

## **Supervisor Forum: Onboarding New Staff -Beyond the Requirements**

**Schedule:** Tuesday, March 12, 2024 10-11:00 am  
Wednesday, March 13, 2024 10-11:00 am

**PCANY Facilitators:** Ellen Butowsky and Brigette Grant

**Participating programs: 26 programs, 35 participants (combined from both days)**

Ulster, Central Harlem, Rockland, North Country, Steuben/Livingston, Wayne, Orange, Staten Island, Oswego, Onondaga, Jefferson/Lewis, Herkimer, Dutchess, Delaware, Otsego, Suffolk, Albany, Oneida, Saratoga, Broome, Chautauqua, Monroe, Schenectady, Morris Heights, Washington Heights, Brookdale.

### **Welcome and Introductions**

- We welcomed two new supervisors - Krit Gunn from Onondaga and Leisly Jordan from Genesee/Wyoming

### **Intro and Large Group Discussion**

- Shared interest from programs regarding the onboarding process of other programs. What does it look like? How do programs integrate new staff beyond orientation, wrap-arounds, and core.
- Successful onboarding process may be to the retention of families, staff, and even supervisors?

Asked everyone to enter a word or a phrase they'd use to describe themselves when onboarding new staff. Some were selected from the chat and that person was asked to share more:

"Understanding" This means to take time from staff and be flexible since they come from different backgrounds and have had different experiences.

"Excited/Worried" I'm excited because we are adding someone new, but worried because some don't last past six months.

"Organized" You have to be organized because you don't want to come across as "shuffling papers." It also takes patience and you need a plan.

"Patience" We had a new hire who still felt uncomfortable with her first visit despite completing core and curriculum trainings. I checked in with her and was concerned about the fact that she was not the one to complete the FROG and wondered if the family would be comfortable. She asked if I could come with her and I said I would. She was fine after that. Sometimes, a new hire may look ready "on-paper" but still need extra support.

"Somewhat unprepared but always strength-based" I don't get help from HR. There are forms like ones for background checks that I have to fill out and it takes a lot of time.

“Consistent” It takes a long time to work through the questions new staff have and there is a lot to keep on top of. We always look for ways to streamline the process.

### **Large Group Discussion**

What specific approaches have worked for their programs?

- We made a welcome folder that is given to new staff. Also, meeting with new staff to give them a tour of the building, showing them where things are like the kitchen and bathroom. New staff are paired up with a seasoned home visitor and do lots of shadowing. We also make sure staff can get their desk setup the way they like because they may not have time once they get families.
- We start off with a half-day orientation and then meet with them to show them around and meet staff. We like to connect them with staff so they feel comfortable with reaching out to them if they have questions. We try to get them shadowing as soon as possible.

What kinds of things do folks do to address things that aren't in wrap-around and other trainings?

- We are hybrid and that is challenging for new workers because they can't go and find someone to ask a question like they can in an office. We have new staff shadow with as many staff as possible so they can see different approaches. Staff like that part.
- After core, we work on TOL and GKG activities together. Since we are a new program, we lack opportunities to shadow, so we practice FROGS and visits and document them together,

### **Break out group prompts. Groups shared one thing that stood out, or a specific strategy or activity**

- Share your experiences with on-boarding staff
- What has worked for you? Share specific activities or approaches you've implemented.
- What challenges have you had?
- What tracking systems do you employ in your program to assure everything that needs to happen is happening?

### **One thing from each group that stood out**

- Getting all the wrap arounds in, we try to keep new hires from just “blowing through them all at once.” We would really love to see the prenatal and FGP trainings back in person again, or maybe something more in-depth. Perhaps the Service Plan could be on that list too.
- We love the New Hire Checklist (this was reiterated throughout both days). Sites also appreciated learning where the Training Codes list is located on the website.
- Many sites referenced using the TOL both pre and post core and the importance of “acclimatizing” new hires so they get more out of core. One site stressed that they are strategic with the visits staff shadow so they get at least one with a FROG, one with an ASQ, etc. and always integrate the follow up documentation element into whatever they've focused on in the shadowing visit.

- Several programs use a scavenger hunt to help new staff learn about the community, including having them get experience (with a co-worker alongside of them) talking to organizations where they bring program materials.
- One site has a brunch for new hires before they even start their first day so they can informally “mingle” with their new co-workers.
- It’s a challenge even to hire when your host agency doesn’t help with the recruiting. The idea of having the HR staff shadow a home visit was well-received by the group so that they understand more of what you’re looking for.
- Having the new hire sign an “overview of expectations” early in their on-boarding.
- Making sure that staff see “the good, the bad and the ugly” when it comes to home visiting- that’s my job as a supervisor. We have them accompany as many people as possible so they learn different home visitor styles, and especially have them visit a wide variety of families so they have realistic expectations about the different experiences and situations of the families we serve.
- Including writing up a mock home visit narrative on the visits they shadow, reviewing it with them in supervision, letting them see the one the home visitor completed for comparison.
- It’s a challenge when the host agency has so many different orientation requirements apart from the ones required in HFNY.
- Organization is the key- it can be overwhelming for the supervisor to keep it all straight. I create a fillable calendar for their first month- it helps them and me.

**When asked for a word about their experience in the forum, supervisors shared:**

- helpful, reassuring, productive, informative, enlightening and encouraging, I love these meetings/thank you so much for having these, it seems like we all have our own individual challenges with on-boarding, but we also have some great ideas for addressing these challenges, great ideas of ways to help, the need of in person trainings if only once per year will support us on maintaining expectations to an in person type of program, connection, supported, motivated and supported, love the supervisor forums!!! Always like to come together with others, makes me feel a sense of community, new ideas.

**Attached to the email with the notes:**

Margaret (Herkimer) Welcome document, New Staff orientation checklist, when to notify your supervisor  
 Melissa (Chautauqua) New Hire Scavenger Hunt.