CENTRAL CALIFORNIA TRAINING ACADEMY

ADVANCED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR SUPERVISORS:
Report 3 – Relationships

December 2010

EVALUATION PROCESS

Training evaluation has a number of purposes: it provides feedback for course improvement, training design, and training structure; it identifies trainee's knowledge, skills, and values; it provides data for individual accountability; and it identifies facilitators or barriers to achieving program goals. Training evaluation does not establish a direct cause and effect relationship between a training program and agency or client outcomes.

To evaluate the Advanced Leadership Development for Supervisors (ALDS) training series, three evaluation levels are being used. These evaluation levels include tracking, knowledge/skill, and transfer of learning.

This document provides information on two evaluation levels: knowledge/skill and transfer of learning for the Relationships module.

EVALUATION LEVEL: KNOWLEDGE/SKILL ACQUISITION

Evaluation at this level focuses on the changes in the knowledge, skill, or values of the participant as a result of the training. The results from the Level 4 evaluation are used to measure the effectiveness of the training, assess if the competencies and learning objectives were met, and to provide guidance as to where changes to the curriculum should occur.

To measure a participants' knowledge/skill acquisition, a self-assessment of learning form was used. This form asked participants to rate their competency in regards to the topic before and after the module using a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 is the highest rating. The following table provides the mean scores (out of a possible 5.00) and the change between the mean scores.

For the Relationships module, participants mean self assessment scores decreased in all areas. A decrease in mean scores from pre to post does not necessarily indicate that participants lost knowledge from this module. This decrease in mean scores can mean two things: (1) the participants had a higher self assessment of their skills prior to the training than they did after the training; and/or (2) the training clarified what was meant by the prompt.

An additional interpretation of the self-assessment scores is to focus on the mean scores for after training. The training did a good job at explaining the link between supervisory relationships with staff and staff retention, listing ways to build appropriate relationships with staff, and valuing the role of "support provider" as a supervisor. The training, however, may need to be revised in the areas of clarifying job expectations to staff, and calculating the costs of staff turnover. See Table 1 for more information.

For the open-ended section, two open-ended questions are posed to participants: (1) the key objectives that I focused on in the Relationships module were; and (2) the skills I practiced in the Relationships module were. For the first open-ended questions, participants reported focusing on building individual relationships with staff, understating the role of supervisor in regards to staff retention, and the importance of meeting regularly with staff. In addition, as provided by the second open-ended questions, participants practiced creating rapport, active listening, and how to praise staff. See Table 2 for more information.

TABLE 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

	Mean Score Before Training	Mean Score After Training	Change in Mean Score
I understand the link between supervisory relationships with staff and staff retention.	4.70	4.50	-0.20
I can list 3-4 ways to build appropriate relationships with and between staff.	4.70	4.44	-0.26
I value the role of "support provider" as a supervisor.	4.90	4.40	-0.50
I can develop 2-3 ways to recognize and reward staff to promote retention.	4.70	4.20	-0.50
I practice clarifying job expectations to staff.	4.40	3.80	-0.60
I can calculate the costs of staff turnover.	4.00	2.90	-1.10

TABLE 2: OPEN-ENDED PROMPTS – RELATIONSHIPS

The key objectives that I focused on in the Relationships class were:
- Forging individualized relationships with staff.
- Learning how to clarify job expectations and realizing how vital that is staff.
- The role of supervisor in regards to staff retention.
- Recognizing the importance of documentation in the supervisory relationship. Recognizing the need to provide support and encouragement to staff.
- Understand the link between supervisory relationships with staff and retention. Practice clarifying job expectations to staff.
- Discuss some of the essential elements of growth-oriented supervision, and which are your strongest.
- The importance of meeting regularly, to build up that relationship with staff. I have not been consistent on day and time, however, I do meet with staff at least twice a week as they come into my office to confer about what is happening. I also check in with them regularly, on the floor, and invite them into my office as needed.
- Providing appropriate support to staff and finding models of retention.
- The continuous effort in maintaining relationships and how this is an ongoing endeavor.

The skills I practiced in the Relationships class were:
- Role playing the first meeting with a new staff member.
- Engagement.
- Practice improving relationships with staff during PMCs.
- Creating rapport, never assume anything, ask questions and be direct about expectations. I consistently frame out work based on mandates, policy and expectations, so that I am consistent re expectations.
- Listening to staff uninterrupted (turning off phone, putting "In Conference" sign on door). Defining job expectations and writing them out for self and staff. Stop and chat about non-work related items.
- Develop 3 ways to recognize and reward staff to promote retention.
- Active listening, mutual respect, accountability.
- Learning from my counterparts in other counties.

