

Connecticut Governor's Task Force Planning Retreat
June 13, 2017
MEETING SUMMARY

I. Results of Survey

The group was reminded that the survey was originally designed and administered by a previous consultant in preparation for a January retreat. Due to illness, the Consultant was not able to complete the work and Laura Downs, a new Consultant agreed to complete the work. At the time when the original survey was created, it appears that the partnership between the Connecticut Governor's Task Force (GTF) and the Connecticut Children's Alliance (CCA) was a core area of focus. Nineteen (19) GTF members completed the survey and the majority of questions were answered by the 19 respondents. The Consultant shared some of the high-level themes from the January 2017 survey:

Strengths

- The varied expertise of the people gathered around the table
- The multi-agency and multi-disciplinary nature of the Task Force membership
- Promoting best practice standards in investigating child abuse

Opportunities

- Utilizing NCA standards to ensure that all teams/CACS are offering high quality of services
- Providing consistent and cohesive victim advocacy; forensic interviewing
- Effectively servicing DMST cases
- Support for and training of the direct workers
- Improving services for the families by creating a better web of communication between disciplines and service providers

Challenges

- The potential impact the state's financial crisis may have on going funding
- Successfully implementing the new NCA standards

Primary Purpose of GTF

- Coordination between constituencies represented on the Task Force, but that felt so vague that I felt a need to see what's on the GTF website
- Support and monitor the work of the MDTs in the State
- Guiding and standardizing best practice for the investigation of child abuse

Primary Purpose of CCA

- To ensure quality services throughout the State of CT to victims of child abuse and their families by providing oversight, tech. assistance, training, legislative and community education and awareness surrounding the work of MDTs and CACS statewide
- To provide services to all child victims and their families through collaboration, systemic change, public awareness and legislative advocacy

The survey also included questions about the composition of GTF and the relationship/partnership between the GTF and CCA. The Consultant noted that a significant number of responses for all the questions related to these topics were "not sure" or "neutral" and that this may be an issue that needs to be addressed. The survey was anonymous. Retreat members asked for a full copy of the survey responses which will be distributed with the retreat summary.

II. GTF and CCA Roles and Responsibilities

The Consultants review of the overall survey responses indicated that the roles and responsibilities of the two groups need further clarification.

Retreat participants noted that since the survey was done, efforts have been underway to clarify the relationship between GTF and CCA and wondered if we needed to spend time on this issue. The roles and responsibilities of each group were discussed and although each has different charge there is some overlap in terms of evaluation. GTF has a statutory responsibility to evaluate MDTs at the same time, MDT functioning is a component of the NCA standards for which CCA is responsible for ensuring they are upheld through regular evaluation. It was also noted that the NCA standards for CACs include other elements that GTF is concerned about including forensic interviews, victim advocacy, and medical evaluation. The timing for each evaluation is different, and occasionally may occur within the timeframe. It was noted that with the new CAC legislation there is an opportunity to explore ways to streamline and/or align the CT and NCA evaluations. There was some discussion about the possibility of outsourcing the CT evaluation to CCA since they are a nonprofit entity but it was not clear if the legislative language would allow for this. It was agreed that an ad-hoc evaluation group will further explore this issue and bring recommendations back to GTF.

In terms of training, there is some overlap in terms of who participates in training since CCA training is for MDT members which includes law enforcement, prosecution, DCF, etc. but the topics are different. It was also noted that the NCA standards also include case tracking and that GTF and CCA have been working together to look at ways to aggregate data at the state level and streamline the data collection process.

