SUPERVISORY CASEWORK PRACTICE

Supervisor Core - Module 1

- Your name
- Agency
- Unit you supervise
- How long you’ve been at your agency
- How long you’ve been a supervisor

SUPERVISOR CORE TRAINING

MODULE SC6
Building a Highly Effective Unit

MODULE SC5
Professional Development of Staff

MODULE SC4
Assessing and Evaluating Individual Staff Performance

MODULE SC3
Leading Change and Managing Conflict

MODULE SC2
Leadership In Child Welfare

MODULE SC1
Supervising Casework Practice

CORE: FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILL AND AWARENESS
Module 1 Overview

- Promote casework supervision
- Introduce Ohio Child Welfare Practice Model
- Deliver tools and strategies
- Increase recognition of, use of parallel process

Ohio Child Welfare Practice Model

Core Principles

- Child safety first; all policies, guidelines, practices child-centered, family-focused
- Emphasizes family engagement, involvement
- Supports assessment, intervention processes; focuses on family strengths; addresses underlying conditions, contributing factors that impact child safety

- Promotes active, collaborative, respectful engagement of parents, family, community, CPS stakeholders
- Identifies family needs; finds creative solutions, including formal and informal supports and services
- Respects family choices
- Takes appropriate action to provide protection and child safety when families cannot do so
Differential Response

• Family-centered practice
• One size fits all response not realistic or good practice
• Works with families across service systems
• Enhances families’ capacity to care for, protect own children
• Quality of child protection services the same regardless of track assignment

Differential Response

• Flexibility with child abuse, neglect reports
• Adversarial role neither needed nor helpful
• Understand family issues that lie beneath maltreatment reports
• Engage parents more effectively to use services that address their specific needs
• Quality child protection services be the same regardless of track assignment
Ohio Child Welfare Initiatives

- Family Search and Engagement (FSE)
- Permanency Roundtables (PRT)
- Safe and Together
- Visitation Pilots
- Family Team Meetings (FTM)
- Fatherhood Initiative

Child Welfare Initiatives

Each Ohio child welfare initiative integrates within the broader picture, transforming what may seem like a series of disconnected initiatives to one cohesive, system-wide shift in the way we work with our families from the “front door” through case closure.

1. Supervising Differential Response
2. Coaching in Child Welfare: Using the Practice Profiles
3. Group Supervision that Supports Family Engagement
4. Group Supervision Using the Case Consultation and Information Sharing Model
Activity Instructions – Part 1
“Job Description”

1) Take 10 minutes to create job description for casework supervisors

2) List all responsibilities and tasks on flip chart paper; leave 3” borders on left and right sides of page

3) Place dots in left border relating to:
   - Red --- critical importance
   - Green --- moderate importance
   - Blue --- lower importance

Becoming an excellent supervisor is a career-long process.

- Time
- On-the-job experience
- Life experience
- On-going formalized training, coaching and/or mentoring
  - It is also incremental.

Kadushin’s Model of Supervision

Functional roles:
1. Administrative
2. Educational
3. Supportive
Administrative Supervision

Efficient, effective delivery of services to achieve agency goals
Plans, executes, monitors, evaluates activities to accomplish work of agency through staff
Ensures adherence to agency policy, procedure to achieve agency goals

Administrative Supervisors

• Organize workplace and work environment
• Manage functioning of human resources within unit
• Communicates, operationalizes, continuously monitors whether agency mission is achieved
• Makes sense of larger environment so workers understand their roles within agency

Administrative Functions

• Implement legislation, rules, procedures
• Align unit’s work with agency, unit mission
• Plan, coordinate work; make decisions
• Monitor, evaluate work
• Act as advocate, administrative buffer, change agent
• Create, maintain effective, efficient organizational structure
• Ensure unit processes, procedures are designed to facilitate performance of work activities
• Address organizational/systemic barriers to staff performance
• Maintain on-going communication with caseworkers, administration
• Advocate with other parts of the agency and community

