



We will begin
shortly.

**Integrating Executive Functioning Principles, and Soft Skills
Activities, and Case Management Coaching into TANF work
programs in order to Improve Economic Success for TANF
Recipients**

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If your computer speaker is not available, please use the Q&A function to state this then you will receive additional call-in information.

OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

Welcome!

- **Lisa Washington-Thomas, Chief, Self-Sufficiency/Technical Assistance Branch, Office of Family Assistance**
- **James Butler, Family Assistance Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance**
- **Damon Waters, Family Assistance Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance**

Presenters

- **Donna Pavetti**, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities
- **Beth Babcock**, Crittenton Women's Union
- **Kate Probert**, Minnesota Family Investment Programs/Diversionsary Work Programs-Employment Services
- **Boyd Brown**, Ramsey County Easter Seals

Executive Function Skills:

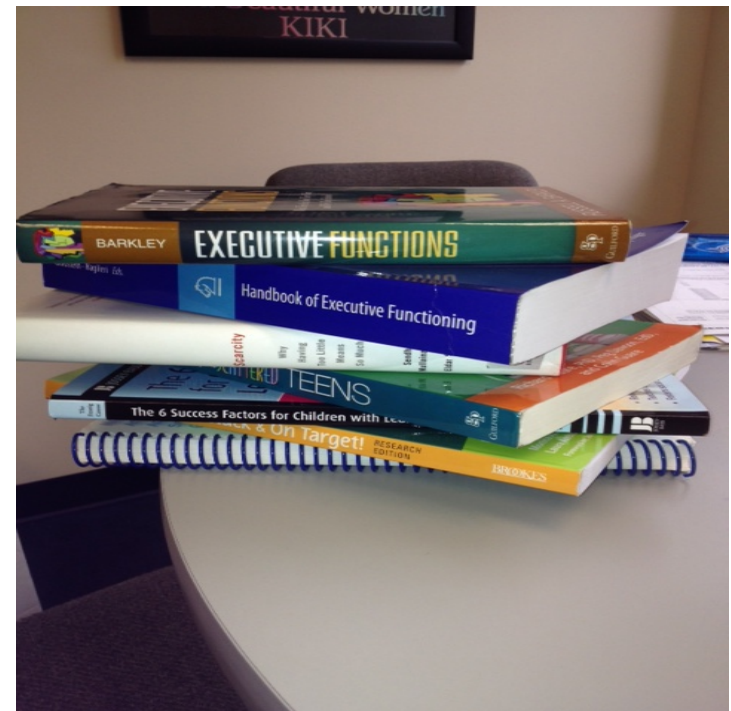
A New Frontier for Workforce and Other Human Service Programs That Aim to Build Adult Capabilities

By LaDonna Pavetti
Vice President for Family
Income Support

February 4, 2015

The Challenge

- **Can we use Executive Function concepts and principles to improve the effectiveness of TANF employment programs?**
 - Why are we asking the question?
 - What are executive function skills and why do they matter?
 - What would characterize an executive-function informed TANF employment program?

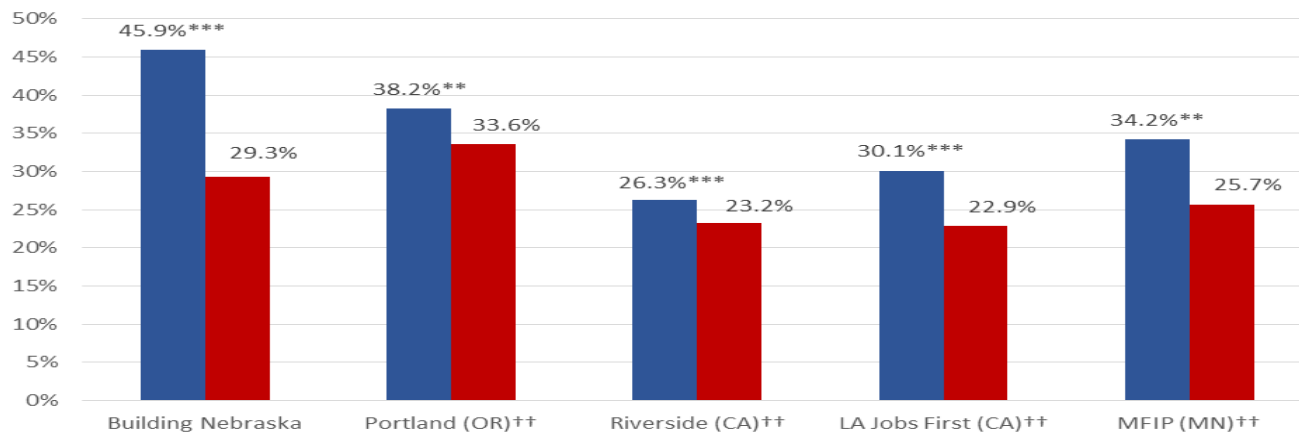


Why the Interest in Executive Function Skills for Adults?

