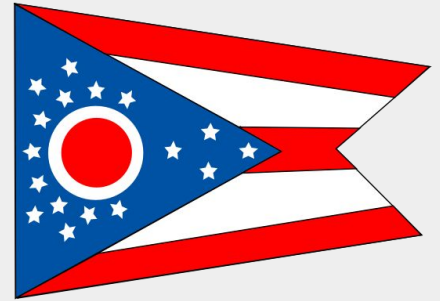


Harnessing the Child Welfare System to Relentlessly Pursue Connection

Summit on Children 2023
Columbus, Ohio
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What are the key operating questions for dependency cases?

Are the
allegations in the
petition true?



Can this person safely parent?

What needs to be put into place to safely parent? Who can help?

What relationships and connections that can support the family and child?

How do we build and support those connections?



What is the goal of the
most dependency
cases?

Permanency

With their Family of Origin

With a 'new' or different family'

Legal membership in a
safe, stable, nurturing
family with relationships
that are intended to last
for a lifetime



Relational Permanency

Relational permanence is defined as youth having lifelong connections to caring adults, including at least one adult who will provide a permanent, parent-like connection for that youth. (Louisell, 2008)

Let's consider Relational Permanency



“Emphasizing a **child’s attachments and connections while ensuring safety**, rather than solely prioritizing timeframes . . . will serve to strengthen and preserve families.”

“**Children in foster care should not have to choose between families.** We should offer them the opportunity to expand family relationships, not sever or replace them.”

”Children **do not need to have previous attachments severed** in order to form new ones.”

Why do we fail at making lasting connections?

