



Standards Development Principles and Process

When COA's Division of Standards Development and Performance Measurement conducts a comprehensive review of the standards, staff members are aided by the Standards Committee of the Board of Trustees, [Standards Advisory Panels](#), and comments and suggestions from the representatives of accredited organizations and Peer Reviewers. As part of the standards development process, COA staff conduct literature reviews to ensure that the standards support practices that are evidence-based and outcomes-oriented. Above all, COA is dedicated to strengthening on an on-going basis the relevance of the standards for both accredited organizations and the people they serve.

Our Interest in Capacity Building

We believe that **organizational capacity** and **quality services and supports** matter in **improving child, youth, individual, and family outcomes**. We believe building **strong** organizations and **effective** service delivery matters. Thus, to **achieve favorable outcomes**, we believe it is essential to support:

- resource management practices related to organizational performance, and
- service interventions associated with positive results.

Guiding Principles for Standards Development

COA has developed *Guiding Principles* to provide a framework for standards development consistent with *Our Interest in Capacity Building*. Developed in collaboration with COA's Standards Advisory Panels, the *Guiding Principles* represent strong expert consensus on quality practices in organizational leadership and service delivery. Principle statements and resources consulted in the development of the *Guiding Principles* are listed below.

Principles for Effective Leadership

Accountable: The organization holds itself answerable to the public and maintains internal controls. Strategic goals are translated into operational objectives, and volunteers, staff, and the governing body are held responsible for their performance. The organization adheres to strict ethical practice guidelines.

Active in Advocacy: The organization goes beyond its direct service role and seeks, through its governing body, staff, and clients, to influence and promote social policies and regulations within and beyond the community that support the health and safety of the community and its members.

Collaborative: Personnel and volunteers collaborate to perform concerted action across program and division lines. Organizational systems are used to achieve goals and do not hinder change or result in "silos."

Diverse: The organization's volunteers, staff, and governing body are representative of the community and persons served, and the organization values individual and cultural diversity.

Informed: The organization promotes open dialogue and invites input from staff, volunteers, clients, and the community. Information is clearly and rapidly shared throughout the organization.

Mission and Vision Driven: A clearly articulated mission provides the governing body, staff, and volunteers with a common purpose.

Outcomes and Results Oriented: Continual improvement is a permanent objective that promotes high

quality decision-making and service delivery, and recognizes effective practices. The organization regularly sets goals, monitors performance, and uses evidence to identify opportunities for improvement and change.

Partnered with the Community: As an active member of the community, the organization partners with other organizations, volunteers, and clients to develop and pool resources, share information, and establish mutually-beneficial relationships.

[Go to References for the Leadership Principles](#)

Principles for Effective Practice

Accessible: Individuals and families can obtain services where and when they need them.

Appropriate: Individuals and families receive services that are a good fit for their circumstances. Services are provided in the least intrusive or restrictive and most normalized setting to support individual or family self-determination and community connections.

Community-based: Practice strengthens community connections, and the community is seen as an important source of support. Natural networks of informal support and traditional healing practices are used whenever relevant and possible.

Coordinated: Program participants receive integrated and coordinated supports, resources and services, and transitions are planned across systems to provide continuity of care.

Culturally Competent: Practice reflects a respect and appreciation for cultural and ethnic diversity.

Evidence-based: Service approaches are based on the best available evidence for effective practice.

Individualized: Services respond to the unique needs of the individual or family and are adjusted to reflect changing conditions.

Outcomes-oriented: Service outcomes are measured and analyzed to continuously improve service effectiveness.

Provided by a Skilled and Supported Workforce: Personnel possess the competencies relevant to their job, and the organization provides a comprehensive training program, ongoing professional development opportunities, supervision, and manageable caseloads.

Respectful of Individual Rights: Practice reflects a profound respect for personal dignity, confidentiality, and privacy.

Strengths-based: Practice promotes the strengths and resources of individuals, families, and communities, and enables individuals to achieve maximum independence.

Supportive of Partnership: Individuals and families participate in all stages of service planning and delivery, and are primary decision-makers.

[Go to References for the Practice Principles](#)

References for the Leadership Principles

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development *Governance Principles*, available online at: www.ascd.org.