- Modest success, even in the most effective employment programs
- Declining employment among single mothers with high school education or less for most of the last 10 years
- Cash assistance provided to very few families
- Evidence that if we teach “life skills” we can do better
- Two-generation concerns: need to invest in adults to see big improvements in outcomes for kids

Evidence that moving in new directions could yield positive results

Impacts of Select Employment Programs on Stable Employment



Note: */**/** Significant different from zero at the .10/.05/.01 level, two tailed test

[†] Employed 12 consecutive months

^{††} Employed 4 consecutive quarters

■ Treatment ■ Control

Impetus for applying executive function principles to programs for disadvantaged **adults** comes out of a concern for improving outcomes for children

- **Theory of Change Supporting A Focus on Adults**

(Frontiers of Innovation, Harvard Center on the Developing Child)

- Protecting children from the impacts of toxic stress requires **selective skill building**—not simply the provision of information and support—**for the adults who care for them**;
- Interventions that improve the caregiving environment by **strengthening the executive function and self-regulation skills** will also enhance their employability, thereby providing an opportunity to augment child outcomes by strengthening the economic and social stability of the family; and
- Community-based initiatives and **broad-based, systems approaches** are likely to be more effective in promoting healthy development and reducing intergenerational disparities if they focus explicitly on strengthening neighborhood-level resources and capacities that buffer young children from the adverse impacts of toxic stress.

Why Executive Function Skills Matter

Executive Function skills are critical for:

- Job success – poor executive functions lead to poor productivity and difficulty finding and keeping a job (Prince et al. 2007)
- Cognitive, social, and psychological development
- Success in school and in life
- For mental and physical health

What are Executive Function Skills?

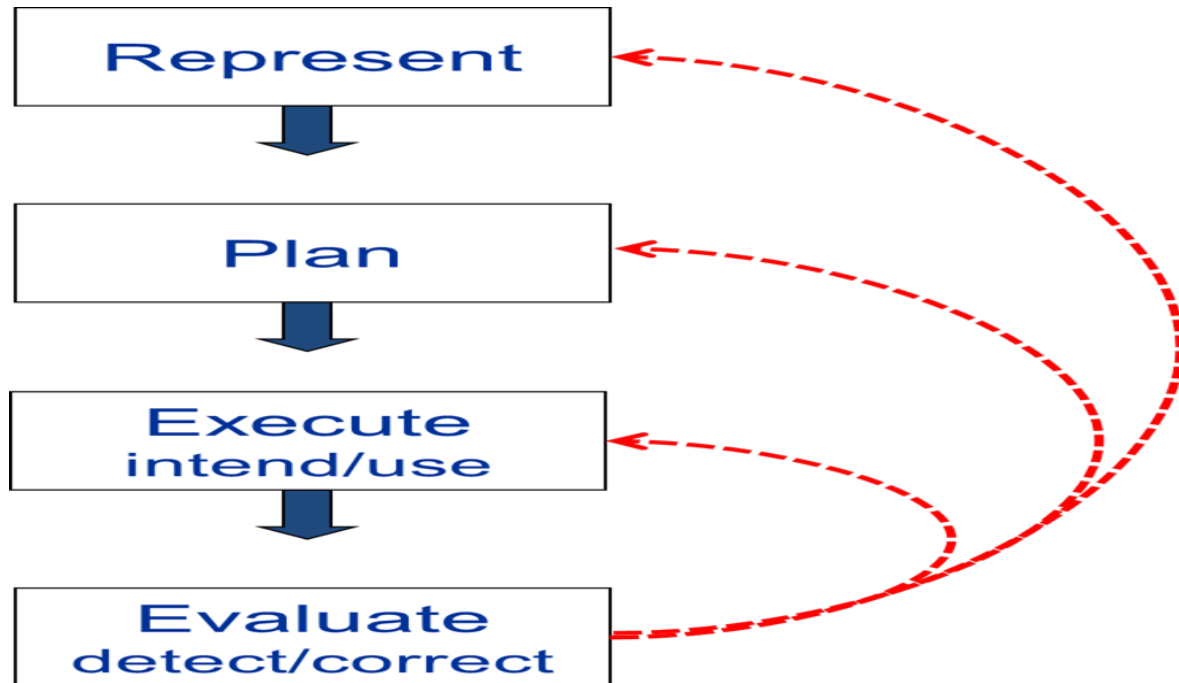
Short definition: The conscious control of what we think and do; neurocognitive processes involved in goal-directed behavior (Phil D. Zelazo, Ph.D., Neuroscientist, University of Minnesota)

Useful to think of executive function as having two dimensions:

- **Process dimension:** The steps we go through to achieve a goal
- **Skill dimension:** The skills we draw on at each stage of the process in order to be successful

An Executive Function Framework

Phil D. Zelazo, Neuroscientist, University of Minnesota



Executive Function Skills

Peg Dawson and Richard Guare, Mental Health Practitioners
and Authors

Skills Involving Thinking (Cognition)

Working memory: Ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks; incorporates ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to current situations

Planning/prioritization: The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task; making decisions about what's important to focus on

Organization: The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials

Time management: The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines

Metacognition: The ability to monitor oneself; ability to ask oneself – how am I doing or how did I do?

Skills Involving Doing (Behavior)

Response inhibition: Capacity to think before you act

Emotional control: The ability to manage emotions to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior

Sustained attention: The capacity to keep paying attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue or boredom

Task initiation: The ability to begin a task or activity without undue procrastination and to independently generate ideas, responses, or problem-solving strategies.

Goal-directed persistence: The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be distracted by competing interests

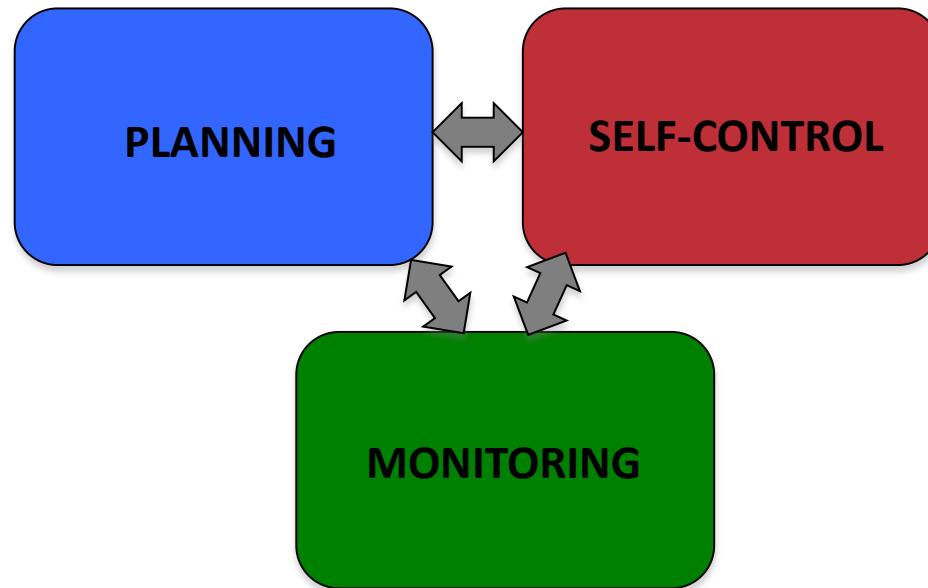
Cognitive flexibility: The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, or mistakes

Stress tolerance: the ability to thrive in stressful situations and to cope with uncertainty, change, and performance demands.

From: *Smart but Scattered* by Peg Dawson, Ed.D. and Richard Guare, Ph.D., 2009

Executive Function Processes and Skills Are Interconnected

Silvia Bunge, Neuroscientist, University of California at
Berkeley



Putting the Pieces Together for TANF Work Programs:

Set, Plan, Act, Review/Revise (SPARR)

Set

Establish meaningful, achievable goals

Metacognition, working memory

Plan

Develop a plan for meeting goals

Planning/prioritization, time management, working memory, task initiation

Act

Put the plan into action

Task initiation, response inhibition, time management, sustained attention, working memory

**Review
/Revise:**

Review the plan to assess what worked and revise it as necessary

Metacognition, flexibility, working memory

Factors that Impair Executive Functions

- Stress
- Lack of exercise
- Loneliness
- Lack of sleep
- Sadness
- Poor nutrition

If we ignore that someone is stressed, lonely, or not healthy because of poor nutrition, lack of sleep or lack of exercise, those unmet needs will work against that person exercising the executive functions s/he needs to function properly at work and at home.

*Adele Diamond
University of British Columbia*

How Do we Improve Executive Function Skills?

- Work on reducing things that impair executive functions such as stress, lack of connections and lack of sleep
- Find ways to reduce the demands on executive function skills (e.g., change the environment, provide tools to make the task easier --like using a cellphone app for reminders; folders for organizing documents)
- Work on explicitly building EF skills: break them into small steps, train them, challenge them and practice them *in the context in which they will be used*

Key Elements of an EF-Informed Approach

- Participants are encouraged to set individualized goals that are challenging, but achievable and meaningful to them.
- Participants are supported in their pursuit of intermediate goals that have a short time horizon.
- Coaching is used to facilitate achievement of a goal and development of skills; coaches act as a guide and facilitator through the stages of the goal-setting process.
- Coaches help individuals to develop a detailed plan that serves as a roadmap for reaching their goals.
- The program helps individuals to recognize their executive skill strengths and weaknesses and helps them to identify ways to use their strengths to compensate for their weaknesses.

Key Elements of an EF-Informed Approach

- Expectations for an individual are consistent with their ability to successfully engage in effortful tasks.
- The program helps individuals improve their ability to handle stress and/or helps them to reduce stress in their lives.
- The program understands and supports strategies for modifying the environment (or the task) to lessen the negative impact of executive skill weaknesses.
- Opportunities for participants to build executive function skills are built into the program.
- Incentives are used thoughtfully and systematically to help individuals maintain the effort and motivation needed to work towards achieving a longer-term goal.
- Processes for review and reflection are an integral part of the program.

For more information

- www.buildingbetterprograms.org (Executive Function and Webinar Tabs)
- Pavetti@cbpp.org

Integrating Executive Functioning Principles into TANF Work Programs in order to Improve Economic Success for TANF Recipients

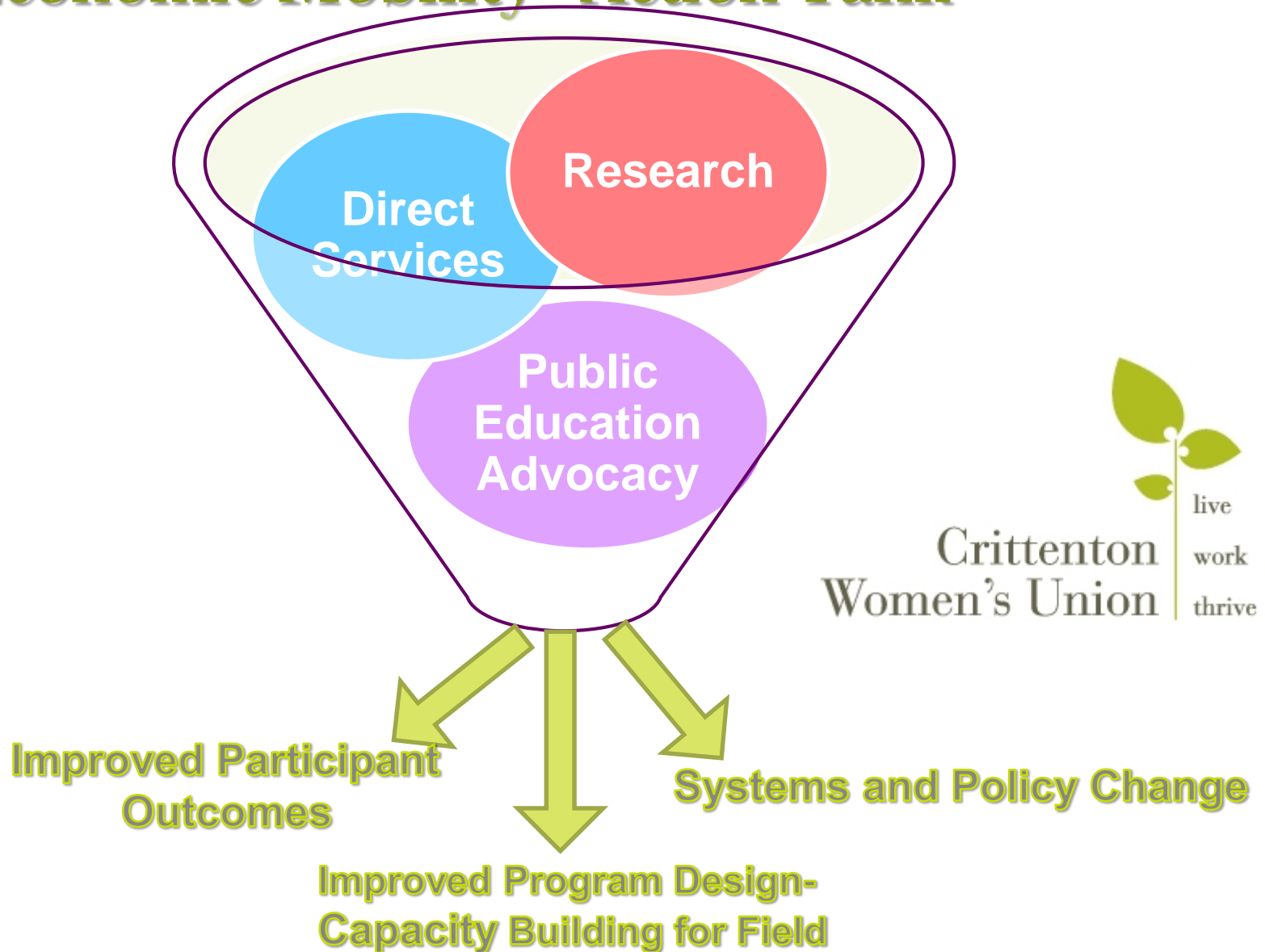


Presentation by
Elisabeth Babcock, MCRP, PhD
President and CEO

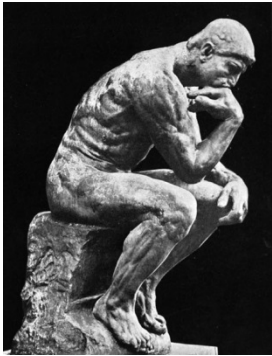


What is CWU? :

An Economic Mobility “Action Tank”



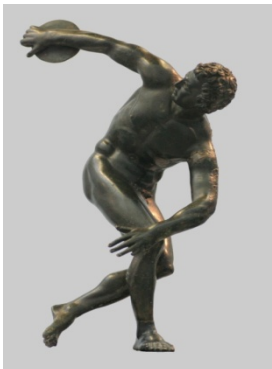
Common Stress-Related Challenges



- **Challenges Managing Thoughts, Memory, Organization, and Learning**



- **Challenges Managing Behavior, Emotions, and Interpersonal Relationships**



- **Challenges Managing Health and Well-being**

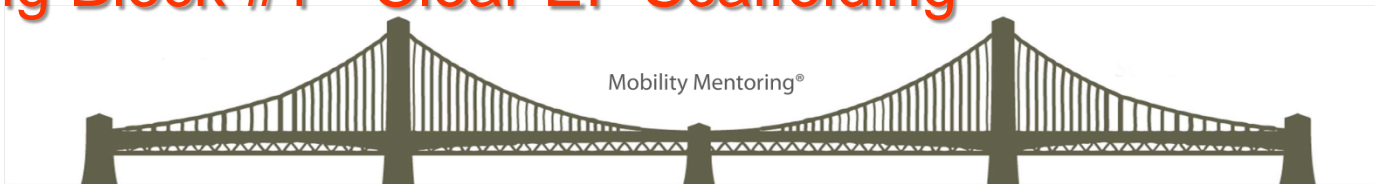
Critical Building Blocks of Successful EF-Informed Human Services Programs Are

Consistently delivered:

1. EF-informed program scaffolding;
2. Coaching/mentoring for goals attainment;
3. Near-term rewards for positive steps toward longer-term goals;
4. Outcomes measurement systems.



Building Block #1- Clear EF Scaffolding



FUTURE ORIENTED DECISION MAKING

FAMILY STABILITY		WELL-BEING		EDUCATION AND TRAINING	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT		EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER MANAGEMENT
Housing	Dependents	Health and Behavioral Health	Social Networks	Educational Attainment	Savings	Debts	Earnings Levels
No subsidy, housing costs less than 1/3 household take-home pay	Dependent needs met; serving as no barrier to parent/guardian school or work	Fully engaged in work, school, and/or family Health / behavioral health issues serving as no obstacle	Advocate/ Networker: Uses own and other resources and connections to advance the mobility goals of others	Completed bachelor's degree or higher	Savings of three months' expenses or more	Current on all balances and no outstanding debt other than mortgage or educational and/or car loans	Job with earnings \geq Mass. Index wage (If not calculated for specific family, use income \geq \$65,880)
No subsidy, housing costs exceed 1/3 household take-home pay	Dependent needs serving as minimal disruption to parent/guardian school or work	Minimal disruption to work, school, and/or family due to health / behavioral health issues	Developed Network: Consistent source of both support and leveraging connections	Completed associate's degree or postsecondary job training or certificate program	Savings of more than two months' expenses but less than three months' expenses	Current in payments and plans and paying more than minimum payments	Job with earnings of 66-99% of Mass. Index wage (If not calculated for specific family, use income range of \$43,481 - \$65,879)
Partial subsidy (shallow): Paying \$200 or more towards rent	Dependent needs serving as intermittent disruption to parent/guardian school or work	Intermittent disruptions to work, school, and/or family due to health / behavioral health issues	Emerging Network: Consistent source of support and occasional leveraging connections	Attending college or postsecondary job training program	Savings of at least one months' and up to two months' expenses	Structured payment plans in place and meeting minimum payments	Job with earnings of 33%-65% Mass. Index wage (If not calculated for specific family, use income range of \$21,741-\$43,480)
Full subsidy, permanent housing: Paying \$200 or less towards rent	Dependent needs serving as significant obstacle to parent/guardian school or work	Regular and recurring disruptions to work, school, and/or family due to health /behavioral health issues	Limited network: Occasional source of support	Completed postsecondary remedial education classes, college preparatory program, or prerequisites for job training/ readiness program	Savings of less than one months' expenses	Debts in excess of ability to pay, behind in payments	Job with earnings less than 33% Mass. Index wage
A. Homeless / co-housed with family or friends B. Homeless / transitional housing Homeless / emergency shelter	Recently emergent or not yet addressed dependent needs, requiring additional attention	Severely limited engagement in work, school and/or family due to significant health/ behavioral health issues	Isolated or draining network	Attending postsecondary remedial education classes, college preparatory program, or fulfilling prerequisites for job training/readiness program High school diploma or General Educational Development certificate GED obtained No high school diploma or GED	No savings	Defaults or nonpayment on all or most loans and accounts	Unemployed

