



The MHSa Guiding Principles and Practices¹

What are the CPP Guiding Principles?

The Guiding Principles and practices are suggestions that may strengthen local planning processes.

The 15 Guiding Principles were identified from county CPP processes.

List of 15 Guiding Principles for CPP Processes

1. *Use the MHSa values and concepts as a foundation to develop and conduct all CPP activities.*
 2. *Focus on strengths and aspirations.*
 3. *Leverage existing resources.*
 4. *Be strategic. Practice thoughtful, deliberate preparation.*
 5. *Plan and prepare for each CPP activity in advance.*
 6. *Develop partnerships.*
 7. *Be transparent.*
 8. *Make the purpose, expectations, and impacts of stakeholder participation explicit.*
 9. *Build Capacity.*
 10. *Train stakeholders to meaningfully participate in CPP activities.*
 11. *Be inclusive.*
 12. *Use multiple methods of outreach.*
 13. *Fairness.*
 14. *Share responsibility and accountability.*
 15. *Plan for the long haul.*
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How were the promising practices identified?

The first part of the project focused on gathering information in each county through focus groups, interviews, surveys to stakeholders and document requests to counties, and by studying annual reports submitted by each county which described the most recent developments in the county's behavioral health system. In particular, these annual reports provide information on each county's respective CPP processes. Over four months, CSP and its four regional partners went to each of California's counties (and two municipalities) and gathered information on how each county conducted its CPP process for its community. The information included which activities the county did, outreach methods, how the information was utilized, and the effectiveness of the activities both from the perspective of county staff, as well as community stakeholders.

The second part of the project was to inventory and summarize the vast amounts of information collected. CSP was responsible for this portion of the project. Once the inventory was complete, CSP provided the inventory information to RDA for analysis. After RDA completed its initial analysis, RDA hosted a workgroup meeting, a collaborative effort to discuss the promising practices found in RDA's preliminary analysis. This meeting was comprised of an array of diverse individuals – stakeholders, county staff, and OAC staff. RDA briefly presented the results of their data analysis and described how they identified promising practices. RDA then conducted a series of consensus building activities to confirm and refine the identified practices. The identified promising practices are suggestions that may strengthen local planning processes.

How Are the Guiding Principles Defined?¹

- 1 Use the MHSa principles as a foundation to develop and conduct all CPP activities. Incorporate activities that are collaborative; integrated; culturally competent; client and family driven; and wellness, recovery, and resiliency oriented.**
- 2 Focus on strengths and aspirations. Learn about the community, including their values, hopes, and aspirations, through research and participatory visioning processes. Develop plans based on community strengths and assets, and celebrate small and large successes.

¹ From Resource Development Associates report on Promising Practices.



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3	Leverage existing resources. Recognize and utilize the resources within the community to support CPP activities, reduce cost of logistics, and increase community presence and collaboration. Establish flexibility with CPP staffing to allow more full time employees (FTEs) to be allotted for periods with a high volume of CPP activities.
4	Be strategic. Practice thoughtful, deliberate preparation. Establish purpose, priorities and goals before launching the planning process. Use methods and tools based on a clear sense of how they contribute to the process and intended outcomes. Recognize political, social, and market realities to create feasible implementation plans. Engage in systems thinking by considering the interconnectedness of issues and institutions.
5	Plan and prepare for each CPP activity in advance to ensure that meetings are well organized and conducted in a language that stakeholders speak/understand, and that facilitators are well prepared to lead activities and are respectful of stakeholders' cultures.
6	Develop partnerships. Establish collaborative relationships with all sectors of the community by respecting diversity, encouraging dialogue, seeking points of agreement, and valuing and utilizing local knowledge, strengths and expertise. Seek commitment, and recognize that partnerships are developed and maintained over time. Time and space for face-to-face interaction and deliberation is essential.
7	Be transparent. Model clear, open, and consistent communication. Be direct about roles, responsibilities, and the degree of decision-making authority participants can expect throughout the process.
8	Make the purpose, expectations, and impacts of stakeholder participation explicit. Communicate how stakeholder input will be used.
9	Build capacity. Develop individual and organizational knowledge and capacity through co-education, dialogue, and opportunities to participate in research and informed deliberation and decision-making.
10	Train stakeholders to meaningfully participate in CPP activities. Ensure that stakeholders have an adequate understanding of county services, functions, and the decision-making process.