EVALUATION LEVEL: TRANSFER OF LEARNING

Evaluation at this level focuses on the transferability of the knowledge, skills, and values to the workplace. Evaluation at this level attempts to provide information on the relevancy of the training program and what effect did the training have on the trainees' ability to utilize the information. To measure a participant's transfer of learning, follow-up surveys are conducted. These surveys are conducted 2 months after the individual training.

By attending the Relationships module, participants are now working more with staff on specific work related tasks, discussing personal lives to become more connected with staff, and working on general self improvement in the areas of relationship building. This has led to these participants having more open communication with staff, allowing staff to be involved in decision making, and helping staff understand why decisions were made. Ultimately, participants believe that having better relationships with staff will lead to more accountability, positive working relationships, team building, and retention. Please see Table 3 for more information.

In addition, the participant's supervisors are invited to fill out a follow-up survey. Evaluation at this levels focuses on what someone with an outside perspective is noticing about the transferability of the knowledge, skills, and values of those participating in the program. This perspective helps to validate the self-assessment of the participant.

Supervisors are reporting that the participants are having more consistent/frequent meetings with staff (4), clarifying job expectations with staff (3), and participants working on personal growth (1). By doing so, most of the supervisors (7) have noted that this is holding staff accountable and clarifying the job expectations. Please see Table 4 for more information.

TABLE 3: TRANSFER OF LEARNING SURVEY

By participating in the Relationships training and completing your specific TOL Activities, what one or two things are you doing differently now (either incorporating a new skill and/or modifying a previous skill) that you weren't doing prior to the Relationships training:

Working with staff on specific work related tasks (5)

- Working with a staff member to encourage them to raise the bar for their professional development. The quality of the work is completed at a high level and our relationship allowed for a serious conversation about career development and promoting.
- Supporting my staff more than ever toward retention. Continuing to clarify expectations, not only at the onset of employment of new staff, but also throughout job performance.
- Setting clear boundaries and work expectations for the two social workers that just moved to my unit. In addition, I will also have a unit meeting on a monthly basis to cover Division 31 regulations with my staff.
- I am spending more time listening to my staff's concerns and providing them with specific guidelines, depending on their needs, I am also making staff accountable for their actions.
- I see staff recognition events as ways to promote retention of staff. I keep retention of staff in mind when coming up with ways to reward staff.

Discussing personal lives to become more connected to staff (3)

- Really attempting to gain insight into my staff's life outside of work to balance our relationship between work and life outside of work.
- I never used to ask staff to much about their personal lives. I have had to try to incorporate a few more questions about how they are doing, and how their family is doing into my supervision meetings with them. I am very task oriented, and usually only want to be on task and talk about work. I have noticed, since I have been incorporating more relational questions, that I have more ways to connect with staff. It has been a very positive outcome.
- I am working on learning more about staff on a more personal level to assist in building my relations with them and developing more empathy and rapport regarding their performance in the work place. I am also making sure I am available for conferences when they are scheduled and making sure we are not interrupted.

Working on self improvement (3)

- Further, I am being consistent. I am working on recognizing my own triggers so that I do not impose my own values on others.

- Discuss the concept of growth-oriented supervision. Share my assessment of how I think I'm doing in providing growth-oriented supervision to staff. Discuss some of the essential elements of growth-oriented supervision, and which are your strongest.
- Deliberately thinking about my own reactions to my superiors and the system in order to facilitate building positive staff relationships which will encourage them to build their relationships with their clients.

How are these one or two things that you are doing differently now helping you to become a better supervisor?

Having more open communication with staff (5)

- I am becoming a better supervisor because I am making staff accountable for their own responsibilities. At the same time, I am providing them with the guidance and support they need to help them succeed. I listen to them and offer and provide needed assistance.
- I have a more in depth knowledge about what is going on in my workers' caseloads and I am able to lend more support to them. I also feel that staff have more of my undivided attention during conferences and they are able to vent/process their concerns during these times.
- I remember to ask about or comment on anything they have shared with me. After this, we do focus on task of the work expectations. I see the value in how the discussions have been better. I see a difference in how they are responding to me. It has been a positive outcome.
- I have noticed that the more I share the feelings are reciprocated.
- There is a clear emphasis on how rewarding staff directly affect morale and retention. I am better able to see and understand that, and value that.

Allowing staff to be involved in decision making and helping staff understand why decisions were made (4)

- I am empowering my staff to assist in the decision making of our unit. I am giving them task to which they would understand the role of a supervisor better and be able to understand the dynamics and responsibilities the supervisors has to staff, clients and organization.
- Treating each other with respect, and allowing my staff to understand what their roles and responsibilities are. In addition, by going over Division 31 regulations with them, I'm helping them understand their work better and at the same time, I'm challenging them to expand their knowledge and skills. By doing this, I'm consistent with them and they know what needs to be done on their cases.

- I am proactive in communicating expectations from the start and am working diligently with my newest staff member, who needs a lot of guidance, to ensure retention.
- This deliberate thinking creates a mindset that can be constructive and modeling the behavior that I want to solicit and create in the staff I supervise. Therefore, once this mindset becomes a routine and pattern which is consistent to workers to see the supervisor is practicing what the supervisor is expecting.

By participating in the Relationships training and completing your specific TOL Activities, how did the training and TOL Activities lead to better outcomes for you and your staff? And what, if any, are these outcomes?

How the training has led to better outcomes:

- Accountability and allowing them to have ownership of their cases. I was able to analyze who my X, Y, & Zs are and facilitate training to meet their needs. I also looked at my challenges and where I need to improve on.
- I have new staff that is naturally energetic and eager to please, but I believe developing this skill has attempted to solidify their transition into the agency as team members.
- The ultimate outcome would "positive working relations with staff."
- I know from what we have been reading that retention has very much to do with the employee/supervisor relationship. I can see a different side of people, and I have learned things about staff that I did not know before. It has been a good outcome.
- I did have a unit meeting outlining some of the expectations and have begun to review key aspects of the job with my staff, which I hope will remind them of some of the agency and State's expectations as well. However, staff caseloads have been on the rise in the last month or so and it is adding to worker burnout.
- I am able to come up with more meaningful rewards for staff that will also promote retention.

Still assessing outcomes:

- I have a brand new team that I am still working with. However, my team is working together and supporting each other.
- Outcomes are ongoing. I do believe that my working relationships with my staff are positive, and that, in turn, will optimally lead to positive outcomes, both qualitatively and quantitatively.
- I am still assessing the outcomes. My staff is on board with being afforded more responsibilities to the unit and the learning process.

What, if any, additional support, knowledge, and/or skill development would you need to help you further apply the knowledge, skills, and/or values of the Relationships training.

- We didn't get a chance to go over how to calculate staff turnover. I hope there will be some time for that in the lab.
- I am working on being consistent in making time for staff. So many work duties come up, and meetings are scheduled by others that I must attend, however I make it a priority now to catch this ahead of time, and be sure and share with the staff person, as well and make a new time with them, so that they can see that I see this time together as important.
- Willingness to work with people and the vast personalities.
- It can be difficult to "build relationships" when I also need to hold staff accountable for their actions. I have talked to them about my need to hold any one of them accountable to assure that the work is being done in an equitable manner. Any other suggestions in this area would be helpful. Help with addressing burnout, especially when Administration seems to feel that "cases should be more than manageable" would also be helpful.
- I am still having some challenges with a particular worker who takes much of my time and energy. Would like to discuss this at our training.
- I am still working on how to assess the outcomes and the processing of the TOL as a unit.
- Nothing came up in my mind at this point.
- None at this time.

TABLE 4: SUPERVISOR FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

By participating in the "Relationships" training and completing the specific TOL Activities, what one or two things are the participants doing differently now (either incorporating a new skill and/or modifying a previous skill) that they weren't doing prior to the "Relationships" training?

More consistent/frequent meetings with staff (4)

- The participant is meeting with team members individually more frequently based on their supervisory needs and experience to assess their performance and provide support.
- In the past, the participant met frequently with staff, but it was not planned. The participant has now set scheduled times with them and has been more diligent in keeping to this schedule, which has allowed the participant to have full conference times with staff and not only review and train on performance expectations, but this also allows an opportunity to monitor and guide staff's competency level and then adjust and modify as needed. The participant is able to see areas of opportunity with staff that the participant can assert their own experience as needed, or provide them with a sense of calmness so a task or specific situation can be accomplished. The participant is effective in reading cues from others and addressing this.
- The participant maintains consistent conferences with staff and has been clearer about expectations. The participant has been meeting with staff as a unit and in conferences to more effectively communicate with them on what is expected. The participant is cognizant of ensuring all staff are treated equal and has been putting forth more active efforts toward learning about what their expectations are and their private life.
- The participant is conferencing more regularly with staff and is more cognizant of asking staff how they are doing.

