplining children. How you speak to a foster child. They have rights. They deserve to be respected. So, I have had to have some hard conversations with foster parents that, “okay, I am sorry, maybe this is not for you. I think it is wonderful you want to help children. But you can't bend on those issues. They are non-negotiable.”

(Lindsay Williams)

That's great. So I am going to move to the next slide and Erica, are you with us?

(Erica Sabados)

Yes, ma'am okay. So this ideal practice talks about communicating in a way that demonstrates our cultural diversity competence. And for me, I think that this is particularly critical to all the other Practice Profiles. Our ability to engage, assess, partner, etc. with our families is really built on this foundation of being able to communicate again with this cultural diversity competence and demonstrating that sensitivity and responsiveness to culture. Asking respectful questions when we are not sure. Being able to do that is important. And an easy example of this is when we attain language interpreters to work with our families who are not fluent speakers of English. Another example is when we need to obtain ADA accommodations or interpreters for the hearing impaired. Translating our documents as well so that we can communicate clearly with speakers of other languages. Another piece here that Lashaun pointed out in our previous conversation - I don't know if you have the clip for this. But he talked about how it is important as listeners in our communication and interpreters of communication that we as the professionals not focus on how things are said from our clients. So not focusing on things like dialect or slang and really focus on the content of what someone is communicating to us rather than the how.

(Lindsay Williams)

Yeah, and actually Erica, we do have that clip from Lashaun and if they can queue that clip 6 for us...

(Lashaun Carter)

It is also true we were all speaking the same language, right, and, you know, when we talk to our caseworkers about especially is when you go into someone's home, you do need to be respectful of the language spoken and also what can be the case in certain circumstances is that we have a language expectation. So, we sometimes can make judgment when people communicate in a

way that we don't see as ideal. And, you know, we say it is not being able to speak the King's English to the queen's satisfaction. And really what that means is try to strip away how things are being said and try to pay attention to what is being communicated. Because our families know what they want. They know what they need and are going to share with you those things quite expressively. But if you are so locked in and focused on how things are being said, you might miss the message. And so you need to go in with that humility to be able to understand there is valuable information here. There is valuable content here that I can get from this family if I am willing to really pay attention to it and listen to it.

(Erica Sabados)

Thank you. Yes, I love that. And I think that is an important one that we don't talk about often so that is really great insight. So then the next piece about communicating with cultural diversity competence is about informing others that are interacting with our families about their communication needs and unique perspectives related to cultural diversity and competence. Of course, this dovetails nicely with the advocating Practice Profile, right? So this is part of that as well. Others that we might need to communicate with include other professionals involved in the family. I know in our county as well as others, we have facilitators who help us conduct team decision making meetings or family team meetings in some areas, making sure to communicate with those people as well as court officials and others about a family's communication needs.

(Lindsay Williams)

Absolutely. So, Erica, so as a supervisor and you said you spent all these years in supervision, what kinds of things can you do as a supervisor so if I was out there listening to help, you know, my staff improve and increase and develop their cultural and diversity competence?

(Erica Sabados)

So on the screen we have several questions that come right out of the coaching and supervision tools document that goes along with the Practice Profiles and we will talk about those a bit. But the first thing I want to say about coaching and supervision is the foundation of this piece just as it is with working with families is a good working relationship. Having that positive professional relationship with your staff really enables a supervisor to be able to ask these kinds of questions and make that meaningful conversation, as well as, you know, always demonstrating a supportive supervisory style so that these questions like what are asking about the family that they are working with and how the worker has learned about them. What the staff has done to expand their knowledge of the family's experiences and traditions and how they have used that in their work? And this final question on the screen about how has the worker's family background values or beliefs affected their work with this family. In order to be able to have this meaningful conversation, again that good working relationship and supportive supervisory style is really paramount to that. And it is not necessary that the staff even particularly with the last question, even really directly answer to the supervisor. I think the main point here is to encourage that self-reflection and be available to the worker as a mirror so that they can kind of check their confirmation bias and implicit bias even with you as the supervisor.

