MIND THE GAP NATIONAL WEBINAR SERIES, Session #2
Simulation Labs for Child Welfare Training & Education

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Wednesday, February 4, 2015
Overview of Today’s Session

• Introduction to Topic/Context & WDF
• Simulation Labs for CW Education & Training
  o Background & Context
  o Information Gathering & Planning Process
  o Strategy Description, Overview, Development & Implementation
  o Progress, Impact & Outcomes
  o Accelerators & Decelerators
  o Lessons Learned & Tips for Other Agencies

• Q & A
• Closing & Next Steps
Education & Professional Preparation

- Recruit, prepare, and support a diverse student body
- Promote effective school to work transition and retention
- Support a comprehensive evidence-informed system of child welfare workforce development
- Promote agency/university partnerships for pre-service, in-service and ongoing professional development

Explore MyNCWWI
Professional Development & Training

- Principles of a learning organization are valued and practiced and modeled by leaders at all levels.
- Staff are encouraged to continue to learn through ongoing training, education, and career development.
- Partnerships with universities and in the community support a comprehensive approach to professional development for staff at all levels.

Explore MyNCWWI
Background & Context
Basic Overview

• Simulation = technique for education and training used in different disciplines, including aviation, the military, and medicine.
• Offers guided, "immersive" experiences that evoke/replicate aspects of real world experience in interactive fashion.
• Designed to promote, develop, and reinforce key SW skills, e.g. client engagement, critical thinking, assessment skills, interviewing techniques, decision-making, analysis, and problem solving - in a team-focused, supportive setting.
• Simulation training program initially piloted in August 2013
• Simulation is now an integral component of LA County DCFS’ new worker Foundation training and education for child welfare trainees.
Multi-disciplinary Team

Simulation Labs were developed and implemented by a multi-disciplinary team consisting of LA County D.C.F.S. training staff, child welfare training faculty from four University Schools of Social Work (Cal State University, Los Angeles; Cal State University, Long Beach; UCLA; USC), law enforcement consultants, County Counsel, Public Health Nurses, and other subject matter experts (SMEs).
Agency Background & Context

1. Los Angeles County has 2.4 million children and youth ages 0-20 years old.
2. L.A. County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has 7,500 employees, of which 3,200 are Children’s Social Workers (CSWs).
3. CSWs received just over 200,000 calls at the Child Protection Hotline in FY13-14.
4. CSWs investigated approximately 150,000 child safety referrals.
5. CSWs made 198,134 out of the required 210,781 (94%) visits with DCFS supervised children during FY 13-14.
6. CSWs participated in over 100,000 court hearings regarding child safety cases.
7. Over 5,000 children safely reunited with parents.

(Data from Los Angeles County DCFS 2013-14 Biennial Report)
Media... catalyst for change

Telemundo
Channel 52

Univision
Channel 34

NBC- Channel 4 News
Information Gathering & Planning Process

- Focused on mission, preparation, and demonstration
- Built upon direction and support from Agency and University SSW Leadership
Information Gathering & Planning Process

A) Focused on Agency’s Mission, Preparation and Demonstration

- CHILD SAFETY, PERMANENCY, WELL-BEING
- INCREASE TRANSFER OF LEARNING (T.O.L.) OF CRITICAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES
- CORE PRACTICE MODEL
Information Gathering & Planning Process (cont.)

B) Built upon direction and support from the Agency and University Schools of Social Work Leadership

- PUSH TO INNOVATE
- NO MORE “DOING BUSINESS AS USUAL”
- COLLABORATION, COLLABORATION, COLLABORATION
Strategy Description/Overview

• Simulation needed to be designed to specifically promote critical thinking, decision making, analysis and problem-solving skills

• Make it “real” but safe for trainees to learn and practice

• Incorporate key adult learning principles and theories
Adult Learners

• People learn in different ways
• The ways that people learn may change over time
• Adults are less patient than children and are much more focused on immediate application
• Adults want to know WHY information is worth knowing and HOW they can use it
Adult Learners and Training

- Many trainers are promoted internally based on subject matter expertise
- They may not have expertise in adult learning theory, practice, principles, etc.
- Training is a separate and unique skill set, and is not just bombarding folks with facts/information
- Critical that trainers/training systems have knowledge about how adults learn most effectively
Adult Learning and Training

