

Handouts for the Webinar

Leadership in Income Maintenance: A Framework for Success

June 25, 2014

Presenters

DURHAM COUNTY DSS

Catherine Williamson-Hardy
Assistant Director

UNC-CH SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Christine Howell
Clinical Assistant Professor

Produced by

Family and Children’s Resource Program, part of the
Jordan Institute for Families
UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work

in collaboration with the

North Carolina Association of County Directors of Social Services

Contents

Webinar Slides.....	2
Six Steps of The Work of the Leader.....	11

Highly Recommended Reading

Heifetz, R. A. & Laurie, D. L. (1997, January-February). The work of leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 124-134.


http://admin.kasa.org/Professional_Development/documents/TheWorkofLeadership.pdf

Handouts from First Webinar

To download handouts from the first webinar in this series, “Leadership in Income Maintenance: Solving and Aligning Technical and Adaptive Problems” (June 18, 2014), go to:


<http://fcrp.unc.edu/pdfs/IncomeMaintenance.pdf>

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Leadership in Income Maintenance
**A Framework
for Success**
Jordan Institute for Families, UNC-CH School of Social Work


Please click on the colored link below to download the handout for today:
[6-25-14 webinar handout](#)



UNC
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
June 25, 2014

[1]

Goals of this Webinar




- Understand what's required of leaders during times of change
- Learn 6 strategic steps defining the adaptive leader's work
- Generate ideas about how to put these 6 steps into practice

Ultimate Goal
Help you navigate changes to supervision in Income Maintenance.

[2]

Today's Agenda




- I. Orientation & introductions
- II. The Heart of Leadership
- III. The Work of the Leader
- IV. Practice with Examples

[3]

Panelists

Catherine Williamson-Hardy
Assistant Director
Durham County Social Services

Christine Howell
Clinical Assistant Professor
Jordan Institute for Families
UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work




Tech Support

Phillip Armfield
John McMahon

4

Income Maintenance Supervision in NC Today

- Work of Income Maintenance has changed
- Traditional leadership structures have changed
- Customer service is a critical element
- Managing stress is imperative for the supervisor and for workers



5

PRINCIPLES OF PARTNERSHIP

6







Principles of Partnership

3 Partnership...

is a process.

[10]

Principles of Partnership

4  Everyone
has strengths.

[11]

Principles of Partnership

5 Everyone
needs to be
heard.


[12]

Principles of Partnership

6


Partners share power.



{ 13 }

The Heart of Leadership

Leadership at its heart is about mobilizing people to tackle tough problems.



Leadership involves our self-images and moral codes.

—Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (1998)

{ 14 }

Difference Between Adaptive and Technical Work

Technical	Adaptive
Alignment	Different perspectives
Clear definition	Unclear definition
Solution and implementation clear	Unclear solution and implementation
Leader can take primary responsibility	Leader cannot be primarily responsible

{ 15 }

THE WORK OF THE LEADER

[16]

Two Sides of the Same Coin

Leadership requires a change in both:



Action & Beliefs

[17]

Six Strategies for Work of the Leader

1. Get on the balcony
2. Identify adaptive challenges
3. Regulate distress
4. Maintain disciplined attention
5. Give the work back to the people
6. Be open to all voices

6

[18]

1. Get on the Balcony

- Get a perspective on the **big picture**
- Identify conflict
- Identify patterns
- Look for strengths
- Positive and negative reactions to change



19

2. Identify Adaptive Challenges

- Where are there conflicts in values, practices, and relationships?
- Frame the challenge as a “call” for collective sense of responsibility; as a leader, facilitate action.

Consider

What new learning needs to take place?
What new competencies are required for this change?
How can we work collectively?

20

3. Regulate Distress

- Create a “holding environment”
- Maintain personal composure and regulate emotion



21

4. Maintain Disciplined Attention

- Do not avoid disturbing issues
- Expose conflict and use it to produce creativity
- Identify distractions and regain focus on goals



{ 22 }

5. Give the Work Back to the People

- Get them to take great responsibility with the work
- Get them to take initiative to offer input and solutions
- Support them; don't control them
- Instill people's confidence so they take risks; back them when they err
- Create communities of learners



{ 23 }

6. Be Open to All Voices

Leaders must . . .



