

REACHING OUT

CURRENT ISSUES FOR CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE Spring 2017

From the Director	Cover
Introduction to Coaching	2
Coaching Foundational Theories	4
The WOOP Approach to Goal Setting	5
Cultural Humility in Coaching	6
The Perpetual Benefit of Coaching to Critical Thinking	7
The Child Welfare Coaching Framework	8
Coaching Approaches	10
Family-Centered Coaching	11
The Child Welfare Skills-Based Coaching Model	12
Coaching in Action: Scaling Questions	13
Coaching Brings Balance to Child Welfare Supervision	14
Connecting Coaching to Consistent Practice in Counties Large and Small	16
Coaching Supervisors to Reach Best Practice in Alaska	18
Coaching to SOP in Modoc County	20
Ethical Issues of Coaching in Child Welfare	21
Field Training/Advising in Core 3.0	22
Resources/Announcements/Next Issue	23

COACHING IN THE FIELD OF CHILD WELFARE

By Susan Brooks, Director, Northern California Training Academy

As we prepare to host the National Conference on Coaching in Davis, California, in conjunction with this issue of *Reaching Out*, we cannot help but reflect back on what an honor it has been to play a role in the implementation and integration of coaching in the field of child welfare.

Our journey with coaching began in 2008. Intrigued by the work of the Southern Regional Quality Improvement Center on Child Protection, a 10-state collaborative focused on clinical supervision, we designed the *Tools for Supervisory Excellence* series, a 10-month program which included a coaching component. We quickly discovered the benefits of coaching and started to infuse coaching into other projects, such as motivational interviewing, and, most notably, safety organized practice (SOP). Since 2008, we have supported hundreds of coaching hours per year and integrated coaching into numerous programs that serve to support and enhance a child welfare agency's ability to work collaboratively with families toward achieving safety, permanency and well-being. In 2012, we published *The Coaching Toolkit for Child Welfare Practice*, which achieved international reach and helped cultivate a national coaching network stretching from Alaska to Rhode Island.

We have learned much on this road to coaching—first and foremost, that it is worth the investment, and it is an investment, but one that works. Looking at the implementation of SOP, for instance, we have clearly and repeatedly seen

that implementation has been most profound in those counties that have maintained a continuity of coaching since 2010. While this observation may be anecdotal, it is noteworthy; we have not witnessed the success of a new “program” as thoroughly as we have with SOP, and we believe much of that is due to the ongoing support of coaching.

We have also learned that supervisors are key to the coaching process. When we began coaching, UC Davis coaches focused on individual social workers in the 28 counties we serve in Northern California, but we quickly discovered that while we were making a profound impact on those workers, we needed to focus much more on the supervisors of those workers so that the entire agency would make a shift in practice. We now almost solely focus on supervisors and coach them to implementation, as well as how to coach their staff.

In this edition of *Reaching Out*, you will find articles on the foundations of coaching in health and human services, and on lessons learned through the early and ongoing implementation efforts in Northern California and throughout the country. It was the early research and evidence that pointed us to the positive impact of coaching and has kept us tenacious in our quest to develop coaching as common practice across the field of health and human services, and it is our honor to now share our breadth of experience, knowledge and practice with you.

UC DAVIS
EXTENSION
CENTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES



CONTINUING AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

AN INTRODUCTION TO COACHING

By Nancy Hafer and Jason Borucki, Northern California Training Academy

It is no surprise that adults have been found to learn best and improve skills more effectively and efficiently when they receive follow-up support and ongoing performance feedback after they participate in a training event (Guskey, 2000). For more complex skills, such as critical thinking and decision making, the value of ongoing support and feedback can be only that much more significant. When considering the constant demand for critical decision-making skills that social workers face, and how significantly those skills can impact the safety and well-being of the children and families with whom they work, the potential benefit for providing social workers with ongoing support and feedback, or coaching, becomes virtually limitless.

WHY COACHING?

Implementation science researchers claim that “human services are far more complex than any other industry” (Fixsen, Blasé, Naoom, & Wallace, 2009, p. 531). This may be why classroom training alone has not been shown to result in changes in practitioner behavior or improvements in client outcomes (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). One of the problems with traditional approaches to training in the human services field is that staff often do not know how to implement what they learn and have no way to receive support or feedback when they do attempt to apply what they have learned in actual work situations. Imagine, for example, the scenario of a child welfare social worker attending a classroom training on interviewing techniques one day and being expected to be back in the field the next, having had little or no contact with their supervisor about what they learned in training and how they might apply it. Even if presented an opportunity to apply what they were taught out in the field on the following day, chances favor the social worker would not be comfortable trying something new so soon without additional practice. Over time, without any follow up or feedback, the information obtained at the training may be forgotten completely, resulting in a broken transfer of learning that costs the social worker time and the child welfare agency money—and this is to say nothing about what services the family may have potentially lost through their interaction with a less skilled social worker.



Coaching, on the other hand, attempts to facilitate the transfer of learning as part of an ongoing exchange between the coach and the learner. For a social worker with a coach, a classroom training is only the beginning of the learning process. The true learning transfer takes place after the learner discusses with their coach what they learned and how they might apply that knowledge in the field, practices applying their knowledge with their coach, applies this knowledge in the field, and continues to work with their coach until the desired skill level is obtained and consistently exercised to the benefit of children and families who come into contact with the agency.

When the agency’s investment in its social workers’ training is enforced by the support of the coach and the result is a successful transfer of learning, coaching truly pays.

WHAT IS COACHING?

Coaching is a process by which the coach creates structured, focused interaction with learners and uses appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the learner, making a positive impact on the organization.

(Mink, Owen, & Mink, 1993; Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2010)



HOW DOES COACHING PAY?

Return on investment (ROI) is typically examined as the net benefits derived from the purchase divided by cost, expressed as a percentage. This essentially details the profit gained by investments. This hard profit line can be difficult, if not impossible, to apply in child welfare; however, the social ROI can be defined. Positive social gains are brought to the organization by implementing coaching. For example, by increasing social worker confidence and abilities to engage families, rates of timely reunification may increase. If coaching leads to workers with enhanced skills, then organizations will be more effective as a whole, which translates into more effective use of fiscal resources as measured by improved outcomes—and improved outcomes for children and families.



HOW DOES COACHING WORK?

The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning evaluated a group of 87 teachers from different schools. The results of the study indicate that 85 percent of those teachers who received ongoing support from instructional coaches implemented newly learned instructional methods. In another study conducted by the same group, research indicates that teachers who did not receive support implemented newly learned strategies at a rate of only 10 percent (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Interestingly, learners can demonstrate new skills in the artificial classroom training exercises, but to transfer learning to everyday work remains low without follow-up coaching.

In her synthesis of coaching research, Gallacher (1997) describes several key aspects that lead to authentic learning:

- Support and encouragement through the opportunity to review experiences, discuss feelings, describe frustrations and check perceptions with a partner
- Opportunity to fine-tune skills or strategies through technical feedback and technical assistance from a coaching partner
- Time and encouragement to analyze practices and decision making at a conscious level

- Ability to adapt or generalize skills or strategies by considering what is needed to facilitate particular outcomes, how to modify the skill or practice to better fit interactions with specific families or practitioners, or what results may occur from using the skill or practice in different ways
- Opportunities to reflect on what learners perceive or how they make decisions, which help improve their knowledge and understanding of professional practices and activities

WHO HAS TIME FOR COACHING?

On a short timeline, which in a fast-paced, high-stakes child welfare setting is often the only timeline anyone can find time to consider, coaching may not seem like a realistic option. On a longer timeline, however, the benefits not only ultimately save time, but begin to pay exponential dividends. This is because coaching in child welfare is inherently geared toward increasing the critical thinking skills of the learner. When the learner begins to make good, independent decisions that are in keeping with best practice, everyone benefits, including, and especially, the children and families in care.

References

- Cox, E., Bachkirova, T., & Clutterbuck, D. (2010). *The complete handbook of coaching*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Fixsen, D.L., Blasé, K.A., Naoom, S.F., & Wallace, F. (2009). Core implementation components. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 19(5), 531.
- Fixsen, D.L., Naoom, S.F., Blasé, K.A., Friedman, R.M., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature*. Tampa, FL: The National Implementation Research Network.
- Gallacher, K. (1997). Supervision, mentoring, and coaching. In W.P.J. McCollum & C. Catlett (Eds.), *Reforming personnel in early intervention* (pp. 191-214). Baltimore: Brookes.
- Guskey, T.R. (2000). *Evaluating professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Mink, O., Owen, K., & Mink, B. (1993). *Developing high-performance people: The art of coaching*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

COACHING FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES

"Cultural humility is an acknowledgement of one's own barriers to true intercultural understanding. It is the difference between intellectually knowing another culture and being able to truly relate to it"
(Unite for Sight, 2011).

