Andrea Bowersox joins Curriculum Team

Submitted by: Andrea Merovich

Andrea Bowersox joined CWRC’s Curriculum and Trainer Development Department on July 13th as a Curriculum and Instructional Specialist. She comes to us with experience working with children, as well as experience building curricula for diverse age groups.

Bowersox holds a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education with a concentration on communications and public relations from Susquehanna University. Prior to joining CWRC, she taught kindergarten for four years at Kids Quarters in Camp Hill. Through internships and student teaching experiences, she has created curricula for students from kindergarten to sixth grade, and she’s eager to expand her curricula-writing skills to adult learners as well. When asked what first attracted her to the CWRC and the position of Curriculum and Instructional Specialist, she says, “I wanted to help kids, and I liked the idea of building curricula that helps the people that help kids.”

Andrea is an eager and fast learner. In the short time since she started at CWRC, she has jumped in feet first to learn the CWRC culture and to make valuable contributions to the curriculum team. “I’m excited to grow my skills and become a better writer, and to utilize everyone’s ideas to create a product that can help people,” says Andrea. She also looks forward to interacting and working with CWRC’s trainers.

When she’s not at work, Andrea is home with her husband Kevin and cat Athena. She enjoys reading books, especially mysteries, and spending time with family, whether it’s skiing with her husband or attending a Hershey Bears game.

Join us in welcoming Andrea Bowersox as a new member of the Curriculum and Trainer Development Department!
CONSULTANT AND TRAINER BIRTHDAYS

AUGUST

Lester Michael Goodman  Aug 2
Bruce Schaffer  Aug 6
Anne Shenberger  Aug 13
Kathleen Moore  Aug 18
Tom Trafalski  Aug 21
Debbie Leasure  Aug 22

SEPTEMBER

Patti Moyer  Sept 16
Charlene Kolupski  Sept 17
Mary Ann Grec  Sept 21
Corrie Harold  Sept 25
Jacqueline Goldstein  Sept 28
Gary Shuey  Sept 28

“If you don’t build your dream, someone else will hire you to help them build theirs.”

- Dhirubhai Ambani
Letter originally sent to all trainers on July 16, 2015

Dear Trainers:

Thank you for your commitment to child welfare. We value your support. In the past several months many of you have participated in opportunities to provide the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center valuable feedback including responding to a survey on the trainer utilization process, completing trainer feedback forms, attending monthly lunch CTAG meetings, and contributing to the Consultant and Trainer Palette. We have also used some of these forums to provide you updates regarding pending changes in curriculum and trainer delivery processes, as well as other Resource Center changes. For those of you who have not been able to attend CTAG meetings in person or by conference call, we have provided meeting minutes for your review and consideration. If you cannot participate in these meetings you can email us or if you require clarification, have questions, or want to provide comments.

In the CTAG meetings we have presented our plans to substantially revise our method for evaluating training as well as training delivery. We informed you in February 2015, that we have reviewed the current Level 1 evaluation form with internal and external research and evaluation experts and determined that our current form and processes do not reliably measure trainer performance. As a result, the evaluation form is undergoing redesign to more effectively gather information on the reaction to the training session. At that time we shared with you the draft form and process, which is undergoing finalization. We also shared with you that we no longer consider “trainer scores” below a 4.0 to determine whether to conduct a technical assistance or whether a trainer should continue to train a particular course. Also, since this form does not reliably measure trainer performance, we will no longer be using it as the basis for trainer recognition letters. We are in the process of identifying more precise methods to recognize trainers for their delivery of training sessions. To support this effort, the current trainer observation form and process is also undergoing revisions. We will be sharing a draft at an upcoming CTAG meeting for your feedback. In addition, we welcome your thoughts and suggestions about how this recognition can be accomplished.

