

# RAISING THE BAR

## STRENGTHENING CAPACITY TO ADVANCE RACIALLY EQUITABLE RESULTS



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# ABOUT CSSP



CSSP is a national, non-profit policy organization that connects community action, public system reform, and policy change. We work to achieve a racially, economically, and socially just society in which all children and families thrive. To do this, we translate ideas into action, promote public policies grounded in equity, support strong and inclusive communities, and advocate with and for all children and families marginalized by public policies and institutional practices.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



This paper would not exist without the great thinking and contributions of so many, and reflects over twenty years of development, refinement and expansion. Beginning with CSSP's leadership of the Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC) the idea of a TA theory of change and accompanying framework first came to fruition to support the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections Initiative. All credit goes to those who developed the initial framework and the underlying frameworks that support it (Bill Shepardson, Frank Farrow, Rosa Briceno, Jolie Bain Pillsbury, Mark Friedman, and many others), and to the resident leaders, site leaders, and capacity building liaisons who helped us to refine and add to our understanding of high quality, effective and equitable capacity building.

This approach to capacity building and technical assistance has been revised and adapted for other initiatives, including the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, Strengthening Families, Building Neighborhood Capacity Program, and Promise Neighborhoods, among others. Throughout the past 20 years, CSSP staff and partners have continued to use and adapt this approach, and their contributions have led to this current iteration of our commitment to capacity building that advances racial justice. This paper would not exist without their edits, comments, expertise and experience, and while we cannot name everyone, please know the contributions are many and deeply valued.

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# OVERVIEW & APPROACH

## WHO WE ARE

For more than 40 years, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) has supported leaders in communities, public systems, and policy making in developing innovative solutions that contribute to more equitable outcomes for children and families. We translate ideas into action and use both qualitative and quantitative data to drive our work so that all children, youth, and families live in communities where they can thrive.

Our mission is to create a more racially, socially, and economically just society and we know that we cannot achieve this mission alone. Instead, we rely on our national partners, and those leading the work in communities around the country, to help advance our mission and identify ways in which CSSP can support their efforts to achieve racial equity and justice. We approach our work in accordance with a set of values—a “way of work”—that shapes how we engage in partnership and cultivate new and strengthened leadership.

## WHAT WE DO

CSSP’s work is focused on a few key areas: promoting public policies grounded in equity, supporting strong and inclusive communities, and advocating with and for historically marginalized communities by changing public policies and institutional practices. We do this by supporting and strengthening the capacity of individuals and institutions to lead their work more effectively.

Much of how we support systems, communities, and policy leaders is by providing “capacity building” support, with an eye towards building on an individual and organization’s existing strengths and identifying ways our experience and expertise might inform and improve their efforts for impactful change.

*Capacity building means expanding upon the knowledge, skills and expertise that an individual or organization already has to support them in achieving their goals*, through a variety of avenues—including strategic consultation, assessment, program design and development, coaching, training, facilitation, meeting design, and everything in between. Our approach to capacity building focuses on achieving racially and economically equitable outcomes for children, youth, and their families and is based on long-standing work with public systems, funders and community partners. Ultimately, we help to connect leaders to the information and resources they need to be successful—the knowledge, skills, and relationships that allow them to take more effective action and achieve results.

We are committed to racial justice including preventing sociological, cultural, and economic disparities. We do this by using an [anti-racist intersectional frame](#) in all our work, including in our capacity building. The frame is action-oriented and critiques society’s structures, historical and current structural racism, and the disparate treatment of people and communities of color, while providing a guiding approach for how to work towards a more just and equitable society. CSSP’s approach begins with a set of core principles that serve as “touchstones” for both CSSP and our partners to create shared expectations about the quality and effectiveness of our capacity building work. The principles suggest both a way of working together and what our approach should include; they are each of equal value and importance and require equal attention. Each principle is explained further in the following pages.



# ANTI-RACIST INTERSECTIONALITY AT CSSP

Operationalizing anti-racism, anti-Black racism, racist ideas, and intersectionality, an anti-racist intersectional frame recognizes all the different ways people and communities experience racism with respect to their identities and encourages the development of anti-racist policies and practices.