Three major theories form the basis for coaching in child welfare: appreciative inquiry, cultural humility and adult learning. Both appreciative inquiry and cultural humility are based on inquiry and a respect for the others—the other learners, staff members, families, clients and even organizations. Adult learning provides the setting and structure for a positive learning experience.

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is defined by its founders David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva as a paradigm based on the premise that "organizations change in the direction in which they inquire." The driving principle is that an organization [or individual] that investigates problems keeps finding problems, whereas an organization [or individual] that investigates what there is to appreciate in itself will discover what success is (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Often noted as the theoretical underpinning of strength-based theory, AI places emphasis on how questions are asked—the words chosen when asking questions will impact the answers provided, reaffirming the quality of our language and how we talk about our work, our relationships and ourselves with others. Central to appreciative inquiry is the "affirmative topic." This is what begins appreciative inquiry. During this time, the topic of the inquiry is decided. For example, a standard topic would be listed as "To increase the use of motivational interviewing." The affirmative topic would be redefined as: "To develop authentic partnerships with families."

Cultural humility is an alternative approach to that of cultural competency. Through cultural humility, individuals engage in a process of mutual understanding and awareness of self in relationship to others. When coaches embrace cultural humility, it precludes them from operating under the assumption that they are "culturally competent," encouraging them to learn about those with whom they interact. Engaging in this process of self-awareness and self-reflection will ideally awaken the coach to the power imbalance of coaches and learners, which may influence their response to the coaching they provide. Coaches, learners, supervisors and agency leadership are encouraged to be flexible and humble enough to know that the process of coaching will be dynamic and potentially complicated. They must acknowledge what they do not know and search for and access resources to help.

Adult learning research (andragogy) has made it clear how adults learn new information and integrate learning into practice.

Adult learners (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998, pp. 64-68):

- Must be helped to recognize the value or benefit of the learning to be undertaken before it begins
- Need to direct their learning—learning itself cannot be mandated by a supervisor
- Become ready to learn when they recognize the need to learn in order to deal with real-life situations

- Focus their learning on gaining the knowledge or skill necessary for real-life situations
- Will not have a meaningful learning experience if they do not internally find a motivation to learn

The formal coaching process provides an avenue for an enhanced adult learning experience. Elaine Cox (2006) asserts that "andragogy [adult learning] has reached its zenith with the advent of coaching as a learning approach" (p. 195).

THE FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES AND THE COACHING FRAMEWORK

Informed by appreciative inquiry, cultural humility and adult learning theory and applied to the context of child welfare, a successfully implemented coaching framework enables child welfare leaders to provide a comprehensive and embedded professional development plan that can have a systemically positive impact throughout the organization as well as everyone being impacted by organizational decisions and interactions, including those most important to child welfare: the children and families being served.

References

- Cooperrider, D.L., & Srivastva, S. (1987). Appreciative inquiry in organizational life, *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, 1, 129-169.
- Cox, E. (2006). An adult learning approach to coaching. In D. Stober & A. Grant (Eds.). *The handbook of evidence based coaching*, (pp. 193-218). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Knowles, M.S., Holton, E.F., III, & Swanson, R.A. (1998). *The Adult Learner*. Houston: Gulf Publishing.
- Unite for Sight (2011). *Asset based community development, Module 10, Trust and cultural humility*. Retrieved February 15, 2012, from <http://www.uniteforsight.org/community-development/abcd/module10>.

THE WOOP APPROACH TO CHILD WELFARE GOAL SETTING

By Nancy Hafer, Northern California Training Academy

A key attribute of a great coach is the ability to help learners achieve their goals. In social work practice, this can mean everything from improving engagement skills to asking more useful questions or assessing safety and risk more accurately. Coaches sometimes offer encouragement or a nudge in the right direction, and sometimes coaches are responsible for challenging perspectives and giving more direct feedback.

But why is it that sometimes change for people comes easily, and sometimes it's a painful process that doesn't show results? And what can the coach do to impact results?

According to Gabriele Oettingen, as described in the book *Rethinking Positive Thinking*, it has something to do with how much we want the change, and how willing we are to overcome the obstacles in our way. After researching the phenomenon of change, she discovered a system for goal setting that has shown profound results. WOOP, as it is called, is the method which has taken the field of education by storm.

WOOP (Wish, Outcome, Obstacle and Plan) may sound fairly straightforward, and thankfully it is—with some qualifiers, of course. Oettingen found that discovering and visualizing the **wish**, or the dream, is a must. This is something to be contended with, for in the professional world, how much are individual workers connected to the wish, or dream of the goal? In child welfare, for example, if we continue to set goals, or desired **outcomes**, to increase the usage of Structured Decision Making without connecting that goal to something internally motivating for social workers, we should not be surprised when they fall short of these goals. Secondly, Oettingen discovered what she calls, “mental contrasting,” or contrasting our wishes with the **obstacles** in our way. As the last part of the WOOP, **planning** simply (but importantly) involves writing a plan to overcome those obstacles when we find ourselves face to face with them.

Fortunately for the field of child welfare and health and human services, most professionals in the field already have many great coaching skills. The skills of social workers are transferable to that of coaching: asking great questions, listening and engaging people in meaningful conversations are an everyday part of best child welfare practice.

However, one skill that has been more difficult to adapt is that of goal setting, which brings us back to what puts the W in WOOP.

Connecting skill attainment to the wish, or dream, is, indeed, essential, and while it may be difficult to consider anyone dreaming about a goal such as increasing their usage of Structured Decision Making, this is where the skill of the coach becomes essential. Helping a social worker discover (as opposed to stating) the important connection between a certain skill and the outcomes for the children and families with whom they work can have a profound impact that would be difficult to achieve using any approach other than coaching.

By employing the WOOP approach (or WOOPing it), child welfare coaches will have another useful strategy for helping social workers improve their ability to support the safety and well-being of children and families in care.

COACHING WITH CULTURAL HUMILITY IN CHILD WELFARE

Humility is not to be confused as meekness, but the “ability to acknowledge gaps in one’s knowledge, and openness to new ideas, contradictory information and advice.”

(Tangney, 2000, P. 73)

Child welfare workers are already trained to practice cultural humility to better understand the context of the children and families with whom they work, and to likewise share the context of the agency with the family openly and honestly. This transparency, especially when presented during initial or early interactions with the family, can build trust and set the tone for collaboration and partnership moving forward.

Cultural humility is just as crucial to the practice of coaching, even though the relationship between coach and learner is a bit different than the relationship between social worker and family.

What is the same, interestingly, is the perceived power imbalance between either set of groups. The social worker is often perceived to have power over their client, and the coach is perceived to have power over the learner (especially when the coach is also the learner’s supervisor). By openly acknowledging this power relationship, the power imbalance is not necessarily diminished, but it is made transparent. Just as transparency will help a social worker to guard against many of the natural fears families in care often bring with them to their first meeting with child welfare, so too will

transparency guard against the natural fears a learner will have of being disciplined or judged for demonstrating a lack of competence in a particular skill area.

To work from a perspective of true cultural humility in an effective coaching session, each individual, especially the coach, should a) declare his or her own lifelong commitment to learning, b) recognize when potential power imbalances are present, and c) be flexible and humble enough to accept that the process of coaching will be dynamic and potentially complicated. In addition, the coach must acknowledge what they do not know and search for and access resources to help. Further, and perhaps most importantly, it is crucial for the learner to understand that coaching exists for the sole purpose of improving the learner’s skill in a particular area, rather than appraising the skill or lack of skill they have shown in the past.

A coach who adheres to these principles embraces the differences between themselves and the learner and openly acknowledges that their own privileged perspective may guide their work with the learner, resulting in a more transparent, honest and collaborative relationship—one that will include agreements, changes and power imbalances over time, but one that ultimately benefits the learner’s desire to improve their skills in the interest of better serving children and families.

References

Tangney, J.P. (2000). Humility: Theoretical perspectives, empirical findings and directions for future research. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 19, 7-82.