(Lindsay Williams)

Yeah, those are some great tips, Erica. Thank you for that. We are going to keep moving right along here. This last ideal practice kind of brings it all together. So this kind of really sums it up

right here. You just always want to consider the uniqueness of families and it is not just their culture or their language or their socioeconomic status, but it is other differences. It is those unique things that make us all individuals that you are bringing together and you are looking at while you are assessing services. And so as you are developing your cultural and diversity competence, you want to develop kind of a bank of knowledge about those differences and you want to be able to use that to partner with your community so... in your work with schools, if you are going into the schools to talk to teachers, or principles about IEP. As you are talking to service providers and foster parents and adoptive parents. Or, you know, if you have children placed in children residential centers, some of those service providers, other government entities and partners. You want to be able to speak expertly to this. And so part of that goes into, you know, what can your agency do as an organization to ensure the equality in service delivery for families and children and as an organization, you know, steps that can be taken to be more inclusive? Who should be involved in that conversation? Kind of how to go from just that micro level of working with families to that bigger organizational level. And what we have here is Lashaun shared some tips for us about what they are doing at Franklin County Children's Services along these lines and we want to go ahead and play that for you guys so that would be queue 7, Gaye please.

(Lashaun Carter)

Good afternoon, everyone. Over the last year, Franklin County Children's Services has been intentional about developing more strategies related to diversity, equity and inclusion, primarily as a strategy to support our staff but also as a way to more thoughtfully engage the children and families that we serve. So one of the first things I wanted to share with you was the vision we created for our newly created department. And every day Franklin County Children's Services seeks to play a central role in ensuring that all young people are safe in Franklin County, regardless of where they live, their family income level or their cultural identify. To receive the appropriate supports and interventions to ensure safety and mitigate means any delays in their ability to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in life beyond our care. I know that is a mouthful but what really this is trying to say is that we want to make sure that there is equity in all that we do. And we can go to the next slide and I can share with you just kind of the fundamental emphasis on how we ensure this equity in all that we do and the whole idea is embedding as we lay a strategic plan for the agency but then also crafting a strategy for how we understand the equity in the work. And then there is three simple questions that we ask of ourselves whenever we start an initiative or we engage in any ongoing practice. And those three questions are: What are we doing? Why are we doing it? Who benefits or is impacted by it? And those questions are simple in nature but they require some nuance because they can be complex depending on the strategy. Some of the answers are quite simple based upon what we are doing or they are more readily evident. But some of them require nuance because it might be that staff benefits as a result of the strategy but ultimately because staff is benefiting it does end up being a benefit or positive add to the child and family. But it requires us to be intentional about the question because it makes us more thoughtful and reflective about our practices. What I would also say about embedding the equity lens into our strategic plan, or into all of our work is that when you think back to earlier about applying the worker skillsets, our idea is that through all of the steps of the worker skillsets, is that equity lens is being applied. You are ensuring that there is a worker agility across all of those skills and that worker is able to navigate each of those skills with this equity lens, understanding how culture, identify, gender, how all of those values

kind of intersect with each of those skillsets. So that is one of the things that we are trying to implement as an agency and that is what this process kind of offers for us. So what I wanted to cover over the next couple of slides is there are some fundamental strategies that we put in place that kind of help us get to achieving equity, diversity inclusion in our work. The first group is the idea of what we took was this notion that there is certain groups in our work population that are under-represented or have an identity that we are still trying to work through and understand in terms of how we can partner and work in our environment. And so the first group was a group that actually predates me was our African American male affinity group. We recognized that there was an under representation of African American males in our agency and so what we did was we pulled a group together where they can come together collectively problem solve, identify strategies to support one another, and it also provides them with a platform to share ideas and strategies with the agency and the agency hierarchy. The same thing is true about our young professional and emerging leaders. What you will notice here is that we intentionally stay away from terms like “millennials,” because we want our emerging leaders or our young staff to see themselves as young professionals and emerging leaders in our agency. Not only because we want to stay away from the name “millennial” because it kind of may have taken on an identity of itself, but also because we want them to see themselves with the agency in the long-term. We are trying to create speaking and so the way that we can do that is to really identify them as leaders in our agency and give them a platform where they can come together, share best practice, bring some innovation to the agency because one of the things that we polled with our younger staff is that they come in with a lot of energy and ideas and they don't always have the platform to get those ideas. And they don't necessarily see a path to getting those ideas heard. Sometimes they feel like it stops with their supervisor. And they may have a good idea and what we always say is that the collective is a way for you to get your ideas off because you can pass it through this group, this Affinity group. And the last Affinity group about gender equity – and this is not just gender equity for the purpose of male/female but this is male and male and non-binary individuals. As we are evolving with what our understandings are about gender and gender identify, we want to have an Affinity group that understands and recognizes that there are so many differences in how we see each other across these gender lines. There are new ways for us to communicate and work together. And having a gender equity identity group come together have conversations around these things only sets us up to be more responsive to the needs of those who identify as male, identify as female or identify as non-binary so those are our three Affinity groups and our strategies that we are implementing. Secondly, in an effort to encourage our community engagement, we have these Community Summits on Equity and Social Justice but what we have taken a stand on is we are taking these possible things that are going on in our community but we are repositioning through a child welfare lens and so we have four identified for this year and one has already taken place and it was the “Culture of Addiction.” We know that the opiate crisis is a serious epidemic of our community and what we did was we took the opiate crisis but we had a conversation on what does the opiate crisis mean for our community that is focusing on the safety of its children. And what impact is it having on child welfare? So we had a community conversation around that. We brought in panelists from across our community that have a perspective and point of view on that and engaged in some thoughtful dialogue with our community partners on how we can be supports to them in their efforts to continue to serve our children. Our next community conversation is on the immigrant/refugee community. Also add on new Americans who are my friends who identify that way. And we are having a community conversation of similar format on how the child welfare community can

