

National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning
Hunter College School of Social Work of the City University of New York
129 E. 79th Street - New York, New York 10075
Tel. 212-452-7043 Fax. 212-452-7475
Email: gmallon@hunter.cuny.edu

**Training of Child Welfare Agency Supervisors in the Effective Delivery and
Management of Federal Independent Living Service for Youth in Foster
Care**

**Grant No. 90CW1131/02
Final Report**

Budget Period: October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008

Project Summary/Abstract: The Hunter College School of Social Work, in collaboration with subcontractor, the National Foster Care Coalition, along with our state and city partners in this project the Oregon Department of Human Services, State Office for Services to Children and Families, the New York City Administration for Children's Services and the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children's Services proposes to develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate a competency-based training curriculum for public child welfare agency supervisors to insure the effective delivery and management of federal independent living service for youth in foster care.

Objectives: To develop a training curriculum and supervisory transfer of learning guidebook to be used for child welfare agency supervisors in the effective delivery and management of federal independent living service for youth in foster care; To field test and revise a training curriculum and supervisory transfer of learning guidebook; To evaluate a training curriculum and the supervisory transfer of learning guidebook to be used for child welfare agency supervisors; To finalize curriculum and conduct training for training teams from each partner organization who will conduct the training curriculum for child welfare agency supervisors; and To disseminate the training curriculum and supervisory transfer of learning guidebook to be used for child welfare agency supervisors in the effective delivery and management of federal independent living service for youth in foster care and to share the findings from the evaluation.

Approach: The Hunter College School of Social Work, in collaboration with subcontractors as well as our state and city partners in this project (Mississippi, Oregon, and the City of New York) will accomplish its objectives through the development and dissemination of a competency-based training program for supervisors and the creation of a on-line transfer of learning guidebook consisting series of activities, checklists and informational resources to enhance supervision ensuring positive outcomes for youth in foster care. This competency-based training program addressing both the continued acquisition of knowledge and skills in the areas of positive youth development, collaboration, cultural competence, and permanent connections, as it relates to the effective management delivery and management of federal independent living services for youth in foster care and the development of tools to promote educational supervision, assessing outcomes, monitoring systems and managing resources. We will focus on the specific areas of assessment, youth involvement in decision making, identification of culturally competent program services, identification of areas of stress that impact youth, strategies for dealing with crisis situations, working with youth to develop permanent connections and developing collaborations. We will incorporate youth voice into our materials through digital stories created by young people in our partner organizations.

Results: The results envisioned over the three year grant period is that these training modules will increase child welfare supervisor's ability to supervise a worker in the following areas: Assessing a youth's readiness for ILP services, supports, and training; Identifying culturally competent ILP program services and activities; utilizing positive development principles for involving youth in decision making, implementation and evaluation of training and program activities; identifying areas of stress and its impact on youth in foster care; working with youth to help them deal with crisis situations and to assess the results of the intervention; and to develop and maintain permanent connections; and collaborating with both inter- and intra-agency resource people to achieve positive outcomes for youth transitioning to adulthood. The project was evaluated by a trained evaluator and professor at the Hunter College School of Social

Work. This training curriculum and related tools will increase supervisory knowledge about their states' Chafee Program as well as additional federal, state and local initiatives available to youth in foster care.

1. Project Implementation

During the second half of the project's third year the following activities have been accomplished:

- a. Website enhanced containing all learning circle discussion guides, supervisory overview discussion guides and resource materials, OJT activities and updated resources. Since the website launch there have been over 1470 visitors.
- b. Project hosted the only NYC site for the International Day of Sharing Stories on May 16, 2008 and previewed the New York City digital stories to public and private agency staff, policy makers and university staff.
- c. Completed second learning circle in Oregon (13 participants).
- d. Delivered two day Train the Trainer sessions in New York City (13 participants) and Oregon (11 participants) in August and September.
- e. Completed three digital stories with Oregon young people and two staff in New York City.
- f. Invited to present at Scaling the Summit Conference in Denver, Colorado and the West Coast Trainer's Conference in San Diego.
- g. Project highlighted in the CRS Report on Youth Transitioning from Foster Care.
- h. In conjunction with Oregon supervisory learning circle participants delivered customized staff training for their workers in Salem, Medford and Portland reaching approximately 75 workers. Topics focused on materials from youth permanency, youth development and strengths-based practice learning circles.

A: Ongoing meetings with all project partners and collaborators.

- In April 2008, after many discussions with the new independent living coordinator in Mississippi we were advised that they could not arrange for another supervisory learning circle. They would participate in any follow-up evaluation.
- We continued to work closely with our contacts in Oregon to recruit learning circle participants for the second learning circle. In arranging the Train the Trainer session on Facilitating Learning Circles, they were able to recruit a broad range of participants from DHS trainers to the provider community. Additionally, the state independent living coordinator recruited the three young people for the digital story workshop.