**Educational Functions**

• Orient new caseworkers to job
• Identify caseworker learning needs
• Conduct transfer of learning from knowing to doing
• Directly observe caseworkers perform assigned tasks
• Direct, consult, guide caseworkers
• Coach, model, give feedback

• Help caseworkers understand how their values, experiences may impact perceptions about families and case decisions
• Provide skill-building opportunities for caseworkers
• Facilitate professional growth and development
Educational Functions

• Use parallel process as a teaching tool
  – Always model behaviors and attitudes expected of casework staff
  – Explicitly point out parallels during “teachable moments”

Supportive Supervisors

• Team leaders
• Head cheerleaders
• Stress managers
• Improve morale, job satisfaction that, in turn benefits the agency
• Encourage
• Strengthen
• Allay anxiety

• Empower [caseworkers] to be productive, committed, mission-focused, and motivated to perform high-quality work
• Reduce guilt
• Increase certainty, conviction
• Relieve dissatisfaction
• Affirm, enforce worker’s assets
• Replenish depleted self-esteem
• Nourish, enhance capacity for adaptation
- Alleviate psychological pain
- Restore emotional equilibrium
- Comfort, bolster, refresh

Supportive Functions

- Create safe, comfortable, empowering environment
- Be available, approachable for case consultations and questions
- Engage in “doorway” consultations
- Reduce psychological or emotional barriers to caseworker performance and outcome achievement

- Help caseworkers develop confidence and realistic perspectives about the work
- Strengthen caseworker capacity to deal with job-related stress and personal reactions to the work
- Address diversity issues that impact casework practice and caseworkers’ perception of clients
- Provide positive reinforcement for effective performance
**Activity Instructions — Part 2**

**“Job Description”**

1. Review chart created earlier
2. In right column, identify how job tasks break down in the following:
   - A – Administrative
   - E – Educational
   - S – Supportive
3. Be prepared to share; 10 minutes

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**Kadushin Summary**

- Each supervisory function essential to effective supervision
- Each “leg” is distinct, necessary; complements other legs
- If one leg is broken or uneven, then the whole stool falters and crashes to the ground
- The challenge -- create balance between the three functions
Supervisors cannot simply react to the demands of the job; they must proactively engage in a balance of all three functions of supervision to be effective.

Complementing Kadushin

– Create and maintain an “ideal” work environment
– Provide oversight of the direct services to children and families

What We Mean By “Work Environment”

• Relationships between co-workers and supervisor
• Agency culture
• Physical environment
• Opportunities for personal and professional development
An “Ideal” Work Environment

Allows Caseworkers to:

• Work more effectively
• Be more resilient, better able to cope with stress, anger, sadness, frustration
• Feel more confident
• Be more realistic about their performance
• Increase motivation
• Grow personally and professionally

• Increase sense of value and belonging to the agency/unit
• Feel a greater sense of physical safety and well-being
• Enjoy comfortable workspace (adequate furniture, light and office supplies)

Supervisors

in the “Ideal Work Environment”

• Are sensitive to the needs of caseworkers
• Respect knowledge, skills, experience, opinions of caseworkers
• Help staff with stress, trauma
• Congratulate, appreciate, participate, demonstrate
• Model self-control, composure during stress, crises; projects sense of calm
• Celebrate client successes
• Help caseworkers manage workload
• Provide ongoing encouragement to caseworkers
• Recognize caseworker accomplishments
• Discover, develop staff talents and abilities

• Add humor, laughter to the unit (but not at the expense of anyone, especially clients)
• Use strengths-based supervision
• Help caseworkers get resources their clients need

Caseworkers in the “Ideal Work Environment”
• Feel supported by supervisors, colleagues
• Feel physically, emotionally safe
• Have opportunities to develop personally, professionally
• Feel positive about their job
Caseworkers in the “Ideal Work Environment”
• Are physically comfortable in their surroundings
• Have the necessary resources to do their jobs
• Are supportive and helpful to colleagues

