CSTP Conference Call

May 4, 2017

10:00-11:00 a.m. CST

Online

Meeting called by:	Child Support Training Partnership (CSTP)
Facilitator:	Child Welfare Research & Training Project (CWRTP) – Iowa State University (ISU)
Attendees:	Child support trainers from across the United States (see below for names/states)

Minutes

Agenda item: Recap of Last Meeting **Presenter:** Paula Burns (Iowa)

Discussion:

Due to time constraints, we skipped the recap of February's meeting. Detailed minutes from that meeting have been posted on the Child Support Training Partnership forum.

Agenda item: Spotlight Organization: Virginia **Presenter:** Kimberly Jones

Discussion:

This quarter's "spotlight" organization is Virginia's Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE). Training Manager Kimberly Jones spoke on the organization's behalf, focusing specifically on its innovative new training program. A copy of Kimberly's PowerPoint is available on the forum (in three parts).

Where Were We?

When Kimberly arrived at DCSE three years ago, it was organized into three regions with three trainers who developed their curriculum independently of one another In addition, there was no hybrid instruction at that time; training was conducted in the classroom only. While there were some office-specific trainings to meet an individual region's needs, materials were not regularly shared among the three regions. Finally, trainers were considered subject matter experts (SME).

Prior to Kimberly's arrival, a new deputy commissioner had developed three pillars outlining what child support should look like in Virginia, focusing on (1) clients, (2) employees, and (3) performance. Based on these three pillars, Kimberly's team defined the training program's goal as follows: "To provide essential, accessible, and effective program training to ensure all Division employees can achieve optimal work performance." In response, the DCSE website became more user-friendly and featured more content for clients. Internally, DCSE focused on ensuring that staff knew how to better support the front-facing resources that were put in place.

Next, Kimberly presented DCSE's current organizational chart. The organization is trying to achieve a more global perspective on how to train staff in the three regions. The focus is on making sure every unit/manager has some input in establishing learning goals. The previous focus had been on each individual region. The organizational chart also includes a new branch—program operations—whose task it is to centralize, modernize, and standardize materials across the organization and to determine how information is disseminated across the state and what message is being sent to the division as well as to the public.

What's the Task?

Kimberly explained that her team's task has been to centralize the training program by standardizing curriculum; formalizing the design and development of materials; and tracking content, participation, and performance. The program also needs to appeal to all staff: new hires, seasoned workers, and supervisors/leadership. Finally, emphasis has been given to modernization and technology, including legacy system conversion training, self-directed learning opportunities, a blended learning model, and eLearning content. [Note: The training matrix that Kimberly mentioned during this portion of the presentation was not visible to meeting participants.]

How Do We Get There?

Initially, Kimberly had big dreams of how the task would unfold but quickly recognized the challenges of transitioning from a classroom learning model to a self-directed learning model that involves little or no supervisory support. Thus, they chose to “chunk” the material (in three phases) and use a slower approach to ensure that everyone felt the work was valuable to them whenever they needed it. Again, the goals were to formalize training, reduce costs, and develop blended learning. They started by establishing standard operating procedures (SOP), course development plans, and a tracking system (course matrix). They also turned to a curriculum developer to help them formalize the training process.

In addition, they started utilizing staff in the home office (guidance staff), technical staff, and field staff to determine the needs of the organization and what was really important in terms of getting the training program up and running, based on feedback from the regional directors in the field. They used the state’s learning management system (LMS) to start driving registration and for housing eLearning modules. Finally, they created a divisional training calendar at the forefront so individuals could see what was out there.

They also defined the role of the central training team. Kimberly wanted to make sure her own team felt developed and had a mechanism themselves for self-directed learning, so they acquired Lynda.com, where they can study Articulate and utilize other training resources. Moreover, they have established some collaborative development opportunities for both trainers and staff in the field.

In terms of building out their training resources, the program has created a training matrix, as well as a training case for housing classroom materials and real-time resources. In addition, they have started to establish best practices and look at co-training opportunities with field staff.

In Phase 3 and beyond, they are going to establish a more competency-based skills model as well as supervisory training opportunities. They want to start looking at performance improvement across the board—what professional skills does a worker in the field or a division office need to do the job (e.g. customer service, conflict resolution, etc.)?

Timeline

Kimberly presented the timeline and model her team is using to manage their work and design their materials. They want to make sure that, throughout this process, they utilize all staff to identify training needs and, in some cases, utilize the resources they’ve provided to support, design, and develop content. The process includes continuous revision among trainers and other stakeholders to ensure the materials are relevant and current. They also want to make sure that the implementation and evaluation processes are clear and transparent to all staff. They are seeking staff feedback on what’s working and how the training modules can be improved.

