



CFPM RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION BEST PRACTICES (w/Tip Sheets)

Because the Practice Model is a system-wide intervention, existing staff are trained, coached, and supported in its use. However there are key opportunities, as new staff are recruited and existing staff apply for promotion, to recruit and select staff that can effectively deliver and support the Practice Model. Implementing jurisdictions found recruitment and selection a challenging area in which to build implementation infrastructure within their organizations, especially related to bringing on new staff. The challenges experienced resulted from their human resource (HR) systems sitting outside the child welfare program and being driven by policies and protocols that were difficult to affect or change. Child welfare agency leadership in several implementing sites began exploring recruitment and selection practices and procedures, tools, and methods with HR department leaders. These leaders discovered a number of areas for improvement in recruitments for the various classifications and positions in the child welfare agency, including:

- Existing recruitment practices did not necessarily use methods that attract candidates from the communities most disproportionately represented in their local child welfare system.
- HR systems did not always have up-to-date job descriptions for use in recruitment. For example, in some locations, the job descriptions indicated the candidates would be doing counseling or therapy with families and children rather than child welfare case management. Candidates who applied and were selected discovered what they thought they would be doing in the child welfare agency is not what they were doing at all.
- Tests that HR systems were using to develop potential candidate lists for the child welfare agency were often outdated and not relevant to the position for which they were recruiting, or the wording used for many of the test questions was problematic or confusing, preventing some candidates who might be a good fit for the job from getting onto lists for potential hire.

Given these challenges, one implementing jurisdiction began to do targeted work in this area of implementation. With strong support by an executive leader in the social service agency, this jurisdiction established a partnership with HR and formed a recruitment/selection workgroup to develop a shared understanding of the Practice Model and to begin to work on incorporating the implementation best practices outlined on the Tip Sheet below.

Use of an observational assessment of a behavioral demonstration during interviews was tested and found to be very helpful, so a printout sheet for getting started with observational assessments and two sample role play scenarios used in selection interviews (the first for an engagement liaison position and the second for an implementation team member) are also included in the following pages.



Recruitment/Selection Tip Sheet

BEST PRACTICES

A clearly identified individual or group is responsible for ensuring the recruitment and selection of staff who will deliver the Child and Family Practice Model. The individual or group is well supported by Practice Model leadership and the Implementation Team (valued, provided resources, given access to agency decision-making processes) in order to embed the following recruitment/selection best practices for effective delivery of the Practice Model with the children and families being served.

Recruitment strategies outreach to and attract candidates who are:

- Aligned with Practice Model values and the theoretical foundation of Partnership, Culture, and Humility;
- Open to coaching and self-reflection to support their professional development and fidelity use of the Practice Model

Job position or role descriptions for potential staff hires and internal promotional candidates provide clear expectations about their Practice Model activities, responsibilities, and accountability.

Individuals making staff selection and promotion decisions have sufficient understanding of the key principles, skills, abilities, and culturally relevant approaches needed to serve and support local children and families and to partner with their communities.

Interactive interviews with scenarios and observational assessment screen for characteristics that are difficult to train, such as critical thinking; empathy; ethics; and openness to diverse world views, cultures, and perspectives, as well as ability to accept feedback and change one's practice interactions via coaching.

Newly selected staff's strengths and needs are used to inform their training and coaching supports.

When done well, selection processes identify staff with the values, knowledge, abilities, and skill-building potential for using the Practice Model with all children and families and especially with those who are disproportionately represented and experience disparate outcomes. This means staff are selected who:

- ✓ *Understand and value the power of partnership and responsiveness to culture and are able to demonstrate humility in interactions with children, families, and communities;*
- ✓ *Recognize the importance of a natural circle of family and community supports and are able to engage these supports in teaming with the family and supporting the child; and*
- ✓ *Have attitudes and abilities that will enable them to become skilled at identifying, advocating for, and supporting use of culturally relevant services that are sensitive to the current and historic trauma that family members may have experienced.*



Getting Started With Observational Assessment in Selection Interviews

Identify a hiring process to get started with and a small group of folks to develop the specific interview and selection processes to be tested.

Identify key skills or abilities for the position—What is better observed and assessed through a behavioral demonstration than responded to in an interview question? →

EXAMPLE OF A KEY SKILL FOR OBSERVATIONAL ASSESSMENT:

Candidates may articulate engagement and humility behaviors well and even give good examples of demonstrating these behaviors. However, observational assessment during the interview will provide much better information about how well the candidate can put these important practice model behaviors to use “in the moment” during interactions that are similar to those likely to be encountered in the position applied for.

Create a scenario for the behavioral demonstration—The scenario can be a paragraph or two that describe a common situation or experience for the position.

Identify the players or specific roles that will have to be played in the scenario, including the specific role the candidate will be playing and who on the interview panel will play other roles.

Spell out the instructions during the interview so the candidate is clear about the process. Let them know you want them to role play for the next 15 minutes, and identify who else in the interview room will be part of the role play. Provide any other information they should know before the behavioral demonstration begins.

