



Strength-Based Supervision

Finding the Rays of Light and
Focusing Them

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Wraparound and Supervision

- Proposition:
- *The goal of supervision in wraparound is to help create the professional personality of competent family team facilitators, parent partners and support staff, and help them develop the knowledge, skills and understanding to respond effectively in the context of each child and family's personal, interpersonal and environmental situation*
- Agree, disagree? Amendments?

Supervisory Functions

- *Education* (develop knowledge, skills and understanding)
- *Support* (focus on feelings and stress and the tools to cope with them)
- *Administration* (dealing with the relationship between employees and the agency that employes them – evaluate performance, make decisions about reward, advancement and discipline)

Supervisory Tools

- Communication
 - Translating values into action
 - Communication job expectations tied to values
- Analysis
 - Assess staff performance
 - Assess progress with families
- Coaching
 - Proactively coaching staff to demonstrate desired skills
 - Correcting staff behavior

Hanging onto Hope

- Karl Menninger defined hope as an active process of recruiting strength and finding solutions
- Many of the families referred for wraparound come into the process short on hope
- So wrap staff have to bring hope into the process
- To be effective in a strength-based model, wrap staff need to consistently practice the skill of “learned hopefulness”
- Often the support of the supervisor is needed to build or restore this skill

Four Challenges

- Helping your staff help families and teams:
 - Translate talk into action
 - Stay on course through big transitions
 - Consolidate family situations with multiple service plans
 - Integrate confusing or conflicting clinical observations into the action plan
- While maintaining a strengths-based attitude

Turning Talk into Action

- Rapids on the road: what elements seem to be keeping your staff's teams from kicking into gear:
 - Talking strengths instead of using them?
 - Focusing on process rather than help?
 - Running down too many rabbits?
- What else?

The Supervisor's Challenges

- The press of paper – staff feel like they have to document process for fiscal reasons
- Values speak – staff feel like the words are all that matter
- Problem-based supervisory habits – reactive v.s. directive models
- Mired in ambiguity – situations are often messy, hard to focus on precision
- What else?

Reactive & Directive Supervision

- **Reactive Supervision**
 - Staff intervention is single family
 - Staff identify problems within consumers
 - Help giving is not easily seen by consumer
 - Frequent modifications may cause confusion about processes
- **Directive Supervision**
 - Focused on staff ability to follow phases
 - Supervisor checks on staff follow practice pathways
 - Help giving is transparent & accessible
 - Modifications occur after staff competency is demonstrated

Communication

- Maintain an explicit connection between values and agency tools and techniques:
 - Not only, this is why we make it strength-based, but also
 - This is how we make it S/B
- Follow it through the 4 phases:
 - Engagement, Planning, Implementation, Transition
 - Create a compelling reason to put the values into action

Finding the Rays of Light

- Staff can tend to get lost in the family's story
- And take on either implicit or explicit hopelessness
- That can show up in facilitators and parent partners going through the motions or giving way to increasing passivity
- Finding rays of light is more than just being a Pollyanna – it means finding elements of each implementation stage that were done right and emphasizing them
- In the context of principled practice

Using the Phases

- When staff report that they or their teams are stuck, keep the question in the context of the phase
- That way its not all about the family
- But how to use a generalized skill to solve a problem in a particular situation

Exercise

- In your breakout groups identify a good example of a staff having trouble getting their teams to translate talk into action
- Put the situation into the context of the 4 phases and brainstorm 4 reactive and 4 directive supervisory responses that might be used to help the staff person get things back on track
- Be prepared to share your ideas with the group

Work Sheet

Supervisory Responses

Phase	Reactive Responses	Directive Response
1. Engagement	a. b. c.	a. b. c.
2. Planning	a. b. c.	a. b. c.
3. Implementation	a. b. c.	a. b. c.
4. Transition	a. b. c.	a. b. c.

