

Strengthening Family Support through Supervision

Family Support Supervisor Certification Training

*National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice
at the University of Iowa School of Social Work**



Good supervision is the key to achieving excellence in family support programs. Supervisors must know how to develop workers' strengths and how to manage effectively in environments of change and challenge. Research shows that supportive supervision is more important than salary and working conditions in retaining good staff.

Strengthening Family Support through Supervision is a blended in-person/on-line certification training for family support supervisors from diverse professional backgrounds and at all career stages. The course offers supervisors opportunities to gain new insights and enhance skills for developing staff competence and building stronger

organizations. Supervisors take home a number of supervisory tools for use with staff, including tools for evaluating staff across key family support worker competencies.

Four training days will be conducted on-site and in-person. In addition, participants are required to attend three mandatory live webinars, view a number of short on-line lectures at their convenience, complete several homework assignments applying class concepts to their workplace, and pass an on-line certification exam.

The curriculum is competency-based, integrates cultural and ethical issues, and incorporates research and scientific findings in the fields of human services supervision and organizational development. The curriculum supports the Iowa Family Support Standards and is applicable to a variety of family support models such as Healthy Families America, Early Head Start, Head Start, Parents as Teachers and family development programs aimed at supporting families to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Strengthening Family Support through Supervision employs a combination of in-person and on-line lecture, discussion, portfolio development, role-playing, self-evaluation and multimedia training. Supervisors complete a portfolio of three homework assignments, choosing from a variety of assignments which call on them to apply new knowledge and skills to their work settings.

Following completion of the class and written homework, trainees take an on-line competency test. Trainees who pass the test receive supervisor certification from the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice at the University of Iowa (NRC). The NRC will work with state credentialing bodies to assure that the training conforms to credentialing standards. CEUS are also available for the training, including six hours of ethics training which should meet state licensing standards.

Curriculum Overview:

- **Module 1:** Contemporary Family Support Supervisory Practice
- **Module 2:** Developing Human Resources through Family Support Supervision
- **Module 3:** Supervision of Family Support Practice
- **Module 4:** Leadership Skills for Family Support Supervisors
- **Module 5:** The Supervisor's Role in Managing Stress and Safety

Please read on for more information about the curriculum and how to register for an upcoming course!

Module 1: Contemporary Family Support Supervisory Practice

The first module provides an introduction to the strength-based model of supervision which undergirds the Family Support Supervisor Curriculum. The module also offers participants an opportunity to begin to form supportive supervisory peer relationships and to set personal learning goals.

Major Content:

- Current best practices in the field of organizational development and supervision
- NRC's Model of Supervision, including Developmental Planning and Support tool
- Provide opportunity to develop supportive peer relationships with other supervisors statewide.
- Recognize the "parallel practice" elements of staff supervision and organizational/programmatic decisions
- Apply elements of high performing teams to the work unit (e.g., "a learning organization," focus on process and relationships, continuous quality improvement, integration of cultural competence, managing workforce diversity)
- Review elements of individual and organizational cultural competence.
- Understand personal strengths and challenges as a family support supervisor.

Participant comments: *"Good visuals and definitions of supervising in relationships in which strengths are emphasized"; "What you focus on grows. Eye opener for me, I will be changing the "focus" from now on. Great [strength] interview questions".*

Module 2: Developing Human Resources through Supervision

The Human Resources module focuses on the recruitment, hiring, orientation, development, and evaluation of family support workers, the ethical/risk management aspects of the supervisory role, and managing dynamics of diversity (cultural, generational) in the workforce. *This material is not meant to supplant the human resources policies of the participating organization.*

Major Content:

- Strategies for staff recruitment, development and retention (insert picture here)
- Implementing a supervision program
- Ethics and risk management in family support supervision
- Managing a culturally and generationally diverse workforce
- Giving effective performance feedback
- Competency-based evaluation of staff
- Creating individual and unit development plans
- Managing employees with performance problems (underperformance, impairments)
- Adapting supervisory interventions to supervisee developmental stage, skill level, learning style, and culture.

