

**New England Association of
Drug Court Professionals**

September 2015



Collaboration in Specialty Courts *It's easier than it looks*

Presenters:

Sid Gardner, MPA

President, Children and Family Futures

Our Mission



To improve safety, permanency, well-being and recovery outcomes for children, parents and families affected by trauma, substance use and mental health disorders.

For more information, please visit: www.cffutures.org

Introduction – A New Kind of Leadership

- Drug courts are by definition collaborative: to be effective, they demand closely linked efforts by courts, treatment agencies, agencies serving children and families, and other agencies and organizations in the community
- But collaboration is a paradox: leadership is essential to collaboration among partners, but many of the needed partners don't work for the leaders; they work *with* the leaders

It's bout a new kind of leadership

Leadership in a Collaborative Court Setting: The Challenges

Collaborative leadership in Drug Court settings is challenging for three reasons:

- Agencies involved have different agendas
- Different funding streams require leadership in weaving disparate agendas together
- Clients are involved, both parents and children: *Clients procreate!*

All courts are family courts, for two reasons

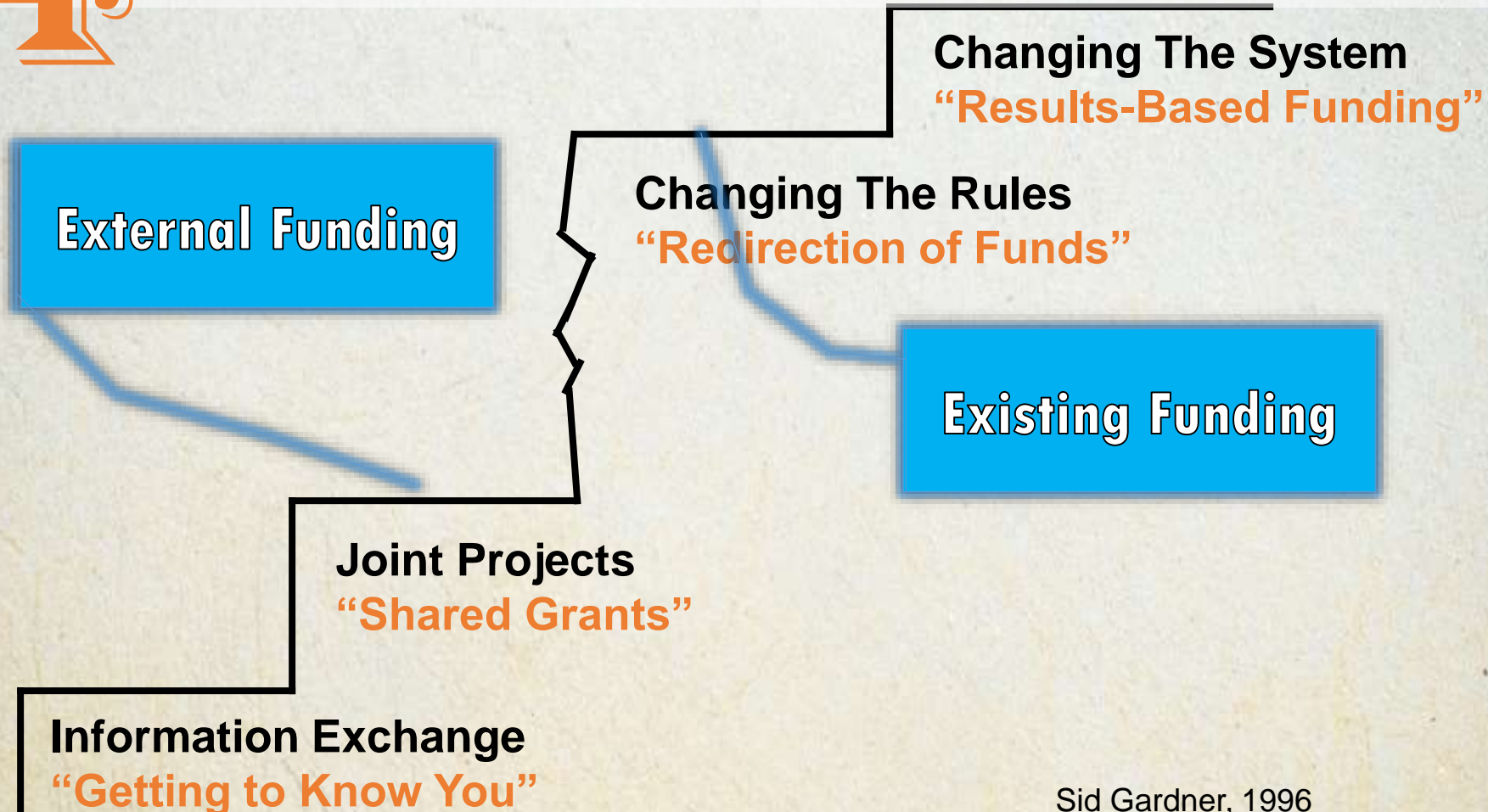
- Substantial numbers of clients have kids
- Kids are affected by parents' substance use disorders, mental illness, domestic violence, and potential incarceration

