

COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES IN CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

MONZA EXPERIENCE

Brief description

Thanks to the TAOS Institute grant, we introduced in 2015 a collaborative practices approach in Social Services that deals with Child Protection. We tried to introduce the complex thinking of Social Constructionism in everyday job of Social Services.

Collaborating actively in decisions affecting their lives, and not staying in a passive position of waiting for the choices of the Courts and Social Services, people feel more protagonist and are able to have an active role in their own lives. Hacking the feeling of “being hearded” and “treated with respect” even in the toughest moments, is the first step to a real position of collaboration between Social Workers and Families.

Overcoming illusionary dynamics of power and control, is the only way to ensure that everyone involved in the decision-making process, can feel treated with dignity. Dignity can only be one of the main principles that guide the actions of service operators.

To introduce these new ideas and practices, we implemented two different modules:

- in the first we conducted a training program for operators of Social Services of different cities near Monza (we involved 102 people including Social Workers, Psychologists, Educators, Psychiatrists, child Psychiatrists, Lawyers) introducing the basics of Social Constructionism and Collaborative Practices;

- in the second module we worked with 4 families following a short path of Family Group Decision Making with a procedure created by the staff of the Family Center.

The FGDM, according to the principle "nothing about us, without us", had a dual aim:

1. Make a collaborative contribution to 4 families treated by Social Services;
2. Test, with the operators of Social Services, the real effectiveness of an intervention according to the logic of cooperation, dialogue and respect.

