

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Technical Assistance Report



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Please indicate which responses were employed in this T/TA:

- Technical Assistance
- Training
- Phone Consultation
- Referral to another NRC
- Referral to Other Organization
- Review of Policy and Materials
- Publications Provided
- Secondary Research
- Other/Group Facilitation

Situation and Technical Assistance Request:

The South Dakota Division of Child Protection Services (CPS) is requesting technical assistance from NRCCPS regarding supervisor development. South Dakota CPS is concentrating on enhancing the performance of supervisors in providing consultation related to the intervention model Comprehensive Safety Intervention (CSI). The request for assistance related to supervisor development is identified in the state's CFSR Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

The current request for technical assistance represents a continuation of work associated with contextual and competency influences affecting the implementation of the intervention model. In FY 08' NRCCPS conducted a structured case review to assess the status of progress in implementing CSI with fidelity. As a result of the case review, the state determined that there was a need to study and identify supervisor characteristics that contribute to effective consultation and are more likely to result in better practice outcomes.

In FY 09' NRCCPS developed and conducted a study involving a selective group of supervisors throughout the state. The supervisors who participated in the study were selected because of their demonstrated proficiency in providing consultation related to the CSI model. The results of the study indicated that supervisors who are more effective at supporting and advancing the implementation of CSI possess specific competency variables that influence their approach to supervisor consultation.

The technical assistance for FY 10' will involve using information learned about supervisor characteristics associated with effective consultation to consider an approach for developing supervisors statewide.

Technical Assistance Provided:

An initial planning meeting was convened on February 3, 2010 in Pierre, South Dakota. In attendance were Merlin Weyer, Cara Beers and Peggy Schmidt from South Dakota CPS, and Todd Holder and Wayne Holder from NRCCPS.

Preliminary discussions during the meeting focused on how best to proceed in using available information regarding characteristics of supervisors who are effective at providing consultation. Questions that emerged from this discussion included:

- How do you design a criteria based hiring process that identifies individuals who possess competency variables and personal qualities consistent with effective supervisors?
- What would be a practical design for evaluating supervisor performance across all service regions?
- How do you translate what is known about the personal qualities of effective supervisors into a plan for enhancing performance of supervisors statewide?
- Is there a need to further assess supervisors' performance statewide prior to developing and executing a plan for developing supervisory competency? What further information would need to be obtained from the field in order to begin considering an approach for developing supervisors?

To help inform the next steps for technical assistance it was important to list out what is currently known about the status of implementation and supervisor performance and what is not known; not well defined; or clearly understood.

It was agreed that what is known is as follows:

- The CSI fidelity indicators in policy, procedures and practice protocols provide a basis for knowing when the model is being done correctly;
- There are multiple sources of data that inform where CSI is being implemented with fidelity (more consistently) and where CSI is not being implemented with fidelity;
- Supervisor characteristics that contribute to implementation fidelity have been identified;
- All positions within the system have a responsibility for advancing implementation;
- Casework staff have the responsibility for conducting CSI assessments as designed to achieve necessary practice objectives and decisions;
- Supervisors have the responsibility for overseeing and directing CSI practice and decision-making, and building caseworker staff competency; and

- Regional Managers are in charge of CSI implementation in the regions, which involves assuring that supervisor consultation is occurring in such a way to promote effective casework practice and decision-making.

It was agreed that what is not known includes:

- The Regional Managers' perception regarding their role in implementing CSI;
- The current efforts of Regional Managers' in overseeing and directing the approach to supervisor consultation;
- The investment and/or expertise of Regional Managers' in developing supervisors to perform their role in implementing CSI; and
- Other explanations that may exist beyond supervisor performance related to why there is inconsistency in CSI implementation and poor practice outcomes among different regions or counties.

Systematic Approach to Supervisor Development

Through the course of the meeting it was determined that the first priority was to consider the organizational management structure(s) that would need to be in place to sufficiently support and direct a plan for supervisor development.

Currently the National Child Welfare Resource Center on Organizational Improvement (NCWRCOI) is working with South Dakota CPS in building capacity of their Management Team. The Management Team includes all the Regional Managers and State central office personnel. Given that NCWRCOI is involved in ongoing efforts to assist South Dakota CPS in structuring and defining the role of the Management Team, it may be beneficial to consider how the Management Team and specifically the Regional Managers approach their responsibility for directing implementation of CSI.

As a matter of timing, the first crucial step to conceptualizing a plan for supervisor development is to establish who within the regions is responsible for directing and overseeing the plan and sustaining change associated with supervisory professional development. The work that is already underway with NCWRCOI focused on the Management Team could potentially include dialogue regarding the Regional Managers' role for "supervising" the supervisors. This could conceivably result in a delineation of the Regional Managers' fundamental purpose, objectives and approach for working with supervisors in building competency and supporting CSI implementation.

The technical assistance provide by NRCCPS can involve collaborating with the South Dakota CPS Management Team and NCWRCOI in designing an assessment of supervisor performance and/or a plan for supervisor development that takes into account the role and responsibilities of the Regional Managers.

TA Goal

To conceptualize a strategy and develop a plan for use by Regional Managers to enhancing supervisor proficiency in providing consultation related to CSI practice and decision-making.

TA Objectives

- To assist Regional Managers in operationalizing their role for directing implementation of CSI.
- To work with Regional Managers in designing a method for assessing supervisor performance within their regions.
- To design an approach for building supervisor competency for providing consultation related to CSI that targets characteristics associated with effective supervision.
- To work with Regional Managers in executing the plan for supervisor development.

Next Steps:

- ✓ Meeting with South Dakota CPS to review and confirm the focus of technical assistance, and to finalize a work plan – proposed 5/4/10