

Supervisor Forum

Topic: Making the most of Internal QA

Date: 1/12-13/21

CW Attendance: Tioga (1), Chemung (1), Cortland (1), Steuben (2), Wayne (1), Broome (1), Ontario/Yates (2), Jefferson (2), Niagara (2)

MH/Cap Attendance: Columbia (1), Schenectady (1), Clinton (1), Rensselaer (2), Orange (1), Sullivan (1), Ulster (1), Delaware (1), Dutchess (3), Oneida (1), Otsego (1)

NYC Attendance: Parkchester 2, Brookdale 4, Central Harlem 1, Suffolk 1, Westchester 2, CAMBA 2, Corona 1, Monroe 1, Sunset, Park 2, Bushwick 1, Morris Heights 1

PCANY: Isabel, Ellen and Caroline

What has been working?

- Having staff that was on board before the pandemic has made the adjustment easier.
- Being paperless prior to the pandemic really helped.
- At staff meetings in addition to talking about what's working, what is not working, now we talk about feedback that families are giving staff. We process and think it through together. This helps them feel that we're all in this together.
- Adding QA requirements into our calendars to tracking observations and getting them done, talking about them during team meetings and supervision.
- Having a "parking lot" so staff can bring their stress and challenges. "If we stay focused and keep ourselves centered, we know there are the constants, and these are the things we have to deliver."
- Having different ways to be able to conduct the observations (video or recording).
- Trying to keep everything as similar as before—the only thing that has changed is the platform, visit content and other tasks are the same.
- We doing more anticipatory work with staff, like providing more reminders about timeframes.
- Using Zoom and WhatsApp for observations- any technology that the family has.
- Orienting families right from the start about QA. Phrasing it to them that "observation is so we can provide best services."
- Really staying with the model of having staff answer their own questions together with the supervisor, rather than supervisor doing the talking.
- For parent surveys, supervisors noticed that sometimes they surveys can go on very long, a family seemed 'bored.' Noted that there are some questions you don't have to ask and that the FSS can ask them. Another supervisor shared, "The most important thing is that the family feel relaxed more than that you get all the questions answered." Another offered, "Try to use questions that can answer more than one question to make it not feel so long. That way you get all the information but it isn't so long."
- Home visitors have "stepped up", even with challenges.
- Engaging home visitors in reviewing the MIS Quality Assurance report.

- Transparent about QA activities. Making sure I let home visitors know what I am doing, the purpose of the QA activity. Sending staff copies of the observation forms ahead of time.
- When observing participants who speak another language in which I am not fluent, I have connected to the home visitor via Zoom and they put the family on speakerphone and I observe their visit interactions with the family. This allows me to observe things such as body language tone of voice.
- Revised participant satisfaction survey to include questions about the families experience with home visiting during COVID.
- Phone observations have been successful. I feel I have had the opportunity to “hear the smiles.”
- Remaining strengths-based during the debriefing sets a positive tone for how the home visitor approaches QA and observations.
- Connecting QA activities with the Best Practice Standards so staff understands the “whys” of doing QA work.
- Using the MIS HV activities report in supervision to encourage home visitors to reflect on their work, and be the ones to make sure they are giving themselves credit for their work.
- Virtual observations make it easier to sit in the background. Being able to mute myself keeps me from talking and getting involved in the visit.
- Use MIS Quality Assurance report more often in supervision.
- Have noted more success with obtaining completed surveys from families if the questions were asked during a phone call instead of having the family fill out a paper survey. This was the experience of some supervisors when virtual observations were more positive via phone versus video contact.
- Have had the opportunity to ask families if they have felt just as supported with current home visiting changes; what is working; what can we do better? A disclaimer is included, that some of it can't be fixed.
- Have worked to be really flexible with FSS/FRS. This has helped to reduce the pressure home visitors feel.
- Observations feel more comfortable in the office; camera and microphone are off and it allows for the observer to be a “fly on the wall.” It is an opportunity to see an actual visit, instead of being 3 ft. away in a home. Staff has said that it feels less awkward.
- During a PCANY QA observation through video felt more comfortable. The observation was also recorded and it was helpful to get to review the video.
- With regard to Parent Survey observations, if a parent answers phone, most do the Parent Survey right then and there. During the call if the parent is agreeable to it, the Supervisor will take the opportunity to conduct the observation at the same time.
- It is different doing observations without visual cues. I was more aware of the importance of transitioning when it is just a call versus in person. For example, a parent was excited about the conversation and the home visitor went right into the next question because they didn't notice the parent's engagement cue.
- Able to take more notes; able to use more quotes because others are not seeing you while you observe so you can write more.
- More opportunities for observations because there is less travel.
- It can be easier to debrief. Often times, the FSS stays on to debrief right away. When debriefing is in person, it may not be able to happen immediately debrief because staff may have to go to another meeting or they are driving back to the office. The feedback is different when it can be done immediately after the observation. Especially true for new staff.

