Permanency
Values & Best Practice

Bob Lewis 2010
Our Shared Goal

- To make permanence as intuitive as safety:
  - No children will come into care who need not
  - To preserve a youth’s culture
  - No child will age out of our care
To every child we take into care
Minnesota makes a promise...
“In loco parentis”
For them it is just as urgent
Changing Perspective
Today

- Concurrent Permanency Planning/Shared Parenting
- Finding & engaging fathers (both parents)
- Reaching out those who love the child(ren)
- The courts involvement
- Teen permanence
Permanence is...

- What is the most common form of permanence?
- What does permanence look like when you think of it?
- What is the most unusual permanence situation you’ve seen?
- Belonging
What About...

- Return home?
- Living with relatives?
- Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
- Independent Living?
- College
- Job Corps
- Permanence is NOT the consequence of failure
- A placement is not permanence; permanence is not a place
We measure permanence by...

- Intent
- Commitment
- Belonging
- Status

It’s Not Rocket Science ...
Concurrent Permanency Planning

Concurrent Permanency Planning means working towards reunification, while at the same time developing and implementing an alternative permanency plan. (Minn. Stat. § 260C. 212. subd. 1(a).)
When have you done something for someone else’s child? Has something been done for your child? For you as a child?

What does shared parenting mean?

Thinking beyond today and beyond yourself…
Shared Parenting

...is a vessel that holds the whole process of parenting:

- The eyes and ears and hands for safety,
- The connections for permanence,
- The nurturing for development and well-being.
Two or more caring adults, each taking a significant and substantial responsibility.

Primary & urgent focus on the child or young person.

Dynamic, developing relationships expect change.

Child welfare initially takes power, shares power, invests resources, cedes power to new vessel of safety, permanence and wellbeing.

Everybody sharing and holding responsibility.
- Youth voices heard and respected.

- Clarity of process: responsibilities, power, communication and authority within the vessel.

- Support from formal and natural helping networks.

- Respectful, collaborative relationships between the adults, e.g. “cooperative colleagues” *

- Determination to hold the vessel together: mutual respect and collaboration may be less than ideal.

Highest degree of legal security possible.
Shared Parenting

Where to Begin*

- Assessment
- Education
- Advocacy
- Facilitation of negotiations
- Continuing support & troubleshooting.
The responsible social services agency shall make diligent efforts to identify and locate both parents of any child who is the subject of proceedings under this chapter (Minn. Stat. § 260C. 150 subd. 3)
Fathers

- Fathers are not "relatives"
- Identify BOTH parents
- Ask the custodial parent for information
- Identification and location
- Search MN Fathers' Adoption Registry
- Other databases
- Courts: sworn testimony & oversight
Continuum of Permanence

- Support, formal and informal
- Recruitment (everyone’s business)
- Systemic Approaches
- Preparing for (Re)Connection
- Talking with Children & Teens
- Child & Youth Development
- Making & Convening Connections
- Recognizing & Preparing Resources
- Finding Connections/Shared Parenting
- Recognizing the Urgency
Relative Search

The responsible social services agency shall exercise due diligence to identify and notify adult relatives prior to placement or within 30 days after the child’s removal from the parent.... the search shall be reasonable and comprehensive and may last until a fit and willing relative is identified. (Minn. Stat. § 260C. 212 subd. 5)
Finding Connections

- Helping parents/children/youth identify connections
- Making contact with potential connections
- “Family Finding”
- Record review/mining
Don’t leave anyone out

- Birth family & kin
- All other important people
- Connections across “professional” boundaries
Finding Connections to

- Heart
- Whole
- Body
- Soul
- Young Person
# The Remembered People Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>≤2</th>
<th>≤11</th>
<th>≤15</th>
<th>≤19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where I lived</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Who I remember</td>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image7.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image8.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>What I miss</td>
<td><img src="image9.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image10.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image11.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image12.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Everyone needs to be “somebody’s special someone”.

👋 Are you the one?

👋 Will you help find the one?

👋 How will you stay connected?
An out-of-home placement plan shall be filed with the court within 30 days of the date of the child is placed in foster care by court order or a voluntary placement agreement… (Minn. Stat. § 260C. 212 subd. 1(a,b,c))
Incorporating Permanency

- Shared Vision
- Shared Responsibility
- Shared Action
- Shared Parenting
- Weaving Family Ties
A Variety of Relationships

- Birth father never involved
- Child care worker involved
- Sibs foster/adoptive family
- Friend’s parents
- Grandparents: not seen in 5 years
- Mother now sober/drug free
- Parents previously abusive, neglectful
- Past foster/adoptive families
When a child is age 16 or older, at the required in-court hearing, the court shall review the independent living plan and the provision of services to the child related to the well-being of the child as the child prepares to leave foster care. (Minn. Stat. § 260C.212 subd. 7(d))
Wake-up call...