Unite for Sight (2011). *Asset based community development, Module 10, Trust and cultural humility*. Retrieved February 15, 2012, from [http://www.uniteforsight.org/community-development/abcd/module 10](http://www.uniteforsight.org/community-development/abcd/module%2010)

THE PERPETUAL BENEFIT OF COACHING TO CRITICAL THINKING

By Jason Borucki, Northern California Training Academy

One of the common roadblocks to the implementation of coaching is the notion that coaching takes too much time and, therefore, is cost-prohibitive. While there are certainly costs associated with training coaches and an important demand for time dedicated to coaching for it to be done correctly, one of the most important facts missed about coaching is that it ultimately allows professionals to slow down in order to go faster, and farther, via enhanced critical thinking skills.

In the context of child welfare, coaching is designed to nourish and improve upon the critical thinking skills of the social worker through the use of questions designed to get a social worker to reflect upon the information they are currently using to make decisions, and what more information they might need to consider in order to make consistently better ones in any number of circumstances. It is through this exchange of information between

the coach and the learner that the learner is challenged to take their thought process deeper in an effort to root out triggers of poor decisions and recognize the value of considering the information they have, checking it against bias and for credibility, and gathering what additional information may be needed to inform a decision that best serves the safety and well-being of the children and families with whom they work.

When a child welfare worker's critical decision-making skills are consistently developed and improved upon through ongoing skills-based coaching, the worker in turn makes consistently better decisions that will positively impact the decisions made on behalf of the child welfare agency. Further, outside of coaching, a coached child welfare worker with strong critical decision-making skills will demand less time of their supervisor. As a result of the quality coaching time they are receiving,

they will have the tools to make strong decisions themselves. This coached child welfare worker is also more likely to remain with the agency, which in turn saves the agency considerably in terms of the retention and hiring costs agencies face. Lastly but perhaps most importantly, coaching grooms a child welfare worker to one day become a coach, or a champion of coaching, themselves. Indeed, one of the key aspects of training coaches in Northern California is to first let them experience what it means to be coached themselves so that they can appreciate its value.

When a new generation of coaches who have experienced firsthand the value of coaching emerges to become the future child welfare leaders, the entire agency stands to benefit, and so too will the clients who interact with an agency whose internal interactions are as strengths-based and solutions-focused as their interactions with children and families.



THE CHILD WELFARE COACHING FRAMEWORK

By Nancy Hafer and Susan Brooks, Northern California Training Academy

The child welfare coaching framework is comprised of three key components necessary to build a strengths-based learning organization that supports change and growth for staff. Each component builds on the other to provide an integrated and dynamic learning structure.



CENTER RING OF THE FRAMEWORK: A STRENGTH-BASED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The center of the child welfare coaching framework is a strengths-based learning organization (Senge et al., 2005). In this environment, learners feel challenged and supported to try new skills and techniques while feeling safe enough to be vulnerable and to receive direct feedback on skills.

A safe environment that allows for change to occur does not necessarily mean it is comfortable; in fact, change may be highly uncomfortable (Whitworth, Kimsey-House, Kimsey-House, & Sandahl, 2007). All parties must come to grips with the notion that coaching leads to change, and change is uncomfortable. A trusting, secure work environment allows learners to work through feelings of discomfort and embrace change.

INNER RING OF THE FRAMEWORK: COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

The inner (middle) ring of the child welfare coaching framework is composed of the people who ensure the success of coaching—the coach, learner, supervisor and agency leadership—a community of learning. This is essential in the social work field where time is scarce, demands abound and the environment is fast paced and high pressure. Each member has special skill sets and techniques essential to creating a culture of learning.

Learners: Learners will benefit from remaining open to the coaching process. From this commitment, learners will discover they can take risks to learn new skills and be actively prepared for coaching sessions.

Supervisors: The role of supervisors is two-fold: a) to support staff who are being coached by an external coach or by a peer or other staff member; or b) to actively coach the staff, whether it be informally or formally. In either scenario, supervisors must provide staff with time to attend coaching sessions, ensure learners' goals are aligned with agency policy, and provide additional resources and support as needed.

Agency leadership: Leadership sets the stage for a successful learning environment by working to provide an environment where staff feels safe to take risks and make mistakes. Leaders must ensure coaching is not done by "name only;" time and resources must be allocated for coaches and to staff who are learning.

Coaches: Coaches support the learner in meeting a specified learning goal. They must allow for the coaching process to be learner-led and provide resources and support as needed. If the coach is not the individual learner's supervisor, he or she must ensure a communication system is in place to keep all parties informed and involved in the coaching process. Coaches also create a coaching agreement with leadership, supervisor and learner to ensure all key players have appropriate expectations and a clear understanding of the coaching process.

OUTER RING OF THE FRAMEWORK: IMPLEMENTATION

In moving to the outer part of the framework—implementation—the community of learning works together to ensure the success and sustainability of the practice or intervention being implemented. At this point the goal is to build capacity, "an ongoing, thoughtfully planned effort by all members of an organization to improve how that organization operates, serves its stakeholders, fulfills its mission and approaches its vision" (Stephens and Russell, 2004, p. 241).

The outer ring represents Fixsen and colleagues' (2005) core components of implementation science. The following components work together in a multifaceted process to promote successful program or intervention implementation.

Staff selection: Hiring and sustaining qualified and effective staff is of utmost importance in implementing best practices.

Training: Learners, supervisors and other staff are given background information on the practices and skills that will be coached. These individuals must understand the vision of the practice and the relevance of what they will be learning in the upcoming coaching sessions.

Coaching: The learner and other involved staff must receive support and resources via clear communication; and feedback mechanisms and other behavior-change strategies must be in place to ensure they are learning the new practice and skills.

Performance assessment/fidelity:

Quality improvement measures provide assurance for the continuous implementation of the core components which support the learners' skills and behaviors.

Systems interventions: These interventions are designed to cooperate with external systems to ensure that financial, organizational and human resources are available to support the work of the practitioners.

Facilitative administration supports: Strong leadership provided to staff at an organizational level will support practice and maintain focus on the goal.

Decision support data systems: Systems or sources of information the organization can utilize to support decision making and implementation.

Technical and adaptive leadership: Both leadership styles are important to the implementation process. Adaptive leadership responds to complex change by reducing conflict while seeking organizational growth. Technical leadership responds quickly to help solve problems, typically in situations without a great deal of ambiguity.

References

- Fixsen, D.L., Naoom, S.F., Blasé, K.A., Friedman, R.M., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature*. Tampa, FL: The National Implementation Research Network.
- Senge, P., Scharmer, C.o., Jaworski, J., & Flowers, B.S. (2005). *Presence: An exploration of profound change in people, organizations, and society*. New York: Doubleday.
- Stephens, D., and Russell, K.W. (2004). Organizational development. Leadership, change and the future of libraries. *Library Trends*, 53(1), 238-257.
- Whitworth, L., Kimsey-House, K., Kimsey-House, H., & Sandahl, P. (2007). *Co-active coaching: New skills for coaching people towards success in work and life* (2nd ed.). Mountain View, CA: Davies-Black Publishing.



The POWERS of Solution- Based Practice

POWERS is a handy mnemonic tool for coaches to remember the steps of the solution-focused approach (Visser & Bodien, 2003).

P

Problems are acknowledged but not analyzed

O

Outcomes desired are specified

W

Where are you now on the scale?

E

Exceptions to the problem are keys to solutions

R

Relationships are enhanced and made productive

S

Small steps forward lead to larger change

COACHING APPROACHES

Solution-focused practice and reflective practice are two approaches coaches should consider prior to working with learners. Both approaches provide a comprehensive framework to implement a coaching process, and each approach has tremendous potential to positively impact the adult learner.

Note that approaches differ from models. Approaches provide a holistic or overall philosophy for coaching, while models provide structure for coaching sessions. To learn more about coaching models, please see pages 11-12.

SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED PRACTICE

The solution-focused approach to coaching intends to facilitate purposeful, positive change by emphasizing resources and personal resilience (Grant, 2011). This approach is based on solution building vs. problem solving. Grant (2011) suggests the solution-focused approach can be translated to the coaching field using the following three themes:

- Goal-orientation is an orientation toward constructing solutions through the articulating and use of approach goals and active self-regulation
- Resource activation focuses on acknowledging, identifying and activating a wide range of personal and contextual resources and personal strengths
- Problem disengagement is an explicit disengagement from problems, which is vital for full engagement in the pursuit of goals and is central to the solution-focused endeavor

Learner led, this approach is built on the belief that small increments of change lead to large increments of change over time.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Reflection is a strategy that should be used by every coach; however, it should also be considered as an overall approach—as something that drives coaching.

