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Lessons Learned from COA *By Tony Nease, MSW*

One of the lessons that I have learned in helping regions get ready for their COA site visit, is that while most DCS employees understand what formal CQI may be, they don't fully understand about informal CQI. Even though this is the most commonly used form of CQI within our department.

Each time we sit down and discuss issues, problem solve around those issues, and develop action steps to correct those issues, we have used the CQI process. An FSW(s) does this every day when they talk to co-workers about what they have done in the past when faced with a similar situation. Foster Parents do this every day when they discuss different approaches to dealing with the behaviors of children. Supervisors do this when they use the Monthly Employee Briefing process. CQI is engrained in what we do.

We spend so much time thinking about our formal CQI process, that we often lose sight of what we do daily. The culture of CQI is the culture of problem solving. Social Workers are problem solvers.

CQI is so very simple. It really is. Why do we make

this so much harder than it has to be? CQI is a process. It's a process that we do informally every day of our lives, and that we hopefully do formally once a month with our team-mates.

So, if informal CQI is so engrained in what we do, why do we have such a hard time with formal CQI? It is the exact same process, only documented through meeting minutes. The steps to a formal CQI meeting are: 1.) Review action steps from the previous meeting, 2.) Identify the issue (using formal or informal data to back up why it is an issue), 3.) Brainstorm ideas around how to rectify the issue, 4.) Develop a measurable goal, 5.) Develop action steps (listing the person responsible and due dates), 6.) Track and adjust action steps as needed to meet your goal, 7.) Close the feed back loop (this simply means share your successes with others).

CQI is your voice. So many people talk about how they feel they have no input on decisions made within the department. The formal CQI process is that chance for input. It is your link to the decision-making process within DCS. It's kind of like voting, if you will. If you



don't vote, then you really have no right to complain about elected officials. Well, if you don't use CQI to get your voice heard, don't complain when others who did use the process get their voices heard over yours.

Another lesson learned for me was how many people don't really understand the value of the surveys the Department does. The Office of Performance and Quality Improvement administers several surveys through out the year. The data from those surveys are valuable in seeing how the services we provide are benefiting the children and families we serve. The employee survey then gauges employee satisfaction, and enables the Department to develop satisfaction *(Continued on page 5)*





Social Workers Corner

By Jennifer Scruggs (BSW Intern)

Quotes from the
Social Work
Code of Ethics:

Value

Dignity and Worth
of the Person

Ethical Principle

Social Workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person. Social Workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social Workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social Workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and address their own needs. Social Workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between client's interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

DCS Values: Employees

According to the United States Department of Labor, www.bls.gov, the job outlook for the field of social work is prosperous, increasing (22% for the 2006-16 decade) faster than the national average for all careers. With more and more people looking towards our profession for advice, it is critical that we continue to take care of our own well-being so that we may be more beneficial to those in need and before we become part of the "burnout" statistic.

For those DCS employees where stress and time management are becoming more difficult to cope with on a professional and personal level, there are helpful resources that are part of your employee benefits package. Since DCS recognizes employees as an important value to the success of the department, it strongly encourages employees to seek out and utilize these resources that are they for your advantage.

Department of Human Resource (DOHR)

Employee Assistance Program (EAP), contracted by

the state through Magellan Health (www.MagellanHealth.com), provides access to a wide variety of services, ranging from parenting or marital issues to online screening tools. These services are provided at no cost to the employee, are completely confidential (just tell your supervisor that you have an EAP appointment, no questions asked).

Employee Suggestion Award Program (ESAP) provides employees with an opportunity to earn a monetary award by submitting ideas which result in significant state improvements. For additional information and to print out a suggestion form, go to: tp://tn.gov/dohr/employees/suggestion/suggestion.html.

Tennessee Center for Child Welfare (TCCW)

TCCW offers wonderful training programs and online courses to all DCS employees, free of charge. Useful employee classes include Time Management, Assessing Risk and Building on Strengths, Non-violent Conflict Management (de-escalation) for staff, Child

and Youth Development, Family Dynamics, and Court Preparation.

Please, please, please take full advantage of all employee surveys. These are your voice in Central Office and they do hold weight when addressing topics, such as employee satisfaction of the cultural competency training. Room for additional comments is there for employees to shed light on certain issues, negative or positive, with Central Office. In addition to internal employee resources, please take advantage of the various community events, such as the Aggression Replacement Training (A.R.T.) which benefits the Juvenile Justice youths, held throughout the month of September. You may find that when you are participating in continual education seminars/training to assist you in helping clients by providing them with resources and needed advice, you are also helping yourself by taking away valuable pieces of information that you are able to implement in your own life.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with all of the diverse personalities that make up DCS. Initially, I was
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Regional CQI Successes

Northeast Region Success Story

By Lagenia Rutherford

The Kingsport JJ FSW CQI team met in August 2008 and determined that there was an issue with the current drug screens they were using. The team and other staff in the region agreed that the drug screens were not accurate and only tested for 5 different drugs. The team agreed they needed a drug screen that would test for several other types of drugs and one that was much more accurate. The staff did not feel confident in the results of the current drug screen.