Analysis

- The process of breaking down the job into sufficiently small steps that each one appears eminently doable
- Sometimes more is needed
- Say a team has an action plan, but doesn't implement
- What tasks should a facilitator and parent partner be carrying out?
- Can you describe them in a way that is specific, measurable, doable and clear?

Coaching the Steps

- Step One: Introduce the task
 - Concrete terms
 - Behaviorally specific (3/4)
- Step Two: Explain the “why”
 - Deal with self interest
- Step Three: Demonstrate the task
 - Variety of strategies
- Step Four: Identify when & where to use task
 - Generally for all families
 - Specifically for individual families
- Step Five: Set a follow-up
 - When you predict the use
 - How will you check back?
 - Follow up conference?
 - Observation?

Administration

- What happens when coaching doesn't work?
- Why might staff still not be able to help their teams get their actions plans into action?
- In your breakouts think about some of your staff who continue to be stuck
- Brainstorm at least 20 driving forces that might be the contributing to this situation

Strength-Based Intervention

- Is a whole lot more than just saying please
- Are there times when the problem is less of a problem?
- What can you use as a positive start to the conversation?
- What is it that you want to accomplish with the conversation?

Correcting Staff Behavior

- Step One: Start with praise or empathy
 - Relevant to the situation
- Step Two: Describe the concern
 - Behaviorally specific: What happened?
- Step Three: Describe why it will be a problem for them
 - Appeal to self interest:
 - To get out of something
 - To get something
- Step Four: Describe the alternative
 - Behaviorally specific: What, when, how, where
- Step Five: Describe the payoff
 - Appeal to self interest
- Step Six: Practice the skill
 - Role play, demonstrate
- Step Seven: Define when to use it
 - Within 48 hours
- Step Eight: Set up a follow-up
 - Set an opportunity to check back

Transitions

- One kind of transition is the fourth phase
- But there are lots of other transitions as well
- Supervising around transitions can be tricky
- Are you pushing for the program's sake, or the family's?
- Why might staff be reluctant to guide teams and families through transitions?

Kinds of Transitions

- Programmatic – leaving wraparound
- Episodic – Life Happens: birth, death, job changes, illness, graduations, etc.
- Therapeutic – Moving from one resource or medication to another, or one stage to another
- Interdictive – Transitions as consequences: detention, hospitalization, etc.
- What other transitions can you think of?

Transition Basics

- Planned transitions should be based on measurable progress toward a specified goal
 - Expected transitions occur in the context of a known upcoming event – like turning 18, or completing a program
 - Contingent transitions are cued by the emergence of certain conditions, like a youth meeting probation expectations
- Out-of-the-blue transitions by definition can't be predicted individually, but since they happen so frequently, they can be anticipated in the abstract

Transition Skill Analysis

- Brainstorm at least 20 core skills that your staff should have to be able to help families and teams through both planned and out-of-the-blue transitions.
- Pick the top 3
- Now develop at least 3 different ways that a supervisor can help her or his staff learn to use each of those skills consistently and effectively.

Work Sheet

Transition Skills	
Skill	Teaching Strategy
1.	a. b. c.
2.	a. b. c.
3.	a. b. c.

Transition Tools

- Besides facilitation skills, supervisor should make sure that staff have sufficient tools for facilitating transitions
- For example, does the documentation system have a method for tracking family progress?
- Do teams have ways of helping families prepare for transition, like scrapbooks and portfolios
- Is there a format for transition plans (both internal transitions and program exit transitions)

Hope and Transition

- One way to build or restore hope is to find meaning in each stage of life
- Major transitions (whether objectively positive or negative) can be traumatic
- Meaning making is one of the coping skills of resilient people
- Humor is often the public face of meaning making
- 3 levels of meaning: the event; one's identity in the context of the event; the nature of the world as viewed through the lens of the event.

