

Appendix 1: Field Instruction Initiative Pilots



Field Instruction Initiative Pilots

GOAL

CalSWEC created the **Field Instruction Initiative (FII)** to strengthen field instruction as a learning tool by creating structures that support consistent high-quality field experiences to social work students in the Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Program that are sustainable over time. Collaboration with community partners and agencies is pivotal and beneficial to all parties involved.

BACKGROUND

In FY 2011-12, four sites were selected to pilot innovative field instruction models. They were: SJSU, Dominguez Hills, Chico State, and USC. In 2012-13, the sites will continue to refine their work to develop curricular and implementation products that will be disseminated to other schools. The following are brief descriptions of each pilot site's activities.

PILOT PROJECTS

California State University, Chico

California State University, Chico (CSU Chico) administers a solution focused supervision model in collaboration with Butte County Department of Employment and Social Services, Children's Services Division. This pilot is designed to:

- develop, implement, and evaluate a training and consultation model of solution-focused strategies for use with field instructors in Butte County Children's Services;

The field instructor training begins with an 8 hour workshop and is followed up by monthly 90 minute consultations over an 8-month period. Evaluation focused on the impact of the on-going training on field instructor self-efficacy, behavior change in field instructors, consistency of supervision, student progress toward acquiring child welfare competences, and student report of the quality of supervision received.

California State University, Dominguez Hills

California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) is piloting a collaborative field instruction and training model. This pilot was designed to:

- provide consistent, quality learning in the field for foundation students working with foster youth in higher education;
- create a collaborative learning experience for MSW interns;
- increase knowledge and enhance relationships with community partners; and
- enhance services to foster youth.

In addition to their regularly scheduled weekly field seminar, CalSWEC MSW interns participate in a specialized, eight-session seminar. The model highlights joint meetings throughout the year with community and county partners to discuss partnership agreements and program development.

San Jose State University

San Jose State University (SJSU) is piloting a partnered research project model with collaborative research teams in Santa Clara County. This pilot was designed to:

- create teams of IV-E students to answer research questions defined as priorities by the Department of Children and Family Services;
- provide orientation for field instructors related to supporting/participating in collaborative practice-based research projects;
- provide roundtables showcasing research projects; and
- provide a special seminar for students about using CWS/CMS data for research and evaluation.

Examples of research projects from this pilot include:

- Child welfare and education - Examines educational issues among children affected by domestic violence;
- The role of fathers in reunification - Examines how father involvement affects reunification outcomes;
- Front-end child welfare processes/Differential Response - Examines use of differential response services and outcomes such as re-referral or child removal

University of Southern California

The University of Southern California (USC) is piloting a group seminar field instruction model. This pilot is designed to:

- deliver consistent competency based field instruction and augmented case supervision to both foundation year and concentration year CalSWEC students through a weekly field seminar format;
- provide consistent child welfare peer group experience; and
- strengthen collaboration between the university and public child welfare agency.

In addition to their regularly scheduled weekly field seminar, CalSWEC MSW interns participate in a specialized, 15 week seminar. The model highlights guest lectures by county partners to deepen integration of the CalSWEC competencies into the students' field placement experience.

FII YEAR TWO

As we move into year two of our initiative, we invite our four schools to renew their work, focusing on the following five categories: **Partnership; Capacity; Sustainability; Products; and Evaluation.** The projects have already addressed these categories to varying degrees, and as we move forward, we would like to hone on these components for sustainability and spread of these efforts.

Additionally, we have issued a request for proposals for a Unit/Group Model of field instruction, in which designated county staff provide supervision for a unit of 4-8 students, who form a cohort and may receive individual and group supervision. Proposals are due on June 15, 2012.



The California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC)
is pleased to present

Enhanced Case Management for Child Welfare: *A Mini Symposium*

CalSWEC will preview the module *Strengths-Based Case Management: Moving Beyond Service Brokering to Care Collaboration* at five regional mini symposia this summer and fall.

So that we can accommodate all attendees, please register online for the symposium you plan to attend.

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Click **Register**
(<https://www.signup4.net/public/ap.aspx?EID=MINI22E&OID=130>).
2. Follow the instructions on the opening **Registration** page.

NOTE: Travel support is available for county staff.

