Symposium discussion summaries

Practical takeaways for attendees and teams

The 2026 Nashville Symposium brought leaders together to examine how community-based child welfare systems can become more stable, responsive, and connected to the lives of children and families. This collection brings those discussions back to the work of teams, boards, and community partners.

What is included

18 LX rounds across 9 topics, 6 affinity-group discussions, 2 panels, and the keynote. The 18 summary chapters preserve the distinct morning and afternoon LX discussions while making the themes easy to use together.

Use the summaries with your team

- Choose the discussion most relevant to a current challenge. Read the takeaways before selecting a next step.
- Use the practical actions and team questions to define one change you could test locally.
- Return to the discussion with what changed, what it required, and what remains uncertain.

Carrying the work into CY2027

Each chapter connects the discussion with potential CY2027 Learning Exchange (LX) and affinity-group topics. These connections offer a way to continue learning together. They are proposed topics, not a confirmed schedule or commitments made by participants.

About this edition

These summaries draw on the available session records and the final keynote presentation. Jay Pruett's round is represented by a written summary. The sustaining-CBC panel record begins mid-discussion. Source notes identify these coverage limits; discussion themes are paraphrased without attributing uncertain remarks to individual participants.

Published October 27, 2026

NATIONAL CENTER
For Community-Based Child Welfare

Find a discussion

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LEARNING EXCHANGE / LX01

From system strain to system stability

Recognize pressure early, preserve relationships, and match capacity to the needs of children and families.

Morning discussion | Terri Balliet

The morning discussion examined stability across the agency, contract, and wider service system. Participants described the need for local flexibility as conditions change, including workforce shortages, shifts in acuity, and gaps between child welfare, behavioral health, juvenile justice, and developmental services. Public-to-nonprofit transitions raised practical concerns about staff continuity, benefits, and the relationships needed to keep services operating. A recurring distinction was whether a barrier could be addressed by one agency or required a different contract or cross-system response.

Afternoon discussion | Tara Roussett

The afternoon group focused on early warning signs and the consequences of communication breaking down. Participants connected staff culture, turnover, and confidence in leadership with system stability. They distinguished available beds from capacity that can meet a particular child's needs. Trust with providers, courts, and state partners needs attention before a crisis. Honest transition communication, clear follow-through, and flexible resources were discussed as supports for maintaining continuity.

Put the learning to work

- Review one service pressure with operations, finance, and quality staff. Separate an agency-controlled issue from a contract or cross-system barrier.
- Select a small set of early signals, such as vacancy trends, delayed access, placement mismatch, or unresolved partner concerns. Give each an owner and escalation route.
- Walk through a potential transition from the family's perspective, including continuity of staff, information, and services.

Questions for your team

Where does information stop moving when pressure rises? Does our capacity picture show the needs we can actually meet?

Proposed CY2027 connection

January LX on funding and stability; Q1 COO/CPO and CEO discussions; Q4 Chicago review of continuity and resilience.

Source and coverage: Morning and afternoon automatic transcripts. Group-level synthesis; examples are not a shared performance benchmark.

Funding that reflects the system families need

Build a funding picture that includes readiness, complexity, and continuity as well as service volume.

Morning discussion | David DeStefano

Participants approached adequacy through the quality and capacity a system needs, rather than historical spending alone. They discussed compensation, training, coverage, transportation, insurance, compliance, implementation, and the cost of supporting kinship families. Maintaining readiness has a cost even when census changes. The group also examined unfunded expectations and the risk of judging a funding model only by short-term savings or service counts.

Afternoon discussion | Mike Bryant

The afternoon discussion connected the financial health of providers with the stability of the whole network. Geography, service availability, and changing needs complicate simple comparisons between rates or agencies. Participants considered ways to respond when assumptions change, including funding floors, reserves, adjustment mechanisms, and shared-risk arrangements. They raised the problem of sustaining useful capacity when prevention succeeds and service volume declines. Philanthropy was discussed as a resource with limits, rather than a dependable answer to recurring operating gaps.

Put the learning to work

- Create a cost-and-capacity worksheet that distinguishes fixed readiness costs, variable service costs, and costs associated with higher needs.
- Test a scenario with fewer children served but more intensive needs. Identify what changes financially and what capacity must remain.
- Document which changes should trigger a funding conversation, who can authorize an adjustment, and what evidence would support it.

