

Using Information Management to Support the Goals of Safety, Permanency and Well Being

Trainer's Guide

Developed by:

The University of Southern Maine
Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service
Institute for Child and Family Policy
Portland, Maine

Funded by:

The US Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Children's Bureau

September 27, 2000

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September 27, 2000

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Module 1: Welcome and Introductions

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the Workplace

Module 3: Systems, Data, Information and
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States

Module 1: Welcome and Introductions

Rationale

In order to derive maximum benefit from the seminar, each participant should be introduced to the instructors and other participants and be familiar with the seminar's goals, agenda, handouts and evaluation plan.

Activities

- Welcoming remarks, including introductions of the instructors, review of the training goals, calendar of events and evaluation plan and an overview of the participant's handouts (5 minutes)
- Introductions of participants and listing of their desired outcomes (10 minutes)
- Welcome from a representative from the child welfare agency (3 minutes)
- Techno Quiz (2 minutes)

Time

20 minutes

Objectives

When this module is complete, participants will be able to:

- Explain the goals of the seminar
- Understand the calendar of events for the training, the evaluation plan and the organization of the handouts
- Understand his/her expected role in the seminar and evaluation process



- Identify his/her desired outcomes for the seminar

Materials

Flipchart, easel, markers, and tape

Sample handouts and overheads:

1. Seminar Agenda (1.1)
2. Goals of the Seminar (1.2)
3. Calendar of Events (1.3)
4. Techno Quiz (1.4)

Advance Preparation

Prepare seminar handouts for each participant. Make sure that the flipcharts, markers, newsprint pad, overheads and overhead projector are in the room.

Glossary of Terms

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

Trainer's Instructions

1. Begin the session by welcoming the group, introducing him/herself and other presenters, highlighting the goals of the seminar and reviewing the calendar of events for the seminar as well as the features of the evaluation plan. Use the Seminar Agenda (1.1), Goals of the Seminar (1.2) and the Calendar of Events (1.3) overheads and handouts. Explain the purpose of the training and non-purpose (this is not a hands-on SACWIS navigation training, it is not an outcomes training, it's not a reports training).

*****The numbers following the name of a handout or overhead refer to the number of the handout or overhead not to a page number. The handout/overhead number is found on the top right hand corner of each document; the page number is on the right lower corner. For example, Seminar Agenda (1.1) , the first sample handout and overhead in chapter one, is found on page 1.5

The trainer may want to make overheads/handouts of the learning objectives for each module.

2. Highlight the purpose and learning objectives of this module using the following as your guide:

The purpose of this module is to help you understand the goals, timing and training materials for the seminar as well as give you the opportunity to let us know what you expect to learn from this training

When this module is complete, you will be able to:

- *Explain the goals of the seminar*
- *Understand the calendar of events for the training, the evaluation plan and the organization of the handouts*
- *Understand your expected role in the seminar and evaluation process*
- *Identify your desired outcomes for the seminar*

3. Review the handouts.

4. Ask each participant to introduce himself/herself, including what unit or division they work for, how long they have been with the agency, and to state his/her desired outcomes for the seminar.

Record each participant's desired outcome(s) on a flipchart.

Mention that there will be opportunities to review and update the desired outcomes flipcharts throughout the seminar.

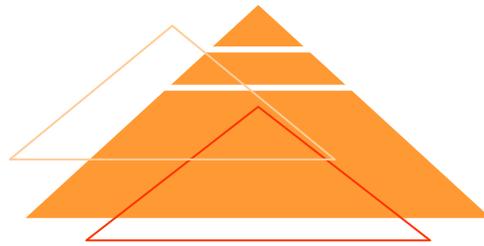
5. Introduce the representative from the child welfare agency who will give his/her welcoming remarks presentation.

6. Ask for and address questions. Remind everyone that questions and comments are welcome anytime during the seminar.

Notes in *italics* are talking points, comments that the trainer may make directly to the participants or use to form the basis of his/her presentation.

In preparation for upcoming exercises, the trainer may find it useful to divide the large group into smaller groups of 3-4 people at this point.

7. Introduce the next module, **The Impact of Technology in the Workplace**, by giving the Techno Quiz. Ask folks to take 2 minutes to complete the Techno Quiz and then poll the participants to see where they fall in terms of scoring. Continue by stating that automation and information technology have significantly changed our personal and professional lives. In Module 2, we will explore some of the impacts of these changes.



Using Information Management to Support the Goals of Safety, Permanency and Well Being

Agenda for Day 1

Module 1. Welcome and Introductions

Time: 9:00 - 9:20

Module 2. The Impact of Technology in the Workplace

Time: 9:20 - 10:30

Break

Time: 10:30 - 10:45

Module 3. Systems, Data, Information and Knowledge: Putting the Pieces Together

Time: 10:45 - 12:00

Lunch

Time: 12:00 - 1:00

Module 4. Supervising for Results: Identifying and Locating Key Data

Time: 1:00 - 2:45

Break

Time: 2:45 - 3:00

Module 5. Using Information Management to Support Casework Supervision

Time: 3:00 - 4:00

Agenda for Day 2
(Should immediately follow Day 1)

Module 6. Welcome

Time: 9:00 - 9:15

Module 7. Data Tips, Tools and Techniques

Time: 9:15 - 10:15

Break

Time: 10:15 - 10:30

Module 7. Data Tips, Tools and Techniques (con't)

Time: 10:30 - 11:30

Module 8. Technology Is Changing the Job of the Child Welfare Supervisor: Are You a Change Leader?

Time 11:30 –12:00

Lunch

Time 12:00 – 1:00

Module 8. Technology Is Changing the Job of the Child Welfare Supervisor: Are You a Change Leader? (con't)

Time 1:00 –2:30

Break

Time: 2:30 - 2:45

Module 9. Options for Skills Improvement

Time: 2:45 – 3:45

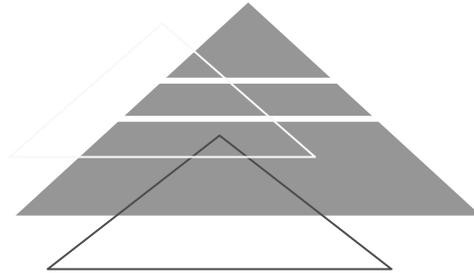
Module 10. Closing

Time: 3:45 – 4:00

Agenda for Day 3

Module 11. So... How Did It Go?

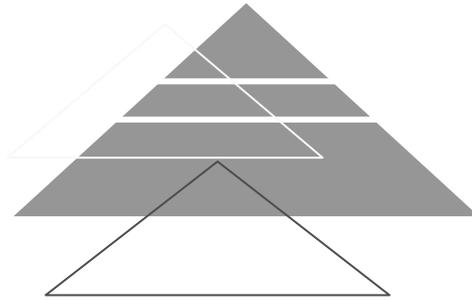
Time: 9:00 – 11:30



Using Information Management to Support the Goals of Safety, Permanency and Well Being

The goals of this seminar are:

- To explore an approach to supervision that uses information generated by SACWIS to assist you in case level decision-making and monitoring case progress.
- To empower you with the knowledge of system information that promotes the agency's goals of safety, permanency and well being.
- To provide you with the necessary skills to implement information management techniques with your unit.



Calendar of Events

Date:

Event: Day 1 of the Seminar

Location:

Time: 9:00 to 4:00

Notes:

Date:

Event: Day 2 of the Seminar

Location:

Time: 9:00 to 4:00

Notes:

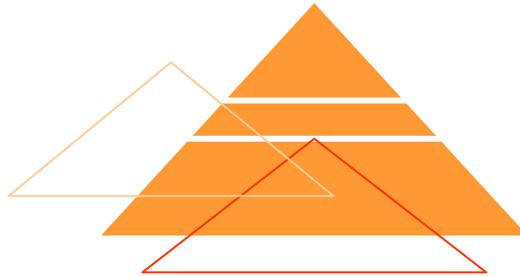
Date:

Event: Day 3 of the Seminar

Location:

Time: 9:00 to 11:30

Note:



TECHNO QUIZ

GIVE YOURSELF TWO POINTS, IF— (has to be from your own experience)

1. You remember when there was no t.v. in the house. _____
2. You have ever used a wringer washer. _____
3. You have seen paper come out of a Xerox machine on fire. _____
4. You have typed a term paper on an all manual typewriter. _____
5. You have ever used three pieces of carbon paper in typewriter. _____
6. You know the name of the first evil computer in the movies. _____
7. You do not know how to program a VCR. _____
8. You do not know what VCR stands for. _____
9. You have relatives who do not believe we placed a man on the moon. _____
10. You know of two others uses for the Sears catalog. _____

Total points = 20

- 16 - 20 -- Yes, life was hard.
- 10 - 14 -- You're getting there.
- 6 - 8 -- U R "kewel".
- 0 - 4 -- Bill Gates wants YOU.

Module 2: The Impact of Technology in the Workplace

Rationale

Technology has a significant impact on the way we live, work and play. Evolving technologies substantially change the way work is done and enable a wide range of processes that were not possible before. Child welfare supervisors need to understand the impact of technology in the workplace, especially on the organization and the supervisory role. The participants should also be aware of the competencies that form the foundation of the child welfare supervisor's job and this curriculum.

Activities

- Exercise: Share several 'real life' examples describing how supervisors and workers have used data from SACWIS to benefit children and families (10 minutes)
- Exercise: Brainstorm information management and related definitions (5 minutes)
- Present the impact of technology on organizations (10 minutes)
- Exercise: What are the tasks and roles of the child welfare supervisor? (20 minutes)
- Exercise: How have SACWIS and other technologies, including voice and e-mail, changed the tasks and roles of the child welfare supervisor? (15 minutes)
- Exercise: Identify information management competencies as they relate to the changing job of the child welfare supervisor (15 minutes)



Using a brief video clip to illustrate the impact of technology and automation may be a useful exercise. Trainers may want to review videos such as:

Babe
Modern Times
Desk Set
2001
Sneakers

Time

1 hour and 10 minutes

Objectives

When this module is complete, the participant will be able to:

- Discuss the impact of automation on the workplace
- Define automation, information management and information technology
- Understand that automation creates change at an ever increasing speed
- Understand the impact of SACWIS and other office automation on the supervisory tasks and role
- Explain the supervisory information management competencies

Materials

Flipchart, easel, markers, and tape

Sample handouts and overheads:

1. Definitions of Automation, Information Technology and Information Management (2.1)
2. SACWIS Expectations versus Reality (2.2)
3. Information Management Competencies (2.3)
4. Competency Model (2.4)

Advance Preparation

Make sure the flipchart, markers, newsprint pads, overheads and overhead projector are in the room.

Bring a copy of the September, 1996 booklet, *A Competency Model for Child Welfare Supervisors*.

The trainer will need to decide if the optional exercise comparing the initial expectations regarding SACWIS to the current reality is appropriate given the age of the SACWIS system. If the activity is used, the trainer must update overhead/handout 2.2 to reflect the expectations of the home SACWIS system.

Poll supervisors and program managers to identify several examples where supervisors and workers have used data from SACWIS to benefit children and families.

Glossary of Terms

Automation –A method of extending the capacity of machines to perform certain tasks independently or nearly independently of human control.

Information Management - The discipline that views information as an organizational resource to be used to achieve the agency mission. It covers the definitions, uses, value and distribution of all data and information within an organization whether processed by a computer or not.

Information Technology - A manner of accomplishing a task using technical processes or methods; processing data by a computer.

Bibliography and Suggested Readings

Bernotavicz, F.D., and Bartley, D. (1996). *A Competency Model*

The trainer may want to make posters of the terms and definitions and post them around the room. Also, you might create a consolidated glossary as a handout.

Including a consolidated bibliography in the handouts is a good way to make the reference information available to the participants.

for Child Welfare Supervisors. Portland, ME: University of Southern Maine, Edmund S. Muskie Institute of Public Affairs.

Daft, R.L. (1997). *Organizational Theory and Design.* New York: West Publishing Company.

Trainer's Instructions

1. Introduce this module by sharing the 'real life' positive uses of SACWIS data to help children and families that you identified in your advance preparation for this module. Ask the participants to share other positive examples. Then explain the purpose and objectives of the module using the following as a guideline:

This module allows us to explore the impact of technology on the world of work. When this module is complete, you will be able to:

- *Describe a variety of technology initiated changes at home and in the workplace*
- *Discuss the impact of technology in your workplace*
- *Understand that technology creates change at an ever-increasing speed*
- *Understand the impact of SACWIS and technology on the supervisory role and related tasks*
- *Define automation, information management and information technology*
- *Explain the supervisory information management competencies*

2. Launch the next exercise by asking each small group to spend 5 minutes defining Automation, Information Technology and Information Management and then process definitions with the large group.

3. Refer to handout/overhead 2.1, Definitions of Automation, Information Technology and Information Management. Build on the definitions that the group provided. Explain that:

Automation is having a profound impact on our lives and the way we work. A working definition of automation is 'a method of extending the capacity of machines to perform certain tasks independently or nearly independently of human control'. Much of today's automation refers to information technology, processing data by a computer. Office automation, a process you are familiar with, is a common example of using automation and technology to replace manual operations with computerized methods. For example, moving from hand writing to word processing and e-mail. Other examples of automation, technologies and impact include:

- *Jet Engines (more people traveling to more places)*
- *Microwave Ovens (quick and easy meal preparation)*
- *Television (easy availability of news and entertainment)*
- *Fax Machines (instantaneous document transfer)*
- *Cellular Phones (instant accessibility by phone)*
- *Computers, Internet and home PC's (access to information, enables work at home)*

4. Ask participants to mention some other technologies and their impacts. Continue:

It's clear that technology has made and will continue to make major changes in the way we live and work. All industries, not just child welfare, have been changed by technology. In fact, significant changes are occurring in organizations in response to the speed at which technology is changing the work environment. Such changes may include:

- *Faster communication within organizations and between organizations*
- *Increased emphasis on information sharing--- access to information tends to be open and somewhat more wide spread*
- *Accountability for results, not efforts*
- *Reliance on teams (VS. individuals) to produce the desired work results, including collaborative problem solving*
- *Decision making is moving lower in the organization*
- *Organizational structures are becoming flatter*

You probably have seen changes of this sort happening in this organization with the increased reliance on technology.

5. Pause and ask participants to describe **organizational** changes they have observed and believe are attributable to technology.

Probable responses include:

- Access to information in one place
- Access from multiple locations
- Changing relationships

Throughout this module, the trainer will want to switch between small and large group for the exercises.

- Increased training needs
- Power shifting to people who have information and skills
- Changes in work processes

6. Continue to refer to the definition handout and overhead (2.1).

Use the following as a guide to introduce the concept of information management and contrast it to the concept of information technology:

In this seminar, we are addressing use of information by casework supervisors in their day to day work, especially information you can obtain from the SACWIS system and related reports. As we've just been discussing, an increased use of technology has changed the way your organization operates. Similar kinds of changes have been observed in many organizations as they introduce new computer systems into their workplace. There has been an explosion in the amount of information available to an organization from computer systems as well as other sources. As a result, organizations have discovered the need to 'manage information'. That is, to incorporate information into every aspect and level of the organization. Let's not confuse information management, which views information as an organizational resource, with information technology—where the emphasis is on technology, not information or management. In contrast, information management focuses on integrating information into the very fabric of an organization---into policy and procedure making and monitoring, into outcome measurements, into performance appraisals, hiring, promoting, literally into every aspect of an organization.

Technology has the potential to change the way people live and work, not just in child welfare but in every business and industry. Change can be both positive and negative. We live in an era where change is constant and rapid, causing our reality to be transitional. The challenge is to learn how to work effectively when the familiar, traditional organizational ground rules are quickly changing.

7. Transition to the next activity using the following as a guideline:

We've spent some time talking about how technology has impacted this organization. Now we are going to focus for a few minutes on the impact that technology has had on the tasks and roles of the child welfare supervisor. As we've been discussing, technologies such as word processing, voice mail and SACWIS are impacting almost every facet of our personal and professional lives. We now want to explore the impact technology and the implementation of SACWIS have had on your role as a child welfare supervisor and see what changes, if any, new technologies have had on your job and how you carry out your job. Let's start by looking at what the job of the child welfare supervisor entails.

8. Begin this activity by asking everyone to work in their smaller groups to define what the major tasks of a child welfare supervisor are. Stress that they should focus on the actual tasks, not feelings about the tasks. After 15 minutes, ask each group to present their list of supervisory tasks. Record the answers on a flipchart. Probe for and expect to hear answers such as:

- Educate and support the caseworkers
- Make decisions

Optional Exercise: Keeping in mind all the tasks they are asked to complete, have the small groups visualize the ultimate child welfare supervisor. Have each group depict their vision in a drawing. Include a list of the characteristics of the supervisor. Process when complete.

Or...you may want to ask the group to draw the ultimate child welfare before the implementation of office automation and SACWIS and then draw another after the implementations.

- Review case files
- Complete paperwork
- Participate in community development work
- Help children and families
- Ensure the implementation of policies and procedures

9. Continue the discussion by asking the group to list the major roles a child welfare supervisor has. List roles on a flip chart.

Expect to hear answers such as:

- Teacher
- Mentor
- Coach
- Monitor/watchdog

10. Then ask... 'are there any of these supervisory tasks or roles you feel have NOT been impacted by technology?' Cross them off the flipchart as they call them off.

11. Go back into small groups and ask that the groups discuss the positive and negative impact technology has had on the remaining supervisory tasks and roles. Remind them that technology includes voice mail, e-mail, fax machines, information systems such as SACWIS, desktop PC's etc. Mention that you are looking for specific ways that the task has changed, not just comments like 'everything takes longer' or it's more confusing' or 'I really like it now'. After 10 minutes, have the groups report back. Record the answers on a flipchart. Expect to see answers like:

- All of my activities have changed
- I've lost face to face time with my workers; now all I do is use a PC
- I can get information I need out of the case record

Optional exercise: Use Overhead 2.2, 'SACWIS Expectations vs. Reality,' to explain that before SACWIS, or any other data collection system, is implemented, people have expectations regarding it. Some of the expectations regarding SACWIS and the current realities are listed on the overhead. Briefly review the expectations and the realities, then ask participants to fill in the blank spaces based on their experience and then ask if they had any expectations regarding SACWIS. Have they been fulfilled? What is the current reality? List responses on the flipchart. Summarize the exercise: *This exercise shows that although we expect SACWIS, or any system, to do certain things for us, in some instances it can't do everything we hoped. However, it can do some things well that can help us in our jobs.*

This exercise is probably more appropriate in states where the SACWIS implementation was fairly recent (within one year). If you decide to do this exercise, the

- The ticklers are right in front of you and they are good reminders of what's coming due
- The volume of data coming at the supervisor is increasing
- I'm expected to be a PC 'guru', not a social worker
- Accountability has increased
- I have less time for supervisory activities such as problem solving, educating and modeling
- My staff knows more than I do
- I'm learning a lot about PC's and automated systems

Make sure that you emphasize here that a major supervisory task is to look forward, be forward thinking, and communicate and share your vision with workers.

12. Have participants go into their small groups. Give the groups 2 minutes to list what new skills or competencies a child welfare supervisor needs to acquire to remain effective given the impact of the new technologies and SACWIS. At the end of two minutes have each group share 2-3 items. Record on a flipchart. Ask if any more competencies or skills need to be added to the list. (This flipchart will be referred to again in Module 8.)

13. Ask participants to find the handout listing the information management competencies (2.3). Begin a quick walk through of the information management competencies by comparing the information management competencies for supervisors with those generated by the small groups. Highlight the fact that the change management competencies probably are more general supervisory competencies that specific to information management. Be sure to mention that these competencies are a part of a larger set of child welfare supervisory competencies important to today's child

trainer will need to update overhead/handout 2.2 to reflect the expectations of their SACWIS system.

The information management competencies for supervisors:

- Were developed based on input from child welfare supervisors and regional administrators during a focus group to discuss the impact of a SACWIS system on the job of the child welfare supervisor
- are among the first, to our knowledge, that focus exclusively on information management for child welfare supervisors

welfare supervisor (Refer to handout 2.4).

14. Ask the large group to discuss other internal and external factors that are altering the job of the child welfare supervisor.

Expect to hear answers like:

- Legislation
- Budget constraints
- Staff turnover

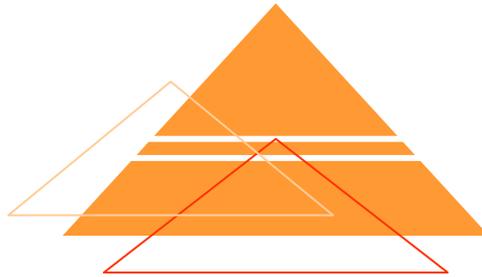
15. Continue the discussion by asking... 'will these factors ever stop influencing/affecting our jobs?'. Process the answers.

16. Wrap-up this activity by noting :

The rapid increase in technologies in the workplace, combined with other internal and external factors such as new regulations, staff turnover, revised reporting requirements, are altering the job of the child welfare supervisor. Certain basic functions haven't changed---the supervisor is still the key link between policy and frontline staff. External and internal forces, however, are causing changes in the child welfare environment, changes in organizational structures, systems and cultures, how the work is performed, how the work is assigned, how the work is organized and the tools available to do the job. We're all struggling to understand fully the depth of these changes, to maintain high standards in casework practice and to figure out how we can supervise most effectively in this time of transition. The nature of the child welfare supervisory role, thus, is evolving and will continue to evolve as reliance on technologies in the workplace continues.

17. Introduce Module 3: **Systems, Data, Information and Knowledge: Putting the Pieces Together** using the following as a guide:

The recent passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, ASFA, requires states to develop outcomes and performance measures. This requirement is a major contributor to changes in child welfare agencies. In the next module, we will take a brief look at how the implementation of major automated systems support the collection of data for this required measurement.

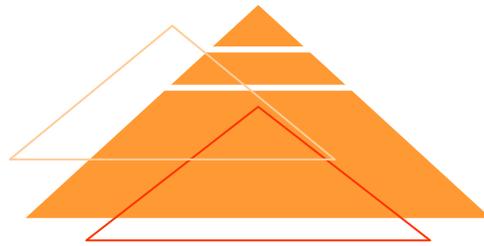


Definitions of Automation, Information Technology and Information Management

Automation: A method of extending the capacity of machines to perform certain tasks independently or nearly independently of human control.

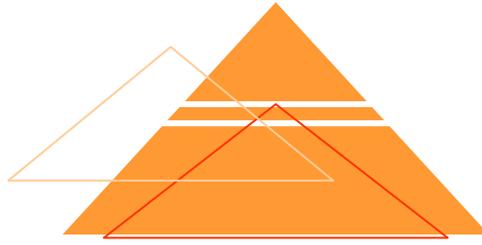
Information Technology: A manner of accomplishing a task using technical processes or methods; processing data by a computer.

Information Management: The discipline that views information as an organizational resource to be used to achieve the agency mission. It covers the definitions, uses, value and distribution of all data and information within an organization whether processed by a computer or not.



SACWIS EXPECTATIONS VS. REALITY

Initial Expectations	Current Reality
Eliminate or reduce redundant paper work	There still is paper work. Some parts of the case record only come in paper form – legal documents, professional evaluations.
Save time	Once everyone feels comfortable with SACWIS, there might be some savings in time
Send e-mail	E-mail uses different software
Use as a word processor	Word processing must be done with different software – Lotus Word for example
Create spread sheets	Must be done with different software
Greater accuracy in evaluating a child's risk of abuse	
Better and quicker matches for foster/adoptive children with available homes	
Up-to-date lists of available services	
Present aggregated data to support decision making	SACWIS is an operating system and was not designed to perform this function, although it is possible to get some aggregated data from it.



Information Management Core Competencies

1.00 Systems Thinking

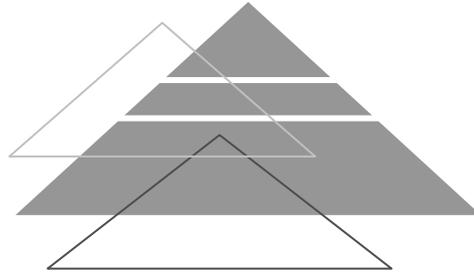
- 1.01 Understands the concept of information systems in general and is aware of the core interfaces with child welfare information and plans for the future development.
- 1.02 Understands the distinction between data and information and is able to convert data into information to support decision-making.
- 1.03 Understands and conveys to others the link between program policy and practice via information systems.
- 1.04 Understands and conveys to others the link between entering quality data into records and improving services to families.

2.00 Change Management

- 2.01 Understands the dynamics of introducing major changes into the workplace.
- 2.02 Understands the process for integration of these changes into the work environment, recognizing that change is constant and continual.
- 2.03 Is aware of, and utilizes, strategies that can facilitate introduction and management of changes in the workplace.

3.00 Information Systems

- 3.01 Knowledge of the data, its location and organization in the current system, and its potential for providing information.
- 3.02 Understands how to utilize a computer-based management information system to supervise effectively in direct supervision and as a teaching and evaluation tool.
- 3.03 Demonstrates the ability to utilize information in supervisory practice.
- 3.04 Understands the impact of technology on work performance and work systems, including the reduction of face-to-face interaction between supervisors and caseworkers.
- 3.05 Demonstrates the ability to identify and locate critical data within a system.



Information Management Competencies for Supervisors

I. Information Management Skills

1.00 Systems Thinking

- 1.01 Understands the concept of information systems in general and is aware of the core interfaces with child welfare information and plans for the future development.
- 1.02 Understands the distinction between data and information and is able to convert data into information to support decision-making.
- 1.03 Understands and conveys to others the link between program policy and practice via information systems.
- 1.04 Understands and conveys to others the link between entering quality data into records and improving services to families.

2.00 Change Management

- 2.01 Understands the dynamics of introducing major changes into the workplace.
- 2.02 Understands the process for integration of these changes into the work environment, recognizing that change is constant and continual.
- 2.03 Is aware of, and utilizes, strategies that can facilitate introduction and management of changes in the workplace.

3.00 Information Systems

- 3.01 Knowledge of the data, its location and organization in the current system, and its potential for providing information.
- 3.02 Understands how to utilize a computer-based management information system to supervise effectively in direct supervision and as a teaching and evaluation tool.
- 3.03 Demonstrates the ability to utilize information in supervisory practice.

- 3.04 Understands the impact of technology on work performance and work systems, including the reduction of face-to-face interaction between supervisors and caseworkers.
- 3.05 Demonstrates the ability to identify and locate critical data within a system.

II. Work Management Skills

4.00 Collaboration

- 4.01 Identifies and understands what resources are available, and builds and maintains effective working relationships with a network of systems.

5.00 Organizational Ability

- 5.01 Shows ability to plan, schedule, and direct the work of self and others.
- 5.02 Balances task requirements and individual abilities (matching people and assignments).
- 5.03 Sets work schedules and caseload workload standards that promote the effective and efficient use of staff and delivery of services.

6.00 Decisiveness and Directness

- 6.01 Anticipates significant information necessary for decision making.
- 6.02 Recognizes when a decision is required and makes timely decisions based on available data.

7.00 Team Leadership

- 7.01 Shows ability to communicate a clear vision, motivation, and commitment to the safety and well being of children.
- 7.02 Engages with others in team process to solve problems.
- 7.03 Shows awareness of how management style impacts on staff productivity and development.
- 7.04 Shows ability to modify leadership style to meet situational requirements.
- 7.05 Shows ability to manage within a context of multiple or ambiguous directives while staying focused on major goals.
- 7.06 Uses knowledge of the system to identify long-term opportunities and problems.

III. Conceptual Knowledge/Skills

8.00 Judgement

- 8.01 Reaches sound conclusions and makes reasonable decisions based on available information.
- 8.02 Sets priorities for tasks in order of importance.

9.00 Conceptual Thinking

- 9.01 Uses theoretical frameworks and incorporates learning from past experiences to guide analysis and practice.
- 9.02 Applies past experience to interpret events, seeing crucial similarities and differences in present and past situations.

10.00 Teamwork and Cooperation

- 10.01 Solicits data, information, ideas, and opinions for specific decisions and plans.
- 10.02 Keeps people informed and up-to-date about activities, sharing all relevant or useful information that affects the group.
- 10.03 Recognizes the complexities inherent in conflict, including aspects of child welfare work, and proactively engages others in conflict resolution.

IV. Self Management Skills

11.00 Self-Responsibility

- 11.01 Takes responsibility for own performance and outcomes and learns from mistakes.

12.00 Flexibility

- 12.01 Adapts communication behavior or approach to adjust to a situation or to the agency's larger objective.

13.00 Organizational Commitment

- 13.01 Adjusts work-related priorities and activities to meet client and agency needs while maintaining focus on agency goals.
- 13.02 Recognizes and builds on the purpose of the agency and its organizational environment to meet client needs.
- 13.03 Maintains focus on agency goals.

V. Technical Knowledge

14.00 Organizational Leadership

14.01 Demonstrates knowledge regarding organization and management development theory; the role of power and authority; the operation of effective organizations, and the dynamics of organization change.

15.00 Program Administration

15.01 Demonstrates knowledge of the mission of the agency and its role in the child and family services system.

15.02 Understands and clarifies roles and responsibilities of participants in the child welfare system.

16.00 Educational Supervision

16.01 Creates a learning climate in which the development and maintenance of competencies, professional judgement, and sound decision making in supervision takes place through clear, sympathetic supervisory direction and assists staff to transfer knowledge and skills learned through in-service training to their jobs.

17.00 Casework Supervision

17.01 Knows and can apply relevant federal and state statutes, rules, policies, procedures, and current practice standards related to casework.

17.02 Demonstrates ability to effectively manage case assignments, case coverage, and service directly to clients via direct caseworker supervision.

17.03 Knows, can model and teach necessary elements of assessments, decision making, case planning, and case process to staff.

17.04 Demonstrates ability to structure supervisory conferences (individual and group) to review and document casework activities or caseworker performance.

Note: These information management competencies are a subset of the existing supervisory competencies presented in the document entitled "A Competency Model for Child Welfare Supervisors". (See Module 2 Bibliography.)

Module 3: Systems, Data, Information and Knowledge: Putting the Pieces Together



Rationale

To improve understanding of their SACWIS system, supervisors need to understand the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) requirements for outcomes and performance measures, how data is collected and stored and the value of information management to an organization's achievement of the ASFA goals of safety, permanency and well being. The participants should also be familiar with the concept of databases, data, information and knowledge.

Activities

- Present a brief summary of ASFA requirements for outcomes and performance measures, including samples of federal outcomes and measures (10 minutes)
- Present a brief explanation of the ways AFCARS, NCANDS and the state SACWIS systems support data collection and analysis (10 minutes)
- Present SACWIS as a database (10 minutes)
- Exercise: explore how SACWIS data and reports are used in measuring progress toward achievement of the agency's goals of permanency, safety and well being (15 minutes)
- Introduce the puzzle diagram, which presents the definition of data, information and knowledge (15 minutes)
- Define data, information, and knowledge in relation to SACWIS and the role people play in transforming data into information and knowledge (10 minutes)

- Exercise: Transforming case data into information and knowledge (20 minutes)

Time

1 hour and 15 minutes

Objectives

The participant who masters the content of this module will be able to:

- Explain the increasing emphasis on outcomes and performance measures in child welfare, especially since passage of ASFA
- Explain how AFCARS, NCANDS, and the SACWIS systems support data collection needed for these efforts
- Have a general understanding of the function of SACWIS as a database
- Understand how information management, including SACWIS data and reports, can support achievement of the agency's goals of permanency, safety and well being
- Understand the terms data, information and knowledge and the concept of transforming data to information and knowledge and how that process fits into implementation of information management

Materials

Flipchart/markers/pad

Sample handouts and overheads:

1. Some Requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of

- 1997 (ASFA) (3.1)
2. Federal Child Welfare Outcome Performance Measures (3.2)
3. Outcomes for Federal Reviews (3.3)
4. Measures/Indicators Common to Both Annual Report and Performance Measures Under New Federal Reviews (3.4).
5. National Systems to Collect and Retrieve Child Welfare Data (3.5)
6. SACWIS (3.6)
7. Advantages of Using a Database (3.7)
8. Manual Files vs. Tables (3.8)
9. Puzzle Diagram (3.9)
10. Case Data, Information, Knowledge (3.10)
11. Puzzle Equation (3.11)

Advance Preparation

Make sure the flipchart, markers, newsprint, overheads, and overhead projector are in the room.

If they are to be used, gather state/county outcomes and measures; determine how familiar the participants will be with the material and then prepare the training instructions and materials.

Glossary of Terms

Data - A recording of facts, concepts or instructions on a storage medium for communication, retrieval and processing by automatic means.

Database - A collection of interrelated data stored (often with controlled, limited redundancy) according to a structure. A database can serve single or multiple applications

The trainer should create a chart that presents the federal outcomes and measures and the state outcomes and measures.

Goal - Expression of direction or priority.

Indicator - Evidence of achievement or non-achievement of any outcome.

Information - Data that human beings assimilate and evaluate to solve a problem or make a decision.

Knowledge - Factual information which is retained with an understanding about the significance of that information.

Measure - A way of evaluating something or a standard against which something can be compared.

Outcome - Consequence of result of actions or a set of actions.

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

American Public Welfare Association. (1994). *Child Welfare Systems: Some Concepts and Their Implications*. Washington, DC: American Public Welfare Association.

DeMarco, T., and Lister, T. (1987) *Peopleware Productive Projects and Teams*. New York: Dorset House Publishing Co.

Inmon, W.H., Zachman, J.A., and Geiger, G. (1997). *Data Stores, Data Warehousing, and the Zachman Framework: Managing Enterprise Knowledge*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Jamieson, Marie and Bodonyi, Jami M. (1999) "Data-Driven Child Welfare Policy and Practice in the Next Century". *Child Welfare*, Vol LXXVIII, No. 1, Jan.-Feb.

Rainey, H.G. (1997) *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Usher, Charles L.; Wildfire, Judith B.; Gibbs, Deborah A. (1999) “Measuring Performance in Child Welfare: Secondary Effects of Success”. *Child Welfare*, Vol. LXXVIII, No. Jan.-Feb.

Website, Administration for Children and Families - <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/>

Website: Child Welfare League of America – <http://www.cwla.org>

Note: this website includes the National Data Analysis System (NDAS). It is an interactive child welfare database.

Pre-defined tables and graphs are customizable by state and data year, and include data sources and notes.

The Gartner Group – <http://gartner.com>

Trainer’s Instructions

1. Introduce the module by presenting the purpose and objectives using the following as a guide:

This module gives you some background regarding the development of outcome measures in child welfare, especially the requirements for reporting and measurement contained in ASFA, and how the major automated systems support the data needs for this kind of measurement. When you complete this module, you will be able to:

- *Explain the emphasis on outcome and performance*

If no other state data is available, some material from the CWLA website might be useful to incorporate into the training.

measures in child welfare and how AFCARS, NCANDS, and the SACWIS systems support data collection needed for this effort

- *Have a general understanding of the function of SACWIS as a database*
- *Understand how information management, including SACWIS data and reports, can support achievement of the agency's goals of safety, permanency, and well being*
- *Understand the terms data, information and knowledge and the concept of transforming data to information and knowledge and how that process fits into implementation of information management.*

2. Begin the module using the following as a guideline:

Over the past two decades federal legislation has been passed that addresses the status of children placed in out-of-home care. The legislation has placed increasing emphasis on measuring outcomes for the children who use child welfare services. In addition, other factors contribute as well. As one author observes, '...the development of outcomes in child welfare is being driven by Federal accountability rules, the growth of managed care, and class action lawsuits, as well as by a need to understand trends and best practice.' (Jamieson, 1999)

3. Use Overhead 'Some Requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA)' (3.1). Explain that:

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA), sets specific requirements that require measurement to

determine compliance. As a result states not only must collect specific data regarding a child's out-of-home stay, but also develop outcome measures to support the goals of safety, permanency and well being.

4. Using the Overhead 'Federal Child Welfare Outcome Performance Measures' (3.2) explain that:

ASFA requires that the states report data in each of these seven areas to the federal government. States' performance on these measures is reported to show how states are performing. Some states are also using the same outcomes to evaluate their IV-B program, or using them in presentations to the state legislature to indicate performance and to support requests for funding.

To determine if an outcome has been met, measures were developed for each outcome. The data collected for each can then be compared to determine how states (or units, or regions in a state, for that matter) compare. The data can be used to identify averages, successes and areas that might need improvement. The material that is produced for each measure comes from the individual pieces of data that are entered in the system.

If the state/county has developed its own outcomes and measures, you can use them in this exercise based on your advance preparation.

5. Use Overhead 'Outcomes for Federal Reviews' (3.3). Explain that:

Federal reviews have also been revised to reflect the increased emphasis on outcome and performance measures. The Final Rule, published by DHHS on January 25, 2000, established new approaches to monitoring state child welfare programs under ASFA. It addresses the Child and Family Services (CFS) review

and the Title IV-E eligibility review. The new reviews focus on outcomes for children and families, rather than on the accuracy and completeness of the case files in isolation.

6. Use the Overhead 'Measures/Indicators Common to Both Annual Report and Performance Measures Under New Federal Reviews (3.4). Continue the discussion:

This table show measures and indicators that are common to both the requirements for annual reporting and the outcomes to be used in federal reviews.

7. Use the Overhead 'National Systems to Collect and Retrieve Child Welfare Data' (3.5). Continue the discussion:

The outcomes we have been looking at depend on data that is entered into several large systems. Over the last two decades the federal government has provided for the creation of two major automated systems, known as NCANDS and AFCARS, to collect and retrieve state welfare data nationwide. The data collected provides information regarding the characteristics, status, performance, and outcomes for children and their families served by state child welfare agencies.

8. Use the Overhead 'SACWIS' (3.6). Explain that:

Federal legislation has also provided funding for states to develop their own data collection systems. These are the SACWIS systems, which are called by a different name in each state. For example in Maine, the system is called MACWIS; in Massachusetts it is called Family Net, and in Colorado, Colorado Trails.

9. AFCARS, NCANDS and the SACWIS systems are all data bases. To better understand them, it might be helpful to briefly describe how databases are organized. A database is a collection of interrelated data stored electronically. Use the following overheads to explain basic information about databases.

Overhead – *‘Advantages of Using a Database’ (3.7)*

Overhead – *‘Manual Files vs Tables’ (3.8)*. *Point out that data bases are organized into tables, as shown on the overhead. Compare the way that data was organized in a paper file – all the data about the case was in one location – with the way it is organized in SACWIS – case data scattered among many tables. Explain that in a database facts are entered in a number of separate tables. So, a table might be set up with a client number, names, street address, town, zip code, and phone number. Another table might list the children involved in a case with a child ID number, case ID number, child name, date of birth, sex, etc.*

SACWIS is a set of tables with all kinds of case and other data. In order for data to be retrieved from these tables, there must be a common link between them. A database constructed in this way is a 'relational database.' *On the overhead you will notice that the case ID number appears in two tables and the child ID number appears in two. The tables are related to each other by means of that number.*

Caseworkers and supervisors using SACWIS don't need to be concerned with the way the tables are organized.