III. GTF Priority Focus Areas

The group reviewed the federal program instructions which included: state Task Force, investigative, judicial handling, demonstrate models, technical resolutions, court handling, sex abuse, GAL, reform of state laws and procedures, supporting CA treatment and prevention programs (not a use of federal funds). Examples of activities included: training law enforcement, DCF, courts; supporting CAC and MDTs; fatality review teams; system response; linkage to anti-trafficking efforts and quality CFSR. . It was acknowledged that although CTs federal grant application has historically received a favorable review, there are areas that could potentially be bolstered and others that may need a fresh look with an eye toward sustainability as follows:

- MDT functioning -- how to streamline state and NCA evaluations? How to address systems issues that emerge from evaluation? What data does GTF need?
- Finding Words – what is the statewide reach, impact and plans for sustainability?
- Minimal Facts – what is next step to ensure consistency and fidelity?
- System gaps and barriers –how can GTF structure itself to address the system gaps and barriers that arise? How do we influence policy and practice?
- Staff support -- How we use our fulltime staff to maximum benefit?
- Funding – is our funding aligned with our priorities?

The group agreed that there are certain functions which are ***coordination priorities***. These are things that others have direct responsibility for but GTF needs to be informed about in terms of implementation and policy/practice issues or concerns. These include: human trafficking; children with disabilities; CFSR; CIP and child fatalities.

The group reviewed current committees, workgroups and activities and agreed that their priorities are:

1. MDT/CAC Evaluation & Quality Assurance
2. Training
3. System Gaps & Barriers
4. Child Fatalities

The group agreed that ad-hoc workgroups for each of these priority areas should be established to replace all the existing workgroups and committees and that the next six months should be used to develop a framework and plans for the next federal grant application which is due May 2018 as follows:

1. MDT/CAC Evaluation & Quality Assurance (volunteer lead: Paula Schaffer)

This ad-hoc group will develop a plan for how the CT and NCA standards and the MDT evaluation process can be aligned and potentially streamlined and how data is collected and utilized.

2. Training (volunteer lead: Margaret Doherty)

This ad-hoc group will assess what training is provided both GTF and CCA including Finding Words, Minimal Facts, MDT training; explore sustainability options, and identify training needs and gaps.

3. System Gaps & Barriers (volunteer lead: John Leventhal)

This ad-hoc group will look at system/service gaps and barriers as well practice fidelity issues (e.g., forensic interviewers, medical interviews, etc.) that have been previously brought to GTF; develop a systemic process for GTF to discuss and track system gaps/barriers on a regular basis and; identify strategies for GTF to develop a common policy platform or agenda.

4. Child Fatality Response (volunteer lead: Faith Vos Winkel)

This ad-hoc group will explore the potential of a developing a local pilot and a plan for implementation.

It was further agreed that the Victim Services ad-hoc workgroup would continue to meet given they have renewed traction, to discuss what if anything needs to be considered by the new ad-hoc groups and the new grant application.

V. Structural and Organizational Changes

Retreat participants noted several issues regarding the GTF structure, meeting schedule and meeting agendas including: there never seems to be enough time on the agenda to have substantive discussion of issues; most of the substantive discussions occur at Executive Committee; if a meeting gets cancelled then the GTF could go for six months without meeting; system barriers need to be a standing agenda item with action and accountability; meetings should include education on emerging issues.

The group agreed that the full Task Force should discuss possible options for restructuring the GTF meeting schedule and agenda so there is more substantive discussion and engagement versus report outs. Preliminary ideas included:

- Meeting every other month
- Having a topical issue discussion and/or speaker
- Having system gaps/barriers as a standing agenda item
- Limiting the Executive Committee role to personnel issues and budget

VI. Wrap Up & Next Steps

The consultant will prepare a meeting summary, recommendations from the retreat discussion and facilitate a discussion of the recommendations at the next GTF meeting.

The group was asked to do plus/delta meeting evaluation.

Plus What worked?	Delta What should be changed?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kept on task• Conversation was useful• Food• Facilitator had local knowledge and content• Facilitator posed hard questions; balanced pushing and backing off so the group solved their own problems• Facilitator acknowledged when she was stepping out of role to provide content• The group• Ended early	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results of survey in writing in advance of the meeting• GTF mission and mandate distributed in advance• Input on survey questions• Revisit survey concerns, did we address everything?• Tent cards with name