Questions for your team

Which necessary cost is least visible in our current funding explanation? Would our funding arrangement preserve capacity if prevention reduces volume?

Proposed CY2027 connection

January LX; CFO Q1 cost and cash-flow review, Q2 adjustment scenarios, and Q3 evidence for sustainable capacity.

Source and coverage: Supplied morning transcript and afternoon automatic transcript. Funding mechanisms are discussion options, not agreed contract terms.

LEARNING EXCHANGE / LX03

Sustainable partnerships with managed care organizations

Start with an access gap, connect executive relationships to operational work, and make the financial proposition explicit.

Morning discussion | Christy Howard

Participants described effective managed care organization (MCO) partnerships as a shared understanding of population needs, service gaps, and each partner's contribution. Executive relationships need to connect with credentialing, claims, coordination, and escalation. CBC agencies contribute family relationships and knowledge of local capacity. The discussion highlighted different payer incentives and time horizons: an improvement may benefit a payer other than the one funding it. Views on pilots differed. A limited start can support learning, while temporary funding can leave providers exposed to staffing, capital, and continuity risks.

Afternoon discussion | Brittany McAllister

The afternoon group emphasized readiness and a clear value proposition. Participants discussed connecting a specific service gap with a payer's priorities while understanding credentialing, documentation, claims, and audit requirements. Shared administrative supports, useful data, and operational problem-solving were recurring themes. The group also considered friction between service needs, court expectations, and coverage decisions, and the importance of bringing practical experience into state procurement and partnership conversations.

Put the learning to work

- Draft a one-page partnership concept: population, access gap, each partner's role, full cost, intended benefit, and the payer or system receiving that benefit.
- Map the route from referral and credentialing to service delivery and payment. Identify one delay and its escalation owner.
- Before proposing a pilot, state how continuation, funding changes, and an orderly end would be handled.

Questions for your team

Can we explain both the family benefit and the business proposition? Which operational barrier is undermining an otherwise strong executive relationship?

Proposed CY2027 connection

February LX; coordinated CFO, COO/CPO, CQO, and CIO/CTO work on costs, access, workflow, and data responsibilities.

Source and coverage: Complete Christy Howard transcript added 25 October; supplied Brittany McAllister transcript. Reported service examples are not independently evaluated results.

LEARNING EXCHANGE / LX04

Useful AI and technology for everyday work

Choose a real workflow problem, define the human responsibility, and evaluate both time and quality.

Morning discussion | Chip Battoe

The morning conversation explored documentation, transcription, policy search, and analysis as possible uses of AI. Participants debated the strengths and limitations of both human and automated judgment. A recurring concern was that incomplete or biased records can produce misleading summaries, especially when family strengths and caregiver perspectives are absent. Meaningful review, data handling, and clarity about permitted tools were important conditions for use. The discussion did not establish that an AI recommendation should substitute for accountable professional judgment.

Afternoon discussion | George Persekian

The afternoon group connected adoption with governance and practical staff support. Participants shared experiences with research, proposals, training, and reporting, while also describing errors and added information in generated output. They discussed introducing tools gradually, building policies, and learning from peers further along in implementation. Understanding the task and the people doing it came before selecting a product. Frontline and lived-experience perspectives were relevant to deciding whether a change actually improves the work.

Put the learning to work

- Choose one bounded administrative workflow and describe the current steps, burden, and quality concerns.
- Write a pilot charter covering permitted information, approval, review responsibility, error checks, and conditions for stopping or revising the test.
- Compare time, rework, accuracy, and staff experience before and during the pilot. Record limitations alongside benefits.

Questions for your team

What would a reviewer need to notice, correct, or reject? Could the tool reproduce a gap or bias already present in the source record?

Proposed CY2027 connection

April LX; CIO/CTO workflow and governance work with CQO review of definitions, quality, and evidence.

Source and coverage: Morning automatic transcript and supplied afternoon transcript. No product endorsement or verified effectiveness claim is implied.

Connecting federal initiatives to local transformation

Translate broad priorities into specific decisions about roles, data, services, and implementation.

Morning discussion | Carol Self

Participants discussed how CBC organizations can contribute to state system design and improvement, including conversations about the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) and A Home for Every Child. They distinguished state oversight from local operations and asked for earlier involvement in decisions that shape services. Prevention, rural capacity, data, and the practical effects of implementation were recurring concerns. A useful next step was to separate federal requirements, state choices, and contract provisions so partners can address the right decision maker.

