Systems Change through Workforce Development

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LOW pay, a ton of paperwork, a massive caseload, upset parents?

SURE, SIGN ME UP!


It’s for people who believe they can make a difference in a world of challenges and hard knocks.

You know who you are. Find a job that matters.

Contact your County Department of Social Services.
Presentation

- Connection between workforce issues and Fostering Connections
- What research tells us about recruitment, selection and retention of child welfare staff
- Evidence-informed workforce development for systems change
Conclusion

- There are serious workforce challenges facing child welfare.
- Solutions involve recruiting and selecting the best candidates and changing organizations so that we can retain a committed and competent child welfare workforce.
- This is not an easy journey, but it is an essential one because children, youth and families are affected.
- There are effective strategies and useful partners that can help.
Demographics: More Jobs, Fewer Workers

Projected Job Growth

Projected Workforce Growth

165 Million Jobs
162 Million Workers

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Demographics of Social Services

- Growing need for workers (BLS projects 36% growth)
- Disproportionate aging of social service workforce
- Salaries
  - Not competitive and not keeping up
- Increasing vacancy and turnover rates
- Millennial workers – value work fulfillment & work/life balance

—Light, 2003; Spherion Atlantic Enterprises LLC., 2005
Financial Costs of Turnover

- Weary and costly cycle of recruitment, employment, training, production, resignation
- According to authors of *Love ‘Em or Lose ‘Em*, 70% of the vacant position’s annual salary is the cost of that vacancy (Kaye, & Jordan-Evans, 2005)
Human Costs of Turnover

Impact on Staff

- High stress, low morale, grief
- Increased workload for those who stay
- Insufficient time to do the work
Impact on Families, Youth and Children

- Delay in timely investigations which can be detrimental to the child at risk (US GAO, 2003)
- Significantly longer stays in foster care (Flower, McDonald, & Sumski, 2005; Ryan et al., 2006)
- Higher rates of foster care re-entry (Hess, Folaran, & Jefferson, 1992)
Fewer Workers: Increased Chances of Permanency

% Chance

- 7 workers: 0.1
- 6 workers: 0.1
- 5 workers: 0.3
- 4 workers: 2.2
- 3 workers: 5.2
- 2 workers: 17.5
- 1 worker: 74.5

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CA study compared recurrence of child maltreatment for high, moderate and low functioning counties:

- Highest functioning had lowest turnover (9%) and lowest recurrence (6-15%)
- Lowest functioning had highest turnover (23%) and highest recurrence (15-23%)

National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2006
A Child’s View

University of Southern Maine Video
Child Welfare Work is Not for Everyone

- Recruit broadly….select purposefully
- Don’t spend your time training a turkey to climb a tree….hire a squirrel
- Do what it takes to keep the competent and the committed
- Impact is a 3 legged-stool: Recruitment, Selection and Retention
Children’s Bureau: Recruitment & Retention Grantees

- University at Albany
- University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
- Michigan State University
- University of Iowa
- University of Michigan
- University of Southern Maine
- Fordham University
- University of Denver
NC Child Welfare Workers Say

- Intention to remain on the job is related significantly to:
  - Accurate job portrayal
  - Match between their skills and the job
Recruitment: Finding the Best

Realistic Recruitment

- Presents an accurate picture of the job and the organization
- Promotes a more informed decision by the applicant
Recruitment Strategies

- Link to mission and public image
- Expand outreach
  - older workers, students, racial diversity, immigrants, international
- Expand strategies
  - print, TV, internet
- Agency staff as recruiters
- Streamline the process
Selection: Hiring the Best

- Competency-based Selection
  - Focus on underlying competencies
  - Multiple job related assessments
  - Consistent, well trained selection teams

- Realistic Job Previews
  - Introduction to the job
  - Balanced view of opportunities and challenges
  - Client and worker perspectives
  - Many RJP options
Impact of a Realistic Job Preview: University of Michigan

- Workers who saw the RJP were significantly more likely to:
  - Indicate a commitment to remain in child welfare for five years
  - Say that the application and selection process helped them cope with job pressures
  - Say that the agency’s honesty made them feel more loyal, and