Dewey (1933) called for teachers to take reflective action that would entail, “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads” (p.9). Dewey identified three attributes of reflective individuals: open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness.

Reflective practice is based on the belief that learners can improve by consciously and systematically reflecting on their work performance (Farrell, 2008). As an overall approach to coaching, reflective practice enables the learner to drive their own learning process. Coaching child welfare learners focuses on improving advanced critical decision-making skills, which requires introspection, reflection and personal meaning applied to distinct settings.

References

- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think. A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process* (Revised edn.), Boston: D.C. Heath.
- Farrell, T.S.C. (2008). Reflective practice in the professional development of teachers of adult English language learners. CAELA Network Brief. Washington, DC: Center for Adult English Language Acquisition.
- Grant, A.M. (2011). Is it time to REGROW the GROW Model? Issues related to teaching coaching session structures. *The Coaching Psychologist*, 7 (2).
- Mishler, E. (1986). *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Visser, C., & Bodien, G. (2003). The POWERS of the solution focus: An effective approach to individual and organizational development. Retrieved from <http://www.mcc.nl/powers.pdf>

FAMILY-CENTERED COACHING: A MULTI-GENERATIONAL, HOLISTIC APPROACH TO IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Just as interactions between the coach and social worker should be focused beyond administrative mandates and extend to focusing on ways to enhance skills and critical thinking in the field, so, too, should interactions between the social worker and the family go above and beyond compliance issues to focus on the strengths and supports of the family to ensure they have the tools to move along the pathway to well-being.

The recent collaborative work between the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), a Kellogg Foundation grantee, on the development and implementation of family-centered coaching appears to recognize this important connection, and important next step forward, in the evolution of coaching in human services.

The Kellogg Foundation's mission is to work with children, families and communities to create the conditions for children to achieve individual success and as contributors to society. This investment was made after observing that across many fields, and especially the two-generation field, coaching was often focused on the adult or child but not on the family as a whole. It is the foundation's belief that the success of a child is dependent on the success of the entire family.

Paula Sammons is a program officer with the foundation's Family Economic Security team.

"We know that families don't segment their lives in silos or in the silo systems we've created," said Sammons in a recent interview with *Reaching Out*. "There is a critical need to support programs and partners in approaching their work with families holistically."

One of the resources the Kellogg Foundation is developing to support human services professionals' work toward this holistic approach is a family-centered coaching toolkit, which provides tools and strategies for building coaching skills and developing an overall coaching mindset. The toolkit was initially developed under a consulting contract with the Kellogg Foundation before becoming a grant as part of Building Better Programs, a special initiative of the CBPP to improve the implementation of human services for low-income individuals.

Karen Murrell, Sarah Griffen and Shelley Waters Boots have been consultants to the Kellogg Foundation and now CBPP and have been key contributors to the development of the toolkit. "I think what this curriculum does that is very different from others, is it really helps people understand when to use which approach and how to weave those together in a way that is looking at the family holistically," said Murrell.

Drawing upon practices that have been effective for helping people make changes, a recent draft of the toolkit included a focus on executive function skills, behavioral economics, trauma-informed care and a race equity lens.

"Our intention is not to create something new," said Sarah Griffen. "We draw, as often as we can, on existing tools and resources because there's a lot out there already."

The toolkit is just one of many ways in which this collaborative partnership is working to advance family-centered coaching in the interest of helping families holistically, with efforts ranging from resources for line staff to training for supervisors, as well as developing approaches for shifting entire organizational infrastructures in the direction of family centered coaching.

Informing all of these efforts, however, is a simple but crucially important underlying perspective.

"To do this work," said Murrell, "it is really done from a strengths-based perspective and from a perspective that acknowledges that the person you are working with has the solutions to their own problems, and that what you are there for is to work with them not in a directive way, [but] in a supportive way."

A draft of the toolkit is currently available on the Building Better Programs website:
<http://www.buildingbetterprograms.org>.

THE CHILD WELFARE SKILLS-BASED COACHING MODEL

The child welfare skills-based coaching model should be used when the learning goal is the attainment of a specific pre-identified skill. In this situation, the coach is typically an expert in the skill being learned. Druckman & Bjork (1991, p. 61) suggest that “[skills coaching] consists of observing students and offering hints, feedback, reminders, new tasks or redirecting a student’s attention to a salient feature—all with the goal of making the student’s performance approximate the expert’s performance as closely as possible.”

The child welfare skills-based coaching model is a seven-step process based on a series of observations and demonstrations (adapted from Rush & Sheldon, 2006, and Gallacher, 1997).

The learner is provided with time to observe an expert using the desired skills, then the learner has the opportunity to demonstrate his or her use of the skill. This model is cyclical in nature—a process of learning and engaging to help the learner integrate and implement a discrete skill. The coach using this model is “hands-on” and purposeful.

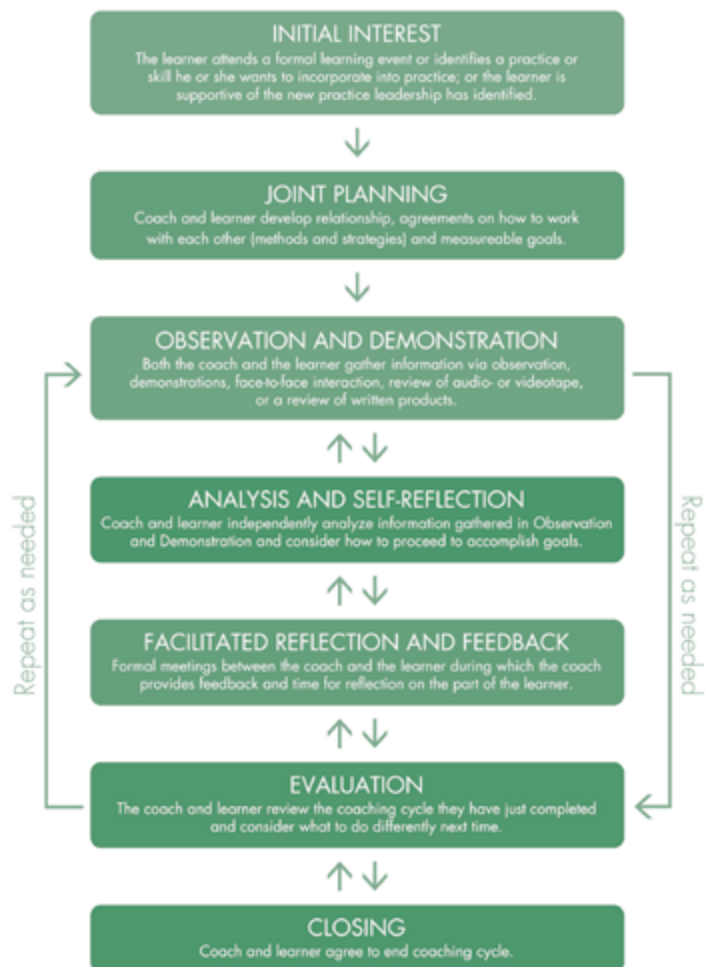
There is no time limit imposed on these seven steps; indeed, these steps sometimes occur simultaneously.

References

Druckman, D., & Bjork, R.A. (1991). *In the mind's eye: enhancing human performance*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Gallacher, K. (1997). Supervision, mentoring, and coaching. In W.P.J. McCollum & C. Catlett (Eds.), *Reforming personnel in early intervention* (pp. 191-214). Baltimore: Brookes.

Rush, M.A., & Sheldon, M.L. (2006). Coaching practices scale for assessing adherence to evidence-based early childhood intervention practices. *CASEtools*. Center for the Advanced Study of Excellence in Early Childhood and Family Support Practices. Retrieved from: www.rippcase.org/casetools/casetools_vol2_no2.pdf



COACHING IN ACTION: SCALING QUESTIONS

Adapted from The Coaching Toolkit for Child Welfare Practice

Coaching is mostly about asking great questions and then asking even better follow-up ones. By asking good questions, coaches steer learners toward reflection, envisioning the future, brainstorming solutions and transformative learning. Exemplary coaches facilitate the learning process not by giving the learners the answer, but by helping guide them in the direction of self-learning.