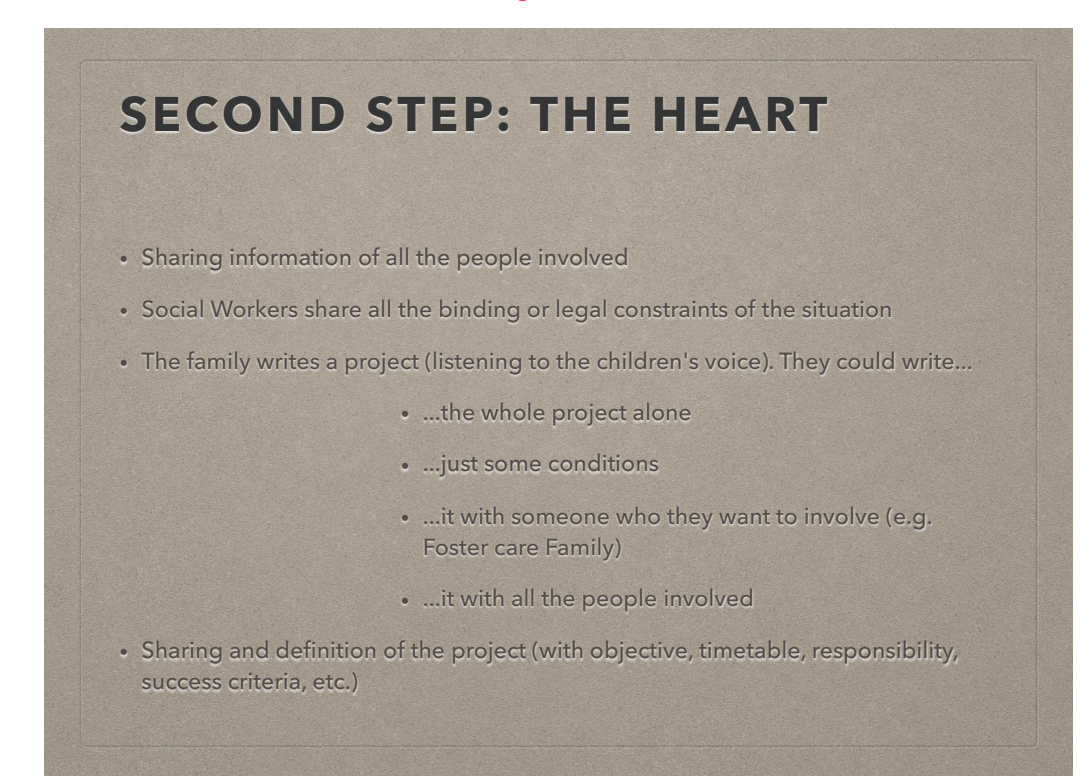
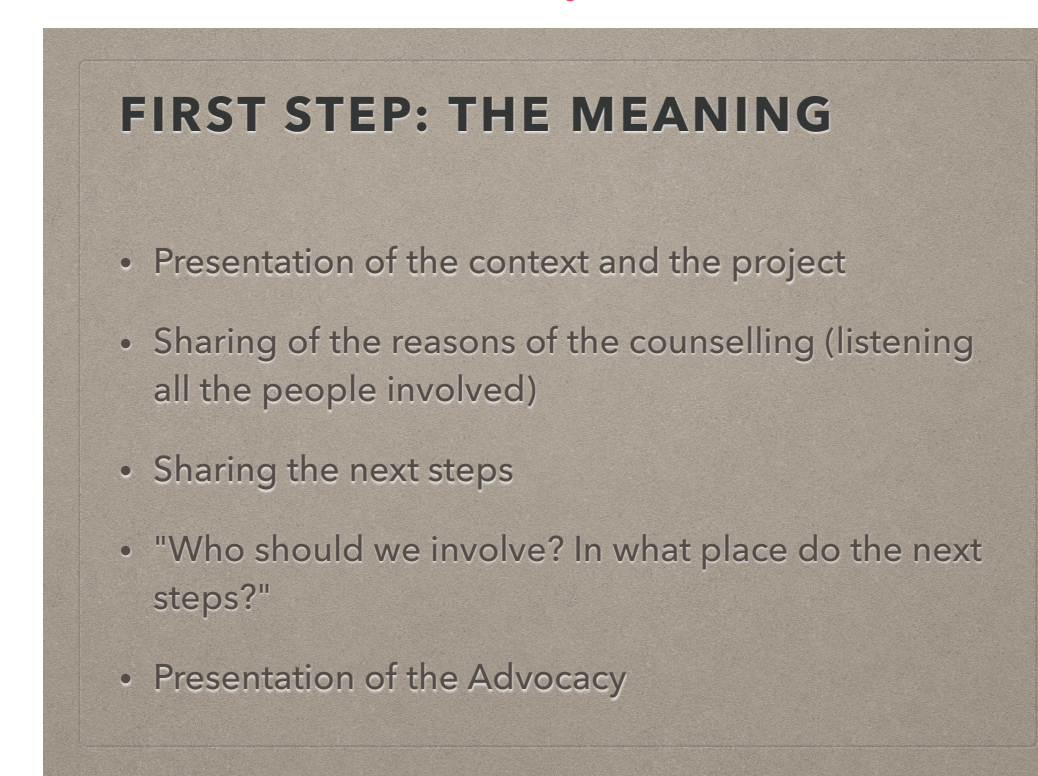
Six months after the end of the project, we gathered the feedback of the operators involved, with a semi-structured interview.

The training

The training consisted of 6 lessons of 4 hours each, with the following schedule:

1. Mauro Piccinin: “From Collaborative Premises to Collaborative Practices”
2. Marco Bianciardi: “The Epistemological Premises of the Collaborative Practices”
3. Francesca Maci: “Working with Families in Child Protection Services: the Family Group Conference experience”
4. Jimmy Ciliberto: “Working Dialogically: from Open Dialogue to Dialogue on the Future. A Finnish Experience”
5. Paola Turroni: “Advocacy in Child Protection Services”
6. Mauro Piccinin: “Collaborative Practice in our Jurisdiction: the project”

Our Collaborative Practice



We built a procedure of Family Group Decision Making with the aim to support Families and Social Workers to find different ways to cooperate for the good of their children.

The premises that lead us in this work were (and, surely, are):

- A “blind faith” in people and, first off all, in relationships;
- A “nothing about us, without us” position;
- A “not knowing” position;
- An idea of dignity for all people involved

Therefore we could just be counsellors of a “stuck relationship” between professionals and families.

Results... ask me!!!!

