

Theme 5:

Human Resource Development & Support

According to the Community Supports for Wraparound Inventory, human resource development and support in wraparound is achieved when *the policy and funding context supports wraparound staff and partner agency staff to work in a manner that allows full implementation of the wraparound model.*

Wraparound projects require a thoughtful and deliberate approach to building staff and personnel capacity. Effective human resource development requires both organizational alignment and individual accountability to ensure effective operations. This section provides information on how stakeholders involved in the wraparound effort can achieve such alignment and effective operations.

1. What represents adequate staffing in a wraparound project?

The first concern that leadership in a wraparound project should consider is the allocation of staff resources. Certain functions must be carried

out within wraparound and it is important that the administrator develop job

descriptions and program plans that reflect these key functions. Some of the more common functions for which human resource capacity must be developed are listed below. For each of these staff roles, links to relevant chapters in the Resource Guide to Wraparound are provided.

» **Wraparound facilitator or care coordinator**

- + See “Phases and Activities of the Wraparound Process: Building Agreement About a Practice Model” (Chapter 4a.1) and
- + “The Phases of Wraparound: Real Life & Teams” (Chapter 4a.2)

» **Wraparound family support partner**

- + See “Application of the Ten Principles of the Wraparound Process to the Role of Family Support Partners on Wraparound Teams” (Chapter 4b.1) and
- + “How Family Partners Contribute to the Phases and Activities in the Wraparound Process” (Chapter 4b.2) and
- + “Family Partners and the Wraparound Process” (Chapter 4b.3)

» **Youth advocates**

- + See “Youth Engagement, Empowerment, and Participation in Wraparound” (Chapter 4c.1) and
- + “Youth Advocates: What They Do and Why Your Wraparound Program Should Hire One” (Chapter 4c.2) and
- + “Youth Participation in Wraparound Team Planning: Why and How” (Chapter 4c.3)

» **Direct support services**

- + See “Direct Support Services in Wraparound” (Chapter 4d.1)

» **Wraparound clinicians**

- + See “The Role of the Clinician Employed in a Wraparound Program” (Chapter 4d.2)

» **Wraparound supervisors**

- + See “Wraparound Supervision and Management” (Chapter 5c.6) and
- + “Supporting Workforce Development: Lessons Learned from Wraparound Milwaukee” (Chapter 5c.4)

2. What are key areas to consider in building human resource development and support?

» **Adequate support to staff.** Once key functions have been outlined, project leaders should predict the necessary staff time to ensure that these key functions are provided with enough resources. This means that staff must be afforded enough time for task completion and case load sizes must be appropriate to the job expectations. *Simply adding wraparound duties to an existing job description or staff role is not sufficient.* One strategy for ensuring adequate staffing patterns



is workload management, in which supervisors monitor and attend to workload issues to ensure adequate time for key functions. Another strategy is resource development, in which managers ensure that staff have easy access to necessary tools and processes to meet the needs of families in a timely fashion. Another way to increase staff persons’ capacity to get the work done is to ensure that organizational artifacts (job descriptions, hiring processes and program statements) reflect a commitment to wraparound principles and practices. Finally, compensation to staff in key wraparound roles (e.g., facilitators and family partners) must reflect their value and encourage staff retention and commitment.

» **A comprehensive performance system.** Training and supervision should be based on clearly defined expectations and focused on performance as it relates to these expectations. Training and supervision should be supported by objective data gathered routinely throughout wraparound implementation. This information should also be used in professional development efforts that include

individual training plans. The project should avoid sending people to training as a reaction to employee situations, and instead develop a comprehensive and deliberate training strategy with each employee. This deliberate training strategy should be focused on the goal of creating a competent work force that not only knows what to do and how to do it, but also can articulate why certain tasks in wraparound should be completed. Though understanding the basic procedures of wraparound is important, especially for new staff, adopting a “know why” approach creates a workforce that can individualize the wraparound process to fit with each family rather than simply focusing on the steps of wraparound. “Know-why” wraparound practitioners come to understand that the family is always more important than the practice model.

- » **Family involvement.** Young people and families should be incorporated in human resource development strategies. This is done by ensuring that families are incorporated in all phases of hiring, training, and supervising for effectiveness. Examples might include families sitting in on hiring interviews, families being surveyed regularly to solicit their feedback on employee performance, employing young people and families as core trainers for newly hired staff, and creating a youth/family-led staff recognition committee that identifies staff for exemplary practice.

3. What are some of the key human resource development cautions and pitfalls?

Human resource development and support in wraparound is not an easy task. Professionally trained staff often must take some time unlearning one set of concepts in order to relearn some other wraparound principles. Many projects will hire family members with direct system experience to increase the capacity of the project to connect with families being served. This may result in a wide range of expectations, skills and perspectives among staff members requiring wraparound leadership to actively manage conflict. While this can be managed on an ad hoc basis during early wraparound implementation, leaders should plan for and anticipate the following challenges as they implement wraparound:

- » **Providing unstructured supervision.** Reactive supervision (e.g., the “crisis of the week” approach) done in a vacuum with little or no data (e.g., about staff persons’ overall performance, youth and families’ strengths and needs, and/or wraparound plan development and implementation) often results in reactive

wraparound responses. This can then lead to staff confusion as they begin reacting rather than planning and organizing with families.



» **Promoting good practitioners without supporting them to become good supervisors.** Frequently, projects will promote good practitioners without helping them learn how to supervise. Facilitating a wraparound process is different than supervising people paid to work with families. Projects should be prepared to articulate their supervisory theory and ensure that newly appointed supervisors get an opportunity to learn management skills.

» **Establishing the supervisor as expert practitioner.** A supervisor that tends to focus on too much detail will often function as an expert practitioner who makes decisions about real families

during private consultations with their staff. While that supervisor may be quite skilled, it is unfair to both families and staff for the supervisor to function in this way. Families won't have the benefit of being able to speak directly to the person who is making the decisions, and must rely on the staff person as an intermediary. Staff in this situation may have difficulty learning new skills since the project functions by having staff come to the supervisor who is seen as the expert who answers questions and solves problems for staff.

- » **Getting stuck in the detail trap.** The more that is written about wraparound, the more detail is recorded. The power of wraparound is not in its discrete steps but instead it is the connection between the steps of phases that makes the difference. As a result, supervisors should be concerned that they do not overly focus on component steps, but rather on the deeper ideas of wraparound, such as always maintaining a strengths perspective, basing plans on family needs, and providing organized and holistic support to the family. The supervisor should be focused on the coherent whole and making sure the ideas behind wraparound are

carried out rather than focusing on any one technique.

- » **Failing to separate values from skills.** Employees who are able to articulate the wraparound values are not necessarily skilled at delivering wraparound. Supervisors should be able to articulate a minimal skill set that defines and describes behaviors. Next, supervisors should set up systems that allow them to monitor whether those behaviors are being deployed regularly within the wraparound project. In some situations with some families, wraparound staff will need to follow an unexpected course. In such situations, performance monitoring systems should allow staff to demonstrate skills while also adapting their skills to the needs of each individual family. As described above, good wraparound projects create the ability for staff to operate reliably rather than seeking uniformity of staff practice.

4. What is the “take-home” message?

Human resource needs will change over time as a wraparound project grows. Initial work in this area involves anticipating necessary programmatic functions, aligning staff roles to ensure delivery of those functions, creating structures that allow those functions to be delivered with high quality and maximum efficiency, and establishing performance baselines to guide expectations and supervision. Over time, such data can support adjustments in staffing patterns, staff assignments, and methods of training and supervision that are employed in order to continually improve wraparound program operations, and the support that is provided to youth and families.