While there are a variety of questions and questioning methods coaches may ask learners, scaling questions are particularly helpful during the learning process. Scaling questions provide learners the opportunity to rate their own perceptions about any number of things, but most commonly their progress in goal attainment. Generally with simplistic questions, the power of them often lies in the follow-up questions that are asked, such as, “tell me what would help you get to the next level?” Scaling questions, since they ask the learner to appraise themselves, put the locus of control with the learner.

Scaling questions are variable and appropriate for many types of goals and situations, such as finding success, measuring improvement, determining motivation and understanding the level of confidence of the learner. The answers are commonly framed between a range of 1 to 10, with 10 being the selection that demonstrates confidence, and 0 demonstrating a complete lack of confidence, or discomfort.

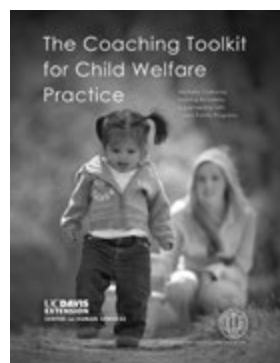
SOME SCALING ISSUES

What does the 10 represent? The 10 on the scale should represent something attainable. If 10 represents an ideal situation, it could be a setup for feeling unsuccessful. The 10 should be something that at some point the learner will achieve. If it's too high, there is a risk of losing meaningful engagement in the process.

What if the learner is at a 0? The 0 on the scale generally represents feelings of a rather desperate situation. If this is the case, coaches should provide empathy for the learner and acknowledge his or her feelings. Depending on the situation, coaches may be able to help the learner move up the scale. For example, if the learner is at a 0 in confidence in performing the new skill but is at an 8 in desire to take a risk and try out the skill, then you can work with the learner to increase confidence. Much of this depends on the learner's state of mind. If the learner is at 0 and is clearly feeling desperation in the situation, it will be up to the coach to refer the learner to other resources or to take a step back in the coaching process to work through challenges and barriers.

“If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper questions to ask.”

~ Albert Einstein



Access Examples of Scaling Questions

The *Coaching Toolkit for Child Welfare Practice* contains a list of several scaling questions, as well as a guide for developing and asking scaling questions. The Toolkit can be accessed for free by visiting <http://bit.ly/TheCoachingToolkit>

See More Coaching in Action

Visit the Toolkit's companion website at <http://bit.ly/ToolkitVideos> to access videos of simulated coaching sessions to learn more about what a good coaching session can look like.

COACHING BRINGS BALANCE TO CHILD WELFARE SUPERVISION



By Jason Borucki, Northern California Training Academy

In a typical day in the field of child welfare, a supervisor is asked to take on a number of distinct roles, often simultaneously. These roles can include administrative supervision, educational supervision, supportive supervision and clinical supervision.

While all four types of supervision are of equal importance, it's not uncommon to hear child welfare supervisors say that administrative supervision can take up most of or even all of their time. Such a statement might initially set off a few alarm bells, but when taking into consideration the high turnover rate child welfare agencies face, this begins to make a little more sense; the administrative duties associated with hiring and training new staff are substantial, and new staff are bound to have a lot of basic but necessary questions as they get accustomed to their new and complicated work.

Unfortunately, when supervisory resources are mostly exhausted on only one of the four key areas of supervisory focus, social workers are only receiving basic support, with little attention paid to their development or their exercise of critical-thinking skills that would enable them to perform their duties without as much need for administrative support. Over time, this lack of support can result in a social worker feeling isolated in their work, which can ultimately result in the very turnover that has perpetuated the lack of support in the first place.

Coaching in child welfare is an intentional strategy to curb this self-perpetuating cycle and call out the importance of dedicating time to supportive and educational supervision.

Coaching may also involve some clinical supervision by proxy, but the key strength of coaching is that it provides the social worker with time to sit down with their supervisor and communicate their challenges, recognize their strengths and set goals for continuing to improve their skills. It also provides social workers with the comfort of knowing they are not alone in their work and that there will be a set time for them to share their context with their supervisor in a safe, neutral environment.

Coaching in child welfare does not negate the need for administrative and clinical supervision, but rather works to develop a social worker's critical decision-making skills so that they do not feel the need to "play it safe" by asking a supervisor what to do every time a complicating factor arises. This further ensures that when a consultation is in fact necessary, the supervisor will be available to work through the issue with the social worker rather than simply telling them what to do.

Through the use of coaching, child welfare supervisors are provided with the appropriate time and space to focus on administrative, educational, supportive and clinical supervision equally, which stands to benefit not only the child welfare workers interested in growing professionally, but also the agency in terms of retention, hiring and training costs and, most importantly, the children and families who are served by an increasingly stable and capable workforce.

SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION

is encouraging, strengthening and empowering [caseworkers] to be productive, committed, mission focused and motivated to perform high-quality work. (Excerpted from OCWTP Supervisor Core Module I: Casework Supervision).

Supportive supervision also involves:

- Helping staff become aware of and deal with their reactions to the emotional intensity of their work with families, such as managing anxiety and other strong reactions to families that maltreat their children
- Creating a safe, comfortable and empowering environment that promotes high levels of caseworker performance
- Reducing psychological or emotional barriers to caseworker performance and outcome achievement
- Helping caseworkers develop confidence and realistic perspectives about the work, as well as deal with job-related stress and personal reactions to the work
- Addressing the cultural issues that impact casework practice and caseworkers' perception of clients
- Providing positive reinforcement for effective performance

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION

"focuses on the efficient and effective delivery of services to achieve agency goals." It is "planning, executing, monitoring and evaluating activities to accomplish the work of the agency through the staff." (Excerpted from OCWTP Supervisor Core Module I: Casework Supervision). It provides quality control of supervisees' work, ensuring their work is appropriate and ethical.

It involves activities such as:

- Aligning the unit's work with the agency and unit goals
- Assigning cases
- Implementing quality assurance strategies related to case management
- Addressing organizational and systemic barriers to staff performance
- Monitoring completion and timeliness of case-related activities



CLINICAL SUPERVISION

is another aspect of supervision that has similarities with educational supervision and supportive supervision. However, there are some unique aspects to clinical supervision, as applied to child welfare, including:

- Developing the skills, understanding and capacities of the supervisee through the reflection of their practice
- Encouraging critical thinking and analytical skills
- Focusing on social work engagement interactions/strategies
- Exploring family situations
- Focusing on social worker engagement interactions/strategies
- Attending to interpersonal dynamics between family members that may contribute to child maltreatment

Based on the work of the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning and the National Child Welfare Center for Organizational Improvement; Bogo & McKnight, 2005; Collins-Camarago, 2006; Deal, 2003; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002; Shulman, 1993, modified by Sue Lorbach, 2015.

References

- Bogo, M., & McKnight, K. (2006). Clinical supervision in social work: A review of the research literature. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 24, 49-67.
- Collins-Camarago, C. (2006). Clinical supervision in public Child Welfare: Themes from findings of a multisite study. *Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*, 9(2), 100-110.
- Kadushin, A., and Harkness, D. (2002). *Supervision in social work* (4th ed.) New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Shulman, L. (1993). *Interactional supervision*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION

is teaching caseworkers what they need to know in order to do the job, developing their "capacity and competence to perform their work tasks in accordance with practice expectations and standards" (Kadushin 2002,). Supervision is important in reducing knowledge and skill barriers to staff performance and outcome achievement. (Excerpted from OCWTP Supervisor Core Module I: Casework Supervision).

It includes activities such as:

- Orienting workers to their jobs
- Identifying learning needs of casework staff
- Conducting the transfer of learning from "knowing" to "doing"
- Directly observing caseworkers performing assigned tasks
- Directing, consulting and guiding caseworkers as they interact and intervene with families and children
- Developing and managing Individual Development Plans with casework staff
- Coaching: modeling task behavior, giving feedback; individualizing, reinforcing and demonstrating
- Helping caseworkers understand how their own values and experiences may impact perceptions about families and case decisions
- Providing skill-building opportunities for caseworkers



CONNECTING COACHING TO CONSISTENT PRACTICE IN COUNTIES LARGE AND SMALL

“When you’re coaching your staff to be better listeners, to ask better questions and to clarify, you’re also grooming them to be better social workers with families.”

