

**Executive Summary:**  
**“Addressing Disproportionality: One County’s Institutional Analysis”**  
**With Margaret Jackson, MSW**

**Course Overview:**

Child welfare systems across the country are under continual pressure to keep children safe and help them live securely with a family, their own whenever possible. These public systems are judged and held accountable for their actions by the federal government, state legislatures, communities, and oftentimes lawsuits and consent decrees. Far too often the current flaws in our child welfare systems are attributed to individual leaders and workers, a general lack of resources, or a failure of other public systems. While these attributions may be valid, they are not the sole cause for the poor results of many of the interventions of our child welfare systems. In order to have meaningful and long lasting improvement child welfare systems must address the entrenched institutional practices and biases that inhibit a caseworker’s ability to effectively assist children and their families (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2007).

**Course Description:**

This workshop will provide shared insights and observations of a recent institutional analysis conducted in Fresno County. Insights from the perspective of a community member participating in the process will be shared. Training implications as a result of the findings will also be discussed. The topics and activities for this training on “Addressing disproportionality; One County’s Institutional Analysis will include:

1. A review of the institutional analysis process.
2. Role plays and practice opportunities for participants to identify individual as well as institutional practices that contribute to disproportionality and disparities in child welfare.
3. Brief Review of some of the work being done in Fresno County to address the issue of disproportionality.
4. Lively interactive activities utilizing case scenarios from actual child welfare cases to provide an opportunity for participants to experience the application of Fresno County’s practice change efforts.

**Target Audience:** This training is appropriate for Supervisors, Managers and Directors in child welfare services. This training is designed to share insights and observations of a recent institutional analysis conducted in Fresno County.

**Learning Objectives:**

As a result of this training participants will be able to:

1. Define the concept of an Institutional Analysis.
2. Understand the intent and purposes for engaging in an institutional analysis.
3. Understand and identify individual as well as institutional practices that contribute to disproportionality and disparities in child welfare services.
4. Gain knowledge of Fresno County and Michigan’s child welfare system Institutional Analysis
5. Understand various efforts Fresno County has made such as the use of Cultural Brokers, DCFS Joint Emergency and Community Response, Racial Sobriety Training and the Institutional Analysis, in an effort to address disproportionality and disparities.

## **Transfer of Learning Supports:**

It is recommended that the Supervisor or Manager attending the training do the following to transfer learning from the training.

1. Meet with their Director or Manager to review the executive summary and discuss the objectives of the training.
2. Identify an objective/focus area to target for possible integration into current practice.
3. The Manager or Supervisor attending the training should utilize the identified focus area in their development of an individual action plan during the training.
4. After the training the participant should meet with the Director or Manager to discuss and review the participant's action plan and discuss how the Director can support implementation.
5. The participant and the Director or Manger should identify any possible individual or institutional barriers that might have an impact on plan implementation and strategize ways to address the barriers.
6. The Director or Manager and participant should consider possible ways to evaluate success and consider spread or modification of the participant's plan.

# Individual Action Plan

## Directions:

1. Identify one to three of the training objectives listed below to target for possible integration into your practice change efforts.
2. Your identified objective/focus area will be utilized during the training for an exercise focused on the implementation of your individualized action plan.

## Learning Objectives:

As a result of this training participants will be able to:

1. Identify those day to day case actions that contribute to disproportionality and disparities in child welfare services.
2. Identify county specific practical ways to address racial disproportionality and disparities in child welfare services.
3. Utilize the art of focused conversations to help move through difficult conversations from start to finish.
4. Gain knowledge of what can be done on an individual level to support and encourage practice changes that eliminate disproportionality and disparities in child welfare services
5. Develop a personal plan of action to implement practice changes in child welfare.
6. Recognize the institutional and systemic supports and barriers that impact practice and contribute to the elimination of disparate outcomes in child welfare services
7. Understand how one county is utilizing Cultural Brokers in child welfare to address disproportionality and disparities “The Fresno Experience “

<b>Identified Objective/focus Area:</b>	<b>My Plan of Action:</b>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

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## Discussion Materials for “Ellie the Elephant Training”

In preparation for the upcoming training it would be helpful to have some actual case examples of situations where decisions, case activities or practices could possibly have been less than equitable or could contribute to disproportionality or disparities. A good example is a reunification case that consisted of a single African American mother and her 10 children. Despite the fact that there were over 20 relatives and family members offering to care for the children (2 of the relatives were licensed foster parents in good standing) while at least 3 of the Maternal Aunt’s and the Maternal Grandfather complied with the relative approval requirements and had been waiting for over 4 months for a response from the Agency. Needless to say the family felt that they were being treated less than fair and believed that they were being discriminated against. This would be an excellent case to review and discuss the case decisions and activities, engage in courageous conversations at all levels and consider how things could possibly have gone differently.

Your actual case examples are welcome and will be utilized during the course of the training to collaborate, strategize, discuss and consult around key issues, taboo subjects and engage in courageous conversations. No identifying information is necessary and case situations will be discussed anonymously. Feel free to take creative liberties to insure the anonymity of the family, social worker or county.

Please provide a brief synopsis of the case. Include case decisions, activities or practices that you would like to contribute to the collaborative learning environment for discussion, review consultation and or opportunities to engage in courageous conversations.

### **Case Synopsis Information:**

**Case Synopsis Information (Cont.):**

**Case Issues or Areas of Concern to be Discussed:**

