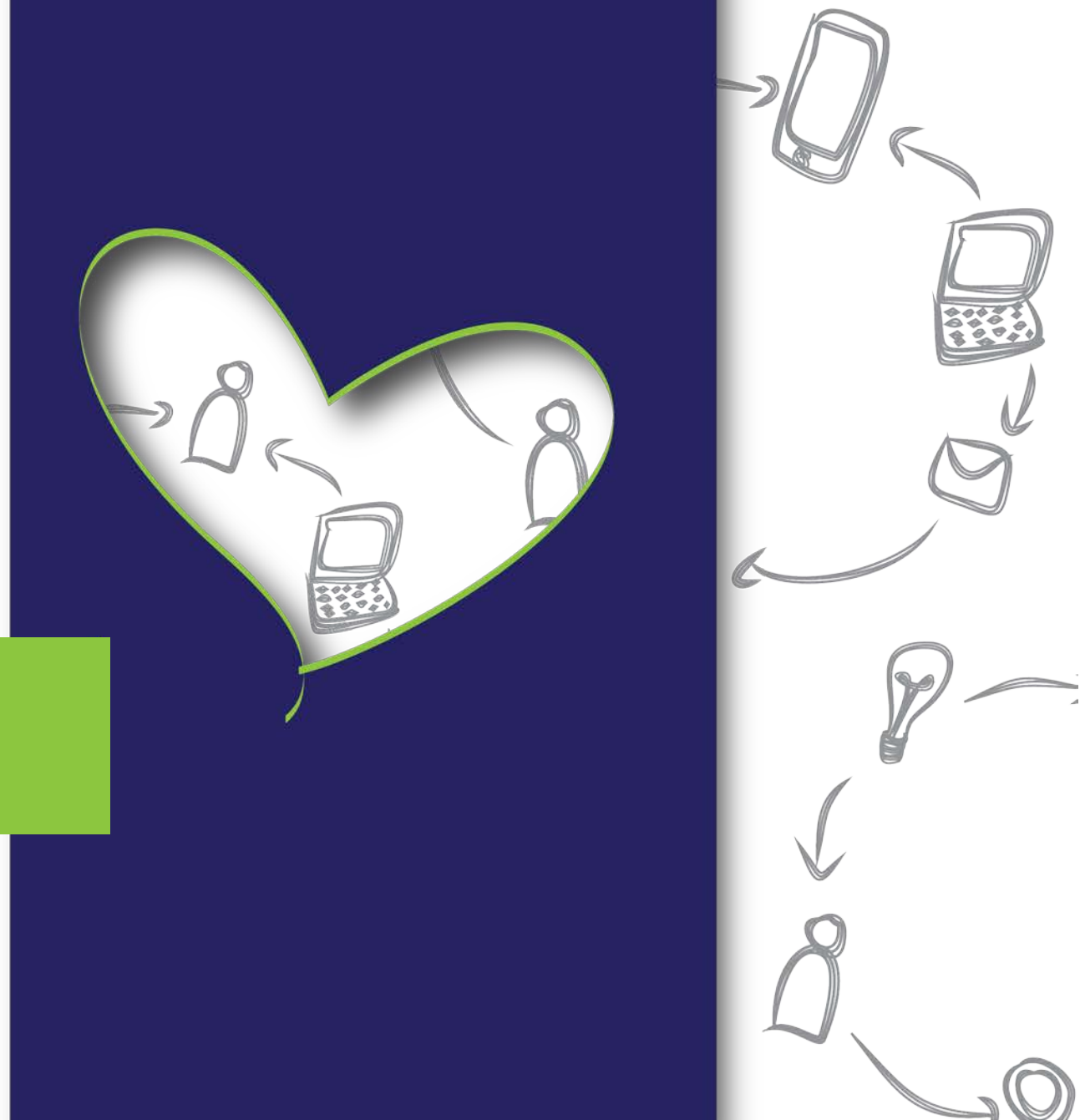
National Child Welfare Workforce Institute