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11	Be inclusive. Recognize the value of meaningful participation by those people whose lives are most affected by the issues at hand. Pay special attention to vulnerable populations and those who might not otherwise be included in decision-making. At the same time, be conscientious of stakeholder diversity. Frame issues from multiple perspectives. Recognize the rights of clients but also the needs of service providers and other stakeholders. Provide opportunities for people to gather at convenient and comfortable locations at a variety of times and use a variety of approaches and tools that reflect stakeholders' cultures and skills—even if doing so slows the process down.
12	Use multiple methods of outreach. Developing reaches to broader audiences well help to build trust in the public mental health system.
13	Dedicate efforts to increase accessibility by making reasonable accommodations for those with SED/SMI, limited English proficiency, and/or socio-economic disadvantage. Arrange logistics and prepare events to allow easier access to safe environments throughout the CPP processes.
14	Share responsibility and accountability. Counties and communities should share responsibility and accountability for improving the planning and services of public mental health systems. Counties are accountable to their function as planners and administrators of mental health services in line with MHSA values and principles. Communities are accountable for understanding and voicing their own collective stakeholder needs to the counties. Both counties and communities share responsibility for contributing to the CPP process and their respective counties' public mental health services.
15	Plan for the long haul. Prepare stakeholders for ongoing and long-term committed participation. Recognize that social transformation takes time and may not follow a linear path, develop strategies for maintaining momentum, and engage and reengage over the years and throughout the planning and implementation process.

To determine how to apply these Guiding Principles and Practices we have to consider **who** will be applying these principles. Clearly a county staff person or meeting convener facilitating of CPP events would have a different perspective and a different focus than a consumer or family member or a contracted agency. We provide examples of how three different groups might apply the guiding principles and practices for each individual guiding principle in the chart below for Clients & Family Members, other Stakeholder groups (i.e., community based organizations, service providers) and meeting conveners (i.e., county staff, contractors).



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How Guiding Principles & Practices Apply to Different Stakeholder Groups²

#	Guiding Principle & Practice	Clients & Family Members	Other Stakeholders	Meeting Conveners (i.e. County Staff, Contractors)
1 Practice	<p>Use the MHSA principles as a foundation to develop and conduct all CPP activities.</p> <p>Key concepts: Collaboration; culturally responsive; client and family driven; and wellness, recovery, and resiliency oriented.</p>	<p>Validate participation through acknowledgement of their critically unique role as stakeholders; consider perspectives of others; create new partnerships. Keep the idea in mind of the greater good.</p>	<p>Be open to hearing the experiences of diverse individuals and world views. Respect differences and look for the similarities; focus on shared interests despite differing agency cultures or competing economic interests.</p>	<p>Bear in mind the power differential between meeting conveners and attendees, while focusing on everyone’s ability to contribute to common goals. Be open to discussion and sharing decision-making power in the spirit of collaboration.</p>
1 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		<p>A Client/Family member stakeholder group recognizes they lack people of cultural and ethnic diversity in their group.</p> <p>Outreach to diverse communities and agencies serving those communities to educate, engage and partner with diverse representatives with differing needs</p>	<p>Three different faith-based organizations will for first time collaborate to enhance wellness in their common community;</p> <p>Share vision, mission, values, projects of each org with all; find similarities; discover how their differences are strengths in their collaboration.</p>	<p>A facilitator is expressing their views, which appears to cause participant to avoid expressing a different perspective.</p> <p>Conveners should avoid expressing opinions in order to create a safe space for participants to express their views.</p>

² CAMHPRO developed under MHSOAC CSP Project.