An [anti-racist frame](#) also recognizes that racism in the United States is grounded in and motivated by anti-Black racism. Therefore, an anti-racist intersectional frame provides a conceptual tool to examine institutional and systemic oppression that people of color face because of both their race and identities while providing a guiding approach for working with and in communities and systems to create a more just and equitable society.



## FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

CSSP's approach to results-based training is informed by two foundational skills, Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA)\* and Results-Based Facilitation (RBF)\*\* which were developed by long-time partners of CSSP, Mark Friedman and Jolie Bain-Pillsbury. RBA focuses on creating shared accountability for achieving both program and population level results to improve the lives of children and families. It helps leaders create measures of performance to know whether they are achieving the results they are aiming for. RBF is a specific, hands-on method that enables people to get to better results in meetings and conversations. It is based on a set of skills and competencies that facilitators and participants use to allow them to move from talk to action, make decisions, and hold each other accountable for achieving the results they've agreed upon.

CSSP staff employ both foundational skills in our approach to capacity building, as well several staff qualified to employ advanced skills included in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Results Count™ leadership development program.

\* <http://resultsaccountability.com/>

\*\* <http://rbfnetwork.com/new/>



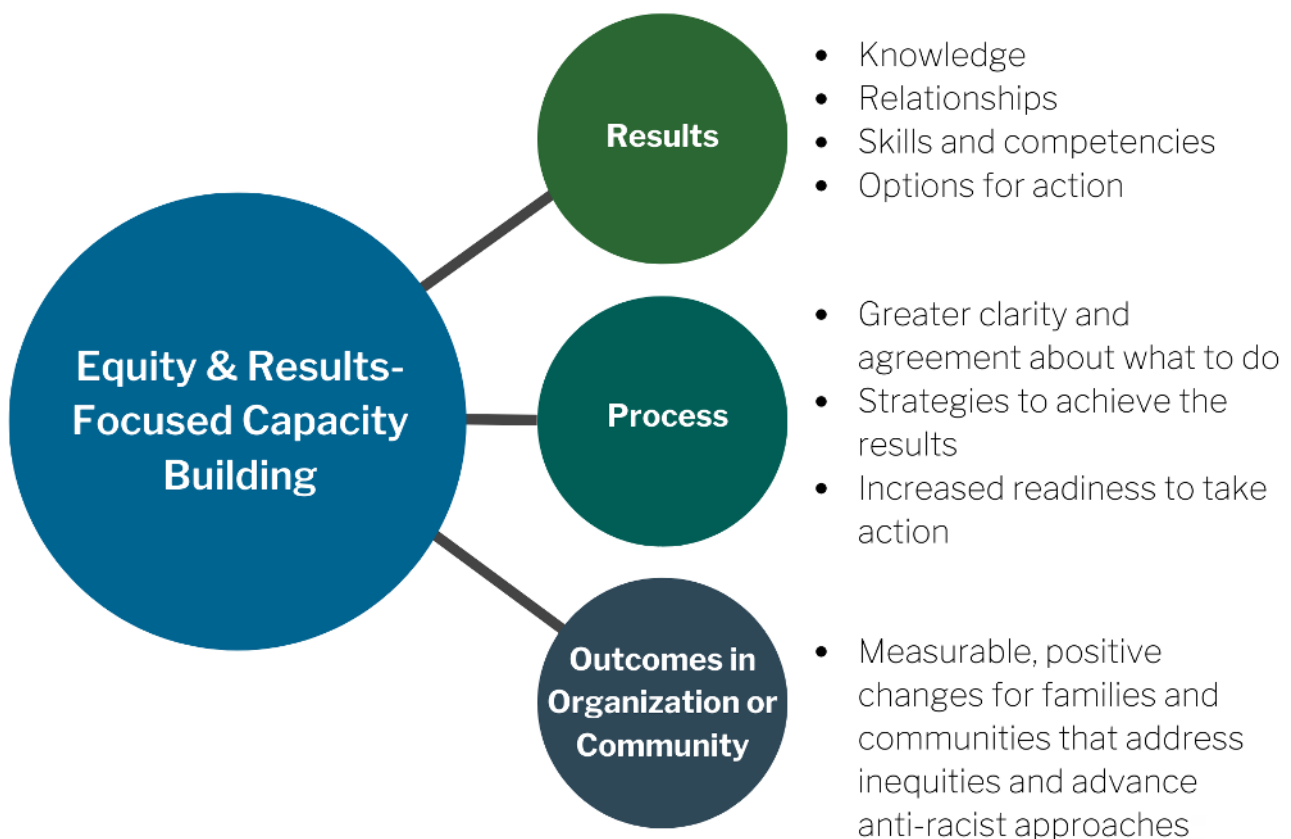
# BUILDING CAPACITY FOR ACTION

## WHAT IS RESULTS-BASED CAPACITY BUILDING?

We have learned that a thoughtful, results-based approach to capacity building that is guided by a set of principles can achieve:

- New knowledge,
- New and improved relationships,
- An increase in skills and competencies,
- Options for action, and importantly,
- A sense of what's possible.

The capacity building that CSSP provides ultimately impacts the work of individuals, organizations, systems, and communities and strengthens their ability to achieve measurable, positive, equitable results for children and families.



# PRINCIPLES OF RESULTS-BASED CAPACITY BUILDING

There are many ways to think about the delivery of capacity building. It can be as informal as a strategic consulting conversation, and as formal as a long-term, multi-year engagement that is time and resource intensive. CSSP typically utilizes the following types of results-based capacity building in our work—sometimes we only utilize one of these methods, but more often our work with partners involves multiple efforts over any given timeline of an engagement.







## FOCUS ON DESIRED RESULTS

Any capacity building effort should be directly linked to the overall goals that are held by the partner(s) with whom we are working. The focus should combine skill building, knowledge development, and strengthened relationships to support participants in acting on their stated goals. The central question is: Did this effort have the desired impact, and did it contribute to the partner(s) achieving the outcomes they want for their work?

