

Evaluation of the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training System

Results Summary
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Butler Institute for Families

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Introduction

DCF contracted with Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver to conduct evaluation of statewide child welfare training system in order to:

- 1.Examine extent to which functions of the Training Program are operating in a quality manner
- 2.Suggest how functions could be strengthened or enhanced

Wisconsin Child Welfare Training Partnership

- Department of Children and Families (DCF)
- County child welfare programs
- Tribal child welfare programs
- DCF Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare
- Special Needs Adoption Program
- University of Wisconsin system
- Regional Training Partnerships (NEW, Southern, Western, Milwaukee, ICW)

Areas of Focus

- Domain I: Structure and Governance of Training System
- Domain II: Professional Development Continuum
- Domain III: Curriculum and Training Development
- Domain IV: Trainer Development
- Domain V: Training Delivery
- Domain VI: Research to Practice
- Domain VII: Training Evaluation

Methods

- Document reviews
 - Annual report, guidelines, policies, job descriptions, curricula, etc.
- Focus Group interviews (workers, supervisors, directors)
 - 14 focus groups; 150 participants
- Individual interviews with stakeholders and external training experts
 - 31 participants
- Web-based questionnaires
 - Caseworkers (511; 25% response rate)
 - Supervisors (241; 48% response rate)
 - Trainers (50)
 - Managers/directors (85)

Domain 1: Structure and Governance of Training System

Description and Scope

How the structure and governance of the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training System function in relation to its mission and goals. sub-domains include:

- overall design, organization, structure, components/entities and purview of the training program;
- planning, decision-making and communication processes at the two levels of program operation; and
- functions, tasks and roles.

Findings for Domain 1

Strengths

- Structure conducive to collaboration and partnership
- Responsiveness to local county/tribal needs

Needs/Issues

- Increased factionalism among partners
- Lack of clarity about role of Training Center staff
- Lack of decision-making ability of the Training Council
- Lack of oversight and accountability structures

Domain II: Professional Development Continuum

Description and Scope

- Continuum of professional development activities strategically aligned with agency practice and outcome goals
- Coherent set of competencies drives the recruitment, selection and training of staff and reinforcement and development of skills on the job
- Traditional classroom training is one component of an integrated system of activities that may include web-based training, on-the-job training, mentoring programs, etc

Findings for Domain II

Strengths

- High satisfaction with the connection between training and job skills
- Range of professional development options for child welfare

Needs/Issues

- Integrated process for assessing needs, planning and developing training, allocating resources
- More professional development options for experienced workers, sups and admin
- Integration of post-QSR with other professional development

Domain III: Curriculum Development

Description and Scope

- This domain addresses the Wisconsin Training System's processes for developing or selecting training curricula, including those that are used statewide and regionally. These processes include the planning (statewide and regionally) for which curricula should be developed

Findings for Domain III

Strengths

- Statewide Pre-service and Foundation training for new workers

Needs/Issues

- No statewide competencies/learning objectives for workers to provide a framework for curriculum selection, development or writing
- Lack of common set of standards/format for curriculum

Domain IV: Trainer Development

Description and Scope

- This domain addresses the issues associated with recruiting, selecting, and preparing trainers for these diverse roles and evaluating trainer effectiveness
- The trainer's role has begun to move from an emphasis on imparting information to a greater focus on promoting learning outcomes
- Expectations of trainers include expertise in: using standardized skills based curricula, utilizing distance learning and other computer based delivery technologies, promoting transfer of learning, and supporting evaluation of learning

Findings for Domain IV

Strengths

- Trainers are in touch with current practice, and able to address local practice concerns
- County personnel who are trainers bring current info on best practices back to their agencies and serve as a local expert resource

Needs/Issues

- Informal/inconsistent processes for trainer recruitment and selection
- Lack of common set of trainer competencies
- Lack of standardized trainer development and assessment process

Domain V: Training Delivery

Description and Scope

- Processes for ensuring that large numbers of potential trainees receive the right training at the right time
 - Communication and marketing
- Planning for, administering, and supporting a range of delivery options including computer based and distance learning, locally based team training, or individualized coaching
- Maintain resource centers and websites, and track progress on individual training plans and completion of training requirements via learning management systems

