



The Mandatory Reporting Task Force | Meeting 13 Meeting Minutes February 28, 8:00 am-11:00 am Virtual Meeting (Zoom) Facilitators: Trace Faust Members: See Appendix A

Welcome & Approval of Minutes	• Chair Stephanie Villafuerte welcomed the task force and took attendance. She then asked for any edits to the minutes; there were none. Michelle Dossey motioned and Jessica Dotter seconded. The minutes were approved. Stephanie then moved to the meeting recap; there were no edits. Ida Drury motioned and Shawna McGuckin seconded. The recap was approved. Adriana Hartley abstained from both votes due to absence.
Procedure	 Trace Faust gave a shout out to Aletha Jenkins, a new member who is replacing Nicci Surad with Mesa County. Aletha introduced herself; she is an assessment supervisor. Trace outlined the agenda for the day; presentations from task force member Michelle Dossey, as well as presentations from the state of New York and Evident Change. After each discussion there will be time for questions and answers. Trace also explained the additional meetings that were sent; these are to make sure that all of the work gets done. These meetings are all 2 hours. Trace asked if anyone did not get the invites; no one messaged. They displayed the list of meetings on their screen. They also explained the roadmap of the next meetings. March 13: Continued reflection and discussion, compiling elements to include in recommendations. Soon after March 13, task force will be sent draft recommendation approval. Trace explained the future meetings. There are not specific dates assigned yet for these topics. Phase 1
	 Training subcommittee Standardized training for implicit bias (Directive III) Standard training regarding the requirements of the law (Directive V) Training requirements for people applying/renewing professional licenses (Directive XV) Standard training for county departments in determining which reports meet the threshold for assessment (Directive XVII) Reporting Process Subcommittee Definition of "immediately" and timeframes for reporters (Directive VI)





 Whether mandatory reporters have a duty that extends beyond their professional capacity (Directive IX) Reporting process for two or more mandatory reporters who have joint knowledge (Directive XII) Whether the duty to report may be delegated to another (Directive XIII) Whether institutions may develop internal policies regarding mandatory reports (Directive XIV)
■ Phase 2
Specialized Occupations subcommittee
reporters (Directive XIX)Stephanie explained that the specialized occupation subcommittee is about the
 professionals who are mandated reporters but have special considerations like working with sexual assault survivors and domestic violence survivors as well as attorneys. Jessica Dotter asked if the subcommittees can be dual work. Trace said that the challenge is that the subcommittees will be held simultaneously for purposes of momentum. From a process perspective, it is helpful to keep group members consistent but there probably can be opportunities to jump around. Stephanie also said that all of the materials will be available for review and she can connect her with subcommittee members to make sure she has her eyes on both. Trace





	said that this set up is not to exclude anyone but to get moving on progress. They asked for questions and there were none.
Research	• Bryan Kelley gave a summary of the research resource that had previously been shared with the task force. The different topics under consideration were decision tools, consultations, and warmlines. Evident Change was going to speak on decision tools. These are resources developed to help reporters know when they need to report or if there are other options like referring to alternative resources and services. He highlighted their Community Resource Guide dummy tool that people can use to see how it works. He then summarized two examples of consultation options for mandatory reporters, as seen in WI's Dane County and CO's Arapahoe County. These are phone calls that will help reporters decide if a situation should be reported. He then briefly surveyed three warmline programs, as seen in CT, NY and San Diego. These warmline programs can connect families to resources without bringing them through the reporting process. There will also be a conversation about training to make sure reporters know that reporting is not the only option. Bryan said that these are all explained in more detail in the resource he created. To kick things off, he invited Michelle to present briefly about the program in Arapahoe County that was covered in the research resource.
Presentation	 Michelle Dossesy, who is the child and adult protection services manager at Arapahoe County, began her presentation In 2018, she created the community development and prevention program. Her 30 year career focused on the frontlines, on the hotline and in the county intake section. She has done mandatory reporting training for a few decades too. She leveraged this information to think about how to support the community differently. The bottom line was to ensure that the group was not doing preventative work themselves, but enhancing the capacity of the community to support families without making them the default system to do so. The program has two foundations. Ameila Frank Myer's idea of the 'unsystem' influenced one: building families up and supporting them, and providing support to community partners to also do that. The other concept is the importance of connection in the community. This is the opposite of judging families but providing connections. About 60% of the referrals made to the county are screened out or they do not meet the threshold of abuse or neglect. She questioned why people report, including when there is a tragic story, worry about liability, genuine worry for a family, not knowing what is happening at home, lack of capacity to serve, lack of system understanding, lack of connection, and lack of resources. With these things in mind, Michelle created a program to work to keep people out of the system and help communities support families. The goals, mission, and vision were displayed on the screen. The program largely revolved around three primary categories: The "before" category describes when a reporting party has yet to make a report; the goal is to encourage them to support families rather than report. The "during" category is when a referral has been made and