### *Questions for partners to consider:*

- If this support was successful, how would you know?
- What changes do you hope to see because of this engagement?
- What would people be able to do/know/understand differently afterwards?
- How would the community (your stakeholders) know something had changed?
- How is the problem or desired result(s) being defined? What alternative decisions might we need to consider?
- How might this effort advance racial equity and justice?



## EXPLORE THE NEED

Any capacity building effort should be directly linked to the overall goals that are held by the partner(s) with whom we are working. The focus should combine skill building, knowledge development, and strengthened relationships to support participants in acting on their stated goals. The central question is: Did this effort have the desired impact, and did it contribute to the partner(s) achieving the outcomes they want for their work?

### *Questions for partners to consider:*

- What's driving the need to engage in capacity building?
- Why is now the right time?
- Is the decision to do this now in reaction to a particular event and/or a rush to action?
- Who will be participating and what will they need to be successful?
- What's the historical and current sociopolitical context of your organization or community, and how might that impact the engagement?



## CO-DESIGN THE ENGAGEMENT

Co-design means working together with partners to clarify goals and priorities, understand the context and local environment, and jointly develop a timeline and strategy that will produce the desired outcomes with shared expectations and responsibilities.

### *Questions for partners to consider:*

- Who needs to be involved in the co-design of the approach?
- Is there an authorizing environment which will ensure that efforts can be implemented and sustained?
- Is there enough staff capacity to take on this work and how will time/resources be allocated to support its success?
- Who will be directly impacted and how will they be involved?
- How will this work be communicated with others within the organization? Board? Stakeholders? Clients?
- What methods of accountability for leadership are in place for sharing what is being accomplished?







## REFLECT THE EXPERTISE OF THOSE IMPACTED

The co-design process should also facilitate the involvement of those most likely to be impacted by the engagement. Ensuring that all voices are included in a way that is collaborative, improves relationships, and reflects individual's viewpoints and insights leads to greater buy-in to the process, and ultimately to better experiences—and results—for all involved.

### *Questions for partners to consider:*

- Whose perspectives need to be included in the engagement?
- How might others in the organization or community understand the issue?
- In what ways might the engagement with this community, agency, or system actively promote positive outcomes for children, youth, and families?
- How might this engagement mitigate risk of negative outcomes for children, families, and communities most often harmed by policies and systems?