Three Frameworks for Collaboration in Collaborative Courts

- 4 Stages of Collaboration
- 10 Principles of Collaborative Courts
- Ten Elements of Collaboration Across Agencies

4

Getting Better at Getting Along: Stages of Collaboration



Sid Gardner, 1996
Beyond Collaboration to Results



10

Key Components for Drug Courts

1. Integrate treatment services with justice system case processing
2. Using a non-adversarial approach
3. Early identification and immediate placement
4. Access to a continuum of treatment services
5. Drug testing
6. Responses to behavior
7. Judicial interaction
8. Monitoring and evaluation
9. Continuing interdisciplinary education
10. Forging partnerships

10

Elements of Interagency Collaboration

Shared Outcomes

Agency Collaboration

- Interagency Partnerships
- Information Sharing
- Cross System Knowledge
- Funding & Sustainability

Client Supports

- Early Identification & Assessment
- Needs of Adults
- Needs of Children
- Community Support

Shared Mission & Vision

Collaborative Relationships: The Essential Infrastructure to Support Cross-Systems Sharing of Data and Resources

Partners across systems have:

- Articulated a clear and shared mission
- Identified shared goals and values
- Obtained knowledge about their own and each other's data system capacities
- Established cooperative working relationships to track families' involvement across systems
- Secured support and buy-in for performance monitoring at all levels
- Agreed that performance monitoring is part of standard best practice

It's About Leadership

- Judges can be leaders
- Agency heads can be leaders
- Front-line staff who work directly with clients can also be leaders—if they are willing and able to identify the barriers that leaders have to bust through

Barriers Leaders are Facing

Systems Level & Sustainability

- Historic system divisions
- Competing priorities and “turf” issues
- Scope and Scale
- Using evaluation results to demonstrate successes to funders and key stakeholders

Barriers Leaders are Facing

Barriers to Information Flow

- Trust Gaps - Confidentiality and access to information
- Lack of formal information exchange protocols and communication within and between team members

Characteristics of Collaborative Leadership



*derived from using these principles in more than 100 sites

Leaders must adopt a balanced “good news and other news” format.

**Positive
Accomplishments**



Barrier Analysis

...balance is critical





Effective leaders have wide-lens radar:

- See external policy context; parallel/competing initiatives
- Know they're not the only game in town

Wide-Lens View



Take the Lead

Effective leaders don't leave it up to staff.

If coordination is only happening when a coordinator convenes mid-level staff—there is a leadership vacuum.



Builds Up Weakest Links

Effective leaders invest and help build capacity of each partner, particular missing partners, to better serve families.