LEARNING, LEADING, CHANGING

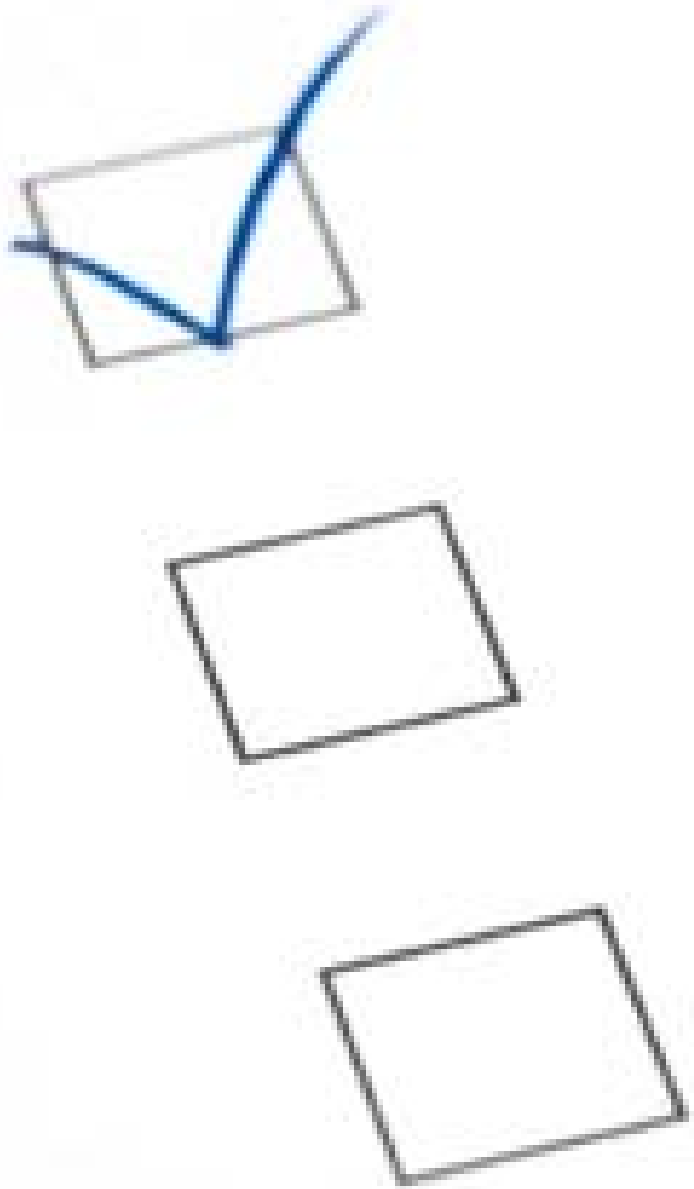
Innovations Exchange

Work Conditions, Benefits, and Organizational Culture and Climate



Hosted by Anthony Mack, MHS and
Sharon Kollar, LMSW

Please respond to the poll question by selecting your answer and then clicking “submit”



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Welcome!

This Innovations Exchange is sponsored by:

National Child Welfare Workforce Institute

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Innovations Exchange Series

- Leadership and Supervision
- Inclusivity, Racial Equity, and Community Engagement
- Practice Supports
- **Work Conditions, Benefits, and Organizational Culture/Climate**
- Education and Professional Development Partnerships

Centering and Acknowledgements

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Today's Exchange

- Orientation to Discussion
- Small Group Discussion
- Large Group Reflection
- Next Steps and Closing

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Chat Question

What one word describes a positive organizational culture and climate?

