

OCWTP GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The success of the OCWTP is based on several unique elements:

Universe of Competencies

The Universe of Competencies is a list of discrete descriptors of the knowledge and skills needed to perform a job. Competencies are organized into four levels: awareness, knowledge and understanding, application, and skill development. The levels are sequential in that a person cannot develop skill proficiency at a task without first acquiring the requisite knowledge and understanding. Levels of learning are reflected in the competency language. For example, (Level I) “Worker is aware, is familiar...” (Level II) “Worker knows/understands...” (Level III) “Worker knows how to” (Level IV) “Worker is able to...”

Competencies are used to design and develop workshop content. Competencies also help determine training methodologies. For example, a level four (“can do”) competency means the workshop must include the opportunity to practice a skill.

You are encouraged to attend *TOT: Curriculum Development* to broaden your understanding of how competencies drive our system.

Utilization of an Individual Training Needs Assessment

Workers and foster caregivers identify their highest priority training needs using Individual Training Needs Assessments (ITNA). The training needs of individuals are compiled to identify highest priority training needs of each region. The RTCs use this information to identify which workshops to offer.

RTC staff makes every attempt to meet the needs of their regions through approved trainers. When the needs cannot be met by existing trainers, additional trainers are recruited for specific content areas. As the needs of the system change, the demand for specific workshops can also fluctuate.

Focus on Job-Related Content

You will be required to stay current in the field of child welfare by participating in field experiences and being knowledgeable about best available research in your area of expertise. Measures to ensure the content you deliver is relevant to child welfare include pre- and post-workshop testing, trainee focus groups, trainee evaluations, and observation of the workshop by OCWTP representatives.

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Incorporation of Transfer-of-Learning (TOL) Activities

The OCWTP relies on supervisors to help prepare caseworkers for workshops and help them transfer the knowledge and skills they learned in the workshop to their job. We rely on trainers to provide regular TOL opportunities in the classroom. Classroom learning that is not supported by TOL activities is less likely to be applied on the job. TOL strategies ensure that training is an investment, not just an expense.

Two formal TOL strategies developed by the OCWTP are the Idea Catcher and the Action Plan. It is suggested you use both of these tools, as well as additional TOL strategies throughout your presentations. You are encouraged to attend the *TOT: Transfer of Learning* to gain a deeper understanding of how to develop TOL strategies.

Commitment to Cultural Competence

The OCWTP values the integration cultural concepts into all training opportunities to promote culturally competent child welfare practice. The OCWTP defines cultural competence as the understanding of how values, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions influence one's own and other people's behaviors; the understanding of cultural content and dynamics of specific cultures, including one's own; and the ability to use this knowledge to work sensitively and productively with persons of various cultures.

Achieving cultural competence is a lifelong journey. In order to assist trainers on this journey, the OCWTP offers a *Culture and Diversity TOT*. This workshop is required for all new trainers. We encourage trainers to consult with IHS' Cultural Competence Task Force members for assistance with incorporating cultural concepts into every workshop.

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Assurance of Standardization while Responding to Individual Needs

As previously stated, the OCWTP is based on the Universe of Competencies. These competencies are organized into:

- ✿ Core Competencies -fundamental for all child welfare staff and resource families
- ✿ Specialized Competencies –for a specific child welfare role (e.g., adoption worker)
- ✿ Related Competencies –for fields related to child welfare (e.g., drug abuse)

Typically, core competencies drive the development of standardized curricula. The content of the curricula does not change, ensuring all staff and resource families receive the same fundamental information. If you are training standardized curricula, you cannot omit or add content and you should address all competencies identified in curricula. If you are training non-standardized workshops, you will base your content on competencies in your specialized or related field. The RTCs may ask you to adjust the competencies you address based on the training needs of the participants.

Dedication to Consensus Building

The Steering Committee, made up of representatives from the OCWTP partners, is the governing body of the OCWTP. Voting by the Committee is not used to resolve conflict, but to confirm consensus. Because policies are agreed upon by all, you can expect to be held to the same standards no matter where you train.

Development of Highly Skilled Trainers

The OCWTP has some of the most highly qualified trainers in North America. Approved trainers continue to develop their skills through TOTs, the Trainer Conference, mentoring from more experienced trainers, field experiences, and other activities provided by the OCWTP.