



Working with the Hard to Serve

Developing Executive Skills with
TANF Participants to Set and
Achieve Goals

TANF Directors Meeting

July 14, 2016

Agenda

How do you define the Hard to Serve?

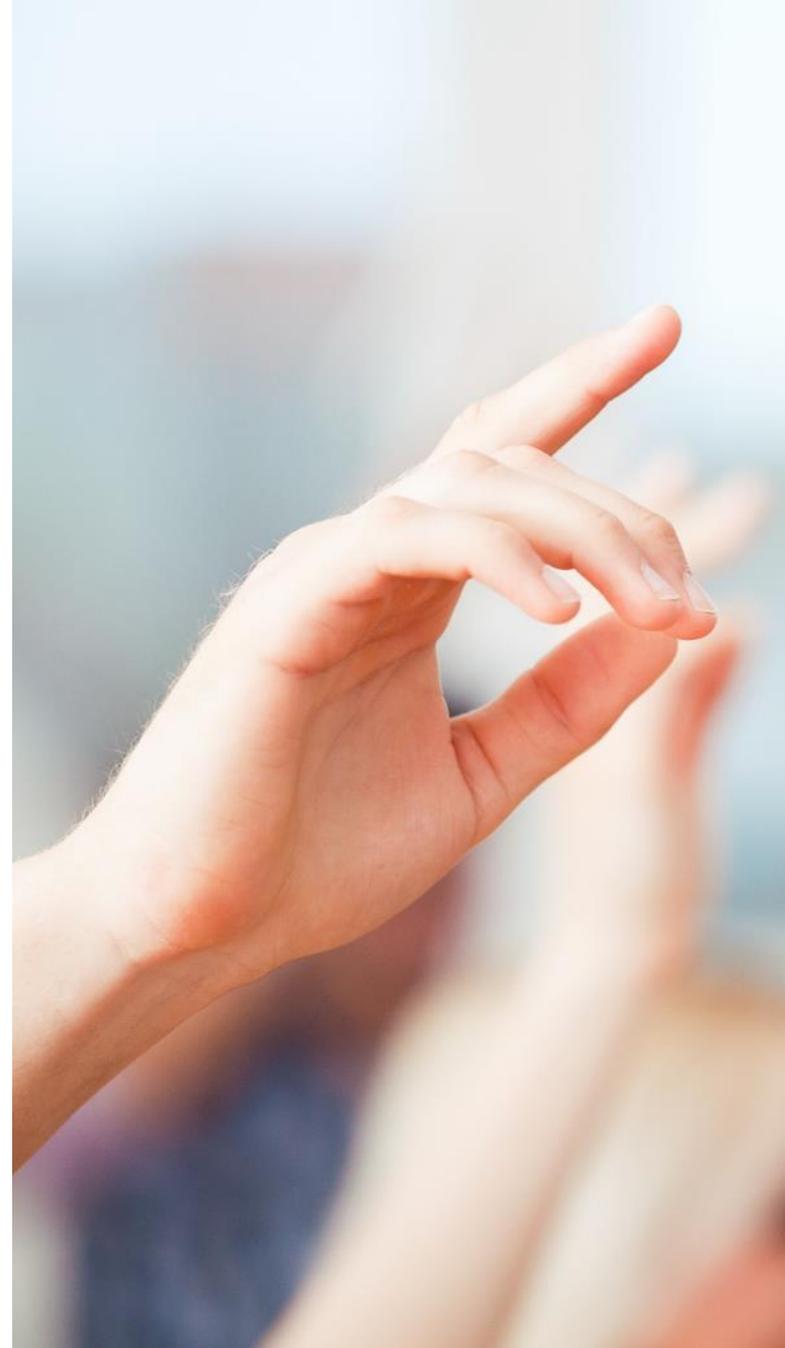
What are Executive Skills?

Can understanding Executive Skills improve TANF Programs?

Ramsey County Case Study

Discussion

Contacts



How do you define the Hard to Serve?

Many definitions, even more challenges

“...Parents with lack of work experience or needed life skills development.”

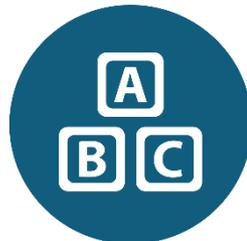
— *RFP on the street in Norfolk, VA*

Many definitions, even more challenges

Who should be considered hard to place? ... It should include a history of alcohol, drug abuse, criminal record or ongoing (criminal or civil) legal entanglements, domestic violence or involvement with the child welfare system, physical or mental disabilities or chronic health problems, developmental or learning disabilities, language barriers, protracted caretaker responsibilities both for chronic health problems (asthma is particularly prevalent in low income populations), or behavioral problems of children, or other incapacities of family members.

— *Welfare Information Network, 1998*
<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED445205.pdf>

How do you define Hard to Serve?



Or do you focus on the strengths?