Clarifying job expectations (3)

- The participant has established good rapport with staff and shows a genuine concern about them as individuals. During conferences, the participant is able to be empathetic to their needs while also command performance expectations.
- The participant practices clarifying job expectations to staff.
- While I have not seen any marked improvement in this area, the participant has always been strong in the area of supervisory relationships. One area we have been working on recently is holding staff accountable for their job performance.

Working on personal growth (1)

- The participant has identified that this is an area for growth for the participant and has specifically targeted this as an item to be brought up during individual conferences with staff.

Concerns (2)

- Unfortunately, I am concerned that this participant has become overly protective of staff and is trying to figure out ways to get rid of cases in an effort to not overtax employees in an effort to promote retention. Sometimes the participant does things for them - sometimes out of necessity - sometimes not.
- The participant has been pretty effective at building a team. However, expanding that team beyond the participant's unit has been problematic. The participant seems more reactionary, less tolerant - of anyone other than people on the participant's team. Perhaps the training has made both supervisors more aware of how things should be - but not sure how to get there.

How are the participants' actions helping these participants become better supervisors?
Holding staff accountable/clarifying job expectations (7)

- In the area of holding staff accountable, the participant has been able to practice clarifying job expectations as well as providing a consistent message to the participant's staff about expectations of their performance.
- By clearly setting the framework of workload expectations, the participant is able to guide and direct staff more efficiently.
- The participant is more focused on what is happening and can look at the work that staff is performing. The participant is also able to bring together staff to effectively communicate any outstanding issues.
- The participant has been documenting the work with individuals on their team more consistently for performance management and evaluation needs. Because of this, the participant is able to better target where she needs to assist them, provide support, and enlist their involvement in achieving their goals.
- The participant understands that the participant is both a mentor and a guide in the supervision of staff. The participant recognizes the need to clarify expectations of staff work as well as overall agency expectations for employees.
- The participant is very focused on the job expectations. Yet the participant uses their caring and sincere demeanor to support staff while also accomplishing the expected tasks.
- The participant recognizes that there are different learning styles and by building more rapport and a stronger relationship with staff, the participant is able to identify their needs and communicate areas that may need improvement.

Working on individual growth (1)

- It's not just these one or two things that the participant is doing differently that is making the participant become a better supervisor, but instead the continued need to discuss what the participant is doing, which is based on the participant's perception, and then incorporating feedback from staff. This allows the participant to further process and refine what the participant is doing.

No results as of now (2)

- Not at this time.
- The participant talks about working together - but has not been able to implement effectively from my perspective - there needs to be more give and take. The participant is not respectful of other supervision styles.

By participating in the "Relationships" training and completing the specific TOL Activities, how did the training and TOL activities lead to better outcomes for the participant and the participant's staff? And what, if any, are these outcomes?

List of outcomes (7)

- This is the one area that the participant struggles with the most. It has heightened the participant's awareness of the importance of establishing good relationships with staff. The participant has taken action to start this process and has noticed a difference in how the participant interacts with staff and how they interact back.
- I have observed the participant to take a vested interest in the participant staff on a personal level which continues on to the participant performance expectations of the participant's staff.
- The participant recognizes the importance of analyzing staff lack of performance as it relates to the cost of turnover. Conversely, the participant also recognizes the correlation between longevity and cost savings.
- Compliance rates for the participant's area have been significantly higher than in the past. In addition, while at first some of the participant's staff was resistant because they felt the participant was "being hard on them," many have stated they now feel relief that their case loads are more manageable.
- By communicating more effectively and clearly explaining the role as a supervisor to staff, the participant has been able to communicate the expectations of the participant's staff.

- Because the participant has been able to effectively communicate staff expectations, the participant is now starting to move toward specific performance plans and staff accountability.
- The participant is good at recognizing staff achievements. This provides a positive atmosphere in the workplace. When staff is happy in their job and with their supervisor, they are more likely to provide timely response and dedication/commitment rather than just meeting compliance standards.

None (3)

- I think there is an awareness of the relationships - but I don't think it is being effective - either with the participant's staff or co-workers. Not sure why.
- Fine within the participant's staff - not so fine with the rest of the world.
- The participant jumps straight from, if I have a relationship with my staff, then I can retain them. Yet there is more to it than this. The training sets the foundation, but the participant is still working through how the participant can build and increase relationships with the participant's staff.