Usually they see a form with various places to enter data about the case. As they enter the data, the computer will place it in the correct table. Depending on the information they want, they can tell the computer to look in various

tables to retrieve the data.

10. Launch the first exercise, using the following introduction:

Let's think for a moment about the major goals of Child Welfare. These are, as you know: child safety, permanency and well being as established by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. Let's brainstorm together the effect that SACWIS has had on the achievement of those goals. In other words, from your experience and observation, what has the implementation of SACWIS done to support the goals of safety, permanency and well being?

11. Probe as to SACWIS' usefulness in supporting key indicators such as:

- identifying any increase or decrease in the number of children in permanent homes or placements
- the timeliness of initial assessments
- reduction in the number of unassigned cases
- reduction in the number of children with a second report
- increase in the number of children placed with or visiting siblings as appropriate
- length of stay in foster care
- increase in the number of cases where routine medical and dental examinations are conducted

12. Record the group's shared information on a flipchart. Assure that both the positives (especially success stories) and negatives of SACWIS are mentioned. Probe for reports and screens that are useful in monitoring the indicators. Wrap-up the activity, using the following talking points:

Demand for Child Welfare information is growing rapidly and several information technology developments, like SACWIS, have attempted to satisfy that demand for information. Used wisely, information management can support, inform and improve Child Welfare practice, as well as measure progress toward achievement of outcomes.

The challenge for the Child Welfare organization is not only to use data like this to set goals and outcomes, but also to inform decisions regarding practice and policy and to make improvements in service.

13. Refer to the Puzzle Diagram handout and overhead (3.9).

Introduce the diagram using the following as talking points:

Another concept that will be referenced throughout the seminar originates with the need for information management and is illustrated by the puzzle diagram. Sometimes the words 'data' and 'information' are used interchangeably. However, in this curriculum, data, information, and knowledge mean specific things. Data, information and knowledge are steps in a classification process that moves from data, to information, and then to knowledge. The puzzle diagram illustrates this progression. For the purposes of this curriculum, data are basic facts. For example, the numbers 58, 65, and 75 are data in the purest form. They are unstructured raw facts resulting from empirical observation. In the corporate world, as well as in child welfare, huge quantities of data are generally available. If we look at the puzzle diagram, we can see that the entire base of the pyramid represents this great quantity of data. The puzzle pieces are data items that are part of a child welfare case record that fit into this category.

*All data is not equally important, however. As W.H. Inmon said in the book **Data Stores, Data Warehousing and the Zachman Framework**, 'One of the keys to success for modern corporations is access to the right information at the right time at the right place in the right form.'*

This statement is true for child welfare agencies as well. It is only when data is placed in context, transformed into information that it becomes valuable. Information represents data in the context of decision making. In the example above, data became information when you know that these numbers represent the mean temperatures for July 15 for the past 3 years. If you are planning a family picnic, this data has become valuable information that will assist you in picking a date for the event – the right information at the right time in the right form.

Looking at the puzzle diagram, we can see that information is the next level in the data to knowledge progression.

Information is data that has been selected by someone because it has some relevance to their needs.

Knowledge is information combined with experience, context, interpretation and reflection. Knowledge is a higher value form of information that is ready to apply to decisions and actions. The human element is important at this point as a filter to determine which knowledge is applicable in which context. Knowledge is the result of collecting and distilling information over time to understand what works and what doesn't work. The key factor in assessing knowledge is time – that is, collecting and applying information to decisions over time yields knowledge. For instance, in trying to decide on a date for the family picnic, you know from years of experience, or by looking at long term trends, that the 2nd week of August

has the best temperature for holding the event.

Looking at the puzzle diagram we see that knowledge, distilled from data and information is located at the top of the pyramid.

14. Show the Overhead 'Data , Information, Knowledge' (3.10) then explain that:

Data is a fact about the case that is entered into the database and stored there. The first column called 'case data' in the overhead is just a list of numbers, many of them look like dates. By themselves these pieces of data have no meaning. However if a person looks at the second column in combination with the data connected with each entry, the numbers make more sense. They mean something when we know that 6/17/99 is the date that the child entered foster care, for example. Even so, taken individually, these facts may not tell you much about the case.

However, when a person begins to relate the pieces of data and consider all the information available, then he or she can begin to make some observations, or begin to acquire knowledge about this case and actions that should be taken regarding it.

15. Write the word knowledge on the flipchart. Ask the group what observations they can make about the data and information shown on the overhead 'Data, Information, Knowledge'. For example, considering the date the child entered foster care, is it time to file a petition to terminate parental rights? (Has the child been in foster care for 15 out of the most recent 22 months?) Or, look at the number of case worker visits, is that enough

If local data is available, it can be used as the basis for discussion in this exercise.

considering the time the child has been in custody. Is there any data missing that is needed to draw conclusions? Where is that data located? Is it in SACWIS, or is there some other place to look for it. And finally, what kinds of decisions, if any, should the caseworker and the supervisor make at this point? How should they decide to manage this information? The decisions made here will reflect the knowledge that has been accumulated over the history of the case.

16. Continue with the lecture:

Individual pieces of data in a database mean nothing. People must decide what pieces of data are important to them, know how to retrieve them from the database and then analyze them to determine in what ways they can be useful to them. The computer can't do this procedure alone. It still requires human intervention to use data effectively and to transform it into information and then into knowledge. A few minutes ago we looked at the Puzzle Diagram and talked about it from the data, information and knowledge perspective. Now we want to go a step further and talk about integration of information management into an organization .As we mentioned earlier, information technology is processing data with a computer. Information management, on the other hand, views data, information and knowledge as organizational resources designed to help an agency achieve its goals. Information technology generally causes the creation of lots of data. SACWIS certainly did that. Taking that data and creating information and knowledge and then incorporating that information and knowledge into the fabric of the organization, to support the mission of the

agency, is a critical organizational challenge. It's through the use of the information and knowledge to inform activities such as policy making, goal setting and measuring progress toward achieving agency outcomes and goals, case decision making, personnel activities, creating budget requests and other day –to- day activities that distinguishes information management from information technology.

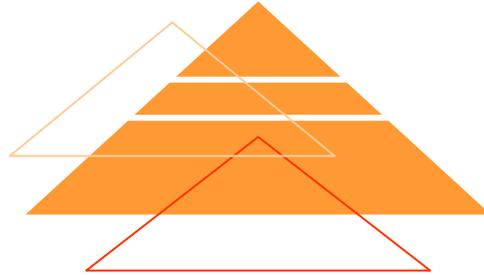
17. Refer to 'Puzzle Equation' (3.11) and continue:

This diagram, looks a bit different than when you saw it earlier. We've added the terms: technology, management, people/organization as part of an equation that equals improved practice. The diagram now depicts the notion that successful implementation of information management requires much more than just the purchase and installation of hardware and software to create data. Successful integration of information management into an organization takes data, information, knowledge combined with people, technology and management to improve practice and ultimately move toward achieving an organization's goals—in this case achieving the goals of safety, permanency and well-being. Too often the benefits of information management are not fully accomplished because the organization focuses on technology and forgets that technology is just a tool that needs to be understood, harnessed and used by people to achieve organizational goals.

18. Wrap up. If time allows, ask for questions.

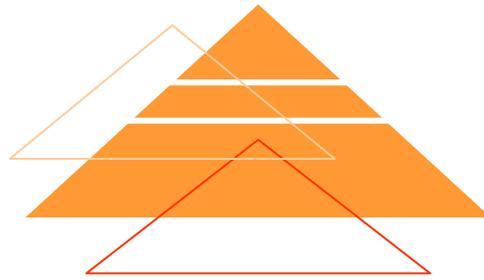
19. Lead into Module 5: **Supervising for Results: Identifying and Locating Key Data** using the following as a guideline:

The advent of the major data collection systems like SACWIS may have changed the storage location of data and information supervisors have been familiar with for many years; have they, however, changed the actual data? In the next module, we are going to identify the key data supervisors need to quickly access to get an overview of a case and look at ways that data can be retrieved easily.



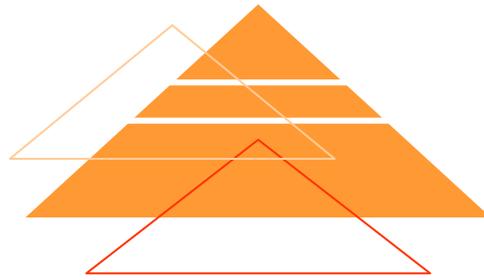
SOME REQUIREMENTS OF THE ADOPTION AND SAFE FAMILIES ACT OF 1997 (ASFA)

- Sets goals of safety, permanency, and well being for children in out-of-home care.
- Establishes outcome measures (including length of stay in foster care, number of foster care placements and number of adoptions) that can be used to assess the performance of States in operating child protection and child welfare programs. States must submit this data annually to the Department.
- Mandates tighter timeframes for action on cases of children in out-of-home care. For example, requires state to terminate parental rights for children in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months.
- Changes the procedures for federal reviews of child welfare systems.



Federal Child Welfare Outcome Performance Measures

1. Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect.
2. Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care.
3. Increase permanency for children in foster care.
4. Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry rates.
5. Reduce time in foster care to adoption finalization.
6. Increase placement stability.
7. Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions.



Outcomes for Federal Reviews

Safety Outcomes

1. Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
2. Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Permanency Outcomes

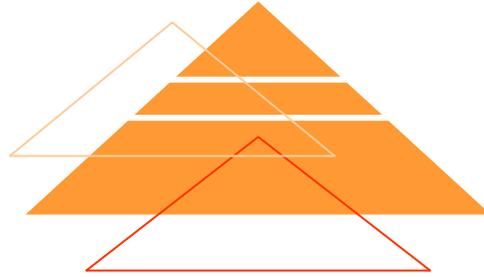
1. Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
2. The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Child and Family Well-Being Outcomes

1. Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
 2. Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
 3. Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.
- Each outcome is evaluated by using specific performance indicators and two outcomes are evaluated using data indicators as well.

Measures/Indicators Common to Both Annual Report and Performance Measures under New Federal Reviews

Measures/Indicators	Annual Report Measures	Review Performance Indicators
Repeat maltreatment	Of all victims of CAN, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 12 month period Of all children that entered foster care, what percentage reentered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode	Repeat Maltreatment Foster Care re-entries
CAN by foster care provider	Of all in foster care, what percentage subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by foster parent or facility staff	CAN by foster care provider
Length of stay in foster care	Of all children reunified at discharge, what percentage reunified in the following time frames Of all children who exited to adoption, what percentage within the following time frames (3 and older)	Length of stay in foster care Length of time to achieve permanency goal of reunification; of adoption
Achieving permanency	Of all children who exited, what percentage left to permanency (12 and older; racial/ethnic, to emancipation)	Permanency goal Permanency goal or other planned living arrangement Independent living services Achievement of adoption
Stability of foster care placements	Of all children in care x amount of time, what percentage had no more than two placement settings	Stability of foster care placements
	For 12 and under, what percentage placed in group homes/institutions	
		<i>Safety</i> Timeliness of initial investigation Services to children in home to prevent removal Current risk of harm
		<i>Permanency</i> Continuity/connections Proximity of placement Placement with siblings Visits with parents and siblings Preserving connections Relative placement <i>Current relationship child – parent</i>
		Well Being Needs addressed by services Child and family involvement in case planning Worker Visits – parent, child Educational needs Physical Health Mental Health



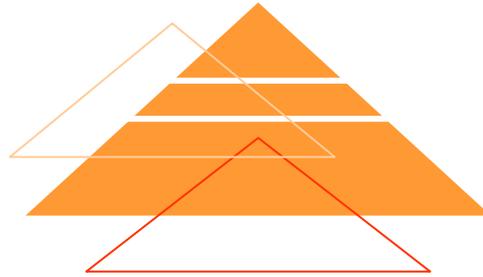
NATIONAL SYSTEMS TO COLLECT AND RETRIEVE CHILD WELFARE DATA

NCANDS *National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (1994)*

- This system promotes the collection of annual national data on child protective services from the states.
- Items reported include data regarding the report itself, child data, and child victim and perpetrator data.

AFCARS *Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (1994)*

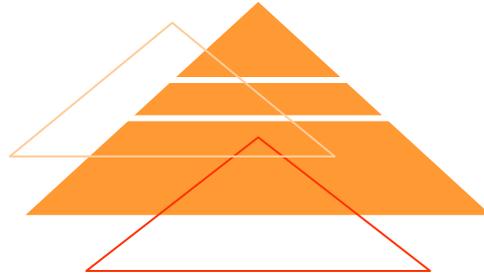
- Mandated by federal legislation in 1986, this system was designed to assist in the administration of Title IV-B/E State plans.
- The system collects and reports to the Administration on Children and Families 65 data elements for each child in foster care and 37 data elements for each child adopted during the six-month reporting period. Some of these are the child's demographic information, removal/placement setting indicators, circumstances associated with removal, current placement settings, most recent case plan goal, parental rights termination, foster parent data, and discharge data.
- AFCARS is a single national system that receives data in the same format from all states.
- ASFA states that the outcome measures for the annual report that each state must file should be developed from AFCARS data.



SACWIS

SACWIS *Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information Systems (1993)*

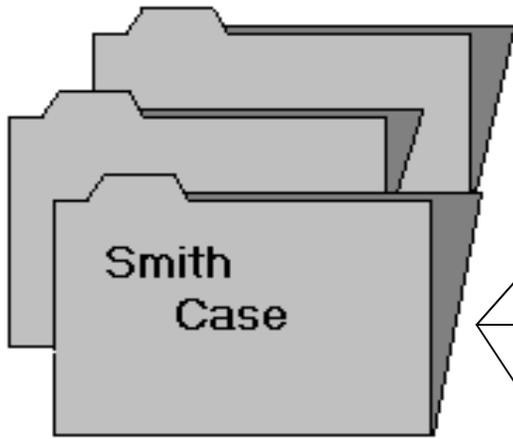
- In 1993 the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1993 provided enhanced funding to States for the development and implementation of this system. Its purpose was to collect case information. During a three-year period, states could apply for funding to develop their own system to collect this data.
- They are more comprehensive than AFCARS because they collect information about all child welfare cases, not just those that concern foster care and adoption. In addition they may contain information about other aspects of child welfare services. Most states chose to develop SACWIS systems and are presently at some point in the process.



ADVANTAGES OF USING A DATABASE

- You can store large amounts of data
- You only need to enter data once
- You can quickly locate the data any time you need it
- By retrieving certain combinations of data, you can provide yourself with information you need to use

Manual Files
(fat files)



Manual file: All Smith info. is grouped together

SACWIS Database

- Smith case data are scattered throughout the database
- Similar data types for all children in state are group together

Table 1 Case Names

Case ID	NAME			
1	Smith			
2	Jones			
3	Miller			
4	Andrews			

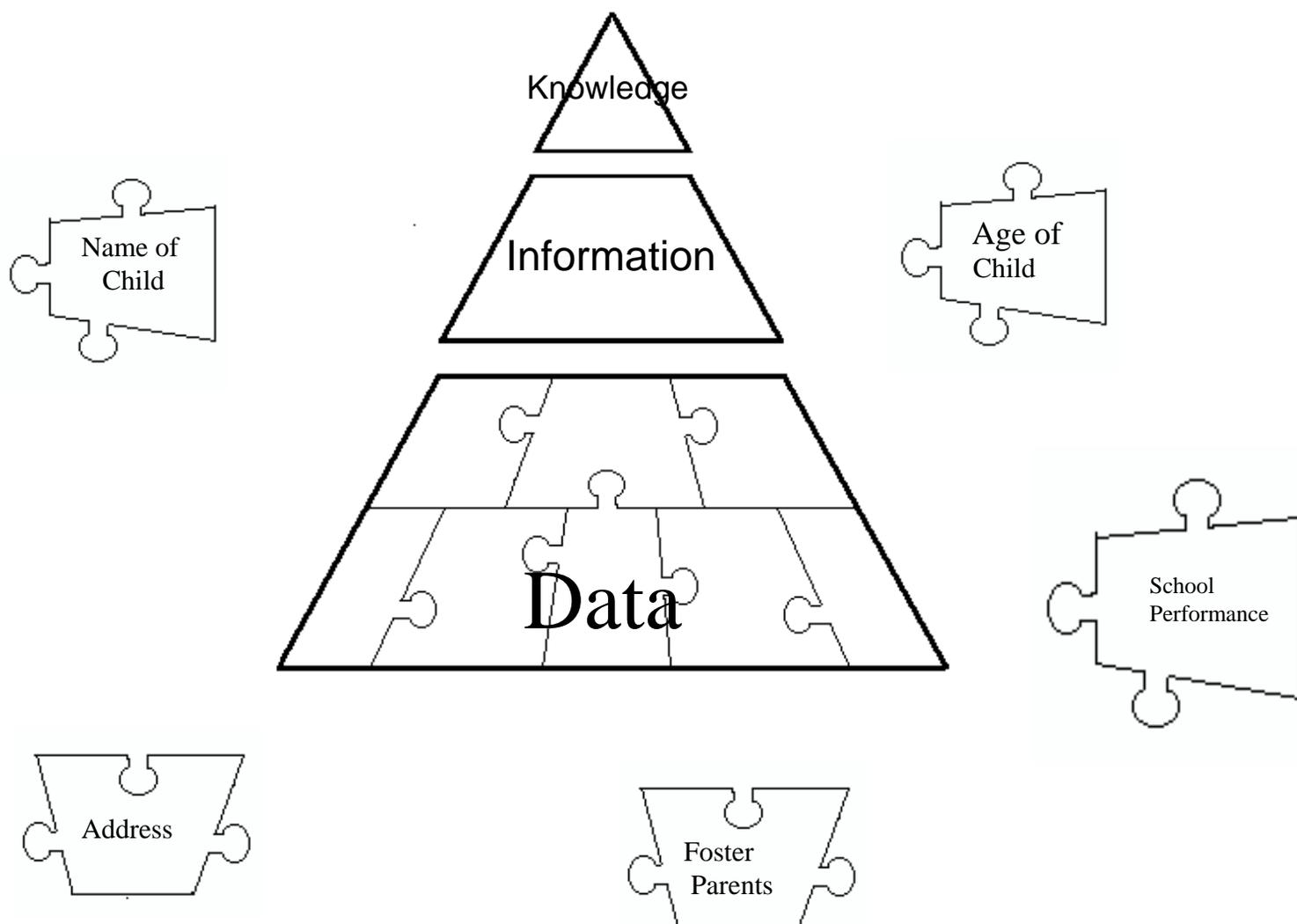
Table 8 Case Children

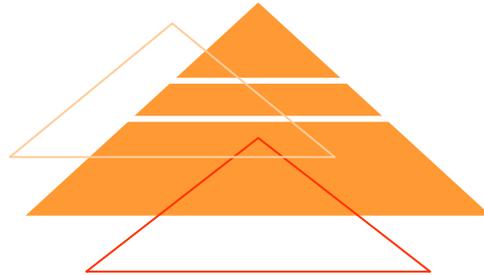
Child	Case ID	Name	DOB	Sex
1	1	Suzie	11/1/91	f
2	1	Aaron		
3	1	Wesley		
4	2	Sally		
5	6	Gertie		

Table 41 Service

Child	Service			
1	Counseling			•
4	Medical Care			•

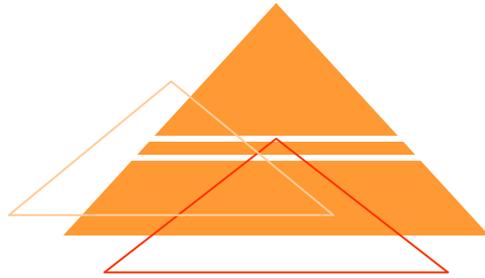
Information Management: Putting the Pieces Together



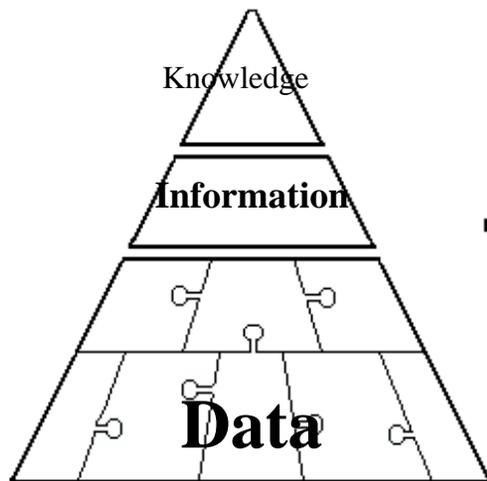


DATA, INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE

Case Data	Information	Knowledge
1467245	Case number	
6/10/00	Today's date	
Sammy	Child's name	
6/10/92	Child's date of birth	
M	Gender of child	
6/17/99	Child entered foster care	
8/4/99	Case plan completed	
2/28/00	Permanency hearing held	
5/30/00	Risk Assessment Completed	
6/15/00	Date of next judicial hearing	
6	Number of caseworker visits	



Information Management: Putting the Pieces Together



+

Management

People/
Organizations

Technology

=

**Improved
Practice**

Module 4: Supervising for Results-- Identifying and Locating Key Data



Rationale

Case decision making often occurs under stressful, highly charged conditions. Child welfare supervisors must identify what data they rely on to supervise for results and have the ability to quickly locate and synthesize that key data to help achieve the goals of permanency, safety and well being. Additionally, child welfare supervisors must understand the importance of having quality data in SACWIS and their role in assuring the quality of the data.

Activities

- Exercise: review and update the matrix, Location of Key Information for Supervisors, based on the state's SACWIS system (15 minutes)
- Exercise: review selected on-line and hardcopy reports (35 minutes)
- Exercise: Brainstorm the need for having quality data in SACWIS (20 minutes)
- Exercise: Share 'most helpful practices' using the SACWIS system, data and reports in supervision (45 minutes)

Time

1 hour and 45 minutes

Objectives

After this module is complete, the participant will be able to:

- Describe the key data needed for him/her to do his/her supervisory job effectively
- Identify where that key data was stored pre-SACWIS and where it is stored now
- Locate key data in SACWIS and in related reports
- Get a quick overview of a case using the identified key data
- Understand his/her role in assuring quality data in SACWIS
- Identify and share their “most helpful practices” with others

Materials

Easel, newsprint, markers and tape

Flipchart printed with the Key Data Matrix headings

Sample handouts and overheads:

1. Selection of state reports available in hard copy or on-line
2. Location of Key Information for Supervisors Matrix (4.1)

Advance Preparation

Make sure flipchart, markers, newsprint, overheads and overhead projector are in the room.

Prepare a selection of state reports to distribute as handouts or make arrangements for them to be available on-line.

You may want to arrange to have a trainer's PC and link to the SACWIS in the classroom. This allows the trainer's to show on-line reports and locate key data.

Update the Location of Key Information for Supervisors Matrix to reflect the states specific terms.

Glossary of Terms

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

Trainer's Instructions

1. Introduce the module by presenting the purpose and objectives using the following as a guide:

This module will help you identify the key data you need for supervision, determine the location of the data, explore several methods of gathering that data and understand the need for quality data in SACWIS. After this module is complete, you will be able to:

- *Describe the key data you need to do your supervisory job effectively*
- *Identify where that key data was stored pre-SACWIS and where it is stored now*
- *Locate key data in SACWIS and in related reports*
- *Get a quick overview of a case using the identified key data*
- *Understand the definition of quality data and the importance of having it in SACWIS*
- *Identify and share their “most helpful practices” with others*

2. Begin the first exercise: identifying and locating key data needed for supervision. Present a mini-lecture using the following

material as a guide. Refer to the flipchart and handouts presenting the key data matrix: Location of Key Information for Supervisors.

Earlier this morning, we quickly went through the Information Management Competency Model. What that theoretical model clearly says, and what you as supervisors know, is that every day you are asked to show and to use several different skill sets and areas of knowledge. For example:

- *Work management skills, such as directing the work of yourself and others, setting schedules, anticipating information necessary for decision making and then making decisions*
- *Conceptual skills, such as establishing priorities, reaching sound conclusions and applying experience to guide analysis and practice*
- *Technical knowledge, such as leadership, motivation, casework, educational and supportive supervision and financial management*

Desktop computing, e-mail, voice mail and systems like SACWIS were designed to be tools to support you as you carry out these day-to-day supervisory activities.

However, the implementation of desktop software, office automation and SACWIS require supervisors to learn and employ a new set of competencies in the area of information management. To continue to be effective in this age of rapidly changing technology, supervisors now must develop skills such as:

- *Knowing how to convert data into information and into knowledge to support decision making*
- *Addressing the impact of technology on work performance, and*

- *Understanding the link between entering quality data into SACWIS and improved services for children and families*

The ability to get a quick overview of a case is something supervisors must know how to do. You knew how to do that pre-SACWIS and you still need to know how to do that post SACWIS. SACWIS didn't change the data elements you rely on to get an overview of a case, but it did change where those data elements are located and stored and how you access them.

Different supervisors may have different key data elements that they use in supervision --- or may use different data depending on the nature of the supervision being performed. But certainly there is some common data that all child welfare supervisors rely on at some time. Let's spend a few minutes looking at some examples of key data, where that data was located pre-SACWIS, and where it is located now. To start the discussion, let's look at the matrix: Location of Key Information for Supervisors. (The matrix is a handout and an overhead.) It shows a sample of some key data elements that you might use, where they were located in one state before SACWIS and where they are located in the SACWIS system. Now think about your state's SACWIS system. What are some key data elements that you use? They can be data that you use for caseload management, administration or for some other purpose. Where is this data located in your state system.

3. Launch a brainstorming session aimed at creating a matrix based on the state's own SACWIS system. It may be useful to ask the group questions like:

- Are these the data elements you use when you are trying to understand a case?
- What other elements do you use?
- Where are the other elements located?

List the answers on the flipchart, then go back and ask where these data elements were located pre-SACWIS and where they are located in the SACWIS system.

4. To begin the next exercise, launch a discussion of state reports that are available in hard copy or on-line. Distribute sample reports or, if possible, have on-line access in the classroom. Ask the participants to discuss these reports, framing the discussion around the following questions:

- Do the reports show key data?
- Would the participants use these reports in their jobs?
- How would they use them?
- If they can't use the reports available now, what kind of reports could they use?

Summarize responses on a flipchart.

5. Begin the next exercise by saying:

We have been looking at the key data that is found in SACWIS and in reports that you need to use in your jobs. The data is important in the work you do, and because you rely on it to do your job, you know how important it is for that data to be of the best quality.

6. Explain that next activity focuses on the reasons for having quality data in SACWIS. Begin a brainstorming session by asking participants to think about and share answers to the question...

“what is quality data?” Probe for and assure answers such as:

Option: Break into small groups. Give them 5 minutes to discuss. Write questions on the flipchart. Then call the group back together to discuss answers to questions.

Consider breaking into small groups for this exercise.

- Current
- Accurate
- Complete
- Readable
- Valid

Continue the activity by asking, "why does paying attention to the quality of the data going into SACWIS matter?" In other words, what is the need to assure that SACWIS contains complete, accurate, timely data?

7. Record responses on a flipchart. Ensure that the following items are raised during the discussion:

- The case record provides key data that is readily available when the caseworker or supervisor change, become ill or in an emergency.
- Certain SACWIS information is provided to the federal government and is used for planning and reimbursement
- There is an increased emphasis on accountability from the federal child welfare agencies (ASFA)
- As more reliance is placed on SACWIS reports, the data in SACWIS and on the reports needs to be 'quality' data. The risk is that uninformed or misinformed decisions can be made based on poor quality data
- Information is power; accurate information is extremely powerful
- The information can be used for legislative decision making as well as policy making on the state and national levels

8. Mention that as child welfare supervisors they have a key role

in ensuring that SACWIS contains quality data. Ask participants to share the activities they do to assure that the data in SACWIS is quality data.

9. Launch the final activity for this module, a “Most Helpful Practice” discussion using the following as a guideline.

Each of you has been using SACWIS for some time. You have come through many of the phases of learning the new system. During your transition to this new system, you developed several ways of using SACWIS in your day to day supervision ---maybe it's a review of ticklers, maybe it's a look at a certain report. Whatever it is, you have figured out a way to use SACWIS in a way that best for you. Please take a few minutes to think about something you have found to be “most helpful” to you as you use SACWIS in supervision; think of something that works for you that you would be willing to share with your colleagues here.

10. After a few minutes ask each participant to share his/her most helpful practice. Record the practice on a flipchart. During each presentation of a best practice, probe to ensure that:

- the practice is clearly described
- why and how it works is discussed, and
- the benefits are mentioned

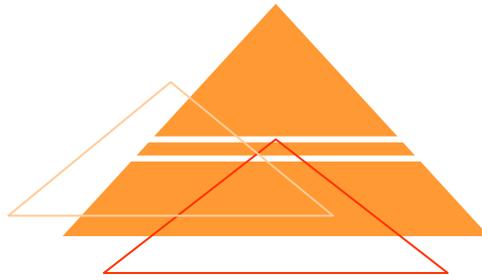
Encourage participants to ask questions of their colleagues about each presented practice to see if others can adopt the practice.

11. Wrap up the activity by thanking participants for sharing their practice and commenting that later on in the seminar these 'most

helpful practices' will be discussed again in preparation for thinking about applying the seminar learning back in the office.

12. Introduce then the next module, **Using Information Management to Support Casework Supervision**, using the following as a guideline:

Decision making is one of the key responsibilities of a child welfare supervisor. In the next module, we will look at several ways SACWIS data and information can be used to support, shape and inform case work decision making.



LOCATION OF KEY INFORMATION FOR SUPERVISORS

Key Data Elements	Location	
	Pre-SACWIS	SACWIS
Work load assigned to worker	Case load list (names, case objective) – Issued monthly on paper	Under worker work load (name of case, report and assessment) and all children Use Profile window
Participants	Case record **Card file**	Profile window
Status -legal -family goal/child goal	Case load list Case load list **Card File**	Demographics Case types (in Case Assignment details)
Evaluations (psychological, etc.)	Written reports from individuals **Evaluation Packet in hard copy record**	Written reports from individuals (not located in SACWIS)
School information -PST stuff (SPED) -Letters from: schools doctors	Written reports **Education Packet in hard copy record.**	Written reports (not located in SACWIS) Not located on SACWIS Not located on SACWIS
Workload -Number of Cases -Number of Kids	Case load list	Workers Work load
Number of Cases -Front end loaded -Last assignment date	Caseload list, manual record	CCI Search Participation window or the Case Management Previous Assignment window
Judicial Review Due	Case load List	Ticklers
Case Plan Review Due	Manual (personal tracking)	Ticklers

Module 5: Using Information Management to Support Casework Supervision



Rationale

The process a child welfare supervisor uses to make decisions is informed by multiple sources of information---the case record, related reports and the caseworker's and the supervisor's experience and expertise, as well as information obtained from voice mail, e-mail and face-to-face sessions. Supervisors need to understand how the use of information management supports his or her decision making process, improves practice and moves the agency toward the achievement of the goals of permanency, safety and well being.

Activities

- Exercise: Brainstorm the importance of case data to supervision, including exploring the information the child welfare supervisor needs to gather (20 minutes)
- Present the 'Where and How SACWIS Supports Casework Supervision' diagram (10 minutes)
- Exercise: Preparing for Supervision using SACWIS data and reports (30 minutes)

Time

1 hour

Objectives

After this module is complete, the participant will be able to:

- Use key data to prepare for and use during supervision
- Understand several methods of locating and eliciting the data and information he/she needs to supervise for results

Materials

Flipchart, easel, markers and tape

Sample handouts and overheads:

1. Where and How SACWIS Supports Casework Supervision diagram (5.1)
2. Miller Case Disposition Hearing Vignette (5.2)
3. Miller Case Adjudication Hearing Vignette (5.3)

Advance Preparation

Make sure the flipchart, markers, newsprint pad, overheads and overhead projector are in the room.

Revise the Miller cases (5.2 and 5.3) to include terminology used in the home state.

Glossary of Terms

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

Trainer's Instructions

1. Introduce the module by presenting the purpose and objectives.

This module allows you to explore the process of data and information gathering from case records, reports and

supervisory discussions and other sources. After this module is complete, you will be able to:

- *Use key data to prepare for and use during supervision*
- *Understand several methods of locating and eliciting the data and information you need to supervise for results*

2. Launch the first activity using the following material as a guide.

We just spent some time identifying and locating the key data elements you use to get a quick overview of a case. How we are going to move into another phase of thinking about data, information and supervision by talking about how and where SACWIS supports supervision. Let's start by brainstorming for a few minutes what a case record is. What are its characteristics? Does it, for example focus on the past or the future?

3. Record the participant's responses on a flipchart and be sure that the following items are included.

Case Records:

- Document the past
- Tell what social work/casework has taken place
- Tell a story of the case—what happened and where the case is currently
- Give a snapshot in time
- Contain both data and narrative
- Narratives discuss decisions, events and progress to date

4. Move into a brainstorming session about what other types of information a supervisor needs to gather by asking a question, for example...if a case record contains the past, the history, what other pieces of information does the supervisor need to gather about the case during supervision?

5. Record the participant's answers on a flipchart. Ensure that the following items are included.

Supervision covers:

- The dynamics of the case
- The caseworker's feelings and observations
- Judgements and assessments
- Priorities
- Next steps
- Go forward decisions
- What the caseworker needs to move forward

6. Tie the two brainstorming sessions together using the 'Where and How SACWIS Supports Casework Supervision' diagram (5.1) and making the following points:

The supervisor finds documentation of the past in the case record and reports. No matter how complete and accurate the case record is, it only provides a look at what has already taken place with the case. It is during supervision, when the supervisor meets face- to- face with the caseworker, that the discussion can turn to what next; and where do we go from here?

The results of the supervision---the discussions and decisions on services, priorities and next steps—get translated into facts by the caseworker and entered into the case record.

The facts of the case--the case record -- can be reviewed on-

line before or during supervision by the supervisor. The gathering of the facts can, but does not need to be, face-to-face. Questions about the facts can be raised on-line, through e-mail or face-to-face.

The dynamics of the case, the where do we go from here supervisory discussions are probably best done face-to-face.

7. Ask the group to break into two smaller groups organized by program—Children’s Services and Protective Services. Instruct the groups to review the appropriate case vignette. (For Protective Services supervisors, use the Disposition Hearing Vignette (5.2) and for the Children’s Services supervisors, use the Adjudication Hearing Vignette (5.3).

8. Instruct the groups to take approximately 15 minutes to come up with a list of questions that they would ask the caseworker during supervision to get the additional information they need to know to assure that the worker is prepared for the Hearing. Ask the groups to include discussions of SACWIS reports, the key data elements and most helpful practices listed on the flipcharts discussed in Module 4. Ask each group to designate a recorder/reporter to write down the questions that the supervisor will ask Dorothy.

9. After 10–15 minutes (or checking in with the groups) ask each group to present their questions. Record the questions on a flipchart and ask the group to comment and offer differences of opinions on the questions. Probe for the sources they would use to find the answers to the questions; focus here on reports, screens and other sources. Ask if there is any information that shouldn’t be in the case record. The end product will be a list of questions and information sources, including reports supervisors think about as

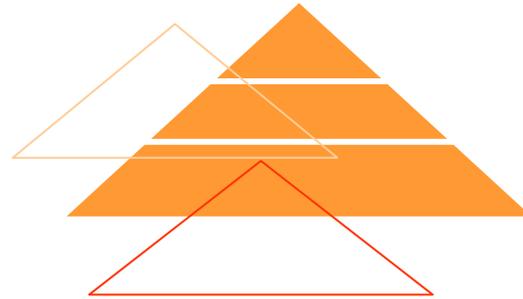
An alternate exercise is for the trainer to develop case data that is based on a real case. The discussion could focus on the value, quality and accessibility of the information available in the state SACWIS that could help the supervisor advise the caseworker on the case.

they prepare a worker for either a hearing or review.

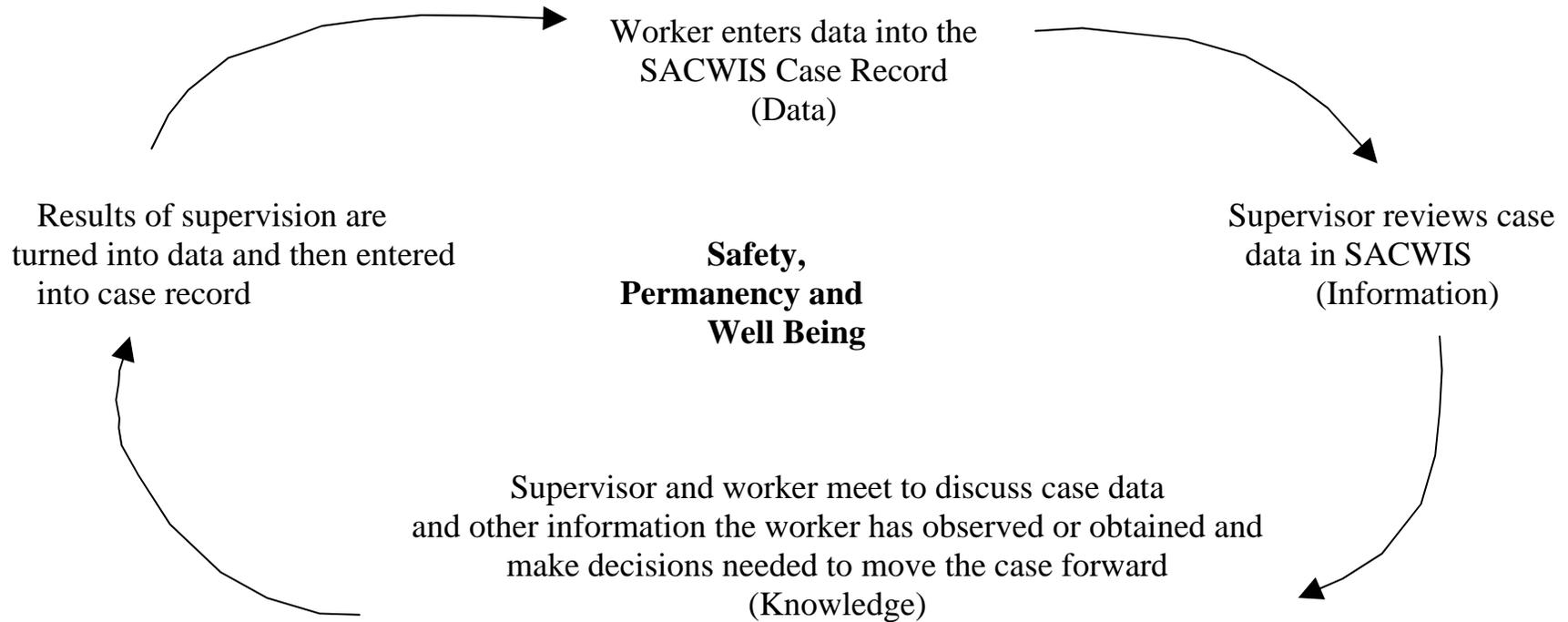
10. Mention that these questions will be used again the next day during the morning.

