

11th Annual Wicked Problems Institute

September 28-29, 2023

The Duke Endowment - Charlotte, NC

Prevention in Action: Building Equitable Pathways to Child & Family Well-Being

The Wicked Problems Institute offers a container by which a group of multisector, cross-system partners can develop practical steps and solutions that address complex social, systems, and family issues. This year, the generative work will focus on disentangling and addressing the constellation of factors that can overload families and lead to unnecessary involvement in the child welfare system. The theme, Prevention in Action: Building Equitable Pathways to Child and Family Well-Being, offers a framework for participants to explore the impacts of financial insecurity and poverty, trauma, systemic oppression, substance use disorders, and mental health issues. The convening will center equity and the experiences of individuals who have been directly impacted by systems.



Thursday, September 28

8:00 Arrival and Networking

Please be at The Duke Endowment by 8:15.

8:30 Welcome and Setting the Context



Takeaways:

- Individuals with lived experiences share a call to focus. Ancestor contributions are honored.
- Participants know their table team partners and the diverse perspectives represented; prepared to do the work of the convening.

9:00 Wicked Problems Discovery Cycle, Part 1:

Overloaded Families: Exploring the Historical and Present-Day Factors Contributing to the Public Health Crisis of Child Neglect

Neglect is a complex and wicked problem but is largely preventable if we work together to reimagine how to eliminate and mitigate the causal factors that overload families. A public health crisis, neglect is the most common reason that families become involved in the child welfare system, then disconnected by systems-driven decisions. Exploring the factors that surface as neglect is an important first step toward building a shared understanding of the problem, which will serve as a foundation for generating ideas for innovations in practice, policy, and systems change. The podcast series, *Overloaded: Understanding Neglect* serves as the narrative backdrop for this convening. Interviewees from the podcast join with Wicked co-host, Dean Denby-Brinson, for a dialogue that covers the factors of poverty, financial instability, trauma and systemic oppression, substance use disorders, and mental health issues.

Bryan Samuels, *Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago*

Bregetta Wilson, *Wisconsin Department of Children and Families*

Jennifer Jones, *Prevent Child Abuse America*

Luke Waldo, *Institute for Child and Family Well-Being at Children's Wisconsin*

Dean Ramona Denby-Brinson, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Social Work (UNC SSW), moderator*

Takeaways:



- Participants have a shared understanding of key factors that are contributing to inappropriate involvement with the child welfare system and why they are factors.
- Table Teams are equipped for generative dialogue.

Related Resource*:

- [Overloaded: Understanding Neglect](#), a podcast series

*Related Resource(s) shared with Wicked participants via the [Foundational Pre-Convening Preparation Materials](#).

Table Teams Convene

This is the first working session of the three-part Discovery Cycle. Each Table Host will provide their Team with instructions and guidance throughout the Cycle.

Data Walk

Table Teams explore key data points that are posted at their station in the room. The purpose is to debrief takeaways, deepen understanding, and further set the stage for the Work Session.



Takeaways:

- Data points are reviewed to build on the topic and spark further dialogue.
- Table Teams learn each other's takeaways and perspectives on the information shared by the panelists and the aligned data.

Facilitated Work Session

With support and guiding questions from the Table Host, participants share and document observations from the panel presentation and data and begin to identify opportunities for solutions and/or ways to explore further.



Takeaways:

- Table Teams begin to develop their contributions to the body of knowledge that will emerge from Wicked.
- Potential opportunities for solutions and/or aspects of the topic that need further exploration are listed.
- Synthesizers have initial insights to share with their colleagues from other Table Teams.
- Notes are documented through a collaborative group process.

10:45 Break



11:00 Discovery Cycle, Part 2

Financial Strain Contributes to Family Overload: There are Solutions That Work

Multiple material and economic hardships weigh down families and create conditions that disrupt health and well-being. Financial shocks, persistent poverty, inability to receive medical care, food insecurity, child care costs and more are preventable causes of family overload. A growing body of evidence shows that families do better overall when they have access to concrete supports and have economic stability. Specific types of support are shown to equip families with essential resources, and help them plan, reach and sustain personal goals related to finance, education, well-being, and long-term economic mobility.

Clare Anderson, *Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago*

Kim Janey, *Economic Mobility Pathways*

Dee Bonnick, *Children's Trust Fund Alliance, moderator*



Takeaways:

- Participants know key aspects of the economy that contribute to family financial instability.
- Participants understand ways that policies and practices can help chart a path to a stronger financial foundation for families.
- Table Teams are equipped with additional information on preventing neglect.

Related Resources:

- [A Key Connection: Economic Stability and Family Well-Being. Addressing economic hardship as a factor in child welfare involvement](#), Chapin Hall
- [Bridge to Self-Sufficiency™](#), EMPATH

Table Teams Convene

Data Walk

Table Teams explore a second set of data that deepens exploration around the topics in Part 2 of the Discovery Cycle.

Takeaways:



- Table Teams begin to integrate knowledge of the information and data from Parts 1 and 2 of the Discovery Cycle.

Facilitated Work Session

The Table Hosts support their Teams in building on earlier work by diving deeper into the financial and economic contributors to neglect.

Takeaways:



- Table Teams begin to formulate insights into how policies, practices, and resource flows could shift and change to better reduce the financial strain that overloads families.
- Synthesizers have insights from their Teams' discussions to share with their colleagues over lunch.
- Key notes are documented through a collaborative process.

