The Unlearning of Child Welfare
INVESTING IN FAMILIES
CONVERSATION GUIDE

Institute for Family

KEY CONCEPTS

- Getting Proximate
- Sharing Power
- Building Relationships
- Vision and Leadership
- Meeting Concrete Needs
- Addressing Economic Inequities

HOW CAN WE HELP?

We would like to support you in any way we can. We also want to hear from you about the actions you take based on what you have learned through this series. Contact us directly at **information@instituteforfamily.org**
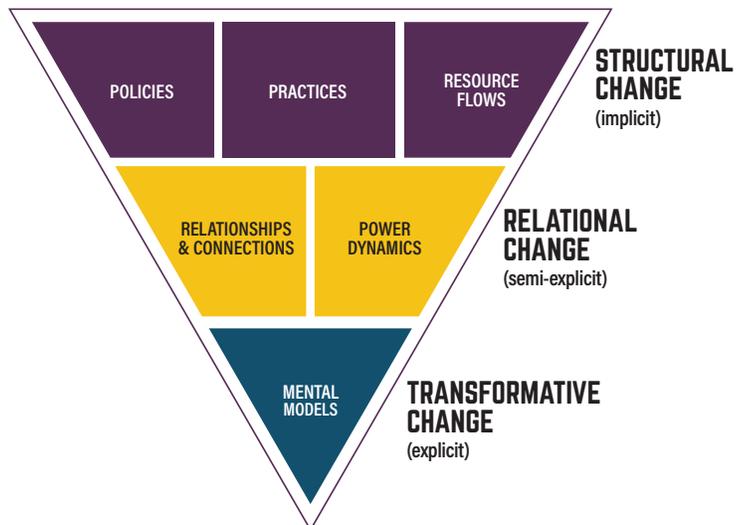
THANK YOU for tuning in to the Investing in Families webinar series. What a great conversation! In Episode 1, you learned how economic interventions and meeting concrete needs can improve family well-being. In Episode 2, you learned how bold leadership can drive organizational and systemic change. We know you are ready to act.

We want to help you **move from conversation to action**. We believe family voice and leadership is essential to how we transform our system to one that advances family well-being. As such, we want to encourage you to take action **by getting proximate to the people you serve and sharing power with them to create solutions**.

Creating systems change starts with changing the relationships between the people who make up the system. "Deconstructing the Bird Cage" provides a helpful model for systemic change — Structural, Relational, and Transformative.

This simple tool will help you start with Relational Change. We need to get proximate. We need to build relationships with communities and families. This is important because those closest to the problem are key to unlocking the ingenuity needed to solve the problem. When we focus on building relationships, we can create a context that establishes trust, builds empathy, and shares power. This is the context we need to shift mindsets and make structural changes to policy, practice, and resource flow.

SIX CONDITIONS OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

POLICIES
PRACTICES
RESOURCE FLOWS
STRUCTURAL CHANGE (implicit)

RELATIONSHIPS & CONNECTIONS
POWER DYNAMICS
RELATIONAL CHANGE (semi-explicit)

MENTAL MODELS
TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE (explicit)

Source: https://www.fsg.org/blog/new-article-water-systems-change

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LET'S GET STARTED!

We invite you to use the following questions as **thought starters** for developing your own process for transformative change. We suggest you use them as an individual, a team, or as an organization. The most important thing is that the process is based on **listening to understand, learning from each other, building relationships, sharing power, and taking action together.**

GETTING PROXIMATE: UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEMS

Who do we need to learn from to better understand the problems we are trying to solve?

How can we engage with individuals and communities in a meaningful way?

What will allow us to establish and build trust?

Are there specific people or organizations that can help us build relationships?

How can we get involved with community-based organizations so that we are more informed?

What questions would help us understand what families need and how our systems need to change?

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KEEP GOING!
SHARING POWER: CO-CREATING NEW SOLUTIONS

How can we assess our current state of power sharing?
(i.e. non-participation, token involvement, partnership, citizen control)

How are we soliciting input and feedback from the people we serve, who is designing those questions?

What structures or approaches would increase our level of partnership and shared decision-making?

What changes to our mental models would help us share control and increase our level of partnership?

Are we having open, honest, and transparent dialogue that establishes trust?

Are we creating a shared agenda for action that is based on a shared understanding of problems?

LEARN MORE

Find more information online with these additional resources:

https://www.fsg.org/blog/new-article-water-systems-change

http://bit.ly/deconstructing-the-bird-cage

https://www.aecf.org/resources/sharing-power/#key-takeaway

https://www.everyday-democracy.org/tips/5-ways-overcome-barriers-youth-engagement

https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/resources/examining-power-dynamics-systems-change