11. Ask for and respond to questions.

12. Preview the next day's start time and agenda. Thank folks for their good work that day.



Where and How SACWIS Supports Casework Supervision



Module 6: Day 2 Welcome

Rationale

Participants should be clear about the agenda, activities and expectations of the Day 2 training.

Activities

- Welcome and review of the day's agenda (5 minutes)
- Review of previous day's highlights and opportunity for questions (5 minutes)
- Review of the participant desired outcomes flipcharts created during Module 1 on the previous day (5 minutes)

Time

15 minutes

Objectives

When this module is complete, the participant will be able to:

- Explain the agenda for the day
- Express any progress toward meeting his/her desired outcomes for the seminar

Materials

Easel, newsprint, markers and tape

Flipchart of the participant's desired outcomes (from Module 1)

Sample overheads and handouts:

1. Day 2 Agenda (6.1)



Advance Preparation

Make sure the flipchart from Module 1, markers, newsprint pad, and the overhead projector are in the room.

Glossary of Terms

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

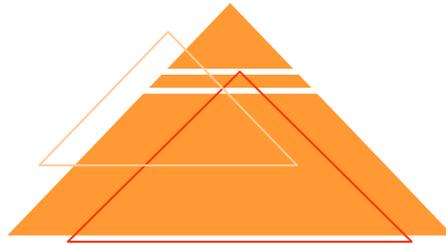
Trainer's Instructions

1. Welcome the participants to Day 2 of the seminar and review the Day 2 Agenda handout and flipchart (6.1).
2. Highlight the events of Day 1 using the following as a guide:
During Day 1, we covered a lot of material on outcomes, performances measures, the impact of technology, key data elements in SACWIS and related reports, information elicited during supervision and the concept of information management.
3. Mention any memorable or humorous comments made by participants during the previous day.
4. Ask if anyone has any questions, thoughts or comments on anything covered during Day 1. Address any items raised by the participants.
5. Refer to the 'Desired Outcomes' flipchart. Ask participants if they want to add or modify any items. Go through the outcomes, checking any that the participant's say are done and adding any new outcomes or modifications. Mention that we will be checking

in on this list again later in the day.

6. Introduce Module 7, **Data Analysis Tips, Tools and Techniques** using the following as a guideline:

Everyone in this room has been asked at some time to look at data and interpret what it means. As more and more data become available, the need to hone your data analysis skills will increase. In the next module, we will look at how data and information needs can vary depending on where you are situated in an organization, as well as practice some data analysis techniques.



Agenda for Day 2

Module 6. Welcome

Time: 9:00 - 9:15

Module 7. Data Tips, Tools and Techniques

Time: 9:15 - 10:15

Break

Time: 10:15 - 10:30

Module 7. Data Tips, Tools and Techniques (con't)

Time: 10:30 - 11:30

Module 8. Technology Is Changing the Job of the Child Welfare Supervisor: Are You a Change Leader?

Time 11:30 –12:00

Lunch

Time 12:00 – 1:00

Module 8. Technology Is Changing the Job of the Child Welfare Supervisor: Are You a Change Leader? (con't)

Time 1:00 –2:30

Break

Time: 2:30 - 2:45

Module 9. Options for Skills Improvement

Time: 2:45 – 3:45

Module 10. Closing

Time: 3:45 – 4:00

Module 7: Data Analysis: Tips, Tools and Techniques

Rationale

Increasingly child welfare supervisors are expected to be able to analyze data and information to help with decision making or to advise decision-makers. This module allows participants the opportunity to learn, expand and hone data analysis skills, as well as understand the varying information needs of people at several levels in the Child Welfare agency.

Activities

- Exercise: Brainstorm how information needs vary by organizational level (15 minutes)
- Exercise: Case Study Abuse on the Increase in Cascadia County (1 hour 15 minutes)
- Exercise: Apply the analytic tools to data in SACWIS reports (30 minutes)

Time

2 hours

Objectives

When this module is complete, the participant will be able to:

- Understand how the information needs of several levels of personnel in child welfare agencies vary
- Understand several approaches to data analysis
- Explain and use various data analysis tools and techniques



- Explain how these tools and techniques can improve child welfare supervision and practice

Materials

Easel, newsprint, tape, markers and calculators

Sample handouts and overheads:

1. Sample Information Needs for Adoption Triangle (7.1)
2. Participant's Version of the Case Study Abuse on the Increase in Cascadia County, including the case study and attachments (7.2)
3. Trainer's Version of the Case Study Abuse on the Increase in Cascadia County, including the case study with attachments, calculations and suggested answers to key questions (7.3)
4. Tips, Formulas and Definitions of Terms (7.4)
5. Table 1: Abuse Reports- Statewide (7.5)
6. Table 2: Abuse Reports Cascadia (7.6)
7. Tables 1 & 2: Abuse Reports Statewide and Cascadia and Answer Box 2 (7.7)
8. Table 3: Abuse and Neglect Fatalities (7.8)
9. Table 4: Age of Victim and Answer Box 4 (7.9)
10. Tables 5, 6 and 7: Alleged Perpetrator of Substantiated Abuse and Answer Box 5 (7.10)
11. Table 8: Type of Maltreatment Statewide and Cascadia (7.11)
12. Table 9: Data Displayed in Three Ways (7.12)
13. Sample Report to the Commissioner (7.13)
14. Sample SACWIS reports selected by the trainer that show multi-year trends
15. Interpreting Data (7.14)

Advance Preparation

Make sure flipchart, markers, newsprint pad, overheads,

To allow trend analysis, the data on the sample SACWIS reports should include multiple years of agency data. Suggested data elements include # of CPS reports, # of CPS substantiated reports, # of investigations closed without a finding, child victims by age, child victims by race, perpetrators by relationship to victim.

calculators and overhead projector are in the room. Have copies of the case study available for all participants.

The trainer will need to update the **Sample Information Needs for Adoption Triangle** to reflect job titles used by the agency.

NOTE: The Abuse on the Increase in Cascadia County case study is a challenging, productive training exercise for both the participants and trainers. The trainer may want to customize the case by using agency data, locations and names. To assist the trainer in preparing to instruct on this case, this module includes the standard Trainer's Instructions supplemented by a Trainer's Version of the Case Study Abuse on the Increase in Cascadia County, which includes the case study with attachments, calculations and suggested answers to key questions (7.3). Prior to the seminar, the trainer should review the material in this module to determine if he/she needs to create additional training aids to facilitate preparation for and presentation of the material.

Have available sample SACWIS reports displaying multi year trends for the concluding exercise.

Glossary of Terms

Comparison – An examination of two or more items to establish similarities and dissimilarities.

Cumulative percent – A summing of all data or values related to a percent.

Data – A recording of facts, concepts or instructions on a storage

medium for communication, retrieval and process by automatic means.

Percent – One part in a hundred; tells how many out of 100. For example, 5% = 5 out of 100.

Percent change – The portion of a change in quantity, amount or value.

Rate – Frequency of occurrence.

Trend - A line of general direction

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

Sperling, A.P. and Levinson, Samuel D. (1998) **Arithmetic Made Simple**. Doubleday, New York, NY. Revised edition

Weinbach, Robert W. and Grinnel, Richard M., Jr. (1991) **Statistics for Social Workers**. Longman Publishing Group, White Plains, NY. 2nd edition.

Williams, Edward. (1989) **Arithmetic the Easy Way**. Barron's Educational Series, Inc, Hauppauge, NY. 2nd edition.

Abuse on the Increase in Cascadia County. (January 2000) Data Users Group of the Oregon Department of Human Services, Salem, OR.

Trainer's Instructions

1. Introduce the module by presenting the purpose and objectives using the following as a guide:

This module offers you the opportunity to understand the types of information needed by people at various levels of responsibility in a child welfare agency, explore why different levels have different needs and practice various data analysis tools and techniques. The goal is not to turn you into a statistician; however the material we will cover in this module should help you feel more comfortable working with numbers, doing data analysis or interpreting data while you are doing your day-to-day work back in your office. When this module is complete, you will be able to:

- *Understand why the information needs of several levels of personnel in Child Welfare agencies vary*
- *Understand several approaches to data analysis*
- *Explain and use various data analysis tools and techniques*
- *Explain how these tools and techniques can improve Child Welfare supervision and practice*

2. Explain that the first exercise will provide an opportunity to think about how information needs may vary depending on the organizational level of the user. Refer participants to handout 7.1, Sample Information Needs for Adoption Triangle, and put up overhead 7.1. Begin a mini-lecture using the following as a guide:

It's frequently said that 'data is data is data is data' and

Optional Exercises: In small groups, expand the Sample Information Needs for Adoption Triangle to include the information needed by front-line supervisors and workers. Or...develop a new triangle for a service other than adoption.

‘information is information is information’. Later on in this module, we are going to look at several ways to analyze and interpret data and we will be better able to determine if we agree that ‘data is data is data’. Right now we are going to focus on the information needs of child welfare agency personnel at various levels in an organization. Let’s start by looking at this triangle, which provides a sample of the questions key personnel at three levels---the Agency Director, the Statewide Program Manager and a Regional Program Manager—may ask about the adoption program. As you consider the answers to the questions, you can see that the information gathered gets more streamlined, concrete and straightforward, as well as more summarized, the higher you look in the agency. Note, for example, the difference in detail requested by these two questions ‘How many children were placed for adoption?’ and ‘ How many families have adoption assistance agreements?’

3. Pause here and ask participants to go into their small groups and to reflect on the potential impact on decision making if executive personnel work primarily with highly summarized information. After 3 minutes reconvene the large group and ask each group to mention 1-2 impacts. Process.

4. Continue to explore this topic by probing the relationship between the audiences for and uses of information and the level of detail. More specifically, ask participants questions such as “How does an Agency Director use information? Who is likely to ask for information from an Agency Director and for what purposes?” Record the answers on a flipchart. Expect the following types of

answers:

- The media often needs information quickly for a breaking story
- The legislature needs information as it is debating budget and other legislative proposals
- The governor's office may need specific information

5. Repeat the questions for both the statewide and regional program managers. Record the answers on a flipchart. Expect answers such as:

- Information is needed for federal reporting requirements.
- Particular information is requested by managers at different levels of the organization
- Auditors ask for this detailed information

6. Wrap-up the discussion by stating that:

Executives in all organizations, not just child welfare, are expected to have some level of knowledge about a variety of topics. Every executive has his or her special areas of interest and will probably be more briefed on those areas than others. Executives, thus, rely on people closer to the program or clients to have, be able to gather and to do more analysis on detailed programmatic issues than they do. Executives often turn to staff to get accurate, complete, factual answers to specific questions. Often, the executives may ask questions that do not have readily available answers so answering the question may take research, analysis and /or educating of the executive on the type of data that is available. Staff often plow through 'tons' of detailed data, selecting, analyzing and organizing it, to get

the answer to one question. When responding to a question, be sure that the response is framed in a way that is familiar to the questioner. Administrators of a program are likely to be familiar with the unique language of a program; while users of information external to the agency may not be. So, for example, when addressing a question about the number of substantiated reports in a county, talking about 'substantiated reports per 1000 reports' might make perfect sense to a child welfare administrator but none at all to a news reporter or a legislator. They might be interested, however, in the number of reports that were verified per population in the county or state or per number of families. We looked at an adoption example here, however, the same holds true of other child welfare services. The organizational position of the person, the audience and the intended use of the information all are factors that help define the level of detail of the questions asked and information provided.

7. Introduce the case, Abuse on the Increase in Cascadia County using the following as a guide:

Even though you as a child welfare supervisor may not need to analyze the kind of data presented in this case study, you may find that the skills practiced in this case study can be applied in variety of situations, perhaps with your unit or when collecting data for your supervisor or when you are reading reports. The point is to develop or increase your comfort in reading numbers, tables and charts, as well enhance data analysis skills that can be applied in a variety of different situations. The goal is to show how using, analyzing and understanding data

The trainer might want to make up an overhead with the words 'The goal is to show how using, analyzing and understanding data correctly can help answer basic social work questions'.

correctly can help answer basic social work questions.

8. Pass out copies of the Participant's Version of the Case Study, Abuse on the Increase in Cascadia County, (7.2). Ask the group to take a few minutes to read pages 7.23-7.25, stopping at the end of Question 1.

9. Put up Overhead 7.4, Tips, Formulas and Definitions and ask participants to find the same handout. Walk through a summary of the case and the Question 1 tips and definitions (found on 7.4) using the following as a guide:

You've read the case and see that Commissioner Smith is stunned by the newspaper's charge that Cascadia County had a 300% increase in the number of abuse and neglect cases last year. Commissioner Smith turns to you, the Program Administrator in Cascadia County, and the CPS supervisor in Cascadia County to help him look into this charge. He asks you to find answers to several questions. Lets stop and think for a moment how to approach this request. First, we need to find a source of data. In this case, we are fortunate that the State Office for Services to Children and Families (SCF) maintains data on a web page and has just released some statistics last week. The first tip in the case points out that locating the correct data and understanding the data is critical first step in any data analysis.

We have discovered that the 'correct data' to answer the Commissioner's first question is on Table 1: Abuse Reports Statewide and Table 2: Abuse Reports in Cascadia County. Can you all find those two tables in you case study? They are in Attachments 1 and 2. OK, lets look at Table 1

The trainer's approach to presenting this case will depend on the trainer's assessment of the group's comfort level working with data and calculations. After setting up the case, the trainer may, for example, walk the whole group through the first question set, then break into the small groups to go through the remainder of the questions. In another situation, the trainer may walk the whole group through Questions 1& 2 before going into small groups. Some trainer's might find that this case works best if the whole group stays together for the entire case.

(Overhead 7.5) for a minute. You often see tables of data organized into rows and columns. This is a fairly complex table presenting a lot of data. Lets look at each column and row. Going across the top, we see the headings Year, # of CPS Reports, Yearly % Change of CPS Reports, # of Substantiated Reports, Yearly % Change of Substantiated Reports and, finally, Rate of Substantiated Reports per 1000 Reports. Below each of these headings are data. So we can see, for example that in 1998, there were 31,456 CPS reports statewide and in 1992 there were 7,265 Substantiated Reports. Does everyone see where I'm getting this data?

The Commissioner's first questions asks 'How many Child Protective Service Reports (CPS) and substantiated reports did Cascadia have in each of the past 5 years?' Does Table 1 answer that for us? No, Table 1 gives us that information statewide. Has SCF provided us any data Abuse Reports in Cascadia County? Sure they have...let's look at Table 2: Abuse Reports in Cascadia County.

10. Put up overhead 7.6 , Table 2 Abuse in Cascadia County and continue the presentation using the following as a guide:

Table 1 presented certain data statewide; Table 2 presents the same data for Cascadia County. Take a look at this table and locate the answers to the first set of the Commissioners questions about the number of CPS reports and the number of substantiated reports in Cascadia County over the past five years.

11. Ask participants to locate and identify the answers to the questions and then the trainer can circle the correct data on the

The level of detailed description needed will depend on the participants' level of comfort using tables of information. It may be unnecessary to review the table or it may be necessary to review each row and column.

overhead. Continue the discussion:

So we have now answered part of the first question, we need to move on to the second and third parts and look at what percent of Cascadia's CPS were substantiated in 1998 and how that compares with the state's percentage of substantiated reports. Do we have the data to answer those questions? Where is it? Tables 1 and 2 provide the data. The analytic tool that is being used here is percent; we are being asked to calculate a percent and then compare percents for Cascadia and the state. Percent answers the question 'how many out of 100?' and is usually calculated by dividing the smaller number by the larger number. So lets calculate for 1998 the percent of CPS reports that were substantiated in Cascadia County.

12. Ask the group what table should be used and then to locate the data. Review the formula using overhead 7.4 and ask someone in the group to calculate the percent. ($217/1105 * 100 = 19.6\%$)

Repeat the activity to calculate the statewide percent of substantiated reports in 1998. ($7461/31456 * 100 = 23.7\%$)

13. Ask the group how the figures compare. (In 1998, the % of Cascadia's substantiated reports was **lower** than the state's.) Ask participants to note the answers to Question 1 in Answer Box #1 and note the answers to Question 1 on a flipchart.

14. Begin a quick summary of the learning from Question 1 using the following as a guide:

We've answered the Commissioner's first question, talked about locating the correct source of data and calculated some percents as a comparative analytical tool.

15. Ask for and address any questions. Ask participants to read through Question 2 information in the case study.

16. Put up overhead 7.4 and continue the discussion:

Question 2 asks us to think about two analytical tools-- percent change and rate. Lets start by looking at percent change. Percent change may be used to show either an increase or decrease in a value and is calculated using the following formula:

*(Most recent # - Previous #)/ Previous # *100 = Percent Change*

Lets find out how we can apply this formula to answer Question 2, 'During the period 1992-1998, how does the change in the percent of reports that are substantiated in Cascadia compare to the state's substantiated report percent change?'

17. Ask the group how they would go about answering this question. Probe with questions such as: Do we have the data to answer this question? If so, where is the data located for the state? For Cascadia? Use overhead 7.7 and ask the group to locate the correct data on Table 1. Calculate the percent change using the identified data on Table 1 and the formula:

$$(7461 - 7265)/7265 * 100 = 2.70\%$$

Look at the data on Table 2. Point out that the data on Tables 1 and 2 present the same time period but the data in the narrative mentions a different time span---1992-1998 for the state, 1993-1998 for Cascadia. Note that a key concept in when making comparisons of entities is to use data from the same time period. Repeat the activity for the Cascadia County information, locating data on Table 2 (8.6) and then calculating the percent change. (217

– $224/224 * 100 = - 3.13\%$) Ask the group how the percents of change compare. (Cascadia’s percent change has decreased by 3.13% and the state’s has increased by 2.7%)

Record the answers to Question 2 on a flipchart and ask the participants to note the answers in Answer Box #2.

18. Move into a discussion to the importance of rate. Ask the group to look at the Rate: Substantiated Reports per 1000 Reports data on Table 1 (8.5). Highlight:

As Tip 3 on Overhead 7.4 notes, a critical issue in attempting to compare data is knowing that the data is comparable. Rate is a helpful tool here. Rate helps us look at the number of events, which occurred, compared to the population for which that event could have occurred. So when we look at Table 1 we see that in 1998, the Rate of Substantiated Reports per 1000 Reports was 237. Looking at Table 2 we see that in Cascadia County, the Rate of Substantiated Reports per 1000 Reports in 1998 was 196.4.

19. Review with the group the answers to Questions 1 and 2 and then ask the participants to go to Answer Box #2a. Explain that the group has calculated data and now needs to begin synthesizing the data and thinking about any other information that would be useful to include in the Commissioner’s report. Ask each person to take 2 minutes to record in Answer Box #2a any preliminary conclusions or thoughts that should be considered for the Commissioner’s report.

20. After 2 minutes, reconvene the group and ask participants to share the information they wrote in Answer Box #2a. Look for the following:

- Based on the data we analyzed, the County has a better track record than the state.
- Growth in CPS reports since 1992 has been slower in Cascadia than the state, at 10.28% and 44.15%, respectively.
- From 1992-1998, substantiated Cascadia reports went down 3.13% whereas the state saw an increase of 2.70% over the same period.
- In 1998, the % of Cascadia's substantiated reports was lower than the state's % of substantiated reports (19.6% and 23.7 % respectively)

21. Ask for and address any questions on the skills practiced in Questions 1 and 2.

22. Ask the group break into their small groups and assign each small group a question to read and respond to. After 15 minutes reconvene the group and ask each group report on what their question was, what the answer was and what the implication are.

23. To answer Question 3, the group must use the percent change calculation --most recent # - previous # /previous # * 100 = percent change. Make sure they mention the following:

- Statewide child abuse/neglect fatalities dropped by 50% this year after an increase of 100% the year before.
- In Cascadia, child abuse fatalities rose an incredible 300%! Does this mean that Cascadia is doing worse than the state in fatalities? Perhaps the newspaper was quoting this figure describing fatalities instead of the one describing total reports.

If the group needs your help with Question 3, use Overhead 7.8, Table: 3 Abuse and Neglect Fatalities and Answer Box # 3

24. Ask someone to define the impact of small numbers.

25. Ask the small group to report on Question 4. This question asks the group to locate data and work with percents. Ask what data should go in the Commissioner's report concerning age of the victims. Make sure they mention the following:

- As calculated using data in Table 4, children age 10 and over constitute a small percent of all victims – less than 22% of victims Statewide and less than 27% in Cascadia
- It is more significant to point out that 78.52% of child abuse victims statewide are children age 10 and under and that 73.42% of child abuse victims in Cascadia are age 10 and under.
- Perhaps most significant is that 12.26% of child abuse victims in the state are under the age of 1, while in Cascadia 9.14% of victims are under the age of 1.

26. Ask for the group report on Question 5. Can they find all the data to respond to Question 5? Note the data they would put in the Commissioner's report concerning perpetrators. Make sure they include the following types of comments:

- Just looking at the numbers, you see that statewide and in Cascadia, parents have been the two most prevalent perpetrators of child abuse; this appears to be a trend.
- Data for the boyfriend is not given.
- Statewide in 1998, mothers are the abusers in 42.0% of all substantiated reports, while fathers abused 25.5% of the time (a total of 67.5% together).
- In Cascadia in 1998, abuse percentages for parents

If the group needs your help on question 4, use Overhead 7.9, Table 4: Age of Victims – Statewide and Cascadia and Answer Boxes # 4 and 4a.

If the group needs your help on question 5, use Overhead 7.10, Table 5: Alleged Perpetrator of Substantiated Abuse, State, Table 6: Alleged Perpetrator of Substantiated Abuse, Cascadia County, and Table 7: Alleged Perpetrators of Substantiated Abuse – 1998 and Answer Box 5, discuss the group's response to Question 5

were similar with mothers at 41.9% and fathers at 25.3% (a total of 67.2% together).

- Total relative abuse, statewide = 85.5%; in Cascadia it's about the same 85.12%.

27. Observe that the data indicate that mothers are much more likely to be perpetrators of child abuse and neglect than fathers are; this seems to be a trend. Is this finding surprising? Is it meaningful? Who provides most of the childcare? Who are usually the parents in single-parent households? What could this finding mean to you as you think about providing services to children and families?

28. Ask for the small group's report on question 6. Make sure they mention:

- Since you are only reporting to the Commissioner what the top 3 are in each year, you decide that, in this case, missing data is not a problem; you'll go with the raw numbers you have.
- Your analysis shows that in Cascadia, the top three types of abuse in 1994 and 1995 are, in order, physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse. Interestingly, statewide neglect and sexual abuse are reversed.
- Yet in both cases, once 'Threat of Harm' was added in 1996, it has remained the most common type of abuse in Cascadia and statewide.

29. Note also that throughout this training they have been looking at data presented in the same kind of tables. However, there are other ways to present data that can be effective. For example, Overhead 7.12 shows data Table 9 and two charts that have been

Use Overhead 7.11 and Answer Box # 6, discuss the group's response to Question 6 if they need your help.

made from the data. Ask participants which presentation of the data seems most clear and readable.

30. Have each small group discuss its response to Question 7.

Make sure participants mention

- Data are statewide, not by county
- Could use data on drug/alcohol use instead
- Could get local information on drug use using some other method – reading cases, doing a survey, name others.

31. Continue the discussion of the report to the Commissioner:

So let's summarize the information we're going to put in the report to the Commissioner. He asked for this research and data analysis because the newspaper said that Cascadia County had a 300% increase in the number of abuse and neglect cases last year. Additionally, the Commissioner believes that child abuse is on the rise in Cascadia, a key factor in that increase was substance abuse and a frequent perpetrator was the mother's boy friend. We've looked at a lot of individual data so let's start to create the introductory paragraph of the report. First of all, we know now that we can find nothing to substantiate the '300% increase in cases'. We did calculate a 300% increase in fatalities in Cascadia but we know that large % increase was caused by a large increase in a small number of fatalities (1 to 4 between 1997 and 1998) and that does not indicate a trend. We know from our research that between 1997 and 1998, Cascadia County had a 12.31% increase in abuse reports and a 2.74% increase in substantiated reports; we know nothing about cases,

however.

In answer to the Commissioner's 'belief' that substance abuse was a factor in the increase of child abuse cases in Cascadia cases; we need to report that we don't have specific data on substance abuse in Cascadia County, rather we have data on statewide substance abuse.

Finally, our research shows that both statewide and in Cascadia County, mothers, not boyfriends are the perpetrators 42% of the time, with fathers following at 26 and 25% of the time respectively. Data on the mother's boyfriend isn't collected.

So, where does that leave us? We can't confirm or deny the 300% increases in cases because we don't have the definition of 'case', we have no data on substance abuse in Cascadia specifically as it's not collected and mothers and fathers, not boyfriends, are the most common perpetrators. How do we frame the report to the Commissioner? Do we just tell him what we don't have? Or do we provide him with the meaningful statistics that we do have (including definitions), mention the data that isn't collected (such as substance abuse by county) and offer suggestions for next steps?

32. Pause and poll the room on what they would do under these conditions. Encourage a conclusion aimed at providing the 'facts' as they have been researched, noting missing data and offering suggestions for collecting such data in the future. Reflect back on the previous exercise where the group looked at data and information needs by varying levels in the agency and note that the commissioner should be provided with highly summarized facts, supported by research and analysis whether or not they support his

personal 'beliefs' or not.

33. Distribute copies of handout 7.13, Sample Report for the Commissioner. Give 5 minutes for folks to read the report and then highlight the content of the report drawing on comments provided by participants through out the case discussion.

34. Put over head 7.4 up and refer participants to the related handout. Quickly review the definitions and formulas and begin to wrap-up the activity using the following as a guide:

In the case study, you just read through and selected data from several tables, as well as calculated percentages, percent changes, and cumulative percents. We've reviewed rates, the effect of small numbers, what to do when a reporting category is added and how to respond when data are missing. Learning how to run numbers through formulas, while a useful skill to have, was not the main point of this exercise. Rather, the goal was to become familiar with these selected analytical tools, learn questions to ask about data and see if any of these tools can be applied in your day to day supervision or other operational activities.

35. Launch the final activity in this module. Distribute the sample reports, ask participants to go into their small groups to discuss the data and answer the questions listed on handout 7.14. Specifically, have the groups 'interpret' the data.

36. After 10 minutes have the group come back together and report on their discussions. Probe the responses by asking the following types of questions: What are the figures saying or trying to say?

Can you make any conclusions using these figures? Can you see any trends? Do these numbers surprise you? Do you think these figures could be misleading in any way? If so, how? Are there different ways the same data could be interpreted? What analysis tools did they use on this data to try to interpret it? How did the tool work? What lessons can be learned from this exercise in interpreting data?

37. Wrap up the exercise by noting that:

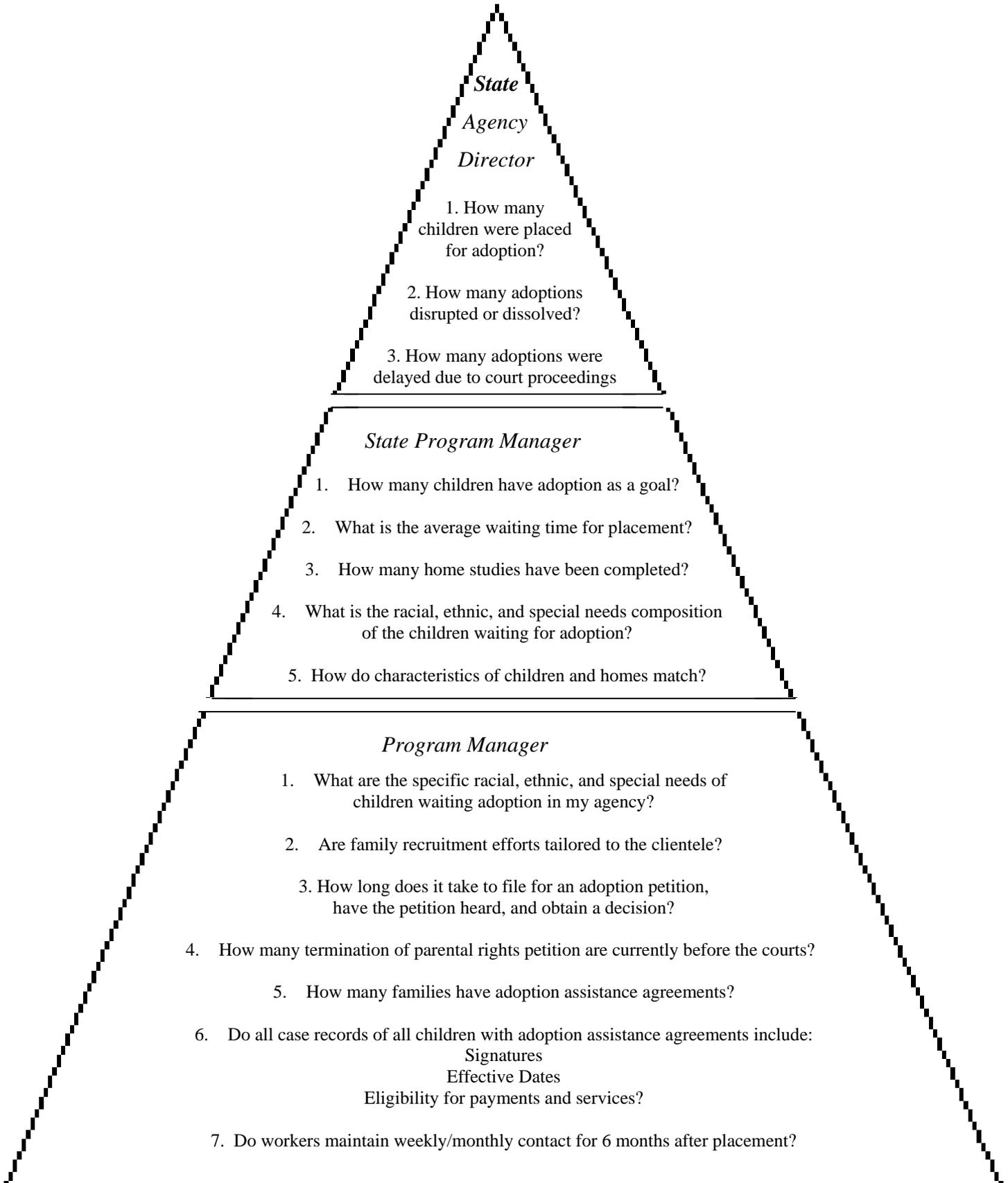
More and more frequently, child welfare supervisors are expected to have basic analytical skills such as reading and interpreting data on reports. Having such skills is another tool that a child welfare supervisor can rely on to support the complex decision making that he/she is called on to perform everyday.

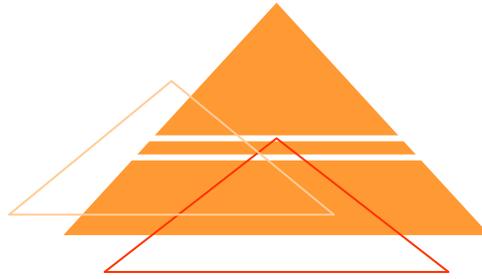
38. Ask for and address questions.

39. Introduce the next module, **Technology is Changing the Job of the Child Welfare Supervisor: Are You a Change Leader?**, by commenting that:

During the implementation of any change, be it a major new system like SACWIS, a new technology, or a new or revised policy or procedure, supervisors are usually asked to play a dual role—leading the change as well as changing their own behavior. The next module looks at several techniques for overcoming resistance to change and enhancing commitment to change building skills.

Sample Information Needs for Adoption Services





PARTICIPANT'S VERSION

CASE STUDY:

ABUSE ON THE INCREASE IN CASCADIA COUNTY

This training version of the case study, Abuse on the Increase in Cascadia County, is based on a case study developed by the Data Users Group of the Oregon Department of Human Services. The lead developers of this scenario were Jim White, Services to Children and Families and Kati Neville, Senior and Disabled Services Division. We thank them and the other members of the Oregon Department of Human Services Data Users for allowing us to use this case study in the SACWIS Supervisory Seminar: Using Information Management to Support the Goals of Safety, Permanency and Well Being Curriculum for Child Welfare supervisors.

Edited by Twin Prime Editorial, Arlington, MA 02474

ABUSE ON THE INCREASE IN CASCADIA COUNTY

You are the program administrator in Cascadia County. Newly appointed Commissioner Smith has asked you to investigate child abuse in Cascadia County. There have been several recent, well-publicized child fatalities. The Capital Courier just published a story about the Child Protective Service program and in that article stated that Cascadia County had a 300% increase in the number of abuse and neglect cases last year.

The Commissioner believes that the CPS program in Cascadia is in a state of crisis. The information he has received regarding the fatalities indicates that these children had previous reports made on them but the social workers had done nothing. Furthermore, he believes that child abuse is on the rise in Cascadia because of substance abuse and that boyfriends are the most common offenders. He believes that there are serious problems with the CPS program in Cascadia County and that the workers there are not substantiating enough of the cases they are investigating. This lack of substantiation is creating a situation where children are being left unprotected. He has asked you and the CPS supervisor to visit the State Office for Services to Children and Families (SCF) WebPages and track down the answers to the following questions:

1. (a) How many Child Protective Service reports (CPS) has Cascadia had in each of the past 5 years? (b) How many of these reports were substantiated? (c) In 1998, what percent of CPS reports in Cascadia County were substantiated? (d) How does that figure compare with the state?
2. During the period 1992-1998, how does the change in the percent of reports that are substantiated in Cascadia compare to the state's substantiated report percent change?
3. (a) Statewide and in Cascadia County, how many fatalities related to abuse and neglect occurred in 1996, 1997 and 1998? (b) What was the yearly percentage change?
4. What is the age distribution of child abuse victims age 10 and over, both statewide and in Cascadia County?
5. (a) Who is the most common perpetrator of substantiated abuse? (b) How often is it the boyfriend?
6. (a) What have been the top 3 types of abuse over the past 5 years statewide and in Cascadia County? (b) Has there been any notable change?
7. Finally, has substance use played a frequent role in the Cascadia cases?

In considering responses to these questions, it is important to look at the data critically. The first step is to locate the data that relates to the question and examine it to make sure that it does indeed answer the question. The second step is to determine if there is additional information related to the topic of the question that should be in the report to the Commissioner.

Question 1: (a) How many Child Protective Service reports (CPS) has Cascadia had in each of the past 5 years? (b) How many of these reports were substantiated? (c) In 1998 what percent of CPS reports in Cascadia County were substantiated? (d) How does that figure compare with the state?



As you get started, it is important to stop and ask what might be the most basic – and most important - questions in the use of data: ‘have we found the correct number’?; ‘what event or events are most appropriate to answer the question posed?’ For example, we will examine data concerning abuse reports and ‘substantiated’ abuse reports. Which of these is the most appropriate data to look at and report on? It depends on the question that is being asked and requires a good working knowledge of the data, the intent of the question and the definition of the data. The issue of what data to use to respond to a question will resurface again and again.

You and the CPS supervisor look at statistics released by the State Office for Services to Children and Families (SCF) last week. You find data about the number of abuse reports in two tables, Table 1: Abuse Reports – Statewide and Table 2: Abuse Reports – Cascadia. (You can find these tables in Attachments #1 and #2 located at the end of this case study.)

In Table 2: Abuse Reports – Cascadia, you find the answers to Question 1a and 1b. Looking at the column entitled “# of CPS Reports”, you see the number of CPS reports for the past five years and in the column entitled “# of Substantiated Reports” you find the number of substantiated reports. With a pen highlight the answers on Table 2.

The numbers themselves, however, don’t tell you much. You would expect that the total number of abuse reports would be greater than the number of substantiated (substantiated) abuse reports and that the state would have more reports than the County. You decide to look at the third part of the question to determine what percent of Cascadia’s total reports are substantiated and then compare Cascadia’s percent of substantiated reports to the state’s percent of substantiated reports.

Recalling your basic math, you remember that a percent tells you how many out of 100. The way to calculate percent is to write a fraction whose denominator (the number on the bottom) is the number after the word of and whose numerator (the one on the top) is the other number and then multiply by 100. Frequently you are dividing the smaller number by the larger number. In this case, the formula is:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Substantiated reports}}{\text{Total Number of CPS Reports}} * 100$$

Using data from Tables 1 and 2 and the formula above, calculate the percent of substantiated reports for both Cascadia County and statewide in 1998 and compare the results. Note your answers in Answer Box #1 below:

Answer Box #1

Percent of substantiated reports in 1998, Statewide = ____

Percent of substantiated reports 1998, Cascadia County = ____

How do the percents compare?

Question 2: During the period 1992-1998, how does the change in the percent of reports that are substantiated in Cascadia compare to the state's substantiated report percent change?

Tables 1 and 2 give you another way to compare the number of abuse reports and the number of substantiated abuse reports for the state and Cascadia. You notice that in both tables there are columns titled Yearly % Change of CPS Reports and Yearly % Change of Substantiated Reports. Using the formula below, you can see how to calculate the percent change in total number of CPS reports and in substantiated reports.



Percents may be used to show a change—either an increase or decrease-- in an amount, quantity or value. To calculate **PERCENT CHANGE**, use the following formula:

$$\frac{(\text{Most Recent Number} - \text{Previous Number})}{\text{Previous Number}} * 100 = \text{Percent Change}$$

Looking at Table 1 once again, you can see that it indicates that child abuse reports are up statewide. In 1998, 31,456 reports of suspected child abuse were recorded--a **percent change** of + 12.31 since 1997.

$$\frac{31,456 - 28,008}{28,008} * 100 = 12.31\%$$

Since 1992 there has been an increase of 44.15%.

$$\frac{31,456 - 21,822}{21,822} * 100 = 44.15\%$$

Look at the same data for Cascadia so you can compare the Cascadia percent change with the state's. You observe that while statewide abuse reports have increased in the last year, reports in Cascadia decreased from 1158 to 1105 during the same time period (see Table 2). This decrease in Cascadia reports represents a -4.58% change since 1997. Even though Cascadia reports were down last year, over the past 6 years (1993-1998) the number of reports has grown. Since 1993, abuse reports in Cascadia have increased 18.18%. Notice how the time period displaying the percent change over many years is different in the narrative than in the Tables. Statewide the time period discussed is 1992-1998 and in Cascadia it's 1993-1998.