Listen




Provide cover for employees who speak their truth



Avoid the urge to silence unexpected leadership voices

{ 24 }

Q & A



[25]

Transfer of Learning

Use your chat pod:

What's one way this information will help you with your work?

[26]

Contact Information

Catherine Williamson-Hardy
cwhardy@dconc.gov

Chris Howell
chowell@email.unc.edu

[27]

The Work of the Leader

Get on the Balcony



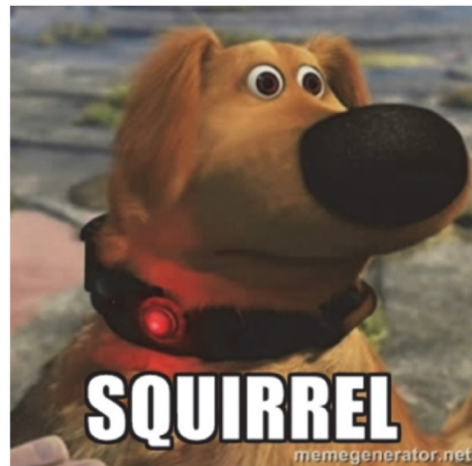
Identify the Adaptive Challenge



Regulate Distress



Maintain Disciplined Attention



Give the Work Back to the People



Be Open to all Voices



Listen

Provide cover for employees
(who are whistleblowers)



Avoid the urge to silence
unexpected leadership voices

Follow-up Document from the Webinar

Leadership in Income Maintenance: A Framework for Success

Webinar delivered June 25, 2014
Follow-up document date: July 2, 2014

Presenters

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Webinar handouts: <http://fcrp.unc.edu/pdfs/IncomeMaintenance2.pdf>

Recording: if you missed the webinar or want to view it again, go to: <http://fcrp.unc.edu/webinars.asp>

About this Webinar

How did this webinar come about?

This was the second of two free, 90-minute webinars for county DSS **income maintenance (IM) supervisors** that the UNC-CH School of Social Work will offer in June. Both webinars center on the theme "Managing Change in Times of Transition: The Work of the Leader."

These two webinars have come about as a result of meetings between the Jordan Institute for Families at the UNC-CH School of Social Work and the NC Association of County Directors of Social Services (NCACDSS). During these meetings, county DSS directors identified the need for income maintenance supervisors to have some training that would help them cope with the sea changes that they and their staffs are experiencing. They suggested that because IM supervisors are too busy to attend long classroom or online trainings, 90-minute webinars might be the best approach.

After this meeting UNC consulted with the NCACDSS and developed the two webinars. A representative of the NCACDSS identified a group of county IM supervisors; UNC surveyed them to

