Ensuring the Quality and Fidelity of Offender Assessments, Case Management Plans, and Programs

We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.

– Albert Einstein

Focus of Concurrent Session

- Remind ourselves about the key elements of assessment and case planning and how they relate to EBP principles
- Discuss the practical, day-to-day role of managers in supporting the efforts of frontline employees related to communication, assessment, case planning and case management
- Discuss how high quality assessments and case plans will enhance supervision and improve public safety

WHO? • WHAT? • HOW? • HOW MUCH?
Why is Quality Assurance Important?

What are some other examples?

Goals of Correctional Agencies

- Protect public safety
- Hold offenders accountable to victims and the community
- Guide offenders through process of becoming law-abiding and productive

What does quality assurance mean in community – and facility-based corrections?
### Evidence-Based Principles

- Assess Actuarial Risk/Needs
- Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
- Target Interventions
  - Risk Principle: Prioritize supervision and treatment resources for higher risk offenders
  - Need Principle: Target interventions to criminogenic needs
  - Responsivity Principle: Be responsive to temperament, learning style, motivation, culture, and gender when assigning programs
  - Dosage: Structure 40-70% of high-risk offenders' time for 3-9 months
- Skill Train with Directed Practice
- Increase Positive Reinforcement
- Engage Ongoing Support in Natural Communities
- Measure Relevant Processes/Practices
- Provide Measurement Feedback

### Quality Assurance Leads to Quality

**Quality Assurance:**
The planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled.

**Quality:**
- The characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs;
- A product or service free of deficiencies.

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Without quality assurance, principles cannot be fulfilled.
QA – Organizing for Quality

**PLAN**
- Define a problem or opportunity;
- Analyze the situation. Brainstorm for causes and corrective actions. Think creatively to determine the best approach and best possible corrective action.
- Develop an implementation plan.

**DO**
- Implement corrective action.
- Document the procedures and observations.
- Use data gathering tools to collect information.

**CHECK**
- Analyze information.
- Monitor trends.
- Compare obtained results against expected results.

**ACT**
- If results are as expected, **do nothing. CELEBRATE.**
- If results are not as expected, repeat PDCA cycle.
- Document the process and the revised plan.

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A Little Taste of Quality

- You want to retire when you are 65 and run a little candy store that offers yummy yet affordable chocolate and other goodies.
- Despite the economy, you are going to open a candy store in the next few months so it will be well established when you turn 65.
- You need to hire employees who have a strong work ethic, a commitment to customer service, and who know the difference between tasty chocolate that is a good buy and cheap chocolate.
- Working in groups, answer the following questions:
  - Which chocolate tastes best? How did your group determine that it was the best?
  - What standards of performance will you set for your employees?
  - How will you know that your employees are meeting the standards?
  - How will you judge that your business is a success?
  - How will you determine that your business is successful enough to support you when you retire?
Mission Critical Activities

- Assessment
- Case Management
- Programs

We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.

— Marian Wright Edelman

Quality Offender Assessments

- Where do you begin?
  - Develop your policy
  - Define competence
  - Develop training protocols
  - Record your outcomes

- Develop policy
  - Define critical elements
  - Determine who should do the reviews
  - Decide how often reviews should be done
  - Determine what training is needed
  - Decide on who audits the experts
Who Should Do It?

- **Supervisors**
  - **Pro**
    - These duties fall in line with what supervisors are doing now
    - They have the authority to reinforce practice
  - **Con**
    - May lack expertise in administration of the assessment tool (haven’t done it)
    - If they supervise large number of employees, time to observe and provide feedback is limited

- **Line Employees**
  - **Pro**
    - Often have the expertise as they have been using the tool
    - Can sometimes free up employees to have this be their sole responsibility
    - They become expert
  - **Con**
    - No authority
    - Caseloads too large
    - Line officers know more than the supervisor

How Often?

- Evaluate employees after they have been trained to determine if there is a risk that the assessment will be invalid
- Develop competency levels — have a definition of what is within the acceptable range
- Employees who have not reached competency need to be reviewed more frequently
- Include in your policy and enforce
How to Ensure Quality?

Make sure initial training is thorough
- Do participants understand the underlying principles of the tool?
- Do they have enough time to practice using the assessment during training?
- Do the trainers have enough time to observe participants’ comprehension and use of the tool and correct mistakes before they become bad habits?

How to Ensure Quality?