By Jason Borucki, Northern California Training Academy

While it may be too early to point to empirical data demonstrating how child welfare coaching has impacted outcomes for children and families, it’s not too early to notice a positive and promising pattern that is beginning to develop across Northern California counties large and small.

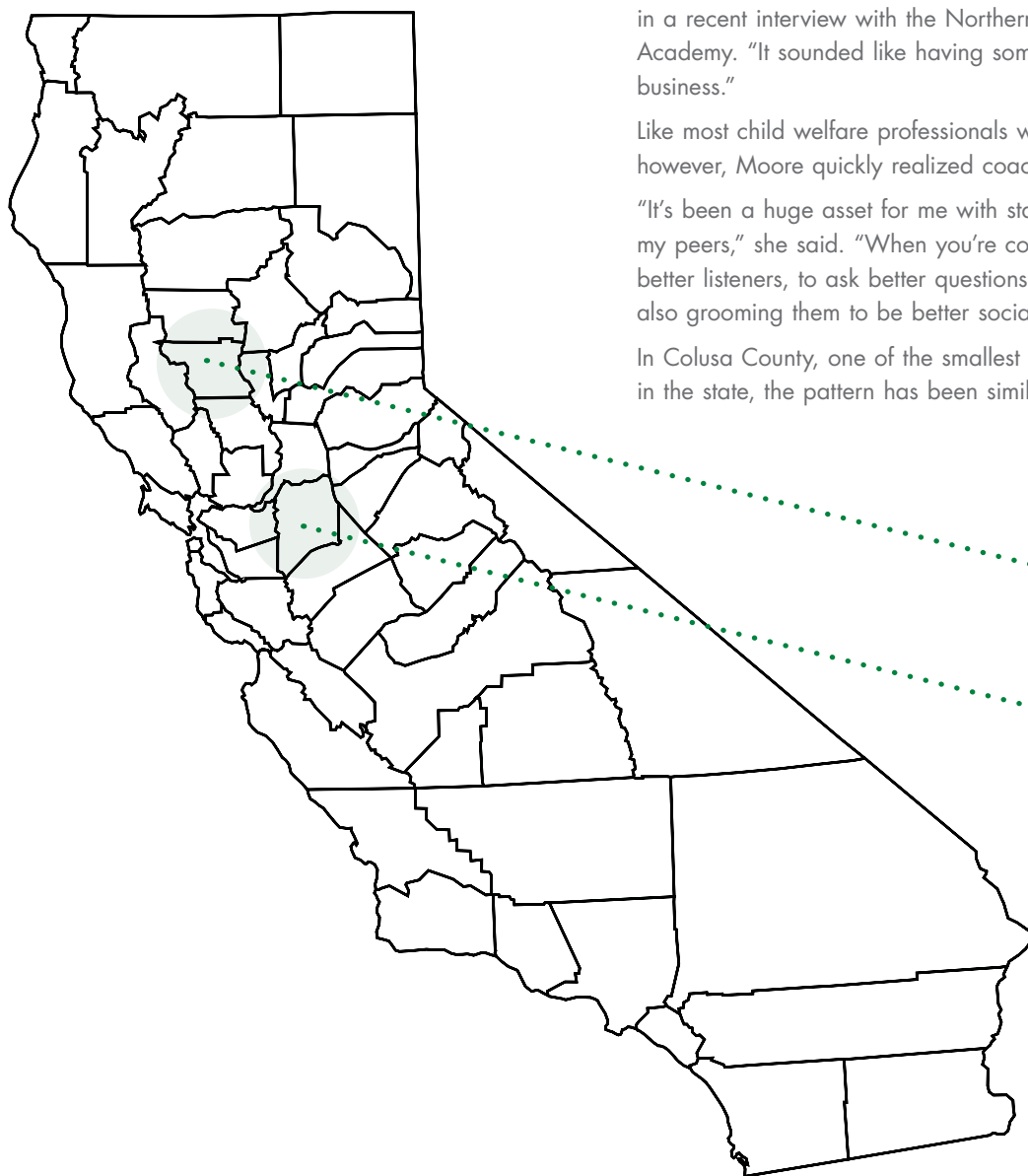
Krystall Moore is a Social Work Supervisor in San Joaquin County, one of the largest counties (by population) in Northern California. A relative newcomer to coaching (it was introduced to her during a Supervisory Core training in May 2016), her first reaction to the concept of coaching was a common one.

“I thought, ‘I don’t know if I want to do this,’” she shared in a recent interview with the Northern California Training Academy. “It sounded like having someone all up in my business.”

Like most child welfare professionals who have stuck with it, however, Moore quickly realized coaching’s potential.

“It’s been a huge asset for me with staff and even some of my peers,” she said. “When you’re coaching your staff to be better listeners, to ask better questions and to clarify, you’re also grooming them to be better social workers with families.”

In Colusa County, one of the smallest counties (by population) in the state, the pattern has been similar.



"I think the first impression was, 'Here goes another flavor of the month,'" said Peggi Cooney, who was with Colusa County four years ago when coaching was first introduced. "We had just been introduced to [Safety Organized Practice(SOP)], and while we were pretty excited about SOP at the time, I think we questioned how spending time away from families [on coaching] was going to help our practice."

Now a child welfare coach herself, Cooney credits her fellow coach, Chellie Gates, for helping the county make the connection between coaching and their work with families.

"Chellie was great," said Cooney. "I remember we were all wondering, 'Is she really that nice? Does she really believe in families as much as it seems?' Yes, she really does. And having a coach that walked the talk made all the difference."

Four years later, Colusa County Social Work Supervisor Danielle Padilla said they are still benefiting from Gates' coaching style.

"Staff respond to Chellie's coaching so well because it is a great addition to the classroom trainings," said Padilla, "maybe because it's so hands on and individualistic. Classroom training followed up by coaching is a really good model for child welfare training."

Peggi Cooney shared her perspective on why coaching appeared to be surpassing traditional training when it came to their work with families.

"Coaching gave us an opportunity to make mistakes in front of someone that we knew wasn't judging our job performance," she said. "That was really big for us in terms of helping us think critically through what we were doing so we could have better outcomes for families."

San Joaquin County's Krystall Moore shared similarly positive experiences related to her own coaches Mary Tarro and Nancy Hafer, but she also helped emphasize the fact that there is a substantial commitment required for coaching to work as intended.

"It's definitely a time commitment in the beginning," she said, "but once you are able to apply some of the skills that you've been taught with your social workers and families, you end up using less time later."

Peggi Cooney also reflected on how, over time, the connection between coaching and child welfare best practice clicked together.

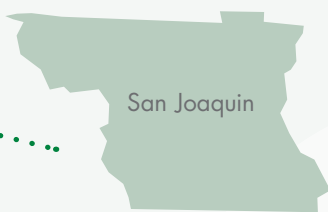
"It was so parallel that it was almost like a light went on around that," she said. "Coaching helped us model the kind of behavior we wanted to see with the families we work with. It definitely gave social workers a way to make the shift from being a case manager to a change agent."

While the connection between increased engagement with families and positive outcomes is almost implied, Moore helped make the connection more linear.

"Coaching can change outcomes," she said, "because when you listen carefully and make clarifying statements, it can help you better discern if there is danger or there is harm, and it helps [workers] become better listeners with families."

Whether it is a large county like San Joaquin or a small one like Colusa, coaching appears to be serving in much the same way, which might be exactly as intended.

"With Safety Organized Practice and coaching," said Cooney, "it's not about treating people equally, but rather treating them with equity, and that's the total difference, so that everyone has a chance to succeed."



COACHING SUPERVISORS TO REACH BEST PRACTICE IN ALASKA

By Jason Borucki, Northern California Training Academy

Despite the considerable distance and geographic difference between Northern California and Alaska, their child welfare systems share very similar challenges when it comes to serving children and families in remote, rural areas. It is promising, then, that both of these regions have experienced tangible successes in supervisor- and skills-based coaching for child welfare workers in spite of the considerable geographic barriers workers must overcome not only to access children and families in need of services, but also to access their own supervisors/coaches.

The Northern California Training Academy recently sat down with Tammy Sandoval, director of the University of Alaska, Anchorage, Child Welfare Academy (CWA), to learn more about how CWA and Alaska's Office of Children's Services (OCS) have managed to bridge the significant gap between workers and supervisors in a state geographically more than twice the size of Texas and four times the size of California.

