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Ensuring the Quality and Fidelity of Offender Assessments, Case Management Plans, and Programs

Reentry in the State of Connecticut:
Partners in Progress
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Judith Sachwald

***We can't solve problems by using the same kind of
thinking we used when we created them.***

– Albert Einstein

Focus of Concurrent Session

- Remind ourselves about the key elements of assessment and case planning and how they relate to EBP principles
- Discuss the practical, day-to-day role of managers in supporting the efforts of frontline employees related to communication, assessment, case planning and case management
- Discuss how high quality assessments and case plans will enhance supervision and improve public safety

WHO? ❖ WHAT? ❖ HOW? ❖ HOW MUCH?

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Why is Quality Assurance Important?

What are some other examples?

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Goals of Correctional Agencies

- Protect public safety
- Hold offenders accountable to victims and the community
- Guide offenders through process of becoming law-abiding and productive

What does quality assurance mean in community – and facility-based corrections?

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Evidence-Based Principles

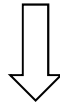
- Assess Actuarial Risk/Needs
- Enhance Intrinsic Motivation
- Target Interventions
 - *Risk Principle: Prioritize supervision and treatment resources for higher risk offenders*
 - *Need Principle: Target interventions to criminogenic needs*
 - *Responsivity Principle: Be responsive to temperament, learning style, motivation, culture, and gender when assigning programs*
 - *Dosage: Structure 40-70% of high-risk offenders' time for 3-9 months*
- Skill Train with Directed Practice
- Increase Positive Reinforcement
- Engage Ongoing Support in Natural Communities
- Measure Relevant Processes/Practices**
- Provide Measurement Feedback**

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Quality Assurance Leads to Quality

Quality Assurance:

The planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled.



Quality:

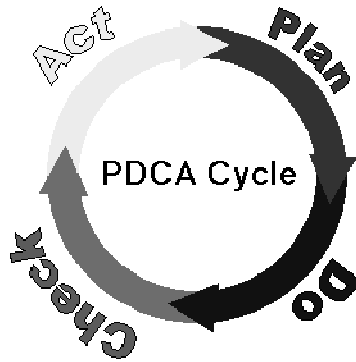
- The characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs;
- A product or service free of deficiencies.

--American Society for Quality

Without quality assurance, principles cannot be fulfilled.

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QA – Organizing for Quality



Source:
Walter Shewhart, *The Grandfather of Total Quality Management*, 1930

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PLAN

- Define a problem or opportunity;
- Analyze the situation. Brainstorm for causes and corrective actions. Think creatively to determine the best approach and best possible corrective action.
- Develop an implementation plan.

DO

- Implement corrective action.
- Document the procedures and observations.
- Use data gathering tools to collect information.

CHECK

- Analyze information.
- Monitor trends.
- Compare obtained results against expected results.

ACT

- If results are as expected, ~~do nothing~~ **CELEBRATE**.
- If results are not as expected, repeat PDCA cycle.
- Document the process and the revised plan.

A Little Taste of Quality

- You want to retire when you are 65 and run a little candy store that offers yummy yet affordable chocolate and other goodies
- Despite the economy, you are going to open a candy store in the next few months so it will be well established when you turn 65
- You need to hire employees who have a strong work ethic, a commitment to customer service, and who know the difference between tasty chocolate that is a good buy and cheap chocolate
- Working in groups, answer the following questions:
 - Which chocolate tastes best? How did your group determine that it was the best?
 - What standards of performance will you set for your employees?
 - How will you know that your employees are meeting the standards?
 - How will you judge that your business is a success?
 - How will you determine that your business is successful enough to support you when you retire?

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Mission Critical Activities

- Assessment**
- Case Management**
- Programs**

We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.

– Marian Wright Edelman

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Quality Offender Assessments

- Where do you begin?
 - Develop your policy
 - Define competence
 - Develop training protocols
 - Record your outcomes
- Develop policy
 - Define critical elements
 - Determine who should do the reviews
 - Decide how often reviews should be done
 - Determine what training is needed
 - Decide on who audits the experts

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Who Should Do It?

- Supervisors
 - Pro
 - These duties fall in line with what supervisors are doing now
 - They have the authority to reinforce practice
 - Con
 - May lack expertise in administration of the assessment tool (haven't done it)
 - If they supervise large number of employees, time to observe and provide feedback is limited
 - Line Employees
 - Pro
 - Often have the expertise as they have been using the tool
 - Can sometimes free up employees to have this be their sole responsibility
 - They become expert
 - Con
 - No authority
 - Caseloads too large
 - Line officers know more than the supervisor
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How Often?

- Evaluate employees after they have been trained to determine if there is a risk that the assessment will be invalid
 - Develop competency levels — have a definition of what is within the acceptable range
 - Employees who have not reached competency need to be reviewed more frequently
 - Include in your policy and enforce
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How to Ensure Quality?

Make sure initial training is thorough

- Do participants understand the underlying principles of the tool?
- Do they have enough time to practice using the assessment during training?
- Do the trainers have enough time to observe participants' comprehension and use of the tool and correct mistakes before they become bad habits?

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How to Ensure Quality?

