



National Child Welfare  
Workforce Institute

LEARNING, LEADING, CHANGING

# Strategies for Developing and Supporting a Sustainable Child Welfare Workforce

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# Welcome



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# Arrival



Am I focused and ready to give 100% of my attention?

Am I prepared to listen to different perspectives?

Am I aware of the implicit and explicit biases I may bring to the meeting?

Am I aware of how my power and privilege (race, gender, age, position within agency) may impact the conversation at the meeting?

Am I prepared to be open to different people's expertise and knowledge?



# Land Acknowledgement

<https://native-land.ca/>





# Re-culturing child welfare

- Build and sustain a workforce that supports transformation of child welfare systems
- Policies and practices support strengthening families



# Re-frame practice and child and family outcome issues as workforce issues



# Workforce Development

## CRITICAL FACTORS

Leadership



Family-  
centered,  
anti-racist  
systems



Workforce  
Well-being



Inter-  
professional  
collaboration

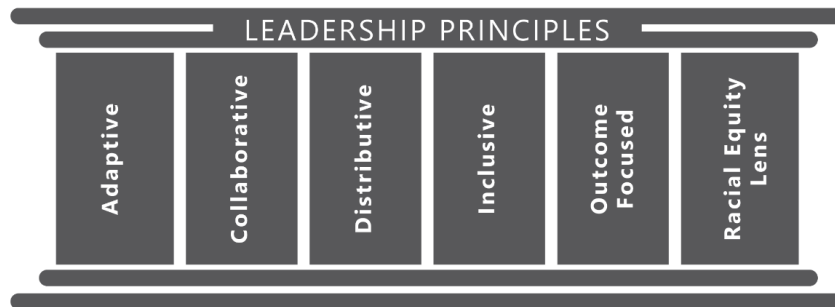
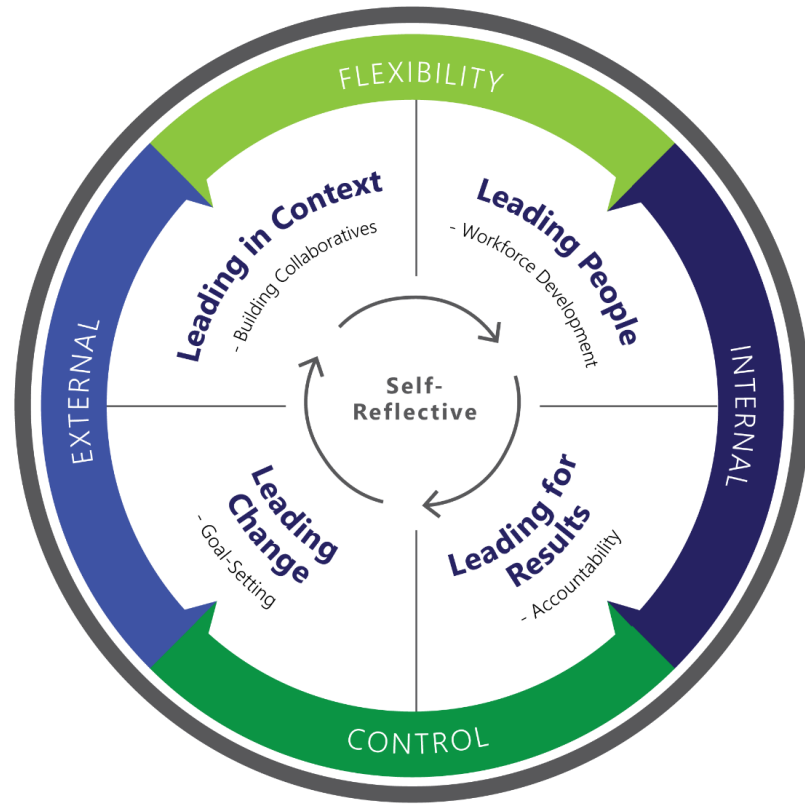




Please respond  
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question by  
selecting your  
answer and  
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# NCWWI Leadership Competency Framework



