

10 Compelling Lessons from CAPC & CPNP Coordinators

The following are over 60 comments received on our survey. They have not been edited. They came from coordinators right across Canada! Many thanks for taking the time and sharing your insights.

I wished I would have been orientated to CPNP- how it started (history), who was involved, other's who I could have consulted, mandated role of CPNP, the necessary paperwork.

That I can't do this job without the support of other agencies.

Connections to other programs. We need to work as team players "working with staff."

Take care of yourself, there is always tomorrow.

Celebrate the small successes clients and families make!

It is about the people not the paperwork; #1 must be to always make time to listen and embrace people.

The amount of time utilized in searching out funding sources and accounting.

We do this job because we have a passion for maternal/child/family health definitely not for the compensation!

I wish I could have shadowed programs in CPNP and within Alberta and that I would have had a job description

How important it is to be trained into CAPC-CPNP positions – from Exec Directors to Child Care Attendants, Program Coordinators and facilitators.

The most valuable service or gift that we have to give our participants, in either a CAPC or CPNP program is the opportunity to form strong relationship with program staff. A relationship that is built on trust and respect. We must always work diligently to earn and keep a participant's trust. This understanding can influence how we do develop and implement our programs.

Community partnership is the key to the success of CAPC/CPNP. All staff at all levels need to foster and develop strong partnerships (eg: front line staff with partners at program site (church) and Coordinators with the variety of funders (Best Start OEYC). It is the strong partnership and support that will sustain the program over the long term. Partnership development is one of the top priorities for success!

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As a result of dollars that just don't seem to stretch as far, we've had to make a few revisions to our programs. I am learning, and would like to share, the excitement I have been feeling when I see programs that might be different... but are better meeting the needs of the participants! Some times change can cause worry, and it is rewarding to see that some changes are actually bringing people more joy. Our programs have always been good, and driven by participant input, but the need to re-look allowed everyone to dream up new approaches.

The learning never stops.

Remember to include the experts in your planning *the participants and * front line staff.

When dealing with participants – Listen more, talk less, offer food.

We need to be flexible and open-minded. Participants come from many different walks of life with many different experiences and histories. Respecting each of them and working with them to meet their needs and supports required. Some days it is food they need, not the food guide.

A truly collaborative attitude takes time to develop. It's about the relationship between the partners as much as it is about the shared actions. Trust and openness are key to good communication and it isn't something that happens overnight.

Our participants are resilient!

Inclusion of families within the high risk - at risk population does not mean just having a fund to pay for transportation if they ask for it - it is ensuring that all participants are treated the same and everyone is provided with transportation - that way those who do not want it say so and those who do accept it as part of the program

Always be a team player and be helpful, even if you do not agree with someone else.

True partnerships require give and take. Everyone has their own agenda and you need to figure out how to work with that to your advantage and move your own agenda forward.

Believe in your own ideas, model your beliefs.

Families don't always thank you when you go out of your way.

Open communication and regular staff meetings are vital to the organization!

Feel free to ask if you don't know.

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Success may look different from what you initially envisioned.

Partnership takes work and can't be taken for granted. Face to face contact is so important and if staff changes take place you need to rebuild the partnership.

In my desire to help improve their lives, I have forgotten to ask what they want!

Powerful relationships, built on integrity and trust, will help you to achieve the impact and outcomes that demonstrate the rewards of working to bring out the best in others: participants, colleagues, community partners and selves.

The importance of relationships: the relationships between parents and children; the relationships that CAPC/CPNP staff have with the participants they serve; the relationships and partnerships that CAPC/CPNP programs have with other programs and services in their community. I believe that the great strength of CAPC/CPNP programs is that they nurture relationships at all these levels -- creating strengths in children, family, and communities.

You must take care of yourself before you can help others.

Listen.

Not everyone is as passionate about the program as we are.

Never able to leave the office, once you are in you are in for life.

How much time it takes, community partnerships.

Make sure you study and understand and do the month end reporting.

There is never enough time and the work is never done

Be open minded and welcoming

The one thing I have learned is that everyone has their own story and we need to be respectful, kind, and patient when one is sharing their life story. It can make all the difference in the world!

Breathe (take 3 deep breathes from your stomach and exhale slowly)

That it is better to do even just one thing really, really, well, than a bunch of things poorly. It will make more of an impact on partners, participants, and myself to really focus in and devote the majority of my resources (in all forms) to achieving success in a limited scope than to stretch my resources out over too many things and do them all

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poorly. There is a definite tendency to think we need to be all things to all people, and I think this is doing everyone a disservice.

Look after yourself.

You cannot care more than the client.

One lesson I have learned is that documentation is everything, even if it is as simple as sending out a fax.

Even though you may be visiting a client or delivering a specific program for clients the single most important thing is that your clients are attending. Know that our clients are experiencing various hardships in their lives and being able to communicate with clients in a non judgmental way is the most important skill you should develop. Knowing your community and the supports available to clients (if they choose) is also very important.

How valuable the provincial and national coalition connections are; I have learned a great deal by connecting with other programs though teleconferences.

Partnerships are easy to obtain but difficult to maintain.

I have learned to be patient with myself and others. I have learned to recognize small steps and to celebrate them as if they were giant ones. I have learned that each person has their very own unique story and to honour those stories. I have learned that all people regardless of circumstance have great value and that the work we do recognizes that worth.

That supporting staff to be successful in their jobs is a huge responsibility and more complicated and time consuming than one would think.

Regardless of who you are working with, it is important to be friendly, non judgmental, empathetic and as supportive as possible. Be a good listener.

Helping others to be the best they can be is the most rewarding work one can do!

It is important to gather feedback/input from everyone involved with the groups.

It essentially takes one's own community to thrive and prosper. CAPC/CPNP are there to help steer it along the way.

Trust that the community knows best what it wants and what will work then be patient as it takes time to manifest.

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Everything we say or do has the potential to become a memory.

Remember that you are never alone, you can network with other program coordinators for help and guidance.

Build it, offer it, share it and "they" will come. Don't worry about numbers of participants, because the ones who do come are the right ones.

Acceptance. Generally parents are really doing the best they know how in their circumstances. Accept his and somehow they feel it and all the wisdom you have to share will be heard. It's hard some days when you want to step in and just change something for a parent. When I think back to all the people I had contact with as a young parent, the ones with the gentle non-judgmental approach were the ones I had most comfort with, especially when I had questions. And be prepared to accept when a parent's choice is not the one you'd make or the one you recommended!

The one lesson I have learned in the time I have been working with my participants ,is that most of them have their own answers for their issues concerning their children , they just need the tools to assist them to bring out those answers for themselves and other group members.

Take each day, and each hour one at a time. Help yourself first.. If you cant help yourself no one will be able to benefit from you.

The work is all about relationships; building them, maintaining them and celebrating them. Relationships with program participants, other staff, program, managers, community partners, members of our board of non-profit agencies.