Module 6 Learning Objectives

1. Participants will understand how their unit functioning impacts the achievement of agency mission and goals.

2. Participants will understand the importance of collaboration and teamwork in child welfare supervision and practice.

3. Participants will understand that teamwork and collaboration with staff mirrors the process of working with a family.

4. Participants will be able to identify in which stage of group development their unit is.

5. Participants will be able to articulate characteristics of groups that perform effectively.

6. Participants will understand what causes units to underperform.

7. Participants will be able to assess their unit functioning in a way that considers strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

8. Participants will be able to identify strategies for maximizing the performance of the unit.

9. Participants will be able to implement strategies for maximizing the performance of the unit.

10. Participants will be able to develop an action plan for improving their unit's performance.

COMPETENCIES AND SKILL SETS

Skill Sets

516-01:   Ability to create a collaborative team environment that enhances productivity

516-02:   Ability to identify and build on unit strengths to promote teamwork

Skill Set 516-01: *Ability to create a collaborative team environment that enhances productivity*	
516-01-001	Knows the importance of collaboration and interdependence among staff at all levels, among work units, program areas, and agency departments, and with community organizations.
516-01-002	Knows the personal, interpersonal, and organizational factors that promote collaboration and those that undermine it.
516-01-003	Understands how poorly defined mission, job expectations, and other systemic factors can undermine the collaboration necessary to achieve outcomes.
516-01-004	Understands how the authority vested in certain job roles and responsibilities can affect the development of collaborative relationships.
516-01-005	Understands the supervisor's role in modeling and promoting collaboration and interdependence to achieve agency, unit, and individual outcomes.
516-01-006	Understands how a supervisor's ability to collaborate with staff can reinforce the value of collaborative worker-client relationships.
516-01-007	Knows strategies to address and resolve "turf issues" within and between agency units and departments.
516-01-008	Can identify when a lack of coordination and integration is a factor in the agency's failure to achieve desired outcomes.
516-01-009	Can use supervisory strategies that promote both intra- and interunit collaboration.

Skill Set 516-02: *Ability to identify and build on unit strengths to promote teamwork*	

516-02-001	Knows the characteristics of effective teams and work groups.
516-02-002	Knows the stages of group development and the typical characteristics of workers at each stage.
516-02-003	Understands the potential uses and benefits of unit meetings for planning, monitoring, problemsolving, education, transfer of learning, and maximizing group productivity.
516-02-004	Understands the value of involving unit members in decisions about their own and the unit's work.
516-02-005	Knows how to determine when the unit can provide valuable input for a supervisory decision, and when a problem or issue is best addressed by the unit as a group.
516-02-006	Knows how to plan, organize, and lead effective unit meetings.
516-02-007	Knows strategies to help the unit develop into a cohesive and productive work group.
516-02-008	Knows how to select the most effective supervisory strategies for a group's current level of development.
516-02-009	Can promote teamwork among the unit to enhance group performance and achieve outcomes.

MODULE FOCUS

- ◆ Introduction

- ◆ Collaboration

  - o Overview of Collaboration
  - o Barriers to Collaboration

- ◆ Effective Unit Performance

  - o Group/Unit Development
  - o Characteristics of Units that Perform Effectively

- ◆ Improving Unit Performance

  - o Assessment
  - o Guidelines for Unit Improvement
  - o Strategies for Improving Unit Performance
  - o Unit Meetings
  - o Improvement Planning

- ◆ Celebration and Closure

TEAM PLAYER STYLES

As a leader, you want a wide variety of team member: Contributors, Collaborators, Communicators, and Challengers. Although we all have all the four types within us, one or two of them will be more dominant than the others. Although your first instinct might tell you to select people like yourself, or to exclude one of these groups, this is not what you want. Having a team that displays all four types will provide you with a better-rounded team.

Challengers/Question

The Challenger is a member who questions the goals, methods, and even the ethics of the team, is willing to disagree with the leader or higher authority, and encourages the team to take well-conceived risks. Most people appreciate the value of your candor and openness, but they think, at times, that you may not know when to back off an issue or that you become self-righteous and try to push the team too far. People describe you as honest, outspoken, principled, ethical, and adventurous.

The Challenger may be perceived as someone who causes conflict and is not considered a "team player." This player might be someone who seems never to be satisfied with the outcome and is considered a bit of a troublemaker. But the question-oriented team member encourages us to revisit our decisions. The "troublemaker" contributes value to the team by providing question-oriented reappraisal.

Contributors/Task

The Contributor is a task-oriented team member who enjoys providing the team with good technical information and data, does his or her homework, and pushes the team to set high performance standards and to use their resources wisely. Most people see you as dependable, although they believe, at times, that you may become too bogged down in the details and data or that you do not see the big picture or the need for positive team climate. People describe you as responsible, authoritative, reliable, proficient, and organized.

A contributor does preparation homework, and pushes the team to set high performance standards and to use their resources wisely. This individual is seen as dependable, contributing focus to the team. The task-oriented team player maintains positive relationships with and support from other parts of the organization. This player might be someone who carries a notepad or Palm Pilot to track ideas and important data. Look for someone who pays attention

to details. The Contributor provides value to the team through provision of task-oriented clarity.

Collaborators/Process

The Collaborator is a process-oriented member who is an effective listener and facilitator of involvement, conflict resolution, consensus building, feedback, and the building of an informal, relaxed climate. Most people see you as a positive "people person," but they find that, at times, you may see process as an end in itself, may not confront other team members, or may not give enough emphasis to completing task assignments and making progress toward team goals. People describe you as supportive, considerate, relaxed, enthusiastic, and tactful.

Collaborators act as effective listeners and facilitators of involvement, conflict resolution, consensus building, feedback, and the building of an informative, relaxed climate. This individual is a positive people person who communicates the process with interpersonal ease and has a clear mission with a plan to accomplish it. Communicators possess excellent communication skills, openness, and trust from other team members.

Communicators/Goal

Communicators are goal-directed members who see the vision, mission, and goal of the team. They are flexible and open to new ideas, willing to pitch in and work outside their defined role, and can stand the heat in the limelight better than other team members. They are "big picture" people who sometimes fail to give enough attention to the basic team tasks or to consider individual needs. They are forward looking, goal directed, accommodating, flexible, and imaginative.

Their first instincts are to remain outcome focused, but at the same time be as flexible as needed when adopting plans and strategies. They often frustrate others because they are constantly flying off in different directions in an effort to find the most creative way to meet long-term goals.

IDENTIFYING YOUR TEAM PLAYER STYLE

Purpose: The Team Player Survey will help you identify your style as a team player. The results will lead you to an assessment of your current strengths and provide a basis for a plan to increase your effectiveness as a team player. Teams may use the survey to develop a profile of team strengths and to discuss strategies for increasing team effectiveness.

Directions: This is a survey; therefore, there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each item according to how you honestly feel you function now as a team member rather than how you used to be or how you would like to be. Each sentence has four possible endings.

Rank the endings in the order in which you feel each one applies to you. You must respond to all statements for the Style Survey to be accurate.

STATEMENTS		RATING		
A) During team meetings, I usually:	**Least**			**Most**
1. Raise questions about our goals or methods	1	2	3	4
2. Provide the team with technical data or information	1	2	3	4
3. Make sure everyone is involved in the discussion	1	2	3	4
4. Keep the team focused on our mission or goals.	1	2	3	4
B) In relating to the team leader, I:				
5. Am willing to disagree with him/her when necessary	1	2	3	4
6. Offer advice based on my area of expertise	1	2	3	4
7. Try to help him/her build a positive team climate	1	2	3	4
8. Suggest that our work be goal-directed	1	2	3	4
C) Under stress, I sometimes:				
9. Am too direct in communicating with other team members	1	2	3	4
10. Lose patience with the need to get everyone involved in discussions	1	2	3	4
11. Overuse humor and other tension-reducing devices	1	2	3	4

12.	Complain to outsiders about problems facing the team	1	2	3	4

D) When conflicts arise on the team, I usually:

13.	Press for an honest discussion of the differences	1	2	3	4
14.	Provide reasons why one side or the other is correct	1	2	3	4
15.	Try to break the tension with a supportive or humorous remark	1	2	3	4
16.	See the differences as a basis for a possible change in team direction	1	2	3	4

E) Other team members usually see me as:

17.	Candid	1	2	3	4
18.	Factual	1	2	3	4
19.	Flexible	1	2	3	4
20.	Encouraging	1	2	3	4

F) At times, I am:

21.	Self-righteous	1	2	3	4
22.	Too results oriented	1	2	3	4
23.	Too laid back	1	2	3	4
24.	Shortsighted	1	2	3	4

G) When things go wrong on the team, I usually:

25.	Press for a candid discussion of our problems	1	2	3	4
26.	Work hard to provide more and better information	1	2	3	4
27.	Push for increased emphasis on listening, feedback, and participation	1	2	3	4
28.	Suggest that we revisit our basic mission	1	2	3	4

H) Sometimes other team members see me as:

29.	A nitpicker	1	2	3	4
30.	A perfectionist	1	2	3	4
31.	Not serious about getting the real job done	1	2	3	4
32.	Unwilling to reassess the team's mission or goals	1	2	3	4

I) I believe team problem solving requires:

33.	A willingness to ask tough questions	1	2	3	4
34.	Good solid data	1	2	3	4
35.	High-level listening skills	1	2	3	4
36.	Cooperation by all team members	1	2	3	4

J) When a new team is forming, I usually:

37.	Ask pointed questions about our goals and methods	1	2	3	4
38.	Want to know what is expected of me	1	2	3	4
39.	Try to meet and get to know other team members	1	2	3	4
40.	Seek clarity about our basic mission	1	2	3	4

K) At times, I make other people feel:

41.	Dishonest because they are not able to be as confrontational as I am	1	2	3	4
42.	Guilty because they don't live up to my standards	1	2	3	4
43.	Heartless because they don't care about how people relate to each other	1	2	3	4
44.	Small minded because they don't think long range	1	2	3	4

L) I believe team decisions should be based on:

45.	An open and candid assessment of the issues	1	2	3	4
46.	The weight of the evidence	1	2	3	4
47.	A consensus of team members	1	2	3	4
48.	The team's mission and goals	1	2	3	4

M) People have often described me as:

49.	Independent	1	2	3	4
50.	Dependable	1	2	3	4
51.	Participative	1	2	3	4
52.	Imaginative	1	2	3	4

N) Most of the time, I am:

53.	Honest and authentic	1	2	3	4
54.	Responsible and hard-working	1	2	3	4
55.	Enthusiastic and humorous	1	2	3	4
56.	Committed and flexible	1	2	3	4

TEAM STYLE DATA GATHERING:

CLUSTERS:

1___	2___	3___	4___
5___	6___	7___	8___
9___	10___	11___	12___
13___	14___	15___	16___
17___	18___	19___	20___
21___	22___	23___	24___
25___	26___	27___	28___
29___	30___	31___	32___
33___	34___	35___	36___
37___	38___	39___	40___
41___	42___	43___	44___
45___	46___	47___	48___
49___	50___	51___	52___
53___	54___	55___	56___

TOTALS:

1 ____	2 ____	3 ____	4 ____

STYLE

TOTAL (1) _____   CHALLENGER/QUESTION

TOTAL (2) _____   CONTRIBUTOR/TASK

TOTAL (3) _____   COLLABORATOR/PROCESS

TOTAL (4) _____   COMMUNICATOR/GOAL

NOTE: Your SUM TOTAL will be 120!

THE TEAM CHALLENGE

Once you have determined the styles of all of your team members (including your own), the challenge is to set team goals so that each person can become the best possible team player he or she can be. To optimize the performance of your team, all team members must:

- Know their own style, including their strengths and their potential for ineffectiveness.

- Develop a plan to optimize their strengths and minimize their shortcomings.

- Look for ways to expand their repertoire by increasing the use of the behaviors of other team player styles.

- Acknowledge that other members of the team will have different styles, and be willing to work with others with different styles and to see this diversity as team strength.

- Persist and persevere. Teamwork is work.

As the team leader, you have the added challenge of building an effective, high-performing team. To accomplish this, there are several basic guidelines that you can follow:

- **Be sure to communicate.** Tell people what is going on. Keep everyone informed and up-to-date.

- **Spell out expectations for each member as well as the team as a whole.** The more precisely you can define your expectations, the more likely you are to achieve the results you are looking for. Since each of your team members may take a different approach to solving a problem, it is important that everyone knows exactly what the final outcome needs to be in order to avoid frustration and conflict (not to mention rework).

- **Keep an open, flexible atmosphere.** To be creative and innovative, people need to feel "safe" when sharing their point of view. Too much **structure can stifle your team's productivity and reduce morale.**

- **Define the ground rules (how the team will operate).** Although too much structure can lead to a lack of new ideas, too little may lead to chaos. Without some basic ground rules, you may find everyone heading in a different direction and little will be accomplished.

- **Build trust in the team.** Although opposites attract, they don't necessarily work well together in a team—at least not at first. Trust is built on the recognition that differences do not equate to weaknesses. In fact, oftentimes we develop a new respect and appreciation for someone who is good at doing the things we consider our weaknesses. As this mutual respect develops, so does the trust each member has in the other members of his/her team.

DISC PERSONALITY CHECKLIST*

Place an X next to the characteristics that describe you.

> ___ Prefers to focus on other people
> ___ Independent and internally controlled
> ___ Energetic and busy
> ___ Tells rather than asks
> ___ Imaginative, big-picture, future-focused
> ___ Likes stability and predictability
> ___ Likes change
> ___ Task oriented
> ___ Flexible to the changing world

Match your responses with the corresponding characteristics below. From this, determine which personality style most closely matches your responses.

Preference	Dominant	Influential	Steady	Cautious
Focus on other people		X	X	
Independent, internal	X			X
Energetic and busy	X	X		
Tell rather than ask (vs. opposite)	X	X		
Imaginative, big-picture, future-focused		X		X
Likes stability and predictability			X	X
Likes change (vs. stability)	X	X		
Task oriented (vs. people oriented)	X			X
Flexible to changing world		X	X	

*Adapted from–*http://changingminds.org/explanations/preferences/disc.htm*

WORKING WITH THE VARIOUS DISC PERSONALITY TYPES*

With Dominant people

- Build respect to avoid conflict
- Focus on facts and ideas rather than the people
- Have evidence to support your argument
- Be quick, focused, and to the point
- Ask what, not how
- Talk about how problems will hinder accomplishments
- Show them how they can succeed

With Influential people

- Be social and friendly with them, building the relationship
- Listen to them talk about their ideas
- Help them find ways to translate the talk into useful action
- Don't spend much time on the details
- Motivate them to follow through to complete tasks
- Recognize their accomplishments

With Steady people

- Be genuinely interested in them as a person
- Create a human working environment for them
- Give them time to adjust to change
- Clearly define goals for them and provide ongoing support
- Recognize and appreciate their achievements
- Avoid hurry and pressure
- Present new ideas carefully

With Conscientious people

- Warn them in time and generally avoid surprises
- Be prepared. Don't ad-lib with them if you can avoid it
- Be logical and accurate, and use clear data
- Show how things fit into the bigger picture
- Be specific in disagreement and focus on the facts
- Be patient, persistent, and diplomatic

*Adapted from–*http://changingminds.org/explanations/preferences/disc.htm*

SETTING UNIT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES COLLABORATIVELY

Instructions: Write a plan that includes the following ingredients:

What method(s) will you use to engage staff in the discussion and decision process for setting unit goals and objectives? (e.g., unit meetings, meeting established only for this purpose. etc.)

What are the categories of work or different tasks in the unit for which objectives should be set?

How will you and your staff decide how the work will be conducted?

What resources will be needed in order to establish unit objectives? Think about state law, administrative code, and agency policy that will impact the goals.

What types of data are needed for consideration before unit objectives can be established? Where is that data located and who can access it?

How will you involve everyone in the unit in deciding about what performance standards should be?

What will the decision-making process be? Who will decide what the actual performance standards should be?

How will you get commitment and buy-in from your staff?

What is the time frame for setting (not completing) the unit objectives? Can it be done in 3 months? 6 months?

Who else should have input into the process? Whom should you consult?

MONITORING PLAN

Instructions: Write a monitoring plan that addresses the following components:

How often should data be analyzed to determine progress? Different objectives may need different monitoring time frames.

How can you involve staff in monitoring unit progress toward achievement of the objectives?

What method(s) will the unit use for analyzing progress? (e.g., unit meetings or special meetings called for just that purpose, etc.)

UNITS THAT PERFORM EFFECTIVELY...