## CENTER EQUITY, INTERSECTIONALITY, AND JUSTICE

An analysis of how race, class, culture, language, gender, power, and privilege impact the work being done is critical to the success of any engagement. CSSP rigorously employs an anti-racist intersectional frame to understand the need, co-design anti-racist solution(s), and shape the process with partners.

### *Questions for partners to consider:*

- How might this work be done in a way that would help to undo the impact of systemic racism?
- How can an intersectional analysis be used in understanding the issue that will be addressed?
- What historical factors impact the current context?
- What kind of demographic information would provide a fuller or more nuanced picture of what the community you are working with experiences?
- What does shifting and sharing power look like?



## FOCUS ON BOTH ADAPTIVE AND TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

The issues facing organizations and communities striving to achieve equitable outcomes for children and families can sometimes be straightforward with an easily identified solution. More often, however, they are complex, without an easily identified solution or, where there no clear choices among the possible options. When a challenge is straightforward, and a technical “fix” can be found, CSSP can help in the selection and implementation of a known solution. When challenges are more complex and harder to easily address, effective capacity building can help to tease out the issues at play, and develop solutions that require more flexibility, understanding, and adaptation, and identify whether other voices and partners need to be involved in the solutions.

### *Questions for partners to consider:*

- What, if anything, has already been done to address the issues, and what happened?
- What could those involved potentially gain or lose if progress is made?
- How might those involved in the engagement be contributing to the problem? To the solution?
- What might be the reasons why this issue hasn't already been addressed?
- Who might be allies in helping to address this issue? Who might be opponents?



## DRAW ON EXISTING DATA AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

CSSP values the use of data to help understand our partner's work: what is driving the need to learn, what is happening in the current community or organizational context, and what data are available to create measurable outcomes. We understand that there are multiple sources of data—which include both quantitative and qualitative (such as stories, visual aids, art, oral histories, etc.) types of data—all of which are critical to help partners make informed decisions about goals and strategies, and should be used to select, apply, and evaluate capacity building efforts.

Effective, results-based capacity building should also combine the best available evidence of what works, including practice-based research and work that is informed by the lived experiences of those impacted to ensure the proposed work is a good fit for the recipient, and is customized and adaptable to the partners' context. Also, we recognize that in many cases the most effective solutions don't yet exist, particularly when crafting an anti-racist response.

### *Questions for partners to consider:*

- What perspectives and information might shed light on the root causes of the problem?
- What data are available and would be helpful? What do we know about the root causes that might be impacting the issue?
- To what degree is there a willingness to shift and share power with constituents? How will you make this a priority?
- How are data being sourced, and who might be left out in the data collection process?
- How well do existing solutions fit? How large an effect do they have, for whom, under what circumstances?
- Given community context, which potential approaches are more likely to be successful and why? What approaches could produce unintended negative consequences?



## SUPPORT HOW ADULTS LEARN

Research shows that adults learn through a mix of learning modalities, including time and space to reflect; time to practice and apply what they've learned; use of repetition; and learning in ways that are relevant for their lives and work. Adult learning is also enhanced by a supportive environment. Effective capacity building employs a variety of strategies to ensure what is learned is absorbed and maintained. The approach outlined in moving groups from talk to action used in Results-Based Facilitation is often helpful in designing workshops and conversations.

### *Questions to consider:*

- How will the work occur—in person, in virtual settings, or in a hybrid approach, and how might that impact the sequencing, pacing, and timeline for the work?
- How does the approach support learning and ensure participation for those with competing demands?
- How does the work incorporate participants lived experiences and knowledge?
- How does the pacing of the work enable participants to utilize what they're learning in real time?

# TYPES OF CAPACITY BUILDING

There are many ways to think about the delivery of capacity building. It can be as informal as a strategic consulting conversation, and as formal as a long-term, multi-year engagement that is time and resource intensive. CSSP typically utilizes the following types of results-based capacity building in our work—sometimes we only utilize one of these methods, but more often our work with partners involves multiple efforts over any given timeline of an engagement.