Tools and Resources

Kimberly provided an example of an **SOP** that they’ve created to ensure a succession plan and to document processes for the next training manager. She also presented an example of a **course development plan**, which provides a history of the planning and development of a training project. It keeps them on target and provides a record of their thought processes during the first stages of developing a training program. The course plan includes objectives, essential activities, and a process for reviewing the course prior to its development. Next, Kimberly discussed the **course tracking mechanism**, which was adapted from another eLearning team in Social Services. It’s useful for seeing how long it takes to develop a project. She also referred to the **storyboarding** process that they use to vet (and document) training materials to ensure the modules are relevant and efficiently created. They’ve also created a **Central Resources Webpage** for posting training materials that can be saved to an individual’s desktop and utilized as necessary. The next project they’ll be working on involves **skill blocks**—the first step in building a competency model. What do they want field staff to know how to do and how can they ensure staff are mastering and maintaining that skill level?

Achievements

Kimberly noted that the opportunity to revamp their training program has resulted in a lot of creative thinking. They want to make sure field staff have things (e.g., process guides, job aids, practical classroom lessons, etc.) at their fingertips. Previous classroom training could take 3-4 days at a time. They’ve minimized that time by focusing on practical activities, including scenario-based learning, and reserving eLearning modules for teaching policy and procedures. Kimberly presented an example of an eLearning module that features a video starring the deputy commissioner. She explained that they are trying to incorporate more videos into their work in response to recent trends in instructional design (75% of what people learn at work or in the classroom is through video). In the last three years, the DCSE Training Team has produced more than 70 eLearning modules and 30 classroom trainings.

What's Our Future?

In the future, the program hopes to move toward a more Agile (iterative) process, whereby they give individuals small chunks of information. Currently, they release an entire course at once, including eLearning modules, classroom materials, and process guides. However, it may be more helpful for staff if they had access to eLearning modules immediately after they were developed, and then could receive the classroom materials and handouts later—after they have been developed. Kimberly noted that people tend to receive information better in increments than all at once, particularly when there is a large amount of content or the material is complex. In child support, especially, the amount and complexity of information can be overwhelming. Therefore, it may be more effective to let workers learn at their own pace but using shorter blocks of time. Kimberly's team would also like to purchase GoAnimate to create video content; they're currently utilizing what's available in Articulate and PowerPoint. The team is just starting to use Canva (a free service) to create infographics. Finally, they've started holding round-table discussions with supervisors so that the trainers learn more about their job and look for ways to collaborate with new and seasoned workers on training in their offices.

Conclusion:

Kimberly ended by saying she's very excited about what they're doing in Virginia. She's hoping this more innovative approach helps them achieve their goals and establish some real precedence for how to move forward within their division.

She cited the following resources during her presentation, if anyone is interested in learning more; links are included:

- Lynda.com
- Articulate
- Agile Learning Design
- GoAnimate
- Canva

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
✓ Collect any remaining questions from online chat	Paula Burns	ASAP
✓ Update the forum with Virginia's information	Paula Burns	ASAP
✓ Find a spotlight organization for next quarter	Paula Burns	ASAP

Agenda item: Minnesota Family Support & Recovery Council **Presenter:** James Demgen

Discussion:

Jim Demgen was next on the agenda. Jim is a trainer with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) and a member of the Minnesota Family Support and Recovery Council's (MFSRC) Board of Directors. He presented information on the organization's mission, fall training conference, and other services, while navigating its website.

About a year ago, Jim volunteered to attend MFSRC's fall conference and enjoyed it so much that he decided to run for and was selected to the Board of Directors. The mission of the organization is to "promote the well-being of children and families through the professional development of members, legislative advocacy, public awareness, and collaboration with government and community agencies." The organization was founded in 1974 and will be hosting its 44^{th} annual conference this fall. According to Jim, the strength of the organization lies in its members' breadth of experience. Members include county child support staff, county attorneys, county commissioners, higher level administrative staff, people from the Minnesota DHS and the attorney general's office, law enforcement officials, representatives of the courts, and even judges and child support magistrates. The organization also addresses issues pertaining to other county and state staff involved in recovery and collections. Other interested parties are welcome to join as affiliate members.

Thirty-three individuals serve on the board of directors. The board functions quite well despite its size, again due to the degree of specialization each board member brings. The board is made up of six officers and 27 directors, two directors elected from each of eight regions, four at-large directors elected by the entire membership, and seven appointed directors. The appointed directors include high-level managers from DHS, county administrators, members of the county attorney association, a representative from the recovery association, a tribal representative, and a representative from the department of corrections (DOC). This diversity helps to promote the collaboration cited in the organization's mission statement.