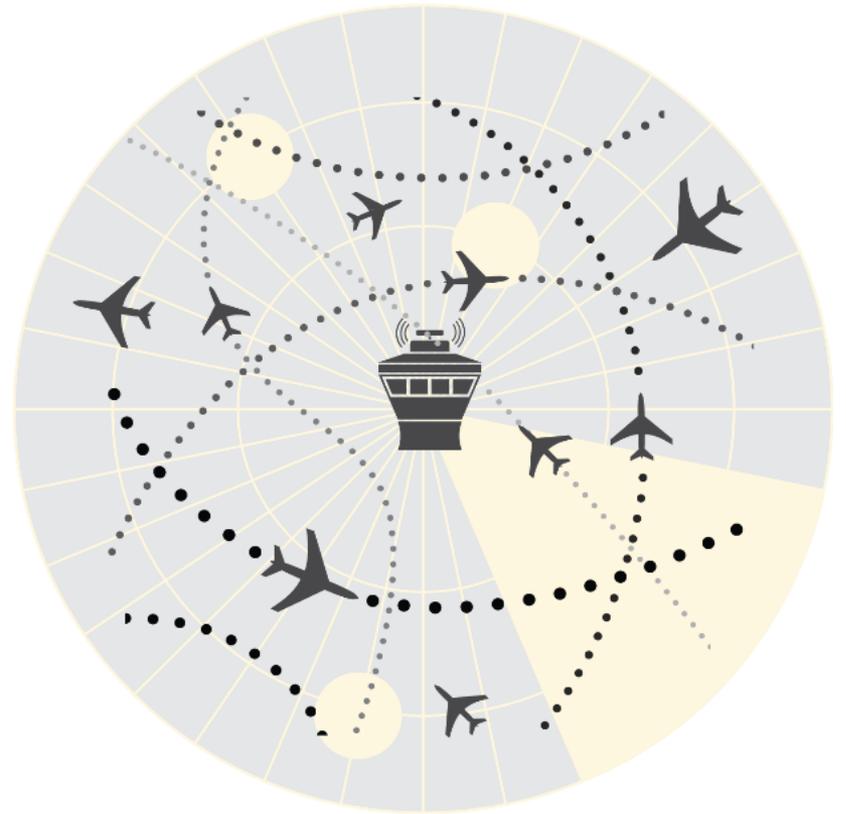


What are Executive Skills?

What is Executive Function?

Air Traffic Controller of the Brain

- The frontal lobe of the brain organizes other brain functions. It acts as the “executive” to the overall brain functioning.
- Executive function impacts people’s ability to succeed in the workforce, in educational attainment and in personal relationships.



Components of Executive Function



Attention Shifting/Flexibility

“capacity to nimbly switch gears and adjust to changed demands, priorities or perspectives.”



Working Memory

“capacity to hold and manipulate information in our heads over short periods of time”



Inhibitory Control

the ability to “filter our thoughts and impulses so we can resist temptations, distractions and habits and to pause and think before we act”

*National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, National Forum on Early Childhood Policy and Programs – Building the Brain’s “Air Traffic Control” System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function”

Executive Function Skills and Capacities

“Executive functions underlie **complex behaviors** such as making decisions to attain pre-determined goals, applying past learning to novel contexts, regulating behavior, solving novel problems, interacting in social environments, and orienting to the future”. (Carlock, 2011)

- **Goal** Directed Behaviors
 - **Organizational** Abilities
 - **Time Management** Activities
 - Strategic, Purposeful, Analytic and Critical **Thinking**
 - **Problem** Solving
 - **Decision** Making
- (<http://understandingexecutivefunctioning.blogspot.com/p/what-are-executive-functions.html>)

Components of Executive Function



Attention Shifting

Many thanks to for permission to use these next few slides. Stephen Chen, a researcher from University of California, San Francisco and now Wellesley College