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Mark Your Calendars

*You're invited to attend
one of the regional previews
and give us your feedback!*

- June 29, 2012
Sacramento State University
- July 13, 2012
University of Southern California
- August 10, 2012
Loma Linda University
- September 14, 2012
Fresno State University
- September 27, 2012
San Jose State University

Strengths-Based Case Management: Moving Beyond Service Brokering to Care Collaboration

Unit I

Objectives

- Present overview & contrast different models of case management: broker, clinical, strengths-based
- Identify roles of engagement & collaboration in strengths-based case management
- Identify salient SW characteristics to promote effective engagement & collaboration
- Identify key components & the significance of strengths-based care collaboration for child welfare

Overview: Case Management vs. Clinical Case Management

- Case management: Coordination, integration and allocation of individualized care within limited resources
- Clinical case management: SW forms alliance with client to ensure that services received are congruent with client need

Models of Case Management

- Broker Model
- Clinical Case Manager Model
- Strengths-Based Care Collaboration Model

Broker model

- Role of social worker:
 - Specific functions include assessment, planning, linking to services, monitoring and advocacy.
 - Serves as the link between the client and community resources
 - Provides very little direct service to client
- Assumptions of model:
 - Needed services are available and client will utilize them voluntarily

Clinical Case Manager Model

- Role of Social Worker:
 - Relationship Focus:
 - Provide conversation and direct counseling regarding client's concerns
 - Engage with client to ensure that interventions address problems as understood by the client
 - Help the client link to both formal resources (e.g. community service providers) and informal resources (e.g. family, friends).
 - Provide support and treatment over an extended period
- Assumptions of model:
 - Collaboration with client, family and formal and informal service providers will increase the appropriateness of interventions and the likelihood that client will follow through with services

Strengths-Based Care Collaboration Model

Model combines elements of clinical model with recognized value of collaboration & strengths-based orientation

- Role of Social Worker
 - Recognize and engage client strengths
 - Interventions focused on empowering client and family
 - Enhance client opportunities for growth, education and skill development
 - Help families become self-sufficient & support each other, apart from agency
- Assumptions of Model:
 - The relationship between the social worker and client is critical to growth
 - Social worker must build rapport with clients in short period of time
 - Community, family, and cross-agency partnerships are sources of valuable support & resources

Care Collaboration Model (CCM)

Key Components

- Use of self and empathy
- Focus on teaming & agency collaboration
- Matching client's felt need with agency & community resources

Care Collaboration Model cont'd

Relationship as context

- Abuse or neglect occurs in the context of a relationship
- To assess strengths & address challenges in family, social worker must be aware of and use relationship skills like engagement, collaboration, & building support networks

Care Collaboration Model cont'd

Social Worker Characteristics

- Committed to client: able to identify family strengths & address immediate needs
- Able to facilitate family team for later continuity of support w/o agency
- Maintaining empathy, honesty, flexibility
- Respecting confidentiality
- Keeping a non-judgmental attitude

How this approach helps children and families

- Relationship skills are essential to effective SW practice
- Although child welfare practice limits time spent with clients, time is used to greatest benefit by SW with well-developed engagement & collaborative skills
- Successful social worker-client alliance is associated with successful service outcomes, as client is more likely to complete services when trust is established (Howe, 1998).
- Service approach based on an understanding of the client's situation and tailored to the client's needs and strengths is more likely to result in an improvement in psychological and social wellbeing (Huxley, 1993).

How this approach helps children & families, cont.

- Strengths-based care collaboration goes beyond service brokering and/or individual child and family meetings to support the child and family in multiple facets of life, including home, school and community.
- A social worker alone will not accomplish this level of support, but positive results can be achieved through team-building relationships with clients, parents, family members, and service agencies, as well as with communities.

How this approach helps children & families, cont.

Promote an alliance with children and their families that foster positive relationships in their lives, by:

- Listening to the child's, parents', and family members' perceptions of the issues and problems
- Listening to and working with family members and/or other caring adults
- Being an effective problem solver to address crises
- Partnering & connecting families with community organizations and other agencies; advocating for the child and family as needed

Further Activities

- This curriculum will be offered in a series of units
- Activities will be developed to increase student capacity to engage with children, families, and others and to develop collaborative skills. These will likely include:
 - Suggested role plays
 - Group collaboration tasks
 - Scenarios with question sets
 - Vignettes

CalSWEC Curriculum Enhancement

Strengths-Based Case Management: From Service Brokering to Care Collaboration

Unit 1

Strengths-Based Case Management: From Service Brokering to Care Collaboration

Advanced Competency Practice Indicators addressed by this curriculum: CP 2.1.1(1, 2) ; 2.1.4 (1,2) ; 2.1.7 (1); 2.1.10 (a, b ,c)²

Preface

For some time, Title IV-E graduates have identified a need for more content on clinically related skill content in their school programs. Once in their jobs in child welfare, many graduates found they needed more clinical background and skills, not to perform therapy, but to engage better with clients, families and service providers and to make sound assessment and referral decisions. In short, the graduates need the knowledge and skills identified as important to a social work case manager. This curriculum has been developed as a resource for both faculty and students in the IV-E program.