When comparing percentage change across entities, it is important to use the same time period.

Now that you have analyzed the number of CPS reports, you need to calculate the percent change in the number of **substantiated** reports in the state and in Cascadia during the same period so you can answer the Commissioner's question.

Using information from Tables 1 and 2 and the **Percent Change** formula, calculate the percent change for substantiated reports for the state and Cascadia County for the period 1992- 1998. Compare the results. Put your answers to Question 2 in Answer Box #2 below:

Answer Box #2

Percent change in Substantiated reports in the state 1992-1998 = _____

Percent change in Substantiated reports in Cascadia 1992-1998 = _____

How does Cascadia's percent change in substantiated reports compare with the state's?

Using percent change data is one way of comparing child abuse reports and substantiated reports in the state and in Cascadia. Note that Tables 1 and 2 also use a rate per 1000.



Definition of Rate and Importance of Rate.

A critical issue in attempting to compare data is knowing that the data are really comparable. In many instances, simply knowing the number of events, in this case, the number of abuse reports, is not sufficient. For example, we know that there will be more abuse in the State as a whole than in Cascadia – one of its Counties. In order to make these raw data comparable, statisticians calculate rates. This means that the number of events that occurred is compared to the population for which that event could have occurred. The figure is then standardized to some number (such as 100, 1,000 or 10,000.) In fact, when you calculated the percentage of CPS reports in Cascadia County that were substantiated, you standardized to the number 100. (Remember that percent tells how many out of 100. You could also have standardized to some other number, for example, the number of abused children in the county compared to the number in the state.)

You and the CPS supervisor have now found or calculated the data that answers the Commissioner’s first two questions. Look over the data you have been analyzing, is there any other information that you think would be useful to the Commissioner that should be included in the report? If so, note the information in Answer Box #2a below.

Answer Box #2a

Question 3 (a) Statewide and in Cascadia County, how many fatalities related to abuse and neglect occurred in 1996, 1997 and 1998? (b) What was the yearly percentage change?

So far, the abuse profile of Cascadia looks better than the state profile. The statistics you have calculated do not even come close to those reported by the Capital Courier. You have double-checked the calculations you have made as well as those you received from SCF and cannot find how the newspaper calculated last year’s growth in the number of abuse and neglect reports as 300%.

You decide to move on to answer the child abuse and neglect fatalities question. Complete Table 3 below by calculating percent change in abuse and neglect fatalities for both the State and Cascadia County for the years 1996,1997 and 1998.

Question 4: What is the age distribution of child abuse victims age 10 and over, both statewide and in Cascadia County?

To answer this question, you and the CSP supervisor decide you need to calculate the percent of child abuse victims age 10 and over for both Cascadia and the State using data from Table 4. To determine the percent of victims age 10 and over statewide, use the Cumulative Percent column in Table 4, subtract the percent of child victims who are age 10 or over (78.52%) from 100.00% which gives us 21.48%.



Since all numbers with a % sign represent a rate per 100, the % numbers in the same data set can be added, subtracted, multiplied or divided as you would other numbers. For example, $2 + 5 = 7$ and $2\% + 5\% = 7\%$.

Make the same calculation to find the percent of victims who are age 10 and over in Cascadia and note your answers to both questions in Answer Box #4 below.

Answer Box #4 Percent of child abuse victims age 10 and over statewide = _____ Percent of child abuse victims age 10 and over in Cascadia County = _____
--

Study Table 4, do the percent of victims age 10 and over statewide and in Cascadia seem significant? Is there data that would be more significant to report to the Commissioner? (Consider what percent of child victims are under the age of 1.) If so, note in Box #4a below.

Box #4a

Question 5. (a) Who is the most common perpetrator of substantiated abuse? (b) How often is it the boyfriend?



While anecdotes and personal experience often help provide richness and depth to supplement data, too often they can be misleading and do not actually represent the true nature of the phenomenon being studied.

Tables 5 and 6 (appearing as Attachment #4 at the end of the case study) display the numbers of alleged substantiated abuse perpetrators over the past five years for the State and Cascadia. Unfortunately, the tables you received from SCF do not report any additional categories, such as significant other, boyfriend, or girlfriend.

You and the CPS supervisor plan to make a note of this data gap in your report to Commissioner Smith. Looking at Tables 5 and 6, what data do you think would be important for the Commissioner to know? Consider who are the most likely perpetrators of child abuse in the State and in Cascadia? Is it important to determine what percent of perpetrators are mothers or fathers or what percent of perpetrators are family members?

Look at the table below. To determine abuse by parents, you can add the entries for mother and father. Note that statewide the percent of alleged perpetrators who are mothers or fathers is 67.5%; for Cascadia the percent is 67.2%. Likewise, if you want a single statistic for the percent of abuse perpetrated family members, you can add the percentages for mother, father, sibling, and other relatives

Calculate the percent of abuse perpetrated by family members in Table 7 below. (Remember that you can add the raw numbers or percents of several categories to come up with new categories. Keep in mind that you can do this only if the categories don't overlap. For example, if, as in the data reported below, there is only a single alleged perpetrator for each case.)

Table 7: Alleged Perpetrator of Substantiated Abuse – 1998

Perpetrator	State (%)	Cascadia (%)
Mother	42.0	41.9
Father	25.5	25.3
Sibling	1.0	.92
Other Relative	17.0	17.0
Total		

Look over the data you have been analyzing on alleged perpetrators, is there any other information that would be useful to the Commissioner that should be included in the report? If so, note in Answer Box #5 below.

Answer Box #5

Question 6 (a) What have been the top 3 types of abuse over the past 5 years statewide and in Cascadia County? (b) Has there been any notable change?

Looking at the data in Tables 8 and 9 (appearing as Attachment #5 at the end of the case study), you and the CSP supervisor review the data to determine the top 3 types of abuse in each of the past 5 years. You notice you are missing data both statewide and for Cascadia in the 1994 and 1995 columns for 'Threat of Harm'. You contact the SCF analyst you had been working with to get the missing pieces and he tells you that the data do not exist; the Division only began reporting 'Threat of Harm' data in 1996.



The major question which needs to be asked in a situation where there are new categories for a variable – in this case, 'threat of harm' added as a 'type of maltreatment - is its impact on the other categories. Is it a subset? Is it pulling numbers from one or more of the other categories?

In examining the data in Tables 8 and 9, the addition of 'threat of harm' in 1996 seems to have a definite impact on the other categories of maltreatment. It appears to be 'pulling' from the other categories. The totals in the other categories are basically on a downward trend as the 'new' category is increasing.

Decide what answer you would give to the Commissioner's questions on types of abuse and note your responses in Answer Box #6 below.

Answer Box #6

Question 7: Finally, has substance abuse played a frequent role in the Cascadia cases?

Your interview with the SCF analyst revealed that the Commissioner's last question cannot be answered with SCF's computerized data. The data SCF has on substance abuse are from a statewide study that cannot be reported by county.

Decide what answer you would give to the Commissioner's questions on substance abuse and note your responses in Answer Box #7 below.

Answer Box #7

You and the CPS supervisor have now gathered and analyzed the data needed to address the Commissioner's questions. Quickly go back through the answers you have recorded in each answer box to make sure that the data you looked at indeed answer the questions asked and, where you think appropriate, that you have provided additional data, information and explanations in response to the question. Note any changes in the corresponding answer box.

Attachment 1

Table 1: Abuse Reports - Statewide

Year	# of CPS Reports	Yearly % Change of CPS Reports	# of Substantiated Reports	Yearly % Change of Substantiated Reports	Rate: Substantiated Reports Per 1000 Reports
1998	31,456	12.31%	7,461	2.74%	237
1997	28,008	14.25%	7,262	12.80%	259
1996	24,515	-8.41%	6,438	5.44%	263
1995	26,765	1.24%	6,106	-2.76%	228
1994	26,436	4.79%	6,279	-10.49%	238
1993	25,227	15.60%	7,015	-3.44%	267
1992	21,822		7,265		333

Attachment #2

Table 2: Abuse Reports - Cascadia

Year	# of CPS Reports	Yearly % Change of CPS Reports	# of Substantiated Reports	Yearly % Change of Substantiated Reports	Rate: Substantiated Reports Per 1000 Reports
1998	1105	-4.58%	217	-5.65%	196.4
1997	1158	-3.42%	230	-5.74%	198.6
1996	1199	-2.04%	244	3.83%	203.5
1995	1224	-6.49%	235	-8.56%	192.0
1994	1309	40.00%	257	47.70%	196.3
1993	935	-6.69%	174	-22.32%	186.1
1992	1002		224		223.6

Attachment #3

Table 4: Age of Victims – Statewide and Cascadia

	Statewide			Cascadia		
Age	# of Victims	Percent of Victims	Cum % Of Victims	# of Victims	Percent of Victims	Cum % Of Victims
<1	1244	12.26%	12.26%	31	9.14%	9.14%
1	711	7.01%	19.27%	19	5.60%	14.74%
2	785	7.74%	27.01%	25	7.37%	22.11%
3	726	7.15%	34.16%	21	6.19%	28.30%
4	696	6.86%	41.02%	22	6.49%	34.79%
5	656	6.46%	47.48%	19	5.60%	40.39%
6	710	7.00%	54.48%	24	7.08%	47.47%
7	714	7.04%	61.52%	29	8.55%	56.02%
8	642	6.33%	67.85%	28	8.26%	64.28%
9	607	5.98%	73.83%	20	5.90%	70.18%
10	476	4.69%	78.52%	11	3.24%	73.42%
11	444	4.38%	82.90%	18	5.31%	78.73%
12	435	4.29%	87.19%	17	5.01%	83.74%
13	403	3.97%	91.16%	14	4.13%	87.87%
14	316	3.11%	94.27%	16	4.72%	92.59%
15	281	2.77%	97.04%	15	4.42%	97.01%
16	187	1.84%	98.88%	7	2.06%	99.07%
17	114	1.12%	100.00%	3	0.88%	99.95%*

*Percentages don't add to 100% because of rounding.

Attachment #4

Table 5: Alleged Perpetrator of Substantiated Abuse, State

Alleged Perpetrator	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Mother	2637	2626	2704	3086	3134
Father	1884	1710	1738	1906	1903
Sibling	63	61	64	73	75
Other Relative	1067	916	1030	1180	1268
Friend	188	244	451	363	522
Neighbor	63	183	129	73	75
Caregiver	251	214	129	218	149
Other	126	153	193	363	336
Total	6279	6106	6438	7262	7461

Table 6: Alleged Perpetrator of Substantiated Abuse, Cascadia County

Alleged Perpetrator	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Mother	108	101	102	98	91
Father	77	66	66	60	55
Sibling	3	2	2	2	2
Other Relative	44	35	39	37	37
Friend	8	9	17	12	15
Neighbor	3	7	5	2	2
Caregiver	10	8	5	7	4
Other	5	6	7	12	10
Total	257	235	244	230	217

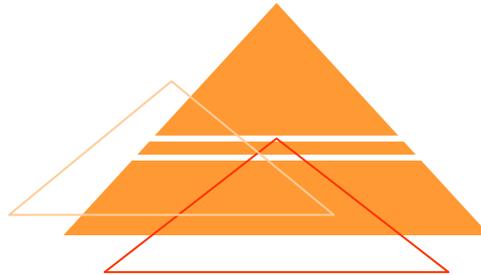
Attachment #5

Table 8: Type of Maltreatment, Statewide

Type of Maltreatment	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Physical Abuse	1964	1727	1893	1788	1620
Neglect	3184	3178	2940	2842	2525
Mental Injury	674	816	1003	617	758
Fatality	19	15	17	34	17
Abandonment	44	104	52	58	60
Sexual Abuse & Exploitation	1791	1587	1396	1476	1434
Subtotal	7676	7427	8301	6815	6414
Threat of Harm	--	--	4022	5405	6344
Total	7676	7427	12323	12220	12758

Table 9: Type of Maltreatment, Cascadia County

Type of Maltreatment	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Physical Abuse	82	74	74	68	60
Neglect	72	63	60	57	54
Mental Injury	26	20	9	9	8
Fatality	5	3	1	1	4
Abandonment	2	4	2	2	2
Sexual Abuse & Exploitation	77	75	50	47	44
Subtotal	264	239	196	184	173
Threat of Harm	--	--	113	106	100
Total	264	239	309	290	273



TRAINER'S VERSION

CASE STUDY:

ABUSE ON THE INCREASE IN CASCADIA COUNTY

This training version of the case study, Abuse on the Increase in Cascadia County, is based on a case study developed by the Data Users Group of the Oregon Department of Human Services. The lead developers of this scenario were Jim White, Services to Children and Families and Kati Neville, Senior and Disabled Services Division. We thank them and the other members of the Oregon Department of Human Services Data Users for allowing us to use this case study in the SACWIS Supervisory Seminar: Using Information Management to Support the Goals of Safety, Permanency and Well Being Curriculum for Child Welfare supervisors.

Edited by Twin Prime Editorial, Arlington, MA 02474

ABUSE ON THE INCREASE IN CASCADIA COUNTY

You are the program administrator in Cascadia County. Newly appointed Commissioner Smith has asked you to investigate child abuse in Cascadia County. There have been several recent, well-publicized child fatalities. The Capital Courier just published a story about the Child Protective Service (CPS) program and in that article stated that Cascadia County had a 300% increase in the number of abuse and neglect cases last year.

The Commissioner believes that the CPS program in Cascadia is in a state of crisis. The information he has received regarding the fatalities indicates that these children had previous reports made on them but the social workers had done nothing. Furthermore, he believes that child abuse is on the rise in Cascadia because of substance abuse and that boyfriends are the most common offenders. He believes that there are serious problems with the CPS program in Cascadia County and that the workers there are not substantiating enough of the cases they are investigating. This lack of substantiation is creating a situation where children are being left unprotected. He has asked you and the CPS supervisor to visit the State Office for Services to Children and Families (SCF) WebPages and track down the answers to the following questions:

1. How many Child Protective Service reports (CPS) has Cascadia had in each of the past 5 years? (b) How many of these reports were substantiated? (c) In 1998, what percent of CPS reports in Cascadia County were substantiated? (d) How does that figure compare with the state?
2. During the period 1992-1998, how does the change in the percent of reports that are substantiated in Cascadia compare to the state's substantiated report percent change?
3. Statewide and in Cascadia County, how many fatalities related to abuse and neglect occurred in 1996, 1997 and 1998? (b) What was the yearly percentage change?
4. What is the age distribution of child abuse victims age 10 and over, both statewide and in Cascadia County?
5. Who is the most common perpetrator of substantiated abuse? (b) How often is it the boyfriend?
6. What have been the top 3 types of abuse over the past 5 years statewide and in Cascadia County? (b) Has there been any notable change?
7. Finally, has substance abuse played a frequent role in the Cascadia cases?

In considering responses to these questions, it is important to look at the data critically. The first step is to locate the data that relates to the question and examine it to make sure that it does indeed answer the question. The second step is to determine if there is

additional information related to the topic of the question that should be in the report to the Commissioner.

Question 1: (a) How many Child Protective Service reports (CPS) has Cascadia had in each of the past 5 years? (b) How many of these reports were substantiated? (c) In 1998 what percent of CPS reports in Cascadia County were substantiated? (d) How does that figure compare with the state?



As you get started, it is important to stop and ask what might be the most basic – and most important - questions in the use of data: ‘have we found the correct number’?; ‘what event or events are most appropriate to answer the question posed?’ For example, we will examine data concerning abuse reports and ‘substantiated’ abuse reports. Which of these is the most appropriate data to look at and report on? It depends on the question that is being asked and requires a good working knowledge of the data, the intent of the question and the definition of the data. The issue of what data to use to respond to a question will resurface again and again.

You and the CPS supervisor look at statistics released by the State Office for Services to Children and Families (SCF) last week. You find data about the number of abuse reports in two tables, Table 1: Abuse Reports – Statewide and Table 2: Abuse Reports – Cascadia. (You can find these tables in Attachments #1 and #2 located at the end of this case study.)

In Table 2: Abuse Reports – Cascadia, you find the answers to Question 1a and 1b. Looking at the column entitled “# of CPS Reports”, you see the number of CPS reports for the past five years and in the column entitled “# of Substantiated Reports” you find the number of substantiated reports. With a pen highlight the answers on Table 2.

The numbers themselves, however, don’t tell you much. You would expect that the total number of abuse reports would be greater than the number of substantiated abuse reports and that the state would have more reports than the County. You decide to look at the third part of the question to determine what percent of Cascadia’s total reports are substantiated and then compare Cascadia’s percent of substantiated reports to the state’s percent of substantiated reports.

Recalling your basic math, you remember that a *percent tells you how many out of 100*. The way to calculate percent is to write a fraction whose denominator (the number on the bottom) is the number after the word *of* and whose numerator (the one on the top) is the other number and then multiply by 100. Frequently you are dividing the smaller number by the larger number. In this case, the formula is:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Substantiated reports}}{\text{Number of CPS Reports}} * 100$$

Total Number of CPS Reports

Using data from Tables 1 and 2 and the formula above, calculate the percent of substantiated reports for both Cascadia County and statewide in 1998 and compare the results. Note your answers in Answer Box #1 below:

Answers to Question 1:

(a) How many Child Protective Service reports (CPS) has Cascadia had in each of the past 5 years?

1998 ----1105

1997-----1158

1996-----1199

1995-----1224

1994-----1309

Location: Table 2: Abuse Reports – Cascadia, Column titled “# of CPS Reports”

(b) How many of these reports were substantiated?

1998 ----217

1997-----230

1996-----244

1995-----235

1994-----257

Location: Table 2: Abuse Reports – Cascadia, ' # of Substantiated Reports'

(c) In 1998 what percent of CPS reports in Cascadia County were substantiated?

Percent of substantiated reports in 1998 – Cascadia County = 19.6%

$217/1105 * 100 = 19.6\%$

Percent of substantiated reports in 1998 – Statewide = 23.7%

$7461/31,456 * 100 = 23.7\%$

(d) How does that figure compare with the state?

In 1998, the % of Cascadia’s substantiated reports was lower than the state’s % of substantiated reports (19.6% vs. 23.7% respectively)

Question 2: During the period 1992 - 1998, how does Cascadia's substantiated report percent change compare to the state's substantiated report percent change?

Tables 1 and 2 give you another way to compare the number of abuse reports and the number of substantiated abuse reports for the state and Cascadia. You notice that in both tables there are columns titled Yearly % Change of CPS Reports and Yearly % Change of Substantiated Reports. Using the formula below, you can see how to calculate the percent change in total number of CPS reports and in substantiated reports.



Percents may be used to show a change—either an increase or decrease-- in an amount, quantity or value. To calculate **PERCENT CHANGE**, use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Change}}{\text{Previous Number}} \times 100 = \text{Percent}$$

Looking at Table 1 once again, you can see that it indicates that child abuse reports are up statewide. In 1998, 31,456 reports of suspected child abuse were recorded--a **percent change** of + 12.31 since 1997.

$$\frac{31,456 - 28,008}{28,008} * 100 = 12.31\%$$

Since 1992 there has been an increase of + 44.15%.

$$\frac{31,456 - 21,822}{21,822} * 100 = 44.15\%$$

Look at the same data for Cascadia so you can compare the Cascadia percent change with the state's. You observe that while statewide abuse reports have increased in the last year, reports in Cascadia decreased from 1158 to 1105 during the same time period (see Table 2). This decrease in Cascadia reports represents a -4.58% change since 1997. Even though Cascadia reports were down last year, over the past 6 years (1993-1998) the number of reports has grown. Since 1993, abuse reports in Cascadia have increased 18.18%. Notice how the time period displaying the percent change over many years is different in the narrative than in the Tables. Statewide the time period discussed is 1992-1998 and in Cascadia it's 1993-1998.



When comparing percentage change across entities, it is important to use the same time period.

Now that you have analyzed the number of CPS reports, you need to calculate the percent change in the number of **substantiated** reports in the state and in Cascadia during the same period so you can answer the Commissioner's question.

Using information from Tables 1 and 2 and the **Percent Change** formula, calculate the percent change for substantiated reports for the state and Cascadia County for the period 1992- 1998. Compare the results. Put your answers to Question 2 in Answer Box #2 below:

Using percent change data is one way of comparing child abuse reports and substantiated reports in the state and in Cascadia. Note that Tables 1 and 2 also use a rate per 1000.



Definition of Rate and Importance of Rate

A critical issue in attempting to compare data is knowing that the data are really comparable. In many instances, simply knowing the number of events, in this case the number of abuse reports, is not sufficient. For example, we know that there will be more abuse in the State as a whole than in Cascadia – one of its Counties. In order to make these raw data comparable, statisticians calculate rates. This means that the number of events that occurred is compared to the population for which that event could have occurred. The figure is then standardized to some number (such as 100, 1,000 or 10,000.) In fact, when you calculated the percentage of CPS reports in Cascadia County that were substantiated, you standardized to the number 100. (Remember that percent tells how many out of 100. You could also have standardized to some other number, for example, the number of abused children in the county compared to the number in the state.)

You and the CPS supervisor have now found or calculated the data that answers the Commissioner's first two questions. Look over the data you have been analyzing, is there any other information that you think would be useful to the Commissioner that should be included in the report? If so, note the information in Answer Box #2a below.

Answers to Question 2: During the period 1992 - 1998, how does Cascadia's substantiated report percent change compare to the state's substantiated report percent change?

Percent change in Substantiated reports in Cascadia 1992-1998 = -3.13%

$$\frac{(217-224)}{224} * 100 = -3.13\%$$

Percent change in Substantiated reports in the state 1992-1998 = 2.70%

$$\frac{(7461-7265)}{7265} * 100 = 2.70\%$$

How does Cascadia's percent change in substantiated reports compare with the state's? During the period 1992-1998, Cascadia's number of substantiated reports decreased by 3.1%; the state's substantiated reports have increased by 2.7% during the same period. Location: Tables 1 and 2

You and the CPS supervisor have now found or calculated the data that answers the Commissioner's first two questions. Look over the data you have been analyzing, is there any other information that you think would be useful to the Commissioner that should be included in the report?

Responses should include information such as:

- Comparing the state numbers to Cascadia's, we can say that based on the information we analyzed, the County has a better track record than the state
- Growth in CPS reports since 1992 has been slower in Cascadia than the state, at 10.28% and 44.15%, respectively.
- The County also is doing better in substantiated reports. From 1992-1998 substantiated Cascadia reports went down 3.13% whereas the state saw an increase of 2.70% over the same period.
- The rate of substantiated reports per 1000 reports also has been consistently lower in Cascadia than the state rate over the period.

Question 3 (a) Statewide and in Cascadia County, how many fatalities related to abuse and neglect occurred in 1996, 1997 and 1998? (b) What was the yearly percentage change?

So far, the abuse profile of Cascadia looks better than the state profile. The statistics you have calculated do not even come close to those reported by the Capital Courier. You have double-checked the calculations you have made as well as those you received from SCF and cannot find how the newspaper calculated last year's growth in the number of abuse and neglect reports as 300%.

You decide to move on to answer the child abuse and neglect fatalities question. Complete Table 3 below by calculating percent change in abuse and neglect fatalities for both the State and Cascadia County for the years 1996,1997 and 1998.

Table 3: Abuse and Neglect Fatalities

Year	<u>State</u>		<u>Cascadia</u>	
	Fatalities	% change	Fatalities	% change
1998	17		4	
1997	34		1	
1996	17		1	

Do the results look strange to you? Why? (See the Tip below.)



Small numbers, as seen in Table 3, can cause large fluctuations in statistics that can render them virtually meaningless. When confronted with a situation like this, report actual numbers.

Look over the data on Abuse and Neglect Fatalities you have been analyzing. Is there any other information that would be useful to the Commissioner that should be included in the report? If yes, record the information in Answer Box #3 below.

Answers to Question 3

(a) Statewide and in Cascadia County, how many fatalities related to abuse and neglect occurred in 1996, 1997 and 1998?

Statewide:

1998-----17

1997-----34

1996-----17

Cascadia:

1998-----4

1997-----1

1996-----1

(b) What was the yearly percentage change?

Statewide:

1998-----50%

1997-----100%

1996-----

Cascadia:

1998-----300%

1997-----0%

1996-----

Location Table 3

Calculations: State change 1996 to 1997: $(34 - 17) / 17 * 100 = 100\%$

Statewide change 1997 to 1998 $(17 - 34) / 34 * 100 = -50\%$

Cascadia change 1996 to 1997 $(1-1)/1 * 100=0\%$

Cascadia change 1997 to 1998 $(4-1)/1 * 100 = 300\%$

Look over the data on Abuse and Neglect Fatalities you have been analyzing. Is there any other information that would be useful to the Commissioner that should be included in the report?

Responses could include information such as:

- You find that statewide child abuse/neglect fatalities dropped by 50% this year after an increase of 100% the year before.
- In Cascadia, child abuse fatalities rose an incredible 300%! Does this mean that Cascadia is doing worse than the state in fatalities? Perhaps the newspaper was quoting this figure describing fatalities instead of the one describing total reports.
- Remember that small numbers cause large fluctuations in statistics.

Question 4: What is the age distribution of child abuse victims age 10 and over, both statewide and in Cascadia County?

To answer this question, you and the CSP supervisor decide you need to calculate the percent of child abuse victims age 10 and over for both Cascadia and the State using data from Table 4. To determine the percent of victims age 10 and over statewide, use the Cumulative Percent column in Table 4, subtract the percent of child victims who are age 10 or over (78.52%) from 100.00% which gives us 21.48%.



Since all numbers with a % sign represent a rate per 100, the % numbers in the same data set can be added, subtracted, multiplied or divided as you would other numbers. For example, $2 + 5 = 7$ and $2\% + 5\% = 7\%$.

Make the same calculation to find the percent of victims who are over age ten in Cascadia and note your answers to both questions in Answer Box #4 below.

Answers to Question 4

What is the age distribution of child abuse victims age 10 and over, both statewide and in Cascadia County?

Percent of child abuse victims age 10 and over statewide = 21.48%

Percent of child abuse victims age 10 and over in Cascadia County = 26.58%

Location: Table 4, Columns titled “Cum % of Victims – Statewide” and “Cum % of Victims – Cascadia”

Calculation: Look at Columns titled “Cum % of Victims – Statewide” and “Cum % of Victims – Cascadia” in Table 4, and use the following formula to answer this question.

$$\text{Statewide } 100\% - 78.52\% = 21.48\%$$

$$\text{Cascadia } 100\% - 73.42\% = 26.58\%$$

Study Table 4, do the percent of victims age 10 and over statewide and in Cascadia seem significant? Is there data that would be more significant to report to the Commissioner? (Consider what percent of child victims are under the age of 1.) If so, note in Box #4a below.

Box #4a

Do the percents of victims age 10 and over statewide and in Cascadia seem significant? Is there data that would be more significant to report to the Commissioner?

Responses could include information such as:

- As shown in Table 4, children age 10 and over constitute a small percent of all victims – less than 22% of victims Statewide and less than 27% in Cascadia
- It is more significant to point out that 73.83% of child abuse victims statewide are children under the age of 10 and that 70.18% of child abuse victims in Cascadia are under the age of 10
- Also significant is that 12.26% of child abuse victims in the state are under the age of 1, while in Cascadia 9.14% of victims are under the age of 1.

Question 5. (a) Who is the most common perpetrator of substantiated abuse? (b) How often is it the boyfriend?



While anecdotes and personal experience often help provide richness and depth to supplement data, too often they can be misleading and do not actually represent the true nature of the phenomenon being studied.

Tables 5 and 6 (appearing as Attachment #4 at the end of the case study) display the numbers of alleged substantiated abuse perpetrators over the past five years for the State and Cascadia. Unfortunately, the tables you received from SCF do not report any additional categories, such as significant other, boyfriend, or girlfriend.

You and the CPS supervisor plan to make a note of this data gap in your report to Commissioner Smith. Looking at Tables 5 and 6, what data do you think would be important for the Commissioner to know? Consider who are the most likely perpetrators of child abuse in the State and in Cascadia? Is it important to determine what percent of perpetrators are mothers or fathers or what percent of perpetrators are family members?

Look at the table below. To determine abuse by parents, you can add the entries for mother and father. Note that statewide the percent of alleged perpetrators who are mothers or fathers is 67.5%; for Cascadia the percent is 67.2%. Likewise, if you want a single statistic for the percent of abuse perpetrated family members, you can add the percentages for mother, father, sibling, and other relatives

Calculate the percent of abuse perpetrated by family members in Table 7 below. (Remember that you can add the raw numbers or percents of several categories to come up with new categories. Keep in mind that you can do this only if the categories don't overlap. For example if, as in the data reported below, there is only a single alleged perpetrator reported for each case.)

Table 7: Alleged Perpetrator of Substantiated Abuse – 1998

Perpetrator	State (%)	Cascadia (%)
Mother	42.0	41.9
Father	25.5	25.3
Sibling	1.0	.92
Other Relative	17.0	17.0
Total		

Look over the data you have been analyzing on alleged perpetrators, is there any other information that would be useful to the Commissioner that should be included in the report? If so, note in Answer Box #5 below.

Answers to Question 5.

(a) Who is the most common perpetrator of substantiated abuse?

Statewide:

The mother

Location: Table 5 answers this question for the state

Cascadia:

The mother

Location Table 6 answers this question for Cascadia

(b) How often is it the boyfriend?

The information to answer that question is unavailable.

Calculate the percent of abuse perpetrated by family members

Statewide:

85.5%

Cascadia:

85.12%

Location: Table 7

Calculation: To arrive at the percent of perpetrators, who are family members, you add the raw numbers or percents to come up with new categories.

Look over the data you have been analyzing on alleged perpetrators, is there any other information that would be useful to the Commissioner that should be included in the report?

Responses should include information such as:

- Just looking at the numbers, you see that statewide and in Cascadia, parents have been the two most prevalent perpetrators of child abuse.
- Data for the boyfriend is not given.
- You report to Commissioner Smith that statewide last year mothers are the abusers in 42.0% percent of all substantiated reports, while fathers abused 25.5% of the time (a total of 67.5% together).
- In Cascadia last year, abuse percentages for parents were similar with mothers at 41.9% and fathers at 25.3% (a total of 67.2% together).
- Total relative abuse, statewide = 85.5%; in Cascadia it's about the same 85.12%.

Question 6 (a) What have been the top 3 types of abuse over the past 5 years statewide and in Cascadia County? (b) Has there been any notable change?

Looking at the data in Tables 8 and 9 (appearing as Attachment #5 at the end of the case study), you and the CPS supervisor review the data to determine the top 3 types of abuse in each of the past 5 years. You notice you are missing data both statewide and for Cascadia in the 1994 and 1995 columns for 'Threat of Harm'. You contact the SCF analyst you had been working with to get the missing pieces and he tells you that the data do not exist; the Division only began reporting 'Threat of Harm' data in 1996.



The major question which needs to be asked in a situation where there are new categories for a variable – in this case, 'threat of harm' added as a 'type of maltreatment' - is its impact on the other categories. Is it a subset? Is it pulling numbers from one or more of the other categories?

In examining the data in Tables 8 and 9, the addition of 'threat of harm' in 1996 seems to have a definite impact on the other categories of maltreatment. It appears to be 'pulling' from the other categories. The totals in the other categories are basically on a downward trend as the 'new' category is increasing.

Decide what answer you would give to the Commissioner's questions on types of abuse and note your responses in Answer Box #6 below.

Answers to Question 6

(a) What have been the top 3 types of abuse over the past 5 years statewide and in Cascadia County?

Statewide:

1998---Threat of Harm (1), Neglect (2), Physical Abuse (3)

1997---Threat of Harm (1), Neglect (2), Physical Abuse (3)

1996---Threat of Harm (1), Neglect (2), Physical Abuse (3)

1995---Neglect (1), Physical Abuse (2), Sexual abuse and Exploitation (3)

1994---Neglect (1), Physical Abuse (2), Sexual abuse and Exploitation (3)

Location: Table 8

Cascadia County:

1998---Threat of Harm (1), Neglect (2), Physical Abuse (3)

1997---Threat of Harm (1), Neglect (2), Physical Abuse (3)

1996---Threat of Harm (1), Neglect (2), Physical Abuse (3)

1995---Sexual abuse and Exploitation (1), Physical Abuse (2), Neglect (3)

1994---Physical Abuse (1), Sexual abuse and Exploitation (2), Neglect (3)

Location: Table 9

b) Has there been any notable change?

Your analysis shows that in Cascadia, the top three types of abuse in 1994 and 1995 are, in order, physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse. Interestingly, statewide neglect and sexual abuse are reversed. Yet, in both cases, once 'Threat of Harm' was added in 1996, it has remained the most common type of abuse in Cascadia and statewide. Looking at the data in Tables 8 and 9, it appears that the addition of the category 'Threat of Harm' in 1996, is pulling from the other categories, causing them to decrease as the 'Threat of Harm' category increases.

Question 7: Finally, has substance abuse played a frequent role in the Cascadia cases?

Your interview with the SCF analyst revealed that the Commissioner's last question regarding the role of substance abuse cannot be answered with SCF's computerized data. The data SCF has on substance abuse are from a statewide study that cannot be reported by county.

Decide what answer you would give to the Commissioner's questions on substance abuse and note your responses in Answer Box #7 below.

Answer to Question 7: Has substance abuse played a frequent role in the Cascadia cases?
There is no way to answer this question with SCF's computerized data since the data SCF has on substance abuse are from a statewide study that cannot be reported by county.

You and the CPS supervisor have now gathered and analyzed the data needed to address the Commissioner's questions. Quickly go back through the answers you have recorded in each answer box to make sure that the data you looked at indeed answer the questions asked and, where you think appropriate, that you have provided additional data, information and explanations in response to the question. Note any changes in the corresponding answer box.

Attachment 1

Table 1: Abuse Reports - Statewide

Year	# of CPS Reports	Yearly % Change of CPS Reports	# of Substantiated Reports	Yearly % Change of Substantiated Reports	Rate: Substantiated Reports Per 1000 Reports
1998	31,456	12.31%	7,461	2.74%	237
1997	28,008	14.25%	7,262	12.80%	259
1996	24,515	-8.41%	6,438	5.44%	263
1995	26,765	1.24%	6,106	-2.76%	228
1994	26,436	4.79%	6,279	-10.49%	238
1993	25,227	15.60%	7,015	-3.44%	267
1992	21,822		7,265		333

Attachment 2

Table 2: Abuse Reports - Cascadia

Year	# of CPS Reports	Yearly % Change of CPS Reports	# of Substantiated Reports	Yearly % Change of Substantiated Reports	Rate: Substantiated Reports Per 1000 Reports
1998	1105	-4.58%	217	-5.65%	196.4
1997	1158	-3.42%	230	-5.74%	198.6
1996	1199	-2.04%	244	3.83%	203.5
1995	1224	-6.49%	235	-8.56%	192.0
1994	1309	40.00%	257	47.70%	196.3
1993	935	-6.69%	174	-22.32%	186.1
1992	1002		224		223.6

Attachment 3

Table 4: Age of Victims – Statewide and Cascadia

	<u>Statewide</u>			<u>Cascadia</u>		
Age	# of Victims	Percent of Victims	Cum % Of Victims	# of Victims	Percent of Victims	Cum % Of Victims
<1	1244	12.26%	12.26%	31	9.14%	9.14%
1	711	7.01%	19.27%	19	5.60%	14.74%
2	785	7.74%	27.01%	25	7.37%	22.11%
3	726	7.15%	34.16%	21	6.19%	28.30%
4	696	6.86%	41.02%	22	6.49%	34.79%
5	656	6.46%	47.48%	19	5.60%	40.39%
6	710	7.00%	54.48%	24	7.08%	47.47%
7	714	7.04%	61.52%	29	8.55%	56.02%
8	642	6.33%	67.85%	28	8.26%	64.28%
9	607	5.98%	73.83%	20	5.90%	70.18%
10	476	4.69%	78.52%	11	3.24%	73.42%
11	444	4.38%	82.90%	18	5.31%	78.73%
12	435	4.29%	87.19%	17	5.01%	83.74%
13	403	3.97%	91.16%	14	4.13%	87.87%
14	316	3.11%	94.27%	16	4.72%	92.59%
15	281	2.77%	97.04%	15	4.42%	97.01%
16	187	1.84%	98.88%	7	2.06%	99.07%
17	114	1.12%	100.00%	3	0.88%	99.95%*

*Percentages don't add to 100% because of rounding.

Attachment 4

Table 5: Alleged Perpetrator of Substantiated Abuse, State

Alleged Perpetrator	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Mother	2637	2626	2704	3086	3134
Father	1884	1710	1738	1906	1903
Sibling	63	61	64	73	75
Other Relative	1067	916	1030	1180	1268
Friend	188	244	451	363	522
Neighbor	63	183	129	73	75
Caregiver	251	214	129	218	149
Other	126	153	193	363	336
Total	6279	6106	6438	7262	7461

Table 6: Alleged Perpetrator of Substantiated Abuse, Cascadia County

Alleged Perpetrator	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Mother	108	101	102	98	91
Father	77	66	66	60	55
Sibling	3	2	2	2	2
Other Relative	44	35	39	37	37
Friend	8	9	17	12	15
Neighbor	3	7	5	2	2
Caregiver	10	8	5	7	4
Other	5	6	7	12	10
Total	257	235	244	230	217

Attachment 5

Table 8: Type of Maltreatment, Statewide

Type of Maltreatment	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Physical Abuse	1964	1727	1893	1788	1620
Neglect	3184	3178	2940	2842	2525
Mental Injury	674	816	1003	617	758
Fatality	19	15	17	34	17
Abandonment	44	104	52	58	60
Sexual Abuse & Exploitation	1791	1587	1396	1476	1434
Subtotal	7676	7427	8301	6815	6414
Threat of Harm	--	--	4022	5405	6344
Total	7676	7427	12323	12220	12758

Table 9: Type of Maltreatment, Cascadia County

Type of Maltreatment	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Physical Abuse	82	74	74	68	60
Neglect	72	63	60	57	54
Mental Injury	26	20	9	9	8
Fatality	5	3	1	1	4
Abandonment	2	4	2	2	2
Sexual Abuse & Exploitation	77	75	50	47	44
Subtotal	264	239	196	184	173
Threat of Harm	--	--	113	106	100
Total	264	239	309	290	273

NOTE: END OF TRAINER'S VERSION OF CASE STUDY: ABUSE ON THE INCREASE IN CASCADIA COUNTY

Tips, Formulas and Definitions of Terms

Question 1



As you get started, it is important to stop and ask what might be the most basic – and most important - questions in the use of data: 'have we found the correct number?' and 'what event or events are most appropriate to answer the question posed?' For example, we will examine data concerning abuse reports and 'founded' abuse reports. Which of these is the most appropriate data to look at and report on? It depends on the question that is being asked and requires a good working knowledge of the data, the intent of the question and the definition of the data. The issue of what data to use to respond to a question will resurface again and again.