- Provide booster sessions after employees have had time to practice
 - Encourage employees to ask questions
 - Have time for practice and demonstration
- Provide coaches to newly trained employees
 - Have coaches review the first 6 assessments and provide feedback
 - Record the progress of newly trained employees and document the field training hours

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Maryland Division of Parole and Probation - Quality Contact Standards

Agent Name: _____

Department and Manner of Being With an Offender

1	Introduced self or greeted offender in a confident, friendly manner and thanked the offender for his/her time and effort when closing the session.																					
	LOW	1		2		3		4		5		HIGH										
2	Posture and physical gestures (e.g., hand shakes, eye contact, non-verbal communication) were deliberate, dignified, and conveyed interest and respect.																					
	LOW	1		2		3		4		5		HIGH										
3	Was organized and prepared with case materials, recent test results, and session goals.																					
	LOW	1		2		3		4		5		HIGH										
4	Achieved goal of meeting and closed session with review of immediate action plan for offender.																					
	LOW	1		2		3		4		5		HIGH										

Assessment and Planning

5	Used appropriate communication skills to decrease tension and reinforce positive behavior, minimize interruptions and avoid raising voice.																					
	LOW	1		2		3		4		5		HIGH										
6	Reviewed and updated the offender's progress towards previously established goals.																					
	LOW	1		2		3		4		5		HIGH										
7	Explored and conducted on-going assessments for offender's ambivalence (to change), criminogenic needs and relevant circumstances of the case.																					
	LOW	1		2		3		4		5		HIGH										
8	Verified current case information and status (e.g., address, employment) and record case information that reflects minimal supervision standards.																					
	LOW	1		2		3		4		5		HIGH										

Treatment and Service Referral

9	Maintained focus for change on offender and their problem-solving ability.																					
	LOW	1		2		3		4		5		HIGH										
10	Adequately discussed referral needs, and jointly planned goals & obstacles with offender and guided through the stages of change.																					
	LOW	1		2		3		4		5		HIGH										

Sanctions and Ground Rules

11	When necessary, appropriately reminded offender of ground rules for effective supervision and legal consequences for non-compliance.																					
	LOW	1		2		3		4		5		HIGH										
12	When appropriate (dictated by sanction contract), provided sanctions clearly in a fair manner.																					
	LOW	1		2		3		4		5		HIGH										

TOTAL			+																			
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How to Ensure Quality?

- Talent and expertise needed to be a quality reviewer
 - Thorough knowledge of the tool
 - Ability to demonstrate competency
 - Considered by colleagues as an “expert”

- Skills needed to be a quality reviewer
 - Tact
 - Patience
 - Precision

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Who Reviews the Reviewers?

- Hire a consultant or engage a university partner to periodically evaluate the quality reviewers
- Provide quarterly training where scoring activities are practiced
- Set a system of peer review where quality reviewers observe one another and provide feedback

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The Quality Review

- Set up as a learning experience
- Eventually tie to performance reviews
- Praise and reward those who exceed the standards
 - Incorporate in performance appraisals
 - Send an email
 - Provide oral praise to these individuals
 - Write a note and send a copy to the Director
- Develop a tool that is easy to administer

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Case Management Concerns

Review of case plan

- Is the assessment scored accurately?
- Are the correct criminogenic needs identified?
- Are interventions based on needs?
- Have responsivity issues been addressed?
- Is the offender's motivation taken into consideration?

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Case Management Behaviors

Change in philosophy for employees

- Does the officer adjust case management based on risk?
- Does the officer use a different style based on responsivity issues?
- Does the officer work with the offender rather than dictate what happens on supervision (motivation)?
- Does the officer act as a change agent?

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Case Plan Quality Reviews

Ways to provide quality assurance

- Paper file audit
 - Pro
 - Easier to find time to accomplish
 - Concrete and easier to show officers what they did right and what they did wrong
 - Con
 - Those that are not good at paperwork may not reflect their true skills
 - What goes in notes may not accurately capture what happens in appointments

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Employee-Offender Interaction

- Video tapes
- Tape recorders
- Sitting in with employee and offender
 - Can see and hear what actually happens
 - Can measure motivational interviewing skills
 - Can assess employee's ability to work with offenders

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Case Management Observations

- Talk to family
- Talk to neighbors
- Talk to treatment providers
- Talk to victims and/or victim advocates
- Client satisfaction surveys

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Case Management Measures

- Identify and review what matters
 - Number of offenders successfully completing supervision
 - Number of warrants issued for technical violations
 - Number of offenders that go to prison for non-compliance with rules, for new crimes
 - Number of offenders that are reassessed on timely basis
 - Number of risk assessment overrides
 - Number of offenders that attend programming
 - Number of offenders completing programming
 - Number of intermediate sanctions imposed
 - What else?

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Measuring Case Management

Finding time

- Permit employees to work on reviews at home
- Elicit feedback from employees of what duties/tasks can be eliminated
- Try to keep supervisor/employee ratios manageable
- Provide praise and tie quality reviews to outcomes

We will not put into our establishment anything that is useless.

Henry Ford
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Role of Managers

- Gatekeepers of Quality
- Track Progress
- Establish Office/Unit Benchmarks
- Problem-Solvers
- Communicators
- What else?

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Program Quality and Fidelity

Issues to consider:

- Are the programs focused on criminogenic needs?
- Are the programs provided by public or private agency?
- If the programs are provided by private vendors, are the vendors under contract?
 - Do the contracts spell out performance measures?
 - Are there incentives for high performance?
 - Has the department provided or offered training to the vendors?
- Are the programs cognitive behavioral?
- What does program fidelity mean? How can fidelity be ensured?

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**Performance must be measured,
if it is going to be improved!!**

Quality is not an act. Quality is a habit. -- Aristotle

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