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2 Practice	<p>Focus on strengths and aspirations. Mutual respect. Shared values, hopes, and aspirations. Builds trust.</p>	<p>Recognize personal and community strengths of self and others. Offer personal strengths to the group, sharing them in the spirit of hope and being solution focused. Share legitimate aspirations and demonstrate respect for the goals and aspirations of others.</p>	<p>Share from a personal perspective hopes and strengths brought to the table, in addition to collective wisdom derived from their role as service provider. Demonstrate respect for others through acknowledging their strengths.</p>	<p>Always be mindful that solutions can be more practical because when they are strength-based and value the community's collective and individual experiences. Demonstrate respect for others and their aspirations.</p>
2 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		<p>A person begins a debriefing with how everything was wrong with an event. Reframe the conversation to find the things that went well. Always start with what's working.</p>	<p>An agency acts as if it is an expert on another community agency. Maintain a level of humility when working with other agencies. Recognize that each agency has hopes for, unique insight and expertise in serving the needs of the individuals/families of their community. Validate each other's strengths</p>	<p>Convener appears to give more validation to the culture of participants that he identifies with. Model being curious, respectful, open and seek to validate everyone's strengths and hopes equally.</p>



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3 Practice	<p>Leverage existing resources. Partnerships. Collaboration. Sharing. Establishes unity and builds on success.</p>	<p>Identify what is working well and implement in recommendations. Offer community resources and connections that can act as conduits for meeting conveners to reach and include more people.</p>	<p>Incentivize formation of partnerships and encourage willingness to build upon past and current successes.</p>	<p>Tap into established community partnerships to reach a wide audience and expand collaborations; utilize respected community leaders to serve as cultural brokers to broaden outreach to unserved/underserved populations.</p>
3 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		<p>Consumer/Family members need a forum to network and discuss local issues regularly. Partner with consumer/family agencies or others who already have weekly/monthly meetings to share time, community space, online forums and for joint projects to build community capacity.</p>	<p>Wellness Center members need meaningful mock interview practice and jobs. A corporation needs mental health awareness training for employees. Develop a mutually beneficial exchange of services between corporations and your agency.</p>	<p>Engagement of a specific cultural group into services has been difficult. Identify and partner with the cultural brokers in this community; spiritual, business, political, law enforcement and/or educational leaders.</p>



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4 Practice	<p>Be strategic. Practice thoughtful, deliberate preparation. Purpose driven, shared priorities and goals. Establishes unity.</p>	<p>Think long-term, look at the big picture, and take collective action to meet objectives that are part of holistic goals.</p>	<p>Identify similar situations and solutions outside of the immediate community or beyond a particular issue to identify innovative ideas and solutions that are relevant to the all stakeholders.</p>	<p>Utilize CBO's and other community resources to optimize effectiveness and broaden outreach to all stakeholders.</p>
4 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		<p>A group of consumer/family friends independently provide public comment using the same points. Strategize and prepare in advance together so each can cover different points of a position on important issues to maximum impact.</p>	<p>A program has been minimally successful but people served are not progressing. Find other successful programs with innovative approaches to learn from. Form a Program Advisory Group composed of a minimum 51% current/past clients to recommend improvements.</p>	<p>Stakeholder CPP meetings are all held midday at County Clinics and draw few participants of diverse communities. Rotate the time, area, setting, cultural/ethnic community stakeholder settings for strategic inclusion.</p>



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5 Practice	<p>Plan and prepare for each CPP activity in advance. Maximizes participation and accessibility.</p>	<p>Participate at a level that is personally appropriate and comfortable, researching issues to be discussed beforehand and preparing positions individually and collectively.</p>	<p>Consider the impact of agency role on discussion and level of feedback from participants.</p>	<p>Consider the meeting atmosphere and take steps to maintain a warm, open and welcoming environment; prepare all information pertinent to anticipated discussions as well as feedback related to previously discussed issues.</p>
5 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		<p>The County has posted a 30 day review period of a 3 year program update. In advance, review materials available relating to the CPP topic, meet with other consumer/family members, prioritize issues, strategize positions as a group and prepare and practice your input.</p>	<p>An agency with County contracts, instructs employees to avoid taking a public position on controversial issues. Advise employees to speak as an individual, rather than as employee representing the agency.</p>	<p>Site is too small and participants have to turn around to see each other speak. Choose a large site and arrange chairs comfortably in a circle or horseshoe with facilitator. Stage welcoming staff at entrances with useful handouts.</p>



