SUPERVISOR TRAINING PROJECT

Louisiana

Interview with Bridget Clark, Former Director of Workforce Development and Clinical Services, DSS
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Supervisor Requirements
In order to become a supervisor in Louisiana, a person must meet one of the following criteria: (1) Bachelor's degree in social work or related field and five years of professional social services experience (including four years in child welfare and two years at the journeyman level); (2) Bachelor's degree in non-related field and six years of professional social services experience (including four years in child welfare and two years at the journeyman level); (3) Master's degree in social work or related field and four years of professional child welfare social services experience (including two years at the journeyman level); (4) Master's degree in non-related field and five years of professional social services experience (including four years in child welfare and two years at the journeyman level). Additionally, those who have been licensed by the State must maintain their license.

All supervisors must complete 20 hours of ongoing training each year. Training must be child welfare related but does not need to be supervisor specific.

Pre-service Training
In recent years, Louisiana has contracted with Marsha Salus to train the course, Mastering the Art of Child Welfare Supervision. Participation is not mandatory, however it is strongly encouraged. Training groups typically consist of 25 supervisors, with first priority given to new supervisors (any remaining vacant slots are given to veteran supervisors). The six-module course is competency-based and is trained in the classroom, 11 days over a 6-month period:

- Module 1: Effective Leadership: Making the Transition From Social Worker to Supervisor (2 days)
- Module 2: Achieving Excellence In Staff Performance (2 days)
- Module 3: Building a Cohesive Work Group (2 days)
- Module 4: Promoting the Growth and Development of Staff (2 days)
- Module 5: Case Consultation and Supervision (2 days)
- Module 6: Managing Effectively in the Organization (1 day)

Ongoing Training
The Department of Social Services (DSS) and Northwestern Louisiana State University have also contracted with Ms. Salus to train the Coaching/Mentoring Initiative. Coaches and mentors are current child welfare staff with supervisory experience and/or retired child welfare professionals. All coaches and mentors have been trained by Ms. Salus to work with first line supervisors during and after attending the Mastering the Art training. Casey Family Programs has contributed to the funding of this initiative. Currently, Louisiana has 22 coach/mentors trained (6 of whom are retirees). Coaches are given the opportunity to attend Mastering the Art, as well as other supervisory trainings.

In 2008, Louisiana State University School of Social Work (LSU), in partnership with the State of Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services, (DCFS) and the Louisiana University Child Welfare Alliance established the Louisiana Child Welfare Comprehensive Workforce Project (LCWCWP) with funding from the Children's Bureau. The purpose of this project is to improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and youth by building the capacity of Louisiana's child welfare professionals and by improving the systems in the State that recruit, train, supervise, manage, and retain them. A primary goal of this project has been to improve training and support systems for supervisors. One of its initiatives was a statewide Supervisory Teleconference Series, where supervisors in each of the ten Regions participated in monthly calls hosted by LCWCWP Project Director, Gary Mallon. The calls engaged over 170 participants from around the State and featured key speakers in the field. The initial teleconferences covered a broad range of supervisory issues; later, teleconferences shifted their focus to clinical supervision and discussion of real-life cases.

In September 2011, LCWCWP will roll out the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute's Leadership Academy for Supervisors in two regions of the State. Supervisors with more than one year experience in their position will participate. Once the training has commenced, LCWCWP staff will meet on a quarterly basis to evaluate progress. LCWCWP's evaluator will complete a formal evaluation of the program at the close of the training. LCWCWP plans to train three more regions on LAS in the following year.

In 2010, DSS hosted "Clinical Supervision Training," a one-day training in three subject areas aimed at assisting first line supervisors in building clinical decision-making skills in their workers. Eleven cohorts, each of 25 supervisors, received on-site training from a nationally recognized trainer/consultant, and then participated in a teleconference for post-training discussion. The topics included:

- Golden Thread- Coaching to Promote Critical Thinking - co-trained by Marsha Salus, MSW and Lorrie Lutz, MPP
- Domestic Violence - trained by David Mandel, LLC
- Sexual Abuse Victims- trained by Kathleen Faller, Ph.D., A.C.S.W., L.M.S.W.

Gary Mallon developed a graduate level supervision course, Advanced Practice Certificate Program in Child Welfare Supervision and Leadership. This course was designed for Louisiana's Office of Community Services (OCS) supervisors. The course is trained ten days over a nine month period and includes the following session topics:

- Overview: History, Roles, Styles and Stages
- The Transition to Supervision
- Organizational Context
- The Administrative Functions of Supervision
- The Educative Functions of Supervision
- The Evaluative Functions of Supervision
- The Supportive Functions of Supervision
- Identifying Commonalities and Distinctions between Clinical Supervision and Supervision in Community Practice Settings
- The Challenges of Diversity
- Leadership

Course Announcement
Course Syllabus

Supervisor Supports
Regional directors convene their supervisors on a monthly basis. These meetings serve as an opportunity to discuss cases, problem solve and provide peer support.

The Association of Social Service Supervisors was created by child welfare supervisors in Louisiana. The association holds an annual conference. The association is not part of DSS; however, the State supports and participates in the annual conference.

Partnerships
DSS works closely with State universities to bridge the gap between BSW/MSW program content and State child welfare training content. The goal of DSS is to decrease overlap of curricula and streamline the process for students transitioning into State agency positions.

Additional Information
As part of Louisiana's PIP, supervisors will engage in learning circles in certain areas in the State.

In 2009, DCFS partnered with LCWCWP to conduct a statewide training system assessment. Information was gathered through surveys and focus groups to produce a summary of findings and recommendations. Click here for a summary of the findings from this assessment!