Components of Executive Function



Attention Shifting



Working Memory

Components of Executive Function



Attention Shifting



Working Memory

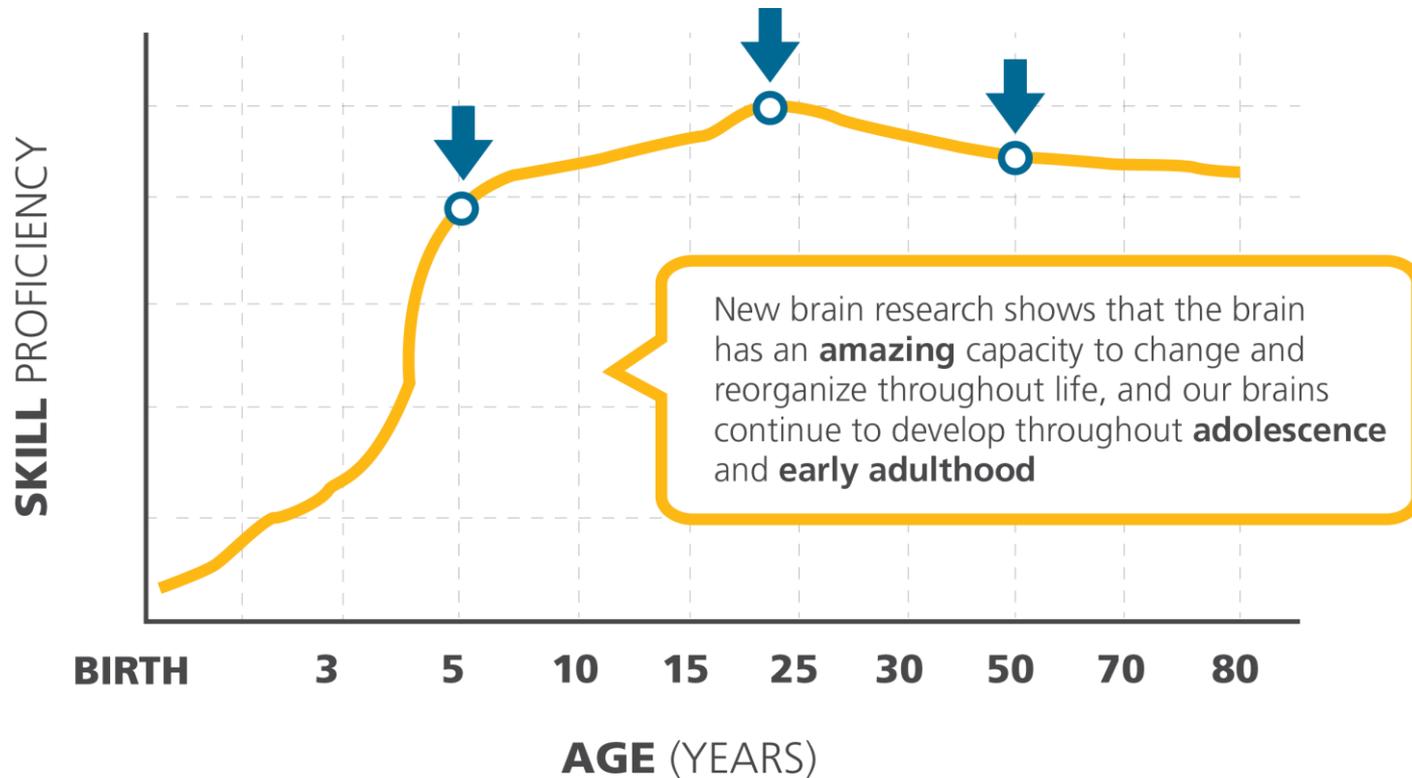


Inhibitory Control





Brain Development: Executive Function



| Weintraub, et al., (2011)
| Center on the Developing Child-Harvard University

It's Not Too Late



Why Might EF be Impacted?

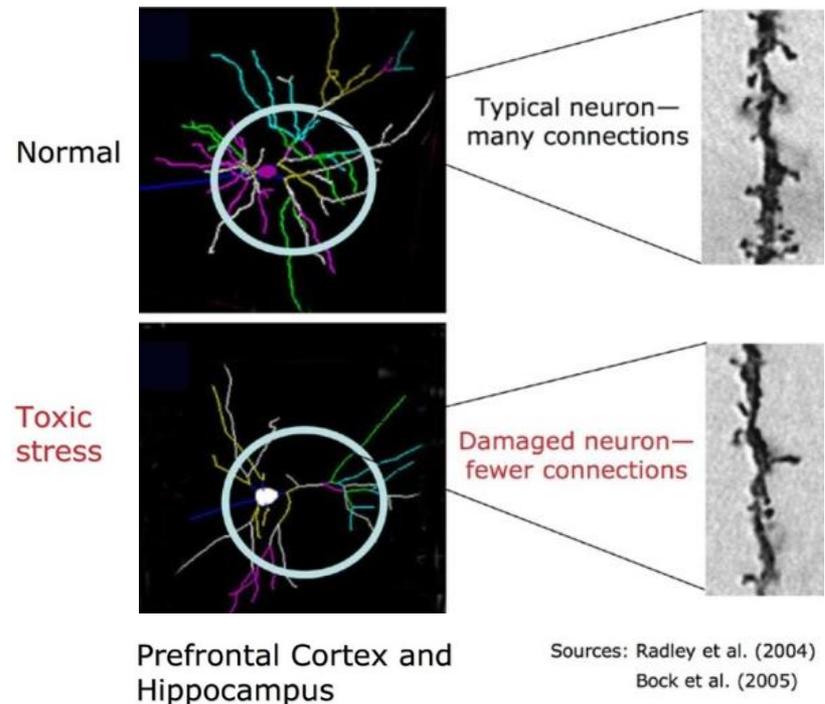
The Science of Toxic Stress and Trauma

Healthy brain development can be derailed by excessive or prolonged activation of stress response systems in the brain. This can impact:

- Behavior: How individuals understand and respond to the environment
- Development of successful relationships



Persistent Stress Changes Brain Architecture



Understanding Executive Skills

We all have strengths and weaknesses

- Response Inhibition
- Organization
- Working Memory
- Time Management
- Emotional Control
- Goal-Direct Persistence
- Task Initiation
- Flexibility
- Sustained Attention
- Metacognition
- Planning/Prioritization
- Stress Tolerance

From Dick Guare (May 2014)

Discussion:

Why do executive skills matter when talking about the Hard to Serve?

Can understanding Executive Skills
improve TANF Programs?

YES

Aesthetics Matter

Focusing on the Environment, Processes and Communication

Focusing on customer environment, processes and communication



Photo of RI DHS office design by (Add)ventures from the *In-Office Observation Report & Concept Test Plan, July 3, 2014*

Ramsey County Case Study

Integrating Coaching and Lifelong Learning into TANF Case Management

Ramsey County Workforce Services Vision:

Provide opportunities for **improved employment** and **family stability**

Dreams and hopes of the participant have a larger role in **driving goal setting, action planning** and **achievement**

A dream written down with a **date** becomes a goal.
A goal broken down into **steps** becomes a plan.
A plan backed by **action** makes your dreams come true.