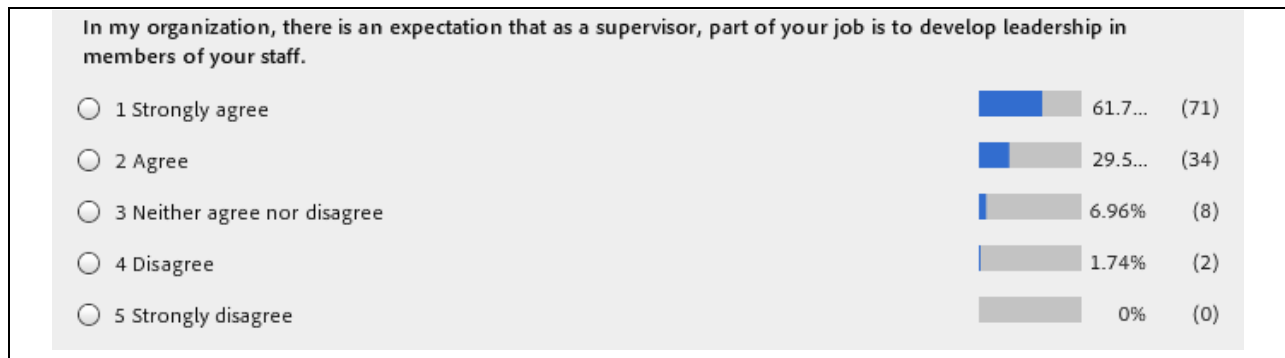
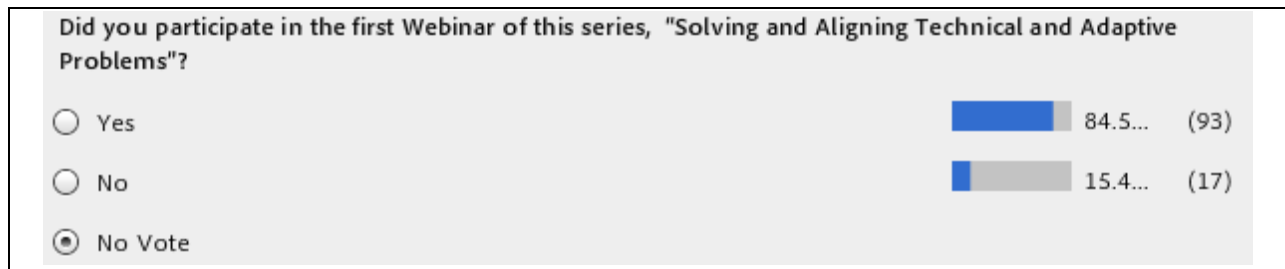
identify the content that they would see as most helpful to themselves and others. The topics selected for these webinars were the ones identified most often by those supervisors.

It is hoped that if these events are successful, other webinars for this audience might be offered in the future.

Who attended this event?

A total of 415 individuals from 90 North Carolina county DSS agencies registered for this event. Most were income maintenance supervisors; additional registrants included program managers, program administrators, lead workers, and county DSS directors.

Participant Responses to Polling Questions



Adaptive Challenges Faced by Participants

What is an adaptive challenge you are facing right now?

Participant responses to this question included the following:

- Huge workload
- Having to learn new programs
- Letting go of EIS
- Not being able to answer the questions that our staff have
- Over turn of staff
- Losing knowledgeable staff
- The feelings of not being an expert in any program anymore
- Multi-program IMCs, Redundancy within NC FAST
- Not having complete direction

- Larger workload with no additional staff
- Figuring out new strengths in the face of new systems and new business structures
- Changes in organizational structure
- Continued phone calls from clients that cases are not processing timely in NC Fast
- Supervising people
- Limited staff, turn over backlog
- Building new working relationships/teams as we embrace the universal concept.
- Multiple priorities - all considered critical
- Dealing with the stress that comes along with NC FAST
- Conflicting and constantly changing advice/instructions from State that hamper any type of planning
- Dealing with system problems that we have no control over
- Trying to get child support in the loop as our program will be affected by NC Fast also
- Having a backlog but then having to adjust and new policies and procedures that come from the state in the 4th quarter
- Staff are stressed to a point of emotions flaring so they are unable to receive the positive advice you try to give and no longer want to hear that they need to embrace the change or that we are here to help

Getting on the Balcony

Catherine, how do you get on the balcony?

Personally, I ask myself the question: "If I didn't have the answer, who would I ask? Who would I bring to the table?" This gets me in the right frame of mind. If you think you already know, you stop learning. But do what works for you--whatever helps you grow your perspective.

What do you do to "get on the balcony"?

Participant responses to this question included the following:

- Place myself in the worker position
- Encourage workers to share thoughts
- Say "help me understand"....empathic listening...I think this is what i heard you say...
- I sometimes use the miracle question to see the big picture
- Take a break - both mentally & physically to come back to the situation refreshed & less frustrated
- Let everyone's thoughts and opinions marinate before answering
- I try to learn everything I can that is available: read, read, read
- We send out surveys to workers to get their feedback
- Remember how it is to be a worker; talk with workers
- Walk around the offices and workers to see what is going on. Ask them questions. Be hands on with some of the work to see how it is actually processing.
- We have meetings weekly to allow staff to share their ideas and thoughts (2)

- Hold a work session to brainstorm on problem solving
- Get workers feedback and ideas
- Continue to get feedback from staff
- Observe the processes with a mindset that leaves out how it should be done.....to see what is being done.....and working well
- We have FAST Meetings to cover new processes

Suggestions for Regulating Distress

Catherine, what does it mean to create a holding environment?

