Supervising for Quality Child Welfare Practice

Supervisors play a critical role in the delivery of effective child welfare services. They are responsible for ensuring that frontline workers have the requisite knowledge, attitudes, and skills to engage children and families; assess safety concerns as well as child and family needs, strengths, and resources; make sound casework decisions; and develop and implement effective service plans. Supervisors are key to translating agency policies and procedures for staff and ensuring that they are adhered to, in training and coaching staff and supporting their professional growth, and in helping workers to address the challenges of ensuring safety for children while strengthening and supporting their families. As child welfare agencies pay increased attention to ensuring quality through systematic continuous quality improvement efforts, supervisors must be particularly skilled in bringing the agency's vision to life by teaching and coaching, monitoring, and supporting caseworkers in a stressful environment, as well as leading quality improvement processes. Supervisor success in these endeavors is critical for staff retention and for fostering positive outcomes among caseworkers.

Child Welfare Information Gateway

Children's Bureau

This bulletin for professionals presents an overview of child welfare supervision and explores the dimensions of supervision that agencies may want to consider as they seek to strengthen the effectiveness of their services to children and families. This bulletin is designed to provide child welfare supervisors, managers, and related professionals with examples of States' efforts to strengthen supervisory capacity and with tools and resources to enhance supervisory skills.

Understanding the Importance of Effective Supervision

Researchers have identified several keys to effective supervision, including the successful application of knowledge to practice, connecting caseworkers to the agency mission, building supportive organizational structures, being an effective leader, and promoting success among employees. Each of these elements is necessary for developing employee commitment and enthusiasm, for counteracting negative practice, and for getting caseworkers and the agency back on the right track when unfortunate incidents occur (Summers, 2010).

There is an extensive body of research in the child welfare field linking effective supervisory practices to positive outcomes for staff, agencies, and the children and families that their organizations serve. Supervisory effectiveness is felt most directly by the caseworkers being supervised. Research indicates that high-quality supervision can prevent or reduce employee burnout and secondary trauma, which in turn reduces staff turnover rates (Collins-Camargo & Royse, 2010; Landsman, 2007; Brittain & Conrad, 2006).

A meta-analysis examining the impact of effective supervision on caseworkers found that positive supervisory skills are related to beneficial worker outcomes (Mor Barak et al., 2009). Specifically, studies indicate that effective supervision can mitigate caseworkers' intention to leave their jobs, as well as actual staff turnover (Chen & Scannapieco, 2010; Fakunmoju et al., 2010; Renner, Porter, & Preister, 2009; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2003). Supervision has even been identified as the organizational factor most consistently linked with caseworker retention (Child Welfare League of America, 2005).

The positive impact of high-quality supervision on caseworkers goes beyond employee retention; it is also associated with higher levels of job satisfaction (Faller, Grabarek, & Ortega, 2010; Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003) and organizational commitment (Landsman, 2001). Furthermore, it has been shown to lessen stressful work conditions, offer protection from unreasonable job demands, provide emotional support during difficult times, and give guidance on negotiating the challenges of the job (Mor Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001; Kadushin & Harkness, 2002).

For some time, research has shown the importance of the supervisor by directly linking effective supervision with good practice. Supervisors offer valuable educational, social, and administrative support, which can in turn contribute to worker effectiveness that translates into quality service delivery (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002). Studies found that relationships between quality supervision and improved worker capacity to define "next steps" and set limits in their cases (Banuch, 1999) increased service provision (McGrew & Bond, 1997), led to stronger client engagement (particularly with resistant individuals) (Bibus, 1993), and improved goal attainment among clients (Harkness, 1995).

When an agency implements a new model or reform, supervisors provide direction and support to caseworkers as they put new policies and procedures into effect and further provide workers with feedback on their implementation success. Supervisors also play an important role in increasing caseworker motivation, job-related critical thinking, and decision-making skills so that workers can better serve children and families (Fisher, 2009; Lietz, 2010; Rzepnicki & Johnston, 2005).

Child Welfare Information Gateway's Management and Supervision web section offers a wide array of resources to help supervisors, managers, and administrators provide effective leadership and build a skilled workforce. The web section is available at https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/.