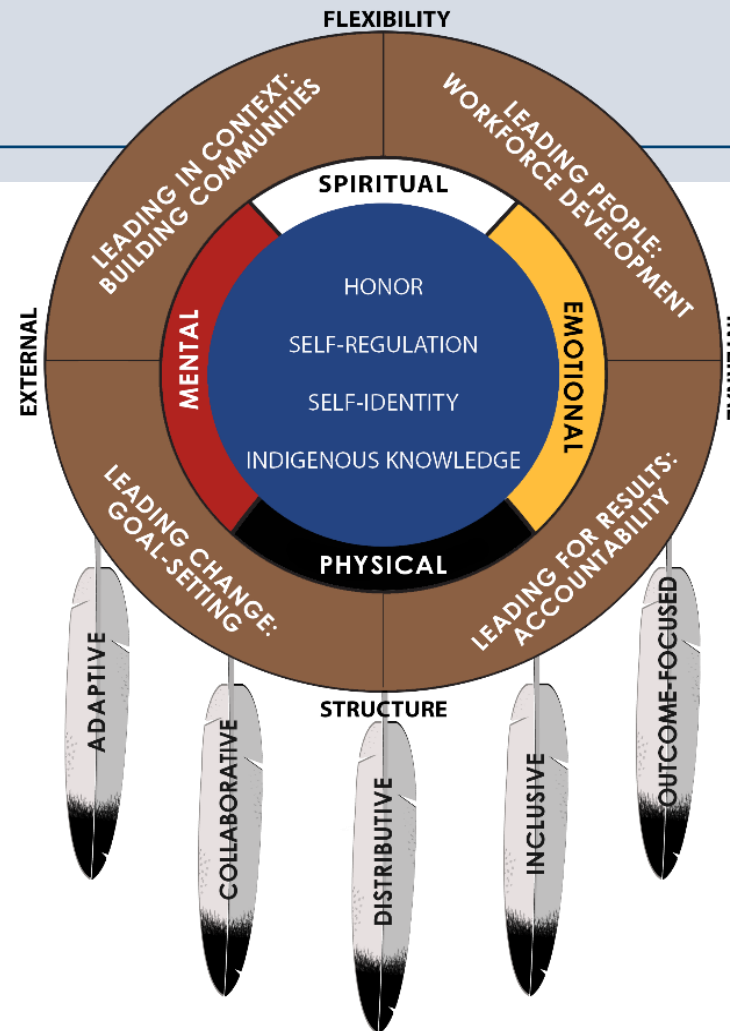
# Tribal Leadership Model

## Inner Circle (Core Values):

- Honor
- Self-Regulation
- Self-Identity
- Indigenous Knowledge

## Middle Circle (Ways of Being):

- Spiritual
- Emotional
- Physical
- Mental



## Outer Circle (Leadership Practices):

- Leading Change
- Leading in Context
- Leading People
- Leading for Results



# Child Welfare Success from a Tribal Perspective

**Embraces the belief that children are sacred gifts from the Creator.**

We believe that every child:

- Has a sacred role and gift to contribute
- Should be able to know their Tribal identity and learn to maintain relationships with all beings in a good way
- Should have the opportunity to grow into an adult who helps sustain a thriving and healthy community





