

Executive Summary

Better Outcomes - One Family's Journey Through the Child Welfare System

Course Description

Child Welfare Services is a complex system, responding to high-stakes crises with very little time and resources. The learning curve for CWS social workers is steep and long. A social worker who practices without an astute sense of context can inadvertently cause harm to the family they are trying to help.

Better Outcomes is a training that takes one family through the Child Welfare System in one day's time. Trainees gain perspective about how their actions in one part of the system impact the family in other parts of the system. Trainees are given "best practice interventions" for each part of the Child Welfare System: Family Engagement, Investigations, Assessment & Decision-Making, Case Planning, Service Delivery and Placement.

Target Audience

This training is appropriate for new social workers, experienced social workers, supervisors and managers.

Outcome Objectives

1. Establish a culture of Family Engagement in the work place and in daily work with children and families.
2. Learn advanced investigative techniques to ensure accurate assessments and decision-making.
3. To accurately assess risk, safety and strengths in families so that the safest, least restrictive intervention can be made on behalf of the children and families.
4. To create case plans with the family that identify areas that fall below minimum sufficient level of care and match effective, accessible, available timely services to reduce risk and safety issues, while building on family strengths.
5. To understand that when a child needs to be placed out of the home, that all attempts are made to place that child in a safe, familiar environment, with siblings when possible.
6. To conduct culturally sensitive assessments of child and family dynamics in order to develop in intervention plan based on that assessment.
7. To understand the contextual nature of the Child Welfare Services system where actions in one part of the system can have a long-lasting impact on the family - either positive or negative.

Ways that Supervisors can support the Transfer of Learning from the classroom to the job...

BEFORE the training

1. Review the training objectives and training description with the social worker.
2. Discuss how interventions in Emergency Response set the stage for how a family will fare in the system over the long-run.

AFTER the training

1. Review the “best practice” tools for Family Engagement, Investigation, Assessment & Decision-Making, Case Planning, Service Delivery and Placement during regularly scheduled supervision.
2. Continually set a culture of Family Engagement in the unit by weaving in Family Engagement principles into daily supervision and case consultations.