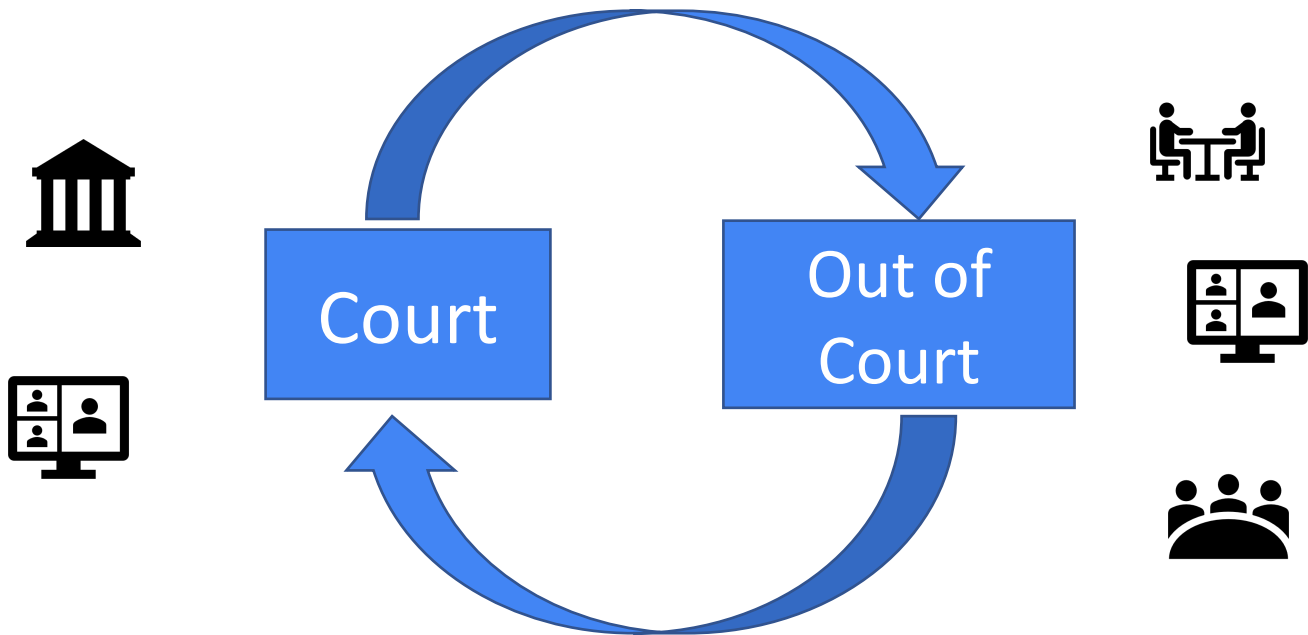


Nexus in and Out of Court

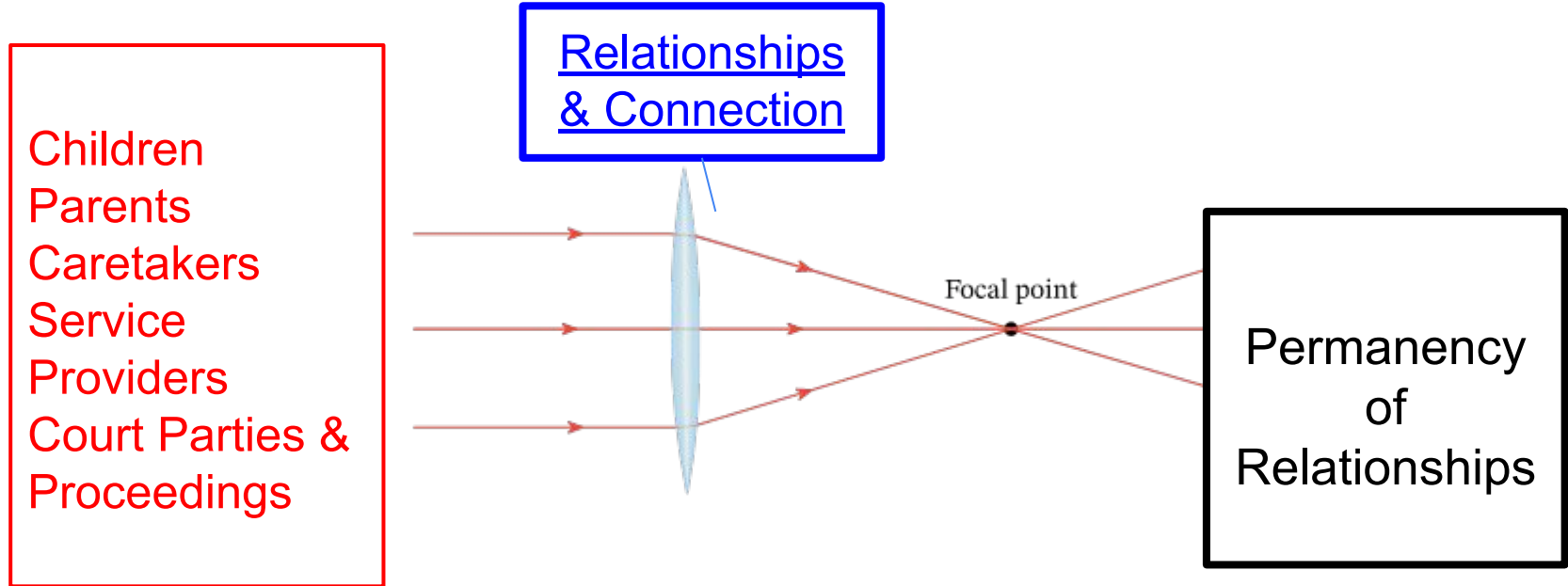
Timelines instead of connections and relationships

Fail as a team

The Nexus



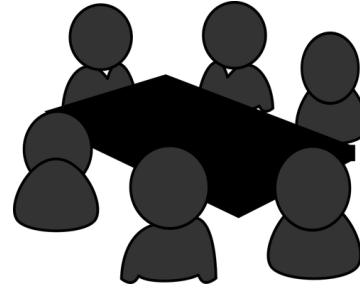
Consider a lens of Relationships and Connections



VISITATION



MEETINGS/STAFFINGS



SERVICES



PLACEMENT



A team is a group of people who are interdependent with respect to information, resources, knowledge and skills and who seek to combine their efforts to achieve a common goal

Thompson, Leigh (2008). Making the team : a guide for managers (3rd ed.). Pearson/Prentice Hall. ISBN 9780131861350.