"Travel is expensive with the sheer size of the state," said Sandoval. "There are 25 offices within OCS, and they are not all on roaded systems."

An office not on a "roaded system" means that for child welfare workers to access families, they have to use alternative methods of transportation, including airplanes, ATVs, snowmobiles and even dog sleds.

With so much demand on travel for child welfare supervisors and workers and no shortage of casework to keep them busy, one might think that Alaska's OCS and CWA would look at coaching as a luxury they simply couldn't afford, or one box they simply could not check

off. Sandoval could not disagree more.

"Coaching provides breathing space," Sandoval explained. "There aren't any boxes; there is no checklist; [it] is about being in the moment and being present with whomever you are working with. It's about really listening to what they need from you as a supervisor and giving them quality time that isn't about meeting deadlines, admin issues or mandates from above, but really being with a worker and spending time with them to help them deal with what they have to work with in the field."

Alaska's Child Welfare Academy trains supervisors on how to champion this forward-thinking coaching philosophy through Coaching Supervisors to Best Practice, a 21-week program that involves online learning, classroom sessions and weekly reading assignments that are followed by hour-long coaching sessions tailored to each week's specific focus.

"The supervisors [come into the program] already knowing the practice model," said Sandoval, "but it's the coaching that has really brought the practice model to life for our supervisors because there is a parallel process going on where they're getting reinforcement, it challenges their critical thinking, and [at the same time] they are learning how to coach their workers to become better critical thinkers themselves."

While better critical thinking naturally produces better decision making in the field and thus, ultimately, leads to better outcomes for children and families, it is still too early to point to any data showing the direct impact of coaching in Alaska. Yet Sandoval has seen firsthand how coaching has positively impacted the way child welfare supervisors approach their work.

"Supervisors who have gone through the program talk about how they thought they knew the practice model until they went through the program," she said. "Now they realize they weren't following the practice model to fidelity because now that they have been coached they know how to be a better supervisor; they make better decisions and definitely think they are helping workers to develop deeper critical thinking skills."

Alaska's current success at implementing coaching is certainly worth noting for Northern California counties who currently have coaches or are considering sending supervisors for training in coaching. Perhaps just as noteworthy is Sandoval's vision for what child welfare practice might look like if coaching were to become a permanent part of the child welfare infrastructure nationally.

"There would be better job satisfaction and less turnover because case workers would have more support to do the work they came to do," she said. "People come to this profession because it's about relationships; it's a relational kind of work. Coaching takes the practice to that deeper level."



Photo Courtesy of Visit Anchorage



ALASKA AND CALIFORNIA: A CROSS-STATE PARTNERSHIP OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

In June 2014, representatives from Alaska's Office of Children's Services (OCS) and Child Welfare Academy (CWA) visited the Northern California Training Academy to learn how the Academy was approaching the development of supervisors and managers to coach line workers in Northern California. The Academy gladly shared information about its Coaching Institutes for Child Welfare Practice and discussed details regarding the coaching model and coaching roles, and was later invited to teach a Coaching Institute in Alaska. Thus began a great partnership during which both Academies have shared their experience and expertise with the other.

In February 2016, the Academy invited Alaska's Child Welfare Academy, a national leader in incorporating innovative training strategies such as Team-Based Learning (TBL) to Davis to host a two-day workshop designed to help instructors at the Northern California Training Academy better train professionals in human services, including child welfare, public assistance and administration. The Academy is now using the two-day training to initiate changes in its training curricula that will be used throughout the state.

COACHING TO SAFETY ORGANIZED PRACTICE IN MODOC COUNTY

By Jason Borucki, Northern California Training Academy

For Modoc County program manager Carole McCulley, the link between coaching and Safety Organized Practice is clear, and the timing of their entry into her own practice impeccable.

"I came into the [Modoc County Department of Social Services] just after our director had been let go," McCulley explained in a recent phone interview with the Northern California Training Academy. "At the time we were six months behind on our Service Improvement Plans."

One of those Service Improvement Plans turned out to be the implementation of Safety Organized Practice, which put her in touch with Susan Brooks and Nancy Hafer of the Northern California Training Academy and, ultimately, the practice of coaching.

"I understood that a strengths-based approach was what we wanted," said McCulley, "but I didn't understand the whole process of SOP at the time. Susan and Nancy walked me through it in a way that was supportive and positive."

McCulley may not have recognized it at the time, but she'd just experienced her first coaching session.

McCulley would quickly learn that coaching, like Safety Organized Practice, was not a one-time thing, but something that required support and reinforcement over time.

"When [our assigned coach] Peggi Cooney wanted to schedule another coaching visit, I worried it was some kind of test until realizing that she, as a coach, just wanted to help."

Since those original coaching sessions, McCulley has seen the implementation of Safety Organized Practice, and the coaching that reinforces it, grow to positively impact both supervisors and social workers who serve Modoc County's children and families, but she's had a front row seat to one supervisor in particular's success with coaching social workers thanks to the fact that her office is right next door to his.

"I remember him being very stressed about it at first," said McCulley. "But when [he started receiving coaching], it was like Peggi laid down the little stepping stones for us and made it attainable."

This same supervisor, McCulley was proud to share, is now a champion of both Safety Organized Practice and the coaching that supports it within the agency.

"SOP ignited him," she said. "It brought that fire back to him, and it brought him that guidance. He's even created a whole binder to help intake workers do their work using SOP and focus on community supports, strengths and engagement."

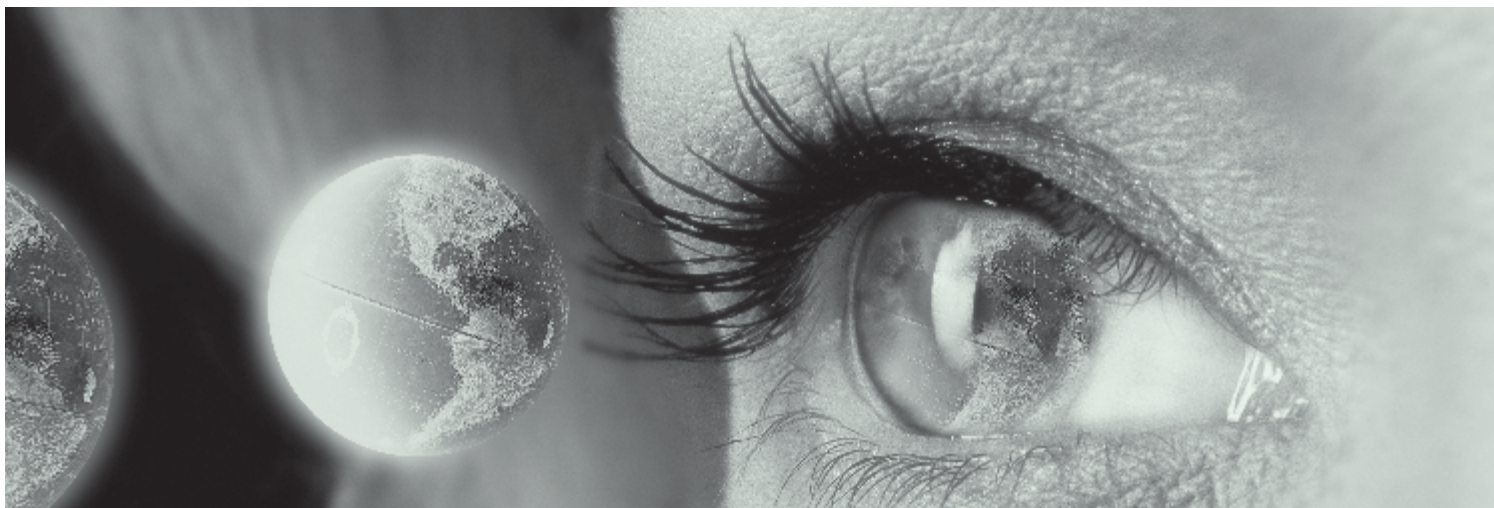
She also hears him regularly coaching social workers right next door.

"I see my supervisor reacting with social workers in the same way in which he has been coached," she said. "He tells me it's really hard not to just give social workers the answers, but we are training and grooming social workers to think critically and come up with the answers themselves."

Just as coaches seek to encourage social workers to think critically toward solutions, social workers are also learning the skills necessary to take this very same approach toward their work with children and families.

"We are all going to be talking to each other in a different way," she said, "and we're training social workers to talk to children and families in the same way, which is positive, empowering, and engaging. If we keep that consistency, it will improve outcomes."





