Organizational Culture and Climate in Ohio’s Office of Families and Children

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Outline

• What do we mean by “organizational culture and climate”?
• Why is it important?
• How did we assess it?
• Using assessment results to inform interventions
• What’s next for OFC?
What Do We Mean?

• Organizational culture:
  – The norms & values that drive behavior
  – “How we do things around here”
  – What is expected and rewarded

• Organizational climate:
  – Work environment’s psychological impact on employees
  – Employees’ affective response to work
  – Perceptions of how the organization affects them

• Work attitudes:
  – Individual-level constructs
  – Morale (e.g. job satisfaction; commitment)
Why Pay Attention?

• Culture and Climate combine to create Social Context that:
  – invites or rejects innovation,
  – complements or inhibits your ability to serve your clients/meet their needs,
  – sustains or adapts the core service technologies that are required for effective service.
The Payoff?

- Turnover, work attitudes
- Job performance, service quality, client outcomes
- New program sustainability
- See for example: Glisson & Hemmelgarn (1998); Glisson, Dukes & Green (2006)
- Egs of intervention research:
  - “Wingman culture” (Alarcon et al, 2010)
  - “CREW” intervention (Osatuke, et al, 2009)
Ohio’s Assessment?

Glisson et al’s Organizational Social Context (OSC) measure:
• 3 dimensions of culture:
  – Rigidity
  – Proficiency
  – Resistance
• 3 dimensions of climate:
  – Engagement
  – Functionality
  – Stress
• Work attitudes (an individual construct):
  – Morale (job satisfaction and org commitment)
Ohio’s Assessment?

- All OFC employees were encouraged to participate (90% response rate) – July 2010
- Acceptable reliability (alpha on all scales above .70)
- Good intra-group agreement (rwg above .70)
Product?

• OFC’s overall (agency-wide) and work unit (by bureau) profiles on each of the 7 major dimensions of culture, climate, and morale, compared to national norms

Benefit?

• Prior OSC norms based on research primarily in mental health organizations, but new set of norms have been established for child welfare
• Results confirmed and gave a name to conditions the agency had long suspected were in existence
• Follow up focus groups with staff to discuss reactions to findings and begin the search for solutions
Implications?

• **Mission-driven vs. rule-driven:** *Focus on mission and eliminate obstacles to achieving it.*

• **Results-oriented vs. process-oriented:** *Assume that staff wish to do well and will do so if given access and tools to do so—focus should be on outcomes.*

• **Improvement-directed vs. status quo-oriented:** *Focus on establishing norms that support innovation and customer service.*

• **Participation-based vs. authority-based:** *Focus on providing meaningful opportunities for staff and external stakeholder involvement.*
“Pulling multiple levers”

• Three broad categories of Organizational Development interventions at work in this project, focusing on:
  1. Human processes,
  2. Structure and functions, and
  3. Work environment.
Up Next...

• Continue multi-level intervention work through Sept 2013
• Planning for sustainability of interventions
• Follow-up assessment of culture and climate with OSC measure in spring 2013
• Expect to see some changes in climate, may not see changes in culture yet—too soon?
• For more information about the OSC measurement system, contact:
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