Authentic Community Engagement: Made in Milwaukee

Luke Waldo, Associate Director, Institute for Child and Family Well-being
Today’s Agenda

1) What is Authentic Community Engagement?
2) Introduce our Panelists’ Organizations, Their Mission and History
3) Explore our Panelists’ Journey through Authentic Community Engagement
4) Q&A
Authentic Community Engagement

“The intentional process of co-creating solutions in partnership with people who know best, through their own experiences.”

Lisa Attygalle, Tamarack Institute
Our Panelists

Leah Jepson  

Reggie Moore  

Blake Tierney  

uwm.edu/icfw
Milwaukee Coalition for Children’s Mental Health (CCMH)

Collaborating to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children aged 0 – 8 and their families in the City of Milwaukee with a focus on disparities in child and family outcomes.

More than 60 organizations, dozens of Community Health Workers and people with lived experience working together to identify innovative solutions to enact change at a grassroots level.

Visit us on the web at: www.mkekids.org
A Brief History of CCMH

**Founded in 2015** with 12 original partner organizations

**Funded in 2016** for one year of guided planning for a five-year project to design strategies and sustainability plans

**Engaged** a diverse group of community and organizational leaders for input

**Funded in 2017** for seven years to improve children’s mental health through prevention, early identification and intervention

**Specifically focused** on racial and socioeconomic disparities with an emphasis on social justice and social determinants of health

CCMH is funded by the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment at the Medical College of Wisconsin
Our Values

**Awareness** that parents and families in Milwaukee have unique experiences and their voices must be heard

**Empathy and respect** for the dignity of all persons

**Fair access** to resources and services

**Inclusion** of the diversity of our Milwaukee community

**Commitment** to our diverse experiences and collective skills in informing our decisions and creating innovative solutions

**Active participation** in building a community full of nurturing relationships and other protective factors
OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Mission
To prevent and reduce violence through partnerships that strengthen youth, families, and neighborhoods.

Activities
- Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
- Safe Visitation and Exchange Center
- Coaching Boys to Men
- Recast Milwaukee
- Trauma Response Partnership
- 414 LIFE
- Blueprint for Peace
Homicides soar in Milwaukee, along with many theories on cause

A sudden rocket-like rise in killings in Milwaukee and elsewhere has experts pondering why — and grasping for solutions.
VALUES

**Community** Centers youth and families most impacted by violence. Its success is dependent on the power, connection, and engagement of every resident in making Milwaukee one of the safest cities in the country.

**Equity** Addresses the inequitable toll that violence has on specific neighborhoods and populations including youth, women, and people of color. Recognizes that multiple forms of oppression contribute to violence, and these must be acknowledged, addressed, and dismantled, including institutional racism.

**Resilience** Acknowledges the impact that violence and trauma have on children, families, and neighborhoods and promotes asset-based solutions for immediate and lasting change.

**Action** Rooted in a public health approach to preventing multiple forms of violence and builds on Milwaukee’s assets through coordinated strategies that are comprehensive, actionable, and measurable.
BLUEPRINT GOALS

1. STOP THE SHOOTING. STOP THE VIOLENCE
2. PROMOTE HEALING AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
3. SUPPORT CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
4. PROMOTE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
5. FOSTER SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS
6. STRENGTHEN CAPACITY AND COORDINATION OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION EFFORTS
Why is authentic engagement of community members and context experts critical to social change?
Importance of Community Engagement

• Our systems are designed by those who hold the power and privilege in our communities/states/nation

• Those making decisions are rarely those with intimate knowledge of the problem on the ground

• Trust in our systems has been eroded by unethical practices and inequitable treatment for generations

• Our communities have the answers to these problems, but are furthest away from the funds and the table where decisions are made

• Parachuting into communities to “fix their problems” is paternalistic (at best) and oppressive and destructive at worst

• Those who have created and held problems in place are not the best folks to solve the problem
NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US
MOTHER'S CALL TO ACTION!!

COA 2320 W BURLEIGH ST
August 31, 2019 at 10:30am

THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW!
VISION

MILWAUKEE IS A SAFE AND RESILIENT CITY WHERE THE LIVES OF ALL RESIDENTS ARE VALUED, PROMOTED, AND PROTECTED.
How does authentic community engagement impact decision-making from design to implementation to evaluation?
### The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stance Towards Community</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Community Engagement Goals</th>
<th>Message to Community</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Resource Allocation Ratios</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ignore</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Marginalization</td>
<td>Your voice, needs &amp; interests do not matter</td>
<td>Closed door meeting, Misinformation, Systematic</td>
<td>100% Systems Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Placation</td>
<td>We will keep you informed</td>
<td>Fact sheets, Open Houses, Focus Groups, Community Forums, Surveys</td>
<td>70-90% Systems Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tokenization</td>
<td>We care what you think</td>
<td>Public Comment, Focus Groups, Community Forums, Surveys</td>
<td>60-80% Systems Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>You are making us think, (and therefore act) differently about the issue</td>
<td>Community organizing &amp; advocacy, House meetings, Interactive workshops, Polling, Community forums</td>
<td>50-60% Systems Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Delegated Power</td>
<td>Your leadership and expertise are critical to how we address the issue</td>
<td>MOU's with Community-based organizations, Community organizing, Citizen advisory committees, Open Planning Forums with Citizen Polling</td>
<td>20-50% Systems Admin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defer To</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Community Ownership</td>
<td>It's time to unlock collective power and capacity for transformative solutions</td>
<td>Community-driven planning, Consensus building, Participatory action research, Participatory budgeting, Cooperatives</td>
<td>80-100% Community partners and community-driven processes ideally generate new value and resources that can be invested in solutions</td>
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Coalition Roles and Structure