Overview

Social workers and other human services professionals, particularly in public child welfare, are often described as “case managers,” as contrasted with direct service providers such as counselors and therapists. Yet a case manager, to be effective, is more than a service coordinator or broker. Clinically skilled case management involves engagement with clients and others, assessment, planning, linking with resources, consulting with families, collaborating with service professionals, client education, and crisis intervention (Kanter, 1989). The skills of engagement and collaboration are key.

Case Management versus Clinical Case Management

² CP 2.1.1 (1) Interact positively with clients, colleagues and supervisors and demonstrate skill in seeking out suitable client services and ensuring client access to those services. CP 2.1.1 (2) Maintain professional demeanor and boundaries in practice situations, demonstrate skill in articulating professional knowledge and effective use of self, and utilize appropriate resources to ensure professional growth. CP 2.1.4 (1) In child welfare practice, demonstrate both an acute awareness of historical and societal variables influencing interaction at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and the consistent ability to work effectively with diverse individuals, families, and communities. CP 2.1.4 (2) Consistent demonstrate the skill of learning from client systems and from diverse cultures, being informed by such differences and applying the knowledge to child welfare practice. CP 2.1. 7(1) In evaluation of child welfare practice, demonstrate the ability knowledgably to apply information about human behavior and the social environment from diverse perspectives. CP 2.1.10 (a) Skillfully and respectfully establish working relationships with clients and community partners in accord with social work values and utilize those relationships in forging goals and positive outcomes.(b) Create service plans that demonstrate data collection and assessment methods reflecting goal mutuality and respect for clients from diverse backgrounds (c) Shape child welfare interventions that demonstrate effective balance of multiple social worker roles and phases of service that recognize client strengths and self-determination.

While traditional models of case management offer service linkages, clinical case management utilizes engagement and alliance between the social worker and the client to ensure that services offered match client need (Kanter, 1989). Through engagement with the client, the worker confirms that the provided resources are congruent with the client's understanding and views. Because the client's views and wants are included, this form of case management is necessarily strengths-based.

Models of Case Management

Models of case management fall into three basic types. These are the Service Broker, Clinical Case Manager, and the strengths-based, Care Collaboration Model. The Broker Model requires that the social worker perform functions that include assessment of the client and needs, service planning, linking to services, service monitoring, and client advocacy. Emphasis is on linking clients to services, not on service provision.

The Clinical Case Manager model has a relationship focus: the social worker is expected to provide direct counseling about the client's concerns. The social worker engages with the client with the goal that the selected interventions meet the client's needs as understood by the client. The social worker helps the client access both formal and informal resources in the community and provides support and intervention over time. This model is based on the assumption that collaboration with clients, family, and formal intervention providers will increase client service completion.

The Strengths-Based Care Collaboration model combines aspects of the clinical case manager model with the recognized importance of collaboration in care management and the strengths-based orientation in client service provision. This model is grounded in the knowledge that relationship between the social worker and client is critical to growth as well as the importance of community, family and cross agency partnerships and resources in achieving service effectiveness. The collaborative conceptual frame is consistent with emerging practice models being shaped in California, notably through the Partners for Permanency (CAPP) Project and engagement strategies that are prominent in the Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

In many ways, the Care Collaboration model presented here takes the most important elements from each of the other models and integrates the aspects of each that are most relevant to emerging trends in effective child welfare practice.

Model Components, Context, and Social Worker Characteristics

Key Components

Enhanced case management integrates direct client interventions with community or environmental services in response to diverse client concerns. Key components include:

- Use of self

While traditional models of case management offer services linkages, clinical case management utilizes an alliance between the social worker and the client to ensure that the services received are those most appropriate to client need (Kanter, 1989). Through engagement with the client, the worker ensures that the provided resources are congruent with the client's understanding and views of the presenting issues.

- Focus on agency collaboration

To successfully integrate services and provide a supportive environment for the client, clinical case management is best served by agency collaboration. This collaboration requires building relationships across systems, sharing information and assets and having clear expectations and understanding of other's responsibilities and resources (Schmied & Walsh, 2010).

- Matching clients' felt needs with worker-provided resources

Forming an alliance with a client as well as successful partnerships with other agencies increases the likelihood of being able to match the client's needs effectively with necessary resources. If the resources provided do not match the client's understanding of the problem, they will be of limited help. A client is unlikely to follow through with treatment or services if they do not match the client's understanding of the problems (Hill, 1999; Malekoff, 2005).

Example: a mother struggling to care for her toddler approaches a social worker for help with respite care, in hopes of enrolling her toddler in subsidized day care. The social worker could respond by registering her for a parenting class. The client, feeling unheard and dismissed, might not attend the class and be reluctant to ask for help again. In a better scenario, the social worker might help the mother enroll her toddler in the requested day care, possibly one that offered collateral supports like a "tips for parents" program or a parent group. Engagement helps to ensure that services correspond to the needs felt by the client.

