

Continuum Practice Profile Implementation Ideas

The items below are “idea starters” for how Continuum providers and state agency staff members can use the Continuum practice profile. It is not an exhaustive list as providers and other stakeholders may have their own creative ideas for how to best support implementation. Some of the activities below might be best accomplished by the Caring Together team members or DMH or DCF staff members while others are best completed by provider agency staff members while some might be done by more than one group.

Engaging system partner activities

- Use the practice profile to create presentations and/or develop other informational materials (e.g. brochure, flyer, info sheet) for referring agency (DCF/DMH) staff members AND families about the Continuum.
- Schedule a meeting(s) or hold a focus group(s) with local DCF and DMH partners and families to learn about how the program is doing on one or more of the core elements.
- Create a survey for system partners (including families) to learn about how the program is doing on one or more of the core elements.
- Hold a meeting(s) with local group home providers, inpatient or CBAT programs to review the *Ensuring Continuity of Care* core element to clarify the role of Continuum when a youth is involved with a higher level of care.
- Convene a meeting with the local MCI team to review the *Assessing Risk, Safety Planning, and Supporting Families Through Crisis* core element to clarify the role of Continuum (and MCI) when a youth with Continuum has an encounter with MCI.
- Identify activities or practices of systems partners that might be getting in the way of “ideal practice” and engage them in discussions about how to work together to mitigate those barriers.

Selection and staff member recruitment activities

- Develop job interview questions specific to each of the Continuum core elements from the practice profile.
- Ask job candidates to review the practice profile prior to a first or second interview and to come prepared to discuss their impressions of areas where they believe they are strong and areas that might be challenging.

- Develop some interview questions (or create a tool to be used to screen candidates) to assess if a candidate can distinguish ideal, developmental, and unacceptable Continuum practices.
- Review current job descriptions for clinicians and outreach workers and update to align with practice profile core elements and skills necessary to provide “ideal” Continuum practice.
- Create a presentation and/or a brochure/flyer/handout using the practice profile core elements for area colleges and graduate schools to be used to recruit new employees and use these materials at career fairs, to present to classes, for posting in career centers, etc.

Onboarding and initial training activities

- Integrate the practice profile into a manual for new employees.
- Use the practice profile as a basis for new hire orientation.
 - Create new training materials organized around the core elements.
 - Develop case vignettes (for reading and discussion during orientation training and/or to be used in role plays) using examples of ideal, developmental, and unacceptable practices.
 - Use the practice profile as a basis for a self-assessment that a new hire will complete and discuss with their supervisor to identify areas for professional development and skill building.
 - Create a “knowledge check” to see if new staff can distinguish ideal, developmental, and unacceptable practices in the core element areas and discuss the results in supervision or with other new hires (or existing staff) during training/orientation.

Ongoing training and professional development activities

- Use the practice profile to create a survey to help identify priority training topics.
- Have staff members share examples of where they observed someone engaged in “ideal practice” at staff meetings.
- Create a training series where one core element is focused on in-depth each month.
- Send out quick weekly email (or text) reminders to staff focused on different examples of ideal practice from the practice profile (e.g. *“Don’t forget that a good assessment invites family members to describe times in the past when needs were less acute and what was different at that time.”* OR *“Always make sure to promptly share safety plan documents with other providers and supports who share responsibility for safety of the family.”*)
- Post tips around the office or on people’s desks using examples of ideal or unacceptable practices from the practice profile (e.g. *When preparing a youth/family to transition out of Continuum it is important to processes loss of Continuum support and changes in the support network for the family and establish*

connections with any new services prior to ending Continuum.” OR “Never ‘badmouth’ other services or waitlists in front of a family when preparing to transition out of Continuum.”)

