a monthly newsletter from
the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center

COUNTY CONNECTION

Foundations of Supervision Standalone Modules Now Available

Submitted by: Andrea Merovich

Standalone modules are available for select Foundations of Supervision courses, which include:

- **Module 2: Supervisory Roles and Personal Boundaries**
- **Module 4: Using Child Welfare Data**
- **Module 6: Coaching and Performance Management**

These standalone modules are available for individuals who are already certified as supervisors.

Module 2 is a twelve-hour, instructor-led module providing opportunities for supervisors to practice applying the ethics of supervision, navigating role transitions, and setting and maintaining boundaries as a supervisor through Team-Based Learning™ application activities and simulation. This workshop is approved for 12 continuing education credits and includes a two-hour online prerequisite available through E-Learn.

Module 4 is a six-hour instructor-led module examining the utilization of data within child welfare to continuously improve outcomes for children and families through the use of application activities and Team-Based Learning™. This workshop is approved for 6 continuing education credits and includes a two-hour online pre-requisite available through E-Learn.

Module 6 is a twelve-hour, instructor-led module providing opportunities for supervisors to practice applying their collaboration, engagement, and professionalism skills to support supervisees' professional growth through Team-Based Learning™ application activities and simulation. This workshop is approved for 12 continuing education credits and includes a three-hour online prerequisite available through E-Learn.

Please contact your Regional Resource Specialist if you would like to schedule any of these workshops.

RACE EQUITY TIMELINE: A Journey Toward Inclusivity and Change

By the CWRC External Race Equity Workgroup

Dear Readers of County Connections,

We're thrilled to share with you the journey of our organization's commitment to becoming an anti-racist organization, striving for inclusivity and equity in all aspects of our work. From our initial steps to our ongoing efforts, we've come a long way in our pursuit of meaningful change.

2019: Planting the Seeds of Change

- **Prior to National Uprising:** Even before the nation was galvanized by events like the tragic murder of George Floyd, our Child Welfare Education and Research Program (CWERP) leaders were proactive. They assembled a small group to explore establishing the Resource Center as an anti-racist organization.
- **Starting Within:** We embarked on our journey internally, educating our staff about race equity and its impact on Pennsylvania County Child Welfare Agencies and the families they serve.
- **Collaboration and Foundation:** Recognizing the importance of partnerships, we initiated collaboration with the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) to guide and support our efforts.

2020: Laying the Groundwork

- **Messaging and Education:** Early in the year, we began communicating our intentions to become an anti-racist organization, sharing resources and materials to educate our staff.
- **Awakening to Action:** "Awake to Woke to Work - Building a Race Equity Culture" and similar resources were introduced, shaping conversations and understanding within our executive team and beyond.
- **Unity in Diversity:** Our Resource Center Steering Committee embraced our anti-racist goals, creating a united stance for change.
- **Supporting Our Peers:** Recognizing that transformation is not solitary, we partnered with likeminded organizations, like the Office of Children, Youth, and Families, and the Center for the Study of Social Policy to strengthen our collective impact.
- **Safe Spaces:** We initiated affinity groups for CWRC staff, such as the People of Color (POC) Affinity Group, offering safe spaces for discussions on race.
- **Reflection and Evolution:** We engaged in self-assessment, using tools like the Transforming Organizational Culture Assessment (TOCA), to understand our progress and potential.

2021: Paving the Way

- **Every Voice Matters:** We embraced race equity discussions as an integral part of our staff meetings.
- **Shared Vision:** The Desired Future State (DFS) and working agreements for having conversations about race were presented, and feedback from the staff was sought.
- **Stepping Up Recruitment:** Our approach to hiring evolved, incorporating race equity questions into all interviews and diverse recruitment strategies. Candidates are also informed about the CWRC's commitment to being an anti-racist organization.

- **Learning and Growth:** Professional development sessions for our staff expanded, providing a deeper understanding of race equity through expert presentations and interactive discussions.

