

Joe Lombardo
Governor



Richard Whitley, MS
Director

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.



Cindy Pitlock, DNP
Administrator

Nevada Children's Commission Behavioral Health Committee Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, May 17, 2023

TIME: 3:30 P.M.- Adjournment

VIDEO CONFERENCE:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NGEyYjVmNWUtM2NINC00MTY4LTgxMTktMzkzOWQ3NDkxYmQ4%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e4a340e6-b89e-4e68-8eaa-1544d2703980%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22be58909a-421c-4f56-857e-c5f7d4ef6f7f%22%7d

TELECONFERENCE LINE: 775-321-6111

CONFERENCE ID: 481 963 370#

1. **Call to Order** – Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, Dr. Joe Haas
The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Gwynneth Smith.

2. **Welcome and Introductions (Roll Call)** – DCFS Staff
Members Present: Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, Dr. Joe Haas

DCFS Staff: Elvira Saldana

Public: Tiffani Wickel, Ashleigh Brunner, Meghan Vargo, Gena Segno

3. **Public Comment and Discussion**

There was no public comment.

4. **For Possible Action:** Meeting Minutes February 28, 2023 – Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, Dr. Joe Haas

Gwynneth Smith asked committee members if there were any changes or edits, they wish to propose.

Kim Abbott commented Gwynneth's name is missing an "n" on page 6.

Action: A motion was made by Gwynneth Smith to approve the minutes with the suggested edit, seconded by Kim Abbott, and carried to approve the minutes of February 28, 2023.

5. For Information: Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) Model Presentation – Meghan Vargo and Gena Segno, Raise the Future

- Provide an overview of TBRI, the attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children.

Gwynneth Smith stated two representatives from Raise the Future are present to present on an intervention called Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI). Over the last 6 months, Gwynneth Smith has been hearing more about this intervention on cases she is assigned to. The intervention comes from Texas and is expanding nationally. It is not only an individual child and family intervention. There are system level applications to it. There have been jurisdictions who have implemented the principles to reform juvenile probation and court practices. It is something important for the Children’s Commission to learn more about.

Meghan Vargo stated she is the Family Support Program Manager at Raise the Future.

Gena Segno stated she is the Director of Family Support at Raise the Future and a Clinician.

Meghan Vargo stated they have been known in the community for working with foster adoptive kinship and reunified biological families in Clark County. Within the last year, they have expanded their efforts to working within the schools and courts. TBRI is Trust-Based Relational Intervention. It is a holistic intervention developed over 20 years ago out of Texas Christian University. The intervention is an evidence-based practice that meets the whole needs of the child. It has been great to implement where they see kids that come from trauma. They realize that typical ways of raising children are not working. These children have had harm in relationships, so they have to help heal those harms and help see things differently. The holistic approach of TBRI has helped get the healing going and helped with the attachment focus. TBRI is developmentally respectful. It is responsive to the trauma and helps build the attachment. Children who never had their needs met are able to get their needs met through attachment. The book “The Connected Child” written by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross is the basic introduction to TBRI. They are the creators of TBRI.

Gena Segno stated one of the most challenging things is getting evidence-based practice validated and systemically utilized. The court system is an estuary. Even though there is a lot of opportunity there is also a lot of danger. When they work with courts, they use the ecosystem analogy to help people in the court systems look at where the opportunities are to reduce toxicity and create an opportunity for getting out of a lifepath which could be potentially more harmful. They feel like there is an opportunity to apply the TBRI principles to help create a healthier ecosystem in the courtrooms. TBRI supports SIM. Everything they teach in their approach can be used at any stage of where they might be. The goal is to bring them back into connectivity, into the best clinical practice. It can be used with the interceptive practice used in the treatment courts. Even though there are behavioral techniques and tips, they are not solely focused on behavioral outcome. They are focused on relational outcomes. Behavioral tips and tools are provided to shift connections and relationships. One of the things they leverage heavily in the approach is increasing and drilling down on the awareness of ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences). They help train and support people to understand how to use TBRI and look at ACES not so much from like a damaged checklist but to look where there is opportunity for

reparative work and strengthening relationships. A unique approach is taken in looking at the intersection of legality and clinical work around ACES. Gena Segno shared a video with the committee on toxic stress and the brain.