Relationship as Context

In the field of child welfare, abuse or neglect takes place within the context of a relationship. To assess accurately the strengths and challenges present in child and family relationships and improve the course of those relationships, a social worker needs to be aware of and use both engagement and collaborative skills. The work goes beyond client visits to support the child and family in multiple facets of their lives, including home, school and community.

Due to the skills involved, this kind of case management can best be done by social workers with advanced preparation. Nevertheless, the undergraduate level student can be introduced to the conceptual framework and the skills involved. A thorough client assessment and links with formal and informal resources, along with on-going client

engagement and evaluation are needed to ensure that services meet client needs (Kanter, 1989).

Social Worker Characteristics for Effective Engagement

Qualitative work with diverse clients has increased our understanding of traits and skills required for effective engagement. Key characteristics include:

- commitment to the client and continuity of caseworker
- empathy, honesty, flexibility
- being nonjudgmental and knowledgeable
- respect of confidentiality
- accountability

(Howe, 1998; Leigh & Miller, 2004; Malekoff, 2005; Schmied & Walsh, 2010).

Through clinical case management and a worker-client alliance, a social worker can help the child and family make positive changes and form supportive relationships, forging a path to permanency.

How This Approach Helps Children and Families

A successful worker-client alliance is associated with successful outcomes, as the client will be more likely to follow through with services when trust has been established (Howe, 1998). Relationship skills are essential to effective social work practice. It is not enough to connect a client to needed services. The social worker must engage with the client to achieve the best outcome. The engagement involves respectful listening to the client, reflecting empathy and understanding for the client's and family's perceptions and desires, demonstrated sensitivity to the client and family cultural background, along with honesty and accountability on the part of the social worker. Although child welfare practice may not permit extended time spent with clients and their families, the social worker can use the time available in efforts to form a bond of trust. The limited available time can be used to far greater benefit by a social worker with well-developed engagement and collaborative skills.

Among models of case management, simple service brokering has been shown repeatedly to be the least effective (Bedell et al., 2000; Moxley, 1996, Rapp, 1998). A strengths-based approach, on the other hand, involves a more prolonged assessment of the client's needs and strengths as well as a continuous, long-term relationship with the social worker (Huxley, 1993). Huxley found that most outcomes measures used to evaluate case management practices focus on administrative aspects such as hospitalization costs, which are often unrelated to client perceptions of service need. When a case management model is used that combines assessment and service provision, Huxley found that better client outcomes result. This approach is more likely to result in long-term improvement in the client's

psychological and social well-being, as services are tailored to the client's needs and strengths and based on an understanding of the client's situation (Huxley, 1993).

Through engagement and care collaboration, a social worker can help strengthen child and family relationships and encourage supportive community relationships. Links to community supports, when they are compatible with client and family wishes, help to forge lasting ties to resources that meet family needs. Strengths-based care collaboration, combining as it does elements of clinical case management with the importance of collaboration in service delivery, yields a model that can readily be utilized in public child welfare. The model goes beyond service brokering and/or individual child and family meetings to support the child and family in multiple facets of life, including home, school and community. Clearly a social worker alone will not accomplish this level of support, but the goal can be achieved through building relationships with clients, parents, family members, and service agencies, as well as with communities.

Recommendations for the social worker

Specific actions on the part of the social worker promote positive relationships in the lives of the child and the family. These tasks involve:

- listening to the child and family members' perception of the issues or problem
- listening to and working with family members and/or other caring adults
- linking the child and other family members with helpful resources
- partnering with other agencies and advocating for the child when necessary

The work goes beyond individual child or family meetings to support the child in multiple facets of his or her life, including home, school and community.

Example: A social worker might realize that a young child is having difficulty learning to speak English in part because he has no English speakers in his home during the day. Learning that the caregiver grandmother is interested in learning English, the social worker might help to enroll her in classes offered in a community school, while also suggesting that the child might attend a bilingual day care offered in the same building.

Activities

This curriculum will be offered in a series of units and will include a variety of activities such as suggested role plays and scenarios, vignettes, and question sets designed to develop the student's capacity to engage with children, families, and others and to develop collaboration skills.

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Family-Centered Care Collaboration: Practice Components

Unit II

Family-Centered Care Collaboration Model Components

These 4 components foster an alliance between social worker and client :

- Parental involvement
- Communication
- Engagement
- Cultural Awareness

Components: Involving Parents

By involvement we mean: Inclusion and active participation of mothers and fathers in activities, tasks, services and decision-making throughout the child protection process.

Benefits include:

- Greater parental participation in intervention/ reunification plan & progress towards outcomes;
- More positive and empowering experience for parents throughout the child protection process;
- Potential for parents to have more responsibility for decisions involving their children;
- Enhanced likelihood of family preservation or reunification and ultimately better outcomes for children.