**Research and Information Scans.** This involves the use of content experts to support specific topics, best practices, research findings, and/or evidence-based programs, and strategies. It often results in the production of a document, which can either be simply shared with the requesting party or can be part of a formal presentation or event with multiple stakeholders. It's often used as one step in a longer process of identifying possible approaches that may be considered to achieve more equitable outcomes by changing policy or practice in a community or organization.

**Strategy and Implementation Consultation.** This can be short-term or ongoing consultation with content and/or process experts, peers, and partners to work through an issue, design a program or solution, and build capacity to solve problems. This can include content specific information; policy and program strategy and implementation; data collection strategies; development of performance measures; insight from strategic partners; leveraging of resources or the application of best practices. We specialize in strategic consultation that centers race and equity in the development of any strategy. Consultation can occur in person, or virtually and can vary in duration based on recipient's needs.



**Organizational Assessment.** Ensuring a partner is ready to engage in the capacity building effort is a key consideration. To best assess this, CSSP may ask a variety of questions of leadership and staff to better understand their commitment, the resources available, the time and capacity they can dedicate, and whether their goals are realistic. Once an agreement about a scope of work is made, an organizational assessment could be a part of the work and may include the design and analysis of a baseline survey of an organization's staff capacity, knowledge, and skills on a variety of topics, usually with a focus on racial equity and justice.

CSSP has developed several assessment tools that can be utilized and/or adapted to a particular need and organizational context,

including a Race Equity Impact Assessment Tool designed to assess the impact of policy and practice; Strengthening Families Program Assessment to assess best practices to support young children; an Early Childhood Performance Assessment Toolkit to assess how well an early childhood system is working; a Guide for Anti-Racist Data Collection to support caseworkers and front-line staff, and many other tools and resources. CSSP has also developed a more intensive qualitative assessment called the Institutional Analysis, which identifies how institutions may not be working as effectively as they can for families, particularly families of color. The Institutional Analysis reveals features of structural and institutional racism—policies, practices, protocols, resource distribution, training, concepts, theories, etc.—and suggests practical strategies that communities and institutions can employ to address identified inequities. CSSP may also include the use of other, externally created organizational assessment tools focused on racial justice. Whatever assessments are used, any organizational assessment typically includes a facilitated process of understanding the assessment results, producing a summary report, and sharing recommendations for action.

**Leadership Development and Coaching.** This is typically one-on-one or small group, focused on building/enhancing the skills and capacity of anyone in a leadership role (broadly defined) who is seeking support in their role. It is primarily offered to leaders and teams who seek to develop their leadership, emotional intelligence, and effectiveness skills that will better equip them to lead toward adaptive results, and equity focused efforts within their organization or community. The goals and methods can be modified to meet participant's needs, but in general this work is focused on how each individual can be an instrument of change, helping leaders utilize a set of skills and tools that they can use to advance equity in their work. This can also include the use of specific tools, such as the Team Emotional and Social Intelligence assessment (TESI), the Myers-Briggs (MBTI) profiles, and other team and leadership development tools.

**Meeting Design and Facilitation.** We believe that people need the time, space, and opportunity to work and think together to surface their own expertise and ideas to come to agreement about solutions to challenges they are facing. Results-based meeting design and results-based facilitation can provide groups with a neutral facilitator who can help shape a conversation designed to elicit clear results. Results-based facilitation guides participants from talk to action and uses a process that intentionally builds upon partners' ideas and expertise. CSSP's design and facilitation skills help to create and hold the space necessary for teams to have the difficult conversations that are often needed to address the challenges our partners are working to address—particularly with regard to advancing racial equity and justice. Skillful meeting design and facilitation can be a one-time event or an ongoing form of capacity building. As part of our capacity building offerings, CSSP also provides training on results-based facilitation that build the capacity of individuals in organizations and communities to use these skills in their own practice.