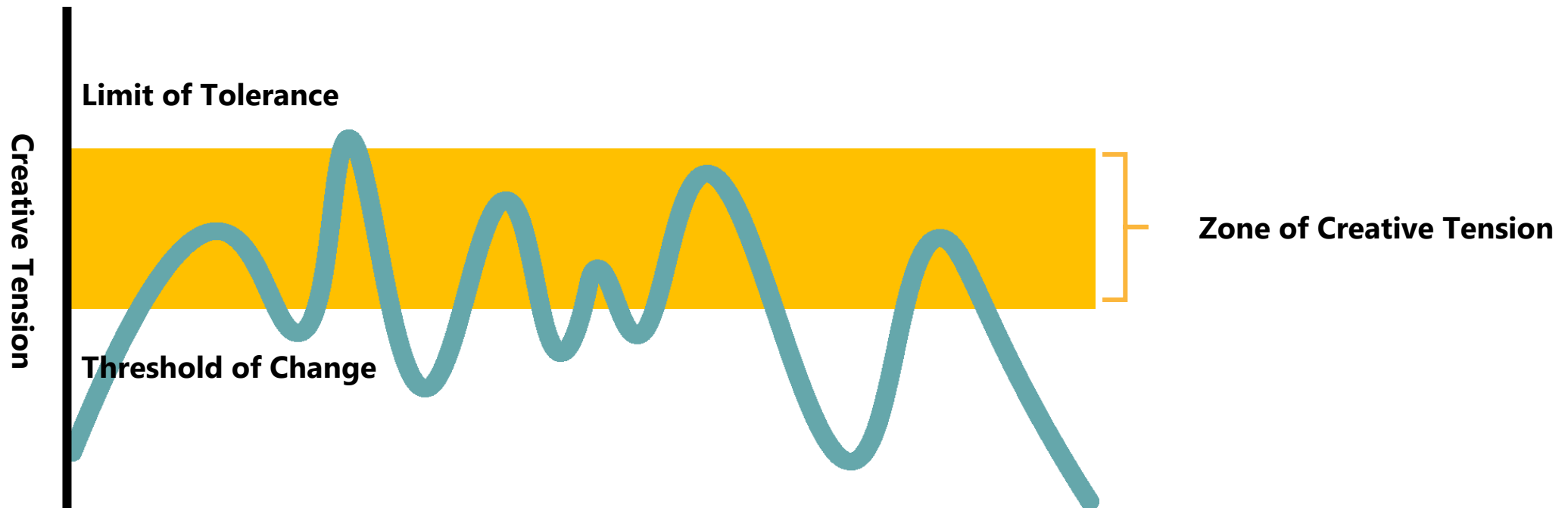
# The Leadership Academies:

- Support child welfare leaders
- Develop the skills to sustain an equitable and positive organizational climate, and
- Facilitate sustainable organizational change.



# Holding Creative Tension

Adapted from ©Adaptive Change Advisors, Eric Martin





# Racial Equity in the Workforce

- Lack of diversity in agencies, especially in leadership positions
- Many staff report witnessing or experiencing bias and discrimination
- BIPOC staff report significantly higher levels of bias and discrimination compared to white staff
- Rewards and promotions often perceived as biased



# Family- centered, anti-racist systems



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- Grow awareness that racial equity and inclusion are important
- See workforce diversity as a strength
- Update policies, procedures, and training
- Have greater understanding of how issues of race influence work with families
- Implement equitable policies and practice with families

# Racial Equity Strategic Plan

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Establish a Structure to Guide the Work

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Examine, Understand, and Define the Issue

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Collect, Analyze, and Disseminate Data

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Establish a Vision

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Assess Environmental Factors

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Develop an Action Plan

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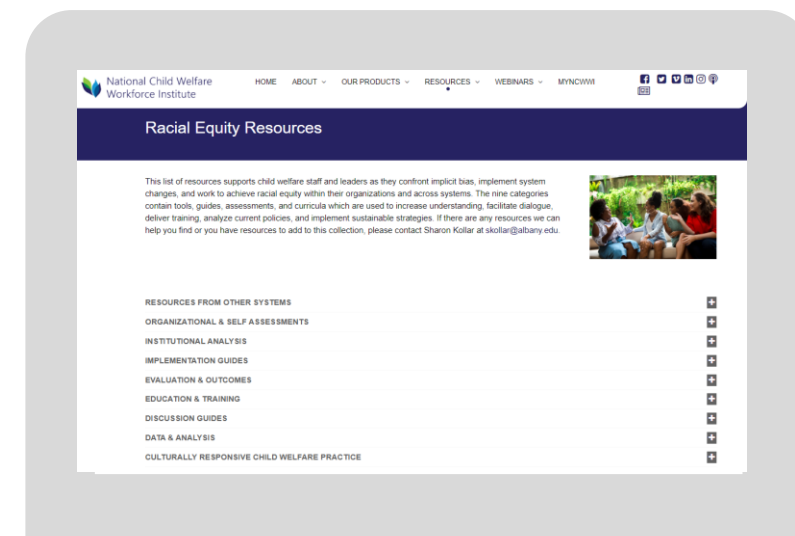
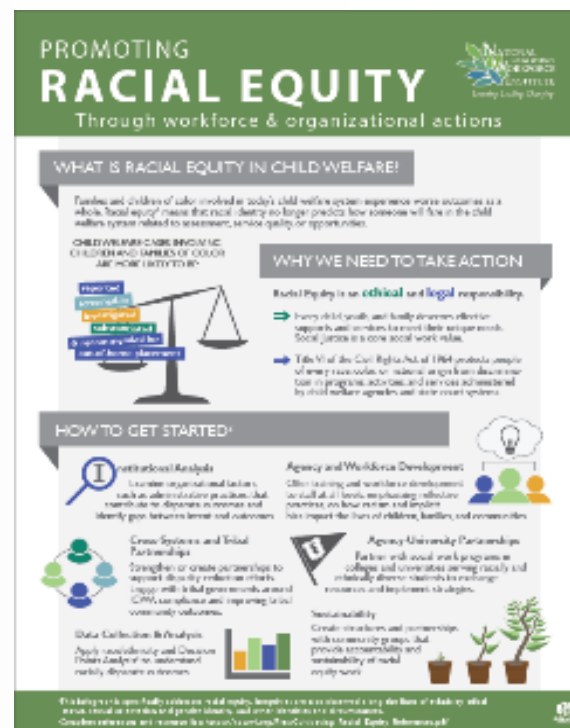
Implement, Evaluate, and Reassess