Psychological Safety

Interpersonal risk-taking

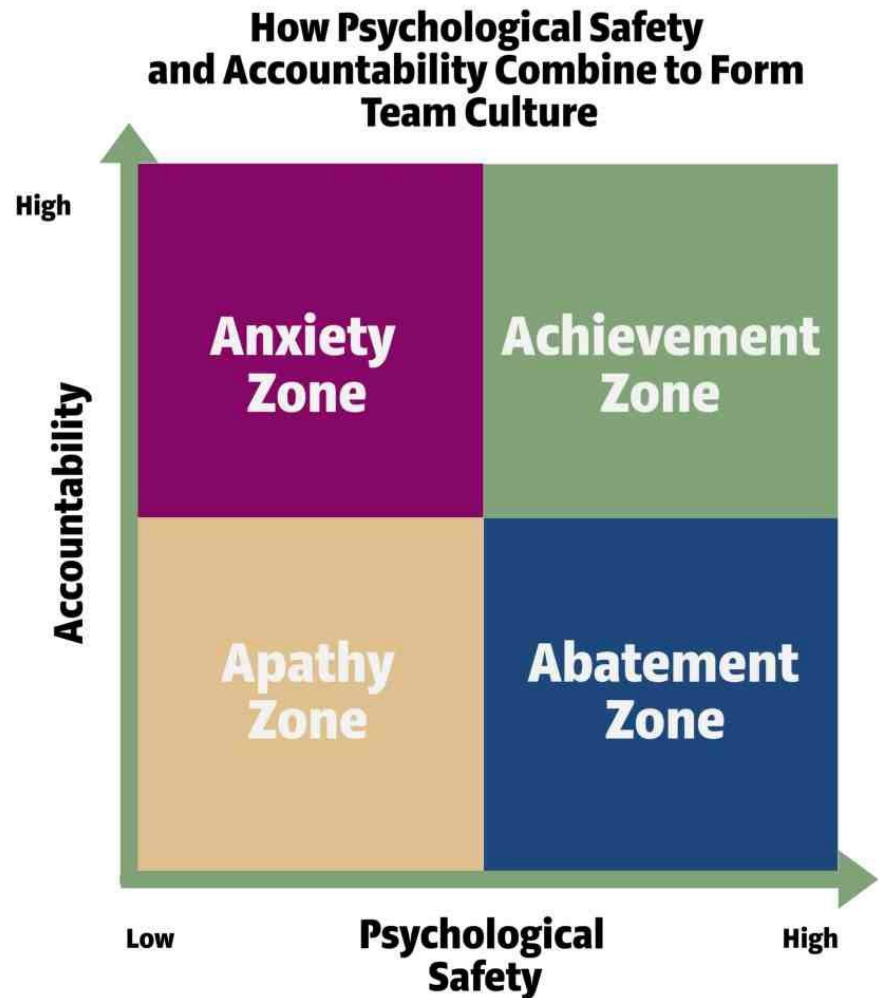
Free from
embarrassment, rejection, or
punishment

Trust and mutual respect

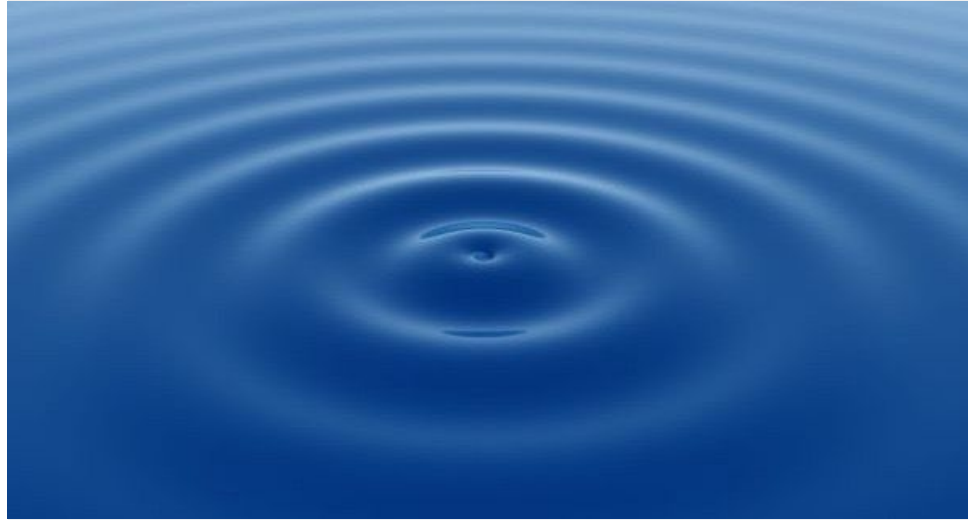
Team learning is an ongoing process of Reflection and Action

- **Asking questions**
- **Seeking feedback**
- **Experimenting**
- **Reflecting on results**

Psychological Safety
+
Accountability
=
ACHIEVEMENT



It starts
with us.