Involving Parents: Practice Tips

- Build trust by respecting client dignity, and being honest, accessible, and positive;
- Meet as much as possible with parents and listen to their perspectives;
- Encourage parental responsibility by holding them accountable for participation;
- Keep an open attitude and a strong belief in the possibility of change.

Components: Communication

- Communication between the social worker and client builds the relationship and allows for the development of an effective service and reunification plan.
- Focus for social worker is on both *sharing* and *gaining* information.

Communication: Laying the Groundwork

- Approach first meeting with attitude of respectful honesty with client
- Take care not to abuse power or authority
- Make eye contact with family members and pay attention to your own non-verbal cues like body language
- In meeting with clients from an unfamiliar culture, ask questions about their customs & expected behaviors
- Maximize respect in tense situations by engaging in "courageous conversation" that is forthright about balancing child safety and parents' rights
- Remember purpose is to gain a deeper understanding of what caused the family's contact with the agency and to begin a working relationship with family members

Practice tips: Communication

- Listen attentively and protect confidentiality as appropriate;
- Explain limits on confidentiality to parents;
- Develop the service/reunification plan in collaboration with family members;
- Ensure that plan priorities match parent expectations;
- Encourage honesty among all family members, including children;
- Identify and address barriers to plan elements.

Components: Engagement

"Engagement goes beyond involvement...It is about motivating and empowering families to recognize their own needs, strengths, and resources and to take an active role in changing things for the better. Engagement is what keeps families working in the long and sometimes slow process of positive change."

-Sue Steib, *Children's Voice*

Practice tips: Encourage Engagement

- Use honest communication and positive reinforcement;
- Recognize parent and family strengths;
- Identify benefits that can result from child protection process;
- Help parents feel they can be honest without fear of retribution.

Components: Cultural Awareness

"*Cultural competence* refers to the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each."

-NASW, 2001

Importance of cultural awareness

- Racially and culturally diverse children and families are overrepresented in the child welfare system.
- Diversity includes differences in social class & sexual identity
- Family practices, such as methods of discipline, differ by culture, class, and race and need to be understood in context.

Practice tips: Encourage Cultural Awareness

- Seek out educational opportunities to learn culturally sensitive practices;
- Gently initiate conversations with clients about cultural diversity;
- Cultivate and demonstrate respect for diversity while recognizing own biases.

Promising Programs

Family to Family

- Key strategies include building community partnerships, team decision-making, recruiting families to serve as mentors and continuing self-evaluation.

Signs of Safety

- Key strategies include creation of constructive working relationships with family, social worker, extended community. Strength-based risk assessment through "mapping."

Culture Brokers

- Key strategies include use of liaisons to address issues of diversity and clear communication of expectations.

Common elements for positive outcomes

While distinct in their approaches, these programs share the four components of the Care Collaboration model:

- Parental involvement
- Communication
- Engagement
- Cultural awareness

Conclusion

Public child welfare workers often must handle high caseloads with limited time and resources.

- Family-centered care collaboration components of parental involvement, communication, engagement and cultural awareness allows social worker to optimize the time available.
- These components foster greater collaboration and teaming with parents and community members, more appropriate service referrals and ultimately better outcomes for children and families.

CalSWEC Curriculum Enhancement

Strengths-Based Case Management: From Service Brokering to Care Collaboration

Unit 2

Strengths-Based Case Management: From Service Brokering to Care Collaboration

Unit II: Family-Centered Care Collaboration

Overview

Care collaboration utilizes engagement and alliance between the social worker and the client to ensure that the services offered match the felt needs of the client. This model is grounded in the knowledge that the relationship between the social worker and the client is critical to growth. Additionally, the model recognizes the importance of community, family, and cross-agency partnerships and resources in enhancing client outcomes. As a supplement to the Strengths-Based Clinical Case Management curriculum, this narrative will identify social work skills that foster collaboration with family members in child welfare practice and review the rights and responsibilities of the family members involved.

Family-Centered Components in the Model & Social Worker Practice Tips

Key Components

Four key components foster collaboration between social workers and family members involved with Child Protective Services (CPS) while recognizing the responsibilities of each. These four components include parental involvement, communication, engagement, and cultural competence.

- Parental Involvement

Parental Involvement refers to the inclusion and active participation of mothers and fathers in activities, tasks, services, and decision-making throughout the child protection process. When families feel they have a say in the decisions that determine their families' status with Child Protective Services, they are more likely to be a willing accomplice throughout treatment rather than an adversary. Even when parents are non-voluntary clients, they may find that choosing to be involved in the tasks services, and activities required by the child welfare system can ultimately make their experience a rewarding and empowering one. This principle also pertains to parents with multiple challenges, such as those with substance abuse or domestic violence issues. The results of greater involvement are especially compelling when parents' increasing participation leads to their greater role in decision making. Parents taking on greater responsibility for decisions involving their children may in turn enhance the likelihood of family preservation or reunification and ultimately the well-being of children.