Creating and Maintaining the “Ideal Work Environment”
• Requires deliberate, proactive effort
• Must utilize specific strategies to achieve work environment desired

Strategies
1. Develop Caring Relationships
2. Focus on Caseworker Safety and Well-being
3. Focus on the Agency Mission
4. Prioritize Planning
5. Create a Culture of Learning
6. Manage Time, Preserve the Workspace, and Prioritize Tasks
The Most Effective Supervisors

- Develop strong, nurturing relationships with their staff
- Are close to their staff
- Believe staff perform better for supervisors who care about them

As a Result

Caseworkers

- Tend to stay with the agency longer
- Work harder
- Develop a stronger commitment to their work
- Have a positive relationship with their supervisor

Gallup Study

- Handle stress more effectively
- More satisfied with their lives
- Are happy and engaged
- Better equipped to handle new challenges and changes
“49% of engaged employees agree that a strong relationship with their supervisor is crucial to their success at work.”

Parallel Process

1. Supervisor relationship with caseworker is built upon trust; embodies respect, genuineness, empathy
2. Caseworker relationship with parents is built upon trust; embodies respect, genuineness, empathy
3. Parents relationship with children is built upon trust; embodies respect, genuineness, empathy

Caseworker Safety

NASW reports:
- 48% of all non-fatal injuries from occupational assaults and violent acts occur in the field of healthcare and social services
- Social service workers in the public sector are seven times more likely to be victims of violent assaults than workers in the private sector
- 70% of front-line caseworkers have been victims of violence/threats in the line of duty
Supervisors Must

- Educate caseworkers about potential job risks
- Promote caseworker safety
- Implement policies, procedures that address caseworker safety in the field, in the office

Safety Strategies

- Identify points of greatest risk in life of cases
- Alert caseworkers to anything in referral that indicates safety issues
- Review safety at each case conference
- Require caseworkers to keep office informed of their whereabouts
- Require caseworkers to discuss any perceived safety issues with supervisor

In-Office Safety Strategies

Assess safety precautions
  - Where is unit located in relation to public areas?
  - Are caseworkers vulnerable due to physical space issues?
  - Are there doors that need to remain locked?
  - Are security cameras needed?
More Safety Strategies

- Have co-workers or law enforcement accompany workers when necessary
- Encourage staff to attend safety training
- Remind staff to always assess surroundings; pay attention to their instincts
- Alert administration to safety concerns
- Review safety issues, procedures in unit meetings
- Advocate for any resources needed to keep staff safe

Complacency
Increases
Vulnerability

Awareness
Decreases
Vulnerability

Sources of Stress

- Survival
- Internally generated
- Environmental and job
- Fatigue and overwork
Caseworker Stress

Stress that is not recognized and reduced can lead to “a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations.”

Staff Attrition in Child and Family Services: The Practice of Retention-Focused Supervision, Workbook 2
(McKenzie et al., 2007b, page 53)

Strategies to Address Caseworker Stress

• Actively listen: understand, empathize, acknowledge feelings
• Help caseworkers identify what they can change, provide suggestions, help them understand some things they can’t change
• Make referrals to EAP, etc.
• Allow caseworkers to vent without interruption
• Provide one-on-one emotional support: decrease their feelings of isolation, frustration, hopelessness, anger
• Help caseworkers understand how their self-talk can have a direct response on their emotional response, e.g., “awfulizing” and “catastrophizing”
• Arrange for caseworkers to discuss issues with co-workers

• Ask (when appropriate) how staff would like to proceed or resolve a particular problem. If staff can identify all or part of solution, it can be empowering for them.
• Temporarily reassign job tasks or provide staff support to counter overload
• Minimize or eliminate stress caused by supervisor indecision, changing priorities, inconsistent work assignments, assigning “best” workers toughest cases

“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.”

Rachel Remen in *Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories that Heal* (1996)
Trauma

**Normal reactions to abnormal events**

Secondary Trauma

Natural consequent behaviors resulting from knowledge about a traumatizing event experienced by someone else.

