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TO: Juvenile Probation Staff
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Children's Mental Health Contract Agency Staff

FROM: Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.
Director, Department of Mental Health

Calvin C. Remington
Acting Chief Probation Officer, Probation Department

Phillip L. Browning
Interim Director, Department of Children and Family Services

SUBJECT: **SHARED CORE PRACTICE MODEL**

Our departments have committed to a shared Core Practice Model that describes our common vision, guiding principles, and practice activities for improving the lives of the children, youth, and families we serve. The attached "Foundations of Shared Practice" provides an overview of this approach. This practice model provides an overarching framework for promoting best practice standards, recognizing the need to strengthen and integrate the day-to-day work of our staff and represents nothing less than a transformation of our approach to partnering with children and families to address the needs that have brought them to our attention.

Fundamental to our shared practice model is the belief that we must work together to ensure that children and youth are safe, free from abuse, neglect, and are afforded nurturing and permanent living environments whenever possible with their families. Our work is best accomplished through strong partnerships that start with community based agencies, a sensitivity to family, cultural values, and a focus on promoting child and family well-being, and self-sufficiency.

In our work with children and families, we need to strengthen our efforts at engagement, for without the establishment of a trusting relationship with those we seek to serve, we cannot accomplish our shared objectives. Best practice calls for a team approach. Every child and youth should have a child and family team that works together to

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identify the needs and strengths of the youth and family, and provide for the formal and informal supports and services needed to achieve identified goals. We also need to be vigilant in tracking progress and adapting our efforts as necessary to promote and sustain desired outcomes.

We have begun working together to train and coach our workforces in the application of these principles and activities in their daily work and are committed to moving forward in these efforts. We expect that these fundamental changes in practice will transform our broad service system, lead to better experiences, and outcomes for those we serve and have established mechanisms to evaluate our progress with respect to systems performance and outcomes for children and families.

We encourage all staff – Child Welfare, Mental Health, and Probation - to participate fully in the training and coaching support for the Core Practice Model.

MJS:BM:GL:ag

Attachment

Our Shared Foundations of Practice
Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Mental Health, Probation Department

Our Departments have developed a shared and evolving model of practice to better integrate services and supports for children, youth, families and communities. Our commitment and approach are cemented in the crucial elements of community partnership, teamwork, family voice and choice, cultural competence, respect, accountability, continuous quality improvement and implementation of best practice.

Key Outcomes: *Safety, Permanence, Well-Being, Self Sufficiency, Organizational Excellence*

Shared Values and Guiding Principles

- **Child Protection & Safety:** Children and youth have the right to live in a safe environment, free from abuse, and neglect.
- **Permanent, Lifelong, Loving, Families:** Children and youth need and are entitled to a safe, nurturing and permanent family environment ideally in their own home.
- **Strengthening Child & Family Well-Being and Self Sufficiency:** Identifying the unique strengths of children, youth and families allows services and supports to be individualized and tailored.
- **Child Focused Family Centered Practice:** Focusing on the child's individualized, underlying needs and strengths, and the strengths and capacities of families provide the best guide to effective intervention and lasting change.
- **Community-Based Partnerships:** Services and interventions for children, youth and families are delivered collaboratively by agencies, providers, community and informal and naturally occurring supports in order to meet each family's needs.
- **Cultural Competency:** We maintain an attitude of cultural humility; honoring and respecting the beliefs and values of all families and recognizing that the cultural, ethnic and spiritual roots of the child, youth and family are a valuable part of their identity.
- **Best Practice and Continuous Learning:** We commit to developing an environment of continuous listening and learning and to ensuring that policy and practice decisions are based on reliable data as well as evidence, research and feedback.

The Practice Wheel: Our Shared Core Practice Model in Action

Our values and guiding principles are applied through a set of practice activities depicted by the Practice Wheel:

- **Engaging** is the practice of creating trustful working relationships a child and their family by increasing their participation, validating their unique cultural perspective, and hearing their voice and choice.
- **Teaming** is the practice of building and strengthening the child and family's support system, whose members meet, communicate, plan together, and coordinate their efforts in a unified fashion to address critical issues/needs.
- **Assessing** is the practice of collaborating with a family's team to obtain information about the salient events impacting children and families and the underlying causes bringing about their situation.
- **Planning and Intervening** is the practice and process of tailoring and implementing plans to build on strengths and protective capacities in order to meet individual needs for each child and family.
- **Tracking, Adapting and Transitioning** is the practice of evaluating the effectiveness of the plan, assessing circumstances and resources, reworking the plan, celebrating successes, adapting to challenges and organizing after-care supports as needed for the child and family.