Greg S Reid

Life Long Learning Initiative, Enhanced Coaching

- Create family centered system that helps families engage and stay engaged to get education, find and sustain employment, reduce isolation and create prosperous communities
- Shift power from the system to the family, participant has power to create own plans and goals, system provides supports and incentives to do so. Family and Counselor become partners and share accountability
- Service delivery at home, community sites and in the offices
- Have 2-4 major evidence based or evidence informed interventions that work for multiple families
- Invest funds based on a need of families and level of intervention

Ramsey County MFIP/DWP Systems Change

Essential Skills

Gap Tool

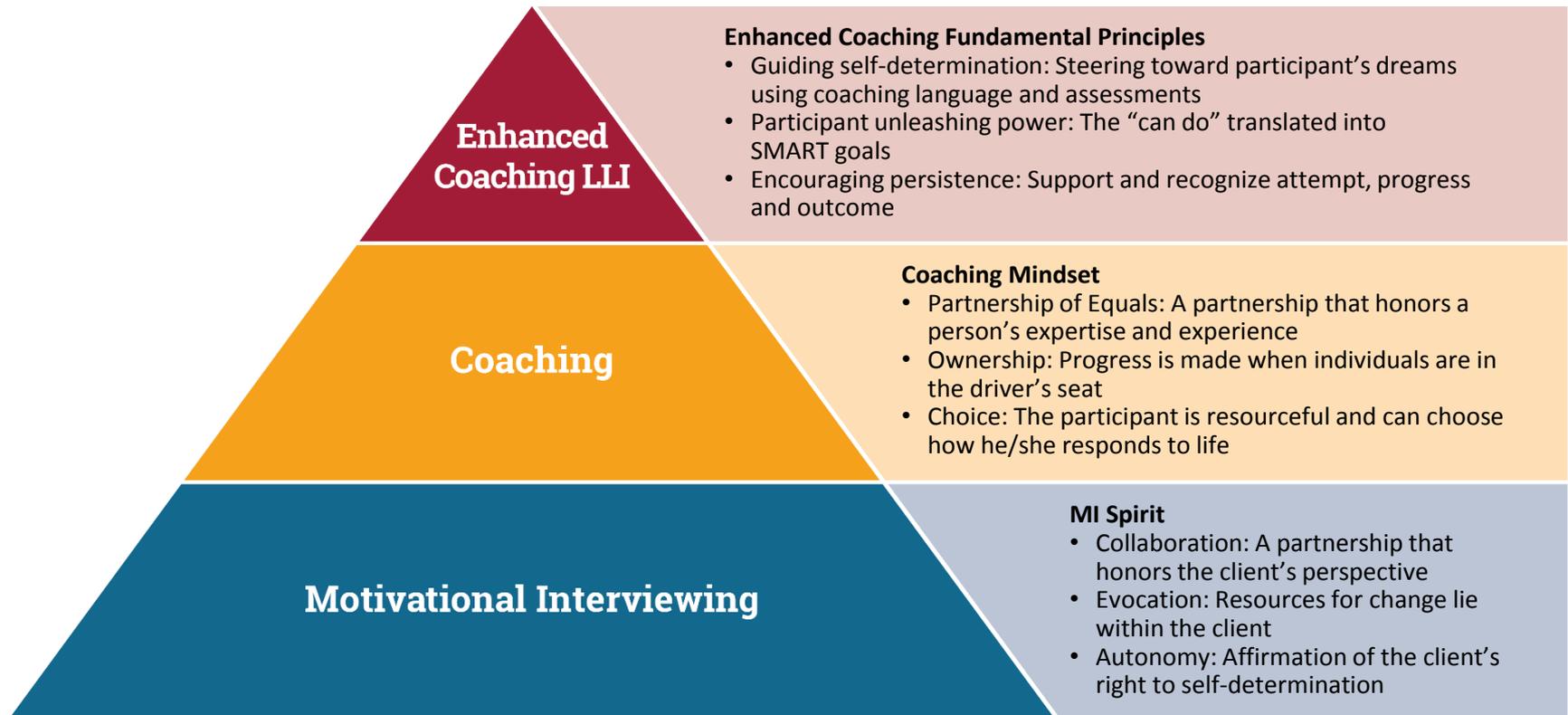
Life Long Learning

**My Bridge
of Strength**

Coaching

**Motivational
Interviewing**

Building upon the foundation



Mindset Shift

From: Case Management Model

Conducting an ES Overview to describe policy, procedure, and rules/regulations

Developing employment plans based on a pre-chosen menu of options and tools dictated by system outcomes (Work Participation Rate) not client outcomes

Utilizing a “one size fits all” approach to a family’s self-sufficiency

Maintaining a minimum of monthly contact to collect required documentation

To: Coaching Model

Utilizing ES Orientation to build relationship, understand the client’s past/present/future, and set the stage for a more supportive and collaborative relationship

Developing SMART goals based on our client’s own self-identified, relevant goals and current situation

Identifying each individual’s strengths and challenges by utilizing My Bridge of Strength, Executive Skills Questionnaire (and other tools) to encourage small steps/progress and considering a “whole family” approach

Engaging our families with meaningful, supportive appointments that encourage and foster the established partnership; mutual accountability in the partnership; looking at the relationship differently; the relationship matters as much as the policies; counselor must understand where the client has been, where they are, and where they want to go; the role/skills/approach of the counselor matters

