ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND CLIMATE:
ASSESSMENT AND CREATING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

*Improving children’s lives one organization at a time*

Anthony L. Hemmelgarn, Ph.D.
Center for Behavioral Health Research (Children’s Mental Health Services Research Center)

College of Social Work
University of Tennessee
http://cbhr.utk.edu
Why does culture and climate matter?

“Here, hit him with this paddle. This is what my daddy used on me and look how I turned out.”

“I tried to ask them for input, but they just stared at me and said nothing. It’s like I told you, they aren’t like me. I want to learn, to get better, to improve. I have to force my staff to do everything.”
Why does culture and climate matter?

- Substantial impact on client, staff, and organizational outcomes
- Impacts capacity building and implementation efforts (e.g., EBP implementation)
- Long-lasting positive change in human services depends on it
Plan for today

1. Learn about Organizational Social Context (culture and climate)
2. Review scientific evidence of impact
3. Understand a model of Organizational Social Context’s (OSC) central role in human services
4. Discuss tools to assess and improve OSC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OSC Measure</th>
<th>ARC organizational change strategy</th>
<th>ARC training &amp; workshops</th>
<th>ARC consultation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Organizational social context (OSC)

**Culture**
- System norms and values
- “The way things are done”
- What is expected and rewarded?

**Climate**
- Perceptions of the work environment’s psychological impact on employees
- Affective response
- Is this place good or bad for me?
Organizational Social Context Measure: Culture

Organizational Culture

Proficiency
Expectations for excellence, up-to-date knowledge, expertise, and being focused on client well-being

Rigidity
Centralization and formalization with limited discretion in the hands of front-line staff

Resistance
Passive or active resistance to change, new ideas, or innovation
Organizational Climate

Engagement
Feelings of accomplishment, purposeful work, and personalization in relationships with clients

Functionality
Well-oiled machine where roles are clear, support from colleagues is evident, and growth and development can occur

Stress
Feelings of role overload, receiving conflicting messages, and emotional exhaustion (burnout)
What culture or climate (OSC) barriers have you experienced that interfered with implementation or change efforts?
Research on OSC
Studies to date link Organizational Social Context to:

- New program sustainability
- Job satisfaction and commitment
- Staff turnover
- Quality of services
- Client well-being
- Individualized care
New program sustainability

Staff turnover

Percent 1 Year Turnover for Worst, Average, and Best Climate and Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Worst</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Best</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent 1 Year Turnover for ARC vs Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>ARC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Child well-being: Children’s problem scores in child welfare systems nationwide

A model of OSC in child welfare
What creates OSC

Internal Factors
- Employee knowledge, skills, abilities, “fit”
- Client severity and complexity of problems
- Resources available

External Factors
- Market forces: competition, funding potential
- Institutions: lawmakers, media, regulators
- Community norms and values

Formal organizational structure and processes

Organizational Leadership and Administration

Leadership style and deeply held beliefs
A model of OSC in Human Services
Takeaways

Myriad factors interact to create OSC (culture and climate)

Effective change requires us to be mindful of how changes in external, internal and leadership factors affect OSC

Sustainable improvement requires addressing OSC
Factors that influence assessment implementation in child welfare

Example:

Introducing an assessment measure

- Consent decrees, oversight boards, federal requirements, documentation
- Numerous implementation efforts
- Multiple stakeholder measures and objectives
- Staff untrained in assessment and data usage
Example: Context details an assessment

Focus on documentation, not child well-being

- “Yeah, we were told to complete the SAC and make sure it was in our files just like all the other things we complete”

Norms for implementing new practices

- “Look, why should I believe this is any different than any of the other interventions – this too shall soon pass”

Disconnect from mission of child well-being

- “We really don’t use the SAC to make decisions – our job is to collect it, not do something with it”
- “I know we had training, but nobody actually uses the measure in making decisions for the kids – we just try to find a place to house them”
What factors do you see that negatively or positively affect the way your staff see and react to data?
Research-proven tools to assess and improve OSC and outcomes
Tools and processes we use to assess and improve cultures and climates

- OSC Measure
- ARC organizational change strategy
- ARC training and workshops
- ARC consultation
OSC: Culture and Climate Assessment

Nationally-normed Profiles

Organizational level assessment
- Front-line staff respondents
- Organizational Units and Multi-level data
- Agreement Indices

Impact
- Tracking impact & improvement
- Creating tension for change
- Identifying targets for improvement
ARC organizational change strategy

Availability, Responsiveness, Continuity

Proven in multiple Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) funded by NIMH and W.T. Grant Foundation

Tested in “real world” child welfare and mental health agencies
Research-proven outcomes for ARC

- Improved culture and climate
- Improved quality of care
- Improved child well-being
- Improved job satisfaction and commitment, and decreased turnover
- Improved EBP/EBT exploration and training attendance
- Improved EBP/EBT effectiveness
ARC strategies to improve cultures and climates

5 principles of organizational effectiveness

Key component tools and processes to help front-line staff and administrators remove service barriers

Positive mental models and beliefs for leadership to front-line staff that support improvement and implementation efforts
ARC guiding principles

Mission-driven vs. rule-driven
All staff and administrative actions and decisions contribute to client well-being.

Results-oriented vs. process-oriented
Measure staff and program performance by improvements in client well-being.

Improvement-directed vs. status quo-oriented
Staff and administrators continually seek to be more effective.

Relationship-centered vs. individual-centered
Staff and administrators focus on consumer and stakeholder relationships.

Participation-based vs. authority-based
Include front-line staff and community stakeholders in key program decisions.
## ARC component tools and processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership development</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal relationships</td>
<td>Conflict resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network development</td>
<td>Goal setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building</td>
<td>Continuous improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information &amp; training</td>
<td>Job redesign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positive mental models

Mental models are internal frameworks that guide what we pay attention to, what we think about it, and how we react.

Example: Psychological safety

A context where it is safe to openly talk about concerns, problems, and/or mistakes affecting client well-being outcomes, as well as new ideas, competing perspectives, and alternative views.
Fostering OSC “Proficiency”

Example

- ARC Principles
- ARC Components
- Mental Models
ARC Principles

OSC Proficiency

Example

- Re-establishing focus on client well-being (Mission-driven)
- Measuring success by client outcomes (Results-oriented)
- Fostering norms for personal improvement (Improvement-directed)
- Focusing on high quality relationships (Relationship-centered)
- Increasing discretion of staff in service decisions (Participation-based)
ARC Components:

OSD Proficiency

Example

Data Feedback Systems

(Creating meaningful client feedback that front-line staff are motivated to use)

Continuous Quality Improvement

(Creating processes and mechanisms that allow front-line staff to eliminate barriers with leadership)

Team Development

(Establishing cohesive teams that foster personal growth, development, and skill refinement)
**ARC Mental Models:**

**OSC Proficiency Example**

**Psychological Safety**
- Creating an environment where it is safe to “say I need training and help”

**Locus of Control**
- Leadership that drives intrinsic motivation and passion vs. control and monitoring

**Effective Training Models**
- Re-envisioning what it takes to ensure effective training is in place
Baseline & creating tension for change

Monitoring organizational change efforts over time

Gaining insight into the true impact of external, internal, and leadership changes

Identifying targets for change
• Systems and processes
• Training
• Leadership development
• Mental Models development

Fostering improved models for successful change – going beyond technology
For more information:

Tony Hemmelgarn
Hemmelgarn@utk.edu

ARC Institute website:
*Coming Soon*

CBHR website:
http://cbhr.utk.edu

Child Welfare Information Gateway
Organizational Change section:
https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/workforce/change/