2022: Progress and Empowerment
- **Embedding Change:** Conversations about race became regular features of department and team meetings.
- **Equity at Every Stage:** We provided implicit bias resources to interview panels, striving for fairness from the outset.
- **Plotting the Path:** We established workgroups focused on inward and outward facing work to guide our organization's journey toward equity. They are the Internal Race Equity Workgroup and the External Race Equity Workgroup.
- **Ongoing Education:** Professional development sessions continued, empowering our team with knowledge and understanding.
- **Leadership Series:** We launched a leadership series in collaboration with CSSP, challenging and empowering our management team and Race Equity charter group members.

The External Charter – Our Group's Guide-in-Writing

As part of the CWRC's unyielding commitment to fostering equity and inclusivity, we presented the framework outlined in the External Race Equity Workgroup Charter. This workgroup is focused on the CWRC's outward facing products, efforts, and interactions as they relate to promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. This charter encapsulates our ongoing efforts to transform the CWRC and the broader child welfare system in Pennsylvania. Through intentional strategies and collaborative partnerships, we are steering towards a future where every child, youth, and family experiences equitable opportunities and nurturing environments, unburdened by racial disparities.

Conclusion: Progress in Motion

With the External Race Equity Workgroup Charter as our guide, we're navigating the course towards a brighter, more inclusive tomorrow. Our unwavering dedication remains focused on reshaping the landscape of child welfare and fostering a legacy of equity and inclusion.

As we stride forward into the next phase of our journey, we're excited to continue learning, growing, and fostering inclusivity in every aspect of our work. We invite you to tune into our future articles as we navigate this mission of change and look forward to sharing further updates on our progress. As we continue our race equity journey, we will be sharing updates to future publications of County Connections.

With determination and unity,

The CWRC External Race Equity Workgroup

Introducing our YAB Youth Ambassador– Qasim Abrams

When people hear terms like "DHS," "Kinship," or "Foster Care," they often associate them with negative connotations. However, in my personal experience, these words played a role in bringing stability and positivity to my life, despite the uncomfortable situations and decisions they led me to make.

At the age of 16, I entered the foster care system, which was a unique experience for both me and my family. Thankfully, I had the support of my blood relatives through kinship care during this challenging time. Although staying with family was comforting, it's essential to recognize that youth in kinship care still face transitions and require support to adapt to the changes.

During this period, I was completing my sophomore year of high school and planning for my future while navigating the foster care system. My primary goal was to graduate with honors and secure a spot in college. I achieved this goal, but due to family dynamics, I again had to relocate to other relatives after high school.
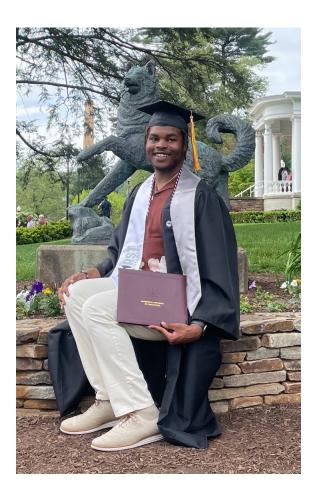
At 18, I graduated from high school fully focused on my college education at Mansfield University. Despite the challenges of the foster care system, I remained determined to pursue my education. Even during the introduction of COVID-19 around my sophomore year, that didn't deter me, as I continued my studies remotely with my kinship family until I returned to campus in my junior year.

However, after dealing with various challenges on campus, including racial, social, and financial issues, I made the necessary decision to transfer to Bloomsburg University for my senior year. This decision allowed me to step out of my comfort zone and demonstrated that I could go against the grain, even when others questioned my choice.

I finally completed my college education graduation at age 22 in the spring of 2023 with a degree in Mass Communication/Public Relations as a first-generation college student in my family. It was an emotional and uncertain moment, but my resilience has led me to secure two great jobs that showcase what I've learned from my major and provide a solid foundation for my future.

I currently work as a Concierge in my hometown of Philadelphia at a luxury apartment complex and recently became a Statewide Quality Improvement Youth Ambassador through the University of Pittsburgh for the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center.