screened out, and action is taken to support those families. The "after" category is post-closure outreach to prevent repeat involvement with the department. On the community development side, they expanded the hotline for a single point of entry for all referrals. They encourage community partners to ask for what they need rather than fit their worries into the bucket of abuse or neglect. Once a referral is made, they assign it to a prevention consultant who engages the community partner who made the referral. They do not usually call families directly. They think it is best for the community partner to do that so they offer coaching and guidance on how to do this. The reporting parties are school employees, mental health professionals, medical professionals and law enforcement. They encourage connections to be made between the reporting party and the family; if the department calls, it disintegrates trust. They also offer multidisciplinary team responses to offer consultation in supporting families.

- Jill Cohen asked how many cases become voluntary cases when families voluntarily elect to have child protection cases. Michelle said that her organization does not service children voluntarily out of the home; her services are for families who are not in the child welfare system at all. This shifts to a proactive response. They also offer education on their resources. The education is about how to engage families and offer trauma informed care, like protective factors as well as adverse childhood experiences. Sometimes people report that families are aggressive, so they help them understand that the behaviors are a result of adverse childhood experiences. Their two-generation lens is important to make sure people thrive. The center of the circle is a shared responsibility to engage families and establish a relationship to offer support. She provided a case example used when training community partners. For some basic insights, community partners have a shared responsibility to engage families and offer support. She stressed the importance of considering ways to support rather than just making a report. This is not to minimize when the situation meets abuse or neglect; the county's service help them understand the difference. DHS cannot be the system to surveil families or solve all social problems. They cannot look into every family's home to make reporters feel better; this is not the department's responsibility. It is much better to help support families and walk alongside them. rather than just giving them a list of resources. It is also important to make sure that the resources are not difficult to obtain. The county seeks to ask families what they need, as they are the experts on themselves not reporting parties. Consultation by the department must be offered to any community partner. As an overview, the program is 6 years old and they have 4.5 years of data. Since the program's inception, they have served almost 6,000 referrals. 63% of these are successfully served. They cannot serve everyone due to bandwidth and a small team. They have to prioritize highest need referrals. There is a statistical difference between those who received the services; they have better outcomes, less permanency cases, less referrals, less cases, and less placement. Trace thanked her and asked for questions.
- Jill Cohen asked how many prevention cases become voluntary cases. Michelle said that her program does not serve those cases. Those get opened up by