Practice Tips

Despite the dual role of social workers in child welfare (both agent of the state and helper), projecting a forthright yet non-judgmental attitude will help parents see the social worker as an potential ally and will increase their willingness to collaborate in the process.

- Be accessible, positive, and effective problem-solvers in order to gain parents' trust and confidence.
- As much as possible, have regular, face-to-face meetings, or at least contact with parents to give them an opportunity to be heard and to share their perspectives on different situations.
- Encourage parents to take responsibility in collaborating with child protective services:
 - They must be on time for all regularly scheduled visits, or provide notice when unable to do so.
 - When parents are unable to make visits or complete other CPS requirements, the social worker must be notified to allow alternative arrangements.
 - As with the social worker, parents should be encouraged to maintain a non-judgmental attitude and belief in the possibility of change.

- **Communication**

Communication in the Child Protective Services context has two main goals:

- (1) Build the relationship between the social worker and the family members; and
- (2) Develop an effective service and reunification plan.

Practice Tips

The social worker needs not only to gather information from the parent but also to share information about the child protection process in order to build relationships with family members.

- Remember that process involves listening and protecting confidentiality as appropriate.
- Explain social worker's responsibility to share certain types of information provide by parents or others.
- Develop the service/reunification plan in collaboration with family members.
- Ensure that the parental responsibilities identified in the plan match the parents' expectations.
- Encourage parents to be honest and allow children to share information as much as possible to enhance social worker's understanding of the home situation.
- If the family has barriers to following through with any of the activities in the reunification/service plan, ask family to identify these so the plan can be revised as needed.

- **Engagement**

Engagement is about “motivating and empowering families to recognize their own needs, strengths and resources and to take an active role in changing things for the better” (Steib, 2004). Although frequently blocked by anger, bias, power issues, mistrust, or fear, engagement between a worker and family encourages family members to stay committed and involved “in the long and sometimes slow process of positive change” (Steib, 2004).

Practice Tips

- Use honest communication and positive reinforcement.
- Focus on client strengths to foster engagement with parents and enhance service delivery.
- To encourage engagement, help parents understand resources and benefits to be gained through involvement with Child Protective Services.
- Help parents feel they can be honest without fear of retribution.

- **Cultural Competence**

Cultural competence is defined as “The process by which individuals and systems response respectfully and effectively to people of all culture, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms and values the worth of individuals, families and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each.” Cultural competence matters in large part because of the current racial makeup of the social workers and families involved. While child welfare workers are predominately Caucasian, racially and culturally diverse children and families are overrepresented in the child welfare system. Family practices, such as methods of discipline, differ by culture and race and need to be understood in context. In addition, cultural competence in a social worker helps to foster engagement.

Practice Tips

The social worker must recognize and respect diversity while be attuned to his or her own biases.

- To increase cultural competence, social workers should pursue educational opportunities for culturally sensitive practices.
- Especially when a family and the social worker are culturally different from one another, the social worker can foster engagement by gently initiating conversations about some of these differences.

- Through use of self and even a little humor on the part of the social worker, parents can be encouraged to recognize and respect diversity while gaining insight into their own biases.

Promising Programs

Although these four family-centered components detailed above sound promising for practice, are they realistic? With large caseloads and limited time and resources, how can social workers incorporate these family-centered components into CWS practice? An answer may be found in the components of innovative programs developing across the nation.

Three pioneering models of practice include:

- *Family to Family*: The Family to Family model utilizes a network of neighborhood-based care to support families involved with the child welfare system. This program fosters parental involvement and cultural competence by caring for families in the communities in which they live.
- *Signs of Safety* : This program was developed in Australia in the mid 1990's by Andrew Turnell and Steve Edwards. This work has continued internationally and has been adopted by many California counties. Training academies in California have been working with the model, as well as integrating it with the actuarial assessment tool, SDM.
- *Culture Brokers*: Broker programs, which grew out of the discipline of anthropology, utilize case managers to bridge the gaps between workers and family members that arise due to disability, cultural background and/or language differences. Culture brokers, who may come from diverse professional backgrounds, engage directly with families and act as intermediary communicators to help family members and social work or court professionals understand one another and work towards shared goals.

All of these innovative models utilize diverse ways to incorporate family-centered components into practice.

Important Components

What are the active ingredients of these programs and how may they can incorporated into the practice of a Child Welfare social worker?