The team delegated Michael Warren, JJ FSW, to take the issue to Regional CQI after he did some research on what type of drug screens were available, which ones would benefit the need, what the costs were compared to the drug screens they are currently using.

Michael did a great job of researching. He found a drug screen that would test for 7 different drugs, is accurate according to other agencies that use them, is more cost effective, and a few dollars less than what we were paying for the current ones.

Michael took the issue along with the research information and presented it to the Regional CQI team in April 2009. It was approved by the team that NE would order a small amount of the drug screens to test. The team decided if the new drug screens were more accurate and tested for the drugs that we needed them to, we could order more for the region.

The results have been positive. There have been many comments on how much better the new drug screens are. They are accurate, easier to use, test for 7 different drugs, and less expensive than the ones we were using.

The region seems pleased with the results of this decision made by CQI.

Southeast Region Success Story

By Tracy Theobald

Congratulations to Southeast Region's Bradley County Juvenile Justice CQI Team who has met consistently and turned in minutes for the entire fiscal year!!! They have covered and resolved issues including: updating all client photos in files, completing and updating FFA(s), and curfew checks. **Way to go Southeast!**

East Tennessee Region Success Story

By Caterina Heatwole

Have you heard about the latest CQI success? In case you have not let me fill you in...FSW(s) have not been very satisfied with the drug screens we were using. More and more clients seem to be using drugs that were not detected by the five panel screens. Through a joint effort of several county teams, Pam Fraley, the training unit, and of course the CQI process, a solution to the "drug war" was achieved.

We were using a 5 panel stick test (Meth, THC, COC, OPI, and Amph) and an additional stick that tests for Benzo. Because of the CQI process success we now have a 10 panel in the cup test (Meth, THC, COC, OPI, Amph, Barb, Benzo, PCP, PPx, and MTD), addition of a 3 panel adulteration screening, and an additional stick test for Oxy with the EXACT same cost to our budget.

We will now be able to test for 5 more drugs at the same price. The Oxy test does not have to be used unless Oxy use is suspected. Because the test is all confined within a cup it is less steps and more sanitary. The 10 panel cup also has an adulteration strip to verify the validity of the urine sample.

Thank you for finding the answer to your problems through the CQI process!

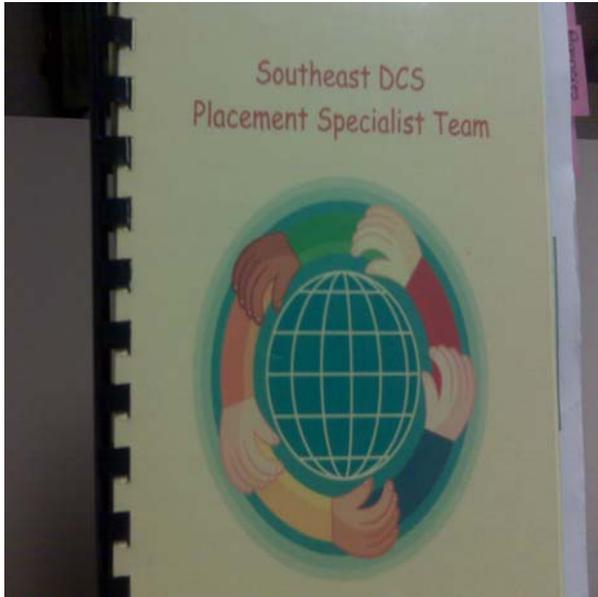


*Ethics and
equality and the
principles of
justice do not
change with the
calendar.
- D.H. Lawrence*



(Continued on Page 6)

CQI In Pictures



SOUTHEAST PLACEMENT SPECIALIST
RESOURCE PHONE NUMBER LISTING
DEVELOPED BY THEIR CQI TEAM

SOUTHEAST REGION PLACEMENT
SPECIALIST CQI TEAM
AUGUST 2009



BRADLEY COUNTY JUVENILE
JUSTICE CQI TEAM
AUGUST 2009

Lessons Learned from COA *(Continued from page 1)*

and retention goals and action steps.

These surveys are then broken down by region so that they can use the CQI process to determine how that region may compare against other regions on different categories. That region can then develop goals and action steps specific to their own needs.