Indicators of Secondary Trauma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Headaches</td>
<td>Self-isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Stomachaches</td>
<td>Cynicism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prolonged grief</td>
<td>Backaches</td>
<td>Mood swings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Exhaustion</td>
<td>Irritability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Follows a single traumatic occurrence in which a person is directly involved.
- A life-threatening event
- An assault
- A threat of assault or death

Symptoms of PTSD

Re-Experiencing the Trauma:
- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Intrusive memories
- Exaggerated emotional and physical reactions
- Triggers that remind the person of the trauma

Emotional Numbing:
- Feeling of detachment
- Lack of emotions (especially positive ones)
- Loss of interest in activities

Avoidance of:
- Activities
- People
- Places that remind the person of the trauma

Increased Arousal:
- Difficulty sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability
- Hyper-vigilance (being on guard)
- Exaggerated startle response
Unresolved Trauma

- Hurts workers’ physical and mental health
- Decreases capacity / productivity
- Wastes time and energy
- Lowers morale

Affects Caseworker Performance

- Risks inefficiency and duplication of work
- Increases stress, frustration
- Clouds judgment
- Causes negative thinking
- Shortens attention span
- Reduces quality of work
- Causes turnover

- Creates inability to concentrate
- Affects decision-making
- Reduces fine motor control
- Lowers enjoyment of work
- Damages self-confidence
- Turns challenges into threats
- Compromises ability to protect children
Turnover Statistics

• National turnover rates 30% - 40% annually
• 71 Ohio counties report turnover rates of 14% - 16% annually
• Average tenure of caseworkers less than 2 yrs.
• New supervisors may only have 3 years total child welfare experience
• 60% of turnover may be preventable

Supervisors can

• Respect limits of caseworkers’ mental energy
• Allow caseworkers to say “no” when overwhelmed
• Help caseworkers manage time / tasks
• Ensure policies, procedures in place for assisting staff exposed to trauma
• Avoid use of labels, diagnoses that imply defect

• Promote supportive unit; encourage sharing difficult experiences
• Arrange debriefings within 24 hours
• Encourage use of grief counseling, peer support
• Review all Critical Incident Reports in unit meetings
• Encourage staff to build resilience – no excessive overtime; take time off as needed
• Offer on-going support and validation
Agency Mission

• Purpose of child welfare practice:
  – Safety
  – Permanence
  – Well-being

• A clearly articulated agency mission reminds supervisors and caseworkers of this purpose

A Unit Mission Will

• Reinforce unit’s purpose in achieving the ultimate goal
• Help caseworkers see connection between their specific jobs and agency’s reason for being
• Provide link between work done and goal to be achieved
• Keep staff focused on purpose and goal

Planning

Thinking through a course of action to achieve a goal or solve a problem.
• Gathering, evaluating information
• Making decisions about desired outcomes
• Activities to be performed to achieve goals; by whom, how, when and where
Benefits of Planning

• Gives direction and specific methods to accomplish goals
• Saves resources; prevents duplication of effort
• Assures focus on achieving most important goals and objectives
• Assures supervisors identify real issues
• Assures collection of pertinent information prior to acting

• Formally records activities to be completed, enabling supervisors to track, monitor degree to which plans are implemented and effectiveness of plans
• Can be used as a formal, written tool to communicate with others, assuring that all parties are in agreement and working in a coordinated manner

• Transparency in planning models its importance and value to staff
• Caseworkers associate successful planning with a smoothly run, less stressful, and productive work environment
Create a **Culture of Learning**:

- Enable others to take responsibility for problems and help solve them
- Take responsibility for problems and work collaboratively with others to solve them
- Keep caseworkers engaged by discovering and developing their talents and abilities
- Promote caseworker development
- Encourage creativity and “risk” taking
• Make it safe for staff to make mistakes and learn from them
• Create a climate of trust and openness
• Support caseworkers' attempts to develop competence, effectiveness, independence, and self-directedness in their work
• Be a continuous learner as well as a continuous teacher