Remember - you are only as strong as your weakest link



Barrier Busters

Effective leaders approach barrier-busting as a norm; they don't take barriers for granted

They know the difference between barriers and excuses

- *Confidentiality won't let us share information*
- *Other agencies don't understand our clients*
- *Our funders won't let us do it*
- *We don't have the funding to take our efforts to scale*



Effective leaders hear what isn't being said and see what isn't being done:



The Sherlock
Holmes factor: the
non-barking dog

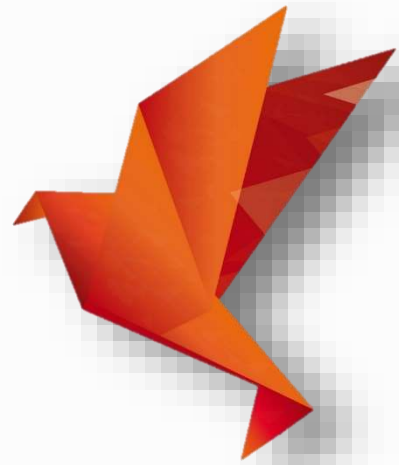


Effective Leaders Assess *@ the Table*

Who's Missing?

@ the table means:

- More than signing an MOU
- Involved in policy and operation decisions
- Knows where the money is going
- Key agencies are not just “sending somebody;” they are actively engaged



Leaders know that nothing collaborates like cash—but it takes more than resources to make it real and to take it to scale

Limits of Cash

- The finances of collaboration: sustainability planning, costs, new revenues, negotiations for new \$ vs grants - *if it works, do more*
- Redirection—cross-reference sustainability workshop
- Grants can never start collaboration by themselves; they can enhance it, but they can't sustain it without buy-in from partners with redirected resources, not external grants





Effective collaborative leaders can count



Ask: Compared to what?

**Effective leaders sell the results
of collaboration to other leaders**



Demand the data to make the sale

Effective leaders know that collaboration isn't about what agencies did last month—it's about whether clients are doing better.



A photograph of a courtroom interior. In the foreground, a black leather chair with gold-colored stitching is visible. Behind it, a portion of a flag with red, white, and blue stripes is seen. The background consists of wood-paneled walls and a wooden bench.

Legislative interpretations of
reasonable efforts in child
welfare cases leave a lot of
room for leadership