Meghan Vargo stated one of her favorite concepts from TBRI is it teaches how to be in a healthy relationship. For children who have been through trauma and stressful beginnings, they do not know what attachment looks like. They do not know how to have a healthy relationship. TBRI helps to rewire the brain and teach healthy relationships. The four hallmarks of a healthy relationship are giving care, receiving care, negotiating your needs, and being comfortable being your true self. TBRI is a caregiver training; however, it is also appropriate for professionals. The concepts of the TBRI caregiver training are introduction and overview, connecting principles, empowering principles, and correcting principles. TBRI is based on years of attachment, sensory processing, and neuroscience. However, at its core it is about connection. Meghan Vargo shared a video with the committee about the importance of attachment. The connecting principle focuses on attachment. It helps build trust, self-worth, and self-efficacy in individuals. Connecting focuses on engagement strategies; how to build the attachment, what it looks like, and focusing on behavior matching, voice quality, being playful and mindful. Empowering principles helps build the foundation for success. It involves environmental and physiological strategies. It is important to keep in mind that 80-85% of youth who have experienced trauma have sensory issues or needs. The correcting principles is building for behavioral and social competence. It is done by being proactive, focusing on choices and compromises, and sharing power where it is appropriate. When kids do get it wrong, there are responsive strategies such as IDEAL response and levels of engagement. Meghan Vargo shared a video with the committee which summarized everything presented on TBRI.

Gwynneth Smith thanked Meghan Vargo for presenting.

Kim Abbott commented Raise the Future conducted an overview training last year for the Children's Attorneys Project. The training is beneficial. Kim Abbott stated she wishes she would have had the training 13 years ago when she was going to become a parent and when she started working with children. It has been a powerful tool. Kim Abbott hopes as a community they can work to get more of the system trained on the principles. Kim Abbott asked about the coaching in home services for families who are trained.

Meghan Vargo stated they partner with the Department of Family Services to serve foster adoptive kinship and reunified biological families in Clark County. Any families who meet the demographic can take the TBRI Caregiver training. Once they have been trained in at least the introduction and overview, they are eligible for in-home coaching. There are 2 TBRI practitioners who are coaches. They can go into the home and help implement the TBRI principles.

Kim Abbott asked what the process is for families to access the coaching.

Meghan Vargo stated it is a self-referral or can be a professional referral, as long as the family is aware. After the training is completed, it is mentioned and shared as an available resource. It is a

Microsoft forms link asking a few questions about the family and contact information. The coaches contact the caregiver for an initial assessment and then an observation and coaching schedule is set up.

Gena Segno stated they have recently added another model. It is a tandem model which allows the full caregiver series to be completed with coaching in the home. TBRI only needs to be used 40% of the time, to receive the benefit.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs asked what would prevent them from coming into the home if a kid is experiencing a crisis or a family is in crisis. Dr. Sheldon Jacobs also asked if there is a connection to some of the cultural elements.

Gena Segno stated in terms of crisis in the home they have a tiering system. If someone is in an acute level crisis where there is violence or active drug and substance abuse occurring, they would not send a coach into the home. They would still extend training support and provide some support to get them to tier 1 or tier 2. Gena Segno shared that often they find that communities of color do have a quicker embrace of the TBRI principles because there is a higher prioritization on community and less so on individualism. There is plenty of room for people to put their own cultural stamp on these experiences. Everyone has space to self-define in the training.

Dr. Joe Haas asked Gena Segno and Meghan Vargo for their thoughts or experiences with kids who are on the higher end of the continuum in attachment issues; kids who have had multiple placements or challenging behaviors.

Gena Segno stated reactive attachment is what they see across the board, however they see it in systems and parents. Their first goal with the approach is to help the parents understand their own relational poverty and reactivity because if they cannot get that part right, they will all be at a loss. The first point in addressing it is working with the parents on the shift. Helping parents do a deep dive into their own reactivity is critical. They empower the children to understand their own reactivity, not from a place of shame, blame or brokenness. The goal is for a child to understand what is behind their own reactivity.

