

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

Meeting Date:

Supervisor:

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.