- **Training:**
  - Something done TO others
  - **Pushes** knowledge, skills, attitudes essential to work performance
  - Goal is to change individuals so they produce better outcomes as quickly as possible

- **Learning:**
  - Something individuals do on their own
  - Learners **pull** knowledge, skills, attitudes from others in order to achieve results
  - Learning is a human need-based activity to solve real time work or life problems
  - Learning and problem-solving go together
  - Central to organizational & individual success
1. For successful transfer of learning to occur, similarities must exist between instructional and work settings

2. Informal learning occurs through interacting with others, observation, first hand experience & other “hands on” events

3. Many organizations resist “theory” versus “practical” learning, but the founder of organizational development says “nothing is so practical as good theory,” because good theory guides good practice and yields better results

4. People will repeat behaviors that worked well in similar previous situations

5. Practice improves performance

6. Skill practice essential to learn complex set of behaviors
Simulation Tips for Trainers
(based on various learning theories)

1. Encourage learner intuition (cognitive theory)
2. Play the role of facilitators rather than subject matter experts (constructivist theory)
3. Encourage social interaction among learners by giving them chances to teach back what they have learned (conversation theory)
4. Focus on action-oriented, problem-solving challenges, reducing reliance on lectures & increasing reliance on learners undertaking challenges, provide tips how to avoid common mistakes or missteps in learning process (minimalist theory)
5. Draw instruction materials/activities from real-world situations, documents, problems (functional context approach)
6. Give learners advance organizers so they will have a roadmap to navigate through learning material (subsumption theory)
7. Encourage action-oriented learning, create a psychologically supportive learning climate, give learners compelling reasons to learn & offer resources for them to access in their learning (experiential learning theory)
1. Allow trainees to practice their knowledge and skills in a supportive environment where mistakes are allowed and can be corrected.

2. Help increase confidence and competency.

3. Provide realistic overview as well as “stress inoculation” to new workers by preparing them for situations they may experience while on the job.
Developing the Strategy

1. Preliminary work done by DCFS and University Simulation Design Team
2. Observations of training simulations conducted by local law enforcement
3. Simulation scenarios created specifically for DCFS social workers; roles defined and rehearsed
4. Piloted simulation training in August 2013 at Cal State LA’s Residential Simulation Lab
Essential Elements

1. Simulation scenarios based on **actual** critical incident and child fatality cases, but with fact patterns altered.
2. Simulations follow the chronology of a case through the child welfare system.
3. Learning objectives and outcomes → baseline level of competencies and skills at trainees’ developmental level.
4. Stair-step learning from classroom presentation and training.
5. Critical thinking about desired behaviors of trainees.
Learning Objectives & Outcomes

Demonstrate baseline competency and skills in:

- Assessment
- Observation
- Professional presence
- Interviewing (e.g. rapport building and engagement)
- Client communication (including “difficult conversations”)
- Critical thinking and decision-making
- Collaboration across disciplines/professions (e.g. LE, PHN)
- Documentation
- Worker safety/Situational awareness
- Policies, procedures, legal issues
- Self-awareness
Essential Elements (cont.)

1. Learning is sequenced and integrated into the overall introductory training curriculum.
2. Strength-based feedback is modeled by facilitators and a parallel process.
3. Peer-to-peer learning is supported by highly-skilled facilitators.
4. Desired learning objectives drives design and development.
5. SME trainers serve as role players and guide learning.
6. Training materials and facilitator guides are included.
Designing & Creating a Simulation Environment

1. Residential Simulation Lab
2. Simulation Sets
3. Hotel Guestrooms
4. Court Simulation
Residential Simulation Lab (CSULA)
550 sq. ft., one bedroom apt. inside a classroom
Residential Simulation Lab (CSULA)
550 sq. ft., One bedroom apt. inside a classroom

Residential Sim Lab Construction Costs:

a) Initial Lab mock-up (Aug. 2013; three weeks) = $2,000 (materials, staff labor, props donated)

b) Lab upgrade by CSULA (Jan. 2014; six weeks) = $18,900 (labor, materials to bring up to building code + creation of storage/prop room. Props donated)

c) Installation of AV/Recording/Sound Effects equipment for “Closed Set” (2015) = $ TBD
Simulation Sets (CSULB)
Simulation Sets (UCLA)
Hotel Guestrooms
Other Nuts & Bolts