PCG Human Services Coaching Framework™ adapted for Ramsey



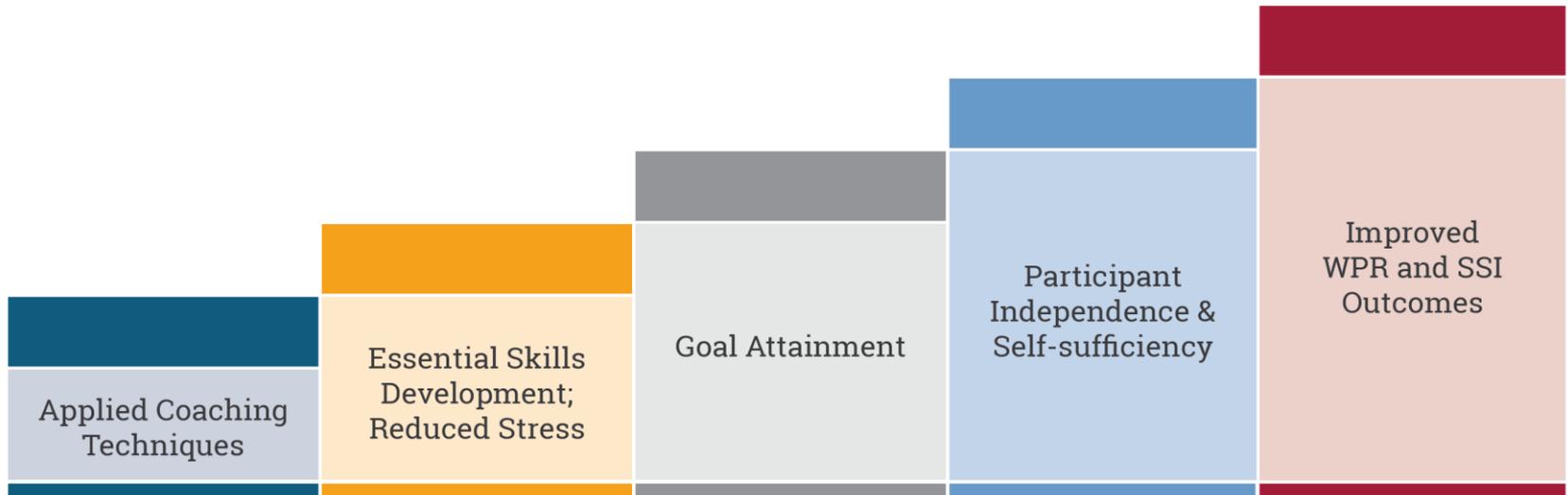
Tony Stoltzfus

Motivational Interviewing and Coaching



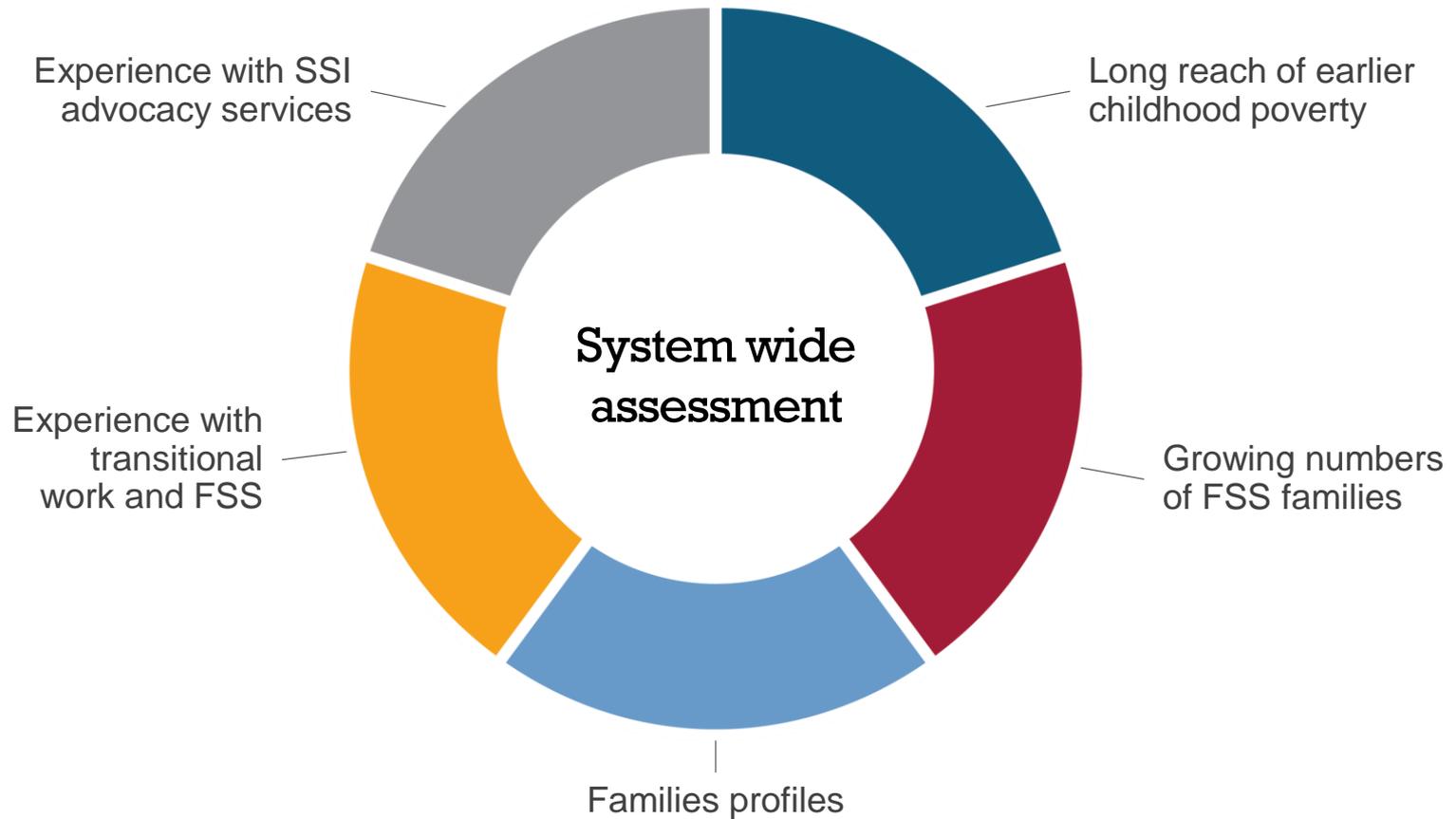
These two similar yet different techniques can be used together to compliment one another

Ramsey County Service Model



Coaching helps participants cope with stress by introducing tools that build the essential skills needed to manage crisis and succeed in the workplace.

