Supervisor Training Event Gives Supervisors Tools to Support Staff in Applying Our Practice Model

Submitted by: Maryann Marchi

The application of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice Model (Practice Model) was the focus at the four Supervisor Training Events held regionally this past fall. Supporting Your Staff in the Quality Service Review Process was the title of the one-day workshop. The events were well attended with 72 supervisors across the state exploring their role in supporting the Practice Model. Comments received on the training evaluations for this event indicated that the workshop was well planned and the information provided to them was helpful and comprehensive. Supervisors reported leaving with a better understanding of how and why the focus of child welfare practice has been shifted to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). Many left at the end of the day with a plan to enhance their supervision efforts.

In the morning, facilitators provided a brief overview of the Quality Service Review (QSR) process and an explanation of how QSR fits into CQI efforts. Supervisors reported leaving the session feeling less intimidated about the QSR process and better able to prepare staff for their...
onsite reviews. In addition, multiple supervisors requested information on how to become a QSR reviewer.

Supervisors also had the opportunity to discuss daily Practice Model implementation by incorporating the supervision tool, *Enhancing Critical Thinking: A Supervisors’ Guide (Critical Thinking Guide)* into their regular supervision. Supervisors said that if they started to use the *Critical Thinking Guide*, they could better ensure that the needs and perspectives of all team members are addressed during supervision. Many supervisors who attended indicated that they plan to begin using the *Critical Thinking Guide* immediately in their supervisory conferences to reinforce practice on QSR indicators.

In the afternoon, panel presenters with experience in the QSR process brought the entire CQI process to life. Panel members included local QSR site leads, state leads, supervisors, administrators, OCYF representatives, and QSR reviewers. They spoke about their experiences before, during, and after the onsite QSRs. Supervisors had the opportunity to ask questions of the panel members. The panel members were extremely well-informed according to the training evaluations. Supervisors felt more confident in supporting their staff before, during and after QSRs after hearing panel members “lessons learned”.

Comments received on the training evaluations indicated that this training should be highly suggested for all supervisors and all administrators in Pennsylvania. If any supervisory or other management staff did not have an opportunity to attend this event and would like to learn more about CQI, the Practice Model, QSR, or the *Critical Thinking Guide*, contact your assigned Practice Improvement Specialist.

---

**IF OPPORTUNITY DOESN’T KNOCK, BUILD A DOOR.** — Milton Berle
When Did You Stop Learning? Building Transfer of Learning Into Agencies.


Introduction

Transfer of learning (TOL) studies have concluded that, at times, only 10 – 13% of skills or knowledge learned in training is actually applied in the workplace (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Broad and Newstrom, 1992; Rackham, 1979). Trainees that implement new skills after training can experience awkwardness when first trying out new skills, and then can become frustrated, which can lead them to abandon their efforts to implement new knowledge and skills. Instead, they return to old practices that feel more comfortable to them. In order to better understand how to strengthen TOL practices in Pennsylvania, the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and The Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC) decided to more closely examine the implementation and impact of TOL activities. This included a research study, as well as a careful look at feedback from TOL participants. The research study examined training outcomes amongst public child welfare workers in Pennsylvania.

Background

The CWRC trains and certifies all of Pennsylvania’s county child welfare workers. In addition to providing training, CWRC staff also provide Pennsylvania’s counties with technical assistance on a variety of initiatives and county needs. As the expectations regarding the practices of public child welfare agencies have evolved, efforts and strategies to impact practice and effect change have continued to increase. The staff at CWRC observed that often the most common strategy to improve practice was to send staff to training and expect that this would create change. However, data gathered from a variety of initiatives, including Pennsylvania’s Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), did not reflect practice changes as a result of training efforts. It became apparent that efforts to promote TOL outside the classroom were necessary to impact child welfare practice and service delivery.

Pennsylvania’s 2008 CFSR results indicated that efforts were needed to increase the engagement of children, youth and families receiving services. This heightened awareness provided an opportunity for evaluators to examine strategies that may influence the transfer of learning into practice. The CWRC staff developed a series of TOL strategies that when combined with classroom training could increase a participant’s use of content in practice. The Evaluation Team hypothesized that trainees who received a TOL training package would be more likely to use new knowledge and skills on the job compared with trainees who received training as usual.
Study Methodology

The study took place from 2007 through 2012 and used a standard intervention and control design with intervention counties receiving the TOL intervention and control counties receiving only training. Participation by staff in the evaluation was voluntary; however, participation in the training and TOL strategies was not voluntary and required by the agencies as part of staff employment and professional development. From initiation to completion, participation was about 6 months (see Figure 1).