- Our partners at NYC ACS/OYD had four staff participate in the Train the Trainer session on Facilitating Learning Circles and the ASRN will host a supervisory learning circle in 2009.
- Ongoing communication with our partner NFCC continued in the development of the discussion guides as well as participation in the Train the Trainer session on Facilitating Learning Circles in Oregon.
- Attended Grantees meeting in Washington, D.C. on August 4 – 6, 2008.

Lessons Learned

- Building strong relationships with our partners in Oregon and New York City has facilitated the delivery of the learning circles and production of digital stories. In addition, there was consistent staff support in Oregon during the projects tenure and even with changes in NYC staff we were able to maintain project deliverables. However, Mississippi had a total change in personnel both in staff training and adolescent services during our second year which made it difficult to build project sustainability.
- Based on the competing training priorities with all our partners having the materials on the project website facilitated access to ongoing training and use of the materials.
- In our Oregon learning circles with supervisory support, we designed specific training modules that we delivered to their staff to enhance their supervision on youth permanency, youth development, strengths-based practice and preparation for adulthood. Those supervisors recruited their staff and other colleagues for the training seminars. They all participated in the training sessions with their staff.

C. Curriculum Development

- During the third year of the project we finalized the six learning circle discussion guides and posted them on the project website.
- We used the input of supervisors to finalize the web-based OJT activities.
- We launched the project website: www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/pass . Since its launch we have had over 1470 visitors.
- We disseminated DVD's to the following states; Conn., New Jersey, Idaho, California, Oregon, Hawaii, New Mexico, Virginia, Colorado, Louisiana, Delaware, Texas, Utah, Florida, Alaska, Pennsylvania, Wyoming, and Arkansas. The University of Houston is using the stories in their casebook for faculty who teach child welfare. Arkansas is using the stories in their new worker training. Thus far we have disseminated over 100 DVD's and they are also posted on our web site.
- We presented the learning circle model at the Scaling the Summit conference in August 2008 which resulted in initial conversations with the

Butler Institute for Families, University of Denver to incorporate our learning circle model into supervisory trainings.

- In August 2008 we presented the model at the West Coast Trainer's Conference and received positive feedback on the model. We disseminated over 20 DVD's to trainers and they have reported using the digital stories in their training programs.

Lessons Learned

- We used an emergent curriculum design in the development of our materials which gave us time to create the most effective discussion guides and resource materials.
- We have used the ideas of supervisors from our learning circles to create OJT activities. We used an existing format for activities developed by our colleagues at Portland State University.

D. Training Delivery

- We conducted our second learning circle in Oregon during May 2008 – July 2008. We had a consistent group of thirteen participants. We had a trainer from Portland State University as part of the learning circle but not as a co-trainer.
- In April 2008, after many discussions with the new independent living coordinator in Mississippi we were advised that they could not arrange for another supervisory learning circle.
- In August 2008 presented at the PASS learning circle model at the Scaling the Summit Conference in Denver, Colorado and the West Coast Trainer's Conference in San Diego with our Oregon partner. We received excellent evaluations and have been in contact with Butler Institute for Families regarding our learning circle model.
- On August 26 – 27, we held a two day Trainer the Trainer session on Facilitating Learning Circles in Oregon. There were 11 participants representing state trainers, three supervisors from the learning circles and representatives from the provider ILP community.
- On September 18 -19, we held the same training in New York City. We had 13 participants. Our partner NYC ACS sent four staff from the Office of Youth Development. We also had trainers from the New York City contract agency community.

Lessons Learned

- The learning circles format has been well received. Using a ritualized training format of focus questions, voices from the field -digital stories, tools and techniques, integration activity and action planning over several sessions is a new type of training design and keeps participants interests throughout the six sessions. Additionally, the format provides consistency

- for the supervisors and creates continuity between the sessions as they report back on their action plans.
- We continue to believe that the ideal learning circle needs to have at least ten participants as these circles are running for a period of three months. We have found that supervisors are willing to make the commitment as long the participation period is made clear from the invitation.

2. Project Outcome Evaluation

We have developed an outcome evaluation methodology with the assistance of Professor S.J. Dodd, of the Hunter College School of Social Work, the evaluator of our project.

3. Program Evaluation

The program evaluation is being conducted by S.J. Dodd, Associate Professor at the Hunter College School of Social Work. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered during the third and final year of the project. Quantitative data included a self-administered reaction survey completed by all participants at the end of each day of training; a pre- and post-test knowledge survey completed at the beginning of the first learning circle and then again at the end of the last circle; and an online feedback survey linked to the digital stories that are available for viewing online. Qualitative data was gathered both through open-ended questions at the end of the self-administered reaction surveys that were completed after each circle, and through more in-depth telephone interviews with past participants.

4. Summary

The project has completed the goals developed in our time line. We feel confident that our project partners in New York City and Oregon will sustain the training content through the project website. Our project partner Mississippi will benefit from the website and all the available materials.

Though the project has ended we will continue to support the material content and new training design concept through the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning.