

Using the Differential Response Practice Profiles in Supervision

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As an Alternative Response unit supervisor I have found the Differential Response Practice Profiles to be a valuable tool in my work with my unit and to promote best practice within other areas of my agency.

How I've used the Practice Profiles with staff

My agency gave all social service personnel a copy of the Practice Profiles along with a brief description of the tool. After having some time to read and reflect on the Practice Profiles my workers and I began to have conversations during supervision using the Practice Profiles to evaluate their skills.

One worker found the tool very helpful because it used behavioral statements and skills she could immediately incorporate into her practice. She felt this enhanced her service delivery to her families. One particular practice she immediately implemented altered how she completed her service plans with families. In the past, it was my worker who often asked questions and wrote the responses provided by the families during the development of their service plan. However, the "Partnering" skill set encourages caseworkers to give the families a blank document, allowing them to use their own words during the development of the family service plan. My worker realized that "little" things like this make all the difference to the families we serve.

How my agency has used the Practice Profiles

To promote the use of the Practice Profiles throughout my agency, the Intake Department plans to highlight one skill set each month. This month is "Engagement". The staff was charged with spreading the word about engagement, so we hung fliers throughout the agency that displayed our definitions of engagement. We also made simple suggestions on how to move caseworker's engagement skills from developmental to ideal. Staff have also been encouraged to put different engagement techniques in each other's mailboxes. Supervisors are responsible for reiterating the message in their monthly unit meetings and fostering discussions on engagement. Supervisors are also focused on learning how their staff engage families and asking them to share something new they've have tried with their unit. Supervisors share during weekly supervisory team meetings their unit practices and changes they've made.