# Infographic and Resource Collection

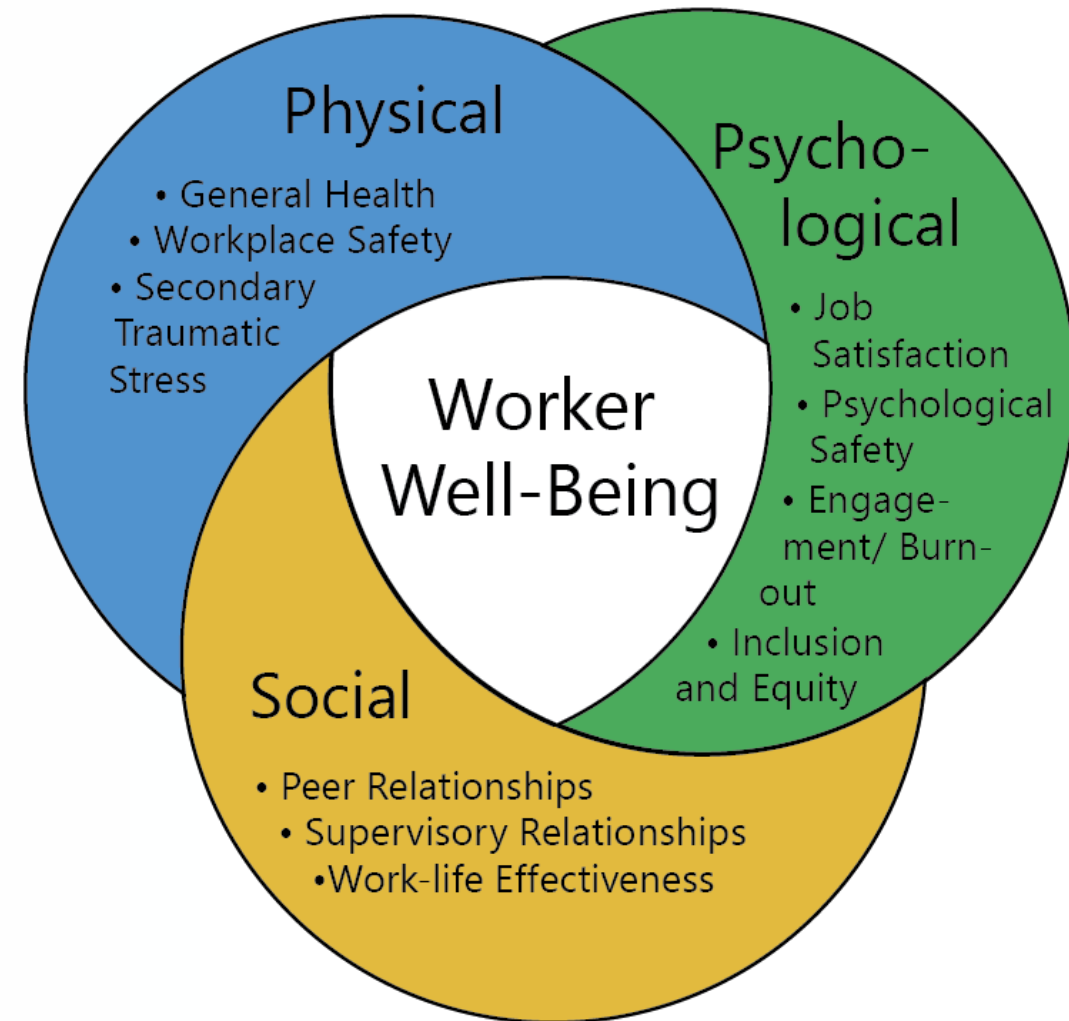


[http://ncwwi.org/files/Promoting\\_Racial\\_Equity\\_Through\\_Workforce\\_and\\_Organizational\\_Actions.pdf](http://ncwwi.org/files/Promoting_Racial_Equity_Through_Workforce_and_Organizational_Actions.pdf)

<https://ncwwi.org/index.php/resourcemenu/racial-equity>



# Workforce Well-being



# Child Welfare Organizational Data



**Turnover rates ranged from 20% to 40% annually across the agencies**

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**All staff reported experiencing high job stress and some amount of work-related burnout (feeling worn out at the end of the workday and being emotionally exhausted from work)**

- 49% of caseworkers and 63% of supervisors
  - 50% report workload is too high
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**46% of staff reported PTSD-level symptoms of secondary traumatic stress symptoms**

# Child Welfare Organizational Data

**Low psychological safety** (feeling unsafe to take risks, undermined, afraid to disagree)

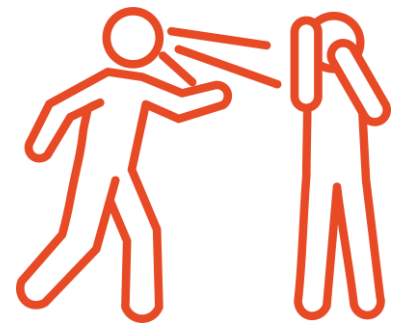


**Over 60% of staff experienced Moral Distress**

- This job requires action against their better judgement

**Physical safety:**

- 73% of staff have been yelled out, or sworn at by a client
- 37% have been physically threatened



BIPOC staff report more ***organizational bias and prejudice and discrimination*** in the workplace compared to white staff



# Characteristics of a Safety Culture



- Staff feel valued and appreciated for their contributions
- Staff have the tools and resources to work effectively
- “Learning Organization” where staff are encouraged to try new things, ask “what went wrong?” and learn from mistakes
- Agency where the physical and emotional well-being of staff is nurtured and protected
- Prioritizes racial equity and inclusivity
- Support from leadership, supervisors and peers
- Job is understood and valued by the community



# Building a Safety Culture

- Regularly assess organizational climate