- Less likely to say they would “never have taken the job if they had known what it was like.”
Arizona Realistic Job Preview Video

- Developed by team of agency workers and supervisors in Phoenix
- Supported by a trained group of current workers who are on call to answer questions from applicants.
Partners for Retention

Visionary Leadership
Supervision: Quantity and Quality

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Role of Leadership

- Inspire with a vision
- Align agency values, mission and practice
- Provide resources to do the job
- Create a learning organization
- Communicate
- Celebrate performance
Supervision: Quality & Quantity

- Providing emotional support
- Expressing approval and concern
- Being warm and friendly
- Providing work-related assistance
- Fostering on-the-job learning
  - Peer mentoring
  - Supervisory coaching
Supervisors and managers are the architects of organizational climate for their staff.
Organizational Climate and Retention

- Mission Driven
- Performance Based
- Affirming
Organizational Retention Strategies

- Agency mission is clear and workers feel valued as contributors to that mission
- Clear expectations and measurable performance objectives
- Staff able to use knowledge and skills
- Professional discretion and participatory decision making
- Open communication and team work
- Opportunities for professional growth and education
- A rewards and recognition program
- Family-friendly job supports
Intervention Research and Retention Practices

- The correlates of retention and turnover have been identified
- What interventions stem turnover and increase retention?
An Experimental Study of Child Welfare Worker Turnover in NC

- Random assignment to 17 intervention and 17 control groups
- Provision of intervention:
  - Supervisor and manager training in recruitment, selection, retention skills
  - Toolkits and TA for transfer of learning
- Collection of data between 12/1/04 and 9/1/08
Results

- Significant improvements for the intervention group on:
  - Self efficacy
  - Organizational commitment
  - Agency affirmation
  - Shared mission
  - Depersonalization
  - Role clarity
  - Supervisor practice support
  - Supervisor team support
  - Intent to leave
Impact of Intervention on Retention

Survival Curve

Group (n=613)

- Control
- Intervention

Cum Survival

Days on Job

0 30 60 90 120 150 180 210 240 270 300 330 360 390 420
Impact of Evidence-Based Practice on Staff Turnover (Aarons, et al., 2009)

- Effect of EBP implementation on staff retention in context of statewide, randomized trial of intervention designed to reduce child neglect.
- 21 teams consisting of 153 Home-based service providers were followed over 29 months.
- SafeCare with & without fidelity monitoring; Services as usual with and without monitoring.
- Greater staff retention in the condition where the EBP was implemented along with ongoing fidelity monitoring presented to staff as supportive consultation.
Perspectives on EBP Implementation and Turnover

- Having to learn new skills and dissatisfaction with SC or with being monitored may have led to some of the older CCMs to quit their jobs.
- Learning skills like SC were motivators to stay with current employers.
- Implementation of EBPs helps to recruit and retain new staff.
An Innovative Model to Improve Recruitment and Retention

New York State Agency Based Design and Improvement Teams

- Annual, longitudinal design
- Effectiveness of the intervention measured by improvements in participants’ survey responses and a case study of each site
- Surveys examine perceptions of work environment, agency culture, job satisfaction
Design Teams:
State University of New York, Albany

- Local agency teams focus on organizational culture and work issues.
- Workers, supervisors, and managers served on design teams.
- New York District Commissioner
University at Albany Results

- Mentoring and coaching supervisors in team building activities improved worker retention in New York State.
- Participants’ total satisfaction significantly improved as did satisfaction with supervision and a perception that the work they did mattered.
- Dissatisfaction with the nature of the work was a significant predictor of the worker’s intention to leave.
- Intent to leave influenced by:
  - Satisfaction with supervision
  - Opportunity for promotion
  - Agency communication
- Agency leaders could inspire and facilitate or constrain and impede teams.
Lessons Learned

- Pay explicit attention to recruitment, selection and retention—all three.
- Child welfare supervisors matter.
- Data are a powerful tool in developing the agency’s awareness of and commitment to recruitment and retention; and the targeting of specific interventions.
- Sustained recruitment and retention focus requires imbedding the effort within the organizational climate.