Participant comments: *"Great- lots of info in a fun format. Even we 'adults' like to play". [The evaluation tool is] "a very visual way to identify individual and team strengths and weaknesses. Very useful in identifying training needs but also how to draw on individual strengths to help train co-workers."*

Module 3: Supervision of Family Support Practice

Module Three focuses on applying strength-based supervision to family support practice issues, and includes DVD demonstrations and opportunities to observe, analyze and practice reflective supervision. Participants wrestle with complex ethical issues arising in practice, including involvement of clients in non-voluntary systems such as juvenile court.

Major Content:

- Strengthening the supervisory relationship
- Enhancing skills in reflective, strength-based supervision
- Ethical practice supervision; applying an ethical model of decision making
- Culturally competent practice supervision
- Consulting with, teaching, and mentoring staff
- Designing a supervision program
- Supervising evidence based practice using logic models and theories of change
- Clinical issues in supervision of family support practice (adult mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse)
- Engaging community resources to improve client outcomes

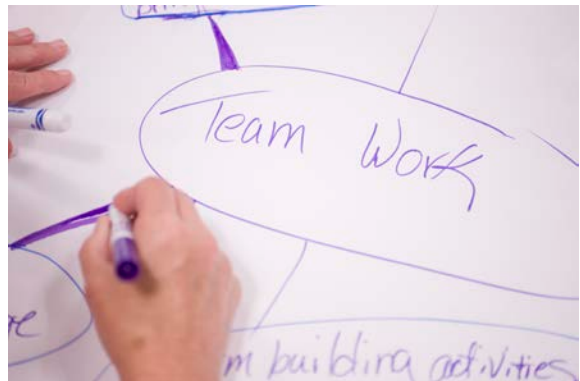
Participant comments: *“I used the eco-map on families, I had not thought of using it [with workers] . . . thanks for helping me think outside the box. “ It helped me focus more on strengths with challenging employees” “Great specific info --tools and specific examples are valuable.” “Good to be able to discuss parallel process and to tie reflective supervision to family support practice” “Everyone always talks ‘reflective supervisor’ but this actually put some examples and meaning behind it for me. “I think the conversation that came out of this [cultural competence] piece was great-helpful to keep this in mind!” “I can’t wait to use the diversity wheel with my staff”.*

Module 4: Leadership Skills for Family Support Supervisors

Module Four addresses a set of inter-related leadership skills which are applicable in any setting but are taught with family support practice examples.

Major Content:

- Leading positive change
- Leading effective teams
- Running effective meetings
- Managing conflict in the team
- Advanced group facilitation skills
- Effective public speaking
- Long distance supervision; using communication technology
- Public relations



Participant comments: *“Our staff meetings last up to 6 hours!! I will be sharing this info so we can run ours more efficiently.” “*

Module 5: The Supervisor’s Role in Addressing Worker Stress and Safety

Module Five offers tools and perspectives for supervisors to manage their own and their workers’ stress, with a focus on promoting workplace resilience. Team safety is also addressed.

Major Content:

- Creative supervisory techniques to promote individual and organizational resilience
- Secondary trauma and compassion fatigue
- Supervisor’s role in assuring workplace and home visiting safety
- Critical incident stress management
- Strategies for promoting self care
- Closing group activities to discuss ongoing cohort support

Participant comments: *“You complement each other well as trainers and bring to the training a variety of ways to learn the material --very helpful!” “Love stress management and resilience.” “I did not think about how my work can cause this effect [secondary traumatic stress] on me, and that my responses and feelings about this [are] not ‘just me’.”*

* Development of this curriculum was supported by the Iowa Department of Management, Office of Empowerment. Funding for development of a child welfare supervisor curriculum upon which this curriculum was based was provided by the Children’s Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Grant #90CT0111.

For information about arranging for a course in your area, or to register for a scheduled course, please contact:

Lisa D’Aunno
Director of Training
National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice
University of Iowa Research Park
100 MTP4, Room 162
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-5000
319-335-4965

or visit the **NRCFCP website**
www.uiowa.edu/~nrcfcp