	 formal child welfare involvement. They serve families entirely outside of the system. Trace thanked her and asked for more questions. Margaret Ochoa asked to review information on the entry point again. Michelle said that they offer training for community partners and talk with them about resources so that when they call, they can ask for what they need. The call center is open 24/7 365; they do all their own calls. People can call and ask for preventive community resources. Then these calls go to the prevention team to get support. Jessica asked which resources get reached out to and wonders if this list could be distributed to non-mandatory reporters. She also asked about calls from outside of Arapahoe County. Michelle said that her program is small so she targets the top four reporting party types. The bulk of the referrals are from schools. Sometimes families will call and ask for help. They serve anyone who calls but they mainly serve mandatory reporters. They are responsible for Arapahoe county. Roshan Kalantar said that she loves the idea of just one number to call and ask for help with a concern. She asked about people who might be asking for resources, but who actually have a legitimate abuse or neglect case. Michelle said that this happens; they need to assign cases that meet abuse or neglect thresholds. Michelle also said that there is positive feedback that this is helpful. They also offer education about the department to people who are confused by the system. Kathi Wells asked how it is funded. Michelle said that they use child welfare block funds. Trace thanked her.
Presentation	 Bryan then introduced the speaker from Evident Change: Emerson Ives, who is a senior program specialist. Emerson introduced themself. They said that they have experience with almost every aspect of the system, and they have struggled with the lack of options in the system. They also explained their personal experience with the child welfare system. They explained that Evident Change is a social justice nonprofit organization that uses research and data to uncover area's issues and partner with area entities to come up with projects and tools to make systems or practices better. They have a body of work called structured decision making which is a suite of tools that 40 states and eight countries use in their systems. Their four pillars are equity, accuracy, consistency and utility. Their work is used in 3 states in Australia and in Singapore. It is also used in NH, OH, OR, and CA. CA's tools were more binary rather than offering a range of options, which they have since moved away from. NH focused on providing resources for the whole community, not just mandatory reporters. They have a few areas in different stages of using the tools. The community response guide is a web-based decision support tool. It guides professional reporters and concerned citizens about reporting and available





alternative supports. It is designed through a data driven, community-based work group process. It becomes a community intervention through the design process itself.

- Nationally, about 50% of calls to child abuse and neglect hotlines get screened • in. Most calls come from mandatory reports, so focusing on them has a significant impact. Over and under reporting are happening. There are racial disproportionalities that happen at the reporting levels. This is shown through screening data. The current process starts with a concern coupled with a thought process to make a report. The new process being pursued by places like Evident Change is the emergence of a concern, thought process and a decision support tool to reach better outcomes beyond just the decision to report or not report. There is a continuum of concerns around a family. There is a gap between families that do not need intervention and families that require CPS responses and interventions. There is also a service gap where CPS is not the right agency but services are needed. In these situations, everyone is frustrated, families don't get their needs met, reporters don't know what is going on and CPS is flooded with reports. The tool recommends one of three actions: no action, consult, and report. The tool asks 1-5 questions and recommends an action. If the action is to consult, then the tool provides contact information that provides support to the reporter to help them decide if they can function as a supporter. The family can still get resources no matter what. The goals are to design an intervention to support more consistent, accurate and equitable reporting.
- The guide is roughly developed in five stages over two years. It starts with creating a multidisciplinary group to think about the issues and design solutions. This group decides if the tool can collect data or if the tool can be used by many people. Evident Change supports through the implementation and evaluation stages. A typical discovery phase includes administrative data analysis, policy review and analysis, training review and analysis, stakeholder feedback, a prevention services inventory, and more. When testing the tool, results include accuracy and consistency with inter-rater reliability (IRR) testing. This is to see if the tool is statistically helpful. They can also test equity to make sure the tool helps lessen bias. The tool has good buy in since people using it are involved in the development.
- Emerson stressed that this is only one piece of intervention. The purpose of the project is to provide scaffolding with other interventions around the tool like training around prevention services. For example, in NH during the IRR test, people said that they would not follow the guidance the tool provides. So, they needed to figure out what in NH is creating this culture. The attorney general released a memo that says that anyone who uses the tool can count its use as fulfilling their reporting obligation no matter the recommended action. Emerson concluded the presentation.
- Emerson displayed CA's Humboldt County tool. This is one of the first builds and there are notable differences between the new tools. They provided a walkthrough of the tool.
- Trace thanked them for walking folks through it. They opened it up for questions.





