

MRS Conference Call Notes  
February 2010

Counties Participating 2/17: Brunswick, Catawba, Chowan, Forsyth, Gaston, Hoke, Jackson, Lee, Lenoir, Mitchell, Mecklenburg, Union, Yancey

Counties Participating 2/18: Alamance, Avery, Catawba, Dare, Davie, Harnett, Jackson, Johnston, McDowell, Nash, New, Hanover, Northampton, Person, Randolph, Wilson.

Counties Participating 2/23: Caswell, Cherokee, Craven, Davidson, Davie, Gates, Halifax, Henderson, Macon, Mecklenburg, Pitt, Washington.

Agenda

Announcements from Raleigh

Presentation from the Supervisors Work Group

News from Raleigh

Letters

- 1/29 – Administration Letter regarding new Foster Home Licensing forms (5016, 5157, and 1515).
- 2/6 – Letter with corrections to the 5016 so make sure you using the most updated version of the form.
- 1/29 – Adjustments to IVB participation rates – we sent in more data and our rate was adjusted up, so that is a good thing, but we are still not where we need to be!
- 2/12 – Performance Mgmt letter - a new CSDW query regarding Foster Care visits.
- About a month ago a letter came out regarding a survey that all county staff can take regarding how the state supports the counties and gives technical assistance. REAP – an initiative that the Division and lots of county staff are working on together. By way of TA they are giving us time (not money) and part of what we wanted to do is get some baseline data on how we are providing TA/customer support, etc. currently to the departments. Survey came about a month ago but the deadline to complete has been extended for about a month. Open to everyone: directors, supervisors, and workers. This information will inform us going forward, along with some focus groups.

Other Announcements

- Diedre Russian is the new LINKS coordinator at the Division. She is in Joan McAllister's old position.

Presentation – Supervisor's Work Group

Supervisors across the state have been working on this issue for the last year or so, and will share the results of what they have been working on.

**Helping Child Welfare Supervisors Serve as the Agency's Practice Change Agents – North Carolina's Experiences.**

## Slide 2 – Purpose Today

The role of supervisors is recognized as crucial in every Child Welfare system.

- Supervision has been empirically linked to organizational, worker, and client outcomes – particularly staff recruitment and retention. Over 20 states included improving child welfare supervision as a key strategy in their Program Improvement Plan (PIP) during the first rounds of the CFSR.

*\* In NC at the time we developed the PIP the social worker turnover rate was about 30% and we really wanted to do something to address that since constant turnover affects the outcomes for the families.*

*\* NC did not include that in the first round of PIP but did in the 2<sup>nd</sup> one and began to meet in October 2007 and started looking at what the Division actually said about supervision and what it looks like in counties.*

*\* Statewide we have about 2700 social worker positions and, 496 supervisor positions.*

## Slide 3 - Process – Work Group

- Volunteers Supervisors from varied counties;
- Central Office Representatives (e.g.. PIP, QA and Training Coordinators);
- University Partners;
- Staff Consultants with NRC's.

*\* To get started on this work, went to the Children's Services committee and asked for volunteers and tried to make sure that both small and large counties, from various locations around the state were represented, and also other partners (listed above). National Resource Centers for Organizational Improvement and NRC for Data and Technology. NRC's facilitated a process where we developed a strategic plan through monthly meetings.*

## Slide 4 – Process

- Meet with Leadership - *made sure Division and Children's Services were on board and committed.*
- Organize work group - *small counties participated that sent one supervisor who represented 50% of their supervisors, and also large counties that certainly did not represent that large of a proportion. Included large and small counties to ensure all voices were heard.*
- Describe current culture of child welfare supervision - *how line staff value supervisors, expectations of supervisors.*
- Describe current structure and practice of child welfare supervision – *looked at what the Division says about supervision and what do they not? How does supervision fit into Family Centered Practice and SOC principles?*
- Describe purpose of supervision - *to pay attention to continuous improvement of your staff. A larger part of what you want to do is grow your social workers and improve their critical thinking and decision making skills*
- Formulate recommendations
- Construct strategic plan.

## Slide 5 – Products

- Strategic Plan
- Time and Activities Study
- Pilot of Child Welfare Best Practices in Supervision

#### Slide 6 - Strategic Plan:

*It was very important to the Division that this be a work group led by the supervisors, so modeled sharing leadership that there were 3 chairs; two co-chairs from counties (one large county, one small county), and one division staff. This group was led by supervisors, not just division staff.*

- Action Steps
- Tasks/Time Frames
- Benchmarks
- Completion Dates
- Persons Responsible

#### Slide 7 - Time and Activities Study

- Activities:
  - Identified by work group
  - Four Categories
    - Systemic (not case specific)
    - Personnel/Management (not case specific)
    - Case Specific (clinical)
    - Other
- Planned vs. Unplanned;
- One week captured;
- Automatic compilation of results (daily & weekly).