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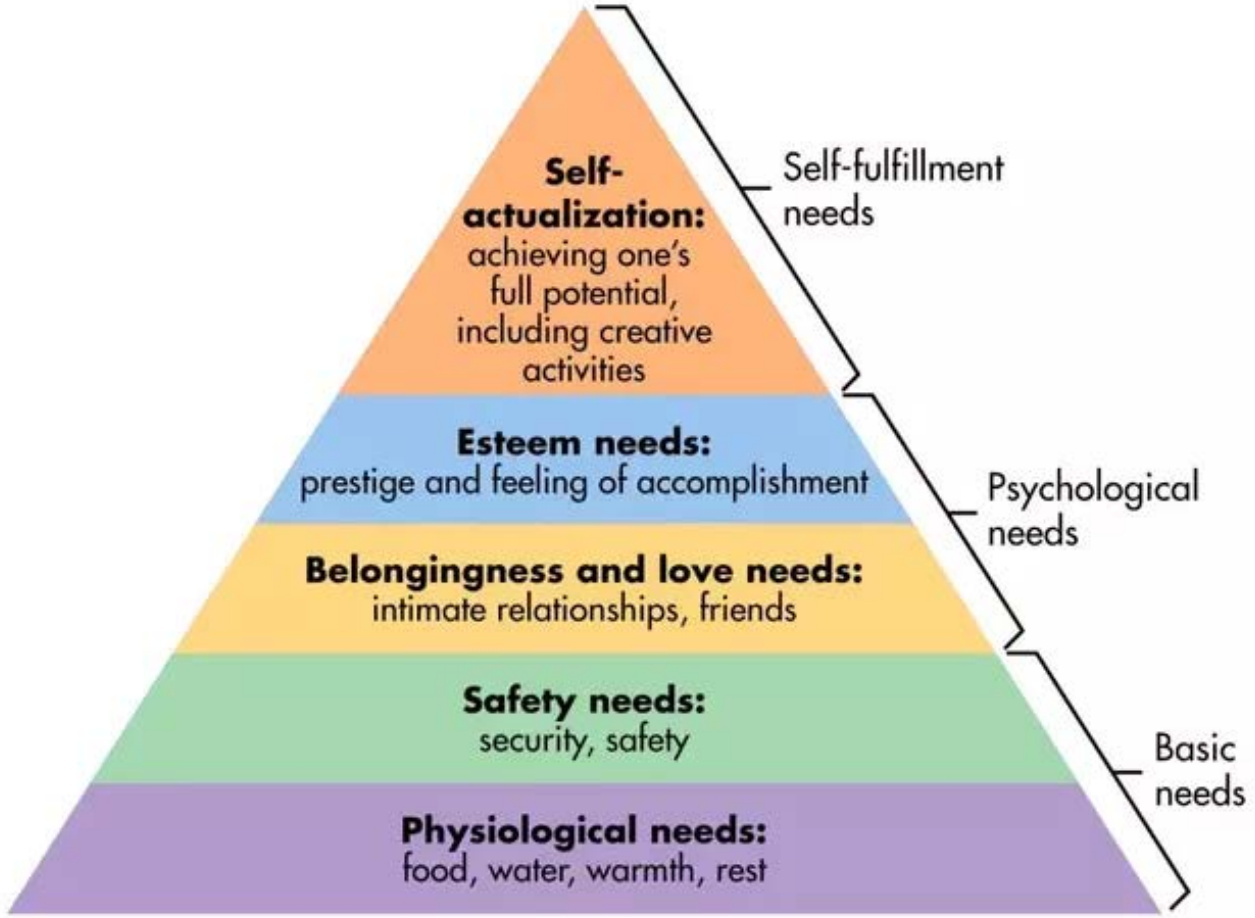
Orientation to Discussion

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



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https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

Organizational Culture and Climate

- Conduct an agency self-assessment
- Create a welcoming environment for diverse people and ideas
- Ensure staff voices are heard and staff are physically safe
- Engage in transparent communication
- Hold employee recognition and appreciation events
- Help staff feel safe engaging in courageous conversations
- Conduct staff satisfaction surveys

Work Conditions and Benefits

- Offer culturally responsive self-care programs that address secondary traumatic stress and promote resiliency
- Conduct regular salary surveys
- Offer information on dependent care
- Offer an employee assistance program that ensures confidentiality
- Assess staff perceptions of office and field safety and develop safety and risk-management protocols and procedures

What Child Welfare Workers Need During a Pandemic

1 . . . clear and safe return-to-office plans, including:

Ongoing office cleaning plans that adhere to comprehensive sanitizing procedures

PPE and sanitizing materials for staff to use in the office and to provide to families during in-person visits

2 . . . child welfare programs to support ongoing work-from-home options.

During the pandemic, workers found that working remotely:

Increased

- Client engagement
- Schedule flexibility
- Work-life balance
- Worker efficiency and effectiveness

"The pandemic has shown we do not need brick and mortar buildings to get our essential work done."

Decreased

- Office distractions
- Driving time
- Travel-related stress and expense

"Working remotely has been amazing for my mental health. My stress level has been way down and my productivity way up."

3 . . . innovation in using virtual platforms for child welfare work.

Using videoconferencing for agency and client-related meetings has increased attendance and engagement. These virtual practice options could also improve:

- Follow-up contact
- Case-closing conferences
- Service plan reviews
- Virtual visits for parents who live far away

- Court interactions for families and staff by:
  - Helping families consistently show up
  - Reducing barriers to childcare
  - Making the waiting process less stressful
  - Decreasing the time staff spend waiting for a case to be heard

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Children's Bureau

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Chat Questions

- Considering the workforce's needs, what should your program do next?

