Securing Stakeholder Buy-In for Reintegration

Better Care Network

VIDEO SUMMARY

Reintegrating children out of residential care settings back into community and family can be a challenging process that requires strong buy-in from multiple stakeholders. Failure to secure buy-in and clearly communicate the reasons for reintegration, as well as the process, can cause numerous issues that can ultimately affect the outcomes for the child. Securing buy-in, however, is far more complex than simply discussing what is in the best interests of the child. It requires social workers or technical staff to first understand the range of motivations and personal concerns that can differ for each stakeholder group and tailor communication strategies accordingly.

In this two-part video series, Nou Dalin, discusses her experience of working in partnership with Department of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (DoSVY) to implement the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) Action Plan on Improving Childcare in Battambang Province in Cambodia. Dalin focuses on her learning with respect to communicating with orphanage directors, caregiver staff, families and children to achieve buy-in for reintegration of children in residential care institutions. Dalin shares insights into the nuances and differences in approach for each stakeholder group and discusses the risk to children in cases where buy-in is not secured.

DISCUSSION TOPIC

Identifying and responding to stakeholder motivations

In the video, Dalin describes how there is no 'one size fits all' approach to communicating with stakeholders and that different points have different purposes and affect stakeholder groups differently. For example, she states that discussing the policy is important to validate the social worker's role and authority, however it is not effective as a tool to change mindsets about residential care, particularly with families. Instead she says you have to tap into each stakeholder's emotions and personal feelings and use experiences they can relate to, to help them understand the perspective of the child.

In your context:

? Who are the stakeholder groups you must secure buy-in with to reintegrate children or to ensure they have the opportunity to be raised in families?

? What motivates them and how might these motivations (a) be leveraged to support reintegration/ family-based care and/or (b) constitute obstacles to buy-in for reintegration/family-based care?

? How can you tailor your communications strategy to each individual stakeholder group addressing motivations and concerns? What are the key messages in your strategy and what is the purpose of each one (i.e. to establish authority, relevance, provide evidence, ensure compliance, appeal to emotions, link to personal experience)?

? What are the next steps you'd need to take to develop or modify your communications strategy and what are the resource implications for your organisation?

Managing risk

In the video, Dalin highlights the risks to children associated with reintegration if the stakeholder engagement piece is not well managed. In Dalin's context, these risks relate to child safety, education retention, stability of placement, relationships with parents and emotional wellbeing.

In your context:

(?) What are the risks to children associated with failing to secure buy-in from stakeholders in the context of your program or social work practice?

(?) What measures are in place to manage and monitor those risks?

(?) What more should or could be done to understand, reduce and better manage risk?

(?) What implications would this have for your programs and resources?

📁 **EXERCISE**

Building on the above discussion points, develop a stakeholder engagement and communications strategy (or outline). Select the stakeholder/s most relevant to your work and include in your strategic plan:

- A profile of your stakeholder/s

- A verbal communication guide focusing on key messages that address their motivations and concerns.

- Written resources that can you can source or develop to provide your stakeholders with more information (such as FAQs, fact sheets, policy briefs etc.)

- Other supporting materials, such as case studies and videos, that might be used to build confidence, address concerns or alleviate fears.

- Action and implementation plan, including next steps and a basic timeline.