- Zane Grant asked if they have worked with states with required training, and if so, how does this look? He also asked about data being called into question in a criminal investigation. Emerson began by answering the second question, stating that it hasn't happened yet but there was a potential that it could interact with the investigation. In answering the first question, Emerson discussed work in CA, which has state mandated reporting training. Trace thanked everyone and asked people to introduce themselves prior to questions.
- Jessica introduced herself. She asked if the tool is more web based or phone based. Emerson said it is web based and the phone based part is the consult calls. Jessica said that her biggest fear is that a sex assault case could be seen as a "he said/she said" situation. She highlighted a need around training for sex assault myths. She also asked about liability when the tool told them not to report but a report actually ended up being needed. Emerson directed her to questions developed specifically around sex abuse; they also explained that these tools increased reporting. The trafficking and sex abuse tools increased reporting which suggests that people do not know what is reportable. The tool is more conservative and they also know what CPS will screen in. Any disclosures or indication of sex abuse all go to CPS regardless of if it is a caregiver or not. Buy in comes from the consult option being seen as a safety net to make sure nothing falls through the cracks. Emerson asked if they answered the questions. Jessica reiterated her second question around liability. Emerson said that this situation has not happened yet. Every time there is a tradic situation, people look for the cause. A high profile case, Gabriel Hernandez in LA, happened in a jurisdiction that uses the tool. Emerson said that when things need to be reported, they are getting reported. They said that they are nervous about it but it hasn't happened yet. The consultation is run locally. Evident Change also carefully looks at local laws to create the tools. Trace thanked them.
- Cris Menz introduced herself and highlighted her focus on bias prevention. She asked if there is a mental health and emotional wellbeing aspect of the tool. She also asked if there is a public feature that everyone can use. Emerson said that the tool operationalizes the law. The community can decide how they want to use the tool, either publicly or just for professionals. They said that the decision support tool has 14-17 support types. Two are specifically for mental health and mental health is incorporated throughout all of the others. The tool looks for the impact. Cris asked about the anonymity part of the tool. Emerson said that the hope is to reshape the culture around reporting. The consult can take over after a user calls them. No family information is currently collected. There is privacy concern especially for families that do not have a suspicion of abuse or neglect. Emerson talked about the NH story again. Fifty-three percent of people said that they reported to CPS when they did not suspect abuse since they have a mandate to report. With the attorney general's memo, they can start to reshape things. Trace thanked them and highlighted Jessica's guestion about evidentiary storage in the chat.
- Dr. Kathi Wells introduced herself and asked what happens when the tool recommends a report but the user chooses not to report. Emerson said that in





	San Diego there is a link to report, if that is the recommended action. Everywhere else, it is on the individual to report. Kathi also asked about cross reporting and collecting data with potential impact on investigations. She asked if there is a way to make sure the data gets to law enforcement. Emerson said that a primary consideration for the tool is understanding who is using it and tailoring training to that group of users. There is some cross reporting but there were reasons that people did not like that. There are some practice guidelines to cross report to law enforcement, but there is not an action in the tool that would lead directly to law enforcement reporting. CPS also cross reports so that may already be happening outside of the tool. NH struggled with data for cases that get screened out. They analyzed data for the cases that get screened out. Trace thanked them for the presentation! They moved the task force to a break.
Presentation	 Trace brought the task force back. Bryan introduced the HEARS program in NY: Kristin Gleeson, associate commissioner of the Division of Child Welfare and Community Services and Tracy Swanson, senior attorney in the Office of the Ombudsman of Child Protection and Families. Kristin Gleeson introduced herself; she is with the NY State Office of Child Family Services. They work in the division of child welfare. NY is state supervised, locally administered by over 50 counties who actually do the provision of child welfare. Their focuses are social justice reform and narrowing the front door. The idea is supporting families instead of reporting them if appropriate. Families should not have to interact with the child welfare system to get help. So, they embarked on creating a warmline. They love hearing about other states' programs, and met with several states about their warmline set up and functioning. They also updated -as was required by law- their mandated reporter training around HEARS, which Tracy will talk about at greater length later in the presentation. HEARS stands for Help, Empower, Advocate, Reassure, Support. It is their support line for families. It was launched in April 2022. It was more of a soft launch, and they have grown in the last 2 years. HEARS asists families and mandated reporters by identifying local resources close to families; it can also make referrals to resources in the community. They find the resource that best meets a family's need. HEARS operates during weekday business hours, and they have a goal to expand the hours. They encourage reporters who work with families to call the line and they will help with the need. The caller can then provide the resource list or referral to the family, or they can refer the family directly to the HEARS line. A family can also call for themselves. There were about 50 calls per month in the beginning, which helped get the program up to speed. As the state marketst HEARS more, they averaged 150-200 calls a month. January saw