Afternoon discussion | Thea Ramirez

The afternoon discussion emphasized the difference between being consulted and having a meaningful role in design. Participants raised questions about Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) changes, access to information, and the ability to preserve useful local practices. They connected data and technology decisions with prevention, rates, innovation, and service capacity. The conversation also highlighted that having a home available is only one part of meeting a child's needs; families need appropriate supports and a workable service pathway.

Put the learning to work

- Choose one initiative and list the operational decisions it creates, including the effect on families, staff, information, and providers.
- Maintain a question log that distinguishes a verified requirement from a local interpretation or unresolved issue.
- Identify the decision owner, where CBC and family input enters, and what information must remain available during implementation.

Questions for your team

At what point can local experience still change the design? Which dependency could interrupt services if it is missed?

Proposed CY2027 connection

May LX; State/Federal Government quarterly work, linked with CIO/CTO and CQO implementation questions.

Source and coverage: Morning automatic transcript and supplied afternoon transcript. This is a record of discussion themes, not a statement of current federal requirements.

Partnership and advocacy with visible follow-through

Connect shared barriers, credible evidence, and relationships to a specific next action.

Morning discussion | Jay Pruett

The available written summary emphasized prevention access, financing, and the service pathways that support families before and after a crisis. It identified peer, parent, kinship, father, and aftercare supports, along with workforce barriers. Shared outcome and cost evidence can help partners explain what is needed. Transition continuity was another theme, including coordination among the state, incoming and outgoing organizations, and the workforce. These points reflect the supplied written summary; the recording was not available for this edition.

Afternoon discussion | Lila Cavasos

Participants wanted CBC organizations involved in state, legislative, community, and provider conversations before decisions are settled. They connected advocacy with staff understanding, local relationships, and credible evidence. Family and agency stories were seen as stronger when paired with useful results and independent validation. Suggested follow-up included a short list of recurring barriers, focused member workgroups, agency spotlights, peer visits, and easier access to shared resources. The group asked how exchanges would lead to practical action and a more coherent national message.

Put the learning to work

- Describe one shared barrier in plain language, including its effect on families and the decision needed to address it.
- Pair a respectful example with evidence that can be supported. State what remains uncertain or varies by state.
- Create a short priority register with the issue, intended decision maker, proposed owner, next step, and review date.

Questions for your team

Which problem is common enough to address together? What useful result should members see after the next conversation?

Proposed CY2027 connection

May and August LX; State/Federal Government and communications affinity work; September evidence briefs.

Source and coverage: Morning: written summary only. Afternoon: automatic transcript. Workgroups and shared projects were suggestions, not established commitments.

A clear CBC identity with room for local differences

Explain community responsibility, public accountability, and the difference families experience.

Morning discussion | Jennifer Justice

The morning group explored how a shared national explanation could strengthen local work without obscuring local identity. Participants described confusion about whether a CBC organization is the state or an additional administrative layer. They wanted language that explains local responsibility, partnership, and the experience of children and families. Data, stories, and repeated use of a common explanation were discussed together. Suggested tools included adaptable materials, a provider-facing one-pager, and a national branding workgroup; the discussion did not establish that workgroup.

Afternoon discussion | Phil Scarpelli

The afternoon conversation emphasized accountability as well as community participation. Participants considered how to explain the problem, the CBC role, who remains responsible, and how outcomes will be judged. Different audiences need different invitations: neighbors, donors, policymakers, providers, and media. Strengths-oriented stories and family perspectives can convey purpose without casting agencies as rescuers. The group also examined how to describe a national movement honestly when structures and experience differ across states.

Put the learning to work

- Draft a short explanation of the state, CBC organization, provider network, and community roles.
- Pair one supportable result with a respectful story and a clear invitation suited to a particular audience.
- Test the explanation with someone outside the field. Ask what they understood about responsibility and how they could help.

Questions for your team

Does the message explain accountability as clearly as purpose? Which statement is shared across the network, and which needs local context?

Proposed CY2027 connection

August LX; CDO/Business Development and Communications Q1-Q3 message development and testing.

Source and coverage: Morning and afternoon automatic transcripts.