Findings for Domain V

Strengths

- Available distance learning courses have been well-received
- Overall satisfaction with availability of classroom training
- High satisfaction with training materials, websites, registration, facilities and communication
- Strong support for training from county administrators and supervisors

Needs/Issues

- Better utilization of distance learning options
- Learning management system to track completion of training, transfer or learning and job performance

Domain VI: Research to Practice

Description and Scope

- Seeking out evidence-informed practice literature to help guide decision-making about curricula, learning theory, and promising practices in training methods and evaluation of learning
- Conducting research on training-related activities
- Generating ways to develop a comprehensive workforce approach by integrating various functions under a unified competency based model
- Conducting program evaluation of child welfare practice efforts in the state

Findings for Domain VI

Strengths

- Several universities expressed interest in being part of expanded research-to-practice efforts
- Great deal of expertise in program evaluation in the university and a strong research orientation through the state Office of Performance and Quality Assistance
- Training partnerships currently conduct literature searches as they develop curricula and disseminate knowledge via their websites

Needs/Issues

- Need a planning process to set a research agenda, identify resources to support the work, and identify the most appropriate model for the research function

Domain VII: Training Evaluation

Description and Scope

- Assess the training needs of staff, provide formative feedback for curriculum improvement, assess the program's efficacy in developing staff knowledge and skill, and assess the transfer of knowledge and skill to the job
- Examine the organizational and contextual factors that influence the use of skills and knowledge on the job, assess the effects of alternative training delivery methods, such as e-learning and link to evaluations of client and agency outcomes

Findings for Domain VII

Strengths

- Workshop evaluations are used for formative evaluation and to provide feedback to trainers
- University partners are open to helping Training System move to higher level training evaluation

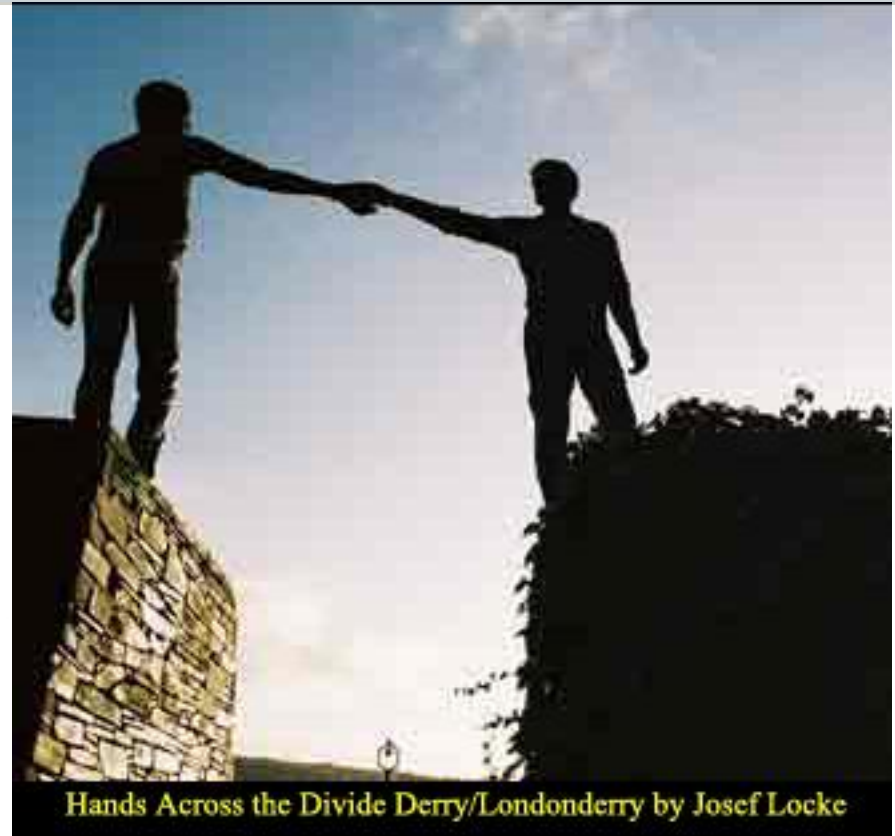
Needs/Issues

- Need to build capacity to conduct higher levels of evaluation that would provide information about staff's acquisition of needed knowledge and skills, transfer of learning, and the relationship of training to practice changes and improvements in child welfare outcomes

