

Strength-Base, Solution-Focused Supervision

Web-Streamer Supplement

Participants in the web-streamed afternoon session of the “Strength-based, Solution-focused Supervision” workshop should review handouts one through six and the key morning content summary material listed below prior to the web-streamed session.

- Workshop rationale: It has long been recognized that supervisors play a critical role in the transfer of learning process and overall staff development. Moreover, the learning process for workers is accelerated when supervisors understand and model the same values and skills that workers are expected to demonstrate with clients (parallel process). This workshop is intended to assist supervisors in supporting their workers in practicing and applying the Strength-based, Solution-focused Approach (SBSFA) with client families.
- The SBSFA is comprised of elements of the Interactional Helping Model (4 phases: Preparatory, Beginning, Middle, End) and the Solution-focused approach which emphasizes resolution of problems and challenges by focusing on development of clear goals and developing strategies built on strengths and exceptions to the problem.
- Three focus areas of supervision are managing current work, envisioning future practice improvement and external connections.
- The Open Systems Model (OSM) is a way of conceptualizing the work of any organization or functional unit in a dynamic manner. The OSM encourages attention to all the components of an agency or unit in order to maximize efficiency toward targeted goals consistent with the values of the organization. The OSM also helps units within an organization to operate with more unit to unit consistency. The OSM requires a clear unit vision of a positive future; clear and measurable unit outcomes; shared values; internal (unit) and external (client and inter-unit) accountability measures; efficient processes; and sufficient resources especially competent, confident and committed staff.
- To successfully implement the Open Systems Model requires supervisors to develop and promote:
 1. A positive vision of the future (what the unit aspires to become).
 2. Unit outcomes
 3. Measures of unit performance (internal success)
 4. Measures of effectiveness with clients and in collaborating with other units (accountability)
 5. Assessment of worker performance level,

6. Fostering the worker's ability to self-assess and gain proficiency through experience,
 7. Promoting worker adherence to social work values,
 8. Promoting unit use of culturally competent strategies and skills.
- The SBSFA provides many tools for supervisors to accomplish the above requirements by
 1. Modeling of the SBSFA in supervision at the unit and worker levels (parallel process) promotes a positive vision of the future and measurable progress built on strengths.
 2. Using focused questions to gain information about the worker's competency level,
 3. Promoting a sense of partnership and mutual responsibility for a worker's professional development.
 - The Interactional Helping Model was developed by Lawrence Shulman, PhD of the University of Buffalo and is a standard component of many social work curricula. The 4 phases of the Interactional Helping Model and associated skills provide a structure and tools for both clinical practice and for unit meetings and planned conferences with individual workers. The model helps to insure that there is a clear focus to the interactions and that there is continuity from meeting to meeting. The Interactional framework described in Handout #5 is easily adapted for use by the supervisor in interactions with the unit or individual workers.
 - The Interactional skills of Tuning-in to Self and Others helps to maintain the engagement of the supervisor and worker and models the quality of relationship that workers and clients should experience.
 - The Solution-focused practice model pioneered by Insoo Kim Berg and Steven DeShazer and promoted in the work of Andrew Turnell and Steve Edwards in their book *Signs of Safety* is already a familiar component of child welfare practice in Minnesota. The 7 Key Strategies and associated skills of the Solution-focused Model complement the Interactional Helping Model and operate together with the Interactional Helping Model to form the SBSFA.