The Evaluation Team decided to focus on studying the TOL strategy in connection with training on the engagement of clients. Counties frequently requested this training due to increased focus on family engagement, as well as an emphasis in the state’s CFSR results and subsequent Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Based on the learning needs of a county, it was included in either the intervention or the control group. Counties that just wanted the training, participated as controls and counties that wanted further assistance, TOL, committed their participation in the TOL strategies outlined above. Those counties that participated as controls did have the opportunity to request the TOL strategies above after 6 months from the initial training. These counties could then be included as intervention counties.

The study took place from 2007 through 2012 and used a standard intervention and control design with intervention counties receiving the TOL intervention and control counties receiving only training. Participation by staff in the evaluation was voluntary; however, participation in the training and TOL strategies was not voluntary and required by the agencies as part of staff employment and professional development. From initiation to completion, participation was about 6 months (see Figure 1).

The Evaluation Team decided to focus on studying the TOL strategy in connection with training on the engagement of clients. Counties frequently requested this training due to increased focus on family engagement, as well as an emphasis in the state’s CFSR results and subsequent Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Based on the learning needs of a county, it was included in either the intervention or the control group. Counties that just wanted the training, participated as controls and counties that wanted further assistance, TOL, committed their participation in the TOL strategies outlined above. Those counties that participated as controls did have the opportunity to request the TOL strategies above after 6 months from the initial training. These counties could then be included as intervention counties.

Study Design

The study incorporated several measures and interventions employed at regular intervals. Both intervention and control participants completed the same measures at the same intervals (see Figure 2). Intervention participants participated in an initial training, TOL Support Sessions and a Booster Shot Training (see Figure 3). Control participants participated in an initial training and received no other formal interventions regarding how to transfer classroom skills into practice.
**Figure 2: Study Measurements**

**Agency Climate Survey**
- Asks all participants views on their agency’s perspective on training, its value and support for implementation of new techniques.

**Self Assessment**
- Asks all participants to rate their use of training material and content in their everyday practice.

**Supervisory Assessment**
- Asks supervisors to rate each of their supervisees on their use of training material and content in their everyday practice.

The **Agency Climate Survey** incorporated the *Learning Transfer System Inventory* (Holton & Bates, 1998). It measures factors in the agency climate that may influence training transfer including Peer Support, Supervisor Support, Supervisor Sanction, and Resistance/Openness to Change.

The **Self-Assessment and Supervisory Assessments** are project-developed measures focusing on skills specific to training content; but also included items adapted from Wehrmann, Shin, & Poertner (2002).

**Findings**

Training outcomes were compared over a two-month and six-month period between trainees who participated in a TOL training package and trainees who participated in training alone. A total of 259 of the caseworkers and supervisors participating in Strengths-Based Solution-Focused trainings enrolled in the study. Of these participants, 166 completed all of the data collection activities in the study.

Results suggest some positive impact of the TOL training packages. For example, for participating caseworkers in the TOL group, perceptions of peer support and supervisor support significantly improved between baseline and the six-month follow-up. Openness to change also moved in a positive direction (though was not statistically significant). There were no differences in perceptions of support or openness to change for participants in the control group.

Analyses also showed that participating caseworkers in the control group reported feeling significantly less *knowledgeable* about training content six months post-training. Although not statistically significant, participating caseworkers in the intervention group showed positive trends in items related to content knowledge, ability to use training content and opportunities to use training content six months after training. Taken together, these findings suggest that the added support and booster sessions were effective in helping participants retain and utilize the training content, and without them, participants actually felt less knowledgeable about content than they did prior to the training.
There were no significant differences between supervisor ratings of caseworkers in the intervention or control groups. However, due to confidentiality issues, it was not possible to link supervisor ratings with specific caseworkers. Additionally, supervisors rated all of their caseworkers, even if caseworkers declined participation in the project (supervisors were not told which of their caseworkers had signed consent forms). Thus, we could only look at supervisor ratings of their caseworkers as a group. Although ratings were slightly more positive for the intervention group than the control group, there were no statistically significant differences.

As another line of sight on the use and effectiveness of TOL packages, we examined the feedback collected as part of the After Action Reviews (AARs) after counties had participated in a TOL package. These went beyond the scope of the research study and included topics such as Strength-Based Solution-Focused Supervision, Achieving Permanency through Kinship Foster Care, Risk Assessment and Safety Assessment. The number and sequencing of TOL sessions and Booster Shots varied from county to county and training to training.
Overall, participants appreciated some of the structural differences between the TOL approach and trainings as usual. One particular benefit of the TOL approach was that everyone was trained together. One participant said that the “TOL supports help supervisors and caseworkers stay on task; they hold supervisors accountable to caseworkers’ growth.” Other participants echoed this sentiment: “the package showed commitment from the entire agency and provided a common language to communicate”, “trainers and specialists incorporated the same language – kept all staff connected”, “hearing from everyone other options/opinions about how it might work for you – different units within the TOL Support Sessions”, and “Everyone thinks and applies a lot more with a TOL package having the same training/process together”. In the same vein, participants appreciated the fact that the trainings all occurred in-house and that they did not have to travel.