Why Ramsey County Selected Coaching



Why Ramsey County Selected Coaching

Rules and Regulations		Impact
Process		Outcomes
Staff Expertise		Participant Expertise
Support Disability		Support Ability
One Size Fitsall		Individuality & Choice

Life Long Learning in practice

- Setting overall System Goal and Vision
- Training full System
- Personalized Services and Intervention
- Leading and intervening
- Intervention aligned with the functional level
- Creating of new tool, Goal Action Plan and My Bridge of Strength

- Use of Motivational Interviewing
- MI coaching circles
- Investing in staff development
- Investing in participants, education
- Incentives
- Redesign of services in Resource Centers
- Placement and Retention units
- Right to choose

Outcomes: What does Ramsey measure?

Major message:

Please work with your families, put them into actives that matter to them based on their motivation and need, enter information into WF1, enter hours.

Key Outcomes:

Engagement, Education, Employment, and Employment Retention

All drives towards Self Support Index, outcome based measure.

WPR is being watched but not a driver of the results based/outcome based system.

Belief:

If you do what participants wants and needs, have solid Employment Plans, update WF1 with activities that matter, track hours, then WPR and SSI follow.

PCG and Ramsey County WFS Partnership

- Created based on the system need
- Based on listening and hearing each other
- Communication and ongoing phone calls
- Detail project management
- Includes feedback from staff and families, focus groups
- Working towards Ramsey County WFS vision and goals
- Keep interests of the families in the center
- Not top down heavy, level approach
- Everything is based on the RC WFS needs
- Site visits to conduct assessment

Coaching Curriculum

Introductory Coaching Series

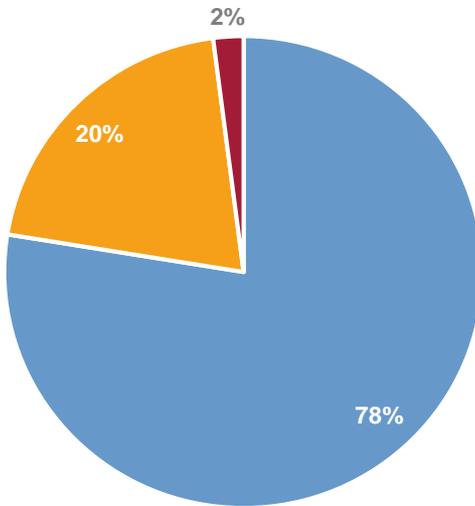
- All 130 Employees trained
- 25 employees in each session
- Five three hour sessions

Intermediate Coaching Training

- 90 Employment Services staff and managers, 25 employees in each session
- Four cohorts, three sessions each, each session 2-3 hours

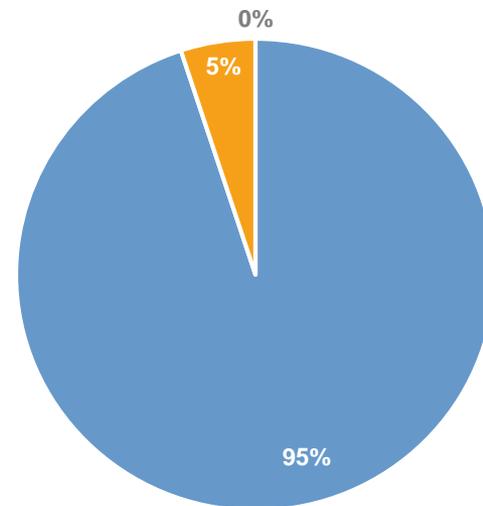
The Results

Introductory Training:
I feel more inspired to help participants succeed.