support immigrant/refugee families in a more thoughtful way. So it will be a similar format but we want to have the same conversation there. Next is our Disproportionality and Disparity so we do some internal reflection and study. We not only just look at our data but we also look at our practice. And so what we share now are disproportionality and disparity data primarily with our mandated reporting community but also with our community partners in our peer agencies so at this year's PCSAO conference we will be doing a high level teaser, if you will, of our Disproportionality and Disparity Summit that is something we embed as a strategy for our equity and social justice work as agencies. And then lastly our Family and Faith Community. We will be engaging in some dialogue with our family and faith community. Because what we say and what we see is that child safety is a community responsibility and so how do we engage with our faith community and our families at the community level to perhaps identify some interventions that can take place in the community prior to coming into contact with them. And so those are the types of conversations that we will have there. And then lastly, I wanted to share with you what we call our cultural intelligence outcomes and usually there is a series of things that will grow as a result of doing the series. So I wanted to just take bullet by bullet what these things are. So the first is intercultural adjustment and this is – intercultural adjustment is essentially the notion that how do you modify your behavior in an effort to have a better understanding and better way of working with children and families? And this is not modification in the form of inauthenticity of who you are but it is recognizing that when you are working with the family there might be things that will work with one family that may not work with another and your ability to adjust cultures to be able to achieve the results of that engagement is going to be a very important asset to you and also for our case working staff as they enter into intercultural negotiation with our families and we are going to get there. Cultural judgment and decision making - these are, the idea of cultural judgment and decision making is the whole idea of being reflected in your practice so that you can counteract any implicit bias or any other confirmation bias or any other forms of bias that might either unconsciously or consciously emerge as you are working with a family and making stronger and more sound decisions on behalf of the children and family. Intercultural negotiation effectiveness – this is essentially your ability to negotiate meaning and create new meaning with the family. I have my own lived experience, the family that I am working with might have their lived experiences and it may be different and oftentimes it will. But intercultural negotiation is us being able to work together, understand where each of us are coming from and create a new meaning that is neutral in nature to help us achieve a lot more quickly as we are working the case plan. Trust, idea sharing and creative collaboration. What that is is fostering an environment of trust internally in the agency but also with our families, giving our families the perspective that they are the experts of their lived experiences and so when they are sharing ideas, they are sharing ideas as the expert of their lived experiences so that we can be creative in how we collaborate and problem solve collectively. We are not always going to be taking to them the solutions to all their problems. Sometimes and I would say in many cases, with thoughtful questioning, they will have the ideas on their own about how they can problem solve and how they can identify solutions to whatever issues might be emerging in their families. Cultural leadership effectiveness is an internal aspect of our work and the Affinity groups kind of get to this in understanding that we live in an environment of different but being able to collaborate in the presence of those differences give us a better chance at identifying new emerging leaders in our agency. Leaders that may have been underrepresented or left unidentified in previous situations are now being able to emerge into leadership status in our agency because we are being more intentional about how we engage

across different and identify ways that those that represent many of our different cultures that live in our agency can grow into leadership roles in the agency. And then lastly, individual and group performance on cultural tasks and in culturally diverse settings- this is us being able to set the context that we achieve better and we achieve more when we work better together. This is just our understanding and our recognition that as we engage in all of the strategies mentioned previously if we do them well and if we recognize that we have an individual role to play and our group has a role to play collectively, we can achieve our goals. It sets us up to be more successful across the agency and on behalf of the children and families that we serve. Was there any dialogue or any feedback from my fellow panelists on any of that?