Multiple Plan Syndrome

- Sometimes the biggest barrier to implementation of the wrap action plan is the presence of several other human service or educational plans that don't jibe together.
- Probation or child welfare court orders
- Individual Education Plans
- Internal treatment planning in a day treatment or residential treatment program.
- What others have your staff had to deal with?

Task Analysis

- Much as you did for transitions, identify some frequent multiple plan situations, brainstorm a skill cluster to go along with the situation, pick 3 key skills and identify 3 different ways that supervisor could grow those skills in staff.

Work Sheet

Multiple Plan Handling Skills

Skill	Teaching Strategy
1.	a. b. c.
2.	a. b. c.
3.	a. b. c.

Clinical Inputs

- Children and youth in wraparound and their families often come into the process with lots of clinical labels
- And may have also gone through many different treatments and interventions
- Often there may be no clear clinical explanation for a child or youth's behavior or situation
- The risk is for your staff to buy into one or another clinical recommendation, or to fight against them

Maintaining Balance

- How can supervisors help staff stay strength-based and focused when there are conflicting or confusing clinical inputs?
- What tasks can be applied at each of the 4 phases to provide families and teams with a useful context for managing clinical input and information?
- Work in breakouts and prepare to share

Work Sheet

Integrating or Dealing with Clinical Input	
Phase	Information management skills
1. Engagement	a. b. c.
2. Planning	a. b. c.
3. Implementation	a. b. c.
4. Transition	a. b. c.

What Makes Our Practices Strength-Based?

- Six components of a strength-based approach:
 - **A**ttitude
 - **D**iscovery
 - **M**irroring
 - **I**ntervention
 - **R**ecording
 - **E**valuation

Pressure for Change to Be More S/B

- **External challenges**
 - Changes in community needs, expectations, relationships
 - Changes in technology for services and operations
- **Internal challenges**
 - Staffing changes
 - Philosophy changes
 - Leadership changes
 - Dreams and desires
- **Disconfirming information**
 - What we're doing isn't working
 - But doing it different is scary

Passion Drives Change

- Changing behavior is less a matter of giving people analysis to influence their thoughts than helping them to see a truth to influence their feelings. Both thinking and feeling are essential, both are found in successful organizations, but the heart of change is in our emotions. The flow of see–feel–change is more powerful than of analysis–think–change. These distinctions between seeing and analysis, between feeling and thinking, are critical because, for the most part, we use the latter much more frequently, competently, and comfortably than the former.
 - John Kotter – The Heart of Change

Points of Change

- Values
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Understanding
- Partnership
- And what else?

Proehl's 8 Steps for Change Leadership

- Create a clear sense of urgency
- Build a coalition for change
- Clarify the change imperative
- Assess the present
- Develop a plan for change
- Deal with the human factors
- Act quickly and revise frequently
- Evaluate and celebrate accomplishments

Supporting the Change Process

- In order to make strength-based practice the standard operating procedure for an agency or unit, the organizational climate should include:
 - **Incentives** for strength-based practice
 - **Disincentives** for not using this approach
 - **Resources** to support its use
 - **Removal** of barriers to its use
 - **Encouragement** from leadership

Change Levers for Leaders

- Language
- Reaction to crises
- Attention and recognition
- Shared learning experiences
- Allocation of rewards
- Consistency/Repetition
- Framing
- Criteria for selection and dismissal



Four Leadership Strategies

- Push** - Tell them what to do
- Pummel** - Punish them if they don't do it
- Pamper** - Reward them for doing it
- Pull** - Create a vision or incentive that inspires or motivates them to do it

Evaluation

- Assessment of staff is meant to provide an overall view of their functioning and help them:
 - Develop more awareness of themselves and their skills
 - See pathways for improving those skills
 - Acquire the hope and motivation to continue to build their practice repertoire
 - Overcome negative thoughts and hopelessness about their own growth and/or that of the families they are serving
- In what ways have our discussions today helped you feel more positive about your leadership and supervisory skills