Building Resilient Professionals and Organizations

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Goals

Caring, effective and ethical professionals working in caring, effective and ethical organizations

Outline

- Introduction
- Workforce
- Resiliency
- Retention
- Leadership
- Biblical principles
- Altar Call

## North American Association of Christians in Social Work

To equip its members to integrate Christian faith and professional social work practice.

Cloud of Witnesses

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

Hebrews 12:1

Alan Keith Lucas
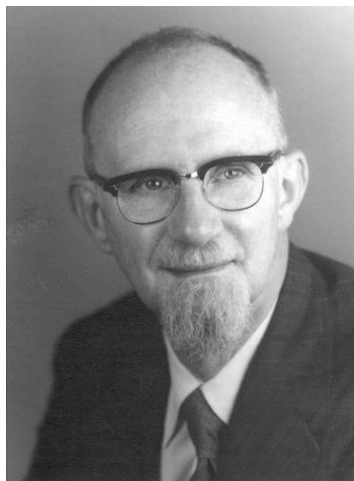
Diana Garland

Social Work Relationship

"...the dynamic of change, in either attitude or behavior, lies in a relationship to a person. Since attitudes favor or stand in the way of the solution of many problems of social adjustment, the relationship between the caseworker and client becomes a matter of extraordinary importance."

Bertha Capen Reynolds 1934

Today's Focus

The intersection of a relationship religion and a relationship profession

Workforce

The people engaged in or available for work, the workers employed in a specific project or activity; either in a particular company or industry, or in a geographic area.

Group of people willing to obey orders who work together for a specific period of time.

Workforce Development Framework

National Child Welfare Workforce Institute

www.ncwwi.org

www.myncwwi.org

Resiliency

- The power to spring back to a former position or shape after being stretched or compressed; recovering quickly from difficulties.
- The capacity to regroup from pressure or shock unchanged or undamaged; an elastic quality—springing back into shape.
- Latin: spring back, rebound

Protective Factors

Qualities that shield or buffer from harm or injury; that guard, defend, preserve or shelter against damage; at least lessening the shock potentially delivered by an event or crisis.

1. Characteristics of the person
2. The nature of the family
3. The quality of external supports

Personal Characteristics

1. Skill in problem solving
2. Broad range of interests and goals (2 hobbies)
3. Ability to attract peer support
4. Ability to nurture others/take responsibility for others
5. Assign purpose and meaning and make sense out of chaos
6. Psychological and physical distance
7. Good natured, curious, sense of humor
8. Realistic sense of personal control/hopeful

Close group dynamics/family dynamics

1. Physical and psychological space
2. Strong bonds with little early conflict
3. Consistent relationship characterized by warmth
4. Reasonable structure and limits

External Support

1. The presence of supportive persons and networks
2. Safe spaces
3. Connections with peers with similar experiences
4. Small acts of kindness
5. Connected to structured settings in which one has some responsibilities

The Absence or Exhaustion of Resiliency Matters

1. High cost of turnover with regard to child and family well-being.
2. High cost of turnover with regard to achieving organizational outcomes.
3. High cost of turnover with regard to the expenses associated with covering open caseloads, recruitment, orientation, and training.
4. High cost for worker morale.

Turnover Study

- Milwaukee Study on permanency outcomes for children in foster care:

    1. Children with only one worker achieved permanency in 74.5% of the cases;

    2. Children with 2 workers achieved permanency in only 17.5%;

    3. Children with 3 workers achieved permanency in 5.2% of cases;

    4. Children with 4 workers achieved permanency in 2.5%;

    5. Children with 5-7 workers achieved permanency in less than 1% of cases.

    These employees had low or reasonable caseloads, so while manageable caseloads are necessary, it alone is not sufficient to solve turnover problems.

Why do workers and front line supervisors **stay** in an organization?

And what promotes their *resiliency* and *happiness* so that they continue to be effective and productive and persevere?

Why do highly regarded workers stay?

- Study of private agency front line workers and supervisors with 3+ years of experience
- Nominated due to the assessment that these were highly effective professionals
- 56 nominees
- 23 in depth interviews
- Supported by the U.S. Children's Bureau

Why Workers Stay:
1. Mission and Vision

Strong sense of personal calling/mission:

- A compelling purpose and mission
- Guiding principles
- Core values that aligns with the work to be done
- Strategic Plan and vision that is alive
- Consistency in practice

Having a purpose in one's work life

"A ray of sunshine for kids."

"My calling."

"This is not just a job. I have a sense of ownership."

Collective: What us the mission of your organization? Its vision for how to do its work now and in the future?

Individual: What is your goal and purpose as an employee and professional? A personal mission statement?

2. Sense of Accomplishment

Making a difference

"Live for God and accomplish something with your life."

Francis Perkins

Worker Statements

"What kept me in casework is I saw changes in people and saw evidence that the best decision had been made for the child."

"I like the success of adoption; I see the connection between kids and families who are well-matched."

"I am making a difference. Not every day but hold on to the good things I see happening. See the good kids getting better. Families reunited. I'm a part of the solution..."