- What is your program doing to help staff feel emotionally safe and supported during this time?

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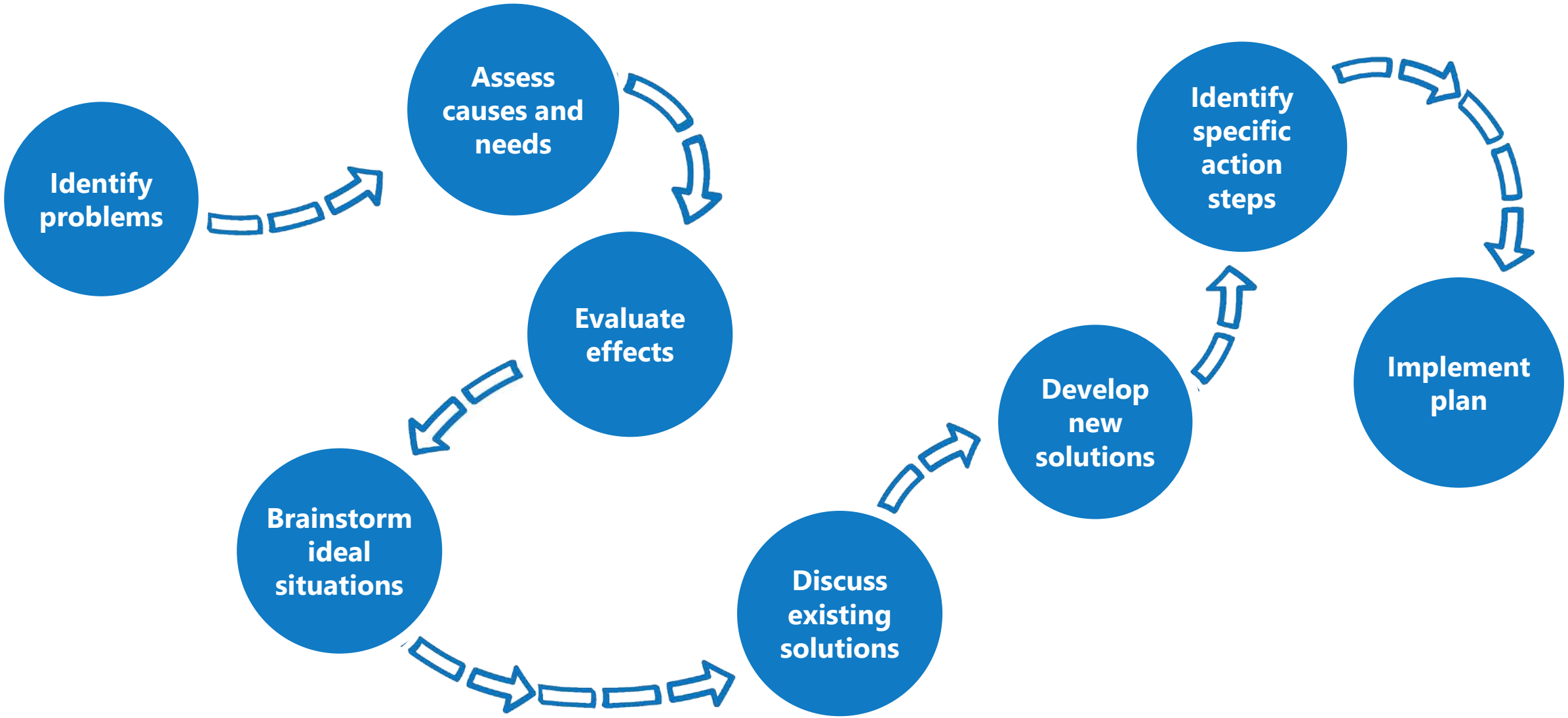
Organizational Improvement Steps



Organizational Diversity Practices

- Signals commitment to support employees from all backgrounds
- Associated with a trusting climate that builds employee engagement
- Goes beyond equal opportunity employment practices and traditional recruitment and retention of individuals from traditionally underrepresented groups
- Promotes inclusion at higher levels and increases employee engagement and well-being

Chat Question

What are some of the diversity practices your agency uses to create a trusting and inclusive environment?

