The Transformational Power of Starting with Wellbeing
“When we start with problems, we get programs. When we start with people, we get possibilities.”

— inspired by the words of Lupe Serrano
Assumptions matter

Which assumptions drive the work and the policies in your community, programs or agency?

- People coping with significant challenges are different—even deviant
- Issues and problems are discrete
- People in programs are pathologies wrapped in skin, and services fix them
- Change is additive
- Sustaining change is about willpower
- We’re more alike than we’re different
- Life is messy
- There’s always something that’s working
- Change can involve gains and losses
- There are structural forces that keep people from moving forward and structural forces that undermine progress for some people more than others
To change outcomes, we need to change our narratives

How do we get from dominant narratives, assumptions and biases of our society to reflections of very different beliefs and truths?

By recognizing, legitimizing and building on our universal drive for wellbeing, the set of needs and experiences essential, in balance and combination, to weather challenges and have health and hope.
Decisions and change create tradeoffs

- When we’re making a decision or a change, we’re balancing tradeoffs:
  
  Is it worth it to me?

- We’re much more likely to make change when the tradeoffs feel worth it. If the tradeoffs feel unsustainable, the change becomes unsustainable.

- When people make choices different from what we expect or want, they may be weighing tradeoffs differently.

- People need motivation AND sustainable tradeoffs for change to last.

In pursuit of specific short-term outcomes, systems and services can force tradeoffs that create havoc in people’s lives and undermine lasting change.
When we identify tradeoffs

- Be aware
- Use curiosity to check understanding
- Be prepared to change your mind
- Add something, take something away, talk about it ahead of time
- Advocate to shift the structures that force unsustainable tradeoffs

Something here doesn’t add up!
Questions for consideration: Tradeoffs

• What information do we regularly gather that helps us understand tradeoffs people face? That staff experience?

• Do we push people to make change even when we and they have identified significant tradeoffs?

• Do our policies contribute to the “riptide” that pulls people backwards?

• Is “not being willing to give something up” or “resistance to change” seen as “not caring” or “being unmotivated”?
Five Domains of Wellbeing: Needs and experiences

- Hierarchical
  - Universally needed, individually experienced, differentially accessible
  - Interdependent, non-linear
  - Meaning matters
  - Assume assets, without value judgment

© 2009-2019 The Full Frame Initiative fullframeinitiative.org
Five Domains of Wellbeing: Needs and experiences

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

- Quantity and diversity of relationships
- Reciprocity – give and get
- Sense of belonging
- Foster growth
Five Domains of Wellbeing: Needs and experiences

STABILITY

- Anchors, that provide predictability in days or weeks
- Familiarity
- Buffer to small problems snowballing to big problems
Five Domains of Wellbeing: Needs and experiences

SAFETY

- True to core identities without harm or humiliation
- Physical, emotional
- People, places and systems
Five Domains of Wellbeing: Needs and experiences

MASTERY

- Potential to influence our environment, our relationships, and/or our future
- Comes through practice and perseverance
- Important to self, and recognition and value by others
Five Domains of Wellbeing: Needs and experiences

MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO RELEVANT RESOURCES

- Self-determination of what needs are relevant and important
- For access to be meaningful, the resource needs to:
  - Exist
  - Be accessible without shame, significant hardship or danger
How I meet my needs for wellbeing are my assets.
You may see them as assets, or as problems.
Questions for consideration: Five Domains of Wellbeing

• What are your “deal-breaker” assets: the ways you meet your needs for wellbeing that you really won’t compromise?

• Do we assume our understanding is “right”, or do we use tools to make sure we’re not taking mental shortcuts?

• Do we pay attention to how one experience may mean different things to different people?

• Do we leverage familiarity and anchors to support less traumatic transitions?

• Do we allow for practice, or do we expect perfection from the get-go?
From short-lived fixes to durable wellbeing
From short-lived fixes to durable wellbeing
From short-lived fixes to durable wellbeing
Starting with wellbeing

Aligning (often significantly changing) the underlying assumptions about the people and communities who are heavily involved with the system, so as to recognize, reflect and work with “the wind”—people’s innate drive for wellbeing, supporting change that doesn’t force unsustainable tradeoffs.

Requires aligning:
• culture
• practice
• structures and policies
A wellbeing orientation

- Grounds the work and the change in people, not problems
- Is about all of us
- Supports what we hope for, instead of just preventing what we fear
- Creates durable change and improves outcomes
- Addresses drivers and artifacts of inequity
- Isn’t about a new program
“In Massachusetts, we have seen how something as simple as asking about ‘tradeoffs’ increases opportunities for housing stability for survivors of domestic violence, and honors their desire to remain safely in their communities.”

Tammy Mello
Executive Director, Children’s League of MA, former Executive Director, MA Governor’s Council to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence
“St. Louis County has the opportunity to be at the national forefront of positive change for children and families. By bringing the Five Domains of Wellbeing framework and tools into our family courts, we are increasing alignment with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and, together, we will demonstrate the power of a shared commitment to wellbeing for vulnerable children and families.”

Ben Burkemper
Family Court Administrator, St. Louis County Court
Since 2011 when DYS began the implementation of its enhanced comprehensive treatment planning which intentionally strengthened and incorporated a wellbeing framework, we have seen the following outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>FY 2010</th>
<th>FY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One year law abiding rates</td>
<td>83.95%</td>
<td>FY 17 (last completed year) 86.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two year law abiding rates</td>
<td>73.66%</td>
<td>FY 16 (last completed year) 82.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three year law abiding rates</td>
<td>65.74%</td>
<td>FY 15 (last completed year) 72.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic progress</td>
<td>86.67%</td>
<td>FY 18 91.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational completion</td>
<td>38.14%</td>
<td>FY 18 57.71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developed by the Full Frame Initiative and Missouri Division of Youth Services. (c) The Full Frame Initiative. All rights reserved. Distribution or reproduction of this material is prohibited without the express permission of FFI.
First steps

• Signal that you see people in the full frame of their lives: as more than perpetrators, survivors, foster kids, etc.
• Beware the professional pattern trap.
• Identify (and change if possible) where a condition of participation may lead to unsustainable tradeoffs.
• If there’s a need or a problem, don’t assume we need another program. Make sure you see the people.
Cutting off people’s access to wellbeing is a core driver of inequity, deepening cycles of poverty, violence and trauma.

Enabling fair access needs to center on putting power for change in the hands of those who have had least access to it.

Equitable access to wellbeing also means changing the structures that hold the problems in place, through institutional and structural change.

FFI and our partners believe a wellbeing orientation can be the common thread that links efforts across issues and geographies.
Join us!

• Save the date: **Stakeholder Virtual Meetings on May 23 or May 28**
• Stayed tuned for new resources and tools like *From Safety Planning to Wellbeing Planning: A Toolkit for Change*
• Read and share the [FFI e-newsletter](mailto:tanya@fullframeinitiative.org)

Have questions or ideas about our growing movement? We want to hear from you!

Tanya Tucker, Chief of National Partnerships and Outreach
tanya@fullframeinitiative.org
413-768-1807