CONTEXTUALIZED DECISION MAKING

Building Block #2- Coaching/Mentoring

- Individual assessment and goal setting;
- Participant driven processes;
- Coach serves as advisor- not a director;
- Goals being set are “SMART”- specific, measureable, attainable, relevant, time-bound;
- Goals contract is written;
- Goal of mentoring is to have participant be able to “mentor themselves”.



Building Block # 3- Reward Systems

You're the best!!



- Reinforce positive steps toward longer-term goals;
- Can include congratulations or celebrations, access to special privileges/activities, earned “points or chances”, or incentive payments;
- If incentives- should be clearly set at time of goal-setting and quickly/dependably administered;
- Incentives should be achieved by participants, not awarded by staff.

Building Block # 4- Consistent Outcomes Measurement

- Goal is to create positive participant change;
- To create positive change, one must assess where they are, then set a goal, make a plan, and then measure whether the goal was achieved;
- Each time this process is done it builds important EF skills.



FY'14 CWU Mobility Mentoring Outcomes



	FAMILY STABILITY	WELL-BEING	EDUCATION AND TRAINING	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER MANAGEMENT
Overall Successful Goals Completion Rates (N=730)	85% Dependent	88% Social Supports	77% Education and Training	71% Asset Building	73% Employment
	75% Housing	75% Health		56% Debt Reduction	
Examples of Goals	Obtain child IEP; move into permanent housing	Stop smoking; obtain therapy; lose weight	Complete a semester; receive GED or college degree	Pay bills on time; save \$; improve credit score	Get a new job; get a family sustaining job
Statistical Significance Shelter Prog. (498 Control: 98 Tx)				$P \leq .001$	$P \leq .01-.05$

FY'14 CFO Program Outcomes

(CWU's Most Intensive Mobility Mentoring Program
with Average Length of Participation=3 years)

- **95%** enrolled in school or employed; **58%** enrolled in school and employed;
- **29%** graduated during the current year (72% with college degrees; 28% with trade certificates);
- **38%** are now in a family sustaining job (avg. wage **\$28.03/hr.**- approx. double starting wages);
- Avg. total new participant savings **\$2,085.00/pp** since program start.



Questions?

Elisabeth D. Babcock, MCRP, PhD
President and CEO
Crittenton Women's Union
One Washington Mall, 3rd Fl.
Boston, MA 02108

Phone: 617-259-2950

ebabcock@liveworkthrive.org

www.liveworkthrive.org



Additional Helpful Resources

- CWU's *Using Brain Science to Create New Pathways Out of Poverty* and *Mobility Mentoring* research briefs and the Economic Independence Exchange (Mobility Mentoring Shared Learning Network) at www.liveworkthrive.org website;
- Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University- research brief #11, *Building the Brain's "Air Traffic Control System"* and *Building Adult Capabilities* video at <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>



Together, we prepare people for work.

