

# Collaborative Adventures

Choices  
TA Center

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*It's No Surprise - Some of the Best Deals are Made on a Golf Course*

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Technology and the security of cubicles make it more comfortable than ever to stay in our own personal workspace and generate “results”, also know as” productivity”. Coordinating a System of Care, however, requires participation of the entire community, and tends to operate more efficiently without walls. It is critical that each community carefully selects the right person for the role of system of care coordinator. One thing we know for sure and should never disregard is the importance and the impact that face-to-face interactions have on building and strengthening community support.

It wasn't so long ago that we planned to wait two to three days for the mailman to deliver some much anticipated information or a letter of approval that would dictate our next move. In that time, most of us also enjoyed the advantages of having a telephone or fax machine at our disposal and were accustomed to the feverish frenzy of a good game of telephone tag. Today it is much easier for most of us to draft a quick e-mail, double check our attitude and with one strike of a key send a message, request or document that could change the entire course of a family's life. E-mail also ensures a paper trail and can easily be stored in an electronic file. Technology has its good points, but takes a lot away from the *humanness* of human services. It isn't always easy to gauge your recipient's reaction through an e-mail and an e-mail can foster miscommunication. In many cases we miss out on the cues and body language that help us fully engage in the experience of communicating.



The beauty of a SOC is that it encompasses all levels of support within the context of a community. This includes the human service providers, families and the for-profit community as well. In order to garner the ownership necessary to be effective, it is imperative that those most affected by the initiative, decision makers and families alike, are engaged in the process. This is why it is so important to select someone to coordinate this initiative that isn't afraid to show their passion for their work and loves to get out and network. Never underestimate the power of a good schmooze when raising money and awareness about your SOC.

**Join, present** your story and most importantly, **participate** in those community gatherings of organizations that care about children and families. Seek out local fraternal organizations, faith based organizations and fellow providers. Emily Owens, SOC Coordinator for [Vigo County](#) can testify to the importance of “being there”. Emily developed brochures and outcomes for her community presentations where families presented their testimony. She explained how wraparound could be utilized as a preventative measure for keeping kids in the community. She presented at her Department of Child Services Regional Service Council and was then selected to receive prevention dollars from Director Katie Edgington of DCS.

Consider holding a child & family team meeting where other than in the office. In rural [Wabash County](#), Shelly Snyder facilitates one of her team meetings at the local café, where 15-year-old Levi washes dishes on Friday nights. The owner of the café along with the small community ‘care-taker’, the 4H team leader and the bus driver attend along with teachers and mental health providers. They never have any problems with attendance or finding creative ways to provide the support and wraparound Levi needs.

Take advantage of an opportunity to get out, feel good and strike some of your best deals ever. Don't underestimate the power of a warm smile or the simple words "please" and "thank you". In [White County](#), one of the consortium members took it upon themselves to help a grandmother (who is raising a child involved with the system of care) have something nice to wear to her class reunion. SOC coordinator, Linda Robledo Fisher, followed up with an in person thank you to a local clothier for donating an outfit and ended up with a donation of \$2,700 worth of clothing and accessories to add to her treasure chest for other families.

It's no surprise some of the biggest business deals are made on a golf course! Now is the time to get out and enjoy the rejuvenation that comes with spring and the arrival of warm days. Let the sun motivate you to get out and enjoy your community by walking around downtown and exploring the many resources just waiting to be tapped. Have a late or early lunch and introduce yourself to the local business owners. Merchants and other for profit businesses also care about youth and families and will ultimately strengthen and add another layer of support to your system of care. A phone call, or even a letter of invitation will initiate a conversation, but what seals the deal is the personal touch of a face-to-face interaction. It demonstrates your level of commitment to the work and shows how much you value community support. In some cases it's helpful to ask a member of your community team to help make the introduction. Ask Liz Smith, SOC coordinator in [Carroll County](#), who was asked to present at their human service provider gathering. The meeting was being held at an Amish owned and run establishment, and Liz wasn't sure if they had the technology needed for her to do a Power Point presentation. She decided to go and check it out for herself. Not only did she find out they had what she needed, she engaged them in a conversation about the local SOC and before she left, they offered to hold a fish-fry fundraiser for her flex funds.



So if you are tempted to sit behind your desk to write one more letter or e-mail seeking support, perhaps your time would be better spent getting out and about in your community and telling the stories of the wonderful work that is happening in your system of care in person. Enjoy the lovely weather and better yet, make new friends and supporters for your SOC!