Another benefit was the addition (and timing) of Support Sessions and Booster Shot trainings. As one participant stated, “The three month delay from the last TOL session and the closing session was a good thing; it gave everyone time to try the skills and then come back and review them.” Other participants shared the following: “Got more out of the TOL sessions than the trainings. Sessions made it practical to our work and we learned from one another", “Booster shot training reinforced learning”, “TOL review of skills and concepts was helpful and reinforcing”, and “reminder meetings helped the new information from going down the drain”.

Participants also enjoyed the training tools that were used along the way. For example, a few participants said that they liked the handouts that were shared and that they referred to them after the training session. Others said that they valued the action plans, stating that they allowed for “the gradual building of skills”. The group activities and other learning tools were also appreciated by participants (e.g., “Jeopardy and card games were fun and engaging and helped to refresh the material.”)

However, there were some participants who disliked aspects of the TOL structure. Some participants stated that the addition and timing of the Support Sessions and Booster Shot trainings were “redundant” or that “the training process took too long.” As such, a few worried that the time they had to invest in the TOL sessions would take away from time they could devote to other trainings. A few also stated that the sessions were scheduled too closely together and that they would have liked more time in between sessions to practice. Other suggestions that participants gave were around some of the training activities. One participant wanted to “role play with our own cases”; another asked for “more realistic examples.”

All in all, however, feedback on the TOL process was predominantly positive. Although sometimes it was difficult to get the timing of sessions just right (which is understandable when trying to coordinate trainings with an entire agency), participants at all levels appreciated the opportunity to learn, discuss, and practice skills in this manner. They felt that the structure allowed for consistent training across job categories and they valued the reinforcement of the knowledge and skills that the on-going trainings provided.
Implications for Practice

Organizations looking to improve their service delivery should consider integrating efforts and strategies beyond classroom-based training in order to realize significant changes to direct practice. Study results suggest that trainees need more than a classroom-based training to develop skills and then implement them in their practice. These strategies cannot be casually implemented but need to be structured, deliberate sets of activities or resources intended to help participants make the connections from theoretical concept and associated skill to integrating that concept into practice. A planned series of steps or activities that continue outside of a learning event are necessary for organizations to strengthen the link from training to practice. The planned series of activities help to support participants’ integration of the knowledge they have just learned in the training room into practice. Without the activities or supports in place, participants often return back to their old way of doing tasks or are have a harder time fitting the new tasks into their daily practice. The TOL activities also provide a way to assist the supervisor in learning the best way to support their staff in the use of the new knowledge and skills.

References


Citation for this report:


For questions about the study or for further information, please contact Shauna Reinhart, Research Coordinator, at shr30@pitt.edu.
Resource Center Liaison Roles and Responsibilities

Submitted by: Andrea Randolph

Leadership Roles-Identify Training and Technical Assistance Needs:
1. Leadership responsibility to share your county’s training and technical assistance needs with the Resource Center to help inform regional calendar development, off calendar scheduling, and new curriculum development.
2. Support strategic and timely completion of your county’s ITNA (Individual Training Needs Assessment) from your staff and provide the completed forms to CWRC.
3. Receive county training requests:
   a. Contact your county’s assigned Practice Improvement Specialist and Regional Resource Specialist with the training request information (training title/topic, target date, etc.).

Training Registration duties:
1. Register participants for training:
      i. Contact Rachael Ickes if you need a user ID and password.
   b. Email cwtpreg@pitt.edu
   c. Call 1-877-297-7488
2. In the case of inclement weather, check the following for training cancellations and forward information to staff registered for training:
   a. Email from Regional Resource Specialists
   b. Call the winter weather/registration hotline: 1-877-297-7488
   c. Check the CWRC Facebook and Twitter pages for the latest updates on training cancellations.
3. Receive confirmation/cancellation/decline letters and pre-work and distribute to staff.
4. Distribute monthly training certificates of attendance and certification packets.

Staff updates:
1. Provide new workers with a Demographic Form (http://www.pacwcbt.pitt.edu/Demoform.htm) to be completed and input the information online via Encompass or send back to CWRC via cwtpreg@pitt.edu.
2. Collect ITNA (Individual Training Needs Assessment) from new workers and mail to the Resource Center.
3. Assess ongoing workers training needs.
4. If there is a termination of employment, enter the date into Encompass, or contact Rachael Ickes to cancel any training registrations for that person.
5. If there is a change of position or name please update Encompass, or contact Rachael Ickes.