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6 Practice	<p>Develop partnerships. Collaboration and team work for the greater good, benefits community.</p>	<p>Find and be open to unlikely allies. Cultivate and deepen alliances through frequent consultation, brainstorming about strategy, and sharing of aspirations.</p>	<p>Find and be open to unlikely allies concerning shared interests, despite possible differences in positions and goals on other issues.</p>	<p>Find and be open to unlikely allies. Consider agency and community based stakeholders not simply providing input, but as meaningful partners is in success from planning through implementation.</p>
6 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		<p>Consumer and Family members are at odds regarding involuntary treatment. Form partnerships on issues that all can agree upon—voluntary, safe, effective care for all, housing, employment and benefits.</p>	<p>Altercations between police officers and homeless consumers have led to deaths. Partner with other branches of public service for cross-training and on-going mutual learning leading to better practices and outcomes for all.</p>	<p>Convener conducts separate input meetings for consumers, family members and other provider agencies. In addition or alternatively, conduct combined meetings to encourage relationship building, mutual learning, partnerships and community commitment.</p>



The MHPA Guiding Principles and Practices¹

#	Guiding Principle & Practice	Clients & Family Members	Other Stakeholders	Meeting Conveners (i.e. County Staff, Contractors)
7 Practice	<p>Be transparent. Honesty, openness. Facilitates trust.</p>	<p>Speak honestly about needs, goals, and possible solutions that might impact one on a personal level as well as one’s community.</p>	<p>Be honest about both interests and the possible impacts that decisions may have on the ability to deliver services.</p>	<p>Provide consistent feedback and follow up communication; be open regarding decision-making processes and next steps, and willing to explain the decisions that are made.</p>
7 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		<p>A consumer/family member is so grateful to be on a decision-making workgroup that she dares not contradict the County staff person’s ideas. Your purpose and responsibility is to contribute your consumer/family position honestly while remaining open to hear others’ perspectives. This does not mean you must agree with everyone.</p>	<p>An agency wants to win a contract even though it knows another agency may be better equipped to meet the need. Maintain honesty, integrity, and the greater good of the community over the financial interests of the agency.</p>	<p>A facilitator assures participants of a focus group that their input will be reported back to them and used to make changes. Be prepared to honestly explain the stages of the CPP process and to follow through with communication agreed to.</p>



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8 Practice	<p>Make the purpose, expectations, and impacts of stakeholder participation explicit. Honesty, openness, maintains realistic expectations.</p>	<p>Respectfully but clearly express the expectation that questions will be answered and feedback offered by the meeting conveners about decisions they make and implementation/outcomes issues that may arise.</p>	<p>Support clients and family members by assisting meeting conveners in communicating results and next steps as well as making clear the possibilities and limitations of an agency's ability to help implement solutions/programs.</p>	<p>Educate clearly about both the possibilities and limitations of available stakeholder processes, desired levels of participation, and the ability to provide feedback.</p>
8 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		<p>County avoids addressing questions/concerns on a new program decision. Respectfully hold County accountable to genuinely partner with clients/family members, to respond to concerns, and to clearly back up controversial decisions with rationale. Accept a compromise or progress towards meeting a need, even it is not exactly what was hoped for.</p>	<p>County announces a new program but does not explain the background. In the spirit of fostering transparency, partnership and community commitment, the Program assists by outlining the need, the development process, the expected outcomes and limitations, and the next steps for program implementation.</p>	<p>Stakeholders express concern with County plans made and the limited time in which to provide public comment. Conveners routinely educate stakeholders on information and local resources on various stakeholder processes and opportunities at different levels for input/participation to the County, as well as explaining reasonable and realistic limitations.</p>