Peer learning that supports improvement and risk management

Make it easier to ask for help, discuss what went wrong, and reuse a practical lesson.

Morning discussion | Janet Braker

Participants wanted peer learning that is brief, useful, and easy to enter. Examples included provider communication, shared templates, joint problem-solving, and a clearer collective explanation of operational issues. Competition and fear of punitive responses can inhibit candor. The group considered safety, financial, reputational, and implementation risks while emphasizing learning rather than blame. Requested formats included short coffee chats, one-page examples, and an easier way to locate a willing peer with relevant experience.

Afternoon discussion | Erin Keltner

The afternoon group examined learning at frontline, supervisory, executive, and cross-agency levels. Time, competing demands, and distrust were recurring barriers. Participants described proposal debriefs, difficult-case reviews, family-finding discussions, supervisor lunch-and-learns, and reflection after incidents. Leaders build trust when they acknowledge mistakes and make visible changes after feedback. Mentoring also requires support: repeatedly relying on experienced staff without adjusting their workload can create strain. Direct peer contact and consistent follow-through were discussed as ways to sustain trust during difficult periods.

Put the learning to work

- Use a short case brief: the problem, context, what was tried, what changed, limitations, and one question for peers.
- Open with clear expectations for non-attribution and respectful discussion, and close by naming a change to test.
- Give mentoring and debrief work a realistic place in the workload. Check whether participants can see what changed after feedback.

Questions for your team

What makes people hesitate to ask for help early? Which learning routine produces a visible improvement rather than another meeting?

Proposed CY2027 connection

July LX; HR, CEO, COO/CPO, and CQO quarterly work; November proposed learning follow-through session.

Source and coverage: Morning automatic transcript and complete Erin Keltner transcript added 25 October. Reported practices are not new group commitments.

Leadership development that lasts

Support new leaders, transfer critical knowledge, and build development into ordinary work.

Morning discussion | Cecilia Haag

Participants described leadership as an ongoing practice of listening, transparency, and shared responsibility. Promotion alone does not provide the skills or support a new supervisor needs. Coaching, stretch assignments, feedback, and learning alongside experienced leaders were practical approaches. The group connected supervisory workload, difficult conversations, and well-being with retention and culture. Succession should develop a range of capable people, while allowing strong practitioners to grow without assuming that management is their only path.

Afternoon discussion | Melissa Briggs

The afternoon discussion focused on making development part of day-to-day organizational practice. Clear expectations, delegation, candid feedback, and staff or peer input can help identify what a role requires. Participants supported growth even when a person's next opportunity might be elsewhere. Succession extends beyond the CEO: playbooks, cross-training, and deliberate transitions reduce dependence on one person's knowledge. They also considered affordable learning practices, including peer discussion, shared resources, and internally led development.

Put the learning to work

- Choose one critical role and document responsibilities, decisions, relationships, and knowledge that another person would need.
- Build a 90-day development plan around a specific skill, supported practice, feedback, and protected time.
- Ask a new supervisor what support is missing, then adjust expectations or workload so development is feasible.

Questions for your team

Which role would be hardest to cover tomorrow? How do we know a development activity changes leadership practice?

Proposed CY2027 connection

June LX; HR and CEO quarterly progression; December proposed review of leadership continuity and next-year priorities.

Source and coverage: Morning and afternoon automatic transcripts. Suggested development structures were not adopted as a shared program.

Chief executive leaders

Prepare the board and leadership team for continuity while building a credible picture of organizational resilience.

Nadereh Salim

CEOs connected stability with workforce and insurance pressures, board readiness, succession, and effective policy relationships. The experiences shared were agency-specific, rather than a common compensation, insurance, or financial benchmark.

Succession requires clarity about the future role, board involvement, development opportunities, and consideration of internal and external candidates. Giving prospective leaders meaningful operating responsibility can reveal both strengths and support needs.

Participants explored collaboration, shared services, mergers, and multi-state structures as possible ways to build capacity while preserving local identity and accountability. They also wanted more usable evidence of CBC results, advocacy and navigation skills, peer visits, and board learning.

Put the learning to work

- Review the future CEO role with the board, including the capabilities the organization will need next.
- Identify one continuity risk and a practical way to reduce dependence on a single person or relationship.
- Choose one result the organization can explain clearly, including context, limitations, and the community contribution.

