

STAR Committee Meeting
November 7, 2007

Attendees: Shelly Johnson, Marcia Daniel, Diane Senn, Sam Pourciau, Karen Faulk, Rhenda Hodnett, Kaaren Hebert, Nelda Rains, Joe Palmer, Gail Lewis, Hannah Dunn, Charlotte Frilot

Conducting: Shewayn Watson and Bridget Clark

Review/Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as is.

Research/Training

Shewayn stated that she, Bridget, Joe and Sam are doing research throughout the United States regarding training. She has been in contact with Gretchen Robins, a contact from the state of Maine. Gretchen told Shewayn that they recently moved from 5 week training session to an 8 week training session, 5 weeks of “in class” training and 3 weeks of “field practice”. There is a rating system for the training before and after the training and it helps develop where the training would like to be to develop their skills. They must pass a test upon completion of the training and the trainer meets with the worker and supervisor to develop individual training plans in a contract that is catered to the worker’s needs. There is also weekly feedback while in the training to build on the skills that are learned and accesses areas that need improvement. In the end there is a post meeting with the worker and supervisor that goes over the training, what has been learned and areas that might need improvement to develop an improvement plan. This assists the worker in increasing skills before practicing.

Shewayn has tried to contact Marsha Salas regarding any good training programs in other states. Bridget is also in the process of contacting Kris Sahanckek with the National Resource Center.

Bridget recapped what had been discussed at the last meeting because there are a few members that are here for the first time. During the last meeting we talked about the data that was available to us regarding staff turnover and retention issues. As a group we came to the consensus that the areas we need to focus on are the Child Welfare Specialist trainee 1 and 2 because those have the highest levels of turnover. We broke out into smaller groups to brainstorm as to what were some of the root causes. We came back into the large group; we tried to group into categories the major areas. Our original goal was to find 5 major areas and drop down to 3. We found 3 major areas: training, support and guidance, and workload and caseload. Today we wanted to begin to explore and research other states training programs and how they handle entry level staff training and on the job training.

We wanted to present some of what has been learned, we may have to put our feelers out farther to find out what additional states are doing. Maine was suggested because 12 of our staff have recently been there looking at their practices. Utah, California and

Kentucky were also mentioned. The National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement was considered because they have an overview of states around the country who are dealing with some of the same issues. Bridget tried to contact Kris Sahonchek but has not heard from her at this time.

Joe Palmer said that he spent a lot of time on California's site because of some of the things they were doing with safety. California as well as Pennsylvania start with core courses. California did a study in terms of worker retention, it was about support for workers, training for supervisors, training for support/mentoring. One of the things they were looking at is having a common curriculum training for everyone, every child welfare worker. Lack of support had to do with workers not feeling that they were competently trained. New worker training basically focused on maltreatment identification, critical thinking, framework, engaging families and permanency training. As they went through that there were other core areas that they focused on as well. Bridget asked if the coaching and mentoring was identified early on. Joe said he didn't know because his major emphasis was to look at their safety piece, what they were doing for workers in terms of that. Rhenda asked if they have specifics around safety, not worker safety but assessing safety. He said that is a part of their PIP program. Joe said he would talk to someone in California regarding duration of training, at what point do they identify their coach/mentor, how long does this coaching/mentoring last and did this make a difference in addition to whether or not they have a means of assessing safety.

Bridget said one question she left with Kris Sahonchek was do they know of states that have really put some extensive training into place and do they have data that supports that this additional training and other things they have put into place has reduced staff turnover and retention? This is something we can ask anyone that we contact.

After we make the ongoing research we probably should do diagrams to show the different components such as class room training, on-the-job training and the ongoing component to plug in what we need at each phase.

Shewayn said that she received a lot of surveys and was not able to review all but did review 75 of the surveys that were sent out. We were trying to get feedback on training but did get a lot of info regarding pay as an issue. When answering the question about where the most pertinent training occurred and how you feel you could have been better trained to perform your job duties most said on-the-job/shadowing/mentoring/coaching. We need to start making a recommendation about Supervisors attending training with management and then with the workers.

Send survey to supervisors to see what they need to provide the training and coaching with staff, what do you do in an 8 hour day, how much time do you have then to train/coach, what tools can we give them to help with this. Then we need to support them with this. There is no ongoing supervisory training/follow-up.

We should do a survey to find out what they are not getting as far as trying to guide and develop their staff. Do we want to use the same questions as we did for the workers,

who, what, where, when, why? Leave "Other" category in. One question asked could be how many workers are you supervising, what additional responsibilities do you have such as parish manager and how many in your caseload? Possibly ask them to frame their day and then "to be a more effective supervisor what should your day look like." Rhenda said that SDM had an instrument that she was not going to use but they had it available. It was for workers but maybe it would be available for supervisors that possibly have the questions figured out for the time study portion. She thought that maybe we could use those questions and get a sample.

Another question could be how have we prepared you to supervise, what things have we done that has prepared you for your role as a supervisor. The committee was unclear about this question. Instead of asking are you prepared have them list what things the agency did to prepare them and ask the opposite and ask what things would you have liked to have had or needed to be prepared.

It was pointed out that some of the same things being needed for first line workers are needed for supervisors.

Below are some recommendations as to additional questions on the survey:

- ask about the number of years with the agency and number of years of supervision.
- what program(s) and what are the levels of their workers.
- Ranking duties would show what they are spending their time doing, what are obstacles, realities and what is successful.
- What are the barriers to being able to maintain caseload standards
- Looking up/learning/researching policy
- Do you conference with your supervisor
- Completing forms/paperwork
- Anything about technology that would help you to do your job

What are next steps and how will we approach? Bridget thinks that this committee has come to a consensus earlier that we are going to focus on the support/guidance issue first.

Bridget said that this committee has gotten a lot of information; we want to come to a place where we start to do something with the information. She said she is not sure if we are ready to start something yet, but we do want to balance getting going and not just keep asking questions.

Nelda asked that when it is all said and done will we make a recommendation and to who? This will be taken to executive management team. This committee will have to be specific and should have plan A and B. Kaaren said that this committee should have an interim presentation before you go too far into something because of a lot of external factors that are going to be in play for the next few months. One of which is budget, nothing talked about within this committee was included in the budget so anything that we would try to add means something else has to drop off. Before going too far into a

plan we should come up with some general concepts and a recommendation of mentoring. Bridget asked Kaaren to help this group know when we should present this to the Executive Management Team.

Rhenda is working with Kentucky as how money is spent and what they got back in return.

Next meeting will be on Wednesday, December 5th at 8:30.