The annual conference is held during the first week in October (Sunday-Wednesday). A wide range of training is provided—some sessions are program-oriented, some are related to technical systems, some focus on professional development, and others deal with awareness and advocacy. Last year, the conference featured a representative from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) who is an expert on adverse childhood experiences and historical trauma. Jim noted that sometimes those of us who work in Human Services can become so focused on the technical side of what we do that we tend to forget the "human" aspect. The conference allows individuals to gain knowledge and insight into other areas that might help them reconnect with the human aspect of their work.

This year, more than 30 sessions will be offered, along with three keynote addresses. The organization tries to offer something for everybody. There are sessions for county attorneys, who can earn CLE credits. There are sessions for front-line child support staff. Other sessions are targeted specifically at supervisors (e.g., succession planning and loss of institutional knowledge).

In addition, MFSRC gives out several annual awards (a tradition started in 1990). There are five different award categories: honorary life member, outstanding individual achievement, outstanding customer service, outstanding program achievement, and program awareness. The people who make the nominations put a lot of thought into the process, said Jim, and the recipients appreciate the recognition.

Aside from the conference, some members of the organization also maintain a case law index. While the database is not intended to be a sophisticated tool, it is a good first step for researching collections and case law as it pertains to family law issues. It's also a good place for non-attorneys to get a less overwhelming view of case law. The MFSRC website also includes links to helpful resources and a news page.

In response to an online question, Jim mentioned that Minnesota has nine trainers at the state level, all housed in St. Paul. Typically, new hires go to St. Paul for training during the first six days of employment. Aside from that training, half of their courses are conducted via webinar. More specialized, two-day courses are taught in St. Paul. Some of the larger counties have their own training staff.

In response to another question, Jim indicated that MFSRC is open to hearing about possible topics for upcoming conferences.

Conclusion:

Jim concluded by noting his disappointment that this year's conference is not offering a poverty simulation. Although it didn't make the final cut, it may be part of next year's conference. Jim would like to increase awareness of such issues throughout the state. The non-profit organization that offers the "Understanding of Poverty" simulation in the Twin Cities area is Urban Immersion, which is run by the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
✓ Collect any remaining questions from online chat	Paula Burns	ASAP

Agenda item: Phone Collections Training **Presenter:** Yvette Asche-Liffick

Due to time constraints, we had to postpone Yvette Asche-Liffick's presentation on phone collections training until our next meeting.

Agenda item: Questions/Comments **Presenter:** Paula Burns

Discussion:

Paula invited anyone attending the NCSEA Leadership Symposium in Scottsdale, AZ, in August to contact her. She and another colleague from Iowa State will be attending and presenting at the conference. Paula will actually be presenting on the CSTP as part of a panel discussion on "training successes."

Conclusion:

The next CSTP meeting date has yet to be determined. More details will be sent via email and posted to the forum.

Action items	Person responsible	Deadline
✓ Post recording/minutes/chat transcript from 05.05.17 meeting	Paula Burns	ASAP
✓ Respond to discussion boards	All participants (optional)	Ongoing
✓ Send out a reminder about NCSEA Leadership Symposium	Paula Burns	Mid-July

Other Information

Attendees:

	Name	Location
1	Bethany Burdt, Paula Burns, Kate Goudy-Haht, Ginger Monroe, Abby Stanek, Martha Stewart	Iowa
2	Kimberly Jones	Virginia
3	Amy Burgoon	Kansas
4	Betina McCracken	New Mexico
5	Judy Golden	Michigan
6	Jim Demgen	Minnesota
7	Mariellen Keely	Virginia
8	Yvette Asche-Liffick	Arizona
9	Joe Banken	Minnesota
10	Kim Westerfield	Florida
11	Ann-Marie Yeates	New York
12	Clifford Smith	Alabama
13	Kathleen Harrington	Massachusetts
14	Debbie Roeten Vickers	Louisiana
15	Janet Henry	Oregon
16	Allison Lasley	Meskwaki Nation (Iowa)
17	Suzanne Horseman	Fort Belknap Indian Community (Montana)
18	Graham Button	New York
19	Zachary Ulrich	Alaska
20	Penny LaRocque	New York
21	Elaine Zapata	Nooksack Indian Tribe (Washington)
22	Angie Davis	Indiana

If your name and state/tribe/territory are not listed here, you may have joined later or used the phone line to connect to the meeting. Feel free to email Paula Burns to adjust the minutes accordingly.

A transcript of the chat that took place online during the meeting is also available at the CWRTP website.