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9 Practice	<p>Build capacity. Identifies and lays groundwork for building resource base.</p>	<p>Build relationships both at the community level and at the meeting table. Take time to talk to meeting conveners and providers to obtain background information that might be useful in the future, and share such information with the community.</p>	<p>Build relationships. Take time to talk to clients/family members and meeting conveners to obtain background information that might be useful in the future. Create and cultivate resources that could enhance effectiveness.</p>	<p>Build relationships. Take time to talk to clients/family members, community agencies and service providers to obtain background information that might be useful in the future.</p>
9 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		<p>A new consumer/family advocate is uncomfortable in meetings with strangers asking questions. Attend with a peer partner and debrief; practice with peers and in a safe setting talking to strangers and asking questions for understanding. Become committed to build long-term, meaningful working relationships.</p>	<p>An agency leader feels too busy to form working relationships or to try to understand the consumer/family perspective. Cultivate an organizational culture for mutual learning; view all stakeholders' knowledge as valuable resources that may enable agency success.</p>	<p>A convener builds relationships with clinical providers but not with consumer/family members. Maintain an attitude of humility in valuing all stakeholders equally; consumer/family member stakeholders are experts of their lived experiences that may inform more effective services.</p>



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10 Practice	Train stakeholders to meaningfully participate in CPP activities. Levels the playing field for meaningful participation.	Request and participate in training activities – both formal and informal. Ask meeting conveners questions about the process and how to participate most effectively.	Request and participate in training activities – both formal and informal. Work with conveners to identify the most effective avenues of participation.	Provide and reinforce multiple methods of stakeholder training and maintain an open door policy for continued informal learning. Make sure new stakeholders are given the knowledge they need to be effective as they join the process.
10 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		Clients/family members new to the stakeholder process are unclear on how to participate. Request and attend training on effective participation from the County, client/family programs and/or advocacy organizations. As an experienced stakeholder approach and offer informal or formal training to novices.	An agency has missed opportunities to participate in the County stakeholder processes that may impact the agency vision. Request and plan for effective training of staff on the process by partnering with County and client/family member expert trainers. Budget consistent agency participation at various levels of stakeholder processes.	Stakeholders are largely ineffective as participants due to lack of understanding the process. Partner with stakeholders to develop & conduct in-person regularly scheduled trainings for different population needs. Prior to key meetings present a brief overview of protocol. Post online training modules on stakeholder processes & effective participation.



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11 Practice	Be inclusive. Fairness. Builds trust and enriches solution.	Be mindful of any voices in the room that are not being heard, and make space for those persons or groups to contribute.	Using their familiarity with the constituencies they serve, be mindful of any voices in the community or in the room that are not being heard, and advocate for those persons or groups to participate more fully.	Cultivate inclusive facilitation skills to ensure equal access to participation and manage the conversation so that the persons most familiar and comfortable with the stakeholder process are not the only ones heard.
11 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		One individual is dominating, another is not participating. Ask the dominating person to step back and the reserved to step up in order to create a space for inclusion of everyone's contribution, and/or use round robin giving all a chance to speak.	A group known to have important input is not speaking up in a meeting. As an agency familiar with a certain community's issues, support and empower the community to participate fully.	A group of new stakeholders is noticeably quiet. Invite all to participate but advise they must share the floor. Ensure all constituents are given the opportunity to be heard. Validate everyone's contribution. Scan and call on those who may be timid or drowned out. Offer training.



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12 Practice	Use multiple methods of outreach. Reaches broader audience and builds diversity.	Provide meeting conveners information on community organizations that might be good partners to reach more people; community venues that might provide alternative meeting locations that will include populations otherwise excluded; and strategies to reach a more diverse selection of participants.	Be willing to partner with and build on existing meetings and community activities to reach more people.	Go where the people are already meeting and active, especially those beyond purely mental health-related venues. Build on momentum of existing community partnerships and share resources. Consider use of technologies that may overcome barriers of geography.
12 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		The young adult consumer voice is missing from the stakeholder process. Partner with conveners, agencies to identify key stakeholder groups missing and customize outreach strategies to each missing group (youth drop-in center, social media, blogs; community centers, senior, wellness, spiritual centers, street fairs, etc.) Propose location for stakeholder process at the meeting place of the missing group or nearby and rotate accordingly.	There is minimal attendance and diversity at stakeholder meetings. Partner with and join neighborhood coalition networks already meeting (that include public health, businesses, schools, law enforcement, city officials consumer/family member advocates, etc.) to add a stakeholder process to their agenda.	A group of key constituents are active in their community but do not participate in County stakeholder processes. Go to where key constituents are active. Use existing connections to partner with their cultural brokers and tie in with one of the community's events already scheduled to conduct the stakeholder process.



