

Supporting Parents in Public:
The Wakanheza Project

Implementation Guide

*Keeping children safe by lending a hand to
parents during difficult situations*

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This guide was developed by Minnesota Children’s Museum and the Initiative for Violence Free Families and Communities in Ramsey County.

Getting Started

Identify Opportunities

Think about how the program aligns with your organization. Why do you think it would be a good fit? What areas do you think would most benefit? Who would need to be involved? Thinking about these issues early on will help you set the course for your implementation, and give you concrete examples to use when talking to others about implementation.

Organizational Assessment

The Organizational Assessment Worksheet is a great way to start identifying areas to apply the Wakanheza Principles. This worksheet helps you think about your organization in terms of three different aspects: environment, staff procedures and organizational policies. It is useful to work on this worksheet with a group of people. If you are working on implementing Wakanheza principles in your department or area, include a variety of people from that group. If you are implementing Wakanheza principles in your whole organization, include people from several different departments and positions. Depending on your situation, it may be helpful to just focus on one area at a time instead of trying to discuss all three.

Tip: When identifying areas for improvement, be careful not to let the group get caught up in why things can't be changed. That will quickly limit the generation of ideas, and discourage the group. Often things can be changed in some way, even if it doesn't seem like it at first.

Start Small

Although some organizations see the power of this program and implement it broadly to begin with, it is often helpful to start on a smaller scale. By starting to spread the word and hold workshops in your own department, you gain buy-in from staff members who can then start spreading the message further. This will be helpful when implementing on a larger scale, and will give you time to practice the principles with a smaller group to become more comfortable talking about them. Starting small also helps get past potential resistance about adding another project to an already busy workload.

Raise Interest

Find ways to share the Wakanheza principles with your co-workers, so that they can see the relevance. This is important when you are first starting and when you are starting to expand your implementation. The key is to get people interested so they want to get the information or go to a workshop, instead of feeling like they are being forced to go to training when they have better things to do. Raise interest by mentioning stories from the workshop you attended, how you used the principles, or how something they did relates to the principles.

Hold a Workshop

A great way to get started is to hold a workshop. A workshop will get people thinking about the principles, and then come up with their own ideas for improving your organization. Workshops can be any length, although a workshop that is less than two

hours won't give participants sufficient time to discuss and digest the concepts. A Workshop Facilitator Guide is available with instructions and tips for holding a workshop.

Some organizations have found it helpful to work together when holding workshops. Having someone from an outside organization can help give credibility to a new program.

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Organizational Assessment Worksheet

Use this worksheet to assess your organization. Try to think about your organization from the point of view of a customer or parent.

Environment/ Climate

Identify three locations or situations in your organization where challenging situations often occur.

For each location or situation you identified, list at least two different ways to positively intervene or create changes using the Wakanheza Principles. This might include physical changes to the space, staff intervention or clear signage.

Staff Procedures

Identify staff procedures within your organization that already encompass Wakanheza.

Identify staff procedures in your organization that may create barriers to implementing Wakanheza.

Identify specific changes that could be made to the procedures listed above that will embrace Wakanheza principles instead of creating a barrier.

Organizational Policies

Identify organizational policies that already encompass Wakanheza.

Identify policies that may create barriers to implementing Wakanheza.

Identify specific changes that could be made to the policies that will embrace Wakanheza principles, rather than creating a barrier.

Next Steps

Now that you have evaluated your organization, what are your next steps in making these changes? Who will be involved, and when will you have them done?

Evaluation

Pre-Post Test

This tool will help you evaluate the effect your workshop had on the participants. You will be able to gauge increases in comfort level and knowledge about challenging situations. This tool is used before and after a workshop, and is included in the Workshop Facilitator Guide.

Workshop Evaluations

These evaluations give feedback on the workshop, the relevance of the ideas presented and the effectiveness of the communication. This will help you modify future workshops to best meet the needs of your audience. Two examples of these types of evaluations are included. You can modify the evaluations to meet your specific goals or to talk about your organization.

Action-Specific Evaluations

Once you have identified areas or situations in your organization that could be improved, you might want to consider evaluating the outcomes of your changes. These evaluations can be observations, surveys or data. Before you make a change, you want to get some starting data so you have something to compare with after the change. A sample observation report is included.

Example: You have identified that stressful situations often happen in the reception area. Before you make any changes, you could have staff keep an observation log and track how often and when these situations occur. Or you could have a short survey card in the area that asks visitors how welcoming the area is. Then you make a change to the area -- perhaps adding additional seating, or having a small toy bag for young children to play with while parents are completing their business. After you make the change, use the same evaluation tool to determine how effective your action was.

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Workshop Evaluation

Location: _____

Day and Time: _____

Trainer(s): _____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Satisfaction					
The workshop met my expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The workshop provided new information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The presentation was engaging and informative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education about the Wakanheza Project					
I believe that tools and techniques taught for helping intervene in moments of stress for families are useful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The guiding principles taught today will help me understand when and why to intervene.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employing Wakanheza principles can make my work environment more welcoming.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Wakanheza principles are applicable to our agency.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Session Feedback					
I learned...					
I liked...					
I didn't like...					
I want more of...					

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Workshop Evaluation

1. What was the most important thing you learned today?
2. Is your understanding of your role in creating a positive environment any different than it was at the beginning of the session? If so, how?
3. Do you believe that implementing Wakanheza principles, tools and techniques can make your environment more welcoming? If so, how?
4. What do you see as the next steps for you in implementing and embedding Wakanheza in your organization?
5. What could have been done to make this session stronger and more useful to you?

Sustainability Practices

Now that you have had a workshop, it is important to keep thinking about the principles and how to use them in their work. While the principles and tools are simple, you will be most successful when you are being intentional in the use and practice. Here are some tips to keep this project alive in your organization.

Create a Wakanheza Team

Put together a small group of people to act as your Wakanheza Team. This group can help you spread the message and develop new ways to embed Wakanheza into your organization. Team members can include: supervisors, managers, administration, staff and community members.

Tip: A cross-departmental team will help spread the message farther and help keep the idea of Wakanheza present in your organization.

Revisit the Wakanheza Organizational Assessment Worksheet

This worksheet gave you the opportunity to think about the environment/climate, staff procedures and policies. Maybe you have a list of ideas from the last time you worked on this. Or maybe you have implemented some of the changes, and now have the opportunity to do the worksheet over again, to identify new areas of potential improvement. Either way, this worksheet can help identify areas where change is possible, or to help employees think about their work in a new way.

Tip: Try taking one of the three areas (environment/climate, staff procedures, and organizational policies) and focusing on that for idea generation. Sometimes narrowing your focus can help you go deeper into areas that you might skim over otherwise.

Share Stories at Staff Meetings

To help keep people thinking about Wakanheza and intentionally applying the principles, share a Wakanheza story at your staff meeting. Talk about how the principles applied in the situation, and how it relates to your organization.

Offer Refreshers

The initial workshop is very powerful, and inspires people to look at situations in a new way. To maintain that enthusiasm without boring people who have been through a workshop before, have an annual refresher session to get everyone motivated again.

Newsletter

Share a Wakanheza story or tip in your organizational newsletter. Not only does this keep people thinking about the principles, it is an opportunity to recognize someone in your organization who is following the principles and supporting parents in public.

Recognize Employees

Recognize and appreciate people you see practicing Wakanheza. This will not only reinforce that behavior, but will also promote a positive and respectful environment.