*A percent tells you how many out of 100. The way to calculate percent is to write a fraction whose denominator (the number on the bottom) is the number after the word *of* and whose numerator (the one on the top) is the other number and then multiply by 100. Frequently you are dividing the smaller number by the larger number.*

A comparison examines two or more items to establish similarities and dissimilarities.

Question 2



Percents may be used to show a change—either an increase or decrease-- in an amount, quantity or value. To calculate **PERCENT CHANGE**, use the following formula:

$$\frac{(\text{Most Recent Number} - \text{Previous Number})}{\text{Previous Number}} * 100 = \text{Percent Change}$$



When comparing percentage change across entities, it is important to use the same time period.



Rate tells you frequency of occurrence A critical issue in attempting to compare data is knowing that the data are really comparable. In many instances, simply knowing the number of events is not sufficient. For example, we know that there will be more abuse in the State as a whole than in Cascadia – one of its Counties. In order to make the raw data comparable, statisticians calculate rates. *Rate means that the number of events that occurred is compared to the population for which that event could have occurred.* The figure is then standardized to some number (such as 100, 1,000 or 10,000.) In fact, when you calculate the percentage, you standardize to the number 100. (Remember that percent tells how

many out of 100. You also could have standardized to some other number, for example, the number of abused children in the county compared to the number in the state.)

To calculate **RATE PER 1000**, use the following formula:
 $\% * 10 = \text{Rate per 1000}$

Question 3



Small numbers can cause large fluctuations in statistics that can render them virtually meaningless. When confronted with a situation like this, report actual numbers.

Question 4



Since all numbers with a % sign represent a rate per 100, the % numbers within a single data set can be added, subtracted, multiplied or divided as you would other numbers. For example, 2 people + 5 people = 7 people and 2% of people + 5% of people = 7% of people.

A cumulative percent is a summing of all data or values related to a percent

Question 5



While anecdotes and personal experience often help provide richness and depth to supplement data, too often they can be misleading and do not actually represent the true nature of the phenomenon being studied.

A trend is a general line of direction.

Question 6



The major questions which need to be asked in a situation where there are new categories for a variable are... 'what is the impact on other categories?' Is it a subset? Is it pulling numbers from one or more of the other categories?

Table 1: Abuse Reports - Statewide

Year	# of CPS Reports	Yearly % Change of CPS Reports	# of Substantiated Reports	Yearly % Change of Substantiated Reports	Rate of Substantiated Reports Per 1000
1998	31,456	12.31%	7,461	2.74%	237
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1994	26,436	4.79%	6,279	-10.49%	238
1993	25,227	15.60%	7,015	-3.44%	267
1992	21,822		7,265		333

Table 2: Abuse Reports - Cascadia

Year	# of CPS Reports	Yearly % Change of CPS Reports	# of Substantiated Reports	Yearly % Change of Substantiated Reports	Rate: Substantiated Reports Per 1000 Reports
1998	1105	-4.58%	217	-5.65%	196.4
1997	1158	-3.42%	230	-5.74%	198.6
1996	1199	-2.04%	244	3.83%	203.5
1995	1224	-6.49%	235	-8.56%	192.0
1994	1309	40.00%	257	47.70%	196.3
1993	935	-6.69%	174	-22.32%	186.1
1992	1002		224		223.6

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1993	25,227	15.60%	7,015	-3.44%	267
1992	21,822		7,265		333

Table 2: Abuse Reports - Cascadia

Year	# of CPS Reports	Yearly % Change of CPS Reports	# of Substantiated Reports	Yearly % Change of Substantiated Reports	Rate: Substantiated Reports Per 1000 Reports
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1994	1309	40.00%	257	47.70%	196.3
1993	935	-6.69%	174	-22.32%	186.1
1992	1002		224		223.6

Formula:
$$\frac{(\text{Most Recent Number} - \text{Previous Number})}{\text{Previous Number}} * 100$$

Previous Number

Answer Box #2

Change in Substantiated reports in 1992-1998 – Statewide:

Percent change in substantiated reports 1992-1998 – Cascadia County:

How does Cascadia's substantiated report rate compare with the state's substantiated report rate?

Table 3: Abuse and Neglect Fatalities

Year	<u>State</u>			<u>Cascadia</u>	
	Fatalities	% change		Fatalities	% change
1998	17	-50.00%		4	300.00%
1997	34	100.00%		1	0.00%
1996	17			1	

Formula:
$$\frac{(\text{Most recent number} - \text{previous number})}{\text{Previous number}} * 100$$

Calculations: State change 1996 to 1997: $(34 - 17) / 17 * 100 = 100\%$
 Statewide change 1997 to 1998 $(17 - 34) / 34 * 100 = -50\%$

Cascadia change 1996 to 1997 $(1 - 1) / 1 * 100 = 0\%$
 Cascadia change 1997 to 1998 $(4 - 1) / 1 * 100 = 300\%$

Table 4: Age of Victims – Statewide and Cascadia

Age	Statewide			Cascadia		
	# of Victims	Percent of Victims	Cum % <i>Of Victi ms</i>	# of Victims	Percent of Victims	Cum % Of Victims
<1	1244	12.26%	12.26%	31	9.14%	9.14%
1	711	7.01%	19.27%	19	5.60%	14.74%
2	785	7.74%	27.01%	25	7.37%	22.11%
3	726	7.15%	34.16%	21	6.19%	28.30%
4	696	6.86%	41.02%	22	6.49%	34.79%
5	656	6.46%	47.48%	19	5.60%	40.39%
6	710	7.00%	54.48%	24	7.08%	47.47%
7	714	7.04%	61.52%	29	8.55%	56.02%
8	642	6.33%	67.85%	28	8.26%	64.28%
9	607	5.98%	73.83%	20	5.90%	70.18%
10	476	4.69%	78.52%	11	3.24%	73.42%
11	444	4.38%	82.90%	18	5.31%	78.73%
12	435	4.29%	87.19%	17	5.01%	83.74%
13	403	3.97%	91.16%	14	4.13%	87.87%
14	316	3.11%	94.27%	16	4.72%	92.59%
15	281	2.77%	97.04%	15	4.42%	97.01%
16	187	1.84%	98.88%	7	2.06%	99.07%
17	114	1.12%	100.00%	3	0.88%	99.95%*

*Percentages don't add to 100% because of rounding.

Answer Box # 4

Percent of child abuse victims age 10 and over statewide = **21.48%**

$$100\% - 78.52\% = \mathbf{21.48\%}$$

Percent of child abuse victims age 10 and over in Cascadia County = **26.58%**

$$100\% - 73.42\% = \mathbf{26.58\%}$$

Table 5: Alleged Perpetrator of Substantiated Abuse, State

Alleged Perpetrator	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Mother	2637	2626	2704	3086	3134
Father	1884	1710	1738	1906	1903
Sibling	63	61	64	73	75
Other Relative	1067	916	1030	1180	1268
Friend	188	244	451	363	522
Neighbor	63	183	129	73	75
Caregiver	251	214	129	218	149
Other	126	153	193	363	336
Total	6279	6106	6438	7262	7461

Table 6: Alleged Perpetrator of Substantiated Abuse, Cascadia County

Alleged Perpetrator	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Mother	108	101	102	98	91
Father	77	66	66	60	55
Sibling	3	2	2	2	2
Other Relative	44	35	39	37	37
Friend	8	9	17	12	15
Neighbor	3	7	5	2	2
Caregiver	10	8	5	7	4
Other	5	6	7	12	10
Total	257	235	244	230	217

Table 7: Alleged Perpetrator of Substantiated Abuse – 1998

Perpetrator	State (%)	Cascadia (%)
Mother	42.0	41.9
Father	25.5	25.3
Sibling	1.0	.92
Other Relative	17.0	17.0
Total	85.5	85.12

Table 8: Type of Maltreatment, Statewide

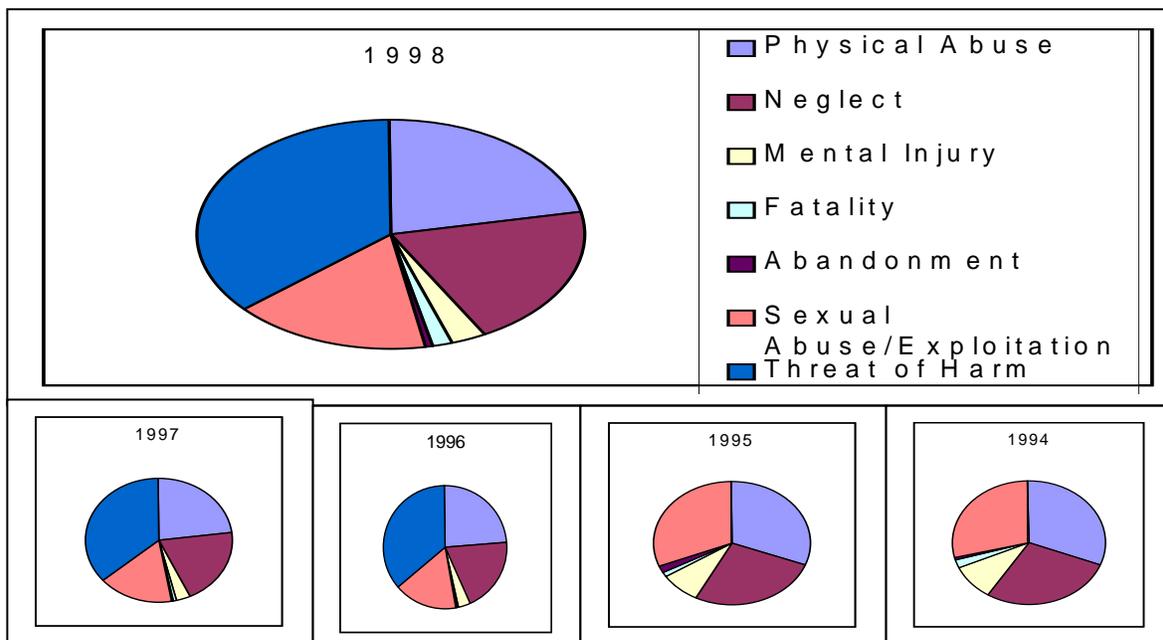
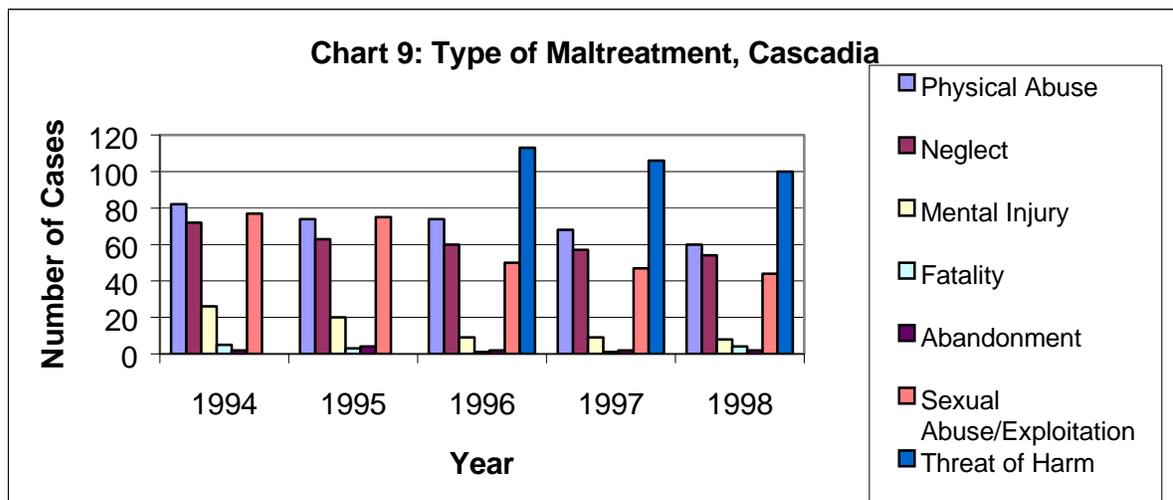
Type of Maltreatment	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Physical Abuse	1964(2)	1727(2)	1893(3)	1788(3)	1620(3)
Neglect	3184(1)	3178(1)	2940(2)	2842(2)	2525(2)
Mental Injury	674	816	1003	617	758
Fatality	19	15	17	34	17
Abandonment	44	104	52	58	60
Sexual Abuse & Exploitation	1791(3)	1587(3)	1396	1476	1434
Subtotal	7676	7427	8301	6815	6414
Threat of Harm	--	--	4022(1)	5405(1)	6344(1)
Total	7676	7427	12323	12220	12758

Table 9: Type of Maltreatment, Cascadia County

Type of Maltreatment	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Physical Abuse	82(1)	74(2)	74(2)	68(2)	60(2)
Neglect	72(3)	63(3)	60(3)	57(3)	54(3)
Mental Injury	26	20	9	9	8
Fatality	5	3	1	1	4
Abandonment	2	4	2	2	2
Sexual Abuse & Exploitation	77(2)	75(1)	50	47	44
Subtotal	264	239	196	184	173
Threat of Harm	--	--	113(1)	106(1)	100(1)
Total	264	239	309	290	273

Table 9: Type of Maltreatment, Cascadia County

Type of Maltreatment	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Physical Abuse	82	74	74	68	60
Neglect	72	63	60	57	54
Mental Injury	26	20	9	9	8
Fatality	5	3	1	1	4
Abandonment	2	4	2	2	2
Sexual Abuse & Exploitation	77	75	50	47	44
Subtotal	264	239	196	184	173
Threat of Harm	--	--	113	106	100
Total	264	239	309	290	273



TO: Commissioner Smith
FROM: Jane Jones, Program Administrator, Cascadia
 Stan Leon, CPS Supervisor, Cascadia

This memo responds to your questions concerning a perceived rise in child abuse in Cascadia County, especially in cases where the mother's boyfriend is the perpetrator and where substance is a factor. It also addresses the comment that Cascadia County had a 300% increase in the number of abuse and neglect cases last year.

We found no data to substantiate a 300% increase in abuse and neglect cases. There was a 300% increase in fatalities in Cascadia, but that large percent increase was caused by an large increase in a small number of fatalities (from 1 to 4 between 1997 and 1998) which, in our opinion, does not indicate a trend.

There is no data to support the statement that substance abuse is a factor in child abuse cases in Cascadia. The only data available are statewide, not county specific.

Finally the research shows that both statewide and in Cascadia County mothers, not boyfriends, are the perpetrators listed most often in substantiated child abuse reports. Data on abuse by the mother's boyfriend isn't collected.

More specifically, the research shows the following.

- Overall Cascadia has had a steady decrease in child abuse since 1992 and the County consistently has a better track record than the state.
- Cascadia has had a steady decrease in the number of CPS reports during the past five years from 1309 reports in 1994 to 1105 in 1998. The actual figures are: 1994=1309 reports, 1995=1224; 1996=1199; 1997=1158 and 1998=1105.
- The number of substantiated reports decreased in each of the past five years except in 1996. The figures are: 1994=257; 1995=235; 1996=244; 1997=230 and 1998=217.
- Growth in CPS reports since 1992 has been slower in Cascadia than in the state, at 10.28% and 44.15%, respectively.
- When compared with the state, Cascadia County had a lower percent of substantiated reports in 1998 (19.6%) compared with the state's (23.7%).
- From 1992-1998 substantiated reports in Cascadia went down 3.13% whereas the state saw an increase of 2.70% over the same period.
- The fatalities in the state were 17 in 1996; 34 in 1997 and 17 in 1998. In Cascadia in 1996 there was one fatality; in 1997 there was one and in 1998 there were four. The yearly percentage change in the state was 100% between 1996 and 1997 and between 1997 and 1998 the percent change was -50%. In Cascadia in between 1996 and 1997 the percent change was 0% and between 1997 and 1998 it was 300%. Since the number of fatalities is so small, it causes large fluctuations in the percent change figures.
- About a quarter of child abuse victims in both Cascadia and the State were age 10 and over but a more significant percent were under the age of 10 and a significant percent

- were under the age of one. Children age 10 and older represent about a quarter of child abuse victims – less than 22% statewide and less than 27% in Cascadia.
- About three-quarters of child victims are under the age of 10 – 78.03% statewide and 70.18 percent in Cascadia. Statewide 12.26% of child abuse victims are under the age of one, while in Cascadia 9.14% of victims are under age one.
 - Statewide and in Cascadia, parents are the two most likely perpetrators in child abuse cases. Statewide last year mothers were the abusers in 42.0% of all substantiated reports, while fathers abused in 25.5% of substantiated cases (A total of 67.5% together). In Cascadia last year, abuse percentages for parents were similar with mothers abusing in 41.9% of cases and fathers in 23.3% (a total of 67.2% together). Total relative abuse, statewide = 86%; in Cascadia it's about the same at 85%.
 - The top three type of abuse in Cascadia and the state in 1994 and 1995 are physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse and exploitation. In 1996 Threat of Harm was added as a category and in both the state and Cascadia it became the number one type of abuse, followed by physical abuse and neglect.

In summary, the data available show that child abuse in Cascadia is **decreasing** and **compares** favorably with the state, based on measures that include total number of CPS reports and substantiated reports. Child victims are more likely to be under the age of ten and many of those are under the age of one. The most common perpetrator of abuse is most likely to be the mother or father or at least a relative of the victim.

To locate the missing data that has been requested (how often boyfriends are the perpetrators and how often substance abuse plays a role in abuse cases in Cascadia), the Commissioner would have to collect additional data, perhaps by reading cases or doing a survey.

The information in this report was obtained from the State Office for Services to Children and Families (SCF) WebPages.

If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know.

Interpreting Data

Review the data on the sample reports. Can you make any conclusions using these figures? Can you see any trends? Do these numbers surprise you? Do you think these figures could be misleading in any way?

Module 8: Technology Is Changing the Job of the Child Welfare Supervisor: Are You a Change Leader?



Rationale

Whether caused by technology or new policies, procedures or regulations or other factors, change occurs frequently and regularly in the workplace. In fact, several organizational development theorists believe that the ability to manage change is the key skill an employee needs to bring to the job today. In order to be effective in leading and modeling change management skills, child welfare supervisors must understand the dynamics of building commitment to change. Additionally, this module provides an opportunity to explore organizational issues such as efficiency, accountability, and hierarchy when a major change, such as the implementation of a new information system, occurs in the workplace.

Activities

- Exercise: A Change I Recently Led (20 minutes)
- Presentation of the Phases of Change Commitment Model (20 minutes)
- Exercise: Change Commitment: Where Are We? (15 minutes)
- Exercise: Actions Supervisors Can Take to Move Staff to the Next Stage of Commitment (20 minutes)
- Exercise: Case Study FamilyNet: An Automated Child Welfare Information System (45 minutes)

Optional exercise: The trainer may want to include in this module some tools to identify leadership styles or personality type.

Time

2 hours

Objectives

When this module is complete, the participant will be able to:

- Define the key phases in the change commitment process
- Assess his/her commitment and resistance to change
- Understand how to assess staff commitment and resistance to change
- Employ some tactics to move self and staff along the change curve
- Discuss several organizational, accountability, hierarchy and efficiency issues and opportunities created by a major change in the workplace

Materials

Easel, newsprint, markers and tape

The flipcharts of new skills and competencies generated in Module 2.

Stars/stickers

Sample handouts, overheads and pre-printed flipcharts

1. A Change I Recently Led (8.1)
2. Characteristics of Commitment (8.2)
3. Stages of Change Commitment Model (8.3)
4. Change Commitment: Where Are We? (8.4)
5. FamilyNet: An Automated Child Welfare Information System (8.5)
6. FamilyNet: An Automated Child Welfare Information System Summary Version (8.6)

Permission to reprint and use the Characteristics of Commitment (8.2), Stages of Change Commitment Model (8.3) and related trainer's notes to train child welfare supervisors is authorized by an agreement between the Muskie School of Public Service and ODR, Inc.

FamilyNet: An Automated Child Welfare Information System was funded by this project and written by a case writer from the John F. Kennedy School of Government (KSG), Harvard University. Public Child Welfare Agencies, the University of Maine and the University of Southern Maine have permission to reprint the case for educational purposes without cost or further permission from the KSG.

7. A Few Bits and Bytes (8.7)

Advance Preparation

Make sure the flipchart, markers, newsprint pad, stars/stickers, overheads, and overhead projector are in the room.

Distribute the FamilyNet: An Automated Child Welfare Information System case and ask participants to read it prior to the training.

Glossary of Terms

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

Conner, D. R.(1992). *Managing at the Speed of Change*. New York: Villard.

Trainer's Instructions

1. Introduce the module by presenting the purpose and objectives of the module using the following as a guide:

*We just finished discussing the impact that SACWIS and office automation has had on your organization and role as a Child Welfare supervisor. Organizational development experts maintain that the pace of change is so frenetic that the ability to manage change is one of, if not **THE**, most important skill an employee can bring to the current work environment. As a child welfare supervisor, the ability to lead and model commitment to change building skills is an invaluable competency whether the change is technology or program related. This module will help you increase and enhance your commitment building skills When this module is complete, you should be able to:*

- *Define the key phases in the change commitment process*
- *Assess his/her commitment and resistance to change*
- *Understand how to assess staff commitment and resistance to change*
- *Employ some tactics to move yourself and your staff along the change curve*
- *Discuss several organizational, accountability, hierarchy and efficiency issues and opportunities created by a major change in the workplace*

2. Begin the module by asking everyone to refer to the 'A Change I Recently Led' handout (8.1).

3. Ask participants to think for a few minutes about a work related change they have recently gone through, specifically a change that they led their workers through---something like introducing a new or revised policy, regulatory requirement, or a supervisory practice. Have participants pair off, ask them to complete the questions on the handout and share their experiences with each other. Give each person 5-6 minutes to share his or her experiences.

4. After a few minutes, ask if one or two participants would like to share with the group their answers to each question. Record the answers on a flipchart.

5. Ask ...'what are the two things about change that cause us to feel anxiety?' Expect answers like:

- Loss of control

- Feeling a skill deficit
- Fear of the unknown
- Unpleasant past experiences with change

6. Explain that there is a wide range of emotions associated with change. Some are positive and some, like those just mentioned, can lead to resistance to change. This range of emotional responses is a natural part of the change process, common when people are going through change. Mention that being familiar with commitment building skills can help people understand and even predict emotional responses to change.

7. Present a mini lecture using the following material as a guide:

As we have been discussing throughout this training, changes in the workplace are occurring regularly and will continue to occur in the future. Agency goals change, people change, procedures change and the tools needed to do our work change. Some might say that the only constant is change. Developing the skills needed to overcome the fear and loss of control that some folks associate with change and respond positively to change have become some of an employee's most essential tools. As a supervisor, you need to understand the dynamics of change, be skilled at building commitment to change and have the tools you need to lead your staff through the change process by helping them develop positive, focussed and flexible attitudes toward change.

In any change, people often have more than one role to play. For example, in the SACWIS implementation, perhaps you, at times, were asked to both change and to lead the change. In other words, you were asked to do the

difficult tasks of altering your own knowledge, skills and behavior. Perhaps you were also called on to be a change leader, responsible for leading the change in your unit. Your primary role with SACWIS, however, was and probably will be as a change leader.

8. Have participants go into their small groups. Give the groups 2 minutes to list as many characteristics of commitment to change as they can. At the end of two minutes have each group share 2-3 items. Ask if any other characteristics need to be added.

9. Display the 'Characteristics of Commitment' overhead and refer participants to the handout (8.2). Compare the characteristics just mentioned and walk through the overhead highlighting items not already noted.

An effective commitment builder not only encourages and gains the commitment of staff but also assesses whether or not she/he is fully personally committed to the change.

According to Conner and Patterson, a person is said to be committed to a specific outcome when he/she:

- *Pursues that outcome in a consistent fashion*
- *Rejects courses of action that may have short-term benefits if they are not consistent with the overall goal*
- *Stands fast in the face of adversity, remaining determined and persistent*
- *Understands that a price will be paid to achieve the outcomes, and*
- *Applies creativity, ingenuity and resourcefulness to resolving problems or issues that would otherwise block achievement of the goal*

The more committed a person is to change, the more personal resources like time, energy, endurance and ingenuity he/she freely invests in achieving it. Commitment building, thus, is necessary for successful implementation of change. The change could be a system implementation, like SACWIS or a life style change or a change you may be asking your clients to make to support the case goal. Regardless of the type of change, the phases of building commitment stay constant. To look at a way that potential resistance can be overcome and commitment to change can be generated, let's look at the 'Stages of Commitment to Organizational Change' model.

10. Display the overhead containing this model (8.3) and refer folks to the related handout. Continue the mini-lecture.

The model is presented as a grid with support for the change presented on the vertical axis and the passage of time presented on the horizontal axis. The model consists of three developmental phases:

- *Preparation*
- *Acceptance and*
- *Commitment*

Each phase represents an opportunity for commitment to be threatened (the down arrows) or supported (the up curve) and provides opportunities for change leader intervention. Also, people tend to go forward and back through the stages---making progress forward and then slipping back. In real life, progress toward commitment is not quite as linear as the chart shows.

Lets look at each of these Phases in detail:

Phase 1: Preparation

*It's in this phase that folks are **contacted to** let them know what's going on and to begin to build **awareness** of the change. Awareness does not, however, indicate a thorough understanding of the change or an agreement that the change is a benefit. In reality at this time in the change process, people may be confused about what the change will mean to them personally, how they will be effected by the change, what role they will be asked to have in the change or even why the change is needed.*

During this phase, it's critical for the change leader to provide a clear message on what the change involves and its major implications.

11. Stop here to ask participants to describe to the group how they first learned about the SACWIS change.

12. Continue the mini-lecture.

Phase 2: Acceptance

*The second phase in the commitment model is the Acceptance phase. It's during this phase that the person demonstrates some initial **understanding** of the nature, intent and impact of the change. The person is, for the first time, in a position to make a judgement about the change and have **positive and negative perceptions**. This is where the anxiety that we discussed a while ago can creep in and if unchecked can result in resistance. Rarely, by the way, is a person's response either all positive or all negative. Usually it's a bit of both. A positive*

perception is NOT the same as deciding to commit time, energy and other personal resources to making the change a success. For example, you may have some negative feelings about implementing a new policy but will go along with it because it's the priority of your supervisor and one of the factors in your performance evaluation will be how well you implemented the policy.

Phase 3: Commitment

*The third and final phase is Commitment. In this phase the change is **installed, implemented** and becomes operational. During this phase, it's common for unanticipated problems to arise, that unexpected complications occur and that 'checking out behavior' can happen. It's in this stage that initial optimism about the change can be deflated or turned into pessimism, resistance can increase and rumors can run rampant.*

*After the change has been used long enough to demonstrate worth and visible positive impact, people begin to assess the benefits of the change from long-term perspectives such as logistical, organizational, personal and economic perspectives. Ideally the change is now the norm and has been thoroughly adopted by people, receiving maximum organizational, personal and professional support. Enthusiasm, high-energy and persistence characterize commitment at this level when **institutionalization and internalization** occur. At institutionalization, the organizational*

structure has adapted to support the change. For example, it's reflected in policy and procedure, job descriptions and performance appraisals. At internalization, the person 'owns' the change---to them its theirs, always has been and always will be.

To wrap-up, what we see here is a three-phase model for building commitment to change.

Building commitment to change is not easy work, in fact the lack of skills in this area is one of the principle reasons so many change efforts fail or are very slow and painful. Understanding the model and applying it can help you be successful however in overcoming resistance to change and building commitment to change. We're going to work with this model now.

13. Refer participants to handout 8.4 labeled 'Change Commitment; Where Are We?'. Ask the group to take 5 minutes to look this document over and complete each section. Instruct the group that after they have completed the work individually, they will be asked to share their answers with the group.

14. When the group appears done, approximately 5 minutes, hand out stars/stickers to the participants and ask participants to answer questions 1 and 3 by placing a star/sticker on each of the flipcharts (SACWIS and Office Automation), recording where they are on the commitment curve.

15. Review each flipchart by commenting on the numbers of folks in each phase of the curve. (The expectation here is that

participants will be in all phases of the curve.)

16. Introduce the next activity in this module, exploring what change leaders can do in each phase to help staff overcome potential resistance and move forward through the commitment curve. Assign each group one phase. Give them 3 minutes to list actions they could take to assure a positive outcome and progress to the next phase. Have each group present their list. After each list is presented ask if anyone has something to add to the list. Ask if any new skills or competencies are needed? If so, record them on a flipchart and add them to the flipcharts of new skills and competencies generated in Module 2.

17. Ensure that the following answers are mentioned for the related phase:

Preparation Phase

- factual, accurate, complete information—what’s known, make known; what’s not known, will be
- discussion of the upcoming change at staff and other meetings
- public announcements
- frequent communication announcing the change
- personal communication from the supervisor
- checking to be sure that the message is heard

Acceptance Phase

- frequent communication focusing on the benefits of the change, why it’s important and when it will happen
- expectation shaping---don’t oversell
- show results/benefits
- training

The trainer might want to make a list of the items mentioned in this exercise to distribute after the completion of this module.

- opportunities—formal and informal-- to participate in the planning, decision making and implementation process (SME's)
- clarification of roles
- question and answer forums
- access to change sponsor and change leaders
- rewards/positive feedback

Commitment Phase

- communication---frequent, factual---when you think you've done it enough, do it more
- honestly acknowledging and addressing problems, issues and concerns
- present facts
- provide feedback on the status of user suggestions for modifications to the system
- acknowledge successes
- rewards/celebrations
- active problem resolution
- formal sanctioning---incorporating the change into daily operations, for example job descriptions, performance evaluations, hiring/promotional decisions

18. Let the participants know that the group will be coming back to the commitment to change topic and going through an exercise to take back to the office and use with some of their unit staff.

19. Introduce the FamilyNet: An Automated Child Welfare Information System case. Let the group know that the discussion will center around six questions:

Trainers may want to give specific examples here as to how Administrators in their state/county have responded to employees' needs during a major change.

- What are the key 'facts' in the case?
- What were the goals and expectations for the FamilyNet system?
- Were the goals reasonable?
- Were the goals met? Why or why not?
- What major themes or issues emerge from the case?
- What are the lessons learned from the case that you could apply in your day to day work?

The summary of the FamilyNet case (8.6) is a useful version to include in the handouts.

Ask each person to spend a few minutes rereading the case and prepare to discuss the questions/comments.

20. Start the discussion by eliciting responses to the first question... 'what are the key facts in the case?' Record the answers on a flipchart. The groups might high light 'facts' such as :

- In February, 1998, the Massachusetts Department of Social Service (DSS) implemented a new information system called FamilyNet. (FamilyNet is a Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System, SACWIS)
- Prior to FamilyNet, DSS' system (ASSIST) for collecting and organizing data on families served was antiquated,, cumbersome and paper based.
- In FY99, \$3.9 billion federal dollars went to states to support foster care. Federal dollars also supported adoption services, family preservation services, prevention services and other activities aimed at protecting children.
- Little solid data about child welfare came to HSS from the states. In December 1993, HHS outlined guidelines for SACWIS systems.

- In Massachusetts, DSS employs approximately 2,800 people in 26 area offices.
- DSS supervisors are not part of management, rather they belong to the same union as caseworkers.
- DSS provides services to more than 21,500 families every day. On average, caseworkers have a caseload of 18-20 families; supervisors have approximately 100+ cases under their purview.
- When supervisors meet with workers, they discuss 'hot' cases as well as more routine matters such as making sure that the children were getting needed medical attention. Progress Supervisory Reviews (PSR's) were instituted in 1993 as a way to assure that every service plan, not just 'hot' cases, was discussed at least once every three months.

There are other facts that the groups may state but these are the key ones.

21. Move on to discussing the goals and expectations for FamilyNet. Probe to assure that the federal, agency management, frontline, media, legislative and client perspectives are explored. Record the answers on the flipchart. Look for issues such as.

- HSS was looking for timely reliable information.
- DSS administrators expected automation to help meet service delivery goals on improving the well-being of children and families, ease the administrative duties of caseworkers and increase the staff time with clients; make improvements in case practice; and provide accurate and current information to assist in decision making and program modification. Specifically, agency administrators hoped that the new system

would greatly enhance the ability of senior managers to collect and aggregate data and respond to the increasing demand for information from the federal government, that it would support ongoing efforts by agency leaders to standardize practice through out DSS and monitor the performance of its area offices; that it would give central office staff instant access via desktop computers to cases that aroused the interest of the press. Perhaps most important, it was expected to lead to improvements in the delivery of services to the agency's clients by lifting the burden of paperwork on the hard-pressed caseworker and making it easier for their supervisors to keep track of the many dozens of cases needing their attention.

- Caseworker and supervisor expectations are not stated. Managers state what they are but the frontline workers don't.
- Media, legislative, public and client goals aren't stated but can be assumed.

22. Solicit from the groups their opinions on the question... 'were these expectations met by FamilyNet?'. Record the answers on a flipchart. Expect to hear answers such as the following:

- By all accounts, the first months of operation were rocky, in part due to technical problems that made the system “crash constantly”.
- After several months, the worst of the problems—the crashes—were largely cleared up, though they left behind a residue of ill will toward the new system; but other technical problems remained. For one thing, the system was slow, especially when it was being heavily

- Workers' unfamiliarity with the construct of a database further slowed things down.
- For supervisors of the beleaguered caseworkers, the new system appeared to be a mixed blessing. FamilyNet brought some clear timesaving benefits to them, especially in terms of access to case files. The same system that seemed to chain caseworkers to their desks liberated supervisors from laborious searches through the green binders. In addition, FamilyNet provided supervisors with a useful tool for keeping track of their own and caseworkers' tasks: the "tickler." The tickler file contained reminders of tasks that had deadlines attached. At the same time, however, the slowness of FamilyNet threatened to offset the benefits it brought to supervision.
- Among central office managers and supervisors alike, there was agreement that FamilyNet generally had not lived up to its promise as far as caseworkers were concerned. From the management viewpoint, it had failed to deliver on some of the key benefits they had originally envisioned it would confer on frontline workers. "We were hoping it would do all the things people thought five years ago computers could do," Linda Carlisle remarks ruefully. "Reduce paper. Streamline their jobs. Like any other job that requires you to use computers, it doesn't always simplify it in a way that you'd like." The hope that an automated system would save caseworkers time had largely faded.

- There was disappointment as well that, thus far at least, FamilyNet had not provided supervisors with the opportunity to manipulate data in the system in a way that would allow them to do some analysis.
- Senior managers at the agency believed that FamilyNet, for all its technical flaws, had fulfilled some of their major goals for the system. It had, for one thing, improved access to information on cases, which on occasion proved to be more than simply a matter of convenience.
- Senior DSS managers also believed that FamilyNet supported their efforts to improve management and accountability at the agency in a number of ways. It helped standardize practice in the agency's area offices, reducing opportunities to dodge statutory requirements and agency policy.

23. Solicit answers to the question... 'what are the major themes raised by the case?'. Expect to hear answers such as:

- The disconnect between management's expectations of the system and staff expectations and reality. Administrators' expectations were similar to those of HSS and, for the most part were met. It's not clear what the expectations of the frontline were but the systems seems to be, at least initially, a disappointment to them. You might explore here what else DSS administrators might have done to get the expectations more closely aligned. You might also examine if the disappointment expressed by the

frontline could be temporary, perhaps caused by resistance to change or perceived loss of knowledge.

- The tension between the needs of the worker and the needs of upper management. Explore how these are similar, different and may change over time.
- The issue of the supervisory squeeze. In other words, the fact that supervisors are the link between the caseworkers and management, are not management (in this case they are union workers), yet are expected to act like managers and assure that management's priorities are carried out. Yet supervisors are also the group that has been around the longest, is the most resistant to change, is the hardest to [get to] see themselves as a manager, as someone who aggregates information, as opposed to a lead worker who's just there for support and mentoring.
- IT is no cure all.
- The morale shift when suddenly caseworkers and supervisors no longer know how to do their jobs. Linking this topic back to exercises in Module 2, **The Impact of Technology on the Workplace**, and might be informative.

24. Begin discussing the final comment... 'describe the lessons learned from the case that you can apply to your day to day work'. Solicit comments from the groups and record the comments on a flipchart.

25. Wrap-up this exercise by summarizing the group's key

discussion points. You may want to use the following as a guide to highlight certain points:

With a situation such as the one we have just discussed, there are no right or wrong answers---very much like real life. While this FamilyNet case focuses on the implementation of a SACWIS, it clearly raises issues of accountability, efficiency, hierarchy and change management that all of us face on a daily basis. These issues are not necessarily automation related; rather, we constantly see issues of power, conflict of expectations and perceived resistance to change play out in the workplace. Solutions to address these issues are not easy to craft yet attempts must be made. Hopefully, this case has allowed you to examine these key issues and explore some new solutions that will help you better meet the demands of your day to day work.

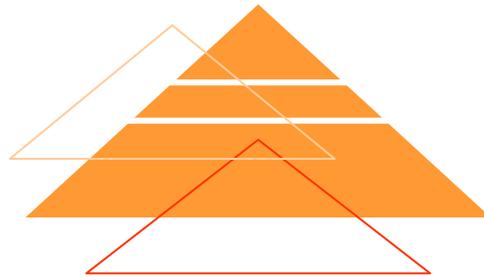
26. Ask for an address any questions or comments.

27. Put up the 'A Few Bits and Bytes' Overhead (8.7) and introduce the next module, **Options for Skills Improvement**, by noting:

One of the roles of a child welfare supervisor is to teach. Thus, in the next module, we're going to then practice the information management skills that will be 'taught' back in the office.

The issues of accountability, hierarchy, goal conflicts and efficiency are at the heart of this case. You and your group of might identify and explore other issues. As the trainer, it is critical that you allow discussion of the key themes raised by the group to be full, robust and thorough while at the same time not allowing the discussion to become circular or stagnant. You need to ensure that all perspectives are aired without censure. The questions you ask to guide the conversation are an important part of the success of this case as a learning tool.

Follow-up note: As of July 2000, Family Net is used throughout DSS with minimal difficulties. All of the DSS central office staff mentioned in the case (Carlisle, Watson and Bennard) have moved on to IT, consulting or managerial positions outside of DSS.



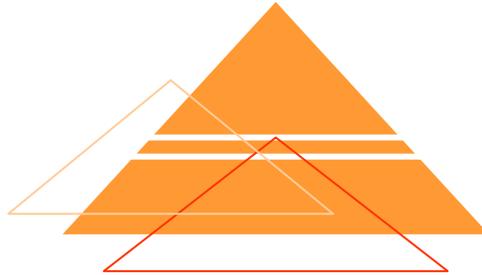
A Change I Recently Led

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. You will be asked by the instructor to share your answers to these questions with the group.