- **Embrace Diversity**

- **Strengths-based**

- **Feel appreciated**

- **Communicate effectively**

- **Have a strong unit identity**

- **Collaborate internally and externally**

- **Share decision-making when possible**

- **Participate in negotiation and consensus building to make decisions**

- **Guided by values, mission, commitment, roles and structure**

- **Manage conflict well**

EFFECTIVE TEAMS

Instructions: Consider the following True/False statements.

All my team members know how their job is important to achieving the mission of the agency, which is to protect children, strengthen families and assure permanent families.

       True   False

Together, my team possesses all the knowledge and skills they need to perform every aspect of the unit's work.

       True   False

My team is very aware of all of our unit goals and understands how each of their functions contributes to achieving those goals.

       True   False

Our unit is structured so that ALL of our required tasks are covered and can be accomplished.

       True   False

Our unit has all the necessary processes and/or established procedures in place to assure that our outcomes are achieved.

       True   False

SWOT Analysis Template

State what you are assessing here _____

(This particular example is for a new business opportunity. Many criteria can apply to more than one quadrant. Identify criteria appropriate to your own SWOT situation.)

strengths

criteria examples

Advantages of proposition?
Capabilities?
Competitive advantages?
USP's (unique selling points)?
Resources, Assets, People?
Experience, knowledge, data?
Financial reserves, likely returns?
Marketing - reach, distribution, awareness?
Innovative aspects?
Location and geographical?
Price, value, quality?
Accreditations, qualifications, certifications?
Processes, systems, IT, communications?
Cultural, attitudinal, behavioural?
Management cover, succession?
Philosophy and values?

weaknesses

criteria examples

Disadvantages of proposition?
Gaps in capabilities?
Lack of competitive strength?
Reputation, presence and reach?
Financials?
Own known vulnerabilities?
Timescales, deadlines and pressures?
Cashflow, start-up cash-drain?
Continuity, supply chain robustness?
Effects on core activities, distraction?
Reliability of data, plan predictability?
Morale, commitment, leadership?
Accreditations, etc?
Processes and systems, etc?
Management cover, succession?

opportunities

criteria examples

Market developments?
Competitors' vulnerabilities?
Industry or lifestyle trends?
Technology development and innovation?
Global influences?
New markets, vertical, horizontal?
Niche target markets?
Geographical, export, import?
New USPs?
Tactics: eg, surprise, major contracts?
Business and product development?
Information and research?
Partnerships, agencies, distribution?
Volumes, production, economies?
Seasonal, weather, fashion influences?

threats

criteria examples

Political effects?
Legislative effects?
Environmental effects?
IT developments?
Competitor intentions - various?
Market demand?
New technologies, services, ideas?
Vital contracts and partners?
Sustaining internal capabilities?
Obstacles faced?
Insurmountable weaknesses?
Loss of key staff?
Sustainable financial backing?
Economy - home, abroad?
Seasonality, weather effects?

Ohio Child Welfare Training Program

Supervisor Checklists
Unit Meetings

October 2007

Written by the Institute for Human Services for the
Ohio Child Welfare Training Program and
The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Unit Meeting

Because the supervisor functions as a middle manager, the supervisor should use the unit meeting to update staff on new policies, and as a follow-up to all-staff meetings, agency initiatives, etc. Child welfare practice topics should also be addressed from a clinical and casework perspective.

Preparing for a Unit Meeting

☐ Schedule regular weekly time for unit meetings and notify staff. Establish process for calling emergency meetings.

☐ Set agenda and send it to staff in advance. One-hour meetings are best; longer meetings may increase staff stress to finish the day's tasks. Ask unit staff to give issues, questions, and concerns to include on the agenda for discussion at the meeting.

☐ Check with administration for emergent issues to discuss in the meeting.

☐ Prepare data for discussion about current unit performance in meeting mission, mandates, and outcomes.

☐ Make copies in advance of any materials needed for meeting.

☐ Prepare a training segment to review one aspect of practice about which the unit, in general, needs feedback.

Include standing agenda items:

☐ To follow up on issues from previous meetings.

☐ For staff to ask questions or present issues for future unit meetings.

☐ Commit to starting and ending meetings on time. Keep minutes of all meetings, and provide these to staff. Ask a staff member to be timekeeper.

Kadushin's Types of Supervision

Supervisors can incorporate elements of administrative, educational, and supportive supervision in the unit meetings. Suggested topics in each area include:

Administrative

Agency Issues

☐ Is there anyone new to the agency? This is especially important if the unit interacts with the new staff member.

