

Succession Planning Notes

Cathy Crabree / San Diego/ Jan 2016

- Now part of accreditation
- SP can help organizations move forward or backwards
- How do we equip centers so they don't fall apart during leadership transition?
 - o Plant seeds as we are providing other trainings w/ CAC's (Strat. Planning) to get them to start thinking about SP
- Listen to them, help them assess, facilitate those conversations
- Leadership transition is a 'process'- facilitated those emotions
- SP is just a tool....the process most important
- Change has to happen when 'founder' leaves
 - o Some try to hire a 'clone' or make a knee jerk hire
- When a director keeps everything in their head, not a good practice for the organization- they must be preparing for leadership transition 'just in case'.
- Prepare BOD ahead of time by using SP slides in other presentations/ trainings (plant seeds)

Why are we talking about SP?

- It's on peoples radars/ in accreditation standards now
- Generational shift/retirement (25 year directors retiring from the movement)
- Sustainability for our very movement- we want to keep it going
- If we don't help centers/chapters get stable, doesn't do any good to develop new centers if they keep falling apart
- Don't be reactive to these issues- weave SP into trainings we already do
- "Your job (BOD) is to make sure your organization is sustainable"
- We can't serve families well (achieve mission) when boards are in crisis/falling apart
- It's an opportunity to 'up our game/grow' NOT just b/c someone may transition

- ED position- critically important skill is being relationship based
- Use successful 'interim director' during a shift
- Boards need to communicate to staff during transition to ease anxiety
- Not wise to have exiting ED go onto the board- let go- being nice and moving them doesn't help kids- can create more problems
- Concrete stuff= materials/documents (when getting ready to leave)
- Soft stuff= IMPORTANT- history, relationships (building in time for this in previous years)
- Usually not helpful when an exiting ED hand picks successor (possibly done to 'help' a clueless board)- sometimes can work if careful planning is done
- Internal hire sometimes good/sometimes not- a new person could be critical of ED's old stuff- internal hire may keep those things on the down low.
- Boards should focus on being strong for when leadership transition happens. Boards role is to be strengthening itself in advance
- Best time to take about a SP is when no one is planning on leaving so no one is offended
- Best ED builds an organization so it can still serve kids effectively if they left tomorrow
- Sometimes organizations outgrow a founding ED's skillset (many times a social worker)- organization develops into a new place. Letting go.
- Struggle b/c of 'personal relationships' but also trying to lift up the organization. Letting go.
- Usually not helpful when old ED is contracted to help new ED (unless a very clear plan/boundaries).
- BOD need to 'keep a finger on the pulse of the new ED's needs, but not micromanage'.
- Knee jerk reaction to an ED leaving- hiring Admin Assistant of 20 yrs
- Helpful to use a professional interim director (outside temporary) when a plan wasn't in place. Very helpful during transition.
 - o Good for chapters to have educated a few of them about CAC's so they are aware when needed
 - o Neutral/not candidate for position
 - o Salary is still in budget to hire them temporarily
 - o Helps organizations to not panic

- Experienced interim director can help prepare the board through hiring process
- Think about timing- Is ED retiring before a capital campaign etc? Are several board members rolling off? Is it time for accreditation?
 - Get the board thinking about what could be rocky times
- How much cross training is occurring with staff? Be proactive
- Help BOD identify when they have been through successful transitions/experiences in the past. They are capable of doing it again
 - Remind them of the positives
- Some ED's will 'hang on' b/c they have created such a mess and they don't want people to know. The 'house is order'?
- Make sure intuitional history documented (video, etc)
 - Use multiple perspectives rather than just one person
 - Memories fade
- Make sample SP realistic, updated yearly, tailored to specific needs, flexible,
- "Acting Director" – internal staff member temporarily
 - Rule/boundaries/restrictions/compensation needed

RCAC Challenges

- Help BOD remember their 'why'
- Change in standards helps us as regionals pass on to boards
- Use Strategic Planning trainings to introduce SP (mitigating risk management)- be intentional (introduce a few slides)
- How do we as regionals market ourselves to BOD with SP?
 - Board newsletter to CAC/Chapter Boards?
 - Introduce self to boards
 - Tell them our resources
 - Get in front of them
 - Invite Board President (especially when not also a CAC ED) to regional summit
 - Meet with EX committee when doing a board training
- We aren't here to judge you- make it safe for them to share challenges
- Validate that we aren't here to judge

- Explain why we as regionals do 'site visits' for NCA- we are not monitoring (messaging important)
- SP is not about accreditation but about helping you to do better work/ grow as a BOD/organization
- Try to have insight as to what is going on in ED/BOD minds- get to their 'why'
- SP is a way for the legacy to be passed on and continue
- Barriers may be a director who doesn't want us to 'look into their house'
 - o How can we be more proactive to build relationships with Directors we don't like or are difficult (we tend to avoid them)?
 - o We need to build relationships with those who are difficult
- Get CAC BOD members to network more among themselves/other BOD within their state (board peer group?)
 - o Add this as a question to the evals?
- Maybe we can impact those in trouble to help
 - o Population pockets
 - o Identify small groups/states/ regions within states
 - o See if targeting them helps increase director retention
- Unique training for ED's/BOD chairs about CAC retention per state:
 - o Work from home/flexible work schedule
 - o Pay increase
 - o Sabbatical
 - o More vacation/three day weekends
 - o Another position (admin assistant , assistant director)
 - o BOD need to have this convo with ED's/retention
- Topic for Regional Summit panel?
 - o Retention
 - o SP
 - o What has worked well in other states
- How do we get to hospital boards to talk about SP? Advisory Boards?
 - o Ground work needs to be with ED's- that the influence
- 30-35 year olds are taking ED positions more and more (stay maybe 5 yrs) and the move on to next opportunity- VERY IMPORTANT to have SP
 - o Boards are becoming younger and not staying
 - o All positions are experiencing a generational shift