The Role of Supervisors in Practice Improvement

In August 2012, the Children's Bureau released an Information Memorandum (IM) on continuous quality improvement (CQI), the process by which organizations identify, describe, and analyze strengths and problems and then test, implement, learn from, and revise solutions. The IM outlines five key components of an effective CQI system:

- A strong foundational administrative structure
- Quality data collection
- An effective case record review process
- Analysis and dissemination of quality data
- Feedback to stakeholders/decision-makers and adjustment of programs and processes to continually improve CQI

CQI also has become an important component of the upcoming third round of the Federal child welfare monitoring known as the Child Welfare Services Reviews (CFSRs). More information about CQI and the CFSR process is available in the June 2014 *Children's Bureau Express* (https://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?event=website.viewSection&issueID=158&subsectionID=57), the Bureau's monthly e-news digest that covers news, issues, and trends of interest to professionals in child welfare.

Because supervisors play a key role in developing and enhancing the skills of child welfare professionals, they also play a pivotal role in implementing CQI processes and systems. They help to create an organizational climate where CQI is expected and valued, modeling the use of evidence-informed practice and those systems that promote it. An October 2012 issue of *Training Matters*, an e-newsletter published by North Carolina's Division of Social Services' Children's Services Statewide Training Partnership, outlines the State's work implementing its CQI model, the Reaching for Accountability and Excellence in Practice, and the importance of supervisors in this application. The October 2012 issue of *Training Matters* is available at http://www.trainingmatters-nc.org/tm_v14n1/tm_v14n1.htm.

Supervisory Roles, Competencies, and Processes That Promote Continuous Quality Improvement

Supervisory responsibilities can be categorized into three overarching domains: (1) administrative, (2) educational, and (3) supportive (National Association of Social Workers, 2013; Kadushin and Harkness, 2002). The combination of all three components is necessary for the development of competent, ethical, and professional caseworkers. Each of these domains is critical to effective supervision and quality practice, and each one experienced renewed emphasis from a quality improvement perspective.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the Association of Social Work Boards produced a booklet that provides an indepth discussion of supervision in social work and provides standards to ensure uniformity. *Best Practice Standards in Social Work Supervision* is available on the NASW website at http://www.naswdc.org/practice/naswstandards/supervisionstandards2013.pdf.

Administrative

Administrative supervision involves enacting managerial methods that enable caseworkers to provide effective services to their clients (Hess, Kanak, & Atkins, 2009). The administrative component of the supervisory role is oriented toward the accurate implementation of policy and practice, which sets the tone for an agency's continuous quality improvement. As agencies evolve, supervisors are responsible for adopting new innovations and enabling reform. In order to do this, they must be skilled at anticipating, addressing, and managing change that is occurring within the agency.

On a personnel level, administrative supervision requires managing the organizational demands that are placed on caseworkers in order to increase their ability to carry out responsibilities related to implementing change. Specifically, this requires managing the caseloads, workflow, and responsibilities of caseworkers, and holding caseworkers accountable for the quality of their practice by identifying, managing, and evaluating their performance. Supervisors must also be skilled at

facilitating communication when tackling issues related to the quality of caseworker practice. Tasks that fall under administrative supervision are best executed by supervisors who listen to and value their caseworkers in an effort to form strong, team-oriented partnerships.

An article in the June 2010 issue of *PracticeNotes*, a newsletter produced by the North Carolina Division of Social Services and the Family and Children's Resource Program, outlines the six principles of partnership as applied to supervision in child welfare. "Using Partnership in Supervision," by Deb Vassar is available on the *PracticeNotes* website at http://www.practicenotes.org/v15n3/partnership.htm.

Educational

Educational supervision focuses on advancing the practice of caseworkers by helping them develop knowledge and skills they can apply to specific cases. It may include helping staff to gain a better understanding of social work philosophy, as well as refining staff knowledge and skills related to assessment, treatment and intervention, identification and resolution of ethical issues, and evaluation and termination of services. Supervisors can promote a positive learning environment by placing emphasis on the implementation of evidence-based practice, using data to inform change, and conducting regular case reviews.

Knowledge transfer is another key strategy in educational supervision. Positive relationships between supervisors and supervisees serve as a model for how caseworkers should interact with their clients (Van Berckelaer, 2011). Supervisors can also teach these techniques using direct, on-the-job training methods.