Challenges:

- The “fire” has gone out now that they’ve been virtual for so long. When we first started, everyone had lots of energy to do what needed to be done.
- On boarding someone virtually is really hard.
- You as a supervisor are going through all the same things as the staff, like with children home schooling. It’s hard to get into the mind set to do supervision if your own world is chaotic.
- A family decided not to be on camera- we didn’t push it, as we have to meet family where they are at.
- The issue isn’t completing the activities; the issue is how do we “fix” the things we’re learning. Everyone’s having the same issues with engaging, maintaining focus. So, how do we then help the staff and guide them to give them the right tools and support them with everything else going on. We’re all learning as we go along, just like the home visitors.
- A family complained to a supervisor about FSS “pushing” visits too much. Felt that if they’d been in person that it would have made the FSS’s requests not seem so “pushy.”
- Some home visitors are having challenges keeping up with what they need to do.
- Conducting virtual observations with families who speak a language in which I am not fluent.
- Some home visitors feel disorganized at home, especially when they are transitioning from home to periodic office days. Some home visitors don’t have a space for a designated office at home.
- File reviews are challenging.
- Observing home visits is more difficult because some families push back with having an observation done.
- Going to the home might seem intimate/private, but phone calls can feel that way more so. Families sometimes feel that video calls are more intrusive, but if the video is shut off and sound is on, it can feel less intrusive, but it’s still challenging.
- Some staff has found it strange to experience observations with the Supervisor muted with the black screen. It has helped to have the video on and “be seen but not heard.”
- It has taken longer to write up an internal QA observation when it is phone (no video). Even though you can hear everything, it is not possible to read the physical cues.
- The act of being observed has been challenging for some staff. However, when staff experience the style in which feedback is given, it has been helpful. Want staff to feel safe and with each observation, they will hopefully begin to feel more comfortable.
- Since there is less travel, supervisors might be able to have more observations; staff then say, “Why so many observations?” They feel that Supervisors might be looking for what is “wrong” rather than supporting the staff.
- Some staff that has been in other positions question why they have to be observed so much. A previous Supervisor was able to explain it in this way, “we are all a team. We support each other; we believe that everybody can grow. Having a Supervisor observe a home visit can be a way for us to get to know each other. If the family needs something and the home visitor is not available, the family is able to put a face to the name of the Supervisor that is helping them instead. I’m just listening, and going to

reflect and see if there are more ways to grow.” This perspective is helpful for the family, home visitor, and the supervisor.

- Staff had anxieties about things too. They were worrying about why they were being observed?
- During a recent PCANY QA observation, there were some technical issues, but with the PM's ingenuity, the observation continued it got done.
- A home visitor said, “Why is she [PCANY QA Specialist] observing me? Important to provide clarification for who is being observed and the benefits of the observation (i.e. supporting professional growth, opportunity for support)
- Need to be more flexible than we have ever been.
- What's nice is if a Program Manager sees how supervisors can support staff in through observation feedback. Watching others debrief can help.

Ideas for Moving Forward:

- Start using recording option for the observations.
- Going paperless.
- Share tracking forms for file reviews, revised participant satisfaction surveys.
- Share systems for tracking ASQ and ASQ-SE on line.
- Being more aware of how home visitors might feel about being observed. Not assuming my perspective is how they view the process.

Where more support/information is needed:

- Haven't seen many examples of how much to write or how little? What does that look like? What are some examples for that?
- Ideas/guidance for the file review
- Due to so many forms being electronic now, guidance/tips on file reviews would be helpful.
- Some Supervisors/Program Managers have created their own file review forms. It seems that concrete guidance is helpful. Other helpful factors are connecting what is covered in a file review to the Best Practice Standards or policies.
- Spreadsheets and timelines for observation per quarter, file reviews, etc. would be helpful.
- QA is covered in Supervisor's Core, but a sample of QA documentation is not shared because every site is not required to use the same form. It may be an area that CA can gather some examples of forms to add to HFNY protected section of the website.
- What about QA ticklers?
- Supervisors could print out the reports, have data, but no stories behind the numbers. It would be helpful to have a way to capture the meaningful stories that staff know are reasons for the growth of a family.
- A program adapted the file review: adjusted it over time, anything that is needed in the file is added to the file review. In another column, what supervisor needs to look for each area is listed.

- If there are materials that programs are willing to share, they can send to Ellen Butowsky (ebutowsky@preventchildabuse.org). It can then be sent out to the HFNY Network, or potentially put on the staff side of the website.

Other:

Any other opportunities to connect with each other.

- Enjoyed the forums. Would be great to continue having them, especially with changes happening for a few of these topics (e.g. FGP, Service Plan). Maybe each topic can be covered annually.
- Would like to see something like this because of the support. Ok with it being offered multiple times per year.
- Staff has expressed interest in having an FSS, FRS, or combination forums regarding topics related to the FSS or FRS role. They would like to have opportunities to connect with other programs.
- Not sure of method for us to keep connecting but I really appreciate hearing from everyone- the more minds the better.
- I look forward to doing this more. This has been really helpful for me.
- Forums focused on MIS changes
- Have a “working” forum where we could choose a topic like the Service Plan and work together via Zoom.