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13 Practice	<p>Dedicate efforts to increase accessibility. Fairness. Safety and provides welcoming environment.</p>	<p>If meeting places and activities are not accessible, ask for reasonable accommodations related to disability, language or cultural factors.</p>	<p>Advocate for the needs of community members requiring accessibility and accommodations.</p>	<p>Utilize universal accessibility guidelines for planning and conducting meetings. Consider use of technologies that may overcome barriers of language, institutional isolation and disability.</p>
13 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		<p>Key stakeholders include a group of immigrants granted asylum who experienced torture, and the stakeholder process site is located next to a military complex. Request a different location. Ask for accommodations whenever needed.</p>	<p>No public transportation is available to the site booked. Represent stakeholders' needs by expecting that all stakeholder locations are easily accessible by public transportation, have sufficient parking available and are ADA compliant.</p>	<p>A person in a wheel chair can't access the location. Be sure facility is fully ADA compliant. Use audio/visual aids for better comprehension. Offer to provide accommodations, assistive technology, translation, sign language, etc. Structure seating in a circle or horseshoe so all can see.</p>



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14 Practice	<p>Share responsibility and accountability. Fairness. Honesty. Establishes trust.</p>	<p>Ask about the limitations and possibilities of the stakeholder process, about decisions made and next steps. Offer to be a continued support and advocate for sufficient feedback and opportunities to participate in implementation or oversight activities.</p>	<p>Support stakeholders in accessing follow up information through dissemination partnerships (i.e. community based organization newsletter, agency websites).</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for community members to follow up, maintain multiple avenues of communication and meaningful participation; report back consistently on outcomes and next steps.</p>
14 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		<p>A stakeholder input gathering process cycle is just ending. Ask questions on how to contribute to next steps and remain involved. Offer to be a resource or liaison to gather ongoing feedback. Ask how to apply to be on decision-making councils. Ask how and when the next cycle will begin. Stay connected with other consumer/family members.</p>	<p>Stakeholders are asking the agency for the results of the stakeholder process. Budget for an agency liaison to clearly disseminate the stakeholder process results, and education opportunities between the County, community stakeholders, and other agencies. Send County dashboard outcomes, success, new and closing programs. Use newsletters, social media, websites, e-trainings, smartphone applications.</p>	<p>Community members are asking what changes are being made in response to the feedback they provided. Maintain a database of contact information email addresses (or physical address) of all meeting participants and follow up with them. Send out input process reports, approved County program updates in a format that is easy to read and post on website and monthly news brief.</p>



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15 Practice	Plan for the long haul. Realistic expectation. Personal Investment. Purpose.	Be persistent -- keep coming back. Develop long-term strategies to reach your goals step-by-step, and prepare to make compromises along the way. Create the relationships that can sustain you over time.	Keep coming back. Develop partnerships around common, long-term goals.	Look to sustainability in terms of planning, staffing, budgeting, and community engagement. Develop and build upon sustainable partnerships with allied agencies and communities.
15 Examples of How Practice can be Applied		Key client/family members want to withdraw from active participation. Take a break if you need to care for yourself, but be sure you have strategic goals in place and well-trained people, who are ready in the wings to collectively pilot the vision forward. Work for progress, not perfection. You are invaluable and your job never ends. Keep coming back!	Due to capacity issues the Agency is not adjusting to meet changing community needs. Never give up. Regroup, and revive old, and form new partnerships involved in community coalitions with common goals. Collectively draw on resources and strive to continuously improve conditions for a healthy interdependent community.	County wants the larger community to be able to sustain WET programs when funds expire soon. Foster alliances between all stakeholders involved in WET, include diverse communities un/underrepresented in the workforce. Cultivate other resources inside and outside public MH to organically grow dedicated community able to sustain a diverse public mental health workforce.