

Bucks County Division of Human Services - Moving Forward Towards Generative Solutions!

Jon Rubin 17 September 2017

Executive Summary

The Bucks County Division of Human Services is striving to advance our supports in the community from a model of practice that strives only to meet regulatory requirements to one that focuses on solutions that meet the needs of the community. We are moving forward to achieve this goal through partnerships and innovative practices. This article outlines the primary strategies of the Division and highlights the Human Services Value Curve (Antonio M. Oftelie and Leadership for a Network World, 2011) that serves as the framework for our continued advancement.

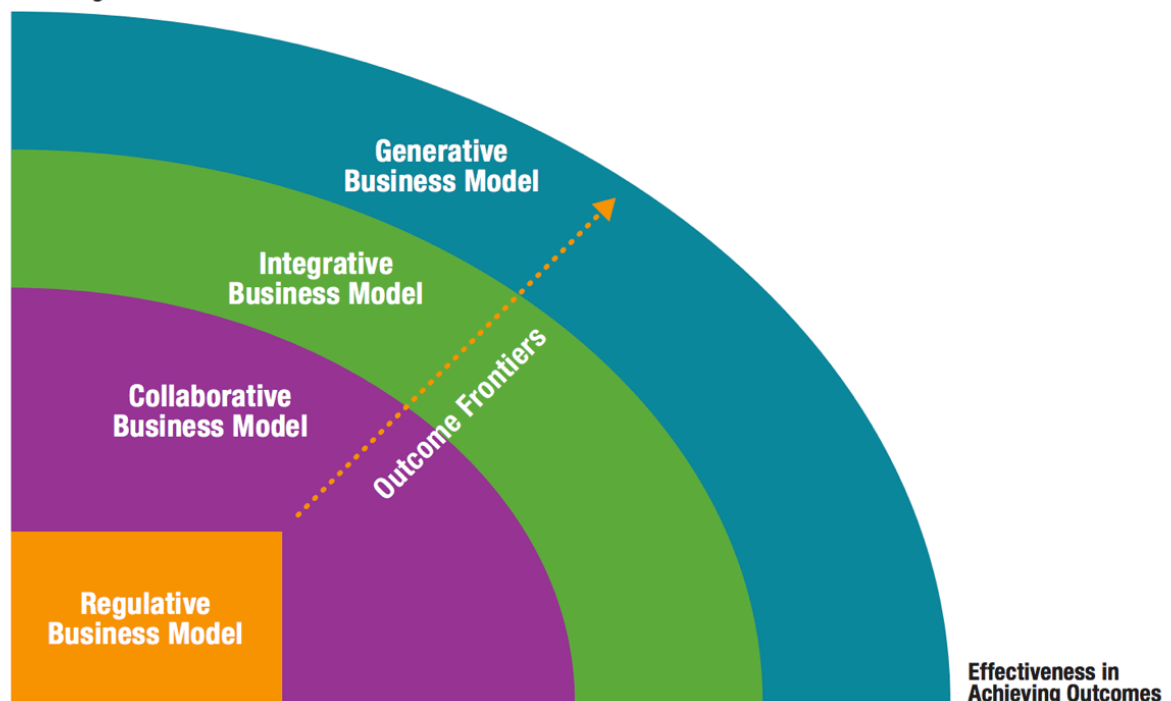
Article

The Bucks County Division of Human Services is proud to partner with the Social Innovations Journal to share some of our local innovations and partnerships. During recent years, we have tried to advance our system along the Human Services Value Curve (copyright 2011 by Antonio

M. Oftelie and Leadership for a Networked World). This model describes how to progress from a highly “Regulative” model focused on compliance and meeting program regulations, towards a more “Collaborative” and “Integrated” model of practice that focuses on supporting people in receiving the best combination of services and addressing the root causes of individual and family needs. Our future goals stress moving to a more “Generative” model of practice where we will focus on generating healthy communities by co-creating solutions for multi-dimensional family and socioeconomic challenges and opportunities.

