

Learning Collaboratives: What, Why, and How

CCS/CST Joint Statewide Meeting, September 12, 2018

Opening Activity

- How do you learn as a professional? What are some of the formats, venues, or methods you use for learning and professional development?

Underlying Values of Learning

- Who has the expertise? (Authority ----- Lived Experience)
- Diversity of perspective? (Single ----- Multiple)
- Learning approach? (Event ----- Process)
- Learner engagement? (Passive ----- Active)

Learning Collaborative

A group of people “who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic... [to] deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). Several design features to consider:

- Purpose
 - Learn about a specific topic
 - Learn about a specific best practice/evidence-based practice
 - Cross-system collaboration
- Duration
 - Short-term
 - Long-term
- Membership
 - Within agency, across agencies within system, across systems
 - Selection process
 - Number of participants
 - Open/changing, Closed/consistent
- Structure
 - Frequency of meetings (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly)
 - Location/Format (onsite/in-person, distance/teleconference or web-based)
 - Facilitation (designated, rotating)
- Development
 - Getting Started – discuss purpose, values of learning, roles and responsibilities of membership; agree on design features; attention to learner engagement and group cohesion; begin inclusive learning process with respect for quiet contributions
 - Growing – What are we learning and how are we applying it? What impacts and outcomes are we beginning to see? How can we maintain our momentum? Expand, mentor new members? How to share learning with key stakeholders?
 - Sustaining – What feedback are we receiving from stakeholders? What sense of purpose and value are we experiencing? How might our original purpose/focus now be shifting? Do we want to keep going and, if so, what do we want to continue learning?