• Staffing infrastructure

• Facilitator development/ability to provide feedback

• Preparation and “sim day” coordination
GROUP ROTATION ON “SIM DAY”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Round 1 (10:00 – 11:15 am)</th>
<th>Round 2 (1:00 – 2:15 pm)</th>
<th>Round 3 (2:30 – 3:45 pm)</th>
<th>Group Debrief (3:45 – 4:30 pm)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group A</strong></td>
<td>Interview with Relative Caregiver</td>
<td>Interview with Mom</td>
<td>Interview with Child</td>
<td>Debrief with all groups together</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group B</strong></td>
<td>Interview with Mom</td>
<td>Interview with Child</td>
<td>Interview with Relative Caregiver</td>
<td>Debrief with all groups together</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group C</strong></td>
<td>Interview with Child</td>
<td>Interview with Relative Caregiver</td>
<td>Interview with Mom</td>
<td>Debrief with all groups together</td>
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Other Nuts & Bolts (cont.)

• Debriefing Session
Current Use/Application/Status

• Four full “simulation days” are now incorporated into DCFS new social worker / Foundation training curriculum
• Simulations are now being rolled out for DCFS supervisors
• Development and implementation of courtroom simulations
Progress, Impact & Outcomes
Progress, Impact and Outcomes

- Over 10 cohorts of new children social workers have gone through the simulation training program (nearly 400 trainees)
- Positive feedback from trainees
- Many improvements and “growth” changes to simulation training program have occurred as a result of increased Agency needs
- Currently developing evaluation process and framework help assess simulation effectiveness
Accelerators & Decelerators
Decelerators

1. Ensuring consistent facts and details in simulation scenarios

2. Large amount of resources required

3. Logistics and coordination

4. Positive reactions to simulation program =>
   Rapid deployment and expanded use of simulations
Accelerators

1. Tremendous support from Agency and University SSW leadership
2. Overwhelming positive response & feedback from trainees, trainers, general public
3. A dedicated, multi-disciplinary simulation training team who work together to create a strength-focused, supportive learning environment for new children social workers
Lessons Learned & Tips
Lessons Learned

- FLEXIBLE LEARNING IS POSSIBLE WITHIN A STANDARDIZED FORMAT
- LESS IS MORE
- KEEP TRAINERS REFRESHED
- DEBRIEFING IS KEY
- EVEN AFTER ONE YEAR, PROGRAM IS STILL EVOLVING AND "MATURING"
Tips for Other Agencies/Universities

• Simulations can be conducted in various “home-like environments” – cheaply and effectively
• Secure support from your leadership; discuss need to move beyond didactic approaches to training
• Assess your level of available resources
• Develop a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency team
• Start slow and keep things simple in creating your scenarios
• Prepare and practice, practice, practice
• Other tips…
“Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand.”

- Confucius, 450 BC
Bibliography


Questions? Comments?

Continuous Quality Improvement

- Analyze Workforce Supply & Demand
- Identify Needs: Organizational Assessment
- Gather Data: Environmental Assessment
- Identify Gaps
- Monitor & Evaluate

Close the Gaps: Implement Workforce Development Components

Leadership

- Community Context
- Organizational Environment
- Professional Development & Training
- Incentives & Work Conditions
- Recruitment, Screening & Selection
- Education & Professional Preparation
- Supervision & Performance Management
- Job Analysis & Position Requirements

VISION, MISSION, VALUES

Mind the Gap Webinar Series | Session 2 | February 4, 2015
A Service of the Children’s Bureau
Follow-up Learning Exchange

Thursday, February 19, 2015 at 3:30 pm ET

• Please join us for a 60-minute follow-up webinar offering deeper interaction between the presenters and participants through facilitated discussion designed to enhance critical thinking on this important workforce development topic

• To register: http://bit.ly/NCWWILearnExch2
Additional Resources

• MyNCWWI:
  o Education, Professional Preparation & University-Agency Partnerships
  o Professional Development & Training

• Previous webinars:
  o Beyond Professional Education & Training: PA's Dynamic University-Agency Partnership for Transfer of Learning, Quality Improvement & Organizational Effectiveness
Closing the Gap
Upcoming Sessions

April 22, 2015:
Children's Corps: A Dynamic Approach to Recruitment, Screening and Selection of Child Welfare Workers

June/July 2015:
Competency Models in Action
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Thank You!

Connect with Us

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