Time, Workspace, Priorities

• Manage time well
• Preserve the workspace
• Prioritize tasks effectively

Time stressors are the most pervasive source of pressure and stress in the workplace
Factors Affecting Good Use of Time

- Doing things that should not be done at all
- Duplicate efforts
- Lack of communication about a task and person(s) responsible
- Constant interruptions; failure to minimize interruptions

Suggested Habits

- Set aside amounts of uninterrupted time for caseworkers and self
- Take care not to over schedule time
- Create “no email” holidays
- Protected times free of email and phone interruptions
- Use “EOM” emails
Maximize the Workspace

Arrange the unit space and personal workspaces so they promote a sense of comfort, familiarity and efficiency.
  – Increases morale and productivity
  – Enables staff to perform essential job tasks

The Flipside

• Dark, dirty, cluttered workspace invites disorder - ultimately negates work efficiency.
• Uncomfortable furniture, inadequate lighting and poor temperature control contribute to a lack of productivity.

Prioritize Tasks
**Important!!!**

**Important tasks** have a direct connection to the achievement of goals (e.g., the supervisor’s, the caseworker’s, the unit’s, the agency’s).

*These tasks should receive the greatest amount of time and attention.*

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**URGENT!**

**Urgent tasks** have specific deadlines. The sooner the deadline, the more urgent the tasks become.

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**Urgent Tasks**

- Often originate from other people
  - May be associated with them achieving their goals
- May be a result of a problem that requires resolution
- Tend to monopolize people’s time resulting in little attention to things that are important
Prioritizing Tasks

Helps caseworkers, supervisors make legitimate judgments about how they spend their time.

Covey Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>URGENT</th>
<th>NOT URGENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMPORTANT</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOT IMPORTANT</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quadrant I

- **Urgent and important** tasks such as:
  - True emergencies
  - “Fighting fires”
  - Pressing matters
  - Tasks with immediate deadlines
Crisis Mode

- A constant state of chaos
- Stress and burnout result from spending too much time in Quadrant 1.
  - No more than 20% of one’s time should be spent in this quadrant.

Quadrant II

- Tasks that are **not urgent but are important**, for example:
  - Scheduling
  - Preparation and planning
  - Relationship building
  - Healthy recreation
  - Prevention
  - Professional development
  - Planning new opportunities

Highly Effective Mode

- Spend most time here (at least 65%)
- Experience:
  - Sense of balance
  - Control
  - Perspective
Quadrant III

- Tasks are **urgent and not important**, such as:
  - Distractions
  - Interruptions
  - Things that others demand through *some* calls, *some* mail, *some* meetings, etc.
- Tasks in this quadrant are urgent but not important for achieving one’s mission

- People who spend a lot of time here feel:
  - Victimized
  - Vulnerable
  - Out of control
  - Lack vision
- No more than 10% of one’s time should be spent in this quadrant.

“Just Say No” Mode
Simple Suggestions

- Eliminate email pop-ups and alerts
- Silence cell phone (and text message alerts) when concentration is important
- Post a schedule indicating do not disturb periods
- Learn to say no to things that take time, focus from activities associated with goal achievement

Quadrant IV

- Tasks that are *not urgent and not important*, such as:
  - Procrastinating
  - Chitchatting
  - “Goofing off”
  - Unproductive activities

“Slacking” Mode

- People who spend a lot of time in Quadrant IV tend to be more irresponsible and/or dependent on others.
- No more than 5% of one’s time should be spent in this quadrant.
The point is...

Recognize when something is truly urgent and not merely disguised as such.

- Develop caring relationships
- Focus on caseworker safety and well-being
- Focus on the agency mission
- Prioritize planning
- Create a culture of continuous learning
- Manage time, maximize the workspace, and prioritize tasks

Ultimate Goal

The ultimate goal for supervisors of direct practice is ensuring the safety, permanence and well-being of children and families.
Casework Supervisors

- Play key role in recruitment, retention, professional development of staff
- They are:
  - Teachers
  - Coaches
  - Mentors
  - Evaluators responsible for quality of services children and families receive.