Supportive

Supportive supervision is intended to decrease staff stress that could interfere with performance and eventually lead to burnout. It also provides caseworkers with nurturing conditions that complement their success and encourages self-efficacy. Supervision that is empathetic and genuine fosters alliances between supervisors and caseworkers, which in turn can facilitate

more effective learning. Supportive supervision also fosters an organizational climate of safety and trust where workers can develop a strong sense of professional identity. There are three methods: modeling, coaching, and reflective supervision.

Modeling and coaching are two of the key strategies that supervisors can use in educational supervision. Modeling appropriate behavior and high quality skills is imperative, as caseworkers look to their supervisors for cues on how to execute their job responsibilities effectively (National Association of Social Workers, 2013). Coaching, a more deliberate technique, involves supporting new staff as they tackle various issues and scenarios that may arise in working with the children and families on their caseloads. Researchers have shown specific supervisor traits and strategies to be effective in the coaching relationship, including exercising empathy and trust, devoting individualized attention to developing workers, and creating a positive supervisor-employee feedback environment (Gregory & Levy, 2011). A list of mentoring and coaching resources used in several States to enhance supervisor-employee relationships and knowledge transfer, including a guidebook on teaming in child welfare, videos, and a Peer Quality Case Review toolkit from the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) that offers facilitation, planning, and communications tools, is available on the CalSWEC website at http://calswec.berkeley.edu/peer-quality-case-review.

Reflective supervision, or the regular collaborative reflection between a supervisor and caseworker that builds on the worker's use of his or her thoughts, feelings, and values within a service encounter, is a necessary supportive process within the supervisor-caseworker relationship (Van Berckelaer, 2011). In order for reflective supervision to be effective, supervisors and caseworkers must meet on a regular basis—at least weekly with new workers—to process a worker's emotions related to difficult cases. While this can be a resource- and time-intensive process, research suggests that investing in these practices can yield returns in staff retention and positive client outcomes, including greater success in

achieving permanency for children (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2006; Turner, 2009).

The Zero to Three National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families offers a resource that provides best practice guidelines for reflective supervision and presents a relevant case study. "Reflective Supervision: Supporting Reflection as a Cornerstone for Competency," by Deborah Weatherston, Robert Weigand, and Barbara Weigand, is available in the Zero to Three journal at http://main.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/31-2_Weatherston.pdf?docID=11942.

Reflective supervision comprises a set of techniques that are used to build trust between caseworkers and supervisors. Three identified building blocks of reflective supervision are:

- Reflection: taking time to think about workers' experiences, thoughts, and feelings directly connected to their work with children and families. Reflection involves active listening and thoughtful questioning by both parties in the pursuit of identifying interventions and services that best meet a family's needs.

- Collaboration: sharing the responsibility and control of power between the supervisor and caseworker. Collaborative relationships enable staff to express their abilities to handle various situations and encourage supervisors to recognize opportunities to share responsibility and decision-making.

- Regularity: meeting and interacting on a regular basis to facilitate reflection and collaboration.

For more information on the three building blocks of reflective supervision, visit the *Zero to Three* website at http://www.zerotothree.org/about-us/areas-of-expertise/reflective-practice-program-development/three-building-blocks-of-reflective-supervision.html.

Supervisors play an important role in addressing or mitigating the effects of compassion fatigue—also known as vicarious trauma or secondary trauma—on staff. The spring 2012 issue of the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare's publication *CW 360°: A Comprehensive Look at a Prevalent Child Welfare Issue (CW360°)* was focused on secondary trauma. The issue notes that the topic of burnout has been widely researched and connected to child welfare over the years and highlights the emergence of secondary trauma or secondary traumatic stress in the human services field. Largely associated with first responders and mental health professionals, the field of child welfare had previously focused on turnover related to burnout rather than the issue of vicarious trauma. This issue of *CW360°* offers articles that explain the symptoms of posttraumatic stress, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout; research on the role of workplace supports and worker retention; and the role supervisors play in helping workers stave off the effects of secondary trauma. Read the entire issue at http://ncwwi.org/files/Incentives__Work_Conditions/Secondary_Trauma__the_CW_Workforce_CW360.pdf.