Leadership, Collaboration, and Reasonable Efforts

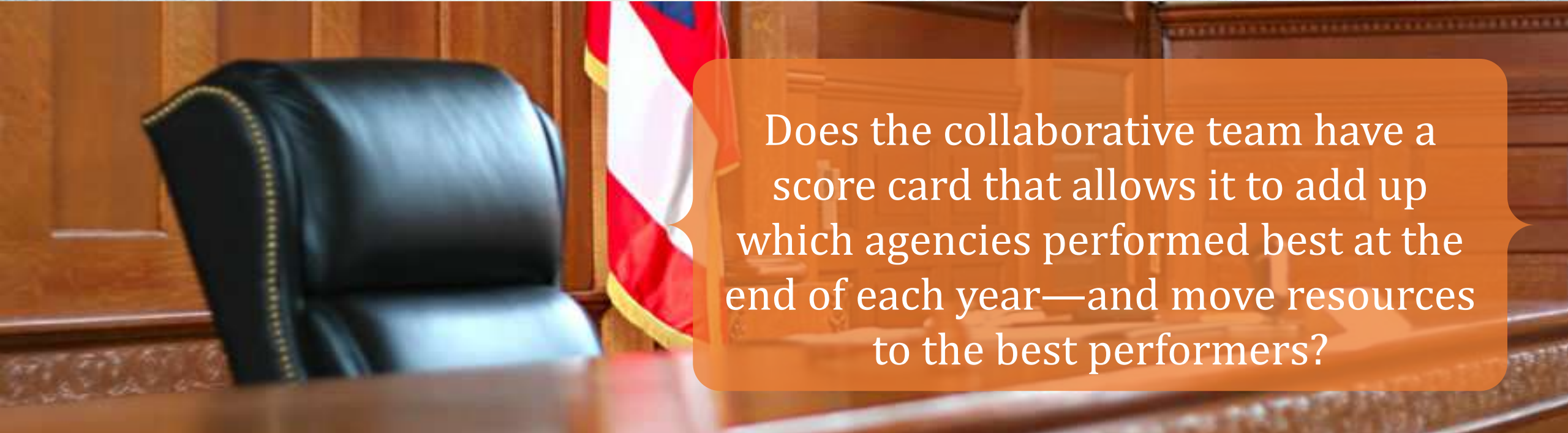
Reasonable Efforts

Source

Judge Len Edwards' book Reasonable Efforts, Judge R. Michael Key "Getting It Right" presentation on reasonable efforts;
45 C.F.R. §1356.21(b)
[available from NCJFCJ]

An effective collaborative team ensures that the whole team is making reasonable efforts to provide needed services to parents and children

Reasonable Effectiveness



Does the collaborative team have a score card that allows it to add up which agencies performed best at the end of each year—and move resources to the best performers?

When we know what works and what doesn't work—we can move from a standard of reasonable efforts to one of *reasonable effectiveness*



Warning Signs of Powerless Partnerships

Warning Signs of Powerless Partnerships

- Monthly BOGSATs* reporting only on activities, not results
 - Reporting on what agencies are doing, not whether clients are doing better
- No buy-in at policy levels, only mid-level staff involved
- No buy-in at front-line levels: all supervisors without staff who have regular contact with families
- Missing players, too-dominant conveners, absent handoff agencies, over-reliance on a “coordinator”
- Undue focus on one set of links—training, referrals, info systems—without looking at the whole system

*Bunch of guys sitting around a table

Five Diagnostic Questions about Collaboration

1. Do we agree on the mission?
2. Do we agree on how we are going to measure whether we are achieving the mission—do we have an accepted annual score card of results?
3. When front-line staff raise issues about barriers they run into—do we ignore it or go to work as a team to reduce or remove the barriers?
4. Do we share enough information across agencies to be able to use our results to get more resources for what is working?
5. Do we have an agenda for scaling up—or are we stuck in *projectitis*?

So Why Do We Say It's Easier Than It Looks?

- If the mission is clear, the tasks of the partnership follow
- Collaboration is cumulative—it feeds on itself, if leadership builds the relationships to make accountability real
- If collaboration produces better results, logic argues for doing more of what works using redirected resources
 - Scaling up is about writing down what works and selling it across systems: having a sales prospectus for expansion instead of just a project report

It's Also Easier Because:

We have tools and assets for collaborative efforts that were barely imaginable twenty years ago:

- Data interoperability to monitor client outcomes
- Multi-disciplinary screening and assessment tools
- Geocoded client and service mapping
- Online curricula and technical support in working across agency lines
- More than fifty years of history (and lessons learned) in interagency services integration efforts
- Models of effective interagency efforts that have proven they work
- Some of those initiatives are moving toward scale and infusing their methods in larger systems, showing they can break out of the *projectitis trap*
- And we have increasing numbers of leaders with experience using these tools



The Hunger for Leadership

- Most people—not all—but most of them—want to respond to and work with effective leaders. There is a hunger for principled leadership in interagency work and in the nation
- And most people realize that flying solo is likely to produce less progress than traveling and campaigning with other supporters
- In collaborative courts, effective leaders create the conditions for accountability and trust that can save money and save lives



**If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.**

African Proverb



Collaboration =

Shared results =

Accountability =

**Trust that Promotes
Sustainability**





Q&A and Discussion

Contact Information

Sid Gardner, MPA

President, Children and Family Futures

25371 Commercentre Drive, Suite 140

Lake Forest, CA 92630

(714) 505-3525

sgardner@cffutures.org

www.cffutures.org

