

Raymond A. Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville
ASFA Supervisor-Team Training

Anita P. Barbee, MSSW, Ph.D./Becky F. Antle, MSSW, Ph.D.
Phone: (502) 852-0416; E-mail: anita.barbee@louisville.edu
Phone: (502) 852-2917; E-mail: becky.antle@louisville.edu

COLLABORATORS: Kent School: Riaan van Zyl, PhD

BACKGROUND: The University of Louisville Kent School of Social Work **received a three-year grant (2000-2003) from the DHHS, ACF, Children's Bureau** to train supervisors and their teams in effective coaching/mentoring and casework skills in order to promote ASFA outcomes. Now the Cabinet delivers this training to supervisors and their teams. There were a number of research questions related to the effectiveness of the training, including trainee satisfaction, learning, and transfer of skills. There were also questions related to individual and organizational mediators of these training outcomes. Finally, there were questions related to the impact of this training transfer on organizational outcomes of child safety, permanency, and well-being.

METHODOLOGY:

- Pre-Post Experimental-Control Research Design
- 72 supervisors (40 experimental, 32 control), 331 workers (195 experimental, 136 control) participated in training evaluation
- Over 1000 cases were reviewed in evaluation of impact of transfer on outcomes
- Trainees (supervisors and workers) completed pre-training surveys (measured individual and organizational mediator variables, knowledge, skill) and two post-training surveys (measured satisfaction, learning, transfer)
- Transfer also measured through chart file review on casework skills from training
- Organizational outcomes measured through management reports on safety, permanency, well-being

KEY FINDINGS:

- Significant increase in knowledge pre- to post-training
- Significant correlation between utility reactions (know why training important) and learning
- Learning readiness, supervisor support, and learning predict training transfer
- The more trainees value learning as a life-long endeavor and the more support they feel from their supervisors/managers, the more they learn and transfer skills from training
- Training refresher courses after classroom training promote significantly greater training transfer
- Significantly better child safety outcomes (fewer recidivism referrals) for training group
- Significantly better child well-being outcomes (more visits with families and better dental care) for training group

USEFULNESS TO CABINET:

- This series of studies demonstrates the University of Louisville's expertise in training evaluation and the significance of training evaluation for organizational outcomes.
- This research found that training has an important impact on practice skills and federally mandated outcomes.
- The lessons learned suggest the importance of promoting a learning organization.
- UL can provide interventions to promote individual and team learning readiness, which can provide the Cabinet with a greater return on investment for training, as well as enhanced child welfare outcomes.