One way to regulate distress is to create a “holding environment.” This can be a physical or mental space where:

- Difficult challenges can be discussed
- Diversity of opinion is welcome
- Experiences, values and assumptions are asked for and challenged
- Stress is expected and tolerated

Two tools that I have used to regulate distress and create a holding environment are:

- Oops/Ouch. These terms can become common vocabulary in your agency and useful for facilitating communication and managing conflict. If, after you have said something, you feel uneasy about the way in which you expressed it (e.g., it was inaccurate, it was hurtful), you might say “Oops” out loud to the group, admit your mistake, and ask for the opportunity to restate your comment. Likewise, if something someone has said continues to seem unfair or hurtful for some time after they have said it, you might say “Ouch” to the group and then use “I” statements to address the issue, rather than let it fester.
- Remote control. For more on this strategy, see the last page of this document.

What tools do you use to help regulate distress for yourself or your workers?

Participant responses to this question included the following:

- Exercising during lunch
- Being proactive in asking staff how they are feeling in the midst of challenging times
- Unit lunches, supervisor breakfast
- Attending to the person--asking how they are doing
- Lead by example; working alongside staff
- Asking staff if there is something that they need in order to accomplish their goals and working on meeting that need if one is identified
- Good communication between coworkers and also between co-supervisors
- We have used a mascot to preside over meetings to remind participants to address others in a respectful manner
- We do the "Pit & the Peach" or "Rose & the Thorn" at each weekly huddle. If the pit is work related, I write it down for further consideration.
- We do staff appreciation days (ice cream social last week)

- We had a huge cake made in the shape of an elephant and staff were invited to eat the elephant.....named NCFAS.....one bite at a time
- We treated our case workers last week to a surprise luncheon
- I will bring biscuits at least once a week for my workers

Exposing Conflict and Using it to Spark Creativity

What tools do you use to manage conflict on your teams?

Participant responses to this question included the following:

- Drill down to the emotion behind the issue
- Ask workers for solutions when they have a problem
- Owning mistakes
- Listening to staff to get to the root of the problem; create achievable goals
- Ask them how they would handle it
- Try to treat as an autopsy without blame
- Use the “Sandwich” technique: (1) begin by asking how would you do it? (2) have discussion based on what we've heard; (3) end by asking “what else would you say?”
- Remember to always tell someone that failed.....that it is okay to fail, that shows that they are trying. If you don't do or try, you will never fail.....but what does that achieve?
- Make sure staff understands there are no bad ideas. All ideas are valid.
- Talking to staff to find out what they would suggest. As an answer to the problems.

Reflecting on the Work of the Leader

Six Strategies for Work of the Leader

1. Get on the balcony
2. Identify adaptive challenges
3. Regulate distress
4. Maintain disciplined attention
5. Give the work back to the people
6. Be open to all voices

[14]

Of these 6 steps, what do you find most challenging, and why?

Participant responses to this question included the following:

- Maintaining disciplined attention (2)
- Be open to all voices (3)
- Give the work back to the people (2)

- Regulating Distress - Open emotions in your office; while continuing to get the work done (3)
 - Catherine: For me, it is regulating distress. I want to honor people's emotions and regulate my own, but need to be able to do that while constructively dealing with emotions so we can move forth.
- Identifying adaptive challenges (letting go of ability to be an expert all the time)

Transfer of Learning

What strategies have you used to be open to all voices? What's been helpful?