Questions for your team

What evidence would help our board make a sound transition decision? Which capability might be strengthened through a trusted peer relationship?

Proposed CY2027 connection

Q1 succession and board readiness; Q2 resilience and partnership options; Q3 evidence and advocacy; Q4 Chicago decisions for the next cycle.

Source and coverage: Automatic transcript of the CEO affinity discussion. Facilitator: Nadereh Salim.

Operations and program executives

Make pathways work across family support, placement, treatment, and discharge.

Valerie Holmes

The group discussed meaningful youth participation in policy, interviews, and court-related processes, along with practical supports for kinship families. Cross-county studies, visits, licensing, and treatment access can complicate a family's path through services.

Children and youth with complex needs exposed gaps between hospitals, psychiatric care, developmental services, and available placements. Participants considered assessment, stabilization, and discharge planning together, with attention to what must be ready before a transition.

Missing referral information, duplicate oversight, and court expectations created additional operational work. Participants also explored learning from prevention approaches in other states while recognizing that funding, authority, and local capacity differ.

Put the learning to work

- Map one referral-to-discharge pathway and identify where a child or family waits, repeats information, or loses continuity.
- Agree on the essential referral information and the person responsible for resolving a missing handoff.
- Invite appropriate youth or caregiver input into the redesign and specify how the feedback will change the process.

Questions for your team

Who owns the next step when several systems are involved? What support must be in place for a transition to hold?

Proposed CY2027 connection

March LX on stable care and complex needs; Q1 pathway definition, Q2 handoff test, Q3 access and continuity review, Q4 Chicago case clinic.

Source and coverage: Automatic transcript of the COO/CPO affinity discussion. Facilitator: Valerie Holmes.

Financial and administrative executives

Connect service changes, accurate information, and funding timing to the capacity the organization must sustain.

Emily Kliethermes

Finance leaders compared the practical effects of late budgets, allocation timing, payment arrangements, and placement costs. Differences in contract scope and state structures make simple rate comparisons unreliable. Historical funding patterns may not reflect current needs.

Participants described the importance of getting placement and service changes to finance accurately and promptly. Clear ownership of exceptions, reconciliation, and unresolved payment issues supports both the provider relationship and the organization's financial picture.

The discussion returned to a recurring tension: lower census does not necessarily mean lower cost when children need more intensive support or capacity must remain available. Short-term grants and other time-limited funding also raised questions about continuity once the funding ends.

Put the learning to work

- Map the delay from service activity to accurate financial information and payment; identify the main exception and its owner.
- Build a scenario that separates census, acuity, fixed capacity, and payment timing.
- For one time-limited service, state the ongoing cost, continuation decision, and funding question before the end date approaches.

Questions for your team

Which operational change reaches finance too late? What must remain available even when volume falls?

Proposed CY2027 connection

January and February LX; Q1 cost and cash-flow baseline, Q2 workflow or funding scenario, Q3 sustainability brief, Q4 Chicago comparison.

Source and coverage: Automatic transcript of the CFO affinity discussion. Facilitator: Emily Kliethermes. No uniform rate or reserve target was agreed.

AFFINITY GROUP / AG-CAO

Technology, data, and quality executives

Make information usable and improvement collaborative across systems and professional roles.

Stacy Peacock and Brandy Tofel

Participants described duplicate entry, limited integration, inconsistent definitions, and delays in data access. The operational burden sits with staff and providers, while the consequences affect reporting, service coordination, and the ability to act on a problem.

The group connected AI and technology governance with the people using the systems and the meaning of the data. Data literacy, mentoring, and cross-functional relationships were important alongside technical tools. A shared directory and state comparisons were discussed as ways to make peer knowledge more accessible.

Quality improvement was framed as an opportunity for learning and earlier action. Participants wanted to distinguish proactive improvement from a purely punitive response to findings, with a clearer path from information to a practical change.

Put the learning to work

- Choose one high-burden data journey and identify duplicate entry, disputed definitions, and delayed access.
- Agree on one measure's definition, owner, use, and limits before comparing results.
- Pair a quality lead with an operational and technical colleague to test one improvement and review what users experienced.

Questions for your team

Can two teams use the same measure and reach the same interpretation? Does our review process help people improve the work?

Proposed CY2027 connection

April LX; separate CY2027 CQO and CIO/CTO tracks with shared cases and checkpoints. CAO participants can select the track that fits their responsibilities.