■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

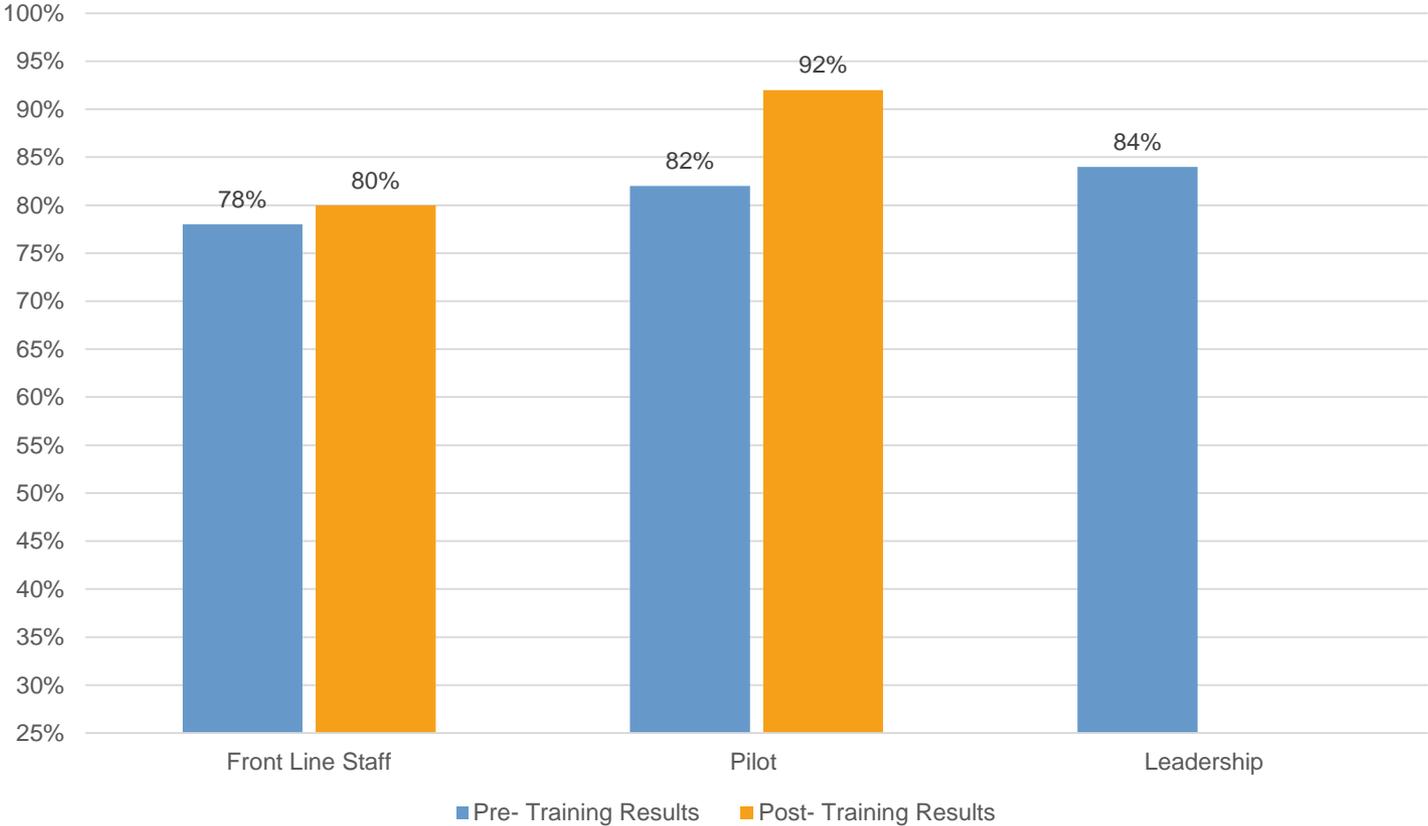
Intermediate Training:
I know how I will apply concepts from this training to my job.



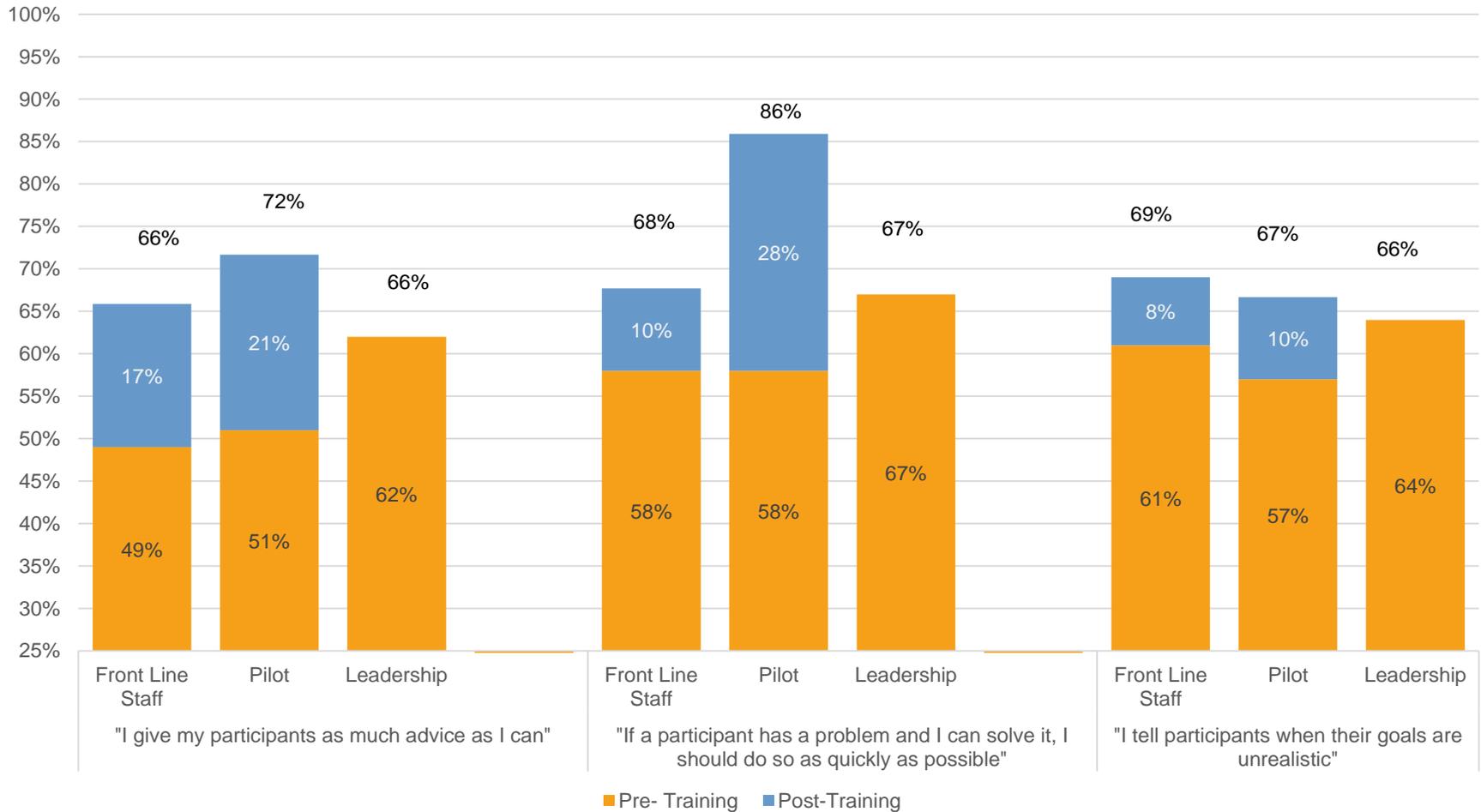
■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree

Changing Mindsets

Impact of Coaching Trainings on Mindset Survey Scores



Changes in Directive Mindsets due to Coaching Training



Training isn't enough

Sustainability

- Ongoing Monthly Coaching Session
- Monthly Coaching Tips for Staff and Supervisors
- Combined Motivational Interview and Coaching
- Supports **goal setting framework**

Monthly Tips keep Coaching alive



February 2016 Coaching Tip of the Month for Staff

Identifying and Managing Workplace Stress

Let's face it – working in social services can be emotionally draining. More than almost any other profession, it is important that we can identify and manage our own stress.

When we are stressed we are less patient and empathetic, and we are more likely to fall into old habits that do not align with coaching. For example, we may be more likely to tell a participant what to do, respond emotionally when participants are late or rude, or give unsolicited and unwanted advice. Reducing stress isn't just good for our bodies, minds and overall happiness, it makes us better at our jobs and better coaches.

This February, try intentionally incorporating new habits that reduce your work-related stress. Try one of the tips below, or reflect on what else would make a big impact for you. Consider making a stress reduction SMART Goal with your co-workers or friends and encourage each other to stay on track.



Move

Sweat out the stress! Go for a short walk with a coworker, set an alarm reminding you to stand and stretch, or commit to taking the stairs every day.



Prioritize

Rome wasn't built in a day. Start the day with your most daunting tasks, create "planning time", and practice saying "no" when possible.



Relax

Feel yourself getting overwhelmed or frustrated? Listen to your favorite song or look at a picture that makes you happy. Schedule tough participants right before lunch, so you can decompress before your next meeting.



Connect

Make time during the work day, or after, to connect with the people around you. (Research shows this reduces stress a lot!) Call an old friend on your drive home, take time to let coworkers know you appreciate them.

Additional Resources:

- Excellent tools and resources from University of Buffalo School of Social Work: <https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html>
- Clear, simple steps to reduce workplace stress: <http://www.spa.org/helpcenter/work-stress.aspx>
- Practical resource and quick read: <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2011/07/11/10-practical-ways-to-handle-stress/>



February 2016 Coaching Tips for Supervisors

Identifying and Managing Workplace Stress

As a Supervisor, you have the influence and power to positively impact many lives. Being a Supervisor is not easy – your responsibility is not just ensuring that your direct reports are happy and productive. You must also be mindful of your own workplace happiness and productivity. That is quite a bit of responsibility, which can be extremely stressful!

When you, as a Supervisor, are stressed, your ability to successfully coach staff can be significantly impeded. Stress causes the brain and body to go into "fight or flight" mode. Either of these may be inappropriate for the given situation and result in displaying behavior that is not characteristic of coaching (e.g. listening passively, responding emotionally, and controlling instead of collaborating). To combat stress, you must first be able to recognize its signs, then know the action to take to manage it. This is important for your physical, mental, and emotional well-being and will allow you to be more effective in all areas of your life. *Essentially, you will be a better coach!*

This February, pay attention to the signs of stress and **be intentional** about incorporating new habits that reduce your work-related stress. Use the tips below to help you on your journey to a life less stressed.



Stop

Slow down and pay attention to what your body is saying. Do you feel yourself getting overwhelmed or frustrated?

Sign Scorecard

Physical	Mental	Emotional
• Headaches	• Loss of concentration	• Low moods
• Fatigue	• Poor judgment	• Irritability
• Nausea	• Negative thoughts	• Depression
• Pounding heart	• Lack of interest	• Anxiety
• Sleeplessness		• Anger



Look

Pay attention and observe how you interact with others. Are you distant or withdrawn? Are you more judgmental than usual? Are you more sensitive about what people say or do?



Listen

Listen to your conversation. Are your words filled with frustration? Do you feel like you are complaining a lot? Are you frequently using words like "can't," "won't," "tired," "stressed," "exhausted," and "fed up"?



Act

Develop a concrete plan to reduce and better manage stress:

- **Set SMART goals:** Be honest about what you can accomplish.
- **Take breaks:** A change of environment can help you recharge.
- **Care for your body:** Get ample sleep, maintain a well-balanced diet, and exercise. All exercise increases endorphins, which promote positive feelings.
- **Have fun:** Laugh, play, and smile. Don't sweat the insignificant stuff!

Additional Resources:

- **Reducing Workplace Stress: A Guide for Managers**
http://www.deakin.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/228652/managers-guide2.pdf

Discussion

Designing EF informed programs

- What are your common touch points with clients?
- What positions could have the most impact if they infused EF concepts into their work?
- Does your physical space support the concepts of EF?
- What changes to your workflow could reduce cognitive load and improve outcomes?



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