Other duties:
1. Receive communication from CWRC to be distributed to staff which might include, but is not limited to, notification of training date/location changes, event brochures, etc.
2. Participate in quarterly meetings (via conference call or in person).
   a. Participate in the discussion related to your county’s organizational training needs, new curriculum ready to schedule, biannual training calendar planning, county updates and resource sharing, statewide topics (safety, concurrent planning, etc.) and updates on work in the counties with the Practice Improvement Specialists (Continuous Quality Improvement to include Quality Service Reviews, etc.).
3. Receive new training opportunities and share them with identified staff.
4. ID staff to participate in committees, Quality Assurance Committees (QUACs), and training pilots.

The Resource Center continues to look at ways to improve the communication with counties across the state. This includes communication between the Regional Resource Specialists and counties to make sure that important information is getting to the appropriate place/people in a timely manner. As part of this effort, with feedback from counties, we have come up with this document to help counties when choosing who their designated training liaison(s) are by outlining some of the duties they will be performing. Each county is asked to identify a person who would be the main contact, as well as at least 1 back-up person in the event that the main person is out of the office for any
reason. The back-up is important to have in case of emergencies or weather events, as we’ve all experienced far too often this year. If you have any questions about this document, please contact your Regional Resource Specialist. The Regional Resource Specialist will continue to touch base with you at the quarterly scheduled Training Liaison meetings and in your day-to-day communication. Thank you for your assistance in helping us improve our collaboration and communication!

Andrea Randolph- Western Region
Jessica Wittman- Southeast and Philadelphia
Michael Danner- Central Region
Maricar Nuesa- Northeast Region

“Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, or worn. It is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace & gratitude.” - Denis Waitley

NEVER BE AFRAID TO TRY.
Remember, amateurs built the ark. Professionals built the Titanic.
CWIS is underway!

OCYF is implementing a Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS) that counties will use in conjunction with their approved case management systems to exchange data with state level systems.

Currently, CWIS is in the first of four phases: Phase 1 is focused on Referrals. This phase will replace the current computer system used at ChildLine to expand state level access to referrals and clearances by providing real-time data on child protective services (CPS) and general protective services (GPS) reports.

Goals to be achieved are:
- Automated exchange of CPS and GPS reports between counties, regions and state;
- Improved data reporting;
- Electronic submission and processing of child abuse clearances;
- Self-service for mandated reporters and clearance applicants;
- Single access point for counties to statewide data.

Phase 1 is scheduled to be implemented in December 2014.

The CWIS project team has completed Business and System Requirements Gathering and General System Design and will complete Detailed System Design (DSD) from mid-February through mid-April.

Questions about CWIS? Email our CWIS Resource Account at RA-PWCWIS@pa.gov

Want to learn more about CWIS? Go to the OCYF Portal. Use your “b-dash” user information to log in.
## Regional Team Contact Information

Our local number is 717-795-9048  
Our fax number is 717-795-8013  
Registration and winter weather number 1-877-297-7488

### Central

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wendy Unger</td>
<td>Acting Regional Team Supervisor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wau2@pitt.edu">wau2@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah Mock</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dpm23@pitt.edu">dpm23@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina Fatzinger</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cmf27@pitt.edu">cmf27@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cpw11@pitt.edu">cpw11@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudia Witmer</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mjd12@pitt.edu">mjd12@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Northeast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jody Price</td>
<td>Regional Team Supervisor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jlp78@pitt.edu">jlp78@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gene Caprio</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:enc12@pitt.edu">enc12@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Dougherty</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wfd3@pitt.edu">wfd3@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayme Toczylousky</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jaf59@pitt.edu">jaf59@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maricar Nuesa</td>
<td>Resource Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:man86@pitt.edu">man86@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Southeast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Swain</td>
<td>Regional Team Supervisor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kls120@pitt.edu">kls120@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Richardson</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:anr63@pitt.edu">anr63@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Kerr</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jlm69@pitt.edu">jlm69@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell Cripps</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ruc17@pitt.edu">ruc17@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Wittman</td>
<td>Resource Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jms137@pitt.edu">jms137@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Western

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Zilka</td>
<td>Regional Team Supervisor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dmz20@pitt.edu">dmz20@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Borish</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lbb14@pitt.edu">lbb14@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvin Kulik</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cfk5@pitt.edu">cfk5@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Caruso</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jcar@pitt.edu">jcar@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Eidson</td>
<td>Practice Improvement Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:see13@pitt.edu">see13@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Randolph</td>
<td>Resource Specialist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aks45@pitt.edu">aks45@pitt.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>