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Small Group Discussion

Group Agreements

- Make space for all voices to be heard
- Embrace creativity and originality
- Listen actively and be fully present
- Stay curious about the range of viewpoints

Discussion Questions

- In what new ways has your agency built a positive culture and climate during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What workplace conditions and benefits have promoted the positive culture and climate?
- What unexplored strategies exist to advance racial equity through culture and climate?

Large Group Reflection

Join us for our next Innovations Exchange:

Education and Professional Development Partnerships

November 17

Innovations Exchange Series

- Leadership and Supervision
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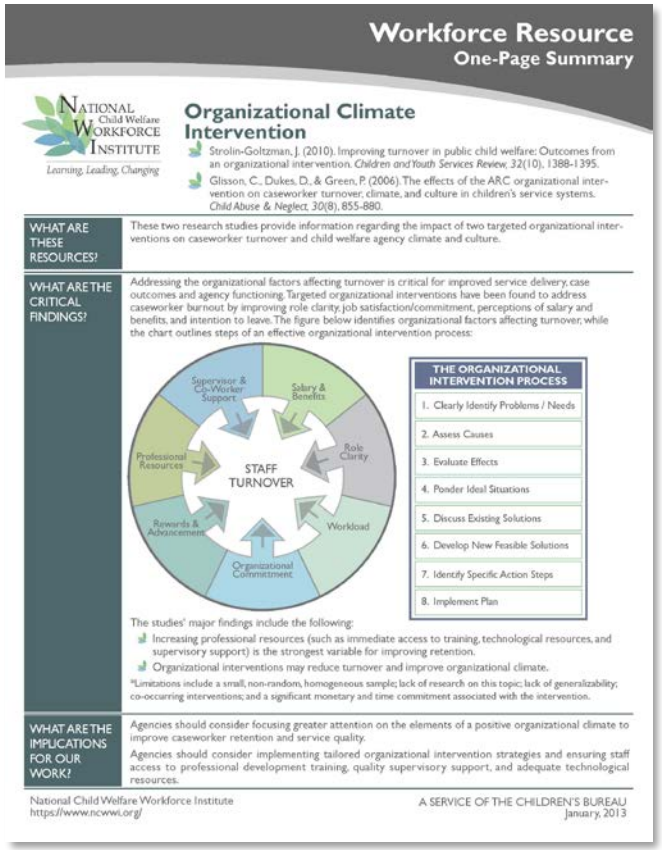
Resources for Work Conditions, Benefits, and Organizational Culture and Climate



Workforce Resource
One-Page Summary

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Organizational Climate Intervention

- Strolin-Goltzman, J. (2010). Improving turnover in public child welfare: Outcomes from an organizational intervention. *Children and Youth Services Review, 32*(10), 1388-1395.
- Glisson, C., Dukes, D., & Green, P. (2006). The effects of the ARC organizational intervention on caseworker turnover, climate, and culture in children's service systems. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 30*(8), 855-880.

WHAT ARE THESE RESOURCES?

These two research studies provide information regarding the impact of two targeted organizational interventions on caseworker turnover and child welfare agency climate and culture.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

Addressing the organizational factors affecting turnover is critical for improved service delivery, case outcomes and agency functioning. Targeted organizational interventions have been found to address caseworker burnout by improving role clarity, job satisfaction/commitment, perceptions of salary and benefits, and intention to leave. The figure below identifies organizational factors affecting turnover, while the chart outlines steps of an effective organizational intervention process:

THE ORGANIZATIONAL INTERVENTION PROCESS
1. Clearly Identify Problems / Needs
2. Assess Causes
3. Evaluate Effects
4. Ponder Ideal Situations
5. Discuss Existing Solutions
6. Develop New Feasible Solutions
7. Identify Specific Action Steps
8. Implement Plan

The studies' major findings include the following:

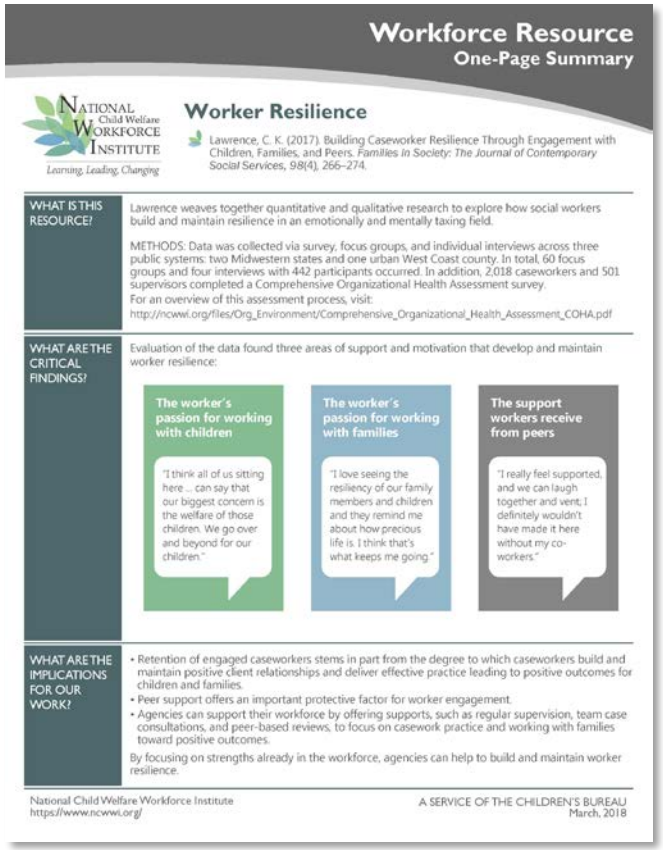
- Increasing professional resources (such as immediate access to training, technological resources, and supervisory support) is the strongest variable for improving retention.
- Organizational interventions may reduce turnover and improve organizational climate.

*Limitations include a small, non-random, homogeneous sample; lack of research on this topic; lack of generalizability; co-occurring interventions; and a significant monetary and time commitment associated with the intervention.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

Agencies should consider focusing greater attention on the elements of a positive organizational climate to improve caseworker retention and service quality.

Agencies should consider implementing tailored organizational intervention strategies and ensuring staff access to professional development training, quality supervisory support, and adequate technological resources.



Workforce Resource
One-Page Summary

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Worker Resilience

- Lawrence, C. K. (2017). Building Caseworker Resilience Through Engagement with Children, Families, and Peers. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services, 98*(4), 266–274.

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

Lawrence weaves together quantitative and qualitative research to explore how social workers build and maintain resilience in an emotionally and mentally taxing field.

METHODS: Data was collected via survey, focus groups, and individual interviews across three public systems: two Midwestern states and one urban West Coast county. In total, 60 focus groups and four interviews with 442 participants occurred. In addition, 2,018 caseworkers and 501 supervisors completed a Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment survey.
For an overview of this assessment process, visit:
http://ncwwi.org/files/Org_Environment/Comprehensive_Organizational_Health_Assessment_COHA.pdf

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

Evaluation of the data found three areas of support and motivation that develop and maintain worker resilience:

The worker's passion for working with children

"I think all of us sitting here ... can say that our biggest concern is the welfare of those children. We go over and beyond for our children."

The worker's passion for working with families

"I love seeing the resiliency of our family members and children and they remind me about how precious life is. I think that's what keeps me going."