Meghan Vargo stated the example Dr. Joe Haas gave of kids being in multiple placements that is multiple times they have not had somebody that they can rely on. It is about building that attachment. Once they get that right caring adult that is consistent in their life and being able to hear their voice and meet those needs, that is going to help change that trajectory for that child. TBRI gives the tools for the caring adult to make that lasting change and build the attachment.

Dr. Joe Haas asked if it would be right to say it is a viable approach to help kids who are struggling at the higher ends of the system and to help avert continued multiple placements or placements into residential care.

Meghan Vargo acknowledged with a nod.

Dr. Sheldon Jacobs stated there does not seem to be a lot of supportive resources for FAS kids. Dr. Sheldon Jacobs asked about thoughts on FAS kids.

Meghan Vargo stated TBRI adapts the impacts of trauma on the brain. FAS has severe impacts on the brain. With the knowledge, and when there is a kid with FAS and the caregivers who have the knowledge, how do they adapt the world that they can help support and scaffold the child? They empower the kid to know it is happening due to the biological wiring and determine what they can do to help support themselves. It helps build for success.

Gena Segno stated the brain science behind this has shifted. With epigenetics and all the studies that are coming out, neuroplasticity and the opportunities with the brain, even the relearning of executive functioning, is lifelong. Gaps can be filled with connectivity, creativity, sensory, with all these things that TBRI touches on, all of the holistic approach. If we start to shift beliefs around brain functioning then we can get youths to start believing that in themselves too.

Gwynneth Smith stated she loves to hear this is an intervention that can still have impact for those kids who unfortunately have been down the line for a bit. Gwynneth Smith would like to understand in more detail, maybe through some case examples of how TBRI has been implemented in systems and helped change the practice of those systems. Gwynneth stated she asked Tiffani Wickel, who comes from a system in Texas, to join the meeting. It sounds like they have really evolved their court practice based on the principles of TBRI. It is a conversation that people are very receptive to right now. Gwynneth Smith asked Tiffani Wickel to share her experience from Texas.

Tiffani Wickel stated she was fortunate to be trained directly by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross. They brought TBRI in to help some of their outer fringe children they were really struggling with who were bouncing from placement to placement. Dr. Karen Purvis did so well, helping the caregiver learn the three healing principles and stabilizing a child that he was adopted. They took at all the principles and tweaked their process in court, everything from how they physically remove children to how they stood in the courtroom, to making sure they all spoke the same language. Week by week, they looked at everything and made changes. Tiffani Wickel thinks there is no more important place to bring these principles into than the courtroom. If everyone talks the same language and understands TBRI, it changes everything. It changes how the systems are addressed. Tiffani Wickel is hopeful to talk about a part 2 and how they reformed their court system in Texas.

Gwynneth Smith thanked Tiffani Wickel for joining and offering her experience. Gwynneth Smith stated she would request to set up another meeting at the end of June/early July to focus on some specific system examples the committee could bring to the full Commission. Gwynneth Smith also requested information on training, examples of what trainings are available.

Gena Segno stated it sounds like they may be able to do a specialized half-day conference focused on courts, i.e., specialty courts, mental health and they can do their TBRI piece. They may be able to bring in some support from people who have done it. At the next meeting, what the committee wants can be discussed.

Gwynneth Smith stated it sounds great.

6. For Possible Action: Discuss and Decide Upon Next Steps – Gwynneth Smith, Dr. Sheldon Jacobs, Kim Abbott, Dr. Joe Haas

- **Assign Tasks to Committee Members (if needed)**
Gwynneth Smith asked committee members to think about the issues the committee members think are important and bring them to her, to consider it being a topic for a future meeting.
- **Specify Agenda Items for the Next Meeting**
Agenda items were not identified.
- **Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time**
A meeting will be scheduled at a later date.

7. Public Comment and Discussion

There was no public comment.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.