Building Capacity in Nonprofit Organizations, edited by De Vita and Fleming, published by the Urban Institute, available online at: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/building_capacity.PDF.

Boehringer Ingelheim's *Leadership Principles*, available online at: http://www.boehringer-ingelheim.ca/culture/vision_leader.asp.

Catholic Charities USA, Code of Ethics and Vision 2001 Statement

Centerpoint for Leaders *Organizational Effectiveness Survey*, available online at: www.centerpointforleaders.org/effectiveness.html.

How and Why Nonprofits Use Outcome Information: Findings from a Symposium, published by the Urban Institute and available online at: <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=310464>.

International Organization for Standardization *Quality Management Principles* (ISO 9000), available online at: www.iso.ch/iso/en/iso9000-14000/iso9000/qmp.html.

Massachusetts Department of Education: Education Laws and Regulations 603 CMR 35.00: Evaluation of Teachers and Administrators, Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership and Examples of Descriptors, available online at: www.doe.mass.edu.

Management Coaching and Training Center's *Profit-ability Management Principles*, available online at: www.mcts.com/PI-Key-Principles.htm.

"Study Identifies Multiple Strategies and Critical Factors for Integrating Human Services," by Mark Ragan, published in *The Form: Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism* Vol. 6, No. 2 (March 2003).

Getting to Outcomes 2004: Promoting Accountability Through Methods and Tools for Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation by Chinman, Imm, and Wandersman, published by RAND Health and available online at: www.rand.org/publications/TR/TR101.

Basic principles of effective organizations by Simone P. Joyaux (April 2002), available online at: http://www.simonejoyaux.com/resources/pdf_archive_miscellaneous.htm.

References for the Practice Principles

Resolution in Support AACAP/CWLA: Values and Principles for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and Supports for Children in Foster Care available from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges: www.ncjfcj.org

American Association of Children's Residential Centers Philosophy and Values Statement: www.aacrc-dc.org

The Alabama Council for Development Disabilities Mission Statement www.acdd.org

The Administration for Children and Families Mission Statement www.acf.hhs.gov/acf_about.html

The Alliance for Children and Families Community Centered Initiatives: www.alliance1.org/Programs/Cci.htm

American Network of Community Options and Resources "Principles and Standards of Conduct" and "Values": www.ancor.org

Catholic Charities Code of Ethics and Vision 2001 Statement.

The National Policy Center for Children with Special Health Care Needs Conception Framework for Examining Quality in Health Services for Children with Special Health Care Needs
www.jhsph.edu/centers/cshcn/quality_2.html

Child Welfare League of Canada's Strategic Plan (2001) www.cwlc.ca

The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family-centered Practice Section Three of "Rethinking Child Welfare Practice under the Adoptions and Safe Families Act of 1997 – A Resource Guide"
www.cwresource.org

Foster Family-based Treatment Association Mission and definition of treatment foster care:
www.ffa.org/mission.html and www.ffa.org/what_is_tft.html

Lutheran Services in America Mission Policies: www.lutheranservices.org/mission.asp

Massachusetts Department of Mental Health Mission Statement and Guiding Principles
www.state.ma.us/dmh/MainLine/MissionStatement.htm

Public Policy Platform of the National Association for the Mentally Ill

About The National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors:
www.nasadad.org/Connections/about1.htm

National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics: www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp

National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare's Principles for Behavioral Healthcare Delivery

National Council for Adoption Guiding Principles for Adoption Policies and Practices: www.ncfa-usa.org

National Network for Youth Guiding Principles: www.nn4youth.org/mission_guiding_principles.htm

New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Development Disabilities Five Governing Principles
www.omr.state.ny.us

Prevent Child Abuse America 2000 Annual Report, Message from CEO
www.preventchildabuseamerica.org

SAMHSA's Matrix, Mission, and Values Statement www.samhsa.gov/policy/content/policy_main.htm

Stroul and Frieman's System of Care as summarized by the Tennessee Dept. of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities www.state.tn.us/mental/mhs/soc1.html

United Methodist Association of Health and Welfare Ministries Code of Ethics:
www.umassociation.org/Primary_Statements/Code_of_Ethics/code_of_ethics.html