Wisconsin Community of Practice on Autism Spectrum Disorders and Other Developmental Disabilities

March 5, 2009
“Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their understanding and knowledge of this area by interacting on an ongoing basis”

What is a Community of Practice?

- A **mindset**, a way of working that promotes shared work and moves away from isolated activity
- **Inclusive framework** for creating dialogue around who and what is known as well as who and what we need to know
- A **structure** that enables routine communication, learning and action among individuals and groups that agree to meet regularly to improve current practice
Why this approach?

A way of working
Involving those who do shared work
Involving those who share issues
Always asking “who isn’t here?”

A way of learning
Create new knowledge grounded in ‘doing the work’
Involve those who can advocate for and make change
Community of Practice

Real leadership means bringing providers and families into the work as allies.

Those who ‘do the work’ have important insights to share.

Those that are the ‘intended beneficiaries’ have important goals that must frame the future work.
Role of the Community of Practice

- Learning through *Community Building*
  - State-to-Local
  - Local-to-State
  - Local-to-Local
  - State-to-State (National Community of Practice on ASD)

- Focusing on issues *and* relationships

- Moving from single events to *year-round strategies*

- Moving from *separate work* to *shared work*:
  - Working across groups
  - Working across agencies
Role of the Practice Groups

• Practice groups are created to;
  – Realize our vision and mission
  – Provide structure and focus for our work as a community

• The community helps the practice group to focus on the big picture; the practice groups keep the community focused on the many dimensions of the issue
Practice Groups

- Identify added issues/priorities that come up from group members
- Involve community members in leadership opportunities
  - Sign up to participate in practice groups
  - Expand practice groups
  - Development of new practice groups
Role of the Steering Team

• Plan the Community of Practice formation
• Assure shared leadership with families and providers
• Support the work of the Practice Groups
• Assure that the Community of Practice’s continued development meets emerging needs
Next Steps

• Highlight some of the major initiatives in WI
• Continue to expand and develop the Wisconsin Community of Practice on ASD network
• Meet 3 times in 2009
• Sign up and utilize www.sharedwork.org
Questions

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