Recommendation

Convene a facilitated reconciliation process

- Find common ground
- Strengthen collaboration of the partnership
- Realign rules, roles, boundaries and governance



Hands Across the Divide Derry/Londonderry by Josef Locke

Improve Effectiveness of the Training Council

- Smaller executive committee with final decision-making authority
 - Decisions made in a timely way
 - Needs to represent all partners to ensure that everyone has a “voice”
 - Conduct less frequent meetings and rotate geographically
 - Full committee utilized for raising/discussing issues and smaller workgroups
- Clear criteria for decision making
- Stronger communication mechanisms

Clarify Roles/Functions of Training Center Staff

- Need shared understanding among stakeholders
- Training Center should facilitate implementation of decisions made by Training Council
- Authority to enforce decisions/accountability mechanisms
- Review job functions and ensure available resources and adequate staffing

Develop Competency Model

- Develop *standardized training competency model* that is aligned with practice principles and knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by CW staff to perform their jobs. Use model to:
- *Revise Foundation training* to address current gaps (order competencies and follow “life of a case”)
- *Develop systematic needs assessment process* to clarify local and statewide training needs

Integrate Post-QSR Training

- Further develop model post-QSR training and T/A to integrate with pre-service, Foundation and in-service training
- Design and implement evaluation strategies to assess effectiveness of strategies, TOL and outcomes
- Involve regional partnerships in all aspects of process to create integrated learning continuum
- Clarify roles of partnership and Training Center staff

More Recommendations

- *Expand range of professional development options* for all levels of staff, especially experienced workers, case aides, supervisors and administrators
- *Develop common standards for curricula* and one or more approved curriculum formats
- Develop and implement plan for making decisions about *standardization and customization of statewide training curricula*

More Recommendations

- Review processes for trainer recruitment, selection and development
- Develop array of training and information delivery strategies and plan for making decisions
- Develop a training plan that addresses unique training needs of Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare

More Recommendations

- *Develop training evaluation plan* that details the purposeful expansion of training evaluation over the next 5 years to move to higher levels of assessment
- Build research and program evaluation capacity responsive to current program needs and future initiatives
- Explore creation of a research-to-practice consortium
- Expand and coordinate access to available research-to-practice literature

Process to Address Recommendations

- Conduct facilitated *strategic planning process* to address recommendations and align training with state practice principles
- Develop *statewide training plan* that identifies training products, processes and timelines

Training Council Action

After the conclusion of the findings and recommendations from the Butler Institute on 4/21/09, the Training Council was led in a facilitated prioritization and sequencing process.

As a Result of the Prioritization and Sequencing Process on 4/21/09...

The priority Domains identified for more immediate action were:

- Domain I – Structure and Governance of the Training System
- Domain II – Professional Development Continuum
- Domain III – Curriculum Development

Initial Action Steps...

Training Partnership and DCF staff met on 4/22/09 to establish the initial action steps that will begin the statewide process to achieve the priorities identified by the Training Council on 4/21/09.

As a result of the Training Partnership / DCF Meeting, the following slides detail the first steps that will be taken:

First Steps

Domain I – Structure and Governance of the Training System and Domain II – Professional Development Continuum

A day-long Training Council Strategic Planning Meeting will be convened in late August 2009 to begin to develop the structure of the Professional Development System.

First Steps

Domain III – Curriculum Development

A day-long DCF / Training Partnership Meeting will be convened in late June 2009 to begin planning discussions about the development of a statewide practice model and a training competency model. These discussions will be included in the strategic planning discussions that will begin in August 2009.