(Louisiana Child Welfare Comprehensive Workforce Project, 2009)

Supervising Direct Practice

- Overseeing “clinical” practice (a.k.a. administrative, educational and supportive supervision)
- Ensuring compliance: standards, laws, rules, policies (a.k.a. administrative supervision)
- Developing staff skills (a.k.a. educational supervision)

What is Clinical Supervision?

On actions, responses, any direct interaction, intervention, decisions or service between caseworkers and families

(Salus, 2004, page 61)
What is Clinical Practice?

Interventions caseworkers use in specific cases:

- Examining family’s level of functioning
- Exploring dynamics unique to the case
- Evaluating what intervention worked and didn’t work
- Identifying blind spots or biases

(Potter and Britton, 2009, page 296)

Clinical Supervisors Focus On

- Ability of caseworkers to engage clients
- Rapport or helping relationship between caseworkers and clients
- Risk and safety assessments and the associated decisions and plan
- Comprehensive child and family assessments

- Development of case plans and safety plans with the family
- A structured decision-making process
- Essential casework activities designed to facilitate change
- The review and evaluation of client progress
The ultimate focus is *always* on improved outcomes and better services for families.

Critical Thinking / Decision-Making

- Supervisors must be able to think critically and develop critical thinking skills in their casework staff.
- They must also make certain caseworkers have the skills and tools necessary to ensure the best decisions are made.

CAPMIS Major Case Points

- Point of referral - screening decision
- Pathway assignment decision
- Assessment of safety (AR or TR)
- Assessment of Risk (AR or TR)
- Placement decisions
- Assess reunification readiness
Steps of Critical Thinking
1. Determine the purpose
2. Identify relevant assessment criteria or questions
3. Gather information
4. Analyze information
5. Test hypotheses
6. Synthesize information, draw conclusions
7. Make well-informed decisions

Discriminating Questions
• What would happen if...?
• What do you think causes...?
• What is the difference between...and...?
• How does...fit with what we learned before?
• Why do you think I asked this question?

Signs of Skill Maturation
• Skillful and unbiased use of information learned during assessments
• Application of the critical thinking process
• Self-awareness and understanding about the impact of life experiences, cultures and values on problem-solving
• Careful listening and assignment of value to other perspectives and ideas, even when they are contrary to their own
• Discovery of unusual approaches for complex problems
• Ability to strip arguments of their irrelevancies and distill them into their essentials

(NCWWI, Linking Evidence to Child Welfare Supervision)

Determining Purpose
• What decision are you trying to make?
• What do we need to know to make that decision?

Criteria or Questions
What criteria do you need to make this decision?

The CAPMIS model provides criteria.
Gathering Information

- Who have you spoken with to gather information?
- What do we now know about the family that would add to the understanding about problems and potential solutions?
- What else do we need to know about the family that would help us have a more accurate understanding of their situation?

Analyzing Information

- What are the indications that a child’s allegations are accurate?
- What are the indications that the information you have gathered is credible?
- What bias do you have that could be interfering with your decision-making?
- What information have you gathered that is relevant?

- How have you determined that parties identified as responsible on safety plans are capable of following through with safety plan activities?
Testing Hypotheses

- Based on the information you have gathered thus far, what is your hypothesis about this family/situation?
- What additional information do you need to determine if this is accurate?

Synthesizing Information

Safety-related questions:
- What of the parents’ protective capacities are present that could contribute to assuring the safety of the child(ren)?
- What of the parents’ protective capacities are lacking and how does the absence of these affect the safety of the child?

- Do the parents have the behavioral protective capacities necessary to follow through with assuring the safety of their child?
- What child characteristics make the child(ren) vulnerable to abuse or neglect? Are there services that could decrease the vulnerability of the child(ren)?
Risk-related questions:

- What of the families’ Non-Risk Contributors are strengths that could become foundations for further growth and problem resolution?
- How do the Risk Contributors increase the risk of future harm to the child(ren)?