Integrating Executive Functioning Principles, and Soft Skills Activities, and Case Management Coaching into TANF Work Programs in order to Improve Economic Success for TANF Recipients

Ramsey County Workforce Solutions & Goodwill-
Easter Seals

HHS ACF OFA Webinar

Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Kate Probert and Boyd Brown

Covered Today

- Historical Perspective – Families Achieving Success Today (FAST)
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)/Diversionary Work Program (DWP) System Change
- Enhanced Coaching Pilot – Integrating Executive Skills Programming

Families Achieving Success Today

- Motivation – How did we start?
- A Collaboration
- Individual Placement & Support (IPS)
- IPS Core Principles
- Lessons and Policy Implications

Motivation-MFIP/DWP System Assessment

- No real change in Employment and Engagement outcomes
- Focus on process and not outcomes
- Focus on case management vs. coaching
- Focus on being an expert as staff vs believing that participant is an expert
- System that supported disabilities vs seeing abilities

Immediate system objectives 2015 - 2018

- Create family centered system that helps families engage and stay engaged to obtain 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 providers supports and incents 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

Tools Piloted

- Blend a strength-based approach with an assessment to clarify participant's goals and construct participant plans
- Participant-centered, strength-based, coaching tool that supports participant's life long learning
- Help participant and counselor to learn ways in which the participant increased their role in choosing one's goal while working within MFIP requirements
- Use of Motivational Interview and Coaching to elicit information

Ramsey County Workforce Solution's My Bridge of Strength

Name:

Date:



Family Stability			Well-Being			Education	Financial and Legal		Employment
Housing	Dependent Care	Transportation	Health	Children's Behavior	Social Support	Education	Financial	Legal	Workplace Skills
I have stable and safe unsubsidized housing	I have reliable child care and back-up	I have reliable transportation and backup	No health concerns affect my employment	Behavior does not limit my employment	I have consistent and effective social support and/or a leadership role in the community	I have at least an AA degree or higher	My income is stable, I am current on my bills, I have money for saving or spending	I have no current legal issues	My strong workplace skills enhance my employability and support career advancement
I have stable and safe housing that is subsidized	I have reliable child care but no backup	I have reliable transportation but no backup	Health concerns sometimes affect my employment	Behavior sometimes affects my employment	I have generally reliable social support that is growing	I have a high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate or a post secondary certificate	My income is stable, I am current on my bills but I don't have money for saving or spending	My legal issues are not work related and do not take work time	My workplace skills support my employability
I am living in temporary housing, unsafe housing, or am at risk of losing housing	I have child care but it is not reliable	I have transportation options but they are not reliable	Health concerns often affect my employment	Behavior often affects my employment	I have a limited social support network with few positive influences	I am attending high school, GED, entry-level certificate classes, or other training	My income is sometimes enough to cover my basic living expenses	My legal issues take me away from work some times	My workplace skills often interfere with my employability
My family has no housing	I have no child care		Health concerns prevent my employment	Behavior prevents my employment	I have no social support; my network is draining or destructive	I have no high school diploma, GED, or entry-level certificate	My income is not enough to cover my basic living expenses	I lack certain jobs, or I have lost jobs because of my legal issues.	I need to work on my workplace skills in order to obtain employment

Strengths:

*Workplace skills include, but are not limited to, decision making, communication, conflict resolution, problem solving, anger management, time management, crisis management, ~~planning~~, relationship skills, prioritizing, grooming, and other capabilities that facilitate job performance.

GOAL ACTION PLAN

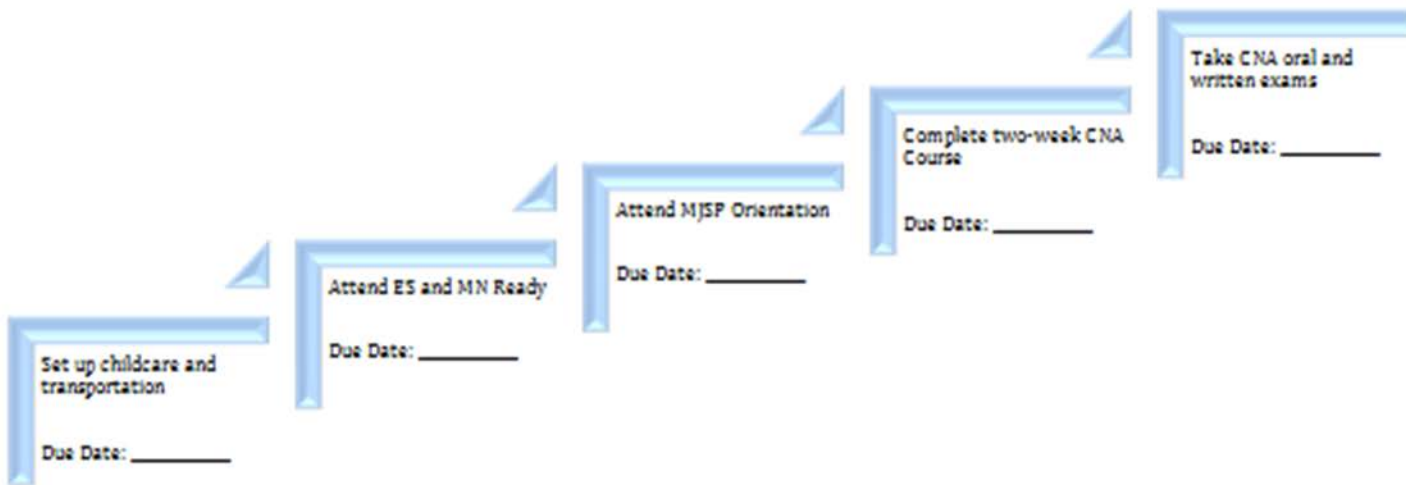
Participant's Name: _____ Case Number: _____ Date: _____