seats, diapers and formula. They also have parenting support such as home visits, training, mental health services, financial assistance, food assistance, furniture, clothing, legal help, child care, preventative services, transportation, domestic violence prevention, and more. Kristin stated that it has been amazing to work with people upstream to prevent calls to the child abuse hotline and to avoid a child protection investigation just to get someone a car seat. When they were just getting started, they would take calls and have to call people back once they had the information. Now they have more immediate answers. Ideally the underlying issue for the family is resolved in just one call. They have tracked system interactions over time to see progress being made. The program continues to train HEARS callers, and those callers are getting more knowledgeable and comfortable. There are some calls that still need information gathering and then a return call. Program staff want to best match the referral to the need. If the caller wants a warm transfer to the resource, they can provide that and stay on the phone to help support them.

- The development process for the HEARS program included consulting with other states like CT, NH, MN who developed similar systems during the onset of COVID. There is a call center in the capital region of New York, as well as a human services call center which includes tax and finance support. The HEARS line is seated in the human services call center. They wanted to be distinctly separate and apart from the child abuse hotline, so the staff are completely different. They use a Verizon call center interface, and initially gathered resource information, partnering with 211 and national resources. It is an ongoing project to make sure the resources are current. They developed call center scripting. The program learned a useful lesson when it became apparent that they need specific program staff who have knowledge of child welfare and how to connect people with resources, rather than general call service experience. HEARS continues to get the word out about the resource. They can reach out to a regional office when there is a need to reach a certain community. They can also help when a family has child welfare involvement already; they can see the case record and connect with the people working on the case. This is especially helpful with housing concerns. Another lesson learned is the importance of evaluation. They send surveys to previous callers who provide their emails and gather feedback. Trace asked for questions.
- Bryan asked about how mandated reporters learn about the HEARS line, and if components specifically address the needs of mandated reporters. Tracy Swanson said that HEARS is incorporated in the required mandated reporting training, it is also a part of the mandated reporter website. They thought it was especially helpful to create a warmline as a tool for mandated reporters. Bryan thanked them and asked how new the training is. Tracy said that they went live in January 2022 for new reporters and all reporters must take the new training by April 2025.
- Trace asked for any surprises or any hindsight perspectives. Kristin said that one of the things that surprised them is when parents call the child abuse hotline to take their kids. Now they have an option to connect that parent to the HEARS





line. When there are safety concerns, they can take the child protection route. A HEARS success story exists about a woman in NYC; her working hours were reduced and she could not pay her rent or buy food. She didn't want to give up her kids but she thought she could not provide for them. She called the child abuse line who directed her to HEARS and connected her to a worker to wrap services around her. For background, Kristin explained that she supervises both the child abuse hotline and the HEARS line; when a call to the child abuse line is not rising to the level of abuse, they do a warm transfer to the HEARS line. Trace asked if this example is above and beyond or if this is a systemic level of support. Kristin said that they have a differential response; it is not mandated that all counties use it, but NYC uses it. They opened a service case to interact with the family. They used differential response staff to address needs. So this example is a little bit of both: systemic success and individual effort success. HEARS was able to mobilize with a sense of urgency since this mother needed support right away. Not all callers are like that. Trace thanked her.

Michelle Dossey introduced herself. She said people need time to talk about what it is that they are dealing with. It can appear as abuse or neglect on face value but when it is explained, there is an opportunity to provide more context. Sometimes, slowing down and asking questions will help prevent weaponizing reports against people. She said that the key thing is space to be able to process. Kristin said that she agrees. Years ago, the NYC example would have been a child protection case since there was no other resource, but the HEARS line connects families in a different way. NY mandated reporters are not always confident in this approach. Tracy followed up that they hear from education staff who think that calling in a family is the way to get them services. HEARS pays attention to this and they inform people that there are other ways to get resources to a family without having to report. Trace thanked them.