Source and coverage: Automatic transcript of the combined CAO/CIO/CQO affinity discussion. The separate CQO and CIO/CTO tracks are a proposed 2027 structure.

AFFINITY GROUP / AG-CDO

Development, communications, and strategy leaders

Build understanding before a crisis and make the community's role visible.

Alice-Lydia Bird

Participants described the difficulty of explaining CBC, state responsibilities, and provider roles to audiences who may assume government funding covers every need. Clear language should connect resources with the experience of children, families, kin, and the workforce.

Relationships with schools, courts, community advocates, media, and other partners need regular attention. The discussion connected everyday storytelling with crisis readiness, emphasizing transparent communication and avoiding claims that oversell success.

The group considered adaptable messages, shared materials, diversified funding, and the capacity required to communicate consistently. Members valued a peer community with light preparation and practical examples that could be adapted to local audiences.

Put the learning to work

- Prepare a plain-language explanation of roles and one specific invitation for a community audience.
- Review a story for dignity, family perspective, supportable evidence, and the permissions needed for its intended use.
- Test a short response process for a difficult issue: who verifies information, who responds, and how partners receive updates.

Questions for your team

What does the audience misunderstand about the resources and relationships families need? Have we built the relationship before asking for support?

Proposed CY2027 connection

August LX; Q1 shared explanation, Q2 audience test and response practice, Q3 evidence-backed message, Q4 Chicago resource exchange.

Source and coverage: Automatic transcript of the CDO/Business Development affinity discussion. Facilitator: Alice-Lydia Bird.

AFFINITY GROUP / AG-GOV

State and federal government partners

Use predictable relationships and clear decision routes to resolve implementation barriers.

Michelle Cunningham

The discussion covered kinship, family finding, older youth, long stays, and the difficulty of meeting complex needs. Participants considered revisiting relationships even when a relative or other important person cannot provide a placement. A connection may still matter to a child's support network.

State and CBC partners described the value of regular communication and established relationships. Courts, behavioral health providers, hospitals, and child welfare organizations may approach the same situation with different responsibilities and expectations.

Participants discussed escalation, reporting, implementation questions, and opportunities to learn across states. The useful common ground was a more specific account of the barrier, the decision needed, and the partner with authority to address it.

Put the learning to work

- Document one cross-system barrier without identifying a child or family, including the operational effect and the unresolved decision.
- Map the responsible partners and the route for routine questions and urgent escalation.
- Identify one state-to-state comparison that could inform a local decision, recording the differences that limit direct transfer.

Questions for your team

Which relationship can be strengthened before the next difficult case? Where does a useful family connection disappear from our process?

Proposed CY2027 connection

March and May LX; quarterly work from barrier definition to joint test, findings, and Chicago next steps.

Source and coverage: Supplied transcript of the State and Federal Government affinity discussion. Facilitator: Michelle Cunningham.

National Perspectives

Turn broad policy and financing conversations into specific questions about access, accountability, and family experience.

Moderated by Will Jones

The panel brought national policy, financing, data, and community perspectives into the same conversation. Across different viewpoints, a practical theme emerged: broad priorities become useful when they are connected to a particular service gap, partner, decision, and intended result.

Discussion of Medicaid and other resources highlighted the distance that can exist between a funding arrangement and the supports families need. Participants also examined organizational sustainability and the risks that contracts and implementation place on community providers.

The conversation emphasized useful information and outcomes beyond compliance alone. Important knowledge can remain buried in narrative records or disconnected systems. Better information is most useful when it helps partners understand a need, change a response, and explain the result.

The panel also returned to community and family supports and the need to explain CBC plainly. Policymakers and community members cannot be assumed to understand the model, the services involved, or the roles of different organizations.

Put the learning to work

- Translate one policy priority into an operational question: whose need, which gap, which partner, and what decision?
- Pair an access or outcome measure with the family experience it is intended to represent.
- Prepare a concise explanation of the CBC role and what a public or community partner can do next.

Questions for your team

What would change for a family if this priority were implemented well? Which decision needs better evidence or a different partner at the table?

Proposed CY2027 connection

February and May LX; State/Federal Government, CFO, and CQO discussions; September evidence synthesis.

