



SUPERVISOR TRAINING PROJECT

South Dakota

Interview with Cara Beers, CPS Ongoing Services and Training Program Specialist

cara.beers@state.sd.us • 605-688-4330 xt. 210

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Supervisor Requirements

To become a supervisor in South Dakota one must have a certain set of skills and abilities; there are no specific licensure or degree requirements. The [Family Services Specialist Supervisor Class Specification](#) document outlines the specific functions, duties and abilities needed of supervisors.

Pre-service Training

Supervisors are required to take training through the South Dakota Bureau of Human Resources (BHR).

These courses, listed on the [Bureau of Human Resources Training & Development website](#), include:

[Legal Side of Discrimination & Harassment](#) *

[Legal Side of ADA, FMLA and Workers Compensation](#) *

[Legal Side of Hiring and Discipline](#) *

[Interview and Selection of New Employees](#) **

[Orienting the New Employee](#) **

[Documenting Discipline](#) **

[The Supervisor's Recognition Kit](#) **

[PPAR: The Supervisor's Role](#) **

* To be repeated every three years.

** To be repeated every five years.

These courses are not specific to Child Protection Services (CPS) and are available to all human resource supervisors. They are offered two to three times per year at different locations across the state.

Supplementary supervisory training is also available, and includes:

[Module: Time Management for Supervisors](#)

[Module: Effective Emailer for Supervisors](#)

[The Leadership Secrets of Santa Clause](#)

ACES, the Accountability and Competencies Evaluation, is the evaluation system used within CPS. All CPS supervisors participate in that supplementary training. There are 14 additional general training courses [listed on the BHR website](#) that supervisors are welcome to take if interested.

CPS Supervisors without prior CPS experience, though infrequent, are required to attend the CPS certification program. This is a five week (175 hour), classroom based training program offered three

times per year for new Family Services Specialists and Supervisors. The training is offered in their central location, Pierre. Anybody that is moving into a supervisor position from within CPS is encouraged to go back through the training so that they can look at the material from a supervisor's perspective as opposed to looking at it through a worker's lens. The majority of supervisors take advantage of this opportunity, especially since the material may have changed since they had taken the training.

The Regional Managers also do individual training with their supervisors once they're on the job. They follow up with supervisors on the things they learned during the BHR courses and help them with administrative duties, getting to know the community, writing ACES, etc. They will also sit in with supervisors on interviews and provide guidance in numerous areas. Regional Managers currently have four to seven supervisors under their direction; the manager and seven supervisors are located within the same office, whereas other regions may have four different offices with their supervisors spread out geographically.

Ongoing Training

Within the past year South Dakota has greatly expanded the ongoing training available to CPS supervisors. These efforts include: Supervisor Development Training, Live Meeting Training, Supervisor Safety Decision Making Training, Management Team Meeting Training and Initial Family Assessment Consultation Training.

The Supervisor Development Training is new and was recently implemented. Led by Cara Beers, CPS Ongoing Services and Training Program Specialist, and Regional Manager, Dawn Johnson, this training is focused on supervisor case consultation, leadership skills and working on adaptive challenges.

Participating in small groups, all supervisors will have completed this training as of September, 2013. This training is not curriculum-specific and is instead tailored to each group of supervisors. The facilitators work with supervisors on getting back to the basics of consultation, helping them to address challenges, look at the bigger picture, and step out on the "balcony". Each supervisor shares two of their own cases to be reviewed as a group. All participants are asked to read the cases prior to attending the training. Supervisors present their cases, and as a group they think critically through each piece. They hone in on whether or not practice is being followed, if the critical questions are being asked by the supervisor, and also focus on case documentation and whether or not the documents supported the decision making. They discuss questions that could be asked of the workers and the best approaches for doing so.

[Sample Agenda for the Supervisor Development Training](#)

Supervisors are also required to attend various Live Meeting (web-based) trainings. Topics for these trainings vary and are scheduled based on need. A previous training focused on active efforts, with Cara Beers and the Legal Department discussing what active efforts look like and how to document them. A second training focused on psychotropic medication.

Supervisor Safety Decision Making (SSDM) is a training that South Dakota CPS supervisors also participated in, led by the [National Resource Center for Child Protective Services](#) (operated by [ACTION for Child Protection, Inc.](#)). This was an intense training program that eleven distinct supervisors were selected to go through. Consultants from ACTION lead the first training, training six SD CPS supervisors. These supervisors then trained five of their peers. The full training was hard to sustain due to its

intensity and the time commitment required of supervisors. South Dakota has since taken smaller pieces of the SSDM training and trained on those pieces individually.

The SD CPS Management Team meets twice per year. These meetings, which all supervisors attend, have one to two days dedicated to ongoing training. Topics for these trainings are often based on new policies or practices or the SSDM training. Various people train during these meetings based on the topics and their particular expertise. A Supervisor Development Trainers Team, comprised of supervisors and program specialists, was newly created and charged with identifying topics that will be trained on during the management meetings for 2014.

South Dakota is also developing training for supervisors that supervise initial family assessments. The Initial Family Assessment Consultation training will also be attended by regional managers and the Initial Family Assessment Specialty Worker training will also be attended by supervisors.

Professional Development

Supervisors are encouraged to attend any state conferences that are offered, as well as any training outside of CPS that they interested in. For instance, some supervisors participate in trainings provided by the Unified Judicial System or the Child Voice Training (which is South Dakota's forensic interview system). Supervisors are also able to receive reduced tuition for college courses. Full details on the reduced tuition program are available on the [South Dakota Board of Regents website](#).

Currently, training needs assessments are not utilized in South Dakota. However, the state does send out supervisor surveys. This survey includes questions focused on training, asking supervisors if the training they're receiving is adequate, and asks what areas they feel they need more training in. They also ask supervisors at the end of every Management Team Meeting what training they would like to have in the future.

In November of 2011 South Dakota had a Comprehensive Safety Intervention (CSI) fidelity review. Following this review, each supervisor was required to write a professional development plan based on the results of those competencies. These concluded in the fall of 2012. Another fidelity review is underway, which may include additional professional development plans as a result. All supervisors also participate in annual ACES evaluations with their regional managers. If anything is noted as below expectation a professional development plans is created.

Supervisor Supports

In addition to the Management Team Meetings mentioned in Ongoing Training above, supervisors meet monthly during regional meetings. Numerous email communications between supervisors also occurs across regions. Supervisors depend on one another across the state and will look to each other for advice.

There is no formal coaching or mentoring programs in South Dakota for supervisors; however, they do receive a great deal of on the job training and support from their regional manager.

Partnerships

South Dakota CPS partners with ACTION and the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services for supervisory training. They have also been providing training to some University of South Dakota students, and work with the USD and South Dakota State University internship programs. They are also

currently working with the Kempe Children's Center on a grant for family group decision making. Some supervisors have participated on this grant through peer consultation and peer networking.