12:45 Luncheon and North Carolina Welcome

Brian Maness, *Children's Home Society of North Carolina* and
Children's Home Society of America

Dean Ramona Denby-Brinson, *UNC SSW*

Phillip H. Redmond Jr., *The Duke Endowment*



The luncheon offers informal time for networking and decompressing. The Synthesizers will convene in a separate room to glean key themes and insights that are emerging across the entire group of participants.

Takeaways:



- Participants are refreshed and have time for informal conversation.
- Synthesizers identify and integrate emerging themes and insights.

1:45 Midday Reflection

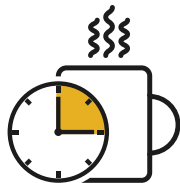
Before the afternoon session begins, the Synthesizers will speak to the shared reflection of their group on the work thus far. A dialogue will be facilitated with the audience to begin collectively shaping the body of knowledge that is emerging.

Takeaways:



- Participants begin to understand and further contribute to what they are collectively generating.
- Each Table Team has a sense of what other Teams are considering and generating.

2:00 Break



2:15 Discovery Cycle, Part 3

Postpartum Focus: Overloading Factors Intensified

The moment a new baby joins a family, life becomes more complex as the birthing parent recovers physically and the family adapts to new identities,

relationships, sleep deprivation, and often increased financial stress and isolation. The effects of overloading factors are intensified. Policies, practices, and systems approaches can serve to reduce stress and support families during this important time or make the experience more difficult.

Dee Bonnick, *Children's Trust Fund Alliance*

Kara Georgi, *Children's Trust Fund Alliance*

Sarah Verbiest, *Jordan Institute for Families, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Social Work*

Georgia Boothe, *Children's Aid (New York), moderator*

Takeaways:

- Participants are aware of the constellation of factors that overload parents who have just given birth.
- Table Teams are equipped with information to help them focus on this population.

Related Resource:

- [Promoting Infant and Maternal Health in the 4th Trimester, Zero to Three](#)

Table Teams Convene

Data Walk

Table Teams reflect on a third set of data points that illuminate the integration of factors explored in Parts 1 and 2 of the Discovery Cycle through the lens of the post-partum experience in family life.

Takeaways:

- Table Teams begin to draw connections among factors that can result in neglect and the moment when a new baby comes to a family.

Facilitated Work Session

Table Hosts guide their Teams to reflect and discuss the post-partum period and the ways causal factors of neglect are intensified. Teams will imagine how the environment surrounding families could be completely different.

Takeaways:

- Table Teams generate observations and ideas for how changes in policies, practices, resource flows, and mental models could have a meaningful impact on child and family well-being during the post-partum period.

4:15 Wrap Up of Discovery Cycle and Table Teams

Table Teams reflect on what they have generated throughout the day and begin to "land" key aspects of their work. The Synthesizers will gather to confer on what has emerged from across all the Table Teams during the day and prepare to kick off the reflection process of the Discovery Cycle on day 2.

Takeaways:

- Participants have a sense of the body of knowledge they have generated during the Discovery Cycle.
- The stage is set for reflection and planning next steps on day 2 of Wicked.

5:30 Adjourn

Dinner on your own

Participants find CHSA staff and members in the lobby of the Fairfield Inn who can help form dinner groups and make restaurant suggestions.

8:00 Arrival and Networking

Please be at The Duke Endowment by 8:15. Remember to check out of the hotel, if you need to.

8:30 Welcome and Setting the Context

The Synthesizers set the stage for reflecting by sharing the framework that is taking shape. Participants engage in further inquiry and integration of content through dialogue.

**Takeaways:**

- Participants have a shared sense of discoveries and co-create the springboard for possibilities and next steps.
- The backdrop is set for the upcoming reflective dialogues.

9:00 Reflective Dialogue Among and With Public Agency Participants (federal and state)

Federal and state public agency leaders share their insights on the Discovery Cycle findings, promising practices and/or systems changes that are underway, what their agencies are doing related to the theme, and ideas they have for next steps.

Miranda Lynch-Smith, *Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, US HHS*

Rebecca Jones Gaston, *Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, US HHS*

David Lujan, *Arizona Department of Child Safety*

Suzanne Miles-Gustave, *New York State Office of Children & Family Services*

Katherine Stoehr, *State of New Jersey Department of Children & Families*

Janee Harvey, *State of Iowa HHS*

Meg Dygert, *American Public Human Services Association (APSHA), moderator*

**Takeaways:**

- Public agency participants are aware of each other's reflections on the content so far.
- Participants have ideas for how public agencies are thinking about key next steps and actionable insights.

10:15 Break**10:30 Reflective Dialogue Among and With National Organizations**

Participants from the convened community who work in national-level organizations, including advocacy and philanthropic entities, share their perspectives on what has been generated by the Wicked community and what they see as actionable next steps.

Amy Templeman, *Social Current*

Andrew Russo, *National Family Support Network*

Jooyeon Chang, *Doris Duke Foundation*

Katie Bhatta, *Children and Family Futures*

Borja Alvarez de Toledo, *Waypoint (New Hampshire) and Children's Home Society of America*, moderator



Takeaways:

- National organization participants are aware of each other's reflections on the content so far.
- Participants have ideas for how national leaders are thinking about key next steps and actionable content.

11:30 Final Synthesis, Acknowledging the Work, and Next Steps

Participants join together to generate a list of outcomes from the meeting, consider next steps, acknowledge the community's accomplishments, and share in committing to keep the conversation and work moving forward.



Takeaways:

- Participants have a sense of the body of knowledge and convening outcomes they collectively generated.
- Participants imagine a plan for post-convening continued learning and valuable action.
- All are clear about 2-3 immediate next steps and who will take the lead on key work the Wicked community is interested in advancing.

12:30 Boxed Lunches and Networking

1:00 Adjourn