Thank you again for your commitment and support for child welfare training. If you have any questions or would like to provide comment, please direct those to Sharon England at sse8@pitt.edu.
Addressing Early Departure Requests

Submitted by Sharon England

Letter originally sent to all trainers on July 16, 2015

Dear Trainers:

Thank you for your continued commitment to child welfare training. Please let this email serve as a reminder of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center’s policy for early dismissal. In a September 9, 2014 email (see below) we reminded you of the policy and alerted you to concerns that were expressed by your colleagues regarding the practice by some trainers to dismiss participants early from training sessions. We also published this email in the October 2014 Consultant and Trainer Palette.

We recognize that participants present challenges when they want to leave early especially during spring and summer months. We have been hearing from trainers that an increasing number of participants are reporting that other trainers are permitting early dismissals. Please remember that early dismissals, elimination of 15 minute breaks, and abbreviated lunches are not permitted for the many reasons identified in our previous communication. This practice places your training colleagues in an awkward position when they adhere to the policy.

Thank you again and please know that we value your support for the Resource Center’s policies and procedures. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please direct them to Sharon S. England at sse8@pitt.edu.

Letter Originally Sent to Trainers on September 9, 2014

Dear Trainers:

Thanks to all of you who have been providing us consistent feedback about curriculum and training issues that arise in the classroom. We appreciate the time you have taken to provide detailed responses to the trainer feedback form. Through these responses and other reports, we have become aware of the concerns and challenges you are experiencing with training participants requesting early departure from training sessions by making modifications in the training schedule, such as shortening the lunch break and/or eliminating morning and afternoon breaks.

We appreciate that in the event of poor weather conditions or holiday traffic congestion, many participants, as well as trainers, are anxious to get on the road quickly to safely travel and/or minimize delay in returning home. We recognize that many training participants have traveled a farther distance than their usual work commute to attend a training session and the opportunity to depart early affords them the convenience of returning to their homes closer to their usual time. We also appreciate the positive impact an early departure from work and/or a training session can have on staff morale.

However, it is important for trainers and participants alike to recognize the responsibility that CWRC and its contracted trainers have in accurately documenting and verifying that participants actually attend the number of training hours for the credit hours they are awarded by CWRC. In particular, CWRC expects that all trainers consistently communicate and hold participants accountable to the 15 minute rule that has been established by the CWRC Steering Committee and is a requirement for the authorization of CWRC training credit. In addition, CWRC is authorized to issue continuing education credit hours through the State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and
Professional Counselors for those training participants requiring continuing education credit hours for their licenses. We must comply with the provision that “credit hours” are the actual clock hours that participants are in educational programming, excluding breaks and that clock hours are defined as “fifty to sixty minutes of instruction or participation in an approved course or program.” Permitting training participants to depart early and awarding them full credit for their attendance falls outside of these provisions.

In addition to the above training credit and continuing education requirements, there are the concerns and expectations of the training participants’ employers. Some employers may have prescribed lunch hour requirements for their staff and/or expectations that their employees attend a full day at work even while attending a training session. Their policies may dictate that an employee return or resume work when a training session ends early which may deny the benefit of an early departure for some training participants.

Establishing an early departure decision in a training session is fraught with challenges. Not all training participants or trainers may welcome an abbreviated lunch or elimination of 15 minute breaks. They may rely on that time to conduct errands, prepare for the afternoon session, or they simply may desire more relaxation time. They may experience “peer-pressure” and be reluctant to volunteer that their employers’ policy prohibits them taking advantage of an early departure. Later, they may express their concerns to their employer about having to return to work while others were afforded an early departure. Trainers may be similarly concerned about receiving low evaluation scores or comments when training participants begrudge the trainer’s preference to follow the schedule as designed. Training sessions such as Charting the Course involving cohorts are particularly problematic when training participants negotiate with the Module One trainer an early departure with the expectation it will be honored by the next nine trainers in the series.