How will we know if a given intervention will reduce the likelihood of future harm to the child(ren) in the home or address a specific Risk Contributor?
- What evidence do we have to suggest that the parents will engage in necessary services to address the Risk Contributors? How does this affect our decisions?

Synthesizing Information

Other questions that support syntheses:

- How does this relate to what we have discussed?
- What would happen if...?
- What do you think causes...?
- What is the difference between... and...?
• How does...fit with what we learned before?
• How has this family changed in the course of their involvement with the agency?
• Why do you think I asked this question?
• What might have happened if our/the agency’s involvement had not occurred?

Learning Opportunity

• *Failure to Protect: The Taking of Logan Marr* (video)
• Participants practice applying critical thinking skills to various casework practice issues and dilemmas
• Guided discussions throughout the day to help participants practice critical decision-making skills as they apply to supervision

Child Welfare Requirements

• Ohio Revised Code (ORC)
• Ohio Administrative Code (OAC)
• Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation (CPOE)
• Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)
Policies and Procedures

Ensure staff compliance with agency policies and procedures that align with agency mission
- Supports policies and procedures
- Articulate link between the work of the unit and the agency mission

Best Practice Standards

- CWLA – Child Welfare League of America
- NASW – National Association of Social Workers
- COA – Council on Accreditation
- APSAC – American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children

Developing Caseworker Skills

- Help caseworkers develop, improve, strengthen, practice skills they need to do their work successfully
- Develop autonomy, confidence, competence of caseworkers to achieve safety, permanence, well-being of children and
Developmental Approach

• Skill attainment will be incremental
• Focus is on individual caseworker; “meeting him/her where s/he is” developmentally
• Current developmental level determines frequency and intensity of direct supervision needed

(Potter and Brittain 2009)

Skill Sets

• Engaging
• Assessing
• Partnering
• Planning
• Implementing

Skill Sets

• Evaluating
• Advocating
• Communicating
• Demonstrating Cultural and Diversity Competence
• Collaborating
Practice Profiles

A tool supervisors can use to:
- Assess caseworkers’ level of performance in each skill set area
- Communicate supervisory expectations
- Move staff from one point in their skill development to the next

Practice Levels

Unacceptable Practice
Developmental Practice
Ideal Practice

Large Group Discussion

1. How familiar are you with the skill sets and Practice Profiles?
2. Have you used them in supervision of your staff? How did it work?
3. Did anyone ever use them with you before you became a supervisor? How effective was that experience?
• Caseworker self-assessment
• Monthly skill-specific self-assessment and supervisory consultation form
• Six Basic Interview Steps in Solution-Focused Casework Practice
• Solution-Focused Assessment Questions
• Assessment Strategies
• Family Circles Tool
• Three Houses Tool

Communicating Expectations

• Supervisors must:
  – Set the standard for job performance
  • New caseworker
  • Experienced caseworker
  – Reinforce expectations
  – Hold staff accountable for expectations

Advancing Levels

• Supervisors and caseworkers identify current performance levels; plan together how to move performance to an advanced level
• Identify ways to measure performance improvement
In General

- Emphasize caseworkers’ strengths
- Highlight what caseworkers can do instead of what they cannot do
- Demonstrate how caseworkers use their strengths to improve their skills
- Identify job-related strengths that enhance caseworkers’ ability to serve children and families

Case Conferences

- Stay abreast of case developments
- Monitor compliance with child welfare requirements (e.g., standards, rules, mission, policies, and procedures)
- Provide guidance and feedback to caseworkers

Individual Case Conferences

- Facilitate evaluation and monitoring of:
  - Case activities
  - Interventions on behalf of children and families
  - Caseworker performance
- Can incorporate elements of educational, supportive, and administrative supervision
• A brief history or review of the child/family
• Caseworkers’ description of the last home visit
• Current safety factors for children and caseworker
• Changes, if any, in the genogram and ecomap
• Family risk factors and strengths
• Case plan progress and barriers