The Human Services Value Curve

Efficiency in
Achieving Outcomes



©Leadership for a Networked World. 2011.

Antonio M. Oftelie. The Pursuit of Outcomes: Leadership Lessons and Insights on Transforming Human Services:
A Report from the 2011 Human Services Summit on the Campus of Harvard University. Leadership for a Networked World. 2011.

We started this journey by developing a shared mission statement and shared set of values for how we deliver

services in Bucks County. Our shared mission, "to support and strengthen individual and family wellness and build community through connection, collaboration, integration, innovation, and responsible stewardship of resources," helps to hold us accountable to good practices and keeps us focused on community outcomes versus solely regulatory requirements. Our values, "Person and Family Centered Practice, Teaming and Collaboration, Trust and Transparency, Cultural Responsiveness, and Organizational Excellence," serve as guideposts for us to check whether our practices meet these standards in our day-to-day operations.

Early on in this process we also partnered with the United Way of Bucks County to hold a series of "Community Conversations" to help us to better understand the concerns, aspirations, and level of trust we have developed with our community. These conversations with the public served as an important information feed for us as we began to develop our long-term strategy to drive us from a system that simply meets regulatory requirements to become a system that meets community needs.

With the support of our county commissioners, the Division of Human Services has used the community conversations and our mission statement as a springboard to additional strategic planning efforts driven by the following priority objectives:

1. Present a unified vision of the future: By articulating a

clear vision of a future where we are trusted partners in the community within a true Human Services Ecosystem together we can build our roadmap and strive to reach our desired future state.

2. Integrate business practices: By moving our internal system to a more collaborative and even integrated model of service, we can eliminate duplication and make better decisions based on community needs and not the needs of one department or service area.
3. Engage community partnerships: We need to embrace our community service providers and locally-led programming. The problems we face cannot be solved by any one organization or by the County government acting solely as a funder. We will better serve our community through partnerships.
4. Become data informed and outcomes driven: We must utilize data and information to drive decisions based on community need and the effectiveness of services. We must hold ourselves, and our community partners, accountable to measure how we are doing and to tell us where we need to improve.
5. Prioritize equity for all services: We must work to assure the fair, just, and equitable management of the Division of Human Services, distribution of public services, and implementation of public policy without bias.
6. Support consumer system access and navigation: We must make ease of system access a priority for all

services and support consumers as they navigate through the complex array of services and supports available to them.

7. Teaming model of practice: We must work to develop person-centered planning that utilizes a teaming model of practice and has professionals working together across services lines and agency boundaries.
8. Staff and leadership development: We will work to improve our service delivery practices, teaming, communication, decision making, engagement skills, management, and leadership at all levels through teaching and performance evaluation.

In the past year, we have made progress on each one of these goals. As you review the articles in this edition of the Social Innovations Journal you will see tremendous steps towards engaging public/private partnerships that better serve the community for such key issues as the opioid epidemic ([here](#) and [here](#)) and [protecting our citizens](#). You will find how we are working with our Medicaid Managed Care Organization to be more [data-informed and outcomes-oriented](#). You will also see stories on innovation and our team-oriented model of practice through our internal Criminal Justice Advisory Board/Behavioral Health [joint efforts](#).

Many of the efforts that we are striving to achieve at the local level are aligned to work happening at the national level. In the article, "Two National Organizations Strive to

Model Generative Partnership to Accelerate Their Shared Visions," two of our national Human Services leaders, Tracy Wareing Evans from the American Public Human Services Association and Susan N. Dreyfus from the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities, share how their two organizations are striving for "[generative partnerships](#)" to improve Human Services outcomes nationwide.

Whereas much work has begun, there is still much work to be done. We are exploring how to better utilize technology to support our data collection, information sharing, and outcomes evaluation. We continue to work on building partnerships with community providers and a seamless system of practice while supporting innovation and locally-driven solutions, and we are always trying to see how we can eliminate internal duplication and complexity while meeting the regulatory requirements that government agencies often struggle with.

Ultimately, our goal is to keep our eyes on the needs of the community as well as each individual consumer of our services.