- Provide booster sessions after employees have had time to practice
  - Encourage employees to ask questions
  - Have time for practice and demonstration

- Provide coaches to newly trained employees
  - Have coaches review the first 6 assessments and provide feedback
  - Record the progress of newly trained employees and document the field training hours
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<tr>
<th>Department and Manner of Being With an Offender</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Introduced self or greeted offender in a confident, friendly manner and thanked the offender for his/her time and effort when closing the session.</td>
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<td>2. Posture and physical gestures (e.g., hand shakes, eye contact, non-verbal communication) were dignified, confident, and sincere and election and respectful.</td>
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<td>3. Posture and physical gestures (e.g., hand shakes, eye contact, non-verbal communication) were dignified, confident, and sincere and election and respectful.</td>
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<td>4. Achieved goal of meeting and closure session with review of immediate and future plans.</td>
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<td>5. Used appropriate communication skills to decrease tension and maintain positive behavior; maintain interpersonal and avoid raising voice.</td>
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<td>6. Reviewed and updated the offender’s progress towards previously established goals.</td>
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<td>7. Explored and conducted on-going assessments for offender’s ambivalence to change, criminogenic needs, and relevant circumstances of the case.</td>
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<td>8. Recorded current case information and status (e.g., address, employment and record case information that reflects recent supervision standards).</td>
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<th>Treatment and Service Referral</th>
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<td>9. Maintained focus for change on offender and their problem-solving ability.</td>
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<td>10. Appropriately reminded offender of ground rules for effective supervision and legal consequences for non-compliance.</td>
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<td>11. When necessary, appropriately reminded offender of ground rules for effective supervision and legal consequences for non-compliance.</td>
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<td>12. When appropriate, enforced by sanction contract, provided sanctions clearly in a fair manner.</td>
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How to Ensure Quality?

- Talent and expertise needed to be a quality reviewer
  - Thorough knowledge of the tool
  - Ability to demonstrate competency
  - Considered by colleagues as an “expert”

- Skills needed to be a quality reviewer
  - Tact
  - Patience
  - Precision
Who Reviews the Reviewers?

- Hire a consultant or engage a university partner to periodically evaluate the quality reviewers.
- Provide quarterly training where scoring activities are practiced.
- Set a system of peer review where quality reviewers observe one another and provide feedback.

The Quality Review

- Set up as a learning experience.
- Eventually tie to performance reviews.
- Praise and reward those who exceed the standards:
  - Incorporate in performance appraisals.
  - Send an email.
  - Provide oral praise to these individuals.
  - Write a note and send a copy to the Director.
- Develop a tool that is easy to administer.
Case Management Concerns

Review of case plan
- Is the assessment scored accurately?
- Are the correct criminogenic needs identified?
- Are interventions based on needs?
- Have responsivity issues been addressed?
- Is the offender’s motivation taken into consideration?

Case Management Behaviors

Change in philosophy for employees
- Does the officer adjust case management based on risk?
- Does the officer use a different style based on responsivity issues?
- Does the officer work with the offender rather than dictate what happens on supervision (motivation)?
- Does the officer act as a change agent?
# Case Plan Quality Reviews

Ways to provide quality assurance

- **Paper file audit**
  - **Pro**
    - Easier to find time to accomplish
    - Concrete and easier to show officers what they did right and what they did wrong
  - **Con**
    - Those that are not good at paperwork may not reflect their true skills
    - What goes in notes may not accurately capture what happens in appointments

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# Employee-Offender Interaction

- **Video tapes**
- **Tape recorders**
- **Sitting in with employee and offender**
  - Can see and hear what actually happens
  - Can measure motivational interviewing skills
  - Can assess employee’s ability to work with offenders
Case Management Observations

- Talk to family
- Talk to neighbors
- Talk to treatment providers
- Talk to victims and/or victim advocates
- Client satisfaction surveys

Case Management Measures

- Identify and review what matters
  - Number of offenders successfully completing supervision
  - Number of warrants issued for technical violations
  - Number of offenders that go to prison for non-compliance with rules, for new crimes
  - Number of offenders that are reassessed on timely basis
  - Number of risk assessment overrides
  - Number of offenders that attend programming
  - Number of offenders completing programming
  - Number of intermediate sanctions imposed
  - What else?
Measuring Case Management

Finding time
- Permit employees to work on reviews at home
- Elicit feedback from employees of what duties/tasks can be eliminated
- Try to keep supervisor/employee ratios manageable
- Provide praise and tie quality reviews to outcomes

We will not put into our establishment anything that is useless.

Role of Managers

- Gatekeepers of Quality
- Track Progress
- Establish Office/Unit Benchmarks
- Problem-Solvers
- Communicators
- What else?
Program Quality and Fidelity

Issues to consider:
- Are the programs focused on criminogenic needs?
- Are the programs provided by public or private agency?
- If the programs are provided by private vendors, are the vendors under contract?
  - Do the contracts spell out performance measures?
  - Are there incentives for high performance?
  - Has the department provided or offered training to the vendors?
- Are the programs cognitive behavioral?
- What does program fidelity mean? How can fidelity be ensured?

Performance must be measured, if it is going to be improved!!

Quality is not an act, Quality is a habit. -- Aristotle
References