- Create teaming structures for safe participation
- Foster distributive and inclusive leadership opportunities
- Listen to stakeholder voices
- Build an inclusive, diverse, anti-racist organization
- Allow for staff to try new things, make mistakes and avoid blaming and shaming





# Inter-professional collaboration

- Critical for successful outcomes
- Includes courts, agencies, community partners and providers of services such as child care, health care, law enforcement, and intimate partner violence
- Foundational for family-centered, trauma informed practice
- Opportunity for child welfare leaders and staff to improve community accountability for race equity and cohesion across service providers



# Inter-professional collaboration skills

- Infuse into all levels of staff training
- Cross-systems training
- Multi-disciplinary teaming models
- Data-sharing

## Resources

- [Building a Multi-system Trauma-informed Collaborative](#)
- [Multi-system Education for Better Outcomes: NCWWI 1-page Summary](#)





# NCWWI Workforce Excellence Projects

Support Public and Tribal child welfare agencies and university partners to implement changes to build a sustainable workforce

- Phased implementation approach that begins with assessment
- Facilitated Teams to implement
- Leadership development
- Supported Partnerships and student stipends
- CQI and Evaluation





# Small Group Discussions

- Make space for all voices to be heard
- Embrace creativity and originality
- Listen actively and be fully present
- Stay curious about the range of viewpoints



# Discussion Questions

1. What strategies have you observed, read, or heard about that others should know about?
2. Identify one for each area (leadership, family-centered and anti-racist systems, workforce well-being, inter-professional collaboration) to share with the larger group.
3. What would it take to move these strategies forward?



# Large Group Takeaways



# Contact Us

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