ETHICAL ISSUES OF COACHING IN CHILD WELFARE

By Nancy Hafer and Susan Brooks

Coaching child welfare professionals requires understanding the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. Even though external coaches may not always be bound by the requirements, coaches must be mindful of these ethical standards in order to ensure the integrity of the work being done with the agency, the learner and the families being served. The NASW Code of Ethics builds integrity by providing guidelines for working with clients and privileged or confidential information. Additionally, the National Staff Development and Training Association Code of Ethics provides guidelines for those training workers in the field of human services. In the field of coaching, the International Coach Federation (ICF) and the Association for Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS) provide similar guidance on boundaries and ethical decision making.

The NASW, ICF and APECS codes of ethics share the following key themes:

- Maintaining conduct in accordance with professional standards and levels of competence (macroscopically)
- Maintaining professional conduct and abiding by ethical responsibilities (microscopically)
- Avoiding conflicts of interest
- Maintaining confidentiality and privacy
- Considering ethical issues in evaluation

Prior to beginning the coaching, it is recommended to review standard reporting laws with the learner. This includes the mandated reporting laws (for example, California Penal Code 11166) to report any suspected child abuse and neglect to the appropriate agency or jurisdiction. Further, in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics, the coach will maintain confidentiality, except "when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person."

Coaches working within the child welfare agency often have the unique perspective of observing the agency functioning as a whole while simultaneously working with individuals at the practice level. In this position, the coach may encounter ethical dilemmas (for example, unsafe decision making for children that requires attention, either at a systemic and/or individual level). Unaddressed, this presents the coach with potential pitfalls from both sides; calling attention to problems with individual learners might damage the coaching relationship, while identifying a systemic problem may be viewed unfavorably by the agency. With some coaches uncertain of their footing, the issue may go wholly unaddressed, potentially exposing the organization and the individuals involved, coach included, to a higher risk of liability. Therefore, the coach, agency and learner must have an agreement of how each participant is to handle and address such dilemmas.

FIELD ADVISORS AND COACHING IN COMMON CORE 3.0 FOR NEW SOCIAL WORKERS

This content is adapted from the California Social Work Education Center's (CalSWEC) Field Guide for Social Workers and Field Advisors and includes information pertaining to the implementation of coaching (or field advising) in Common Core for New Social Workers

Prior to version 3.0, Common Core content produced by CalSWEC was provided only as classroom modules. It was organized by key topic areas and there was no required sequence. Common Core 3.0 has three major changes to the way new social worker training is delivered in California:

- a. Organizing training around practice areas so that all the concepts included in the content are grounded in practice skills and the California Core Practice Model casework components, practice elements and behaviors
- b. Making strategic use of online modules to maximize classroom time for skill practice
- c. Providing new social workers with opportunities to enhance classroom learning through application of concepts in the field. Beyond re-imagining the way social work practice is presented in Core, this revision also incorporates a wider range of training modalities, including e-learning, classroom learning, and coaching. It includes materials to support transfer of learning and to carry the learning experience into the field. The revised Core provides a more comprehensive picture of child welfare practice for new social workers; uses field experiences to ground training in actual social work practice; streamlines learning to focus on key knowledge, skills and values; and uses a variety of training modalities to promote expediency in providing content.

FIELD ACTIVITY ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Field learning activities require the participation of the new social worker and a Common Core 3.0 (CC3.0) field advisor. Both participants play a vital role in the transfer of learning process. Counties will work with their affiliated training organizations to identify CC3.0 field advisors to support new social workers in the field activities. In Northern California counties, field advisors will be required to complete the two-day Coaching Institute, as well as an online and in-person class called Field Advisor and the Field Guide.

Supervisors are well situated to fill the role of field advisor, but counties may identify other individuals as CC3.0 field advisors depending on local needs. In the event that the field advisor is not the new social worker's supervisor, a process will be put in place to provide feedback regarding the completion of field activities to the new social worker's supervisor. Best practices to facilitate the feedback process will be outlined in the Field Guide for Social Workers and Field Advisors.

CC3.0 FIELD ADVISOR ROLE AND EXPECTATIONS

The supervisor or other designee provides field support to the new social worker before, during and after identified field activities. The person in this role will:

- Promote a learning environment and utilize appropriate coaching strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable growth for the new social worker

- Promote knowledge and skill development that aligns with the desired practice
- Track completion, document information needed for evaluation components of CC3.0 and provide information to CDSS, the Regional Training Academy (RTA) or enter information into a learning management system.

The supervisor or other designee is encouraged to utilize existing conference or meeting times with the new social worker to discuss learning objectives, field activities and provide feedback regarding observations or practice. Review of field activities during regular supervision or training support reinforces social work best practice and provides an opportunity for new social workers to ask questions, process information and apply what is learned to new situations.

NEW SOCIAL WORKER ROLE AND EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that the new social worker will participate fully in the field activities. As outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics, "Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice." With this in mind, the new social worker should be open to feedback regarding observations or practice. The new social worker will receive field activity support and any additional training needed to increase family safety and family well-being. The CC3.0 field advisor will work with the new social worker to help him/her meet the learning objectives identified as part of the field activities.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming trainings for Supervisors and Coaches

National Conference on Coaching in Health and Human Services

Davis: April 25-26, 2017

Tools for Supervisory Excellence Series

Davis: Begins Aug. 16, 2017

Additional upcoming trainings from the Northern California Training Academy

Trauma-Informed Client Interactions and Trauma-Informed Communication

Davis: April 27, 2017

For the latest information on upcoming trainings, please visit the Academy website at www.humanservices.ucdavis.edu/academy



For daily updates, resources and industry-related tidbits, be sure to connect with the Academy on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NorCalTrainingAcademy

We can't publish this newsletter without you.

We received lots of helpful and interesting feedback on our last issue. Please send your comments and any ideas for future issues to me at sbrooks@ucdavis.edu



RESOURCES

COACHING WEBSITE

Provides access to information on coaching skills, approaches, models and foundational theories; as well as access to coaching video demonstrations and curriculum.

<http://academy.extensiondlc.net/course/view.php?id=29>

THE COACHING TOOLKIT FOR CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE

A first of its kind textbook on coaching, the toolkit is filled with research, tips for coaches and skill development. Available for purchase or as a free PDF at <http://academy.extensiondlc.net/mod/resource/view.php?id=796>

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Browse our gateway to multiple micro-sites that focus on specific areas of child welfare practice, including coaching, continuous quality improvement, safety organized practice, supervisor development and social worker health and wellness.

THE RESOURCE BARN

The Academy's new, Aggie-themed resource library connects visitors to free curriculum, research, tips for practice, and Academy-based publications including the Reaching Out catalog.

SPECIAL THANKS

The Northern California Training Academy has been fortunate to build relationships and collaborate with others across the nation who share in this coaching journey. We partnered with Casey Family Programs in 2010 to develop the Coaching Toolkit for Child Welfare Practitioners, which includes key background information on coaching in child welfare and describes the UC Davis Skills-Based Coaching Model. We are also grateful to an informal learning circle with the University of Southern Maine (LAMM), University of Maryland (NCWWI), Bowdoin College, and the Institute for Human Services. We have also had the privilege of providing training for and working with child welfare partners from a multitude of jurisdictions stretching from Alaska to Rhode Island.



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TRAINING ACADEMY

UC Davis Extension, University of California

1632 Da Vinci Court., Davis, CA 95618

Phone: (530) 757-8725

Fax: (530) 752-6910

Email: academy@ucdavis.edu

Web: www.humanservices.ucdavis.edu/academy

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Look for more articles, research, success stories resources and tips for practice in our next issue of Reaching Out. The next issue will focus on current issues in young children in care ages 0-5.

About the Northern California Training Academy

As part of the Center for Human Services at UC Davis Extension, the Northern California Training Academy provides training, consultation, research and evaluation for 28 Northern California counties. The counties include rural and urban counties with various training challenges for child welfare staff. The focus on integrated training across disciplines is a high priority in the region. This publication is supported by funds from the California Department of Social Services.

About the Center for Human Services

The Center for Human Services at UC Davis Extension began more than 35 years ago as a partnership between the University of California, Davis and state government to address the needs of rural counties in developing skills for their social workers. Through professional training, consultation and research, the Center has grown to serve human services organizations and professionals throughout California and across the nation.