☐ Provide updates and announcements from management/supervisory meetings. Explain new forms, policies, procedures, and agency initiatives from administration. Give updates regarding human resources/personnel information.

☐ If your agency is "rumor prone," the unit meeting provides a time to dispel such rumors.

Unit Issues

☐ Discuss how central and agency changes/announcements may affect the unit; ask staff for their issues and inputs regarding administrative issues

☐ Present and discuss unit data that addresses meeting unit, Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), or Child Protection Oversight and Evaluation (CPOE) outcomes. Review unit progress toward agency outcomes and unit indicators.

☐ Review and discuss unit processes and procedures as needed. Ask for suggestions from staff.

☐ Plan for coverage issues due to vacations, leave, training, or conference attendance.

☐ Review and discuss position vacancies, status of hiring unit staff and other personnel issues.

Announcements

☐ Include important dates to remember; upcoming agency events.

☐ Give date of next unit meeting, and scheduled group staffing of cases.

Educational

☐ Ask those staff who have attended training to prepare to give a synopsis of workshop in the meeting.

☐ Plan training content for a meeting on a limited child welfare practice topic. Or rotate staff to present an educational topic.

OR

☐ Bring in someone from another department or community agency to discuss collaborative issues.

☐ Review upcoming training for staff; highlight new initiatives and emergent priorities that may indicate a need for additional training for all staff.

☐ Report on emerging practice issues, or community stressors.

Case-related Issues

☐ If no presentation is scheduled, ask each worker to briefly discuss one case he/she is finding challenging or has a special interest in. (This can also be used as a teaching tool to help workers learn to present their cases in group staffings).

☐ Reinforce best practice in discussion of case-related information during meetings.

☐ If caseworkers request a group staffing, have the worker identify the case and issue for the staffing; and schedule time for the staffing.

Supportive

☐ Recognize successes and efforts of individual staff and the unit team.

☐ Address current job-related stressors and action plan; ask for concerns of staff.

☐ Review safety concerns on current cases, and safety issues in the agency and in the field.

☐ Engage staff in discussing concerns, teaming issues, etc., in the unit.

Promoting a Learning Environment

The supervisor is responsible for fostering the unit as a learning environment. The supervisor can energize and increase motivation and commitment of staff by conducting effective, interesting unit meetings. Strategies for planning the meeting:

☐ Revisit the vision/mission of the unit in unit meetings or individual case conferences.

☐ Include provocative or controversial topics for discussion.

☐ Provide intellectual perspective by discussing major issues.

☐ Share important issues affecting management of the agency. The capacity of the unit is increased when all members understand funding sources and levels and more global statewide issues.

☐ Encourage creative approaches to case situations or procedures.

☐ Use naturally occurring opportunities in discussion to reinforce best practice.

☐ Reinforce use of the Field Guide.

☐ Recognize and reinforce workers' positive effects on families.

☐ Discuss Evidence Based Practice (EBP) issues and how to advance the use of EBP in the unit.

☐ Reinforce opportunities to learn and transfer learning to the job/unit/agency.

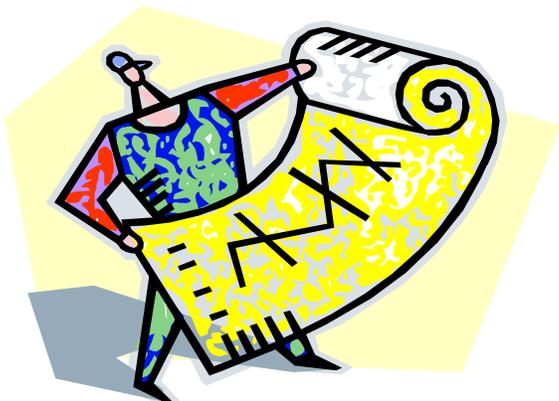# PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

Step One: Consider what is already working.

Step Two: What made this work or caused this success?

Step Three: What are we trying to accomplish? What is our objective?

Step Four: What are the benefits of achieving our objective?

Step Five: What can we do more, better, or differently to move closer to our objective?

ACTION PLANNING

GOAL

	ACTIVITIES	**TIME FRAME**	**PROGRESS**
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			
5)			