(NEW SPEAKER)

How long has Franklin County been participating in these measures and really, really making a conscious focus on some of these things?

(Lashaun Carter)

So, I would say that it has been scaffold. We are scaffolding into it. And mine is when I started it, it became a specific issue for the agency. It predates me. Obviously, there are certain things that have always been going on in the agency. But when I was hired in July of 2017, it put an intentional focus on this effort with someone who is responsible for checking in on it and developing a strategy for implementation, and also responsible for whether or not it is working. It puts some accountability behind the effort as opposed to it being just our best efforts unmanaged. Now there is some accountability behind it.

(Sonia Tillman)

Excellent.

(Lindsay Williams)

So this was some really great information I thought we got from Franklin County that we wanted to share with you guys. They have been doing a lot of work in terms of culture and diversity. , you know, obviously with the families and the children that they are serving but also internally with their staff. Now I know Franklin County is a larger organization and you are from a larger organization at Cuyahoga, Erica, and, you know, so to kind of think about how to scale that down into smaller agencies where you might have a smaller agency but you want to do some of this work. We had talked about wanting to, you know, provide an opportunity maybe as kind of a CQI follow-up call and Lashaun has actually offered to do a follow-up call. He was not able to be here with us in person today but he has offered for any counties or any agencies, private agencies, that may be interested and I am hearing a little bit more about what they have been doing in Franklin County and had to find out that they would be willing to do that. Gaye, can you play clip 8 where he tells us a little bit more about that?

(Lashaun Carter)

No one agency has solved all of this. And we even had discussion in preparing for this around the whole notion around cultural competence and what does that mean. You know, there is some research that would suggest that cultural competence is named as of this moment, right? Suggesting that there is no end gain in competence. There is an intelligence, we'll admit, in understanding that, you know, you are always going to be adding tools to your toolbox around

culture and how to engage the culture and so meanwhile the definition of competence would suggest that once you have this you got it, you know, but this is a moving target. Things are always changing and evolving and quite honestly they will continue to evolve. And since this is the way society works they probably should continue to evolve and we should be responsive to that.

(NEW SPEAKER)

There is no mastering of “I’ve got it. And now I don’t have to learn it anymore.” You are continuing to need to have that.

(Lashaun Carter)

Yeah, and even though we learn that what we have been doing every day are learning something new. I will listen back to this and I will say, “I should have said this or I said that, you know, incorrectly” or, you know, it is an ongoing process.

(Lindsay Williams)

Well, for all of you out there in webinar land . . . .

Okay, I think that kind of got cut off. I thought that last clip that he had talked about. We may have missed it, but Lashaun had said he is willing to have that follow-up call and dialogue with anybody who is interested. So if your agency would be interested in learning a little bit more about and kind of doing a separate CQI call with other agencies that are interested in doing a little bit more work around cultural diversity and competence as an agency, feel free to email me. This is Lindsay or Sonia, and we will get you, or I suppose Lashaun because we have his email address on here too if I can get to this last slide and we can look at scheduling a call that we can have some more conversation and dialogue around this. So that kind of concludes our formal presentation. We do . . .

(NEW SPEAKER)

There are training options too. There are also training options available through OTWTP so if you are also interested in learning more about the cultural diversity training options, there are some great online courses that are pretty self-directed where caregivers and/or caseworkers could also feel free to go through and learn about cultural diversity and competence as well.