**CCMH Core Council:** Our Leadership Team formed 2+ years into our existence; represented by:

- Backbone staff
- Evaluation Team
- Strategy Leaders
- Parent Leaders
- Members with Lived Experience
- Add’l Coalition Members (nominated and voted in)

**Strategy Leadership:**

- Content Experts led Strategy Workgroups initially while authentic community relationships were built
- Shifted leadership to members with lived experience and those closest to the issues, with Content Expert support.

**Project Evaluation:** IMPACT Planning and Evaluation leads effort

**Backbone Agency and Staff:** Mental Health America of WI provides infrastructure, grant management, communications, relationship building, leadership support, and guides strategies.
What are the challenges of building meaningful collaboration between context and content experts?
Challenges and Adaptations

Hold listening sessions and/or focus groups to inform decisions

Creating the coalition and then adding community members after the fact

Holding meetings the same way with rigid agendas and lots of presenting, little time for networking

Providing gift cards for people who are not being paid to be at the table

Creating professional growth opportunities for context experts

Including people with lived experience as team members and leaders

Intentionally creating an inclusive, safe space; making time for relationship building

Loosening up, practicing adaptive leadership, having fun, and being transparent and authentic

Offering context experts to be paid consultants who get paid hourly

Having context experts identify their own needs and design for themselves
How did you overcome those challenges?
<table>
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<th><strong>Outreach and Education</strong></th>
<th>Raises community awareness and concern about violence</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Mobilization</strong></td>
<td>Creates opportunities for community members to take aligned action to address violence as a public health issue</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community Organizing</strong></td>
<td>Builds community capacity among those most affected to address violence as a public health issue through coordinated action and policy change.</td>
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<td><strong>Community Accountability</strong></td>
<td>Develops community power to hold elected and appointed leaders accountable for the policies and resources required to advance safe and thriving communities.</td>
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Engaging Community in Our Work

**Intentionally creating a safe, welcoming space**

- Agendas are important, but flexibility is critical
- Building in “Unapologetic Community Building” into every meeting
- All members are held accountable to maintain space
- Implementing the “Acroknock” and limiting jargon

**Authentically cultivating relationships**

- Bidirectional trust is critical for success
- Be patient and authentic – building strong relationships takes time
- You, too, have to be vulnerable and share yourself
Engaging Community in Our Work, con’t

**Actively supporting leadership development**

- Context experts identify their strengths and weaknesses and interest areas for growth
- Making room for decision making and autonomy
- Being very clear on our limits as a grantee, organization, or initiative
- Celebrating and cultivating the unique qualities each person brings
- Creating partnerships/collaboration between content and context experts working together on strategies
- Also training us as professionals on how to be cognizant on how we show up and take up space; identifying biases and making room for others
Important Considerations

Is my organization able, willing, and ready to intentionally and meaningfully incorporate the voice of the community in our work? Meaning, will we:

• Share power, privilege, and control?
• Slow down the process to develop relationships and build trust, even if it takes considerable time?
• Be open to experiences, opinions, and ideas we didn’t anticipate?
• Be transparent about expectations and what is and is not negotiable?
• Make accommodations for people who need to meet during non-business hours, and may need transportation and child care?
• Create safe meeting spaces where all voices can be heard and respected?
• Pay participants a living wage (i.e., at least $15/hour) for their time?
Community Engagement Resources

Collective Impact Forum: [Community Engagement Toolkit](#)

FSG: [Water of Systems Change](#)

Tamarack Institute: [The Context Experts](#)

Stanford Social Innovation Review: [Community Engagement Matters (Now, More than Ever)](#)

CCMH Website: [www.mkekids.org](#)
RESOURCES

PREVENTION INSTITUTE: HTTPS://WWW.PREVENTIONINSTITUTE.ORG

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL POLICY: WWW.CSSP.ORG

COMMUNITY PLANNING TOOLKIT: WWW.COMMUNITYPLANNINGTOOLKIT.ORG

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES: WWW.NLC.ORG

BLUEPRINT FOR PEACE: WWW.414LIFE.COM
Thank you!

We value your participation and feedback. Please complete the brief survey that you will receive upon the conclusion of this webinar.

We will follow shortly with supportive materials for further learning.
Upcoming ICFW Webinars

Join us for “Making a Case for Trauma Screening and Assessment” with ICFW Clinician Meghan Christian, Clinical Director Dimitri Topitzes, and Cynthia Franzolin, LPC, from Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers, on May 4th at 1:00pm.

Register here: https://chwi.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_oK4j1DiRSzasCuR0bx6bw

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