1. As a supervisor, I have led change, be it introducing a new policy, reforming practice or supervising employees. The change I'm thinking about now is this:

2. How did you decide to lead this change? What did you experience in your own reaction? (Include feelings and behaviors.)

3. What reactions did you get from those impacted by the change? (Include feelings and behaviors.) Did the reactions change over time?



Commitment to major change is evident when people:

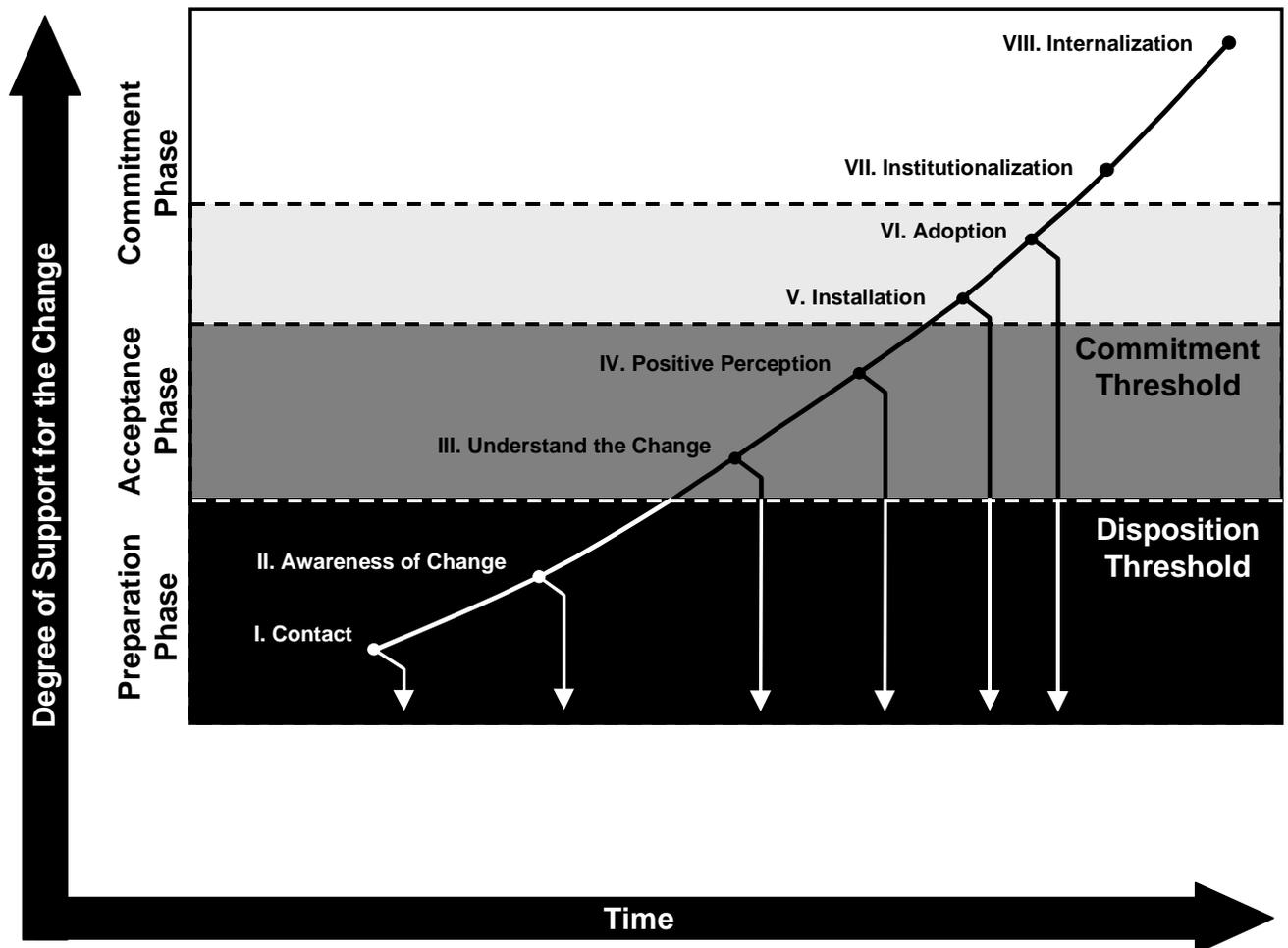
- Invest resources (time, energy, money, etc.) to ensure a desired outcome.
- Consistently pursue their goal, even when under stress and with the passage of time.
- Reject ideas or action plans that offer short-term benefits but are inconsistent with the overall strategy for ultimate goal achievement.
- Stand fast in the face of adversity, remaining determined and persistent in their quest for the desired goal.
- Apply creativity, ingenuity, and resourcefulness to resolving problems or issues that would otherwise block their achievement of the goal.

Commitment is the glue that bonds people and their change goals. It is the key source of energy that propels resilient people and organizations through the transition process at the fastest, most effective pace possible — the optimum speed of change.

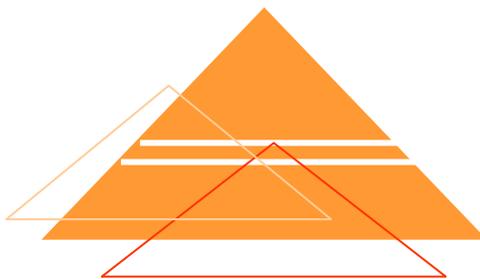
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STAGES OF CHANGE COMMITMENT

Stages of Change Commitment



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Change Commitment: Where Are We?

Using the Change Commitment Model as a Guide, please complete the following:

1) With regard to office automation, I am in the phase of:

Preparation_____

Acceptance_____

Commitment_____

2) To move out of that phase, I need:

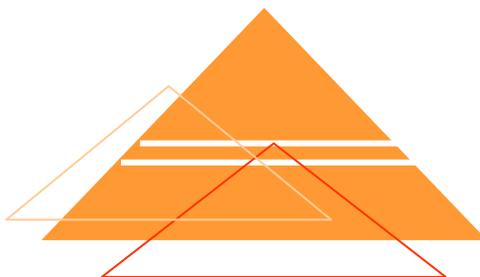
3) With regard to SACWIS, I am in the phase of:

Preparation_____

Acceptance_____

Commitment_____

4) To move out of that phase, I need:



FamilyNet: An Automated Child Welfare Information System

**Kennedy School of Government
Case Program
C16-99-1552.0**

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In February 1998, the Massachusetts Department of Social Services (DSS) launched an ambitious new automated information system, which it called FamilyNet. As the agency responsible for responding to reports of child abuse or neglect and for providing services to children and families throughout the state, DSS faced the gargantuan task of collecting and organizing information on the thousands of families it served, and on the innumerable investigations, assessments, home visits, phone calls, consultations, and placements that were done by its caseworkers everyday. Before FamilyNet, most of the department's activities were recorded in handwritten notes or entered into its antiquated computer system; its limited record-keeping capacity afforded neither easy access to information on cases, nor the means to do more than basic analysis of data. Now, with the aid of federal funds, it had developed a sophisticated and comprehensive automated system that would put it in the vanguard of child welfare information systems in the US.

The agency's hopes for FamilyNet were as ambitious as its scope. The new system would greatly enhance the ability of senior managers to collect and aggregate data and respond to the increasing demand for information from the federal government; it would support ongoing efforts by agency leaders to standardize practice throughout DSS and monitor the performance of its area offices; it would give central office staff instant access, via desktop computers, to cases that had aroused the interest of the press. Perhaps most important, it was expected to lead to improvements in the delivery of services to the agency's clients by lifting the burden of paperwork on hard-pressed caseworkers and making it easier for their supervisors to keep track of the many dozens of cases needing their attention. It was these two groups—caseworkers and supervisors—that would feel the impact of the new system most directly. As the first and most essential links in the chain of data entry that would feed FamilyNet, their response to the new system would be an acid test of its effectiveness. At the same, FamilyNet would be a test of their ability to adapt to the challenges of an increasingly automated workplace. For supervisors in particular, the new system would raise the question of how—or if—the nature of their work would be changed by the advent of what some of them referred to as “the machine.”

Background: The Push for Automation

FamilyNet was in many respects an outgrowth of a new interest in Washington in assessing the effectiveness of state child welfare programs the federal government helped pay for. Federal money flowed to states through a variety of funding streams that supported services to children suffering from, or at risk of, abuse and neglect. The single largest sum—\$3.9 billion in FY 1999—went to foster care; states were reimbursed for 50-80 percent of the cost of maintaining a child in foster care, as well as a percentage of the administrative costs associated with each placement. The federal government also

provided funds and grants for adoption assistance, “family preservation” programs, prevention services, and a host of other activities aimed at protecting children in troubled families.¹ Taken together, federal funds made up a significant portion of state child welfare budgets. In Massachusetts, for example, almost half of its \$509 million budget in FY 1998—about \$225 million—came from the federal government in the form of reimbursements, discretionary grants, and block grants.

But from the federal perspective, there was, in a sense, not much to show for its support of child welfare programs. Little solid data filtered back from the states to Congress or the White House on the status of recipients of these services. In 1986, Congress moved to fill the information gap, enacting legislation that established a mandatory data collection system—eventually known as the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)—for states that received federal funding under Title IV-E (foster care) or IV-B (child welfare services) of the Social Security Act. As later spelled out in regulations, AFCARS sought to capture an array of data on the background, treatment, and ultimate disposition of children in foster and adoptive homes.

The AFCARS measure would pave the way for later legislation that reflected an increasing emphasis on “outcome measures” as a way to rate states’ performance in child protection and child welfare programs. But that lay more than a decade ahead. In the late 1980s, few states had the capacity to comply with requests for basic information, as embodied in AFCARS, never mind to aggregate and analyze data. “In many areas, it was not just that you couldn’t count outcomes,” notes Olivia Golden, assistant secretary for children and families at HHS, “but that you couldn’t count anything. . . . Not having any ability to know important figures about foster care and adoption not only got in the way of states and their ability to manage, but got in the way of the ability to see what was going on nationally.”

Recognizing this, Congress offered a helping hand to states to upgrade their information systems. The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 provided “enhanced federal financial participation”—i.e., 75 percent funding, instead of the usual 50 percent—for the development of “statewide automated child welfare information systems,” or SACWIS.² States would find added incentive to take advantage of the generous federal offer when HHS issued the final AFCARS regulations at the end of 1993. In addition to specifying some 66 foster care and 37 adoption “data elements” to be collected and reported on a semi-annual basis, the regulations for the first time imposed penalties for noncompliance, either in timeliness or accuracy of reporting; the penalties could be assessed for as much as ten percent of a state’s administrative cost reimbursements for foster care.

SACWIS Specifications. But while the federal government intended to take a firmer hand with states in its demand for timely and reliable information, it recognized that the individual states had widely varying child welfare organizations and programs, and sought to give them “significant latitude,” in the words of a 1998 HHS report to Congress, in designing their automated systems. In regulations published in December 1993, HHS outlined the minimum system requirements in order to qualify for SACWIS funding. Among other things, all systems would have to meet the AFCARS reporting requirements; permit “to the extent practicable” interfaces with other systems in the state, such as Medicaid and Aid to Families with Dependent Children; facilitate determinations of eligibility

¹ In addition, social service block grants to states were used to help defray the costs of child welfare services. In Massachusetts, 98 percent of the state’s block grant—almost \$99 million in FY 1998—went to the Department of Social Services.

² The legislation called for enhanced funding for three years, through September 30, 1996, but this was later extended for an additional year.

for federally supported services, such as foster care and adoption assistance; and track the progress of individual cases by recording information on referrals, screenings, assessments, services, and reviews. Beyond these and several other specifications, states were free to tack on additional functions to their automated systems as needed.

In crafting the SACWIS guidelines, Golden says, “we worked hard not to have it be narrow, ... but instead to focus on [writing] it broadly enough that states have the ability to design systems that work. ... States have very different structures and they may need to do different things in order to build a system that works for their line workers.” The utility of automated systems to these workers was, she adds, very much on the minds of HHS officials as they drafted the SACWIS guidelines. “We were really seeing,” she recalls, “how both the development of management information and the ability to support caseworkers so they could do their work better and not be dragged down by paperwork—how we had the opportunity to support both of those goals at once.”

In one state, at least, the progress of the SACWIS legislation through Congress was closely followed and eagerly anticipated. Massachusetts child welfare officials welcomed the opportunity provided by SACWIS, believing, like their federal counterparts, that it would make life easier for employees at all levels, particularly those who worked on the frontlines of child welfare services—caseworkers and their supervisors.

Managing Information at DSS

The Massachusetts Department of Social Services employed roughly 2,800 people, the great majority of them “direct service workers,” deployed in 26 area offices throughout the state. Within each area office, workers were assigned to one of several specialized units, including intake, which investigated reports of abuse and neglect; assessment, which evaluated families when abuse or neglect reports were considered “supported”; “ongoing,” or case management, which worked with families deemed to be in need of services; family resources, which recruited and provided support for foster parents; and adoption, which handled the “permanent placement” of children who were unable to return to their families. Direct service staff worked closely with their supervisors, who were usually responsible for five to six—but, in times of turnover, as many as nine—workers. In DSS, supervisors were not technically part of management—they even belonged to the same union as the direct service employees—though, unlike caseworkers, they were required to have a master’s degree in social work. Above them were “area program managers” who, in the words of one, “supervise[d] supervisors,” and then the director of the area office.

DSS estimated that it provided services to over 21,500 troubled families everyday; keeping track of them, under conditions that were often difficult, was, at best, a juggling act. According to supervisors’ estimates, most workers had a caseload of about 18-20 families,³ which meant that most supervisors were typically responsible for overseeing the handling of anywhere from 100 to 120 cases. Much of the documentation and oversight of these cases was recorded manually. Caseworkers in the ongoing unit, for example, kept handwritten notes, known as “narratives” or “dictation,” detailing home visits, phone calls (including no answers), and contacts with schools, doctors, therapists, or other “collateral” figures. They represented an “ongoing chronology of what caseworkers did,” explains David Van Kennan, a supervisor for 15 years before becoming an area program manager in the North

³ In 1998, according to the department’s annual caseload report, the average caseload was just under 18.

Central area office.⁴ These, along with other pertinent case documents, were bundled into thick green binders, which were stored in record rooms in area offices.

Supervisors devised their own systems for tracking the 100-plus cases under their purview. While most relied on a combination of notes and memory, the basic staple of supervision was talk, whether in formal weekly supervisory meetings or informal conversations with caseworkers. “For me,” says Roberta Barrasso, area program manager in the Cambridge office and a former case management supervisor, “my supervision was more generated by the worker. ‘I saw Mrs. So-and-so. Things are not right. She’s not meeting with the family intensive worker. What do I do now?’ That kind of thing.” Barrasso also made a point of spending time in caseworkers’ quarters. “My personal style,” she notes, “is not to sit in my office for a long period of time. ... I need to sit in the unit [housing the case management team]. I need to know what’s happening for every episode of the soap opera. ‘How was it when you went out [on a home visit] today? Did [the mother] look okay? Did the kids get to school?’ It was daily supervision.” But, Barrasso acknowledges, supervisors’ caseloads were too heavy to sustain a high level of involvement in each family. Certain cases “rise to the top,” she observes, “because Mom’s not looking well, the kids are not getting to school. Not every case is like that. You’d have some pretty stressed-out workers if all the cases were like that. So there’s a middle ground of cases that you’re talking about maybe not on a weekly basis—maybe on a monthly basis, because things are going pretty well.”

In addition to keeping close tabs on cases that were getting “hot,” supervisors helped caseworkers with the more routine tasks that required their attention. Children in foster care, for example, were expected, as a matter of policy, to have routine medical and dental examinations; it was the caseworker’s responsibility to make sure the appointments were made and kept. Again, it was up to supervisors to settle on a method for ensuring that caseworkers met their obligations. Vito Congero, supervisor of a kinship unit in the North Central area office,⁵ provided his workers with a list, which he compiled by hand from case records, of children who would be needing appointments in the coming weeks; he found it a useful management tool in supervisory meetings. “I wrote [the lists] out,” he explains, “and I would say, ‘This week, ... you have these medical appointments that are coming up, and you need to attend to those.’ ... If [caseworkers] were in a situation where they were dealing with four or five things that were immediate, we would set realistic goals. ... [So] if they agreed on two weeks [to schedule the appointment], in two weeks when we talked again, I would say, ‘Is it done?’”

Automation. DSS did have an automated information system, which dated back to the early 1980s. Known as ASSIST—an acronym whose original meaning no one in the agency could any longer recall—the mainframe computer system was used primarily to record certain tasks and transactions, many of them carrying statutory deadlines, such as an investigation of an abuse or neglect report (10 days; 24 hours in an emergency), or a family assessment (45 days); service referrals—for foster care or residential placement, for example—were also entered into the system. In each instance, caseworkers filled out the appropriate forms, which usually involved checking off a series of boxes, and, after getting a supervisor’s approval where needed, handed it over to a data entry operator who typed the information into the system. “It was all very simple information,” says Mary Ellen Bennard, acting director of information technology at DSS and a former supervisor, but caseworkers “hated them” nonetheless.

⁴ In the past, when the department was flush with funds, Van Kennan recalls, it would hire secretaries to type the notes or, sometimes, dictation tapes. “But any time there was a budget cut,” he adds, “they just got rid of support staff.”

⁵ The kinship unit was a pilot program that sought to place children with members of their extended family instead of in foster care; it provided both regular case management services and support for the extended family.

“They took time away from clients. They were not useful to [workers].” ASSIST did not “provide any feedback at all to the worker,” she continues, “other than in a monthly report that told them whether they were in compliance with timeframes for investigations or timeframes for assessments. It was all management reporting.”

When Linda Carlisle was appointed DSS commissioner in 1993, she used ASSIST to implement a new program designed to help supervisors keep track of cases: the “progress supervisory review” (PSR), in which, every three months, a supervisor and caseworker together revisited a family’s “service plan.” This document mapped out a plan of action, in the form of goals and tasks, for families and service providers to follow; the plan, it was hoped, would lead to successful resolution of the problems that had brought a family to DSS’s attention or, failing that, to permanent placement for the child at risk. Service plans were required by law to be completed within ten days of an assessment, but thereafter no formal mechanisms for review were in place. As a result, Carlisle says, cases could easily fall between the cracks, particularly when caseloads were heavy. Before PSRs, she maintains, a supervisor’s awareness of the status of individual cases depended largely on the worker’s own report. “You would come into my office,” she says by way of illustration, “and I’d say, ‘So what do you have for me?’ And you would tell me the thing that you needed help with. But what about the ones you didn’t think you needed help with? So you’d have 20 cases, and talk to me about two. ...”

Under the new review policy, the goals of service plans were entered into ASSIST, which generated a monthly printout of cases ready for their three-month review; supervisors then reviewed the service plan with caseworkers, noting down progress towards goals, contacts with the family, and other pertinent information, which was later entered into ASSIST. This way, Carlisle points out, “every supervisor had to, in a systematic way, go through every one of their caseworkers’ cases. ... It’s through PSRs that we can answer the question, when did you last visit the family. Believe it or not, there was no way to answer that question before that. Then the case would blow up and you’d look in the record and say, “Holy Christ, we didn’t see this family for ten months.”⁶

The PSRs, Carlisle notes, were part of the department’s response to a report by a blue ribbon commission on foster care, issued the year before she became commissioner, which “hammered” DSS for its lack of accountability, and its inability to answer “basic questions” about its services to children at risk. Over the next several years, the department’s efforts to implement the commission’s recommendations—there were over 130 in all—led to “huge policy changes,” the effects of which, Carlisle believes, sometimes got “confused with automation.”

Management Indicators. The information generated from PSRs became an important barometer of area office performance, particularly regarding home visits, but Carlisle, who had a background in management, felt the need for other ways to keep her finger on the pulse of the agency. “I don’t think you can manage anything, even a social service agency,” she says, “without having data and some information.” Accordingly, she instituted a new series of performance measures, which she called “management indicators.” Based in part on information pulled from ASSIST and in part on data collected by DSS central office staff, management indicators were intended to set statewide standards that all area offices were expected to meet. “We said,” Carlisle recalls, “out of the 110 things that social workers need to do, ... what are the ten or fifteen things that we really need to know?”

⁶ According to departmental policy, caseworkers were required to visit each family under their care at least once a month.

Most of the indicators were measures of timeliness, particularly those determined by statute—investigations, assessments, service plans—but others tracked such things as foster parent recruitment and attrition rates. The results were tallied monthly and distributed to area offices where, initially, they caused consternation among directors, who were stunned by the low levels of compliance with statutory mandates and departmental policies that the reports revealed. Those figures soon began inching upward, however, so that by 1998, according to Peter Watson, director of quality assurance at DSS, most offices had compliance rates of 80-90 percent. But while area directors came to find the monthly reports a valuable management tool, frontline workers viewed them in a less positive light. “I think what you’d hear from [them],” says Mary Ellen Bennard, “is that they felt a constant pressure from management in the offices to perform, to make sure that the office was meeting those indicators.” They felt burdened, too, by the growing piles of computer forms that had to be filled out in time for the monthly reports. “The paperwork for the past 15 years,” Dave Van Kennan maintains, “has been horrendous.”

But Carlisle disagreed with the assertion of critics that the concern with numbers distracted frontline workers from their mission. “I hear caseworkers and supervisors all the time,” Carlisle observes, “saying, ‘You guys are worried about the numbers; you’re worried about management; you’re worried about this, that, and the other thing that has nothing to do with casework.’ Well, yes it does. Because if we’re not out there ... seeing kids, if we aren’t out there giving people a service plan saying here are the things you need to work on to get us out of your life, then what are we doing?” Management indicators provided information on whether, and when, these things were in fact done. “I think,” says Carlisle, “we need to be accountable.”

It was in this context of concern for accountability, and for the steadily mounting paperwork it entailed, that DSS moved quickly to, in Bennard’s words, “jump on the SACWIS train.” Soon after the SACWIS legislation cleared Congress, agency officials put together a proposal for the system that would be called FamilyNet. It stalled for months in the Massachusetts legislature, but eventually won approval. By 1995, the project, with a total pricetag of about \$53 million in federal and state funding, was ready to advance to the design stage.

FamilyNet: The Vision

While the need to meet the newly published final regulations on AFCARS provided some impetus to upgrade its data collection capacity, DSS was largely motivated by other possibilities it saw in a new computer system. The vision of what SACWIS could do for child welfare programs was perhaps best captured in a February 1995 “action transmittal” issued by HHS’s Administration for Children and Families. “We believe that in pursuing automation,” the document asserted, “States can also meet their service delivery goals in improving the well-being of children and families; ease the administrative duties of caseworkers and increase staff time with clients; make improvements in case practice; and provide accurate and current information to assist in decision-making and program modification.” It was the pursuit of these goals that prompted agency officials to build an ambitious new system from scratch instead of merely expanding ASSIST’s capabilities to satisfy the AFCARS requirements.

Information technology had advanced considerably since ASSIST had been installed. The old system, notes Peter Watson, “was hard to get at. It wasn’t user friendly.” For the most part, caseworkers and supervisors had little direct access to ASSIST, which was largely the domain of data entry operators. Limited searches could be done on the system—to find out, for instance, whether a new client had previously been served by DSS—but that entailed,

Bennard says, either “finding someone who knew how to use ASSIST” or was willing to share their password; moreover, area offices usually had only two data terminals available.

The new technology would bring desktop computers and, hence, access to case files directly into caseworkers’ and supervisors’ offices. For supervisors, this was expected to be a major improvement over the existing arrangement, which required them to track down the appropriate green binder when they needed information on a family. This could mean a trip to the record room and “flipping through hundreds of pages of handwritten notes,” as Bennard describes it, or, if it was an active case, searching for it in the caseworker’s office—not always an easy task. “Maybe it would be under the desk of a social worker,” Carlisle notes, “or maybe the social worker had taken it home for the evening. Or records could get easily misplaced. ... There’s all kinds of problems in having one physical record of a case.” It was not just supervisors, she adds, who ran into these problems. “From our perspective in the central office, when you get a media inquiry or a case blows up, you immediately want to know certain things,” Carlisle points out. “You have to then track it through to the caseworker to get the caseworker to read the case record, to go through pieces of paper to try to piece together what happened. Meanwhile, four hours of the day have gone by and the reporter is thinking you’re stonewalling. ... So I wanted better access to information.”

But desktop access was expected to do more than make it easier for supervisors (or central office staff) to find information on a particular case. It would make it possible for them to review all the active cases in their unit, and “make sure,” as Carlisle explains, “that the social worker was on track and that they were looking at the right thing and hadn’t missed something obvious. So, we hoped that it would improve the clinical practice and the oversight of the cases at the supervisor level, the APM [area program manager] level, maybe at the area director level.” Carlisle expected the new system to allow for “better oversight” at the central office level as well, “not the big brother stuff,” she adds, but the kind of aggregate data that would enable managers to assess how well the agency overall was doing in meeting its obligations—the number of children who had been in foster care for over a year, but had not had a “permanency planning conference,” as required by federal law, for example, or the number of children “aging out” of foster care in a given year.

Finally, it was hoped that the new system would encourage supervisors to make more creative use of data by providing various kinds of “summary information” that would enable them, as Watson puts it, “to look at trends in terms of the way we’re doing our work.” To Carlisle, the ability to step back and look at the big picture was an important habit for supervisors, most of whom came from the ranks of caseworkers, to acquire as part of their armory of management skills. “Social workers are by and large not trained to aggregate, but to look at individual cases,” she says. “So that was a big mindset shift we were trying to instill, at least in supervisors on up. Yes, you need to be a social worker, and yes, you need to look at that particular family. But you also need to look across all of your families and see, are there trends? Are there trends in workers on things they may be overlooking?” The perspective gained from this approach, she believed, would give supervisors an independent vantage point from which to assess the job their caseworkers were doing. “Without the PSRs, without FamilyNet, without exceptions reports [on what obligations were not being met], without [management indicators],” she asserts, “the supervisor is at the mercy of what each caseworker presents.”

As work on the design of FamilyNet proceeded, project management officials, working with a consultant, sought the input of frontline workers and supervisors in “joint application design” sessions. The sessions—there were over 80 in all, involving more than 400 workers—revealed a sharply different outlook on the potential of the new system. Many workers saw it essentially as a way to automate what they already did. The “overwhelming

tendency,” says Watson, “... when you’re talking about a system which they’re trying to conceptualize, but they don’t know how, is to say, well, this is the way we do it right now, so just put a screen in there that looks exactly like the forms we have. To me, one of the biggest struggles is to say, we have a huge opportunity. Think beyond what we do now. Think what we should be doing and what we want to be doing.” Carlisle agrees. “For me,” she reflects, “part of the tension was that I didn’t want to just take all the forms, all the paperwork, all the ways of doing business and automate them. Because it really gives you an opportunity to do some things differently.”

FamilyNet Takes Shape. The system that emerged in early 1998, after almost three years of planning, was, as Watson puts it, “massive compared to what we used to have.” It went well beyond the federal SACWIS requirements to encompass almost every aspect of DSS operations. “We include basically all of our casework [on it],” says Watson. “Every scrap of information we collect is on the system. Everything. All of our legal work goes through the system, which didn’t have to be [on it]. ... All of our service referrals and financial information is on the system. You don’t have to do that. Some states just have a case management system. All service referrals to outside agencies go through the system, and payment [to foster parents and providers] runs based on what you put in the system. So that’s a huge area that, again, we didn’t have to do at all. We have our resource directory of all potential services out there that people can get. ... It just covers virtually all the work that we do.” In all, FamilyNet had over 380 different screens. Recalling the development process, which he managed in its final year, Watson observes that “one of the biggest things that you fight about is this tendency for people to say, ‘Well, as long as we’re doing this, can we put in these things [in the system], because I’m interested.’” Efforts to contain this inflationary tendency were not, Watson concedes, wholly successful. “There were people here who had pet things they wanted to do, and they snuck them in. ... There’s always this push and pull, I think, in these development projects. What you find out is you built a system that’s probably too large and has too many data points and people are never going to put that information in the system.”

While the project design and development phases proceeded, DSS officials took steps to ease its staff into an automated environment. Beginning in the fall of 1995, DSS began installing desktop computers throughout the agency (“every single employee,” Carlisle notes, received one) and training employees to use the “Microsoft Office suite of tools,” says Bennard. While younger caseworkers and supervisors usually had some familiarity with computers, many of the older ones had never used one. “So they had two-and-a-half years to get used to that,” Bennard continues. “And they loved it. We built some templates for them that they could use to type service plans on, and assessments. They really enjoyed that. They were able to spell-check and have things look professional. And I think people felt better about themselves, more professional.”

But, Bennard notes, FamilyNet would “look nothing like that.” It used an Oracle database and an Oracle case tool, “which is just totally, totally different.” On the eve of implementation of the new system, she recalls thinking that “these social workers and supervisors are going to go home [tonight] and they know how to do their job. They know how to fill out every form; they know how to do all these things. And they’re going to come back to work [the next day] and we’re going to have changed all the rules. ... We’re just turning their world upside-down.”

FamilyNet: The Reality

Early Glitches. FamilyNet was officially launched in February 1998. By all accounts, the first months of operation were rocky, in part due to technical problems that made the system “crash constantly,” in Watson’s words.

“It was absolutely hysterical,” Barrasso recalls. “It went down every 20 seconds. It went down for an hour; then it went up for an hour; and then it went down for an hour.” Caseworkers found themselves handcuffed to their computers, waiting for the system to come back online, instead of making home visits. But system crashes could be more than a time-consuming nuisance, Barrasso points out; in the case of intake workers investigating abuse and neglect reports, it could lead to the loss of crucial data. “You’re supposed to be on the phone [getting information] and typing it in at the same moment,” she explains. “If the thing went down [during the phone call], you lost everything. ... I mean, it was painful. ... They ended up putting stuff down on paper and then typing it in, which is a waste of time.” There were other annoying bugs in the system. The data stored in ASSIST had been transferred to FamilyNet, but the hand-off from one system to another had not gone smoothly. “Being two very different databases,” Bennard explains, “the match wasn’t always perfect.” The result, says Barrasso, was that some data “got lost in the shuffle or just not [recorded] on there accurately.”

Caseworkers and FamilyNet. After several months, the worst of the problems—the crashes—were largely cleared up, though they left behind a residue of ill will toward the new system; but other technical problems remained. For one thing, the system was slow, especially when it was being heavily used, which, according to Dave Van Kennan, had the effect of magnifying “every one of its defects.” For another, he adds, “it’s totally unintuitive.” Watson agrees. “It’s a pain to use sometimes,” he acknowledges. “Some of it isn’t intuitive enough in terms of how you move from screen to screen, and when you have to put information in.”

Workers’ unfamiliarity with “the construct of a database,” says Watson, further slowed things down. Many felt “betrayed in some sense,” Bennard adds, by the stark differences between the Microsoft documents they had mastered and the Oracle database screens that now confronted them on FamilyNet. They said, as Bennard paraphrases it, “‘You gave us this great stuff. We got comfortable using it, and now we can’t do that anymore.’ ... We couldn’t even make the FamilyNet windows look anything like their forms.”

The task of entering information and processing forms was often laborious. What had been a one or two page checklist in ASSIST—for a service referral, for instance—became a six or seven screen process in FamilyNet, due in part to “add-ons for various and sundry reasons,” Bennard says, “probably from more of an administrative side of things than a casework.” The time that it required, moreover, was time that had to be spent in front of the computer, a circumstance that many caseworkers found constraining. Workers in the ongoing units, Barrasso explains, were accustomed to writing out some of their “dictation” while on the road—“sitting in the car or sitting in court,” where they could spend long hours waiting for their case to be called; these went directly into the green binders. Caseworkers could, of course, continue to do handwritten accounts, but it would now be up to them to type them into FamilyNet. “Every worker in their own way had to change their modus operandi,” says Barrasso, to meet the exigencies of the new system, “... first of all [by spending] more time in the office.” But the need to be in the office, many felt, clashed with their obligation to be visiting homes or schools, or ferrying clients to medical appointments. “This is not a job you do in an office,” Barrasso maintains, “never mind at a computer.”

The perception of frontline workers of the burdens imposed by FamilyNet, and of the conflict of duties it implied, was highlighted in the aftermath of a scandal that briefly erupted in the press. In January 1999, police removed five children, ranging in age from 22 months to 13 years, who were living in squalid conditions in a house in Everett, later dubbed the “house of horrors.” When it was discovered that the children’s school and neighbors had lodged 13 neglect complaints against the parents in the past six months, both the caseworker and supervisor were suspended without pay. In an article sympathetic to the DSS workers, a correspondent for the *Boston Globe* noted,

among other extenuating circumstances, that DSS had “introduced a computer network system, FamilyNet, which has been criticized by caseworkers as cumbersome, overly time-consuming and so restrictive that it diverts time from more critical work.”⁷

Supervisors and FamilyNet. For supervisors of the beleaguered caseworkers, the new system appeared to be more of a mixed blessing. FamilyNet brought some clear time-saving benefits to them, especially in terms of access to case files. The same system that seemed to chain caseworkers to their desks liberated supervisors from laborious searches through the green binders. When she needed to look up a document in a case, Barrasso explains, “whereas before I’d have to walk to a case record room that has maybe a thousand binders and go [through them] to find the so-and-so case, I don’t have to do that anymore. I can sit [at my desk] and do it.” Moreover, Watson points out, FamilyNet had the virtue of making caseworkers’ dictation much easier to read; in the past, he says, many complained about the difficulty of trying to decipher some of the handwritten reports in the case files.

In addition, FamilyNet provided supervisors with a useful tool for keeping track of their own and caseworkers’ tasks: the “tickler.” The tickler file contained reminders of tasks that had deadlines attached. In the case of supervisors, the file consisted largely of progress supervisory reviews—a simple list of case names and the dates the reviews were due. Caseworkers’ ticklers, on the other hand, comprised a laundry list of tasks, including medical and dental appointments, service plans due, and other requirements. The ticklers contained dates as much as two years in advance and as much as several years back, which could make them dauntingly long; they could, however, be sorted by date or by category of task, or set to display tasks for a limited time period, such as a week or a month. Moreover, supervisors had access to their workers’ tickler files as well, and could use them to help set priorities. Continuing his practice from pre-automated days, Vito Congero could now generate a printout (instead of a handwritten list) of his caseworkers’ upcoming tasks by extracting them from their ticklers, using a filter to select dates for a two-month period. “The information is there for them on their own screens,” he notes. “They can bring it up themselves and check their ticklers whenever they want to. ... I give them [the list] only because I want them to be clear about what my expectations are.” Providing workers with a list of duties in manageable two-month increments gave them an organizing principle of sorts amid the welter of tasks that confronted them everyday. “They know that they have two months to deal with the 11 things [on a typical printout]. If they deal with those 11 things in two months, that’s fine. They met my expectations at least for the compliance part of the job, which then leaves them the time to do the other 900 million things that they have to do.”

Generally, Congero says, FamilyNet proved to be “an excellent tool for tracking what’s been done, what hasn’t been done, what needs to be completed, what hasn’t been completed. ... And it’s a brain-saver in that respect, where I don’t have to try and store all that stuff in notes or in files, or in my own head.” He also found the new system helpful in conducting his weekly supervisory meetings with workers. It made information “a little bit more accessible during supervision,” Congero explains. “I don’t have to ask workers to go and retrieve records; I don’t have to ask them to thumb through things.” Typically, he and a caseworker sat at his computer together, reviewing the worker’s active cases. “The screen is there for both of us to see,” Congero says, “so we go through each case.” In some situations, he adds, doing these reviews on FamilyNet had improved his relations with caseworkers. “It makes it seem more like a partnership kind of relationship, where we’re working together.” As an example, Congero notes that he occasionally spotted mistaken data entries that would penalize the caseworker if left uncorrected. “Because

⁷ Anne Driscoll, “Turning around the blame game,” *Boston Globe*, February 14, 1999, North Weekly section, p. 11. Both caseworker and supervisor were reinstated in February.

of the way the machine is set up, if you don't enter information correctly, putting in the right criteria, using the right labels, ... then the work that you've done will show up as not being completed, and the credit you deserve will not be there. So with the machine, I can go through these things with [caseworkers] and say, 'There's a mistake here; this is entered incorrectly. I know you've done this [task]; you know you've done it. Let's sit here and fix it so that everybody else knows you've done it.'

At the same time, however, the slowness of FamilyNet threatened to offset the benefits it brought to supervision. "It has impacted the amount of time in supervision that it takes sometimes to cover the information that I need to cover," says Congero, "and that's because of the down-time waiting for the computer to bring it up." This was particularly true, according to Van Kennan, during progress supervisory reviews. "I think mostly [FamilyNet] has taken an awkward system," he says, "and made it slower." As it was, PSRs had become a more problematic process to many after DSS revamped its service plans—shortly before FamilyNet was implemented—both to standardize the format and to emphasize treatment outcomes; the new service plans proved unpopular with caseworkers and supervisors alike, who found them complicated to devise and difficult to explain to client families. When married to the new system, they made the review process unwieldy. PSRs could take place only via computer, Van Kennan points out—it was no longer possible to print out a paper version of them; viewing the multi-screen document was a time-consuming affair. "If you have a social worker sit [with you while doing the PSR]," he says, "they fall asleep [while] you are going between screens.⁸ ... If you have to wait 15 seconds to go from that one to that one to that one, that's a horrendous waste of a social worker's time."

Van Kennan saw a similar waste in the demands the system made on caseworkers for data entry. The system was "tremendously over-inclusive," Van Kennan maintains. "There's just too much in there. And to expect people to feed it—these are social workers—requires a tremendous amount of time." Because caseworkers were often unable to keep up with data entry, supervisors could not always get a clear reading of the status of a case merely by reviewing it on the computer. "All dictation, every move you make, all health records—everything is supposed to be in there," Van Kennan points out. "Seldom is everything in there. And that creates this false sense that what's in there is what's real—which, as a manager now, I'm noticing more and more. If something happens in a case, I pull up the records. 'Oh my God, they didn't do this! They didn't do that! What the hell's going on?' Then you go and sit down with the worker ... and she says, 'Oh no, I was just out there. I'm just so far behind, I haven't put it in the machine yet.'"⁹

The "Numbers" Issue. Under FamilyNet, the timely entry of data into the system became something of a charged issue in DSS, due to its effect on management indicators. Compliance rates that had hovered in the 80-90 percent range in most area offices plunged as low as 20-30 percent, which, Watson says, "really got people anxious, especially at the management level." The low numbers were in part attributable to unfamiliarity with the new system, but they reflected as well the consequences of the decision by DSS managers to use FamilyNet as an instrument to standardize and enforce policy in regard to statutory deadlines. Before FamilyNet, Watson explains, area offices were able to interpret certain time limits somewhat loosely; in the case of abuse and neglect investigations, which had to be completed within ten days, it was not uncommon for supervisors to take an extra day

⁸ His caseworkers, Congero reports, did not necessarily fall asleep, but they often used the time to go outside for a cigarette or coffee.