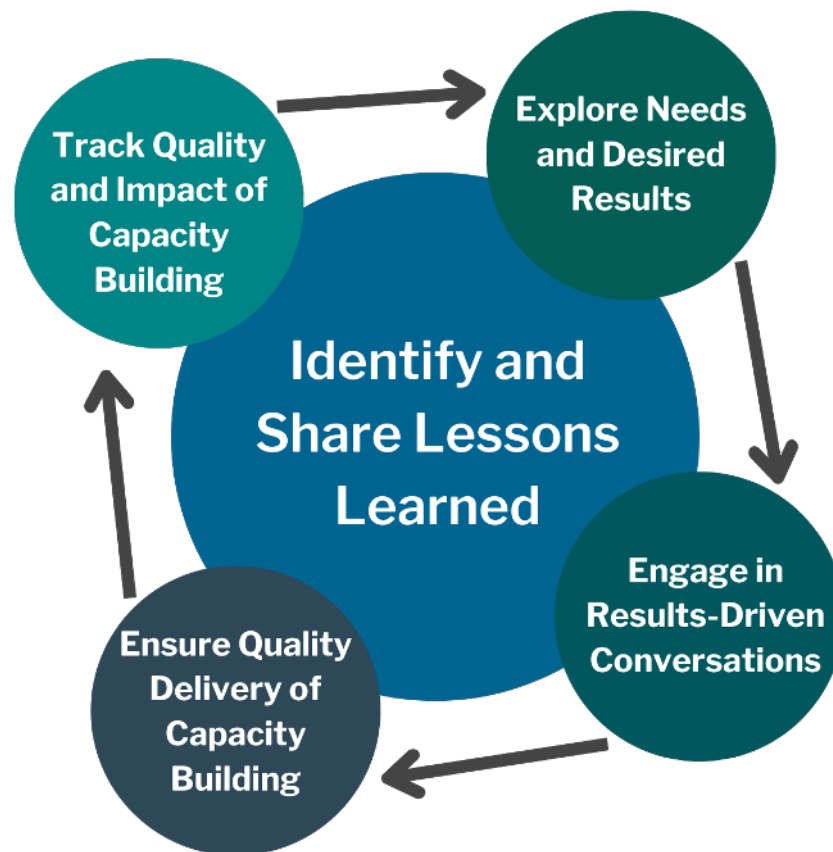
**Large Group Convenings.** One powerful way to build and strengthen relationships, share information and best practices, and provide new knowledge and skills is through convening larger groups who can work towards a shared set of outcomes. Using the same skills involved in results-based meeting design and facilitation, convenings are organized around a set of shared results and ensure that the right people are in the room from the beginning and can have the right conversations to allow them to advance their work. Convenings often consist of formal presentations, workshops, and skill-building sessions; time for reflection and planning; and networking and relationship building opportunities. They are opportunities for inspiration and helping participants develop a sense of what's possible, sparking new ideas and commitments for action. They can range in size from small scale (20-25 people) to large scale (100 or more people).

**Skill and Knowledge Building Trainings.** Another form of capacity building are trainings. These can be content specific to offer participants new knowledge and strategies; skill-based to build the capacity of participants; or a mix of both. CSSP offers several specialized learning opportunities, which are customized in partnership with local communities and organizations and include facilitation and training on concepts of race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE), and using an anti-racist intersectional frame when addressing challenges and co-designing solutions. These include:

- Results-Based Facilitation Skills
- inSIGHT: A Workshop on Implicit Racial Bias for Child Protection
- Racial Equity and Justice Core Terms and Concepts
- History of Racism in Child Welfare
- Youth Thrive Trainings
- Strengthening Families Trainings



# HOW WE WORK



By starting with the end in mind, we shape the approach of the work by mapping out the “who, what, and how” of any capacity building project. It is critical to develop this pathway—the roadmap to eventual success—prior to beginning any work to ensure that all parties share the same goals, and that there are guidelines to ensure that the engagement is aligned to the stated goals as much as possible.

**Explore Needs and Desired Results.** Starting with the end in mind, we ask effective questions to stimulate ideas, clarify expectations and help people make good decisions. This may include understanding and assessing the needs that are being presented, discussing different options, and determining whether CSSP is the right partner to provide support.