- Create refresher trainings organized around the core elements.
- Develop role plays for use at staff meetings that highlight examples of ideal, developmental, and unacceptable practices for each of the core element areas.
- Use staff meetings to focus in on a core element and discuss where staff members think the program (or their own practice) is in terms of idea, developmental, or unacceptable practice(s).
- Identify outside trainings/trainers who are skilled in certain core elements (e.g. risk assessment and safety planning, practicing cultural relevance, etc.) and bring them in to conduct in-service trainings.
- Connect with other providers or systems partners with specialized areas of training/expertise to learn how to move practice to “ideal” in the area of cultural relevance (or any other core element).

Coaching and supervision (including field observation) activities

- Identify staff members who are particularly skilled at certain core elements (e.g. engagement or assessment and clinical understanding) and have them serve as “mentors” to staff members who need to develop skills in that area.
- The supervisor and supervisee both conduct an assessment of the supervisee’s practice using the practice profile as a guide and discuss during supervision. Identified areas for professional growth and development can be used to develop a plan for ongoing supervision.
- Dedicate supervision time to role play or practice activities within certain core elements (e.g. role play doing a family culture discovery as part of practicing cultural relevance).
- Supervisors observe staff in the field and provide feedback during supervision about examples they observed of ideal, developmental, or unacceptable practices.
- Create a supervisor/coaching plan for staff that can be used to move staff from developmental to ideal practice.
- Create group supervision sessions focused around certain core elements (or practices within a core element *(e.g. how do you explore family member’s beliefs regarding physical health, mental health, behavioral and emotional responses, substance use, attitudes toward medication, and treatment?)*).

Performance assessment activities

- Review current staff evaluation forms/documents (in collaboration with HR department) to realign them to cover core elements of Continuum practice.
- Design (or modify existing) chart review tool that is organized around the core elements. It should include space to provide specific examples of ideal, developmental, or unacceptable practices gleaned from the record.
- Create a phone interview tool that is organized around the core elements to learn about ideal, developmental, and unacceptable practice. Contact a sample of families for staff with information to be used to inform supervision plans or staff evaluations.
- Create a phone interview for systems partners that is organized around the core elements to learn about ideal, developmental, and unacceptable practice. Contact a sample of system partners for a staff member with the information to be used to inform supervision plans or staff evaluations.

Quality improvement (including using data) activities

- Create a phone interview script/questions organized by the core elements to inquire about family experiences in each of those areas (and/or a survey that focuses specifically on one area of practice that the program is looking to improve upon).
- Create a youth/family survey organized by the core elements (and/or a survey that focuses specifically on one area of practice that the program is looking to improve upon).
- Create a staff survey organized by the core elements to identify where to focus quality improvement activities.
- Review existing (or develop) an exit interview tool that includes questions about organizational support for practice in the core elements (e.g. *What could our program do better to support staff members to conduct risk assessments and engage in safety planning?*).
- Track no-show rates to better understand how the program (and individual staff members) is doing with respect to engagement.
- Conduct a “[walk-through](#)” of the Continuum program from the perspective of the youth/family to learn about practices that might be interfering with engagement.
- Create a tool using the *Supporting Life Transitions* core element that is used prior to closure (or exit) of the family from Continuum to ensure appropriate transition activities are occurring.

- Create a tool using the *Assessing Risk, Safety Planning, and Supporting Families Through Crisis* core element that is used to review all risk and safety plans.
- Create a tool using the *Collaborative Assessment* core element that is used to review all comprehensive assessments (initial and ongoing).

Engaging agency leadership activities

- Identify agency practices (e.g. forms, policies, actions) that might be getting in the way of ideal practice and engage in a discussion with agency leadership about how to mitigate these barriers to ideal practice.
- Engage agency leadership in discussions about how the agency can support the Continuum program to move toward ideal practice in a core element(s).

Site/program operations and administration

- Conduct a “[walk-through](#)” of the Continuum program (e.g. call to schedule a mock appointment, go through the assessment process) from the perspective of the youth/family to learn about practices that might be interfering with engagement and/or to identify ways to improve to ideal practice.
- Review existing forms/tools/assessments to ensure they align with ideal practice.