



Mentoring

 Strand, V. C., & Bosco-Ruggiero, S. (2008). Initiating and sustaining a mentoring program for child welfare staff. *Administration in Social Work*, 34(1), 49-67.

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

This journal article discusses the implementation and evaluation of a two-year formal mentoring program conducted in a state public child welfare agency with supervisors and experienced child welfare caseworkers who were in good standing. The organizational evaluation utilized both process and outcome measures to determine the effectiveness of the program.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

Child welfare employees need opportunities for professional development, revitalization, and recommitment to their agency mission. This mentoring program was implemented to foster:

-  Increased agency commitment
-  Improved supervisory support
-  Increased retention
-  Improved ability to navigate within the agency and community
-  Increased professional development opportunities

The agency's training department implemented the mentoring program, formed a mentoring committee, facilitated paperwork completion, and matched mentors/mentees. All mentors and mentees were trained on their roles, expectations, and program structure. Activities in the mentoring program included:

MOCK INTERVIEWS	CONFERENCES	STAFF MEETINGS
SHADOWING	COACHING	TOURS
MEETING AREA/ OFFICE DIRECTORS	CHILD FATALITY REVIEW BOARD MEETINGS	BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM DIRECTOR MEETINGS

-  The activities that most influenced participants were the mock interviews and shadowing. The most common activity was attending a conference.
-  Mentors most frequently reported the program helping them to feel appreciated.
-  Mentees reported the activities as the most beneficial aspect of the program, and felt that they were able to achieve identified goals.
-  The study suggests that mentoring impacts professional, career, and psychosocial development.
-  Mentees reported more confidence, a larger network, and improved commitment to their jobs and the agency, as well as higher levels of personal satisfaction and sense of purpose.
-  Study results included increased retention, improved commitment, and increased professional development opportunities.

*Limitations exist in sampling and data collection including: limited sample population; lack of diverse sample; low response rate; lack of demographic information/analysis; and lack of a control group.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

Initiating a mentoring program is a promising strategy for improving workforce retention. Open communication between mentors and mentees is essential in overcoming challenges. Agencies should take steps to develop mentoring programs, as mentoring programs have the potential to attract staff of color and men as participants, and may help improve negative organizational climate and promote learning.