- *Family to Family*: Directed towards increased child safety and reduced out of home placements, the program's key strategies include : *building community partnerships* to support these goals; *team decision-making* that involves collaboration of parents, case workers and community members; *recruiting, developing and supporting resource families* to support children and families in their communities; and *continuing self-evaluation* to insure the program is

meeting its goals. Underpinning all of these strategies are the key family-centered care collaboration elements noted earlier: *parental involvement, communication, engagement, and cultural competence*.

- *The Signs of Safety*: This ever-evolving, family-social worker-community partnership approach to child welfare casework has three main objectives:
 - Creating effective working relationships to guide casework among all stakeholders (child, family, worker, supervisor, extended community, etc.)
 - Enhancing critical inquiry and minimizing the potential for bias by workers through “mapping” the safety, danger and risk undertaken collaboratively by all stakeholders.
 - Developing a joint understanding by workers, families and extended community as to what the family strengths, dangers, risks, and protective capacities are, as well as what meaningful behavioral changes and goals are needed to foster child safety.

Although the model emphasizes its non-static approach to developing practical casework solutions, it nevertheless shares the active ingredients of considerable *parental involvement, communication* (across professions as well as with family and community), *engagement* (with all parties to create constructive partnerships), and *cultural competence*.

- *Culture Brokers*: Not a single program but an approach, the methods of a culture brokering are used in several fields, notably in social work, health care, legal, and education settings where diverse cultures are present and mediation of the cultures is helpful in serving the individuals and communities involved. A broker typically has knowledge and experience in one or more cultures to create engagement and trust among those served. In child welfare settings, brokers have been valuable in helping families navigate the protective services and court system “cultures” involved, while bridging cultural gaps between social workers and diverse families and communities with which they may not be familiar. Brokers may act as liaisons, mediators, and agents for positive change, as when a broker assists families unfamiliar with the expectations and demands of professionals involved in a child maltreatment case. The broker can explain these expectations to family and community members, while at the same time facilitating better communication and mutual understanding with the social worker and court. More positive outcomes can then be achieved. Again, the elements of *parental involvement, communication, engagement, and cultural competence* are prominent in the work of the broker.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges of high caseloads and limited time, public child welfare social workers can nevertheless adopt and incorporate the elements of enhanced case management into their practice. By preparing to engage with children and families to “substantively and affectively prepare for action . . .,” in the words of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Core Competencies, a social worker can utilize what time is available with the client to its best effect. Approaching the child and family and community respectfully, nonjudgmentally—with honesty, openness to communicate, and cultural competence—can only make for greater cooperation and collaboration with parents, fellow professionals, and community members. Better formal and informal collaboration, more appropriate service referrals, and ultimately better outcomes for children and families can be the ultimate result.



Writing Skills Resources

Several colleges, universities and other entities offer online materials and/or courses to help students improve their reading and writing skills. While many of these are intended to assist students with their coursework, the skills offered are readily transferrable to career-related writing such as court reports. The materials also help students and beginning social workers develop the critical thinking and organizational skills that underpin systematic thought and writing. Below is a sampling of the more useful of these sites and courses.

Carroll, A. T. (1990) Student Success Guide: Writing Skills A basic guide for college students, with exercises and examples that may easily be used for self-directed study. Author is affiliated with Sacramento City College

<http://www.skeptdic.com/refuge/writingskills.pdf>

E-Zine University (ezineuniversity.com)

- [Writing Clearly and Effectively](#)
- [Conquering Confusing Words](#)
- [Quick Ways to Clean Up Your Writing](#)

E-Zine University offers a number of courses written by Internet publisher Kate Schultz and visiting professors. Although the courses offered at E-Zine University are designed mainly for web writers and e-zine writers, they are helpful to almost any writer. Courses are very short and don't take much time to complete. No registration is required.

<http://ezineuniversity.com/courses/ez401/401-01.html>

Harvard University Writing Center offers free online assistance through a series of excellent handouts on the writing process. Includes style guide recommendations.

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/resources.html>

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (mit.edu)

MIT offers dozens of free undergraduate and [graduate writing courses](#) online through its MIT OpenCourseWare (OCW) initiative. Course topics include everything from writing fiction, poems and essays to analyzing all forms of literature. Lecture notes, videos, suggested reading lists and more are available online to help users. No registration is required

<http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>

Purdue University

- [Proofreading Your Writing](#)

- Professional and Technical Writing

Purdue University brought their writing lab online in 1994 to offer a writing resource to students no matter where they were located. Online Writing Lab (OWL) materials are now free to everyone regardless of location or student status. The expansive OWL site offers writing instruction, grammar and usage information, individualized help from tutors and much more. Includes online APA and MLA style guides. No registration is required.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

University of Massachusetts Boston (umb.edu)

- Critical Reading and Writing

The University of Massachusetts Boston offers one free writing course through its OpenCourseWare initiative. The course is designed for people who are seeking to strengthen their academic writing skills, and would be ideal for someone considering going back to school. No registration is required.