In conclusion, foster care is a temporary phase in one's life and doesn't define who you are. I've been in two foster homes and managed to complete my education without encountering many of the plights older youth face in transitioning from care to adulthood. Success is not determined by how you start but where you finish.

The 4 C's of Workforce Development Webinar

Submitted by: Christina Fatzinger

The webinar, held on September 25, 2023, featured the CWLA Emerging Leaders Committee Co-Chairs, representing public and private agencies that have implemented various workforce strategies aligned. The panel shared actionable steps agencies can take to incorporate strategies supporting employee wellness, professional development, and community partnerships.

4 Cs of Workforce Development: Culture, Competency, Capacity, & Community on Vimeo

PowerPoint Presentation (ncwwi.org)

CWEL Reminder

Submitted by: Laura Borish

REMINDER

County and OCYF staff interested in earning a Master's degree in Social Work through the Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) Program are invited to join the CWEL Team for a general information session. **Registration is not required.** Those attending the information session will learn about the application process, participating schools, and the benefits available to participants. The information session will be held via Zoom on the following date:

Friday, January 19, 2024
9:00-10:00am
Join Zoom Meeting
https://pitt.zoom.us/j/97914634088
Meeting ID: 979 1463 4088
Dial by your location
• +1 267 831 0333 US (Philadelphia)
• 877 853 5247 US Toll-free
Meeting ID: 979 1463 4088

Additional information is available at:

https://www.socialwork.pitt.edu/researchtraining/child-welfare-programs/child-welfare-education-leadership-cwel

The CWEL Team is also available to provide presentations to County Commissioners, Advisory Boards, Agency Leadership Teams, and Agency Staff Members.

For more information and to schedule a presentation, please contact Laura Borish, CWEL Agency Coordinator at lbb14@pitt.edu or 412-334-9122.

COVID-19

Submitted by: Wendy Unger

Effective August 1st, the University of Pittsburgh discontinued institutional requirements—except for the vaccine policy for all University campuses and all faculty, staff, and students—and now encourages individuals to take responsibility for their health and the wellbeing of the community with respect to COVID-19.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention notes that viruses often rise during the fall and winter months when more people are indoors. We recommend that you reference the resources on the CDC's website, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) | CDC, for more information and base your decisions on the CDC Guidelines and your county policies. CDC guidance currently states that individuals who test positive for

COVID-19 should isolate at home for at least 5 days (or longer if you have a fever and continued symptoms) and wear a mask in public until at least day 11. All members of our community are welcome to wear a face covering at any time, for any reason. Please respect individual decisions regarding whether or not to wear a mask.

If you have any questions regarding Covid-19 and attending CWRC trainings and events, please contact Wendy Unger at wau2@pitt.edu. Best wishes for a warm and healthy fall and winter season!!

Bridge Update

Submitted by: Kari Giles

Coming Soon to Bridge

- In the "Manage Users" screen and in "Modify Demographics" mode, authorized users will have the ability to navigate between any of the four demographic screens by clicking on the numbered orbs.

- In the "Event History" widget, when a trainee clicks on "Certificates", it will navigate the trainee to the "My Workshops and Certificates" screen, instead of the "My Certifications" screen.

- Any certifications that need a role update in order to be started will now automatically start once the role has been updated under the trainee's profile. For instance: if an intern starts Foundations and their role is updated to a DSW, their certification will automatically start on their certifications screen.

- A new widget on the home screen called the "Message Center" will be visible to all trainees. The message center will display all notifications that have been sent to the trainee.

For Further Assistance

- For anyone who would like to set up a one-on-one Bridge training via Microsoft Teams, please contact BridgeHD@pitt.edu. This training can be for new liaisons or for anyone who may need a refresher.

- We would also love to hear any feedback, suggestions, and ideas you may have about Bridge via our online form at http://forms.cwrc.pitt.edu/BridgeFeedback/.

- If you have any technical issues or questions, please email the Bridge team at BridgeHD@pitt.edu.

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

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