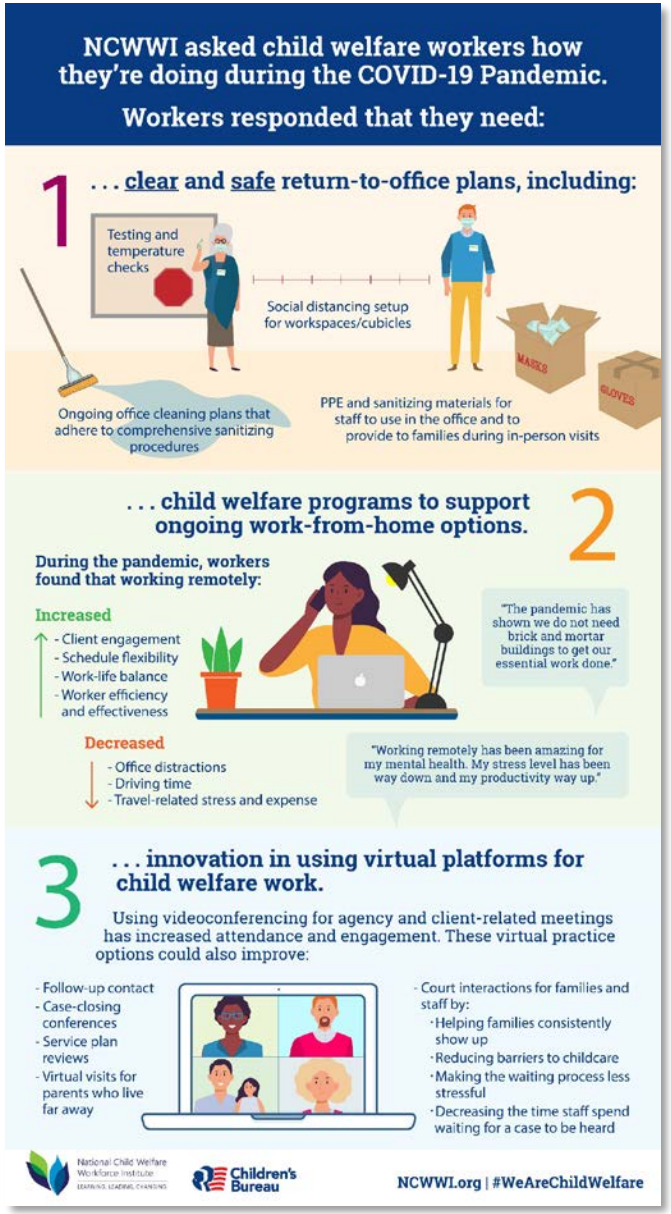
The support workers receive from peers

"I really feel supported, and we can laugh together and vent; I definitely wouldn't have made it here without my co-workers."

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

- Retention of engaged caseworkers stems in part from the degree to which caseworkers build and maintain positive client relationships and deliver effective practice leading to positive outcomes for children and families.
- Peer support offers an important protective factor for worker engagement.
- Agencies can support their workforce by offering supports, such as regular supervision, team case consultations, and peer-based reviews, to focus on casework practice and working with families toward positive outcomes.

By focusing on strengths already in the workforce, agencies can help to build and maintain worker resilience.



NCWWI asked child welfare workers how they're doing during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Workers responded that they need:

1 . . . clear and safe return-to-office plans, including:

2 . . . child welfare programs to support ongoing work-from-home options.

During the pandemic, workers found that working remotely:

Increased

- Client engagement
- Schedule flexibility
- Work-life balance
- Worker efficiency and effectiveness

"The pandemic has shown we do not need brick and mortar buildings to get our essential work done."

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Evaluation

Please fill out the evaluation.

We are always learning and growing and want to improve this Innovations Exchange Series to meet your needs.

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Contact Info for our Facilitators:

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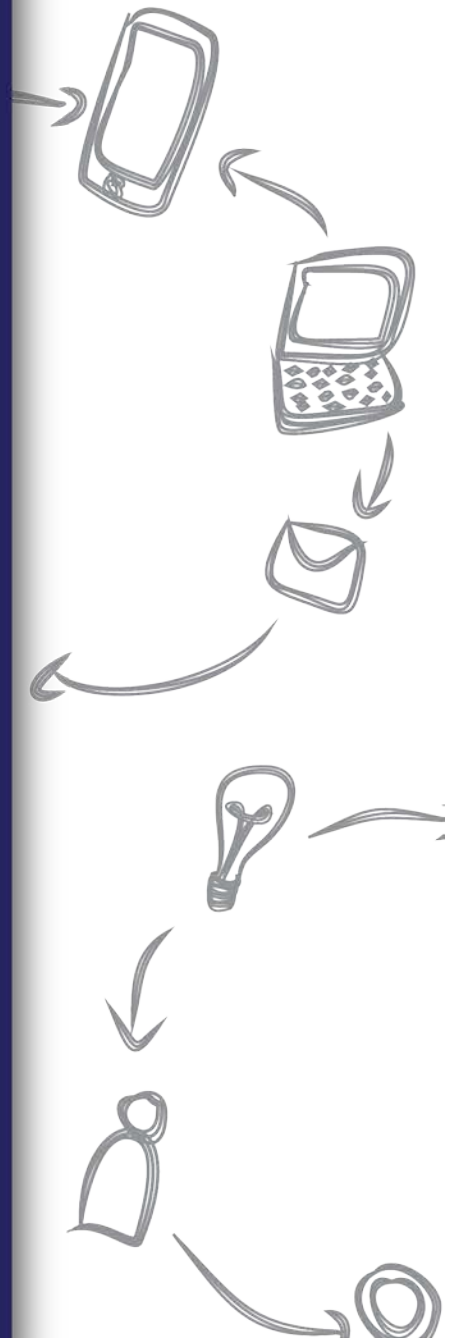

Thank you!