How do you build psychological safety?

Frame the work as a learning
problem

Enormous uncertainty and
enormous interdependence.

Acknowledge fallibility

Model curiosity

“Off the record”

Team tips

Learn each other's names and use them

Talk about the person rather than mom/dad

Establish clear goals

Respect each other's viewpoints and expertise

Visitation

- How is family time fostering connection and deepening relationships?
- If not, how?
 - Time/Duration/Frequency
 - Level/type of supervision
 - People present
 - Activities
- Who can we involve to enhance?
- How can we work together?



Placement

- How is the placement fostering connection and deepening relationships?
- How does the parent view the caregiver, and vice versa?
 - What can we do to impact that dynamic
- Is this a connection that will last beyond the court case?
- How can we collaborate together?
- Does the placement support this family?



Services

- Fostering connection and relationship building?
- Additional services we haven't thought of?
- Routine referral or tailored to the family?
- Non-traditional service?
- WHY?
- Who is communicating with the service provider and how?
- Do they know what's happening in court?



Building System Connections

How much do you feel understood by your service providers including DHHS?

What would they need to do to increase your confidence and safety with them.

Is the SWer/service provider doing their best to help you?

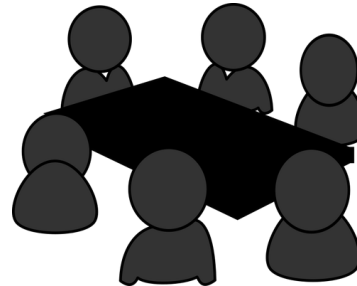
What else do you need from them?

What is the best part of working with _____? The worst part?

Do you trust _____?

Staffings/Conferences/Meetings

- Fully present and distraction free?
- Are people able to articulate the thoughts, feelings?
- **What is on the record, and what is off the record?**
- Can a person(parent, case worker, lawyer), make a mistake, and own that mistake?
- How can we collaborate better?
- Who is missing?



Resiliency Building

“Building resilience – the **ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant sources of stress** – can help manage stress and feelings of anxiety and uncertainty,” according to the American Psychological Association (APA)

Building Connections and Relationships

Who do you go to when trouble pops us?

When you need something, who do you look to for help

Who do you talk to when you have worries?

Who can you reach out to when you have personal/familial challenges that you know will be there for you?

When you have \$ troubles, who helps you out?

When you need a safe place, where do you go?

Who can you count on, no matter what?

Who knows where your kid is at all times besides you?

Resiliency Building Questions with Parents*

*Judge William A. Thorne, Jr

Before all of this happened

- What did a perfect day look like for you and your kids?

I believe that you love your child:

- Tell me what you love about _____

I believe you want the best for your child

- Tell me about times you feel like you were a good parent to _____?
- What have you given up to make sure _____ has what they need?

I believe you are important to this child

- What is a special thing only you can give them?

Resiliency Building Question: Strengths *

What part of being a parent do you enjoy the most?

When are you at your best as a parent?

What would _____ say is the best part of having you as a parent?

*Judge William A. Thorne, Jr.

Resiliency Building: efficacy and mastery *

*Judge William A. Thorne, Jr.

What would you like to improve on as a parent?

What's one thing you want help with to be a better parent for _____?

What part of being a parent would you like to copy from a friend or family member?

What would a friend or neighbor say you are good at?

What are you proudest of?

In Summary

1. Set the stage and build practices for a high functioning team: psychological safety and accountability
2. Utilize a lens of relationships and connection
3. Ask constant operating questions
4. Resilience Building
5. Reflect, make changes