Former Foster Youth: 12-18 months. after aging out

- Wanted adoption
- Employed
- Victims
- Incarcerated
- Need Guidance
- Homeless

- Female
- Male

Former Foster Youth: 12-18 months. after aging out
Midwest Study ‘07
Key Mental Health Findings
Figure 1 compares the rates of current mental illness (diagnosed within the past 12 months) of 1,087 Casey alumni and 3,547 adults from general population matched for age, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Fig. 1. 12-month Mental Health Diagnoses among Casey National Alumni and the General Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Alumni</th>
<th>General Population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Depressive Episode</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified Social Phobia</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panic Disorder</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalized Anxiety Disorder</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Dependence</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Dependence</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulimia</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Right now in our care...
Development for Success

- Belonging
- Usefulness
- Competence
- Power
Development in our Care

- Abuse/Trauma
- Neglect/Limits
- Multiple Moves
- Identity Formation
- Adolescent Mourning
Helping Children Grieve

“They will bury their feelings, and they may develop some behavioral problems to accommodate the energy that is generated and regenerated by the lack of acknowledgement of the emotions they are trying to communicate. Sadly, when this happens, the original grief incident is often overlooked. The focus is shifted to the child’s behavior, which is seen incorrectly as a discipline problem rather than a grief issue.” - When Children Grieve
Youth Development

Raising Teens
Child Trends
Search Institute & 5 Promises
Network on Transitions to Adulthood
Brain Development
10 Tasks of Adolescence

1. Adjust to sexually maturing bodies and feelings
2. Develop and apply abstract thinking skills
3. Develop and apply a more complex level of perspective taking
4. Develop and apply new coping skills in areas such as decision making, problem solving, and conflict resolution
5. Identify meaningful moral standards, values, and belief systems
6. Understand and express more complex emotional experiences
7. Form friendships that are mutually close and supportive
8. Establish key aspects of identity
9. Meet the demands of increasingly mature roles and responsibilities
10. Renegotiate relationships with adults in parenting roles
Talking with teens

Love

Listen

Learn

Teach
Listen with Respect

- Listen beyond the words
- Repeat actions and messages of empowerment
- Allow for disagreement without triggering oppositional behavior
- Find areas of agreement
- Don’t expect full buy-in
- Keep at it

Belonging, safely and securely is the promise we make to every child.
The Permanence Conversation

- Plant the seeds
- Talk softly & often about family connection.
- Engage those in their living space
- Make opportunities
- All the time & everywhere
- Listen to their stories
- Don’t expect them to take all the risk
- Partialize the process to a yes
- Keep at it
- Use their media.
Using the Media
Preparing for (re)connection

- Loyalty
- Loss
- Self-Esteem
- Behavior Management
- Self Determination
Many teens believe they have to give up their parents in order to make new ones. They need to learn that they can have both. It happens all the time – parenting is shared. Teens don’t want to call it parenting…
Teens are struggling to understand and cope with the loss in their lives. Understanding that anger, hurt, bargaining, denial, and acceptance are part of everyone's experience of loss is essential. Painful as it is to do, grief work is a learned skill. Grief is not just traumatic, it’s also developmental.
The Stages of Grief

- Understanding/Acceptance
- Despair/Depression
- Hurt/Anger
- Bargaining/Guilt
- Denial/Shock
Mourning Needs

Alan Wolfelt

- Ongoing support from others
- Search for meaning
- Develop a new self-identity
- Remembering the person
- Embrace the pain/loss
- Acknowledge the reality
Grieving Cycle

SHOCK/DENIAL

DEPRESSION

ANGER

BARGAINING

RESOLUTION
Each young person needs to develop self-esteem him/herself.

Self-Esteem makes it possible for kids to accept attachments.

It also makes them more attractive to families.

What challenges do they want to face?
Survival (mis)Behaviors

Misbehavior is often born of anger and misperception.

Survival Behavior cannot be extinguished if one is still in survival mode.

If a youth is one mistake away from being moved again...
Self Determination

- No teenager is going to be placed against his/her will, but "NO" does not mean, "I don't want a family".

- They need to own the process and to be involved every step of the way.
The truth is that all of us are selfish to a certain degree. Sometimes parents are also driven by self-interest. In other words, when we are wrong, we blame the situation. When others are wrong, we blame their character and negative intentions. - Dr John Ng Swee Kheng

- Recasting by Development & Grieving
- Belonging, Power, Competence & Usefulness
Transitions to Adulthood

Figure 1. Completing the Adult Transition in 1960 and 2000
Leaving home, finishing school, becoming financially independent, getting married, and having a child

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 20</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 25</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 30</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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</table>

Percent completing all 5 transitions
What will it take to make permanence as intuitive as safety for everyone involved in child welfare?

What will it take here in Minnesota?

What will you do?
Focus x competence x passion = Success

Belonging

Usefulness

Power

Competence
Persistence
To Keep Our Promise