

NCWWI Innovations Exchange 5: Education and Professional Development

This document contains the feedback and recommendations from participants of the November 17, 2020, NCWWI Innovations Exchange on Education and Professional Development.



What professional development opportunities has your agency provided during the pandemic?

- Sharing free webinars
- Uploaded NCWWI [Leadership Academy for Supervisors](#) modules to our Learning Management System
- Taking advantage of opportunities to send staff to conferences due to virtual sessions being more accessible and less costly
- Providing change management sessions
- Sending staff newsletters with different training opportunities
- Offering virtual group supervision to support social work licensure
- Offering virtual workshops and road shows
- Holding Zoom meetings, offering free webinars, and providing routine communication from HR
- Providing online training
- Enhancing Moodle learning center for social worker development
- Offering online coaching and learning circles
- Making use of training through business account with LinkedIn
- Providing [NTI e-learning courses](#) for child welfare staff and supervisors
- Provided a full-time social work practice coach

In what new ways has your agency focused on building university partnerships to support education of a diverse workforce?

- Using resources to best support students virtually
- Continuing strong relationships with universities
- Having a staff person in charge of promoting theory of practice
- Holding a fall social work education fair for non-social work degree employees to help them learn about the social work programs
- Providing financial support for students (e.g., tuition reimbursement, stipends)
- Partnering to get interns from two local universities through Title IV-E Program
- Facilitating conversations between externs, interns, and volunteers from different ethnic groups, talking informally to get to know each other including differences and similarities between cultures
- Maintaining multiple university partnerships
- Integrating the [Intercultural Development Inventory](#) into stipend programs
- Providing diversity training within university partnerships



- Focusing on lived experiences having as much value as formal education
- Virtual reality pilot project happening at university in partnership with child welfare agency
- Universities have partnerships with child welfare organizations to provide training
- Universities opened up training to a wider audience – it was previously reserved for university faculty
- Using virtual reality and simulations
- Integrating gaming and technology to keep people engaged
- Developing list of virtual (social work) field placement activities
- Partnering with local college/university to offer free training to staff
- Practice coaches observing workers in the field

How has the promotion of professional development changed within your agency during the pandemic?

- Encouraged to do webinars
- Given tools to work from home and attend online professional development
- A lot of encouragement to do online training while working from home
- Switched to virtual trainings for parents
- No in-person group training whatsoever
- Opened trainings for agency staff that were previously targeted to universities
- Saving time and travel costs by holding virtual conferences and professional development
- Sending out a survey to staff asking what they need for supports and to build well-being
- Meetings are in person but in larger spaces and with masks
- Bringing people from many areas together - no travel issues when you meet on Zoom
- Need to use gamification, chat, and breakout rooms to provide engagement
- Training and resources can help through seminars and symposium
- Sending out survey to staff to identify challenges and need for supports
- Continued use of virtual training, with emphasis on including visual as well as audio and breakout sessions for smaller group discussions/workshops

What unexplored strategies exist to advance racial equity through university partnerships or workforce professional development?

- Being very ambitious about justice and equity training for social workers
- Looking into contracting providers for virtual racial equity training for all staff
- Developing a diversity and inclusion committee with different stakeholders within the agency
- Hire a consultant to work with committee to develop strategies that can be implemented
- Sending message to staff that it is important to participate and okay to take the time for it during work
- Gain buy-in from leadership and staff to drive forward racial equity efforts together



- Implementing the [Intercultural Development Inventory](#) and taking time to do self-assessments prior to having larger conversations
- Asking staff what challenges they see and what ideas they have to advance equity
- Need to ask families what unexplored strategies they see as possible
- Address systemic racism and system change through partnerships in an intentional manner
- Be more transparent with and across staff
- Continue offering racial equity/bias training virtually, using platforms like Zoom or WebEx with workshop breakouts for group discussion and training projects on a regular basis, allowing different types of people to discuss various related topics
- Individuals (students, caregivers, staff) are far more open to having conversations about racial discrimination and anti-racism than before
- Having round table discussions to talk about the trauma and impact of racial bias
- Doing work on self-assessment to understand bias
- Using same race caucusing: white people, people of color, and other groups; exploring questions within own groups can free community of color from having to sit through self-awareness development for white people. There is a good literature base for this and it frees people of color from sitting through the process of awareness building about white supremacy and the ways privilege has protected white people.
- Continue to build capacity to host uncomfortable conversations
- Continue to participate in diversity forums on a national level
- Develop "safe" self-assessment prior to opening up the discussion to a broader group
- Build skills and capacity to host conversations about race and equity
- Create both formal and informal opportunities to talk about racial equity
- Make sure leadership understands the different response of those with cultural differences; what is viewed as aggression is actually passion.
- Going beyond surface level discussions on racial equity, competing priorities that effect training participation