Supervisory Roles in Planning for Innovation and Reform

Over the last decade, many States have enacted large-scale, system-wide reforms in an effort to meet new Federal standards and improve outcomes for children and families. Child welfare supervisors are important agents of change during these periods of organizational innovation and reform. They must communicate the specifics of new practice implementation and coach caseworkers on how to adapt to changing job responsibilities. Managing caseworker stress surrounding agency change is perhaps the most critical role of a supervisor during transitional periods. Research shows that roughly 50 percent of change efforts across organizations fail as a result of employee resistance to change (Self, Armenakis, & Schraeder, 2007). Research indicates that supervisors can help relieve caseworker stress during these periods by clearly communicating job expectations under new practice models and by providing support to help alleviate the stress caused by the uncertainty of organizational change (Cooksey-Campbell, Folaron, & Sullenberger, 2013).

As changes are being implemented within an agency, supervisors must play an active role in the CQI process. This involves planning for and modeling new practice techniques, evaluating workers' abilities to implement

new techniques, and assessing whether or not the new initiatives are leading to better outcomes for children and families. Strategies that supervisors can use to model new practices during periods of organizational change include the following (Frey et al., 2012):

- Discussing how to apply new practice techniques to cases

- Providing field observation and support as a worker is directly serving clients

- Modeling or demonstrating relevant skills or techniques that workers are trying to implement

Once caseworkers begin using new practices, supervisors should evaluate metrics connected to implementation success and child and family outcomes. Supervisors can draw data from such sources as (Frey et al., 2012):

- Basic case measures, such as the number of children and youth caseworkers are serving, service plan goals, and services provided

- Compliance measures that examine adherence to agency policy and procedures, such as timely completion of assessments

- Service response measures and outputs, such as placement settings and stability

- Benchmarks of progress toward, and timely achievement of, permanency outcomes such as exits from the system to permanency

Clinical Supervision

The child welfare field has shifted its supervision focus away from the idea that the primary role for supervisors should be to provide case management and administrative oversight. Instead, the field began to place greater emphasis on clinical supervision, a specific set of strategies geared toward applying caseworker knowledge to overall agency practice in a successful manner. Clinical supervision focuses on the actions, responses, and decisions of a caseworker in providing services to the children and families they serve. Effective clinical supervision is critical to building worker competencies, including reinforcing social work ethics and values, encouraging self-reflection and critical thinking skills,

building upon training to enhance performance, and supporting the worker through caseworker decision-making and crises. Common components of the clinical supervision model include the following activities (Collins-Camargo & Millar, 2010):

- Scheduling regular individual or group supervision meetings

- Enhancing caseworker critical thinking skills

- Encouraging and providing caseworkers with time to engage in self-reflection so as to examine and consider ways to improve their own practice

- Facilitating the identification of crucial casework questions that are meant to critically evaluate issues related to family maltreatment and applying knowledge gained from the critical thinking sessions to assessment and treatment activities

- Developing workers' skills and focusing on evidence-based practice by looking to the professional literature for guidance in casework and implementing successful programs that promote positive outcomes for children and families

- Establishing an organizational culture in which support, learning, and clinical supervision are encouraged

- Using case review and observation to assess workers' skills and evaluate progress

Findings from a qualitative study examining the impacts of these clinical supervisory techniques in public child welfare agencies provide initial evidence supporting the use of such practices (Collins-Camargo & Millar, 2010); however, more empirical research needs to be conducted in order to make more conclusive statements about the effects of clinical supervision on outcomes for caseworkers and children and families.

Child Welfare Information Gateway's website offers a web section on Clinical Supervision at https://www.childwelfare.gov/management/mgmt_supervision/clinical/.

Supporting and Growing Child Welfare Supervisors: How Agencies Can Provide Direction, Supports, and Infrastructure to Facilitate Continuous Quality

In order for child welfare agencies to develop an effective supervisory workforce, they need to invest in recruiting and training strong candidates who are prepared to meet the intense demands of the position. Agencies can further foster the growth of a qualified staff by providing employed supervisors with professional and leadership development opportunities.

Information and resources from 37 States on training and supporting supervisors is available through the former National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement's Supervisor Training & Support Research Project on the website for the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service at http://usm.maine.edu/muskie/cutler/nrcoi-supervisor-training-support-research-project.