#### Slide 8 – Time and Activities Study

- Benefits to Individual Supervisors
  - Captures how supervisor's time is really spent
  - Allows for supervisor's comparison with others
  - Provides basis for supervisors to determine desired changes
- Benefits of aggregate data to Agency
  - Depicts CW work and the need for resources
  - Useful in designing staff development

#### Slide 9 – Best Practice

- The supervisor holds weekly scheduled supervision with staff with two scheduled individual conferences per month;
- The supervisor protects scheduled time by being truly available;
- The supervisor and worker use structured, purposeful format for supervision;
- The supervisor coaches and mentors staff to use supervision time more purposefully - *if something is not truly an emergency encourage social workers to hold off until the scheduled time. If they know they have time devoted to them each week, perhaps social workers can work more independently the rest of the week.*
- The supervisor uses a consistent case review tool on at least 2 case records from each staff member each quarter.  
*So far in Mecklenburg, this has been effective in moving cases along more quickly and efficiently.*

#### Slide 10- North Carolina's experience

- Followed model described by NRCOI
- Strategic plan addresses 3 areas:
  - Recruitment, Training, and Professional Development
  - Practices
  - Support

#### Slide 11 – North Carolina's Experience

- Struggles:
  - Buy-in from Directors - *Began piloting best practice strategies in November 2008. Came up with a commitment letter to have the Directors of participating counties to sign.*
  - Budget Constraints - *Time away from the office to participate, and travel restrictions have been a particular challenge during the current fiscal crisis, as well as lack of funds for the Supervisory training academy. Also some turnover at the Division has impacted our moving forward.*
- Products
  - Time and Activities Study
  - Strategic Plan
    - Best Practice pilot testing structured supervision.
  - Supervisor Tool Kit Website - *a place where there a lots of tools, agendas, reviews, anything that a supervisor has shared with Candice that ahs been beneficial in their county. So far it has only been the counties that have been participating in the best practices pilot, but are now opening it up to everyone. These tools are not endorsed by the Division but are a peer sharing site.*  
*In addition the complete strategic plan will be posted there shortly.*
  - Technology Assessment - *survey that went out to all staff asking what technology they have, and what they felt like they needed.*
  - Social Worker Satisfaction Survey - *still compiling results from this survey.*

#### Slide 12 – County Pioneers

- Thanks to the following counties for their participation in the Child Welfare Supervision Advisory Committee:
  - Alamance, Buncombe, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cumberland, Granville, Harnett, Johnston, Mecklenburg, Nash, Person, Wake, Wilson.
- Served as an advisory group for the SDM tool revisions, In Home Services policy, and as a resource for “Building a Framework and Model for Child Welfare Supervision”, focus group on the REAP (Reaching for Accountability and Excellence in Practice) project.

#### Slide 13 – North Carolina's Experience - Impact

- Strong commitment from directors to pilot direct link between county Departments and State Division that is impacting policy
  - System of Care values are in policy and training
  - Days have been designated for transmittal of policy
  - All changes in policy on-line are in red, print changes are underlines, and a rationale for the change is included.

- Division is in the process of redefining NC's model of technical assistance/support for county departments.

#### Slide 14 – Role of Leadership

- Must set parameters for work:
  - Agency mission
  - Agency Vision
  - Guiding principles
  - Strategies
  - Themes
  - Minimum Products
  - Must evidence commitment – up front, during, and upon completion of work to act on resultant plan.

#### Slide 15 - Resources

- Building a Model Framework for Child Welfare Supervision: <https://webapp.usm.maine.edu/MuskieWebDBfrontend/publicationView.action;jsessionid=750F372FBDA301A1F520293816E26C93?publicationId=6349>
- North Carolina Division of Social Services Supervisory Toolkit Site: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/best%5Fpractices%5Fpilot/>
- North Carolina Division of Social Services: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/training/childwelfare.htm>

*We do have training for supervisors:*

*Introduction for Supervision (9 day course) – this is not about policy, but concrete tools that you can take with you to do the best supervision work that you can. For example, moving away from “on the fly” staffings, and having more formal staffings.*

*The Staying Power – regarding staff retention.*

*Coaching in the Kitchen - Not specifically designed for supervisors but works well for them. Designed to help workers take advantage of teachable moments with families, but easy to make the jump to taking advantage of those moments with your staff.*

*Bringing Awareness and Cultural Competence – required for all new staff in their first year.*

*Revisions to the SDM implementation tools that is effective 3/1.*

*In rolling out that training, the Division did a train the trainer approach with supervisors. The supervisors are the keepers of the culture in an agency. The supervisors had suggested that the Division provide training to supervisors prior to rolling out an implementation and this was done with the SDM tools.*

#### Slide 16 - Contacts

- Kristy Perry – Foster Care Supervisor, Person Co DSS [kristy.perry@ncmail.net](mailto:kristy.perry@ncmail.net)
- Candice Britt – CFSR Coordinator – NCDSS (919) 334-1138 [candice.britt@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:candice.britt@dhhs.nc.gov)
- Bridget Happney – Foster Care Supervisor, Mecklenburg Co DSS (704) 336-7434 [bridget.happney@mecklenburgcountync.org](mailto:bridget.happney@mecklenburgcountync.org)

Want to grow the group if additional counties are interested in participating, email Candice.