My Goal is: _____ Due Date: _____

What strengths will I use to accomplish my goal: _____

Check the goal and action steps against SMART criteria: Specific Measureable Attainable Relevant Time-based

Instructions: Once you develop your goal, identify the action steps that you will need to achieve along the way. Your action steps should also meet the SMART criteria.



Date of next appointment: _____ Was this goal obtained or discontinued?: YES NO If yes, date: _____

If no, what stopped you? _____

Next Steps

- Bridge and Goal Action Plan (GAP) Pilot – Ended October 2014
- GAP and Bridge System-Wide Implementation- April 2015
- Coaching Training System Wide Implementation - 2015
- Enhanced Coaching Pilot – September 2015
- Young Adult and Teen Families Expansion - late 2016
- System-Wide Implementation -2017

Enhanced Coaching Pilot GOALS

- Test comprehensive model that incorporates coaching with executive skills informed interventions, strategies & tools
- Closely examine what interventions, strategies & tools work and what doesn't work
- Measure engagement, employment, retention and educational outcomes to determine effectiveness

Enhanced Coaching Pilot Features

- **Culture and Systems Change**
 - ES Informed Practice Principles
 - Executive Skills Sustainability Model
 - Job Roles and Expectations, Hiring Practices
- **ES Methodology Created**
 - 11 Key Executive Skills: Behaviors and Interventions
 - Enhanced Coaching: Goal Focused, Short time horizon, small steps, intervention-based
 - Goal-directed behavior incentives
 - Groups Redesigned: organize, streamline information delivered and customize learning
 - Environmental and Paperwork modifications: minimize distractions, streamline information
 - Stress Reduction
 - Peer Support
- **Concrete Tools and Strategies**
 - Goal Action Plan
 - Bridge of Strength
 - ES Questionnaire
 - Self accountability check lists for staff and participants

Executive Skills Informed Practice Principles

All people have strengths and weaknesses with executive functioning skills.

Building executive functioning skills starts with the reduction or elimination of immediate stressors.

“Goodness of fit” between a person’s goals and her/his current (EFS) skill level is important for success.

Goal-setting is a critically important, active and client-owned process.

Small action steps over a short amount of time are critical for goal attainment.

Goal development and progress must be a concrete and an explicit process.

Teaching skills, modifying the environment and changing incentives are primary interventions for addressing executive functioning deficits.

Success is determined by the degree to which individuals confidently make their own decisions and are self-regulating and self-determining.

Executive Skills Informed Services Sustainability Model

Leadership

- Knowledgeable about EFS and programming benefits
- Believes EFS -informed services are beneficial to staff and participants
- Promotes that belief with managers and staff
- Provides necessary resources to implement EFS-informed services
- Implements performance metrics to assess, evaluate and improve EFS-informed services
- Hiring practices are aligned with EFS-informed services
- Minimizes system barriers to implement EFS-informed services
- Provides on-going support for implementation and continuous improvement

Management

- Knowledgeable about EFS and programming benefits
- Believes EFS-informed services are beneficial to staff and participants
- Fosters and champions that belief with staff
- Embeds EFS into pre-hire, hire and on-boarding process
- Ensures staff are fully trained on EFS
- Incorporates training reinforcements to support and advance application of EFS into daily practice (e.g., 1:1, team meetings, coaching, observations, case consultations)
- Builds in accountability mechanisms for effective EFS implementation
- Evaluates the use and effectiveness of EFS practices and participant outcomes

Direct Service

- Knowledgeable about EFS and programming benefits
- Understands and values the benefits of enhancing EFS with participants
- Actively engages in EFS training
- Implements EFS skills into direct service work with participants
- Becomes proficient in EFS-based practices
- Collaborates with colleagues to continually learn and improve practices