**Engage Partners in Results-Focused Conversations.** This is an iterative process that involves engaging others, asking effective questions, and taking time to understand the current context can lead to better decisions about the timing and content of the capacity building that is ultimately delivered. This also helps to identify whether the full complement of people who need to be involved have been asked to join the effort. Using a “Before Action Review” can be a useful tool to ensure agreement on what is expected from the capacity building engagement.

**Ensure Quality Delivery.** Once capacity building is underway, it is important to ensure quality and alignment with the recipient’s goals. As part of the process, CSSP builds in check-ins and points of reflection to make sure that expectations are being met. In addition, we develop a transparent process for sharing feedback so that course corrections can be made or engagements can be ended if needs are not being met.



- Create a formal agreement. It can be helpful to codify how we will approach the work through a contract/grant and scope of work that clarifies results, deliverables, and expectations. This document ensures mutual accountability and expectations throughout the process.
- Assign key contacts for the engagement. Preparing for delivering and receiving capacity building is an important and often overlooked step. We recommend that someone from the partner organization assign a/some key point(s) of contact to work closely with CSSP for logistical and contractual support, help ensure that the organization/partners are ready to receive support, and to monitor the engagement to ensure that work is being delivered according to the principles and with high quality.
- Prepare providers and partners. Consider that prep-work is part of the necessary investment to set the engagement up for success. Preparation can include considering the space in which the work will be done, the materials needed to accomplish the work, any advance work needed by the capacity building provider or by participants, any logistical concerns (confirming participants' availability, accessibility and availability of meeting space, travel arrangements, food), etc.

**Track Quality and Impact.** Capacity building in and of itself will not change outcomes for children, families, and communities. However, the knowledge, skills, and capacity that are built can lead to measurable changes that contribute to those outcomes; the ability to understand and track those outcomes are critical to an organization or community's success. Two ways to understand the quality and impact of an engagement include:

- *Debriefing with partners.* A debrief conversation can provide valuable reflective information about how the engagement was received. Using an "After Action Review" can be a useful tool for this. Effective questions can include:
  - What did we do to make the most of this experience?
  - How well did this experience meet our expectations?
  - What did we learn? What will we not know until later?
  - What worked well about our engagement? What could be improved?
  - What else do we need to do/learn now?
- *Completing an evaluation.* This can occur immediately after the engagement to get feedback on the quality of the work that was delivered, what participants learned, and the impact—i.e., how well did the work meet its intended results (including participants receiving new knowledge, skills, ideas; stronger relationships with partners; new resources or strategies; and ideas and options for action). For long-term engagements, such feedback may be requested after major events or milestones. In addition, asking partners to complete a follow-up evaluation at specified future intervals can be extremely valuable, since we know that capacity building often has lasting, and sometimes unexpected, consequences. We often suggest a follow-up conversation to reflect on the impact after relevant intervals: three, six, nine, or 12 months.

Over the years of developing, using, and adapting our approach, we have learned about what works and what partners and providers might want to consider.



# CONSIDERATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE RESULTS-BASED CAPACITY BUILDING

Over the years of developing, using, and adapting our approach, we have learned about what works and what partners and providers might want to consider.