⁹ According to Watson, however, the incompleteness of case records was not a new problem brought on by FamilyNet. DSS policy, both before and after the system was implemented, gave caseworkers 30 days in which to record their activities. FamilyNet, he argues, "raised [supervisors'] expectations about what they would find in the record."

or two to approve the intake worker's report, and then backdate it on ASSIST. The new system, however, was built so that backdating was no longer possible. "Early on [in the development of FamilyNet]," Watson continues, "... top-level management in the agency said, 'We want FamilyNet to track exactly when supervisors and managers make their approval, and you've got to get that approval within ten days.' It sounds like a minor thing, but it's a huge change, and it caught people off-guard."

For managers in area offices, the sudden drop in numbers came as a shock. "It's a hard thing to handle," Watson observes, "when you feel that you're managing an office well ... to suddenly have your percentage of investigations done on time go from 90 percent to 30 percent." The concern over performance, he continues, reverberated through all levels of the area offices. "And that will hit a supervisor," he notes, "because the area director gets the stats [from management reports], but then they'll push down the [organization] and ask why, and eventually that comes to a supervisor."

Different area offices took different approaches to the problem, some applying more pressure than others on supervisors and caseworkers to meet deadlines and get the data in the system quickly. In the Cambridge office, Roberta Barrasso reports, managers "made sure they generated down to everyone that seeing the family was most important. ... So when [caseworkers] said to you, 'What do you want me to do, do you want me to go out [on a visit or enter data],' you don't have to ask. The family is more important; you'll get to the computer." Caseworkers, Barrasso adds, were given "a little bit of overtime [pay] to try to get all the data in, or correct some of the data." A few area offices, however, found ways to "fudge the numbers," Barrasso asserts, "to keep the statistics up." Some in DSS countered that FamilyNet in fact made it harder for managers to manipulate the numbers, but in any event, according to Watson, the central office tried to make clear its position in the ongoing tug-of-war between casework and data entry. "The deputy commissioner was saying, 'Look, we need to get these statistics up; we need to learn how to use the system,'" he recalls, "but if you ever have a choice between going out and seeing a kid and putting stuff in FamilyNet, go see the kid.' He said it over and over, but I suspect that's not the message that's always going down to people who are doing the work, because managers in area offices want to look good."

Taking Stock

Almost two years after it began, the dust from the implementation of FamilyNet had begun to settle, allowing some breathing space for the agency to consider the effects to date of the automated system. Among central office managers and supervisors alike, there was agreement that FamilyNet generally had not lived up to its promise as far as caseworkers were concerned. From the management viewpoint, it had failed to deliver on some of the key benefits they had originally envisioned it would confer on frontline workers. "We were hoping it would ... do all the things people thought five years ago computers could do," Linda Carlisle remarks ruefully. "Reduce paper. Streamline their jobs. ... Like any other job that requires you to use computers, it doesn't always simplify it in a way that you'd like." The hope that an automated system would save caseworkers time had largely faded. "That was a pipe dream," says Watson. "That's not happening."

Managers at DSS voiced frustration with the consultants who developed and installed FamilyNet. The contractors had failed to anticipate the demands on the system, Carlisle notes, which led to slow response times, and had not yet delivered some promised features that would allow caseworkers to provide better and more personal service to the children under their care—by enabling them to compile lists of those who had special educational or

medical needs, for example, or keep track of upcoming birthdays or graduations. Workers “wouldn’t mind spending time in front of the computer” feeding it information, Carlisle maintains, “if they [could] get some back.” There was disappointment as well that, thus far at least, FamilyNet had not provided supervisors with the opportunity to manipulate data in the system in a way that would allow them to do some analysis. “There is tons of aggregate information in there,” notes Vito Congero, but the process of gaining access to it was “cumbersome,” and it was difficult to organize the data to suit supervisors’ needs or interests. “We haven’t done a very good job of giving back to the field-level supervisor the ability to go in and look at the [data] themselves,” Carlisle acknowledges. “They still have to go through reports that get generated. They don’t really have the capacity to go in and play around with the data themselves and do the sorts that they might need.”

Nonetheless, Carlisle—who left DSS in February 1999, after a tenure of six years as commissioner—and senior managers at the agency believed that FamilyNet, for all its technical flaws, had fulfilled some of their major goals for the system. It had, for one thing, improved access to information on cases, which on occasion proved to be more than simply a matter of convenience. FamilyNet, Carlisle maintains, could be “your best friend in the whole world” when a scandal threatened to erupt. She cites a case similar to the “house of horrors” incident, in which young children were found alone in a house in squalid conditions. When the press came to call, DSS officials “went into FamilyNet,” according to Carlisle, “and everything was there. ... They could pull up [the case record] and say, ‘We were out there on Friday, and here’s what the case notes say.’ And that case went right away.”¹⁰

Senior DSS managers also believed that FamilyNet supported their efforts to improve management and accountability at the agency in a number of ways. It helped standardize practice in the agency’s area offices, reducing opportunities to dodge statutory requirements and agency policy. “When I took over [at DSS],” Carlisle notes, “there were 26 different area offices, and they all did things a little bit differently. Well, if you have a computer system, that forces you to do everything the same.” Moreover, Watson notes, it gave managers in area offices a way to “look across the hundreds of cases they have in their office. They need something to help them understand it.”

It was that capacity to see beyond individual cases that lay at the heart of FamilyNet’s promise in the eyes of DSS managers. The agency had to make the case for its effectiveness, Watson argues, and to do that, “you need to have information [you can] look at. That’s really the goal.” A system like FamilyNet did not generate “data for the sake of data.” It was for the sake not only of promoting “best practice,” as Carlisle puts it, but also of being able to show how well DSS served its clients. “You can’t just go out and ask people how well we’re doing in terms of our workers and get a sense of it,” Watson continues. The agency had to “demonstrate that it was doing [its job] better. Because until you can demonstrate that you’re doing it better, you’re not going to get more resources.” FamilyNet, he maintained, would provide the agency with the hard data to back its claims.

At the supervisory level, however, skepticism about the value of FamilyNet prevailed. The argument that the system would ultimately provide useful “aggregated data,” Watson acknowledges, usually made social workers’ eyes “glaze over,” and few of the other claims made for the system proved persuasive. While FamilyNet brought them some benefits in terms of access to cases, most supervisors viewed the system’s flaws as costly in terms of time and aggravation. It was too slow and, for many, “too hard” to master, according to Vito Congero. As one who

¹⁰ DSS was not so fortunate, Carlisle acknowledges, in the “house of horrors” case. “When we pulled up the case,” she remembers, “there was zero information on FamilyNet. There was nothing in there on the family; you couldn’t tell who they visited.”

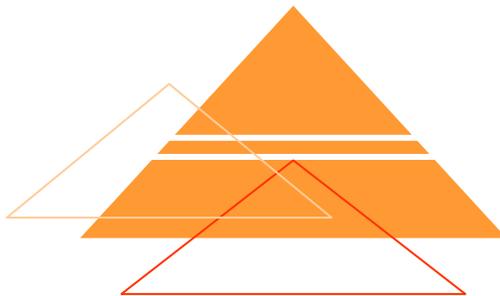
had “minimal to no experience with computers before FamilyNet,” Congero had become firmly convinced of their potential utility at DSS, but less so that FamilyNet was the right instrument. “I’m a computer believer,” he says, but FamilyNet was “a little bit frustrating and a lot time-consuming” to use. Van Kennan echoed this view. “I love computers,” he says. “I’ve used [them] at home for most of my career here. ... I had high hopes for [the system].” FamilyNet was a profound disappointment to him. “They attempted to do too much with it,” he argues; consequently, it became more of a burden than a help, and certainly no improvement over its predecessor. The new automated system, Van Kennan maintains, still could not be relied on to provide a complete and up-to-date record of a case. “That’s no different than when there was paperwork,” he says, “except that this is much more awkward to do.” His supervisory practice remained largely the same under FamilyNet, Van Kennan notes. The system merely “added an extra layer of things to do. ... It cannot be sold as a help for the social worker or supervisor. It’s extra work.”

In response, DSS senior management stressed that FamilyNet was still a work in progress. A system as big and complex as FamilyNet, they pointed out, would inevitably have its share of problems which would, in time, be resolved. “A large system is incredibly difficult to implement,” says Bennard, noting that the roughly 30 other states that were setting up SACWIS systems had run into similar difficulties. “Massachusetts,” she observes, “isn’t alone.” Moreover, Watson adds, the agency had a team of developers working to iron out the bugs in the system. Projects the size of FamilyNet, he says, “take a long time to smooth out. We’re still in the midst of it.”

In some respects, it was their closeness to frontline workers that made it difficult for supervisors to warm to FamilyNet. As Bennard points out, “supervisors clearly just want to make their workers’ jobs easier,” and its failure to do that soured many on the system. The hardest part of adjusting to FamilyNet, says Roberta Barrasso, was “watching caseworkers suffer through it.” The burden of the new system, she maintains, fell more on frontline workers than on supervisors. “So for me,” Barrasso explains, “[FamilyNet] wasn’t a big thing for supervision or clinical work; it was more watching what was happening to the caseworker.” She concentrated her efforts on “trying to help them find ways” to manage their time and meet the demands of the new system, but other than that, Barrasso saw little change in the style or substance of her supervision as a result of FamilyNet. “A supervisor,” she says, “is still a clinical person. If you let the computer become the be-all and end-all, then you’re going to put the computer ahead of the worker. You’ve still got to talk to the worker. ... I still have to ask whether Mary Jones’ kids got to school on time, because Mary looked really lousy the last couple of days, and she might be using cocaine again. That isn’t in the computer; it’s not there. I still have to ask the question.”

The disaffection of supervisors where FamilyNet was concerned troubled senior managers at DSS. As the ones closest to frontline workers, says Carlisle, supervisors were “the group of people that is going to be your measure of success” in any new venture. “Yet they’re also the group that has been around the longest,” she maintains, “is the most resistant to change, is the hardest to [get to] see themselves as a manager, as someone who aggregates information, as opposed to a lead worker who’s just there for support and mentoring. ... I’ve spent a lot of time thinking, how do you get to that group?” Mary Ellen Bennard voiced similar concerns. While supervisors had to grapple with FamilyNet’s complexities, she observes, “it’s truly the caseworkers that bear the day-to-day brunt of it.” For that reason, she continues, the support of supervisors was a key element in winning acceptance of the system. “If the supervisors were to somehow become more comfortable with this beast, which many of them refer to as the FamilyNet nightmare,” Bennard muses, “I think it would be helpful all around. ... Clearly, we know

we need to make FamilyNet easier to use, ... but what we have struggled with as well is how to get this group of people on board.”



FamilyNet Summary Sheet

FamilyNet: SACWIS in Massachusetts

In February, 1998 Massachusetts Dept. of Social Services (DSS) launched a new automated information system called FamilyNet.

DSS's hopes for the new system

- It would respond to the increasing demand for information from the federal government.
- It would support ongoing efforts by agency leaders to standardize practice throughout DSS and monitor the performance of its area offices.
- It would lead to improvements in the delivery of services to the agency's clients by lifting the burden of paperwork on hard-pressed caseworkers and make it easier for their supervisors to keep track of the many cases needing their attention.

Background

Federal funds made up a significant portion of state child welfare budgets. But from the federal perspective, there was not much to show for its support. Little solid data filtered back from the states to Congress or the White House.

In 1986, Congress established a mandatory data collection system (AFCARS). AFCARS would pave the way for later legislation that reflected an increasing emphasis on "outcome measures" such as permanency and stability as a way to rate states' performance in child protection and child welfare programs. A "statewide automated child welfare system" (SACWIS) was the ultimate result of the original legislation.

Massachusetts child welfare officials welcomed the opportunity provided by SACWIS (which would become FamilyNet in Massachusetts), believing, like their federal counterparts, that it would make life easier for employees at all levels, particularly those who worked on the frontlines of child welfare services—caseworkers and their supervisors.

Caseloads and accountability

According to supervisors' estimates, most workers had a caseload of about 18-20 families. Prior to FamilyNet, most of the documentation and management of these cases were recorded manually. Supervisors devised their own systems for tracking the 100-plus cases under their purview. While most relied on a combination of notes and memory, the basic staple of supervision was talk.

DSS did have an automation system, which dated back to the 1980s. Known as ASSIST, it was used primarily to record certain tasks and transactions—all very simple information. ASSIST provided no means of determining accountability with regard to casework. Because accountability was becoming increasingly important, and resulting in increased paperwork, Massachusetts welcomed a more sophisticated automation system.

The system of the future?

FamilyNet would bring with it desktop computers and, therefore, access to case files directly into caseworkers' and supervisors' offices. For supervisors, this was expected to be a major improvement over the existing arrangement, which required them to track down the appropriate green binder when they needed information on a family. Now they would be able to review all the active cases in their unit. And it was hoped that the new system would encourage supervisors to make more creative use of data by providing various kinds of "summary information" that would enable them to look at trends in terms of the way their units were doing their work.

FamilyNet would expand supervisors' management skills by allowing them to look across all their families to see if there were trends. And, were there trends in workers on things they may be overlooking? (As FamilyNet was developed, DSS didn't want to just automate all the forms, the paperwork, and the ways of doing business—they hoped to begin to do their work differently.)

The completed system

When FamilyNet was completed, it had over 380 different screens. (In an effort to satisfy agency personnel, who wanted every aspect of their work included in the new system, plus some innovations, the final version became too large, with too many data points requiring information that people would probably never put in.)

When FamilyNet was launched in February, 1998, system problems made it "crash constantly." Caseworkers found themselves handcuffed to their computers, waiting for the system to come back online, instead of making home visits. The data in ASSIST had been transferred to FamilyNet, but the download had not gone smoothly. Some data "got lost in the shuffle or just had not [recorded] on there accurately."

After several months the crashes were cleared up, but a residue of ill will toward the new system was left behind. And other technical problems remained: the system was slow, and wasn't intuitive enough in terms of moving from screen to screen and putting information in.

The central and ongoing problem

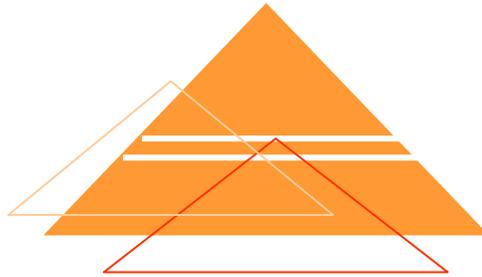
The system's principal users—caseworkers—found FamilyNet to be "tremendously over-inclusive, requiring the input of far too much information." The timely entry of data became a controversial issue, and compliance rates plunged as low as 20-30 percent. As an illustration, in January, 1999, police removed 5 children who were living in squalid conditions in a house dubbed the "house of horrors." When the press discovered that the children's school and neighbors had lodged 13 neglect complaints against the parents in the previous 6 months, both the caseworker and supervisor were suspended without pay. In an article sympathetic to DSS workers, the Boston Globe noted that DSS had "introduced a computer network system, FamilyNet, which has been criticized by caseworkers as cumbersome, overly time-consuming and so restrictive that it diverts time from more critical work."

After 2 years, there was agreement that FamilyNet generally had not lived up to its promise as far as caseworkers were concerned. All agreed that they didn't mind spending time in front of the computer, as long as they could get something back. Supervisors also complained that they were not provided with the opportunity to manipulate data in the system in a way that would allow them to do some analysis. And the system remained slow and too hard to master. The system "added an extra layer of things to do." Supervisors, who wanted to make their workers' jobs easier saw FamilyNet as no different than paperwork, only more awkward.

Some different perspectives from supervisors

But the same system that chained caseworkers to their desks liberated supervisors from searches through the green binders. Now caseworkers dictation was much easier to read. The “tickler” file gave caseworkers a laundry list of tasks, including medical and dental appointments, service plans due, etc. Although ticklers contained dates as much as two years in advance and as much as several years back, they could be sorted by date or category of task, or set to display tasks for a limited time period. Moreover, supervisors had access to their caseworkers’ tickler files, and could use them to set up priorities. They could generate a printout of caseworker tasks from ticklers.

FamilyNet improved access to information on cases, and helped to standardize practice in the agency’s area offices. If the supervisors were to somehow become more comfortable with the system and find ways to make it easier to use, “it would be helpful all around.”



A Few Bits and Bytes....

Where once Americans depended on the vagaries of the post office to communicate in personalized, written messages, now we send 2.2 billion E-Mail messages a day, compared with just 293 million pieces of first class mail. (U.S. News and World Report, March 22,1999)

Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future. (John F. Kennedy)

The trouble with the future is that it is not what it used to be. (Jean Paul Valery)

Current design for learning is based on the dichotomy between novices and experts....that is that novices are learners; experts have learned. This overly simple distinction fails to appreciate the way in which expertise is fluid...constantly subject to redefinition, the more so in times of rapid change. In fact, the conditions of being a novice recur in different forms and do not disappear with increasing competence. (John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid)

In the 1990's change is so rapid that stability is never achieved but only approached. (Gartner Group)

Module 9: Options for Skills Improvements

Rationale

To increase proficiency in his/her information management skills, supervisors should be able to introduce to their supervisory units the concepts learned and practiced during this seminar.

Activities

- Exercise: Back in the office activity practice (1 hour)

Time

1 hour

Objectives

After completing this module, the participant will be able to:

- Describe the activities he/she will implement in the office with one or more of his/her caseworkers
- Feel prepared to implement the activities with his/her staff
- Understand where to turn for support when back in the office implementing the activities

Materials

Easel, newsprint, markers and tape

Flipcharts from Module 4, **Supervising for Results---Identifying and Locating Key Data**, and Module 8, **Technology is Changing the Job of the Child Welfare Supervisor: Are You a Change Leader?**

Sample overheads and handouts:



The trainer should develop activities that match the training provided, use 'real' data and build on the skills developed. Activity options might include:

- selecting an experienced employee and using data from SACWIS to determine if there is a training need
- evaluating a work unit using SACWIS data to determine if there are any unit-wide training needs
- identifying a trend in a work unit and using a SACWIS report to plot data and overlay significant events to determine what has influenced or caused the trend
- designing research based on interest
- using SACWIS data to compare a work units performance to other work units or the state.

1. Stages of Change Commitment Model (8.3)
2. Personal Action Plan (9.1)
3. Preparing for Supervision Checklist (9.2)
4. Trainer Contact List (9.3)

Advance Preparation

Make sure that the flipchart, overheads, markers, and overhead projector are in the room.

Identify, plan and develop the appropriate 'take home' exercises based on the training presented.

Glossary of Terms

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

Trainer's Instruction

1. Introduce this module by explaining the purpose and objectives.

This module will prepare you to practice your newly learned or enhanced information management skills with your supervisory units. After completing this module, you will be able to:

- *Describe the activities you will implement in the office with one or more of your caseworkers*
- *Feel prepared to implement the activities with your staff*
- *Understand where to turn for support when back in the office implementing the activities*

2. Move into the first activity in this module using the following as

a guideline:

Yesterday we discussed several topics all aimed at helping you improve your supervisory skills using the data and information available to you from SACWIS and related reports. It's important to focus our thinking now on how you will implement the skills learned during this seminar back in your office. We want to help you prepare to share your new or enhanced skills with your staff. This morning, you will have the opportunity to practice two activities—one is a commitment to change exercise; the other follows up on using SACWIS data and reports and supervision time to gather data and information.

3. Ask participants to refer to the 'Phases of Change of Commitment Model' (8.3).

4. Ask participants to think of 2 workers on their team: one who has the 'best' attitude toward SACWIS and one who has the worst attitude toward SACWIS. Ask the participants to place the person at the appropriate place on the commitment curve. Have the supervisors reflect on these questions:

- What does the worker who has the better attitude do differently than the one who has the worst attitude?
- What did each of them do when SACWIS was first introduced? When training was offered? When it first became available?
- What do they do now if they run into a problem with SACWIS?
- How do they differ in their skills and approach to the job? To their colleagues? To you as their supervisor?
- What role do you play with each of them?

- What can you do to assist your workers to move to a higher degree of commitment as depicted on the 'Phases of Change of Commitment Model'? Remind participants that they must be specific here.

5. Have the group break-up into pairs. Ask each person to share with his/her partner the situation, explain where on the chart his/her workers are and discuss the behavior the person is displaying to make the supervisor place the staff person in that spot on the curve. Have the partners comment on each other's placement of the person on the curve.

6. After 15 minutes, bring the group back together and ask 2-3 participants to volunteer to describe their 2 workers, where they placed them on the curve, why they placed them there and the actions they propose to take to move them to the next phase of commitment'. Solicit comments from the group on the volunteered plans.

7. Refer to handout 9.1, 'The Personal Action Plan, and ask participants to spend a few minutes completing the document. Mention that they will be filling out the personal action plan for both the change and supervision activities. Explain that part of their take home work will be to record the lessons learned from practicing the activities and bring those lessons back and share with the group.

8. Start the next exercise by referring to the flipcharts from Modules 4 and 5 that contain material on key data elements in SACWIS and reports, 'helpful practices' and information gathered during supervision, and quickly reviewing the contents. Ask the

participants to think of a staff person with whom they will be having (or can schedule) supervision during the next two weeks, who will be preparing for a major milestone, is new to the job or is not keeping up with assigned work. The situation should be real and specific.

9. Ask the participants to refer handout 9.2, 'Preparing for Supervision Checklist' and the 'Helpful Practices' flipchart and to think of and write down what data he/she will review in SACWIS and on reports and what questions he/she will ask the worker during supervision.

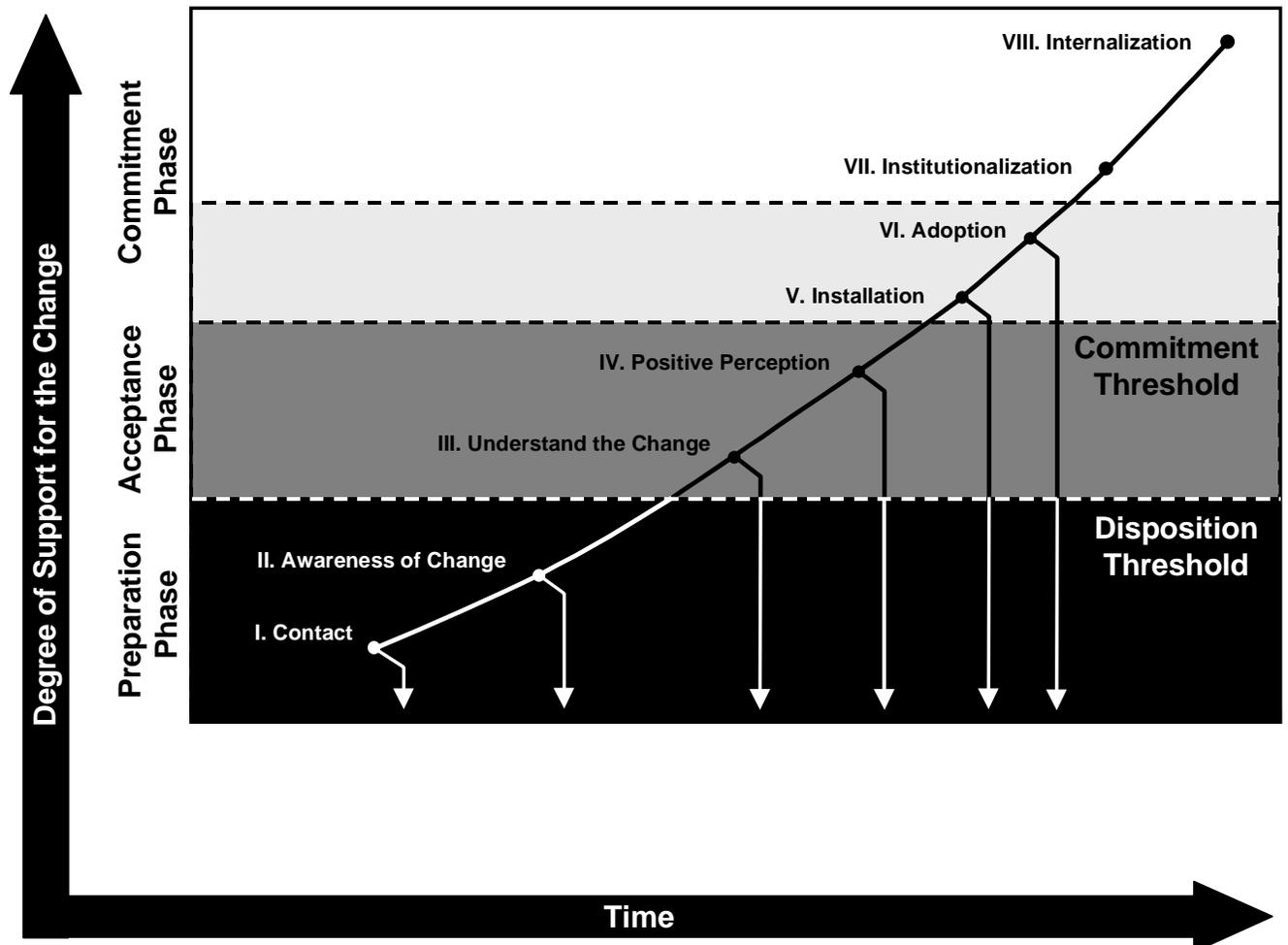
10. After approximately 15 minutes, ask for 2-3 volunteers to describe the supervisory situation and share his/her 'Preparing for Supervision' checklist and facilitate comments on the checklist from the other participants. Participants should then take a few minutes to incorporate the feedback from their peers into their checklists.

11. Ask participants to refer to handout 9.1, 'The Personal Action Plan,' and have participants complete the plan.

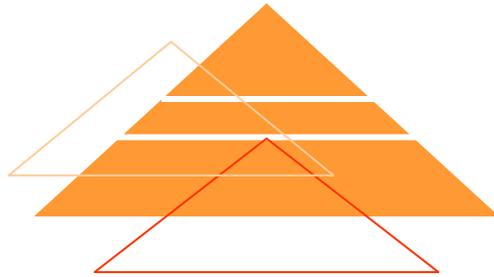
12. Wrap-up the session by asking for and addressing any concerns that the participants have regarding the 'take-home' exercises and refer participants to the 'Trainer Contact List' (9.3). Encourage participants to call a trainer or peer if they are having difficulties implementing any of the action plan items or drafting up the lessons learned.

13. Introduce the next module, **Day 2 Wrap-up**

Stages of Change Commitment



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Personal Action Plan

Over the next _____ weeks, I'll implement the activities I practiced during the SACWIS Information Management seminar.

1. Building Commitment to Change

To prepare for and implement this activity, I need to do the following:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

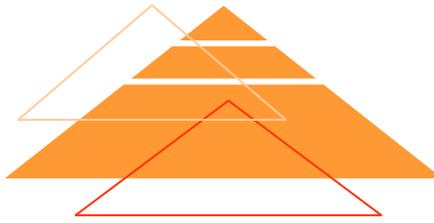
2. Preparing for Supervision

To prepare for and implement this activity, I need to do the following:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

3. I'll write-up the lessons learned from the activities by: _____.

4. I plan to have completed the activities by: _____.



Preparing for Supervision Checklist

As I think about supervision with _____, I want to focus the conversation on _____.

So, I need to look up in SACWIS the following items:

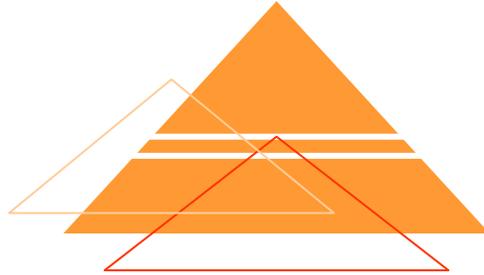
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

I will also review the following reports to gather key information:

- | Report: | Information: |
|---------|--------------|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |

And I will ask the following questions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Trainer Contact List

List names, phone numbers and e-mail address of the trainers.

Module 10: Day 2 Wrap-up

Rationale

Participants need a sense of closure to the seminar, an opportunity to wrap-up unfinished items and time to clarify next steps.

Activities

- Check in on progress toward meeting the participant's stated desired outcomes (5 minutes)
- Complete the session evaluation forms (5 minutes)
- Preview Day 3 (5 minutes)

Time

15 minutes

Objectives

When this module is complete, the participant will be able to:

- Understand his/her expected next steps
- Complete the session evaluation form
- Understand where and when Day 3 is scheduled

Materials

Easel, newsprint, tape and markers

Sample overheads and handouts:

1. Flipchart of Participant's Desired Outcomes
2. Day 3 agenda (10.1)
3. Calendar of Events (1.3)



4. Participant Evaluation (10.2)

Advance Preparation

Make sure flipchart, markers, newsprint pad, overheads and overhead projector are in the room.

Update the evaluation form to match the learning objectives accomplished in this training.

Glossary of Terms

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

Trainer's Instructions

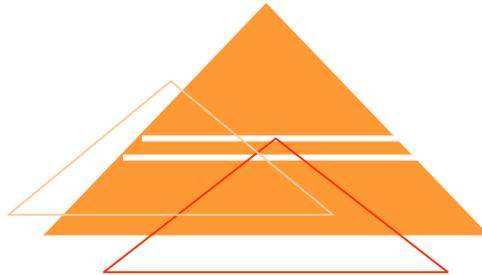
1. Thank participants for their good work, attention and contributions. If there were any 'aha', funny or memorable moments, recollect them with the group.
2. Refer to the flipchart of participant expectations and review with the group progress toward achieving them, offering ideas for closure for any expectations that didn't get satisfied.
3. Ask for any last minute questions and address any raised.
4. Refer to the Day 3 agenda (10.1) and calendar and locations overhead and handout (1.2, walk through the schedule for Day 3 and answer any questions participants may have on Day 3 or what they need to do between Day 2 and Day 3.

5. Remind participants that the time between Day 2 and Day 3 is for them to implement their Personal Action Plans, 9.1, and come back on Day 3 prepared to share their lessons learned with the group.

6. Explain the importance of the evaluation (10.2) and ask that they take a few minutes to honestly, accurately and completely fill out the evaluation and then turn it in.

7. Thank participants for their hard work and cooperation.

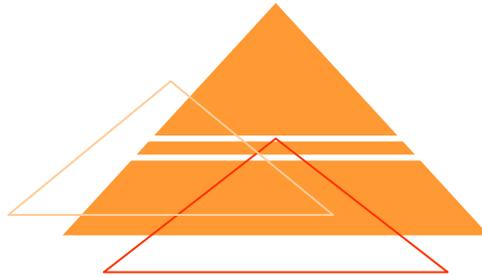
The trainer will need to customize the evaluation form to match the adapted curriculum.



Agenda for Day 3

Module 11. So... How Did It Go?

Time: 9:00 – 11:30

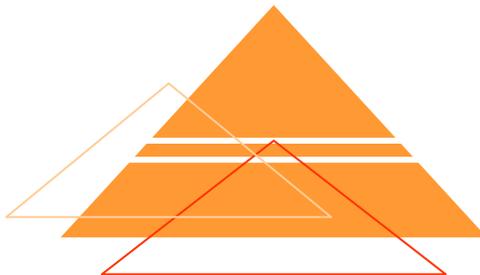


Calendar of Events

Date:
Event: Day 1 of the Seminar
Location:
Time: 9:00 to 4:00
Notes:

Date:
Event: Day 2 of the Seminar
Location:
Time: 9:00 to 4:00
Notes:

Date:
Event: Day 3 of the Seminar
Location:
Time: 9:00 to 11:30
Notes:



Using Information Management to Support the Goals of Safety, Permanency and Well Being Seminar

Evaluation Questionnaire

Date:

We need to know whether this seminar has fulfilled its learning objectives for you and whether and how you think it might be improved. Please take a few moments to give us your frank assessment of the extent to which you believe these learning objectives were actually achieved during these meetings.

The learning objectives for training are presented below. For each, please circle the number (4 or 3 or 2 or 1) that best reflects the extent to which the objective was fully achieved for you. *Please select and circle the number for each objective that most closely reflects your own experience. Please do not circle a mid-point location between one number and another.*

I. Training Objectives

When training is completed, supervisors should be able to:

A. Understand the concept of Information Management

I believe this learning objective was

FULLY ACHIEVED 4 3 2 1 NOT ACHIEVED

Comments _____

B. Define terms such as 'data', 'information', knowledge', 'quality data' and 'information technology.'

I believe this learning objective was

FULLY ACHIEVED 4 3 2 1 NOT ACHIEVED

Comments _____

C. Understand the distinction between information management and information technology.

I believe this learning objective was

FULLY ACHIEVED 4 3 2 1 NOT ACHIEVED

Comments _____

D. Understand the role people play in turning data into information.

I believe this learning objective was

FULLY ACHIEVED 4 3 2 1 NOT ACHIEVED

Comments _____

E. Understand the impact of SACWIS on the Child Welfare supervisor's role

I believe this learning objective was

FULLY ACHIEVED 4 3 2 1 NOT ACHIEVED

Comments _____

F. Understand how to identify resistance to change and build commitment to change process

I believe this learning objective was

FULLY ACHIEVED 4 3 2 1 NOT ACHIEVED

Comments _____

G. Understand some tactics to move myself and others along the change curve.

I believe this learning objective was

FULLY ACHIEVED 4 3 2 1 NOT ACHIEVED

Comments _____

H. Identify and locate key data, and information needed to gain a case overview.

I believe this learning objective was

FULLY ACHIEVED 4 3 2 1 NOT ACHIEVED

Comments _____

I. Use data and information to prepare for supervision and to supervise.

I believe this learning objective was

FULLY ACHIEVED 4 3 2 1 NOT ACHIEVED

Comments _____

J. Understand if and how SACWIS data and information can help achieve the Agency's outcomes.

I believe this learning objective was

FULLY ACHIEVED 4 3 2 1 NOT ACHIEVED

Comments _____

K Describe the modules I will implement in the office with one or more caseworkers.

I believe this learning objective was

FULLY ACHIEVED 4 3 2 1 NOT ACHIEVED

Comments _____

II. Your suggestions for Improving this seminar

Please briefly tell us:

A. What was best about the training you received? Please explain

B. Which aspects of training need improvement? Please explain.

C. Comments or suggestions regarding training facilities, accommodations, location?

III. Preparing to Use Information Management in Supervision

Having completed the training, please tell what steps you now plan to take to incorporate information management into your job as a child welfare

supervisor. _____

Thank you!

Module 11: So...How Did It Go?

Rationale

Supervisors will share his/her experiences and lessons learned from implementing two modules from the SACWIS Supervisory seminar with his/her supervisory unit. Trainer and peer feedback on this experience will strengthen the supervisor's learning and identify continued learning needs.

Activities

- Welcome, review seminar goals and Day 3 agenda and elicit participant's expectations for the day (15 minutes)
- Exercise: Reports back from participants on what he/she implemented with his/her unit based on the learning from the earlier two-day session and feedback from group and instructors (1 hour and 15 minutes)
- Exercise: Seminar impact discussion (30 minutes)
- Graduation Celebration (15 minutes)

Time

2 hours and 30 minutes, including a 15 minute break

Objectives

When this module is complete, the participant will be able to:

- Explain the impact of this seminar on him/herself and the



It would be ideal to reconvene the entire group of participants 10-30 days after the initial 2 day training event to conduct this follow-up session. The reality of the child welfare supervisor's job and time commitments are such that the 'ideal' will occasionally not be possible. Providing a debrief/reinforcement opportunity, however, is a vital component of the adult learning process. If the 'ideal' situation for the follow-up session is not possible, it is important to develop other options for conducting the follow-up session. Such options might include:

- linking the session to another meeting that the supervisors regularly attend
- holding regional meetings with smaller groups of participants
- using a teleconference capacity
- conducting phone surveys of participants and then sharing the responses for feedback

supervisory unit in terms of improved practice

- Identify areas of continued learning and support needed

Materials

Easel, newsprint, markers, large index cards or ½ sheets of paper and tape

Evaluation questions written on index cards or posters.

Sample handouts and overheads:

1. Goals of the seminar (1.2)
2. Day 3 Agenda (10.1)
3. Puzzle Equation (3.11)

Advance Preparation

Make sure flipchart, markers, newsprint pad, overheads, index cards and overhead projector are in the room.

Update this module to reflect the 'take home' exercises presented in Module 9, Options for Skills Improvement

Write evaluation questions on index cards or posters

Glossary of Terms

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

Webster, David W. and Shamdasani, Prem N. (1990) *Focus Groups Theory and Practice*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Webster, Susan. (1992) *Focus Groups: An Effective Marketing*

Research Tool for Social Service Agencies. Portland, ME:
National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational
Improvement.

Trainer's Instructions

1. Welcome the group to Day 3 of SACWIS Supervisory Seminar, introduce any new trainers, review the goals of the seminar (1.2) and the agenda for the day (10.1) Mention that when this module is complete, the participants will be able to:

- *Explain the impact of this seminar on him/herself and the supervisory unit in terms of improved practice*
- *Identify areas of continued learning and support needed*

2. Ask the participants to express any desired outcomes for the day and note them on a flipchart.

3. Ask if there were any items left over from Days 1 and 2 that participants want to discuss; address any new items that are raised.

4. Begin the focus group discussion using the following as a guideline:

Thank you for taking the time to talk with us today. We're anxious to find out about your experiences implementing what you have learned from the recent two-day seminar on information management.

What you tell us is important. It will help us refine the seminar's content so we can anticipate a supervisor's experience when he/she first attempts to take what they

learn back to the office.. But now we want to capture a sense of what happened when you first tried to apply lessons you learned.

Let's begin by discussing how you did over the past few weeks implementing your activities with your unit and then move into other evaluation questions.

5. Ask the participants to share with the group their lessons learned from the commitment to change activity. Go around the room and ask each person to describe their experiences back in the office— both good and bad. Record comments on newsprint and provide feedback and potential corrective actions as well as encourage the group to provide peer feedback to resolve issues raised under the ‘it didn’t go well’ category.
6. Repeat the process for the supervisory process.
7. Ask participants to discuss if they implemented any other skills or knowledge that they picked up in the seminar, and, if so, how that went for them.
8. Move the discussion from a focus on what happened back in the office to evaluating the impact of the training—how it went, and what could have been improved. Begin the structured feedback exercise. Questions are written on index cards, placed face down and turned over one at a time. Participants are given large index cards and ½ sheets of paper and asked to record their responses to the following questions:
 - What pieces of the training could you go back and use?
 - What were the barriers encountered?