Selecting and Training Supervisors

Recruiting skilled supervisors is of the upmost importance given the challenges presented by the position and their role in ensuring effective practice. In addition, agencies should develop internal processes to identify practitioners, including caseworkers already working for the agency and job candidates from outside the agency, who have sufficient child welfare knowledge and whose skills align with the organization's practice model (Hess, Kanak, & Atkins, 2009). In addition to selecting individuals who are a good fit for the agency, the following qualifications should be considered in identifying potential supervisors:

- An ability to display beginning competence in supervisory skills
- Excellent performance in current positions
- High levels of motivation to undertake the demands of the position
- A commitment to continue professional development through supervision and mentoring

Supervisor training should begin by providing an overview of the responsibilities that fall under the administrative, educational, and supportive supervisory domains. Lecture content is most effective when supplemented with relevant tips, examples, role playing, and other interactive activities. Agencies should also provide supervisors with access to outside resources and tools that have been shown to enhance supervisory performance and capabilities.

The University of Iowa School of Social Work, in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Human Services, developed, implemented, and evaluated a statewide training program for Iowa's child welfare supervisors. The curriculum, including supplemental handouts and presentation materials, and a supervisor toolkit, are available on the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice website at http://www.uiowa.edu/~nrcfcp/training/recruitment.shtml#supervisortraining.

Providing Professional Development Opportunities for Supervisors

Providing supervisors with professional development opportunities is critical to both their job satisfaction and their ability to provide effective supervision to caseworkers (Hess, Kanak, & Atkins, 2009). Professional development starts in the early stages of the job. Agencies should provide job preparation programs both for supervisors new to the position and for experienced individuals. The programs should include clear communication on supervisory responsibilities within the agency, access to mentors, frequent and regularly scheduled supervision, and peer learning opportunities.

Once supervisors are acclimated to the agency, they should have opportunities and resources to develop knowledge and skills in advanced or specialized areas that support their professional goals. Examples of such opportunities include workshops, conferences, job-related training classes, and advanced degree programs, such as master of social work programs. Midlevel managers should also have access to management training for those with more advanced

skills. All supervisors should have plans for professional development that identify goals, knowledge and skills necessary to reach these goals, and concrete steps toward achieving goals (Hess, Kanak, & Atkins, 2009).

Developing Supervisory Leadership

Another avenue for building supervisory skills and investment—particularly leadership skills—is to bring supervisors into the assessment, planning, and implementation of agency initiatives and reforms. Whether the agency is developing a new strategic plan, developing a work plan to respond to a State's Program Improvement Plan (a Federal requirement to improve child welfare services in areas identified by the CFSRs) or court order, or designing and implementing a new child welfare practice model, supervisors can be invaluable sources of information every step of the way and important champions of change moving forward.

The National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) offers a wide range of supervisor and manager training opportunities designed to increase overall child welfare practice effectiveness. The organization's Leadership Academy for Supervisors (LAS) is a free, web-based training program geared toward the development of leadership skills. Its modules are based on the latest child welfare research findings and are presented by national experts in the field. NCWWI's Learning and Living Leadership toolkit facilitates acquisition of leadership knowledge and skills, and the Core Curriculum of the LAS includes training in the following areas (for more information, refer to the NCWWI website at http://ncwwi.org/files/LAS_Core_Curriculum.pdf):

- Understanding leadership foundations and principles
- Building collaborative relationships with families, youth, and communities
- Developing a workforce through recruitment, selection, development, support, and performance management of staff
- Ensuring accountability by creating a knowledge culture and using data to improve practice
- Managing change through goal setting

State and Local Examples of Promising Practices

A solid agency supervisory framework or plan is necessary to support quality supervision practices. A number of organizations have, or are working on, strengthening their approach to supervision to produce positive outcomes for workers and the children and families they serve. This section provides some examples of State and local agencies that are using evidence-based supervisory practices strategically to increase morale and job satisfaction among workers and to implement agency practice models effectively.