(Lindsay Williams)

Right. And it looks like the names of some of those are staff transcending differences or caregivers transcending differences and you can look those up in E-Track and you can take the courses without credit by going to the distance learning page at OCWGP.net. I think you can take the courses with credit to enroll, if you are enrolled in E-Track. So we wanted to make sure everybody is aware of that. And then we want to allow some time for some questions and some dialogue. So we invite you guys to type in your questions or if you just want to share with us how either you as an individual or how your agency really works to strive to be cultural and diversity competent and we would love to hear from you. So we are going to mute it for a minute, give you guys a few minutes to kind of gather your thoughts and type in those questions and comments and share some of your suggestions and we will be right back. Maybe two minutes.

(NEW SPEAKER)

Means that you all have embraced diversity competence and are doing it quite well in your agencies and in your individual lives. We are going to assume that.

(Lindsay Williams)

We were just having a conversation that, you know, sometimes we look at cultural and diversity competence as something you learn one time and you are done and how that is just, you know, not really the case. This is something that we have to continuously be aware of, especially like Shannon was saying earlier in our changing world with there constantly being so many differences and so much learning and everything is evolving at such a rapid pace. It is kind of hard to keep up even with the younger, even like intergenerational differences. Shannon was sharing about some of the different like acronyms and stuff, like texting language. And it can be very different.

(NEW SPEAKER)

So keeping up with the culture is important, even the generational cultures.

(NEW SPEAKER)

I do know our agency in particular, we use to train our foster parents, we use OCWGP trainers and a lot of our trainers are giving great up to date information to foster care givers on how to relate to these intergenerational issues, texting, media, social media stuff. You know, so... and I think updated cultural and diversity information. So just take advantage of that. The OCWGP has wonderful trainers.

(Lindsay Williams)

Yes, they absolutely do. So if any of you guys out there, if you receive the First Friday in September, First Friday that would have gone out at the beginning of this month, there was an article in there. I believe Lashaun had written it about some information regarding cultural and diversity competence and so you can probably get his information from there as well. So we are at a few minutes after 11:00 now. I really, you know, would like to have a little bit of a dialogue; I know it is kind of hard over the webinar. If you guys feel comfortable, you know, jumping in and entering some comments about what you do. I know participants always like to hear from others that are out there doing the work and kind of some ideas for integrating some of these concepts into daily practice. So maybe give it another minute and see if we do happen to get anybody who is brave out there that wants to share some comments. And Erica, I know you are probably closer in the field to a lot of this than we are in terms of, you know, staff going out and interacting with people and are there any other, you know, words of wisdom that you have or any challenges, you know, that you are hearing feedback from staff, you know, in terms of working with culturally diverse groups or even some of this intergenerational pieces?

(Erica Sabados)

I think I am probably not as close as you might think although maybe closer than you - that may be true. But I think from my perspective in performance evaluation innovation, thinking about disproportionality and how that impacts our families. I think it is important to keep class and poverty at the center of our conversations and in growing our competence as well because we

know that certainly intersects often with race, with the African American population in particular. And so keeping in mind how our policies and how our practice might impact people with more limited needs, I think, is a piece of the conversation to keep in mind.

(NEW SPEAKER)

Absolutely, I agree. That is definitely key. And being able to genuinely want to help families. You have to have an understanding of where they come from and so you really hit on several things that I think are really important.

(Lindsay Williams)

Well we have not gotten any more comments, questions or suggestions from any of our participants so I don't want to really draw this out if we don't have any other questions coming in, so we are going to give like a last chance for questions and comments and then we are going to go ahead and wind it up and close it out for today. And why we are kind of giving everybody a last chance, we will remind you that in October, our Practice Profile of the month is communicating and we actually, since we are almost at the end of our updates for the Practice Profile information along with communicating, we are going to try to weave in some little pieces about documenting. Because that is such a big part of the communicating and stuff that we do as child welfare professionals and it is really coming up more and more as we are looking at our CFSR and our \_\_\_\_ [67:06] planning and all of that jazz.

(NEW SPEAKER)

So please tune in next month as well. There was one last comment.

(Lindsay Williams)

So there is another resource, teaching tolerance, and it has a great piece of advice on understanding privilege so that would be a good topic to look at in the future if we invest and have a follow-up call with some counties on this. And it can be a misunderstood term. Yes, thank you.

Well, everybody have a great rest of your Wednesday. Thank you for turning in and we hope to have you back with us again next month.

Have a great day!!!!

(NEW SPEAKER)

Bye-bye.

(NEW SPEAKER)

Thank you, guys.

(NEW SPEAKER)

Bye.