- What additional tools/techniques do you need?
- Do you have any suggestions for what might be done beyond the training itself to help you make good use of SACWIS?
- Is there anything that the Agency might do or provide beyond training to speed up your readiness and improve your effectiveness as a supervisor?
- Potpourri...what else?

9. All participant response cards are placed on the board and needed clarifications are made. Discuss at the pace and interest of the group.

10. Move into the closing section of the focus group. Refer to the desired outcomes for Day 3 flipchart. Review the desired outcomes, marking off those that the participants say have been accomplished and providing next step ideas for any outcomes not achieved to the participant's satisfaction.

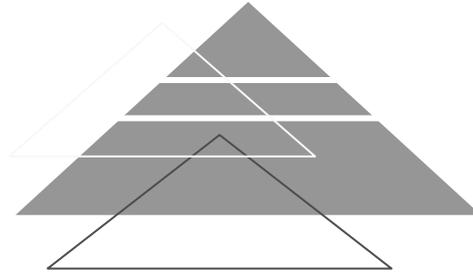
11. Quickly review the Puzzle Equation (9.5) using the following as a guideline.

When we first met several weeks ago, we started off the first day by sharing with you the definition of information management and a version of this puzzle diagram. The diagram, you'll recall, informs us information is a resource which needs to be managed, that agencies are awash in data and that humans transform data to information and knowledge. During this seminar we offered you the opportunity to see the whole picture implied by this diagram---to see information management as an aid to improving practice, not just data collection.

We looked at the impacts of automation on our lives, building commitment to change skills, locating data in SACWIS and related reports, collecting information, using information to improve decision making and practice. We've had fun and learned a lot; we hope you have also.

12. Ask for and address any final questions/comments from participants.

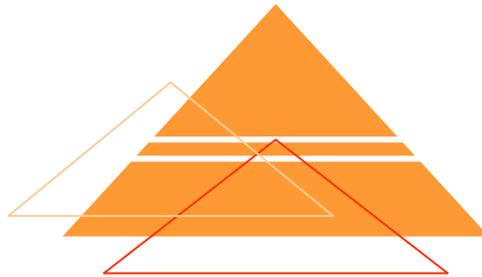
13. Move into the celebration phase, distributing 'take home gifts' and thanking folks again for their contribution and participation. Wrap up this module by thanking folks for their frank comments.



Using Information Management to Support the Goals of Safety, Permanency and Well Being

The goals of this seminar are:

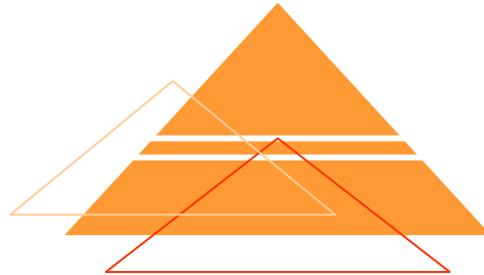
- To explore ways to use information generated by SACWIS to assist you in case level decision-making and monitoring case progress.
- To empower you with the knowledge of system information that promotes the agency's goals of safety, permanency and well being.
- To provide you with the necessary skills to implement information management techniques with your own unit.



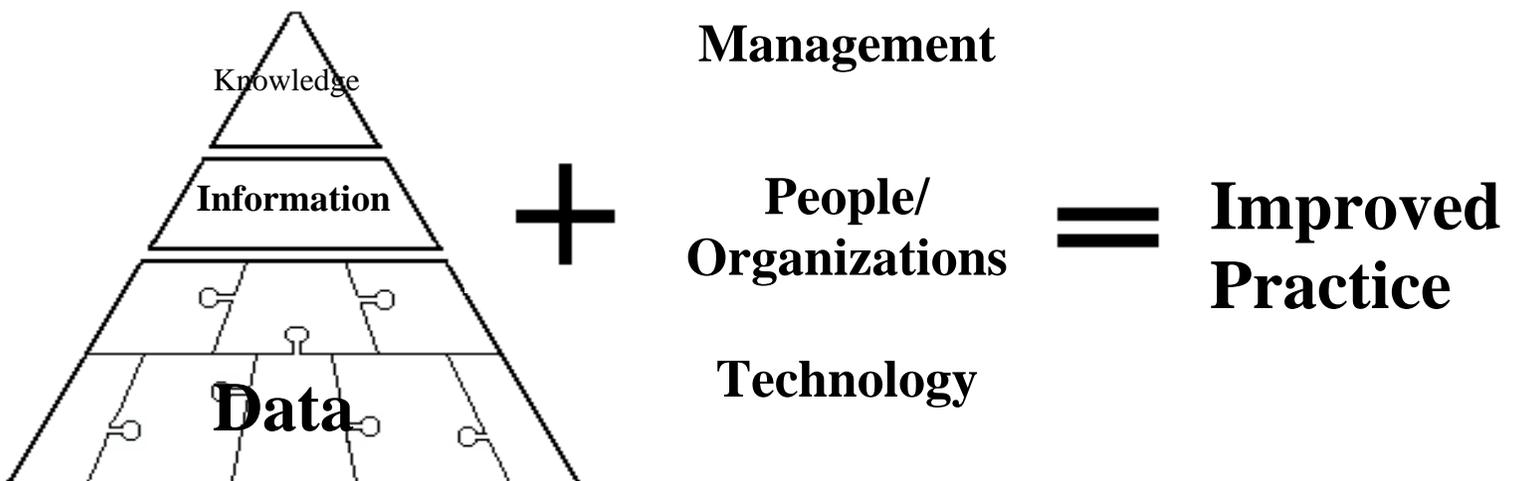
Agenda for Day 3

Module 11. So... How Did It Go?

Time: 9:00 – 11:30



Information Management: Putting the Pieces Together



Survey on Lessons Learned from the SACWIS Supervisory Training Pilot Experience

Kentucky

For further information about Kentucky's experience with the curriculum contact:

Denis Hommrich, Family Services Specialist
Department of Community Based Services
908 West Broadway, 4-E, Louisville, KY 40203
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E-mail: DenisHommrich@mail.state.ky.us

1. Briefly describe how you implemented the pilot project in your state. Mention who you trained, the format of the training, who the trainers were and the types of adaptations you made to the core curriculum.

WE BASICALLY CONDENSED THE TWO-DAY TRAINING INTO 6 MODULES, COMBINING SOME CONCEPTS WITH THE CHANGE MODULE AND THE SUPERVISION MODULE.

WE ASKED FOR SUPERVISORS TO ATTEND AND WE GOT SUPERVISORS AND OTHERS—SOME SPECIALISTS, AND A COUPLE OF STAFF WHO ARE TWIST TRAINERS FOR THEIR REGIONS.

ADAPTATIONS INCLUDED MORE EXERCISES, COMBINING MODULES AROUND CHANGE, GOING OVER LOCAL REPORTS AND DATA, AND DEVELOPING AND USING A CASE EXAMPLE OF OUR OWN.

2. Describe the lessons learned from your experience, including what worked best for you and what needed improvement.

ONE LESSON WE LEARNED WAS THE IMPORTANCE OF REAL DATA FOR STAFF TO DISCUSS AND ANALYZE; STAFF RESPONDED WELL TO OUR CASE EXAMPLE BUT WANTED MORE LOCAL TEAM AND COUNTY DATA.

WE LEARNED WE NEED TO ADD EVEN MORE OF THIS TYPE OF DATA ANALYSES TO THE NEXT TRAINING WE DO, STAFF SEEMED READY FOR IT, AND EXPECTED IT IN THIS TRAINING.

WHICH LEADS TO ANOTHER LESSON, WE ARE GOING TO STAY AWAY FROM THE NAME 'SACWIS' TRAINING AND TRY TO MORE CLEARLY DEFINE WHAT THE TRAINING IS ALL ABOUT.

3. Describe what the impact of the training already has been on those you trained, the system and practice. If you can foresee a long-term impact, please discuss that also.

IT HELPED THE TRAINERS WORK THROUGH THE DATA ANALYSIS FOR SURE. SINCE OUR TRAINING WAS STRICTLY VOLUNTARY (FROM OUR VIEWPOINT ANYWAY) WE MAY HAVE GOTTEN STAFF WHO WERE MOST INTERESTED AND MOST RECEPTIVE TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS TRAINING. WE DEFINITELY 'PRIMED' THEM FOR MORE OF THIS KIND OF TRAINING.

4. Because this was a pilot program, we asked you to conduct several types of evaluations---the pre-training survey, the session evaluation, the post-training and the focus group. Please give us your comments on the evaluation process and components. Were they burdensome? If so, what part(s)? Were they useful to you? If so, how? How could we improve the process in the future?

THE EVALUATIONS WERE USEFUL IN CONFIRMING A LOT OF WHAT WE ALREADY KNEW, OR PRETTY WELL COULD GUESS. PROBABLY NO REAL SURPRISES IN THE PRE AND POST.

I THINK THEY WERE BURDENSOME FOR SOME OF OUR STAFF WHO ATTENDED BECAUSE MANY WERE NOT SUPERVISORS AND FELT THE QUESTIONNAIRES DID NOT APPLY TO THEM.

5. You have worked with the information management competencies for supervisors for several months now. Before we finalize them, please give us your advice on adding to, deleting from or modifying these competencies.

THINK THEY ARE PRETTY COMPREHENSIVE NOW.

THINK FUTURE COMPETENCIES MAY INCLUDE SOMETHING AROUND "MANIPULATION" OF DATA, AND THAT IS CERTAINLY IMPLIED IN 3.03 – BUT AS WE LEARN MORE, MORE IS GOING TO BE EXPECTED.

6. What else do you want to tell us about your experience with the SACWIS Supervisory Training Pilot?

THIS TRAINING FITS VERY WELL WITH THE EMPHASIS IN OUR CABINET ON GOALS AND OUTCOMES FOR ALL LEVELS, STAFF AND MANAGEMENT.

OUR TRAINING TEAM ENJOYED WORKING ON THE CURRICULUM AND BELIEVED THEY LEARNED AND BENEFITED FROM THE EXPERIENCE.

IT WAS NICE TO HAVE SUCH SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE FROM USM – ALL THE WAY FROM THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE

EVALUATION, FOCUS GROUP AND FOLLOW-UP –THE ENTIRE PROCESS,
THANK YOU.

7. To give readers an idea of how their agency compares to yours, please provide brief descriptions of

- your agency (for example, caseload size, number of employees, organizational structure, number of offices, status of your SACWIS implementation, reports available to supervisors from your SACWIS and where the state is in terms of ASFA, NCANDS and AFCARS)
- the training your agency provides for managers and supervisors.

WE ARE A STATE ADMINISTERED AGENCY WHICH HAS COMBINED CHILD AND ADULT PROTECTION (INCLUDING STATUS JUVENILES), K-TAP (TANF), CHILD SUPPORT AND FOOD STAMPS UNDER ONE –DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES. BUT, CHILD, ADULT AND JUVENILES SOCIAL SERVICES ARE IN THE DIVISION OF PROTECTION AND PERMANENCY.

THE STATE IS DIVIDED INTO 16 REGIONS WHERE THE GOAL IS TO HAVE MORE AUTONOMY AND MORE ACCOUNTABILITY AT THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL.

WE HAVE APPROXIMATELY 220 (IN THE DIVISION OF PROTECTION AND PERMANENCY) SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISORS.

8. We would like to also thank the following people:

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO LYNNE MASON AND MARY ELLEN NOLD, BOTH SOCIAL SERVICES SPECIALIST IN THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES, WHO HELPED IN THE ADAPTATION AND THE TRAINING OF THIS CURRICULUM.

Survey on Lessons Learned from the SACWIS Supervisory Training Pilot Experience

Rhode Island

For further information about Rhode Island's experience with the curriculum contact:

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1. Briefly describe how you implemented the pilot project in your state. Mention who you trained, the format of the training, who the trainers were and the types of adaptations you made to the core curriculum.

Rhode Island's SACWIS system, called RICHIST, has been live for almost three years. Consequently, we revised the curriculum to focus on supervisory tools, such as reports, summary case information and outcome measures. Wherever possible, we included real data. Over four, two-day seminar sessions held off-site at a conference center, we trained our 80 Family Services, Child Protective Services and Juvenile Probation supervisors on the curriculum. Feedback on the seminars was very positive. Supervisors especially appreciated receiving data in the form of reports and the opportunity to exchange ideas and "best practices" across different divisions and regions.

2. Describe the lessons learned from your experience, including what worked best for you and what needed improvement.

Initially, we held a workshop for administrative staff to give them a preview of the curriculum and get their revision recommendations. The group didn't think we should spend a lot of time on definitions or basic information about SACWIS, databases, and similar concepts because our system has been up for some time and most of our supervisors are aware of the terms and concepts. They also didn't relish the Cascadia Case exercise because they didn't think it necessary (and too time consuming) for their supervisors to analyze data that extensively. What they suggested instead was a brief exercise using real reports whereby supervisors could analyze "trends". As a result of this workshop, we cut Module 1 down to a true "introductory" piece, got them involved right away in a brainstorming exercise in Module 2 regarding the Impact of Technology, then focused on Identifying and Locating Key Data and Best Practices in Module 3 and Using Case Data as a Supervisory Tool in Module 4. Module 5 focused on reports, Module 6 on Outcome Measures and Data Analysis. Module 7 was Change Management, Module 8 was Integrating Information Management Techniques Back in the Office. Another pilot project, Child Welfare Federal Review, ran concurrently with the Information

Management pilot project, so we incorporated the Case Review Document being used in that pilot into our Module 8. The document asked supervisors to measure one case in their unit against the ASFA goals of Safety, Permanency and Well-Being. Questions asked could be answered by accessing both online and hard copy case records. Since we had four chances to “try out” the curriculum, we adjusted it slightly each time. Group dynamics also played a big role in how each module was presented. Overall, we learned that the most effective pieces were reports, outcomes data, change management, and the impact of technology/best practices discussions. In the future, we may present this course as a one-day workshop, whereby supervisors would be shown how to access and analyze data available in our SACWIS system, both in the form of reports and online case records. Ultimately, we want our supervisors to feel comfortable using that data as a daily supervisory tool. One major area of improvement that was identified in quite a few of the session evaluations is the need to explain the Information Management Competencies in more detail. We had the benefit and pleasure of the Maine Project Director’s expertise in explaining these competencies during our first seminar, but in subsequent seminars, we didn’t explain them clearly enough. Part of the reason for participant’s misunderstanding of these concepts may be related to a lack of familiarity with competency-based training in general.

3. Describe what the impact of the training already has been on those you trained, the system and practice. If you can foresee a long-term impact, please discuss that also.

The SACWIS Information Management seminars brought to light over 50 issues regarding our SACWIS system. The issues were divided up into five categories: Reports/Templates, System Maintenance/Change Requests, Hardware/Software/Interfaces, Policy/Workflow and Training. We forwarded these issues to the appropriate parties in MIS and Administration and received a quick response to most of the issues. As a result of this pilot project, several additional MIS staff were hired and assigned to the Report Design/Maintenance team; the Department is researching mobile technology to allow workers to utilize downtime when off-site (i.e. in court) to update case information; NCANDS and AFCARS data is being distributed to supervisors throughout the Department, whereas before it remained with MIS and the Administrators; a committee has been formed in each division to analyze existing reports and design new reports; a Supervisor Information Management Manual is being created which will consist of reports available to supervisors, “cheat sheets” on how to access and manipulate the reports, and cheat sheets on accessing key data online; follow-up and communication between MIS and end-users has improved tremendously. Long-term, we are expecting MIS to provide supervisors with better ad hoc reporting tools, allowing for greater data manipulation, up to date report information (some reports are generated weekly or monthly right now), and less reliance upon hard copy data (i.e. all/most data will be accessible via our SACWIS system).

4. Because this was a pilot program, we asked you to conduct several types of evaluations---the pre-training survey, the session evaluation, the post-training and the focus group. Please give us your comments on the evaluation process and components.

Were they burdensome? If so, what part(s)? Were they useful to you? If so, how? How could we improve the process in the future?

The pre- and post-seminar surveys were a nice way to ease into the idea of competency-based training in our state. For the most part, evaluation instruments are not competency-based because of union restrictions. Once the curriculum is fully integrated with supervisory core curriculum in our state (being revamped now), we would like to see a pre- and post-test format. From a data analysis standpoint, that would make quantifying the results much easier. The session evaluation instrument was Likert-scaled, so analyzing results was a snap. We used SPSS statistical software for that purpose. We have conducted two focus groups so far and have two more planned to capture as many of our seminar participants as possible. We found the follow-up process a very effective means for communicating resolutions to many of the issues brought up by seminar participants and for demonstrating a couple of new reports that have since been developed. Most focus group participants did not find the time to complete the “homework assignments” we had given them. However, many of the supervisors were also participating in the federal audit pilot project, so they were able to speak with experience about the Case Review Document (used in the audit also) we handed out as “homework”.

5. You have worked with the information management competencies for supervisors for several months now. Before we finalize them, please give us your advice on adding to, deleting from or modifying these competencies.

The Systems Thinking and Information Systems core competencies are very relevant to the topic, *Information Management*. The Change Management competencies, however, may not belong under *Information Management*. Nevertheless, Change Management should definitely be one of the core supervisor competencies.

6. What else do you want to tell us about your experience with the SACWIS Supervisory Training Pilot?

In Rhode Island, our experience both adapting the curriculum and training our supervisors on it was very rewarding. This pilot project has sparked positive change, particularly with regards to reports and other electronic supervisory tools. In addition, policy, workflow, training and system issues have been identified, communicated and are in the process of being resolved. Without this project, we wouldn't be at this point for quite some time yet. We also want to praise the Maine Project Team for their guidance, patience, flexibility and expertise in managing this project. Their enthusiasm, consistent communication and follow-through enabled us to meet deadlines and complete the project on time. And their great sense of humor reassured us when we needed it!

7. To give readers an idea of how their agency compares to yours, please provide brief descriptions of

- your agency (for example, caseload size, number of employees, organizational structure, number of offices, status of your SACWIS implementation, reports available to supervisors from your SACWIS and where the state is in terms of ASFA, NCANDS and AFCARS)
- the training your agency provides for managers and supervisors.

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (RIDCYF) is the agency charged with responsibility for protecting children from abuse/neglect by caregivers. The agency has enormous authority and jurisdiction to remove children from conditions and environments that are deemed unsafe. Yet, the agency also has statutory authority to provide support and preventive services to promote family well-being and healthy functioning in order to maintain the integrity of families. Through multiple programs, the Department provides child protection, child welfare, children's behavioral health, prevention services to children at risk of abuse/neglect, support services for children and families in need, and services for youth requiring community supervision or incarceration due to delinquency. The RIDCYF is organized into three main operational divisions under the direction and authority of a Director, representing Child Welfare and Child Protective Services, Children's Behavioral Health and Education, and Juvenile Corrections. The Department has experiences increasing caseloads and service needs across its Divisions in recent years; and, including investigations into allegations of abuse/neglect, services more than 11,000 children and families annually.

The RIDCYF consists of approximately 800 employees. The Family Service units are regionalized and include four regional offices. The Juvenile Probation units are also regionalized and include 6 regional offices. The Child Protective Services (CPS) division is currently housed at what used to be the central location for all DCYF protective and family service units. However, they will soon be relocating to one of our regional offices. The Children's Behavioral Health division will also be relocating soon to one of our regional offices. All other support services, with the exception of Staff Development & Training, will be relocating to one of our regional offices within the next few months. The Staff Development & Training unit is currently under contract with Rhode Island College to form a Child Welfare Institute and as such, will remain on college grounds (where they are now).

Our SACWIS system, called Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), was implemented in August 1997. Since that time, the Department has committed to making many system changes, policy changes, and workflow changes to accommodate the demands of legislation and the needs of the staff. To give you an idea of how far we've come, the first version of the software implemented was 2.1; the latest to be implemented this August is version 6.7. Until recently, supervisors haven't benefited from system generated reports, mainly due to MIS resources being funneled to system changes, rather than report design and maintenance. However, because of the SACWIS Information Management pilot project, report design and maintenance has become a high priority. Supervisors are now receiving both system-generated and ad hoc reports. MIS has made a concerted effort to meet with

representatives of each division for the purpose of assessing reports already available and designing new reports.

With regards to ASFA, NCANDS and AFCARS, our state is making great strides to meet reporting requirements and legislative mandates. In April 2000, we implemented an exception report for measuring AFCARS data. This report is available to all supervisors via a desktop icon and is updated weekly. Since implementation, we are only in penalty on one item for the previous reporting period and hope to have that cleaned up prior to the September 30, 2000 re-submittal deadline. If we succeed, it will be the first penalty-free report yet! The AFCARS report has proven to be a very valuable supervisory tool. Our NCANDS data submission has been penalty-free since the inception of RICHIST.

ASFA mandates have been answered in several ways by RIDCYF. Supervisors receive a monthly TPR report highlighting which children on their unit's caseload have been in placement for 15 out of the last 22 months. Supervisors can then advise their workers to begin TPR proceedings, if they haven't already. In addition, there are changes being made to our Case Plan module in RICHIST to incorporate Permanency Planning. After implementation in September, workers will be able to document compelling reasons for not filing a TPR petition for a child in penalty right in the Case Plan window.

The Department's core curriculum for training supervisors is currently being revamped to incorporate competency-based training

8. We would like to also thank the following people:

Leon Saunders, Acting Chief of MIS Research and Evaluation, RIDCYF
Heather Elster, Principal, American Management Systems, Inc.
David Allenson, Senior Electronic Computer Programmer, RIDCYF

SURVEY ON LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SACWIS SUPERVISORY TRAINING PILOT
EXPERIENCE

South Carolina

For further information about South Carolina's experience with the curriculum contact:

Sissy Jeffords, Training Coordinator
SC Dept of Social Services
Children's Center
Staff Development and Training
2638 Two Notch Rd
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone #: 803-929-2505, ext 152
E-mail Address: Sjeffords@dss.state.sc.us

1. Briefly describe how you implemented the pilot project in your state. Mention who you trained, the format of the training, who the trainers were and the types of adaptations you made to the core curriculum.

Our pilot training session was held on March 21 and 22, 2000. Our focus group was held on April 27, 2000. In attendance were a group of 14 foster care and child protective services supervisors. Eleven of these supervisors returned for the focus group. We followed the prescribed training format in presenting all modules. Minor changes were made to adapt the material for our state.

The trainers included:

Sissy Jeffords, MSW - Training Coordinator - Staff Development and Training Division -

Sissy delivered modules 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 10.

Cynthia Maxwell, MSW - Management Support Specialist - County Operations -
Cynthia delivered modules 8 and 9.

Cookie Schaekel, MSW - Program Specialist - Child Protective Services -
Cookie delivered module 3.

Frank Oakley - Management Support Specialist - County Operations -
Frank delivered module 7.

Kathryn Kendrick, MSW - Supervisor of Foster Care, Technical Assistance and Recruitment

Kathryn led the focus group.

2. Describe the lessons learned from your experience, including what worked best for you and what needed improvement.

One thing we found was that the most, if not all participants expected this training to be specific, hands on, systems training. We needed to be more specific ourselves regarding what the training was and was not, beforehand. We need to include information/exercises using SACWIS generated reports. We need to emphasize safety, permanency and well being more throughout the training.

We need to schedule the focus group session to occur sooner after the training (like within two weeks of the training session).

3. Describe what the impact of the training already has been on those you trained, the system and practice. If you can foresee a long-term impact, please discuss that also.

We think that the participants got a pretty good feel for the concepts of information technology and information management as well as a better understanding of the concept that data becomes information which becomes knowledge. Therefore they left with a better appreciation of the need for accurate data entry. They also seemed to gain more appreciation for the fact that inaccurate data entered into the system yields inaccurate information.

4. Because this was a pilot program, we asked you to conduct several types of evaluations---the pre-training survey, the session evaluation, the post-training and the focus group. Please give us your comments on the evaluation process and components. Were they burdensome? If so, what part(s)? Were they useful to you? If so, how? How could we improve the process in the future?

It was a little difficult getting the pre-training surveys done because of the time factor. We had under two months to get the training curriculum revised and ready for South Carolina. The majority of this work fell on one person who already had a full agenda. This complicated matters.

For our purposes, the session evaluations were helpful but we did not make any particular use of the pre and post-training surveys. The session evaluations themselves helped us to identify those aspects of the training that participants found most useful.

5. You have worked with the information management competencies for supervisors for several months now. Before we finalize them, please give us your advice on adding to, deleting from or modifying these competencies.

We commend your efforts regarding the information management competencies and think you have done an excellent job in identifying said competencies.

6. What else do you want to tell us about your experience with the SACWIS Supervisory Training Pilot?

When we initially became involved with the project, upper management committed staff to work on the project. However, priorities were reassessed and we lost support for the project. This made our involvement and active participation more difficult. Hopefully, in

the fall, we will see a recommitment and be able to offer the training to all child welfare supervisors.

The opportunity to work with you folks at The Muskie School's Institute for Child and Family Policy has been a very positive and beneficial experience, even with the internal problems we ended up having. Your dedication, professionalism and hard work are obvious and appreciated.

7. To give readers an idea of how their agency compares to yours, please provide brief descriptions of:

- your agency (for example, caseload size, number of employees, organizational structure, number of offices, status of your SACWIS implementation, reports available to supervisors from your SACWIS and where the state is in terms of ASFA, NCANDS and AFCARS)
- the training your agency provides for managers and supervisors.

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) is headed by a State Director who is appointed by our Governor. We have a central State Office, 46 county offices, 7 regional Adoptions offices and 7 regional Managed Treatment Services for Children (MTS) offices.

SCDSS employs approximately 5,083 staffs. Around 1200 of these are child welfare employees. The average caseload size is 30, with MTS staff carrying smaller caseloads. SACWIS has been fully implemented in South Carolina. Currently work is being done to make the system more "user friendly".

The following management reports are available to supervisors from SACWIS:

Report CR711B-R01 - CPS Investigations Case Management Report - which is designed to track CPS investigation information including the referral number, date referral accepted, case number, 10 day staffing due date, whether risk assessment tool completed, 45 day determination due date, and 15 day extension date if applicable.

Report CR711B-R02 - CPS Referrals Accepted for CPS Investigation - which tracks the total number of case determination that are overdue, due in the next 01-15 days, and due in the next 16-45 days.

Report PR711B-R01 - Foster Care Monthly Case Management Summary Report - which tracks episode start date, episode end date, current permanent plan, current and next FCRB date, last and next permanency planning hearing date, date of last face-to-face with child.

Report PR713B-R01 - Foster Care Profile Report - which is a count of children in care by age range, race and sex. This report also includes the number of children and average months in care, removal reason, permanent plan, diagnosed conditions, placement types, and case activity during the month.

Report LB711B-R01, R02, R03 - Foster Home Licensing Case Management Reports - These reports run on the first working day of each month. They lists all facilities licensed by worker/county/office. They identify licensed homes/facilities that may require some type of corrective action. These reports are run on a

monthly basis consisting of the R01 (detail listing by county/office), R02 (county/office summary), and R03 (statewide summary). The R01 and R02 are distributed to the county office and the R03 is distributed to the state office.

SC had legislation very similar to ASFA prior to the passage of ASFA. For example, permanency planning hearings are required every 12 months, with the first due no later than 12 months after the child's entry into foster care. SC's legislation also included the requirement that the court approve all permanent plans including any plan other than reunification and adoption. SC continues to work on implementing early reunification and concurrent planning to reduce the length of time to put the child's permanent plan into place.

Regarding AFCARS, counties receive exception reports which list AFCARS data elements that have not been updated or which are inconsistent with AFCARS rules. The original version of SACWIS had design problems which have caused difficulty in overall implementation of SACWIS and thus AFCARS. The exceptions on the monthly report reflect some of those design problems. In particular, SC has had difficulty in timeliness of entering termination of a foster care episode on the existing system. .

South Carolina has been an NCANDS Summary Data Collection (SDC) and Detailed Case Data Collection (DCDC) participant since the inception of both projects. Staff persons have been involved at the federal level with both original AFGARS and NCANDS DCDC designs. As a result, South Carolina has been proactive in the incorporation of the elements needed for the three activities into our SACWIS design. While SC has an operating SACWIS system, it is currently undergoing redesign to modify the imported system which forms the core of the current system. The new system will reflect the modifications discussed at the June 2000 NCANDS meeting for the SDC and the DCDC data initiatives, as well as AFGARS and the ASFA measures.

Currently all supervisors are required to attend the following training provided by the agency:

- Supervisory Skills
- The Leadership Challenge
- Personnel Practices

We also offer a training for child welfare supervisors called The Consultative Role. This is program specific supervisory training which deals with the stages of worker development and how supervisors can help move workers along in their development.

We also have available through the SC Budget and Control Board a supervisory track where supervisors can earn their Associate Public Manager and Certified Public Manager Awards. This involves participating in a certain amount of required training courses over a limited period of time.

8. We would like to also thank the following people:

Georgette Boulware - Management Support Specialist - County Operations

Robert W. Bradford - MSW - Program Director II - Policy and Program Development

M. Lauren Hobbs - LBSW, Site Director and Program Coordinator, Aiken County DSS

Sissy Jeffords - MSW - Training Coordinator, Staff Development and Training

Kathryn Kendrick - MSW -Supervisor of Foster Care, Technical Assistance and Recruitment

Cynthia Maxwell - MSW - Management Support Specialist - County Operations

Frank Oakley - Management Support Specialist - County Operations

Don Rosick - Assistant Director - Staff Development and Training

Joanne-Cookie Schaekel - MSW - Program Specialist - Child Protective Services

Carla Snodgrass - MSW - Program Coordinator, Spartanburg County DSS

*All are employed by the South Carolina Department of Social Services

Survey on Lessons Learned from the SACWIS Supervisory Training Pilot Experience

Utah

For further information on Utah's experience with the curriculum contact:

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1. Briefly describe how you implemented the pilot project in your state. Mention who you trained, the format of the training, who the trainers were and the types of adaptations you made to the core curriculum.

Utah's Division of Child and Family Services is divided into seven regions. The training for the pilot project was conducted to all supervisors, community service managers, and the associate director in our Eastern Region. The training was done in two groups of approximately 10 people each. The training was set up to allow introduction of topics, exercises or practice of the topics, and discussion by participants. Anita Sorensen, supervisor of the SACWIS system helpdesk and training unit, and Navina Forsythe, lead information analyst of the data, analysis, and reporting unit, conducted the training. In Utah the SACWIS system has been available for two years, consequently the Utah adaptation of the curriculum focused less on acceptance of technology and more on inclusion of the use of data and the SACWIS system by supervisors.

2. Describe the lessons learned from your experience, including what worked best for you and what needed improvement.

Supervisors were very receptive to using information in the SACWIS system in their supervisory role. They responded that it was helpful to review location of key data in the system. Additionally supervisors were unaware of some of the federal requirements that governed data that must be recorded in the system (AFCARS, NCANDS, ASFA, and SACWIS). The flexibility of the curriculum to be adaptable to needs within states, or even areas within states, was beneficial. Supervisors responded that reviewing the

increase in technology and resistance to change was information that they were aware of and therefore was redundant. Additionally, supervisors were concerned about the length of the training considering other demands on their time.

3. Describe what the impact of the training already has been on those you trained, the system and practice. If you can foresee a long-term impact, please discuss that also.

Supervisors responded that they were aware of information and ways to utilize the SACWIS system that they were unaware of before. Many felt that they would use the system with increased frequency. Also many were unaware of some federal requirements and responded that they had a better understanding of why certain data elements had to be recorded.

4. Because this was a pilot program, we asked you to conduct several types of evaluations---the pre-training survey, the session evaluation, the post-training and the focus group. Please give us your comments on the evaluation process and components. Were they burdensome? If so, what part(s)? Were they useful to you? If so, how? How could we improve the process in the future?

The pre- and post- training questionnaires were often not completely filled out by supervisors. A scaling or multiple choice questionnaire may elicit more responses and be easier to utilize for evaluative purposes. The session evaluation and focus group were both useful evaluation tools.

5. You have worked with the information management competencies for supervisors for several months now. Before we finalize them, please give us your advice on adding to, deleting from or modifying these competencies.

The competencies identified in the curriculum seem very comprehensive, although overwhelming to supervisors. I believe that supervisors in Utah would add clinical knowledge and skills to the list of competencies.

6. What else do you want to tell us about your experience with the SACWIS Supervisory Training Pilot?

Utah was excited to be a part of this project. Utah utilizes data and reports regularly and has recognized a need for supervisors to be trained in the use and importance of data. This project and the curriculum will assist us in meeting this need.

7. To give readers an idea of how their agency compares to yours, please provide brief descriptions of
 - your agency (for example, caseload size, number of employees, organizational structure, number of offices, status of your SACWIS implementation, reports available to supervisors from your SACWIS and where the state is in terms of ASFA, NCANDS and AFCARS)
 - the training your agency provides for managers and supervisors.

Utah's Division of Child and Family Services is a state-run child welfare agency with seven regions (we are in the process of combining three and will soon have five). We investigate approximately 17,000 referrals of child abuse, serve approximately 9,000 people in home-based cases, and have approximately 2,200 children in custody. Utah has 988 full-time equivalent positions including administration, caseworkers, and support staff. Our SACWIS system is 90% complete with the implementation phase and we anticipate moving to operational phase in October, 2000. Utah State government has received national recognition for its use of technology and consequently DCFS has been able to produce NCANDS and AFCARS reports for several years (both pre- and post-SACWIS). Prior to ASFA Utah had state laws in place that were as stringent, or more stringent than those required by ASFA, consequently ASFA had little impact on Utah Child Welfare Practice. Additionally Utah has a reporting system with over 200 reports available including outcomes reports on recidivism, protection, permanency, and well being.

Utah's Department of Human Services (of which DCFS is a part) has regular training for all new supervisors on basic supervisory skills. Additionally all supervisors are being training on our Practice Model which covers protection, development, permanency, cultural responsiveness, partnership, organizational competence, and professional competence.

Lessons Learned from the SACWIS Supervisory Training Pilot Experience

Wyoming

For further information on Wyoming's experience with the curriculum contact:

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1. Briefly describe how you implemented the pilot project in your state. Mention who you trained, the format of the training, who the trainers were and the types of adaptations you made to the core curriculum.

Wyoming chose to do two training sessions: one for county and region managers and one for social workers. These two groups represented varying degrees of computer knowledge and skills. The lowest level of skills represented was one who understood only data entry while there were people who had been working in this precise area for some time. The makeup of the groups presented initial problems of adjusting the curriculum so no one felt it was condescending. Trainers included three county managers, a social service manager and a field audit person.

We used parts of the curriculum provided. We condensed the modules and concentrated on the key concepts in each module. In Module 1, we did not use a workbook and we emphasized supervisory competencies providing the competency book to each attendee. We did not use Module 2 but made some verbal references to these concepts throughout the training. From Module 8, we used the Family Net case and Stages of Change Commitment to present the concepts of the entire module. Module 3 was combined with Module 9 and the Federal Outcomes were used to demonstrate the concepts presented in both modules. Modules 4 and 5 were combined re-titled "How WYCAPS Supports Casework Supervision" and was presented using WYCAPS screens to demonstrate. Module 6 was used for the opening of the second day. On the second day, much of the time was concentrated on the data developed by Andy Aldrich, which provided longitudinal data as a supervisory measure. Instead of Module 11, we chose to follow-up with a questionnaire about the projects that supervisors choose to do.

2. Describe the lessons learned from your experience, including what worked best for you and what needed improvement.

The first thing we learned was that this curriculum should be initiated at the time a SACWIS project is implemented. Wyoming's system had been in place for almost two years when the project was initiated. Wyoming is currently developing reports that are more useful for direct supervision. Because of the current dearth of reports there was some tension regarding training on the use of reports that are under development. However, the

supervisors and managers were really enthusiastic about the possibilities of a new way of supervising. Using the longitudinal studies firmly delivered the message that individuals can develop and use the system in new ways.

3. Describe what the impact of the training already has been on those you trained, the system and practice. If you can foresee a long-term impact, please discuss that also.

Fortunately training came during a time of transition for the agency because new leadership at all levels of the agency understood the need for better information practices. Several projects are underway to improve both reports and manager skills in using data. There is a strong multi-level commitment to improved information systems. In addition, the Administrator of the Information Services Division will be contacting the University of Wyoming about using the WYCAPS system as part of the social work education curriculum. The training unit will be working with the Division of Management Development to develop training and this subject will be included in this project.

4. Because this was a pilot program, we asked you to conduct several types of evaluations---the pre-training survey, the session evaluation, the post-training and the focus group. Please give us your comments on the evaluation process and components. Were they burdensome? If so, what part(s)? Were they useful to you? If so, how? How could we improve the process in the future?

Our curriculum changed several times and I failed to change the post-evaluation to truly address the curriculum we presented. However, most attendees were able to answer the survey anyway. The training unit collated the responses and was able to use their standard process to do this. I believe that the surveys were well done but they should be adjusted to each state's curriculum. The focus group (Module 11) was a problem for Wyoming. This training was scheduled at a time when several other trainings were mandated and offered. Due to the geographical problems in Wyoming, the original plan for focus groups was not completed. I do believe the responses we did receive more than adequately show the information received in the training was very useable. I would encourage the development of an alternate method for feedback for situations similar to Wyoming's.

5. You have worked with the information management competencies for supervisors for several months now. Before we finalize them, please give us your advice on adding to, deleting from or modifying these competencies.

These competencies are great and I would not adjust or change them.

6. What else do you want to tell us about your experience with the SACWIS Supervisory Training Pilot?

The support and flexibility of the project director and staff has been wonderful. It must have been very difficult trying to coordinate and adjust for the demographics of all the different states. Kudos to all of you.

7. To give readers an idea of how their agency compares to yours, please provide brief descriptions of

- your agency (for example, caseload size, number of employees, organizational structure, number of offices, status of your SACWIS implementation, reports available to supervisors from your SACWIS and where the state is in terms of ASFA, NCANDS and AFCARS)
- the training your agency provides for managers and supervisors.

The Wyoming Department of Family Services is a state-supervised system which includes all public assistance programs, all child welfare programs, juvenile justice programs, two juvenile correctional facilities, child support programs and several regulatory programs. Total staff is just about 700. The field operations is divided into 10 districts with a total of 27 field offices and 10 child support offices and the two correctional facilities. Our social services caseload is 4000 plus cases. This includes juvenile services, child welfare and adult protection. We implemented SACWIS in July, 1998. While there are many reports available, those that are in the system are not always a lot of help because they provide no analysis just pure data. We are in line with all federal requirements for ASFA, NCANDS and AFCARS. Most training is done by our agency staff who have expertise and, occasionally, resource people outside our system.

8. We would like to also thank the following people:

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