We have also heard reports about early departures occurring because the entire content for the curriculum has been fully delivered prior to the end of the scheduled session. Again, trainers and training participants must remember that credit is awarded based upon time, not content. In particular, the continuing education credit hours policy states that credit hours are comprised of the “actual clock hours that participants are in educational programming,” not the amount of content that is delivered. In these instances, trainers must employ their facilitation and platform skills to recognize and respond appropriately when it appears that training participants are too rapidly moving through the curriculum. There may be several causes for these occurrences including that training participants may minimize their participation to ensure an early departure. In those instances, the trainers must proactively engage the training participants by encouraging a more in-depth analysis of the materials or by identifying their own or the participants’ case scenarios and applying course concepts to them. The trainer might also remind training participants that their active participation is expected during the session and reinforce the expectation that the session will not end earlier than the allotted time. Of course, if trainers believe that the content for any curriculum does not appear to be sufficient for a six hour time frame, we would welcome your feedback on the trainer feedback form. A CWRC representative will contact you to provide suggestions as to how the content can be appropriately delivered in the allotted time frame or, if needed, will plan to make revisions in the curriculum accordingly.
The CWRC leadership has discussed these concerns in the context of these very clear obligations and scenarios and has determined that if a training group has agreed to abbreviate a lunch period and/or eliminate a break that a planned early dismissal for no more than one half hour may occur each day of a training session.

However, trainers and training participants must abide by several conditions before a modification in the departure can occur.

1. No curriculum content may be eliminated to accommodate the modified schedule.
2. The modification in the schedule must be driven by the participants’ requests, not for the convenience of the trainer. The trainer should never request directly or suggest indirectly that the participants modify the schedule to accommodate the trainer’s personal needs. If a trainer cannot fulfill his/her responsibility to conduct the training session as scheduled, he/she should inform the Resource Specialist immediately so another trainer can be scheduled.
3. If the participants propose an early dismissal, the trainer must encourage participants, who are opposed to a shortened break schedule and/or whose employer has a policy that restricts them from a shortened lunch time or from an early departure, to make the trainer aware so that the schedule is not modified.
4. Participants and trainers cannot commit to early departure for a series of training sessions, such as Charting the Course or Supervisor Training Series, which then obligates future trainers and participants to an early departure.
5. Early departure must be provided to all participants in a session. Individual participants cannot be excused while others are required to or volunteer to remain.
6. In the event of travel conditions due to weather and/or the issuance of a travel advisory, trainers along with the training participants should determine a course of action that supports the ability of the trainer and the training participants to travel safely. If, in those instances, an early departure occurs and the lunch hour or breaks have not been adjusted accordingly, the trainer must contact the Resource Specialist who scheduled the training session in advance, by phone, email, or text and inform the Resource Specialist of the reason and time of the early departure.

Again we value your contribution and dedication in training child welfare professionals. The CWRC greatly appreciates your cooperation with these policies and expectations. If you have any questions or would like any further clarification regarding this feedback or CWRC policies, please contact Sharon England by email at sse8@pitt.edu.
Trainer Updates and Reminders

Submitted by Andrea Merovich

**CWRC Parking Lot**
Over the weekend of August 8th, the lines and wording in the side and staff parking lots were repainted. In addition to this refreshed paint job, six parking spots in the side parking lot were designated as “staff.” The next time you are training at the CWRC building in Mechanicsburg, you are welcome to utilize these spots as well.

**Training Approval Credits**
At the end of a training, we ask trainers to verify that the participants present qualify to receive training credits. This is done on the Attendance Sign-In Sheet under the far right column titled “Training Approval Credits.” Please note: When completing this portion of the Attendance Sign-In Sheet, please initial each participant individually rather than simply signing once for every participant on the list. Please only initial for participants that have completed the full training. Credit can only be given to participants who attended the complete training.