Develop an observation guide that clarifies the knowledge, values, behaviors, or skills for which interviewers should be looking during the observational assessment.

Right after the behavioral rehearsal, ask the candidate:

- What do you think you did well?
- What might you do differently next time?

(This will tap into the person’s ability to self-reflect and assess their own behavior.)

Then, give the candidate brief feedback about one adjustment you would recommend that is aligned with the behaviors needed for the position.

Finally, give the candidate the opportunity to go back into the role play so the panel can look for signs of coach-ability and willingness to learn and change behavior based on self-reflection and feedback.

Build in time to assess “coach-ability” by following the behavioral demonstration with self-reflection, targeted observer feedback, and then a return to the behavioral demonstration to see if the candidate can make use of the reflection and feedback.

Debrief the selection process with your interview partners once all candidates are interviewed and selection has been made. This is for the purpose of learning from the interview and selection processes that were tested so that future selection processes can continue to be strengthened and improved.

Share your learnings about recruitment and selection processes with your Practice Model leadership and Implementation Teams.

Example of an Observational Assessment

Engagement Liaison Recruitment

The Scene: A broad Leadership Team meeting attended by agency leaders, managers, and several partners from the local African American community (whose children are disproportionately represented in foster care).

The Players:

- There is a parent partner on the interview panel who agrees to play Pastor Hall, a well-respected and influential leader in the African American community who consistently attends the Leadership Team meetings.
- The candidate plays the public child welfare agency's Engagement Liaison (*position being recruited*).

The Focus of the Assessment:

Panelists are looking for exploration and engagement, humility, and clear next steps for considering Pastor Hall's issue without "over-promising," as well as a timeline for communicating information/update back to Pastor Hall and the Leadership Team on the issue.

The Scenario:

During this Leadership Team meeting, participants are told by agency leadership that it would like the team to play a pivotal leadership and advisory role in the implementation of the Child and Family Practice Model.

Pastor Hall (having already conferred with others from his community) mentions that his community appreciates being finally brought to the table to participate on such an important effort, but has not heard anything about being a part of designing the Practice Model evaluation that the local university will be doing. He notes:

"We are tired of being researched, prodded, and pricked for years only to have the outcomes remain the same or, in some cases, shown to have become worse. Being a part of Practice Model implementation is not enough if we are not assisting with the efforts to evaluate it according to our culture and way of life. If you continue to use biased instruments and approaches to evaluate us, won't the results in turn be biased against us? We think it will and would like to request—in fact, we demand—that we play a pivotal role in the evaluation of this Practice Model."

As the issue has not previously been raised, the agency has not discussed or considered this. An agency executive leader in the meeting looks to the Engagement Liaison to respond.

Note: Please spend the next 15 minutes playing the role of the Engagement Liaison and showing how you would interact with and respond to Pastor Hall during the meeting. Keep your full audience (the Leadership Team) in mind during this behavioral demonstration.

Example of an Observational Assessment

Implementation Team Member Recruitment

The Scene: You are an Implementation Team member who has asked if you could attend a regional office meeting, which includes the regional manager, two continuing services supervisors, and three dependency intake supervisors.

The Players:

- One panelist will be the regional manager; the other two panelists will be continuing unit supervisors.
- Interviewee will play the role of the agency Implementation Team member (*position being recruited*).

The Focus of the Assessment:

Panelists are looking for facilitation skills, engagement, identification of barriers, and teaming to solve problems.

The Situation:

A family survey has been developed to gather data to determine how the Practice Model is being experienced by the children and families receiving continuing services. The survey is also an evaluation deliverable connected to an evaluation grant the local university received. Up to this point, there has never been an evaluation process designed to engage and capture parent perspectives of their CWS services. Aggregate data from the survey will provide information about whether the Practice Model is effectively reaching children and families and will be important in understanding short-term outcomes of the Practice Model.

Completion of the survey is voluntary. Neither the social worker's name nor the responding parent's name is documented on the survey results. It has been agreed between the university and child welfare agency (and approved by the university's Internal Review Board) that the most effective and least burdensome way of distributing the parent surveys is for them to be hand delivered to parents during a monthly, in-person contact. This has been identified as helping to increase response rates.

Approximately 3 months ago, you and your manager provided a training/orientation on survey distribution for all of the supervisors and social workers in this office. However, of the 11 staff in the Office, only 3 social workers have distributed the surveys to all of their families. You have consistently sent emails and lists to the regional manager and continuing services supervisors detailing which social workers still need to complete their distribution. You are equipped with data from completed surveys that highlight that parents are reporting positive interactions with their social workers.

Note: *Please spend the next 15 minutes playing the role of an Implementation Team member who is meeting with the regional manager to discuss the lack of distribution of the surveys by the continuing social workers in this office.*

Take into account your complete audience (the continuing services supervisors are present, too) when being responsive.