• Upcoming stressors facing the child/family
• Status of contract services, if any
• Placement and permanency
• Documentation and timeline requirements
• Plans for case-related activities for the next week

Supervisor Role

• Provide time for caseworkers to ask emergent questions on other cases not currently under review.
• Use active listening, strengths-based feedback, positive reinforcement
• Ask discriminating questions to make sure caseworkers are making accurate assessments, decisions, plans
Caseworker performance
Personnel issues
Confidential matters
Corrective action
Caseworker development, e.g., Individual Training Needs Assessments (ITNAs) and Individual Development Plans (IDPs)

**Group Case Conferences**

- Compliment the existence of the learning culture within the unit
  - Discuss and debate issues
  - Contribute their knowledge, skills, experience
  - Enrich decision-making by providing collective expertise and appropriate challenge

**Benefits**

- Mutual support of colleagues/team development
- Staff skill-building
  - Caseworkers can grow and develop when an idea offered by their supervisor or colleagues exemplifies best practice and can be applied to their work.
  - Use of critical thinking skills
- Caseworker morale
- Collaboration among unit staff
- Consistency in unit practices
- Diversity in perspectives and experience
- Increased time available to the supervisor

Clinical Consultation Framework

- Reason for referral
- Purpose/focus of consultation
- Protection
- Risk and other complicating factors

- Genogram, Ecomap
- Gray area: Speculation
- Worries/Concerns/Hopes
- Next Steps
Group Discussion

- Do you currently use group case conferences?
- How often are these conferences held?
- In what capacity are the group conferences used?

Question 1

Whether individual or group case conferences, or both, are utilized in the unit, there are certain things supervisors need to do to establish the importance of the meeting(s). Name as many as you can.

Possible Responses 1

- Schedule regular meeting time and location for each conference
- Come prepared for every meeting; insist caseworkers do the same
- Limit conferences to maximum 90 minutes.
- Avoid potential interruptions by communicating with caseworkers and other staff about expectations, post “do not disturb” signs, etc.
- Expect caseworkers to attend all meetings
Question 2
What are the most important things to review in each conference, regardless of type?

Possible Responses 2
- Current safety factors for children and caseworker
- Changes, if any, in genogram and ecomap
- Family risk factors and strengths
- Case plan progress and barriers
- Placement and/or permanency issues

Question 3
What are possible adverse consequences with group conferences?
Possible Responses 3

- Unmet individual caseworker needs
- Negative group dynamics
- Individual biases

Managing the:
- Outspoken – who attempt to control meetings with their opinions
- Withdrawn – who participates little or not at all
- Recognition thirsty – who frequently offer their input and think their ideas are the most valuable
- Criticizer – who’s focused on finding fault; not strengths-based
- Humorist – who tries to interject humor when difficult issues are being discussed
Strategies

- Explain purpose, parameters of group case conference
- Decide types of cases to be presented, e.g.,
  - Unusual family needs or circumstances
  - Complex issues/problems not responding to casework intervention
- Establish group “rules of conduct”
- Utilize framework for case presentations

Strengths-Based Supervision

Strengths-based supervision promotes a positive partnership with caseworkers by recognizing their unique set of strengths and challenges.

(Defining an Individualized, Strengths-Based Approach. 2008)

Provide Strengths-Based Supervision

- Identify job-related strengths in caseworkers that enhance their ability to serve children and families
- Identify needs of staff but address those needs using strengths-based approaches
Promote Strengths-Based Casework Practice

• Guide caseworkers in effectively and respectfully engaging families in partnership with agency
• Emphasize strengths of families when talking with caseworkers
  – Highlight as often as possible what families *can* do instead of what they cannot do

Opportunities to Model Strengths-Based Practice

• During formal performance evaluations
• After observing caseworker interaction with clients
• During reviews of caseworker documentation
• During caseworker participation in meetings
Congratulations on completing Module 1!

Go forth and do good work!