**New CWRC Staff Enrolled in CTC**
Frequently, newly employed CWRC staff are enrolled in all ten of the Charting the Course modules. Our expectation is that they will participate in all elements of the training like everyone else. Although, they will certainly introduce themselves as CWRC staff, we ask that trainers refrain from asking these individuals questions regarding CWRC and bringing too much attention to the fact that they are a CWRC staff person. Please note, these individuals are also still learning about their new place of employment and adjusting to their new role. Limiting attention to their role at CWRC will reinforce an environment of learning for all participants, including our new staff members. If you have any pressing questions about CWRC, the training or anything else, please reserve them for your Resource Specialist. Thank you for your understanding!

**Worker Safety Resources Available**
In light of the recent, untimely loss of Lara Sobel, a Vermont child welfare professional who was shot and killed on Friday, August 7, the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute has collected and shared a variety of safety-related resources for your perusal and use. Resources are categorized by Worker Safety, Self-Care, and Secondary Trauma.

To access these materials, click [here](#) or visit [www.ncwwi.org](http://www.ncwwi.org) and click on “Worker Safety & Honoring Lara Sobel” under What’s New. Trainers are encouraged to explore these resources and to share them with participants during your trainings.
Training Reminder for Charting the Course Module 2

Submitted by Andrea Merovich

At the end of the in-classroom training for Charting the Course: Module 2: Living the Mission of Child Welfare, participants need to be given an access code for the post work they need to complete online. Without this code, they cannot complete the course requirements. This code is date specific and changes every 30 days. Look for this code to be in your training materials on the half sheet that has your training date and workshop ID number on it. There is a new section for the Module 2 trainings for the post work code, which is a combination of numbers and letters. If you do not find the code in your materials, please contact the Administrative Assistant for the appropriate training region.

Thank you!

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Training Date: ____________________________

Here is your Workshop ID Number for your training evaluations:

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*Please have all participants write this ID number in the designated Workshop ID location on the scantron evaluation form. Thank you!

If this is a CTC module 2 training, this is the code to be given to participants for their post work:

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I've seen better days,
but I've also seen worse.
I don't have everything that I want,
but I do have all I need.
I woke up with some aches and pains,
but I woke up.
My life may not be perfect
but I am blessed.

~ Lessons learned in life ~
Training Material Return Process

Submitted by Andrea Merovich

You've no doubt seen the cover letter that arrives with your materials before each of your scheduled trainings. In fact, you might be so accustomed to seeing it, that some of the content might be easily missed. That cover letter contains detailed information on the training materials you received and must return to the Child Welfare Resource Center. The prompt and complete return of training materials is a key part of the training process. In some cases, we have limited supplies that need to be sent to the next person training that course. Additionally, some of our training materials are costly or difficult to replace. More importantly to you, our trainers, the prompt return of all of your training materials means you will receive payment in a more timely fashion. Let's take a closer look at one of the processes we have in place – the tracking of training materials we send to you and its return to the CWRC.

We keep a log of all the materials we send to trainers, from the handouts to the training room keys. We keep this tracking sheet of training materials when the box is sent, and we reference it when the box of training materials is returned. When an Administrative Assistant or Resource Specialist asks you to keep materials for an additional scheduled training, we place a copy of this email correspondence in the workshop folder for future reference. We also request that training materials be returned to the CWRC after the training has occurred or in the event of a training cancellation. If your training has been cancelled, a Resource Specialist will contact you to organize this.

If we receive the returned materials and discover that not all of the items are present, CWRC Administrative Assistant, Melissa Yoho, will contact you via email to quickly resolve this issue. Your payment is promptly processed upon receipt of all training materials – sign-in sheets, the signed and dated trainer invoice, the curriculum PowerPoint disk, any videos or materials specific to your workshop, evaluation forms, and training room keys (if training was held in an off-site training room).

We thank you for your continued cooperation and appreciate your service to the Child Welfare Resource Center!
The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center is a national leader in advocating for an enhanced quality of life for Pennsylvania’s children, youth and families.

In partnership with families, communities, public and private agencies, we prepare and support exceptional child welfare professionals and systems through education, research and a commitment to best practice.

PALETTE CONTRIBUTORS

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