Using the data collected from these surveys and from processes such as the Quality Service Review is extremely

important. This is an area that many facilities, regions, and divisions within the Department truly need to focus on in the near future. The data received here is a very valuable tool for driving performance and overall satisfaction.

Communication was also an area we all need to focus on when it comes to our CQI process. We don't do as good of a job as we should with that whole "closing the feedback loop." Successes

are very important, and most teams are having plenty of them. We just don't readily share them with others.

We have come a very long way in our CQI process as a Department, and we are light-years ahead of many other state child welfare agencies. However, we still have some work to do in fine tuning our CQI processes. That fine tuning, though, is everyone's responsibility, not just that of your local CQI Coordinator.



Social Workers Corner *(Continued from page 2)*

skeptical as to how empathetic and humane the Central Office would be towards their caseworkers when implementing new policies and procedures, in particular, all of the new and/or revised forms that trickle down to the 13 regions that make up the state of Tennessee. However, as I conclude my internship, I move forward with great assurance that

Central Office employees will continue to spend a great amount of time, energy, and detail on every new policy or revision. They will continue to make sure that any changes made will be the most appropriate course of action to benefit not only the children and families that DCS serves, but also the caseworkers. Remember, you are an important and

vital part of DCS and your contributions are highly valued. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to speak with your team leader or call upon one of your many employee benefits. DCS does value its employees.

Jennifer Scruggs is a BSW Intern from Middle Tennessee State University.

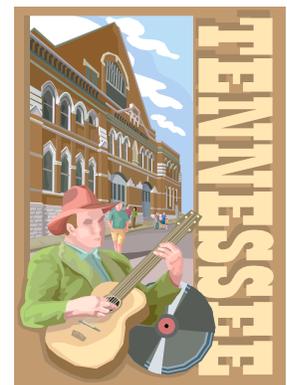
"QUALITY IS NOT AN ACT, IT IS A HABIT."

- ARISTOTLE

Quality Service Review

The Quality Service Review season is about ready to get under way. The schedule for this year's reviews can be found on page six of this newsletter. This year's QSR will be a little different than the ones in the years past, in that this year reviewers will also be looking at a few non-custodial cases in each region.

If you are interested in shadowing, leading, or mentoring in one of the upcoming reviews please contact Landra Orr to schedule a time to do so. Each region also now has a designated contact person in Central Office who can help them think through their reviewer development process/priorities and logistics. Tracy Strange will be the contact person for Northeast, Smoky Mountain, Knox, and East Regions. Landra Orr will be the contact person for Southeast, Hamilton, and South Central Regions. Sherry Haines will be the contact person for Upper Cumberland, Mid-Cumberland, and Davidson Regions, and Doretha McCadney is the contact person for Southwest, Northwest and Shelby Regions.



DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Putting the Pieces Together

**A PUBLICATION OF THE
OFFICE OF PERFORMANCE
AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

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2009–2010 QUALITY SERVICE REVIEW CALENDAR

August 31–September 4, 2009: Mid-Cumberland Region

September 21–25, 2009: Davidson County Region

October 6–8, 2009: Northwest Region

October 26–30, 2009: East Region

November 16–20, 2009: Knox County Region

December 7–11, 2009: Southwest Region

January 11–15, 2010: Hamilton County Region

January 25–29, 2010: Smoky Mountain Region

February 8–12, 2010: South Central Region

March 1–5, 2010: Shelby County Region

March 23–25, 2010: Northwest Region

April 12–16, 2010: Northeast Region

April 26–30, 2010: Southeast Region

Mary 17–21, 2010: Upper Cumberland Region

Regional CQI Successes

(Continued from Page 3)

Southeast Region Success Story

By Sharon Putnam

Southeast Placement Specialist Team wanted a more concise way of keeping up with the multiple phone numbers and information that we need to make placements. We decided to do a CQI on how we could accomplish this task. We came up with a Placement Specialist book that has all the phone numbers and information we need to make placements. This is a 5"x7" bound book. This size is easy to fit in our purses so when we have those after hours calls, we can have it right there with us. The sections include information such as DCS phone numbers, contract numbers, contract agency information, licensure information, DCS group homes, YDCs, scope of services, placement exception request cheat sheets, information needed for placement cheat sheets. It also shows agencies sorted by type, by location, and by level. We also have a lot of Note pages so we can add to our book. We will print off information that changes often such as current resource home information and staple it inside our book. Every thing we need is right there in our book. Thanks to our CQI project, we have accomplished an easier way to do our jobs.

The Month of August is ...

National Eye Exam Month

National Water Quality Month

National Children's Vision and
Learning Month

Simplify Your Life Week
(Aug. 1– 7)

Be Kind to Human Kind Week
(Aug. 25–31)

National Friendship Week
(Aug. 18 –24)

National Children's Day
(Aug. 24)