<http://ocw.umb.edu/>

University of Southern California (USC) Online Writing Resources

This online resource site offers dictionaries, plagiarism rules, and tips for writers and also displays a variety of style guides, MLA and APA guidelines, and grammar rules for writers. It also collects a variety of additional valuable websites, including some for non-native English speakers and writers with a learning disability.

http://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/information_for_students/online_resources.html

University of Wisconsin at Madison Writing Center. Offers an online Writer's Handbook with grammar and style handouts

<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/index.html>

Focus on Multilingual Students:

Anthony Halderman's Cuesta College Page: English instructor Halderman at this college in San Luis Obispo offers exercises for multi-lingual students, research links, composition tips and technical writing resources.

<http://academic.cuesta.edu/ahalderma/>

Courses for Social Work Students

Cal State Chico offers a course designed specifically for BSW level social work students: *Writing for the Social Work Profession*. The course is offered twice a year and may be taken more than once. It is not yet available online, but the course syllabus may be available from the department.



Curriculum Resources for Supervision in Child Welfare

The resources assembled below are intended to assist Title IV-E faculty and project coordinators in preparing material for their courses, as well as students and county staff who may find them helpful for self-directed learning. As holders of the MSW, many of the Title IV-E graduates will take supervisory roles in the future. These materials are particularly useful as learning materials for courses touching on Advanced Public Child Welfare Competencies related to workplace management, leadership, and policy practice issues.

NCWWI Leadership Academy

The National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) offers The Leadership Academy for Supervisors (LAS), an on-line training program for experienced supervisors. The academy is intended **for supervisors seeking to become motivated leaders in their units, their agencies and their communities**. Designed specifically for supervisors, who often find it hard to locate training appropriate to their level of experience, this curriculum addresses the desire to seek advancement, to implement changes in agency service delivery, and/or to find new ways to lead staff towards better child and family outcomes.

A service of the Children's Bureau, the NCWWI offers online training materials to any supervisor with one year of experience in a public or tribal child welfare agency, or in a private agency contracted by the state to provide case management services traditionally provided by a child welfare system.

The courses are offered in two web-based forms described below:

- **LAS Core Leadership Program** : a comprehensive, six module competency-based leadership program based on the latest research and presented by national experts in the field. Core courses include:
 - **Introductory modules**
 - **Foundations of leadership**
 - **Leading in context: Partnerships**
 - **Leading people: Workforce development**
 - **Leading for Results: Accountability**
 - **Leading systems change: Goal setting**

- **Take the Lead** -- a series of shorter skill-based modules on topics of specific interest. Take the Lead modules are open to all eligible supervisors, whether or not they are enrolled in the Core Leadership Program. These shorter modules are 45 minutes in length.

Users may take the courses at their own pace and in any location with internet access. There is no charge for eligible supervisors. CEU units are available for a modest fee. There is also an online Academy for Middle Managers. The NCWWI web site below offers additional materials, access to other workforce sites, and a Resource Library.

<http://www.ncwwi.org/las.html>

Child Welfare Information Gateway: Child Welfare Supervision Services

The Child Welfare Information Gateway offers a rich selection of materials to assist supervisors in becoming more effective in several aspects of their work. The following is a sampling of the topics included on the site:

- Administrative supervision
- Improving performance through supervision
- Improving staff retention through supervision
- Facilitating staff development
- Supervising for organizational change
- Supervisory development

State and local materials are gathered by the site, with various innovative programs among the states featured periodically. All Gateway materials for supervisors may be accessed from the following website:

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/management/mgmt>

California Common Core Curricula for Supervisors

The CalSWEC Regional Training Academy offers several resources for supervisors; these may be accessed through the CalSWEC website.

The Casework Supervision resource below includes statewide standardized information and delivery methods. All resources are updated periodically; the revision dates are noted.

- Casework Supervision, Version 2.0 [Posted October 6, 2011]

Five additional content areas have standardized information, with detailed instructions on delivery:

- Child Welfare Policy and Practice for Supervisors, Version 1.1 [Posted Sept. 15, 2009]
- Evidence-Based Practice, Version 1.0 [Posted Oct. 4, 2006]
- Fiscal Essentials, Version 2.0 [Posted Dec. 4, 2009]
- Educational Supervision, Version 1.0 [Posted Oct. 4, 2006]
- Managing for Results, Version 1.1 [Posted July 14, 2009]

The website below includes all the above curricula, as well as background and content, instructions on using the training guides, and citation information.

http://calswec.berkeley.edu/CalSWEC/CCCCA_Core_Supervisors.html