

# Mastering the ART of Child Welfare Supervision by Marsha Salus

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The goal of this project is to promote the personal and professional development of OCS supervisors by providing them with training and coaching to assist in their leadership/management development. Ms. Salus will train existing OCS managers to support the training and development of new and experienced OCS supervisors through coaching and mentoring.

The training and development project will operate for 6 months and will be offered to 20-25 supervisors during each 6-month period. The project will be delivered twice each year. The training and development program will include the following:

- **Training.** Five, two-day training sessions and one, one-day training session will be provided to the 20-25 supervisors participating in the program once a month for 5 months (the one-day session will be delivered at the end of the last two-day session to reduce travel costs. A description of the training session follow.
- ✓ **Module 1: Effective Leadership: Making the Transition From Social Worker to Supervisor (2 Days)**  
Most supervisors are promoted from within the agency. The assumption of agency managers is that if the individual was a “good” social worker she/he will be an effective supervisor. There is often little preparation, training, guidance, or support provided to new supervisors. The reality of their situation becomes readily apparent and the previously competent and confident social worker feels inadequate, confused, and overwhelmed. This course examines the common experiences/issues of new supervisors, the first key tasks of new supervisors, and provides new supervisors with an opportunity to examine their leadership style.
- ✓ **Module 2: Achieving Excellence In Staff Performance (2 Days)**  
Supervisors set the standard for excellence in their units. The supervisor’s own emphasis on quality and results influences the level of staff performance. Supervisors play a central role in motivating staff to achieve the agency’s outcomes and goals. This workshop focuses on clarity of expectations, giving effective feedback, reward/recognition programs, and using corrective action to address unsatisfactory performance.
- ✓ **Module 3: Building a Cohesive Work Group (2 Days)**

The ultimate goal of every supervisor is to develop a work group that is motivated in the fullest sense to achieve the mission and goals of the agency as a means of satisfying personal needs and goals. This workshop builds supervisory skills to create the essential structures in the unit so that their work group achieves program outcomes, to facilitate the development of a cohesive work team, and to be able to manage work conflict effectively.

✓ **Module 4: Promoting the Growth and Development of Staff (2 Days)**

One of the most satisfying aspects of supervision is helping social workers grow and develop on the job. Because of their daily interaction with social workers, supervisors can facilitate the development of essential skills. For example, decision making regarding safety and permanence, assessment and case planning skills, and structuring visits that promote permanency in the shortest possible time. This workshop focuses on the stages of staff development and the supervisory interventions to help workers master each stage, tailoring their interventions to the learning styles of their staff, transfer of learning, assessing the ongoing learning and development needs of staff and developing strategies to meet staff needs.

✓ **Case Consultation and Supervision (2 Days)**

Supervisors play a critical role in assuring that the intervention provided to clients facilitate achievement of the outcomes of safety, permanence, and well-being. This requires supervisors to review and evaluate casework activities and processes and to provide consultation to workers. Case consultation and supervision also is geared toward building self-awareness in workers. Since the workers personality and behavior are significant determinants of what happens in the worker-client relationship, the worker's attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and behavior become a necessary and inevitable part of clinical supervision. This workshop teaches supervisors clinical consultation skills to promote critical thinking in staff, to assist staff in decision making regarding child safety and permanence.

✓ **Managing Effectively in the Organization (1 Day)**

Most of the training for supervisors focuses on managing staff. The most effective supervisors see managing their relationship with their boss as well as their peers as an essential part of their job. As a result they take the time and energy to develop a

relationship that is consonant with both persons' styles and assets and that meets the most critical needs of each. In addition, because organizational change is the norm in public child welfare and because in times of change morale and performance may decline, it is incumbent upon supervisors to know how they manage change and to assist their staff in responding effectively toward change. This module builds self-awareness regarding supervisory style and how supervisors can build a relationship with their PS and collaborate with their peers to influence program, practice, and policy and to better achieve the outcomes of safety permanence and well-being. In addition, the training helps supervisors understand the stages of change and how to assist themselves and their staff in responding effectively to change.

- ***Selection, Training, and Ongoing Support for Internal Coaches/Mentors.*** Ms. Salus will build internal capacity in OCS by training 20 existing/retired managers to be coaches/mentors of the supervisors participating in the program. It is anticipated that the existing OCS managers will be assigned 1 supervisor in a region/parish other than their office and the retired managers will be assigned 1-3 supervisors. The coach/mentor's responsibilities include:
  - ✓ Attend one 2--day training session to clarify their role as a coach/mentor, enhance their skills to listen, assess, provide feedback and coaching to their assigned supervisor to support the supervisor's development in their critical functions of their job prior to be assigned a supervisor.
  - ✓ Attend a five, 1 day training/consultation sessions to enhance their coaching skills; to provide an overview of the supervisor training to be aware of the training received in order to promote the supervisor's application to the job; to provide consultation on their work with their assigned supervisor(s).
  - ✓ Attend a one day session of Clinical Supervision training, "Golden Thread: Coaching to Promote Critical Thinking".
  - ✓ Meet with their assigned supervisor ½ day a month for 6 months to conduct direct observation in all aspects of supervisory practice. For example, the coach will observe the supervisor conducting individual conferences and evaluate the supervisor's ability to thoroughly review cases in terms of the safety, permanence and will being and promote critical thinking in workers so that they can make accurate decisions.
  - ✓ Provide telephone consultation as needed.
  - ✓ Email the supervisor as needed to reinforce the implementation of the supervisor's action plan.
  - ✓ Participate in ongoing consultation for 1 day every other month.

- Observe one coaching session between Ms. Salus and a supervisor.
  - Be observed once providing observation and coaching of his/her assigned supervisor(s).
- 
- *Action plans* will be developed by each supervisor in consultation with their development coach, and will be shared with their District Manager. The action plans will address identified development needs. The needs will be discovered through 360 evaluations, discussions with their development coach, results from implementation of the action plan; awareness created through the training, and peer feedback and consultation.
  - *Direct observation, feedback, and coaching* of each supervisor. The observation will focus on development issues in each person's action plan. Additionally, other issues raised by the supervisor and District Manager will be addressed during the visit by the coach/mentor. The visit may include a planning meeting with the supervisor and his/her District Manager. Ms. Salus will model the observation, coaching and feedback for the internal coaches and will observe each coach/mentor once to assure effectiveness.