Participant responses to this question included the following:

- Catherine: listen for at least one thing you can connect to that person is saying, especially if you find that, for whatever reason, you are not naturally inclined to listen to this person.
- Leaders should be able to identify the strengths of workers and assign work accordingly while encouraging and rewarding growth at the same time. Must be open to staff and be ready to listen and then act on what you hear.
- Drop-ins for line staff can let their feelings be heard by Senior Leadership/director
- Open door policy with the supervisors and director
- Listening and commenting on what is being said
- With our weekly meetings, we listen to our staff - even if we don't agree, we hear their input
- Understand that listening is just not hearing, but watching body language and facial expressions
- Staying connected with your staff. You cannot solve all problems. Staff need to be heard.
- Acknowledging that staff are the experts; listening and addressing suggestions is crucial.

What's one way this information will help you with your work? What's one thing you will focus on when you get back to work?

Participant responses to this question included the following:

- Oops and Ouch! I like that approach
- To listen even when the comment sounds negative (seek to understand)
- Being more open and better listeners
- Taking the sandwich analogy to begin that dialogue with a worker. We also like the remote control!
- Not to let my personal emotions get in the way of problem solving
- I like the remote control and the 6 strategies for Work of the leader with my Management Team
- I'm going to try to 'get on the balcony' more often to find new ways to deal with situations
- Using the "Pit and Peach" technique
- The Sandwich analogy
- Listen Listen Listen and better support for our workers.
- rose and the thorn
- Be mindful of "How You Show Up"
- [Learn to say:] "I hear what you are saying and understand your point of view, but don't agree with it at this time." That was a nice way of framing it.

From the Field: Remote Control

A story from a CPS family assessment worker, collected and presented by Courtney Smith

After going through training as a family assessor, I asked the trainers to send me an electronic copy of the remote control activity we used for our practice sessions. In the training practice session, we used the remote to collect our thoughts, discuss strategies, or get feedback from the person playing the role of the client or the other workers at the table. I really liked being able to “Rewind” when I slipped into social work jargon or “Pause” to collect my thoughts so I decided to try it with the families I went out to assess the following week.



At first many of them thought I was weird, but using that remote control helped me be “human” in front of my families. They saw that I made mistakes too, that I didn’t always have the answers, and that sometimes I needed some time to think about what I wanted to say next. It also helped me be more willing to try out new tools with families because I knew I could “Pause” and look at my note cards or ask them for feedback about how I was doing.

One evening, I was visiting with a single father who had been mostly cooperative during my assessment with him. This day, however, I confronted him about his substance abuse and how it might be affecting his children. He got angry and just went off, venting about how “you people are messing in my life,” and how disruptive and upsetting my involvement was for him.

Using the principle, “Everyone needs to be heard,” I just let him talk, validating his feelings and agreeing that my involvement was intrusive. After about 10 minutes, his anger subsided.

Then the funniest thing happened. He said, “Where’s that remote control of yours?” Surprised, I handed it to him.

He pushed the rewind button and with a calm voice said, “Now, you were saying something about my drinking weren’t you? Tell me more about what you are concerned about.”

I smiled at his use of my own tool, regained my composure, and was able to focus on having a serious but compassionate discussion about the issues I was concerned about.

I left that day with a plan for keeping his children supervised that he came up with himself. I also came away with a new appreciation for the benefits of offering my own tools to the families I work with.

Reprinted from v1, n4 of the newsletter MRS! (http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/mrs/docs/newsletter_june_2006.pdf)

Remote Control Features

Pause

This feature allows anyone to stop discussion at any time. It can be used to collect your thoughts, to ask for feedback, to solicit different ways of doing something, or to clarify what has been said.

Rewind

This feature allows us to go backwards in an interaction and restate a question, ask a different question, change tactics, use a tool, or go in a different direction. It allows us the freedom to have a successful experience and to “fix” things when we are dissatisfied with the results we are getting.

Help

To be used when you feel stuck. It indicates you need some suggestions or discussion around what is happening and how best to improve the situation.

People responding to the Help command are encouraged to phrase their feedback as an “I wonder...” statement. For example, “I wonder if the fact that the policy has changed may be contributing what’s happening.”