3. Flexibility

"Main reason is flexibility…agency philosophy is that workers come first."

"They allow me to flex my schedule around my kids. Supervisors are always available to talk."

" I had a death in my family and the agency gave me time off."

" My agency is understanding. Not only do they understand that family is important or kids I serve but also to my family. They understand that I need to go home early because my child has a birthday."

Work/Life Balance

"The most important step is the first step--- acknowledging that one cannot build a learning organization on a foundation of broken homes and strained personal relationships." (Senge, 1990)

"Rarely is love discussed or considered from a management/leadership point of view, and yet love incorporates the ideas of humanity, spirituality, inspiration, communication, passion and intimacy." (Love@Work, 2006)

4. Supervision

The **quality of supervision** and the positive nature of one's relationships within the agency.

"The agency really cares about me; I'm more than just an employee."

"The environment is like a family setting."

"Taking the time to point out my strengths, helping me learn how I can use them more effectively and meeting with me regularly."

Survey
(100 supervisors and 67 program managers)

What are the most important qualities in a supervisor?

1. Good judgment and decision-making
2. Ethical and credible
3. Establishes rapport
4. Understands role
5. Recognizes and supports staff

National Child Welfare Workforce Institute Traineeships

- 310 students (163 MSW/147 BSW)
- "It makes a big difference when you have a supervisor who is passionate about the work. Then it kind of rubs off on you and gives you insight into being passionate about what you are doing."
- "People that are working in my unit are passionate and engaged in the work but they are tired and overworked."
- "I am not burned out but sometimes I get a hopeless feeling about the administrative part."

What is the role of money?

Important but not a top four factor.

If there is sufficient funds to make a living, not a predominant issue.

Still an issue:

"Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, **against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages**, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts." Malachi 3:5

Promoting Retention

Focus on Supervisors

1. Initial Training
2. Ongoing Training
3. Mentorships
4. Continuing Education

Promoting Retention

Build a positive climate and construct an affirming work environment.

1. Design Teams
2. Worker Liaison Groups
3. Reward and Recognition Program
4. Social committee/newsletter
5. Social Work internships

Promoting Retention

Assure physical safety and address other insecurities that workers may be experiencing.

Promoting Retention

Creatively address workload and work pressure.

. Addressing secondary trauma

. Responsive supervision

. Agency flexibility

. Training/Training Academies

. Workload size adjustments

How to start a positive change process?

1. Create a sense of importance and urgency.
2. Committed and sustained leadership.
3. Begin at the top and with the new folks.
4. Process matters.
5. Establish a long-term strategy.
6. Build in time to plan and think (15%).
7. Identifiable & measurable progress over time.
8. Communicate and communicate.

(GAO, 2005)

The Crucial Role of Leadership

"Leadership is an intangible quality with no clear definition. That's probably a good thing, because if the people who are being led knew the definition, they would hunt down their leaders and kill them." (Scott Adams)

"Leadership is the capacity to guide others to places they have never been before…to make a significant difference." (Kouzes and Posner)

"They are ambitious first and foremost for the cause, the movement, the mission, the work---not themselves…paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will" (Good to Great)

Integrity

"Leadership is a combination of strategy and character. If you must be without one; be without strategy." (Norman Schwarzkopf)

Essential Qualities of Leadership

1. Strong commitment to the mission.
2. A sense of vision and the bigger picture.
3. Open to a variety of viewpoints.
4. Committed to change.
5. Able to set direction.
6. Align, motivate and mobilize people.
   The greater the stress an organization is facing the more important a leader's "soft skills" become.

Workers

Obey/subject to authority (Romans 13; Hebrews 13)

Rendering service with good will, respect and a sincere heart (Ephesians 6; Colossians 3, 2 Tim. 6)

Bosses

1. Pay fair wages (Malachi 3);
2. Avoid threatening; serve as to the Lord (Ephesians 6)
3. Whoever would be great among you must be your servant (Matthew 20)

Social Principles

- Dignity and worth of all people created in the image of God and are equally valuable;
- "Do unto others whatever you would like them to do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 7:12
- The family/community of all people;
- Seeking justice, love and mercy;
- Responsibility of economic systems and governments.

Biblical Principle: We need a Sense of Purpose and Vision

"Where there is no vision, the people perish…"
Proverbs 29:18

"Work has dignity because it is something that God does and because we do it in God's place…we were built for work and the dignity it gives us as human beings." Timothy Keller, 2012

Accomplishment

- To God be the glory! "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13)
- To the Team be the glory! Acknowledge the crucial role of others;
- Understand and function in our place; ("For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ…" Romans 12:4)

Biblical Principle: Servant Leadership

1. Altruistic
2. Empowerment
3. Humility
4. Genuine Love
5. Customer Service Orientation
6. Cultivating Trust
7. Inspired Vision

Promoting Resiliency

1. Establish and communicate a powerful sense of mission an making a difference that everyone knows and that is reaffirmed by the organization.
2. Encourage one another by identifying and proclaiming accomplishments.
3. Develop a flexible and responsive work place.
4. Provide growth-promoting, supportive supervision.

Conclusion

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9

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