Linking evidence to Child Welfare Supervision

A guidebook for supervisors
This seminar will focus upon:

- The components of social work supervision;
- The educational paradigm within the context of child welfare supervision;
- Linking evidence-informed practice with critical analysis and reflective practice, and;
- The role that learning culture plays in the context of supervision, evidence-informed thinking, and analysis.
The overall mission of PART is to “promote the understanding and use of evidence-informed practice (EIP) at all levels of the child welfare system in Ontario to ensure the best possible services and outcomes for vulnerable children and families” (PART’s Vision Statement, February 2011).
PART ACHIEVES ITS MISSION THROUGH THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS

- PARTicles
- Learning Events
- Webinars
- Archived Webinars
- Link PARTners
- E-Library — access to online journals
Components of Child Welfare Supervision
Critical-Thinking Skills
Evidence-Informed Practice
Creating and Sustaining an Organizational Learning Culture
SITUATING THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR IN THE CONTEXT OF EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICE
Why Focus on Supervisors?
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
COMPONENTS OF CHILD WELFARE SUPERVISION

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FINDING SUPERVISORY BALANCE

Clinical

Educational

Administrative
1. Regularly scheduling individual and/or group supervision
2. Developing front line practitioners’ critical thinking skills
3. Encouraging practitioners to engage in self reflection to support learning, critical thinking and critical decision making
4. Enhancing front line practitioners’ ability to identify important casework questions at the heart of maltreatment

5. Modeling EIP by looking to the research to inform interventions that are most effective for achieving client outcomes

6. Contribute to an organizational learning culture

7. Assessing front line practitioners’ skills and abilities through various methods
We welcome questions from our remote audience as well as our in-person audience.
APPLYING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS IN THE CONTEXT OF SUPERVISION

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Hallmarks of the Critical Thinker

- Use evidence skillfully and impartially.
- Be self-aware and understand how life experiences, cultures and values impact on problem solving.
- Listen carefully and assign weight to other perspectives and ideas, even when they are contrary to their own.
- Find unusual approaches for complex problems.
- Strip verbal arguments of irrelevancies and distil them into their essentials.
1. Modeling appropriate behaviour

- Identify the following for this case example:
  - The elements of faulty and accurate thinking.
  - A question that a supervisor could ask a practitioner to bring attention to faulty thinking.
- “Recently at a team meeting, we discussed the case of a single-parent mother who has an acting-out teenager. The son has been acting out a great deal and causing his mother much grief and stress. I think she will soon want him out of the home and the practitioner should prepare for it. He will probably need a group-home placement due to his behaviour.”
DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS ON THE FRONT LINE

2. Creating an appropriate supervisory environment—build trust and safety

- Expectations are modeled through behaviour and attitudes.
- Expectations can be articulated or implied.
- Using evidence and critical thinking in supervision sets a good example for practitioners.
3. Asking discriminating/Socratic questions

- Conceptual clarification questions:
  - How does this relate to what we’ve been talking about?

- Probing assumptions:
  - What would happen if…?

- Probing rationale, reason and evidence:
  - What do you think causes…?

- Questioning viewpoints and perspectives:
  - What is the difference between … and …?

- Probing implications and consequences:
  - How does … fit with what we learned before?

- Questioning the question:
  - Why do you think I asked this question?
4. Identifying themes

- Blocks to applying critical thinking and problem solving:
  - emotional barriers, such as a fear of taking risks;
  - motivational barriers, such as a lack of interest in helping clients;
  - environmental barriers, such as noise, distractions or inadequate tools to do the job; and
  - workplace culture barriers, such as pressures from an accountability system that rewards redundancy over client services
EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICE
WHAT IS EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICE?

Clinical State and Circumstances

Clinical Expertise

Current Best Evidence

Client Preferences and Actions
Steps in the process of Evidence-Informed Practice

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STEPS IN THE PROCESS OF EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICE

1. Be willing to say “I don’t know”
2. Pose well formed answerable questions related to your practice
3. Search effectively and efficiently for research findings
4. Critically appraise research findings
5. Use clinical expertise to integrate research findings with other sources
6. Evaluate and learn from what happens
GETTING STARTED AND DEVELOPING A PLAN

A. Understand your team caseload
   ☐ Collect evidence from your own team to inform and develop your practice.

B. Talk with practitioners and canvas their opinions and practice wisdom
   ☐ Determine what they already know and what they think they need to learn.
A. Identify clinical areas benefit from EIP
   
   S = Specific
   
   M = Measurable
   
   A = Achievable
   
   R = Realistic
   
   T = Time Limited

B. Tell others goal is for your practice to be EI

C. Use tools available to you in:
   
   ○ Individual supervision
   
   ○ Team learning
Brief break for live audience
CASE STUDIES AND CRITICAL THINKING – TOOL G

For each vignette:

- Identify the elements of faulty thinking
- Identify the elements that are accurate
- Think of a question that, as a supervisor, you could ask a worker if faced with this case to bring to attention any faulty thinking being used.

Page 151, Broadening Horizons, Linking Evidence to Child Welfare Supervision. Rhonda Hallberg, MSW, RSW, and Katharine Dill, MSW, PhD.
In your small group, identify which questions

- Tend to unfold naturally in the process of consulting on a case?
- Receive less attention?
CREATING AN ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING CULTURE
Organizations with a culture of learning are better suited to respond to pressure and achieve change when required.

A culture of learning embraces three kinds of learning:

1. **Knowing how**
2. **Knowing what**
3. **Knowing why**
It is not unusual for organizations to unintentionally develop barriers to learning:

- Attention is overly focused on programs and program development.
- Reflection is not valued as a learning tool.
- Fear of criticism causes defensiveness and protectionism.
- Errors, mistakes and tragedies are not reflectively engaged.
- Passive, directionless or reactionary decision-making is practiced.
- Resistance to change or risk-taking.
Methods of Developing a Learning Culture

- Individual level
  - Technical abilities
  - Relationship abilities
  - Learning to learn abilities
Cyclical Learning Process

Concrete Experience

Observation and Reflection

Generalizing Forming Abstract Concepts

Applying and Testing in New Situations
Methods of Developing a Learning Culture

Team or work group level
- Establish a safe environment for reflection & learning
- Team learning events
- Tie team function to organization mission and goals
METHODS OF DEVELOPING A LEARNING CULTURE

VIDEO:
- Learning as a team
METHODS OF DEVELOPING A LEARNING CULTURE

- Whole organization level
  - Vision: Having a shared vision gives all members a sense of purpose and direction
  - Be integrative
  - Take risk: learning comes with mistakes
  - Connect people
  - Organized structure that embeds learning into daily practice
METHODS OF DEVELOPING A LEARNING CULTURE
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER
STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

1. Yourself: Model of Intentional Change - the 5 Discoveries

   - Recognize Discrepancies
   - Engage Supportive Relationships
   - Practice New Behaviours and Skills
   - Self-Reflection
   - Create a Plan
2. **Your team:**

1. One way of approaching the question “how do we get started?” is to ask your team to design its own process for implementing EIP.

2. Create dialogue within team

**Steps you can take**

- Respect
- Open mind
- Two way
- Positive
- Time

**Dialogue**

- Movement
- Fresh perspective
- New ideas & solutions
- Strengthened relationships
- Satisfaction
3. Your organization

- Develop an organizational vision of EIP
- Identify and use EIP champions
- Create an EIP Advisory Committee
- Promote Evidence-Informed Practice
- Develop an audit of the organization’s strengths, opportunities and aspirations.