1. **Readiness is key.** People, organizations, systems, communities—all need to be ready and willing to engage in capacity building. A successful strategy is not just about ensuring the right support is chosen—it is also about ensuring that all participants are clear on what to expect, are willing and able to commit their time and energy to the full process, and fully understand how to be good partners of the support provided. They should be clear on what they hope to learn and able to fully participate in all aspects of the engagement—they can't solely rely on the providers to do their work for them. It is also important that the timing for embarking on a capacity building effort makes sense given competing demands, and that there is flexibility if plans need to be modified due to unforeseen circumstances.
2. **Focus on both the technical and the adaptive challenges.** Not all capacity building needs require the same amount of time, capacity, or resources. Sometimes all that is needed is a better understanding of the technical issue or question that a leader is facing. This could be for example, needing help designing and implementing a program on improving foster care, or learning how a proposed policy change will need to be applied to ensure that funds are being used properly. However, the challenges facing leaders often do not have easy solutions and require a more nuanced understanding of the context and issues at play, as well as a range of solutions that help to address the myriad factors that are contributing to a problem.
3. **Accept that failure is okay.** The only way to learn is to try. Not all programs, strategies, or relationships will work; not every tool or approach can be adapted to every context. What we've learned over the past 20 years is that mistakes or failures often lead to great discoveries and innovation that would not have occurred otherwise. Sometimes our assumptions about what works are wrong and instead we find that what didn't work was the thing that we needed to learn. It can be helpful to consider what the failure was and why—was it solution failure (wrong idea/solution), an implementation failure (right idea but badly applied), or a readiness failure (bad timing/ preparation)? Funders often want a “best practice” or a sure-fire strategy to achieve results, but that is usually something learned over time. More important is putting a focus on how we learn and measure what we're learning.
4. **Invest in learning and evaluation.** Having the time, will, resources, and capacity to track what is being learned from the design and delivery of the engagement, the outcomes, and the impact on receiving support is critical. That learning allows us to more clearly understand what efforts are working (and what specifically about those efforts are working) or not; it also helps us to measure how capacity building contributes to changes in policies, practices, and programs that can lead to improved outcomes for others.
5. **Tap into the expertise and experience of others.** There are many people working on achieving the same types of systems reform and community improvements and there is much to learn from our peers. The importance of network and relationship building, talking to others to learn about their work, and incorporating the lived experiences of those whose lives you're seeking to impact is imperative.

6. **Champion innovation and adaptation.** If we had all the answers to the challenges we are seeking to address, we wouldn't be working so hard to achieve racial equity and enact anti-racist policies and practices. We must be willing to try new approaches, learn adaptive lessons, and step into new challenges—and continuously learn and reflect upon what's happening to make improvements or adaptations. We often call this continuous quality improvement and use principles from improvement science and continuous quality improvement (CQI) to support ongoing learning.
7. **Invest heavily in people—time, capacity, and skill-building aren't cheap.** In our experience, capacity building is often under-resourced and misunderstood. To do the type of adaptive work that creates a change in outcomes requires time and skills; it doesn't happen overnight. Even for short-term engagements, a level of planning and co-design work is required to ensure that the effort will be as meaningful as possible. At the same time, longer term engagements which tend to have the greatest impact, require a significant commitment of staff capacity and dedication—particularly to ensure learning is captured and shared, adaptations are designed and implemented, and that relationships are nurtured and expanded.
8. **Pay attention to pacing and timing.** While a sense of urgency and events can often dictate when capacity building is needed, there are circumstances out of anyone's control that can disrupt even the best laid plans. Sometimes change can occur quickly, sometimes change happens over a long period of time. Many things can contribute to that—shifts in leadership, turnover of key staff or champions, changes to the political climate, impactful events happen in communities, loss of funding and other resources, etc. Don't be discouraged by the occasional ebb and flow of progress. Instead, we encourage our partners to be aware and flexible when change happens and patient if plans must be altered; this type of course correction is important and can often lead to new windows of opportunity.
9. **Create multiple forms of leave-behind.** External capacity building providers cannot stay in communities, systems, or organizations forever. At its core, results-based capacity building is about building the capacity of leaders to expand on what they've learned and knowing the resources and relationships they need to advance equity and achieve greater results for their organization once the provider is no longer engaged. Ideally that built-in capacity will result in a renewed sense of what's possible, the ability to focus on learning and improvement, and a sustainable commitment to a way of working that is more likely to achieve the outcomes one is seeking.



# CONCLUSION

The work to dismantle systems of oppression, address institutional and structural racism, and ensure we can all live in a racially, socially, and economically just society is a marathon, not a sprint. CSSP is committed to our mission and recognize that we can't achieve it alone. Rather, this work requires the cooperation of leaders at all levels and in all communities making a commitment to do better. CSSP strongly believes that everyone has a role to play and a contribution to make in advancing equity. Our approach is focused on building upon the existing capacity of every individual as a leader, and organizations, systems, and philanthropy as stewards of resources and services, and providing them with the skills, knowledge, and competencies to effectively tap into their respective capacity and become a more effective agent for change.

If you are interested in working with us, please contact us at [capacity@CSSP.org](mailto:capacity@CSSP.org).