 Stephanie asked if the hotline and the HEARS line are staffed by DHS personnel. Kristin said yes that they are all state employees but they have different training paths. Stephanie explained that the task force has seen many models including resources that are completely separate from the state system. She asked if people are hesitant to call HEARS since it is still a part of the state. Kristin said that it is a good question and she imagines that there are some fears around that. She thinks that since it is not at the local level, the association is not as strong. The group is in its infancy especially for training. This will unfold over more time. They hope to start stringing positive experiences to build buy in. Stephanie said that she appreciates this perspective and she explained that NY and CO are similarly situated and that there are questions around who should offer services.

• Trace asked about the considerations around where HEARS was housed. Kristin said that this was a part of a Family First approach. They felt like they just needed to take it on and saw that other states had also utilized warmlines. They didn't really explore another entity taking it on; they just jumped in. Trace thanked them and asked for more questions; there were none.





Survey	• Trace thanked the task force for their engagement and explained a survey that was about to be sent out to gather responses and thoughts. Trace asked for additional members of the public if they want to comment. Trace directed the task force to take the survey. They explained that members of the public should not fill
	 out the survey. The task force was then given some time to complete the survey. Trace welcomed the task force back and highlighted survey results. People can continue to fill out the survey as they digest the information. There were 20 results. As a theme, 85% said that yes Colorado should pursue creating policy to encourage decision tools and no one said no. 15% were unsure. 70% said the Evident Change example is the most worthy of replication in Colorado. A number said they liked both. Two said they just like NY's example. 70% said yes to pursuing the creation of policy to encourage consultation to aid reporters. 19% were unsure. 9% said no. 38% said that HEARS was the warmline example in the resource that seemed most worthy of replication. There is a majority on most of these questions. Trace thanked people for their participation.
Public Comment	Trace welcomed public comment. Anonymous CD provided an overview of her story for those who were not present for her first comment. She is anonymous as she is still in litigation. Her story started in 2019 and her CPS case is still unresolved. She has seen every part of the system fail. She is an expert on what not to do and where the system is still broken with systemic issues. She explained that it is basically false allegations of medical child abuse and serious violations of the Americans with Disability Act. She likes what she is hearing from the task force and gives kudos to people taking a proactive stance, meaning to provide resources to families rather than only focusing on removal and paranoid reactive reporting due to unknown issues and a lack of expertise. There is a lot of systemic bias against families with disabilities, parents with disabilities and children with disabilities alike. Everyone she has interacted with (including schools, medical providers, and community resource providers) were supposed to be following ADA, including effective communication. At every level from the very start, they still violated the ADA, which is a federal violation. DOJ can get involved with this. In courts in the family and domestic relations, this is a big deal: the directive is not to disparage the parents. She believes that there is a new generation of children and citizens being taught to discriminate against disabled people. Disparagement is happening through the court system. She has been dealing with this system for a long time and she was a systems analyst before this where she found where systems were failing. Assumptions, generalizations and speculations about families with disabilities are still being made by many people: medical staff, education staff, and CPS workers. She cannot present her side of the logic. She feels that she was silenced by CPS. She asked the task force to please keep this in mind that to date she still cannot present her side which presents a systemic problem. She thanked the





Next Steps and Adjourn	• Trace thanked everyone. The task force will be back in March to continue the conversation. Cris asked a clarifying question about the meeting times. Trace said they are explained in the meeting invites.
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Appendix A:

Dawn Alexander Yolanda Arredondo Kevin Bishop Ashley Chase Jill Cohen Michelle Dossey Jessica Dotter Tara Doxtater Ida Drury Leanna Gavin Zane Grant Adriana Hartley Jennifer Ely Lori Jenkins Gina Lopez Shawna McGuckin Cris Menz Mararget Ochoa Sara Pielsticker Margaret Ochoa Roshan Kalantar Kaycee Headrick Dr. Kathi Wells Donna Wilson Kelsey Wirtz Jade Woodard Aletha Jenkins Bryan Kelley Stephanie Villafuerte Trace Faust