Alaska Office of Children's Services Strategic Supervision Plan—In response to findings from Round 2 of the CFSR, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services developed a strategic plan to address concerns surrounding agency supervisory practices. As a result of targeted discussions and workshops, agency staff identified goals and action steps within the following key areas: supervisor recruitment, training, and professional development; supervision support; caseworker supervision; administrative and management; and supervisory roles and responsibilities within communities and agencies. The strategic planning document presents the plan in a chart that includes the specific tasks that are needed to complete each action step. The full text of the document can be found on the agency's website (Alaska Office of Children's Services, 2011) at http://www.hss.state.ak.us/ocs/Publications/pdf/strategicplan.pdf.

Missouri Children's Division Supervision Advisory Committee—Missouri's Department of Social Services' Children's Division undertook an initiative to enhance and support effective supervision of frontline child welfare staff. The agency implemented a series of strategies and action steps to address issues surrounding supervisor recruitment, training, and professional development; supervisor support; clinical supervision of caseworkers; administrative and management supervision; and the supervisory role within agencies and communities. The strategic plan, improvement efforts, major outcomes and accomplishments over a 5-year period, and lessons learned are presented in a webinar that can be found

on the archived webinars section of the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute's website (National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, 2012) at http://ncwwi.org/index.php/webinars.

Resources and Tools for Enhanced Supervision

This section presents resources and tools that agency personnel can use to enhance the quality of supervision within their organizations.

Tools for Supervisors

Planning Framework for Team-Based Supervision—This article presents a comprehensive planning framework for quality supervision, with emphasis on the role supervisors play in child welfare team practice models. Components of the framework include: (1) the leader and manager roles and responsibilities for supervisor development, learning, and evaluation, (2) the supervisor's role with regard to an agency's learning, development, and improvement systems, (3) the supervisor's role in mentoring and coaching caseworkers, (4) the supervisor's role in ensuring effective casework practice, (5) the supervisor's role in implementing best practices, and (6) the supervisor's role in creating a positive agency climate and fostering effective teamwork. The article is available for download by request on Research Gate (Lawson & Claiborne, 2010) at http://www.researchgate.net/publication/242690818_A_Planning_Framework_for_Agencies_Adopting_Team-based_Supervision_and_Practice_A_Starter_List_of_Operational_Principles_Along_with_Key_Indicators_of_Their_Implementation.

Developing Workers' Interpersonal Skills—ACTION for Child Protection developed a guide for supervisors that discusses strategies they can use to develop the interpersonal skills of their workers. The suggested action steps are based on research findings that indicate supervisors who are effective at developing workers' interpersonal skills possess certain qualities and characteristics, purposefully prepare themselves to coach their employees, and use planned and relevant consulting and coaching activities. The guide utilizes a case study example to demonstrate suggested practices in action.

Find the guide on the ACTION for Child Protection's website (ACTION for Child Protection, 2010) at http://www.actionchildprotection.org/documents/2010/pdf/March_Supervisors_develop_worker_interpersonal_skills.pdf.

Supervisory Training Curricula and Approaches

Curriculum Overview and Learning Expectations Guide for Supervisors—The Florida Department of Children and Families published a curriculum overview guide aimed at assisting supervisors in understanding the depth and scope of preservice training content for caseworkers. The guide, which is intended to assist supervisors in the training of new workers, provides information on learning expectations, activities, and useful resources for the certification process. Find the guide on Florida's Center for Child Welfare website (Florida Department of Children and Families, 2011) at http://centerforchildwelfare2.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/PreServiceCurriculum/Guide%20for%20Supervisors_030111.pdf.

Putting the Pieces Together—This competency-based supervisor curriculum was developed by the Butler Institute. It is rooted in self-reflection and focuses on the three areas of administrative, educational, and supportive supervision. The training session is available upon request. For more information, visit the website for the Butler Institute at http://www.thebutlerinstitute.org/pd/training/supervisory-training-putting-the-pieces-together/.

Conclusion

Supervisors are key to achieving positive outcomes for children and families, building capacity in the child welfare workforce, and ensuring that agencies meet new Federal standards. To strengthen supervision and the role that supervisors can play in ensuring improved services, child welfare agencies will benefit from taking a close look at their overall approach to engaging supervisors in improvement efforts and how to enhance supervisory effectiveness. While there is no one prescription, research and practice experience suggest that careful attention

be paid to recruitment and selection, training, leadership development, the use of a participatory assessment and planning approach throughout the agency, and providing the organizational supports that enable supervisors to not just be part of, but to actually lead the way to more consistent, quality practice.

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