Source and coverage: Transcript excerpt from the opening through 90:33. Later incidental conversation excluded. Themes are synthesized across the panel without attributing uncertain speaker labels.

PANEL / PANEL-02

Lessons in Sustaining CBC

Sustaining a system requires continuing change management, strong relationships, and resources that support the work.

Moderated by Wayne Carson

In the available portion of the discussion, panelists described implementation as continuing change management. The work extends beyond managing a contract to supporting staff, partners, and communities through changes in roles and expectations.

Relationships with boards, courts, state partners, staff, and provider networks were central. Trust needs maintenance as leaders change and new pressures emerge. Participants discussed provider accountability alongside support, including training, accessible contacts, and regular opportunities for leaders to work through problems.

Infrastructure and cash flow were connected with the ability to sustain services and invest in innovation. Flexibility has practical value when an organization can adapt its response to local needs and support prevention, diversion, and family stability.

The panel also emphasized community involvement and lived experience. Those relationships can help identify what is useful, build confidence, and keep the focus on children and families as the system evolves.

Put the learning to work

- Review the relationships on which continuity depends, including a backup contact and routine communication for each.
- Select one provider-support practice that makes accountability more workable, such as a clear contact or shared problem-solving meeting.
- Identify the infrastructure or funding condition needed to sustain a promising prevention or diversion approach.

Questions for your team

Which relationship or capability becomes fragile during leadership turnover? What does the provider network need to deliver on the expectations we set?

Proposed CY2027 connection

January and September LX; CEO and COO/CPO quarterly work; October Chicago discussion of what sustained improvement.

Source and coverage: Partial transcript beginning mid-discussion and ending at the 63:06 closing applause. The missing opening is not reconstructed; the following showcase is excluded.

KEYNOTE / KEYNOTE

No One Is Saved Alone

Ubuntu, community-based care, and the people who refuse to let go.

Merideth Rose

Merideth Rose's keynote placed lived experience at the center of the Symposium's conversation about systems. Through her account of community, care, and belonging, she challenged leaders to see a whole person beyond a label, record, or point-in-time assessment.

The keynote held two responsibilities together: providing responsive care when children cannot safely remain at home, and building the community supports that can prevent a crisis or sustain healing beyond formal services. Emergency intervention and lasting connection serve different needs.

A recurring theme was the influence of people who remain present. Professional help matters, and so do the family members, neighbors, educators, and other community members who see possibility, open doors, and continue the relationship. Belonging is an experience to understand, not simply a service to count.

For leaders, the keynote offered a way to examine the everyday choices embedded in systems: the language used about families, the assumptions carried into decisions, and whether people with lived experience can meaningfully shape the work. The emphasis was on dignity, possibility, and community responsibility.

Put the learning to work

- Review a routine form or narrative for language that obscures strengths, relationships, or the person's own perspective.
- Ask how a service transition preserves the relationships that matter to the child and family.
- Invite lived-experience input into one design decision and explain how that input affected the result.

Questions for your team

Does our process help us understand the whole person? Who will still be connected when the formal service ends?

Proposed CY2027 connection

A continuing lens for every CY2027 session, particularly March care pathways, August storytelling, and September sustainability.

Source and coverage: Keynote transcript excerpt 0:09-49:26 and final presentation deck. Personal history is summarized without reproducing sensitive details.

From discussion to a useful next step

Use this short structure in a team meeting or peer exchange. Keep the scope small enough to learn something before the next discussion.

The question

What specific experience, delay, burden, or result are we trying to understand or improve?

The context

Who is affected, which partners are involved, and what local conditions matter?

The change

What will we try, who is willing to lead it, and when will we review it?

The evidence

What can we observe before and after, and whose experience should we hear?

The learning

What changed, what did it require, what remains uncertain, and what might another team adapt?

Source and use notes

Sources include the 2026 Nashville Symposium session transcripts and written summaries, the complete Christy Howard and Erin Keltner session records, and the final keynote presentation and event program.

This guide does not reproduce raw participant remarks, identifying case details, or private personnel examples. Discussion of laws, coverage, clinical services, products, costs, or results is not an independent verification of those claims. The recommended actions and CY2027 connections are editorial synthesis for local consideration. They are not a record of agreed owners, deadlines, or participant consensus.

Coverage limits are stated with each relevant chapter. Session examples reflect the experiences shared by contributors and may depend on local circumstances.