Early Childhood Education and Beyond: Collaborative, Multi-disciplinary Supports for Trainers and Educators

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Parenting In Context In-service
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Three innovative, cross-disciplinary initiatives

- Project overview
- Research base (not evidence based yet!)
- Research Plans or preliminary findings
3 innovative, cross-disciplinary initiatives

- CANDO
- Superstar Practitioners Project
- Early Learning Trainers Academy
CANDO: What do we know?

• 53% of Chemung County kindergarteners enter school “not ready” (Chatterji & Iyengar, 2009)

• Local agencies seeing high need for services
  – Chemung County Crisis Program receives ~ 140 calls each year for children ages 0-15

• “Disconnect” in knowledge base between child development and mental health workers
The CANDO Approach

• Train the trainer model
• Co-trainer teams from different agencies
• Cross-discipline training content
  – Base level knowledge of child development and young children’s mental health
• Cross discipline trainees
• Workshop series
CANDO: Training Goals

1. Be familiar with infant, toddler, & preschooler development and mental health
2. Better understand how development and mental health in children age 0-5 relates to your work with children and families
3. Be familiar with resources/strategies to support work with young children and their families
4. Better understand roles, expertise & experiences of colleagues from other agencies to facilitate collaborations and connections for professionals and families
CANDO: Training Topics

• Child Development
  – Developmental Milestones
  – Infant Attachment
  – Toddler Independence
  – Preschool Self Regulation

• Mental Health
  – Mental Health Diagnoses
  – Risk and Resilience
  – Internalizing and Externalizing
  – Addressing Challenging Behaviors
  – Red Flags
Who Ended the CANDO training?

- Child Care Center/Head: 66%
- Home Visitor: 9%
- Family Service Worker: 4%
- Counselor: 4%
- Other: 17%

Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research
Educational Background of Training Participants

- Some/Completed High School: 39%
- Some College/Associates Degree: 35%
- Bachelors Degree: 13%
- Advanced Degree: 9%
- Some Graduate Coursework: 4%
CANDO Training Outcomes

Child Development Knowledge

Developmental Milestones
Infant Attachment
Toddler Independence
Preschool Self Regulation

Before
After

Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research
CANDO Training Outcomes

Mental Health Knowledge

- Mental Health Diagnoses
- Risk & Resiliency
- Internalizing/Externalizing
- Challenging Behaviors
- Red Flags

Before vs. After
What did you learn most from in Child Development?

- Developmental Milestones: 35%
- Infant Attachment: 13%
- Toddler Independence: 22%
- Preschool Self Regulation: 26%
- All
What did you learn most from in Mental Health?

- Mental Health Diagnoses: 26%
- Risk and Resilience: 9%
- Internalizing and Externalizing: 9%
- Challenging Behaviors: 31%
- Red Flags: 4%
- Multiple/All categories: 21%
How did the training contribute to participant’s knowledge/networking?

• Vast majority said training contributed considerably/extensively to their knowledge of child development (77%) and mental health (88%)
• 95% said training was considerably/extensively applicable to their work with children
• 91% said training allowed them to network with other professionals they did not already know
What specific strategies did they learn that they might use with children?

• Replacement language- avoid using word no-use do instead of don't. Name what you want them to do

• Referral services available

• Not to judge, but observe

• What to look for in their behaviors

• How to deal with the behaviors better
Challenges to CANDO

• 65% of the attendees indicated that they would attend CANDO training(s) in the future
• Multi-agency meant that no one “owns” or champions the work
• Cross-disciplinary topics can be hard to identify
• Funding ended, key player lost job, so lost momentum
CANDO Future Research

• Replicate the model
• Objective measures of knowledge and skill change
• Document longer term outcomes
  – Cross-disciplinary collaborations
  – Impact on service referrals
Superstar Practitioners Project
Superstar Practitioners: What do we know?

- Many human service sectors suffer from poor quality programming
- Frameworks looking at implementation of Evidence Based Programs do not address how practitioners’ interpersonal practices/skills promote
  - client engagement
  - high quality program implementation
  - positive client outcomes
Superstar Practitioners:
What do we know?

• Some interpersonal aspects of practice have been examined within individual service domains
  – public health
  – Psychotherapy/mental health
  – home visiting
  – early care and education

• Practice dimensions across domains have not been examined
Superstar Practitioners: Goals

1. Develop empirically/practice based framework of key interpersonal dimensions associated with clients engagement across a wide range of direct-service settings

2. Develop/pilot an observational instrument to measure these dimensions
   - Research
   - Practice

3. Develop procedures/materials to guide use of the observational instrument as a self-assessment/professional development tool
Superstar Literature Review

• Review of academic/practice literature
• Review of observational and assessment tools
• Multi-disciplinary review
  – public health
  – psychotherapy/mental health
  – home visiting
  – early care and education
  – parent education
Feels Good
- Warm Interaction
- Validation/non-judgmental
- Safety

Cares about my growth
- Promote growth
- Invested

Learns what I need
- Listen/Reflect/Understand
- Flexible/Individualized

Perceived Value
- Structure/Limits
- Capacity/Knowledge
Superstar Research Next Steps

• Video observations of Superstar practitioners
• Focus Groups
  – direct-service practitioners
  – supervisors and program managers
  – clients
• Develop and pilot observational tool
Early Learning Trainers Academy
ELTA: What do we know?

- States with QRIS systems see many programs “stall” (Ohio, Maine, Delaware)
- Quality of “training” is often not monitored
Early Learning Trainers Academy (ELTA)

- Rochester Childfirst Network
- Pilot program
- On-going support for professional development specialists in early childhood education
ELTA Activities

• Train the trainer model for trainers who use
  – Diverse training methods
    • Coaches at centers
    • Home Visitors in FCC
    • Presenter/Workshop Leader
    • Facilitator of collegial circle
  – Diverse settings
  – Diverse topics
ELTA Activities

• Study group for NYS Trainers Credential
• On-going training in various topics
  – Adult education
  – Core Body of Knowledge/Early Learning Guidelines
  – Presentation skills
  – Developmentally Appropriate Practice
ELTA Activities

- Pilot on-line relationship-based training modules (Erikson Institute)
  - Focus on family child care providers
  - Developmental knowledge and relational skills
  - Evaluation
ELTA Evaluation

- Document outcomes
- Process study of what works
- Self assessment of training skills
- Objective assessment of training skills
Cross Project Themes

• Support for training infrastructure
• Intensive, on-going
• Need a local champion
• Collaborations across disciplines
  – Common knowledge base/Familiarity with resources → more seamless programming
  – Complexities in shared funding/resources
Thank you funders!

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• CU Agricultural Experiment Station (Hatch funds) (Superstar)
• Rochester Area Community Foundation (ELTA)
For More Information

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Discussion Questions

• What’s innovative in supports for trainers in your community?
• What other research questions should we be asking as these programs move forward?