

Purpose of this Newsletter

The human/social services field is comprised of thousands of dedicated and hard working professionals who often do not receive adequate professional development and support. This quarterly newsletter is specifically for frontline workers and supervisors in child welfare, child protection, juvenile justice, and other related fields and will attempt to address the challenges that are commonly faced.

CONTACT US

We would love your thoughts on topics we can cover in future issues. Email Tim at Tim@HumanServicesLeadership.org or visit www.HumanServicesLeadership.org



This Issue

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Maintaining the Optimal Mindset

The field expects a great deal from workers. Whether it is working with resistant clients or attempting to find adequate resources that often prove elusive, to everything in between. Days often start early and can end late.

First, there are a few points to consider to help ensure you are maintaining the best mindset to support highly effective behavior:

- Most of us did not enter the field to make large sums of money. So, take a moment to reflect periodically on what passion brought you into the field.
 - Find resources to ignite your passion. It could be a YouTube clip, a movie, an experience or a quote.
 - Working in the helping profession is a calling. You are meant to be in this position because you enjoy helping others and can make a difference.
 - Be mindful of your energy. Do you present as someone that enjoys being there?
- Research has found that one of the contributing factors behind worker burnout and eventual turnover is professionals not feeling like they are making a difference. Take a moment to remind yourself of the difference you continuously make. Every phone call, text, email, and interaction with a client makes a difference.
 - Find small ways to have an impact:
 - Thoroughly listening to clients so they feel heard can be significant.
 - Giving a client a compliment for something they did well.
 - Create opportunities to engage clients in a meaningful way.
 - Obtain feedback and perspective from colleagues.
 - Often, the greatest source of support comes from your colleagues.
 - Take initiative to ask for their thoughts on a situation.
 - Be sure to reciprocate support that you receive.

Research Update

The General Accounting Office's 2003 report on how Health and Human Services (HHS) Could Play a Greater Role in Helping Child Welfare Agencies Recruit and Retain Staff, is probably one of the most often cited pieces of research in the field.

The article found the following causes of caseworker turnover:

- Low pay
- Risk of violence
- Staff shortages
- High caseloads
- Administrative burdens
- Inadequate supervision
- Inadequate training

Other critical areas highlighted that still resonate today:

- Annual turnover of frontline workers ranged from 30 to 40 percent nationwide.
- The average tenure for child welfare workers was less than two years.
- Administrative demands on workers and supervisors took up 50 to 80 percent of their time.



Supervisors are often placed in challenging positions. They are asked to lead groups of people, but often are not provided with adequate training or support. Further, administrative demands can often take away from checking in and supporting workers.

Still, workers are often struggling with the weight of the demands of the work as well as the emotional toll of working in the human services field.

Research has found that effective supervision and supervisory relationships can often make a critical difference between worker performance (i.e. above average performance compared to below average) and retention.

While providing effective supervision sounds easy in theory, it can be very difficult due to the numerous challenges that occur on a daily basis.

A couple of tips to improve relationships and retention of your staff:

- **Checking in with staff on a daily basis.** It sounds easy enough, but a text message to your team at the start of the day can make a big difference. Also, consider having a group chat set up for the team.

“Negative feedback can lower staff commitment and contribute to employee turnover.”

- **Catch them doing well.** It could be something as small as complimenting a recent report they completed due to the level of detail or pointing out how something they did made a difference.

How supervisors can support workers.

Sometimes the smallest things can have a significant effect.

Make a point to routinely show your staff how their actions do make a difference-with clients or or with other professionals. It could be an email, phone call, or text that significantly helps a client during a difficult time.

- **Ask what support looks like.** This simple question can potentially unlock a great deal of commitment from staff and give them the opportunity to verbalize the challenges they are experiencing and what they need from you or the organization. For example, during a recent training with a supervisor group this was mentioned. The director of the agency emailed me later in the day to show how this simple question was used to help a struggling employee ask for help and take ownership of their performance.

Upcoming Events You Can Attend

Maximizing Employee Engagement and Retention

6/5/19: King and Queen, Virginia
6/6/19: Open for private training
6/7/19: Radford, Virginia

6/26/19: Lincoln County DSS, North Carolina
6/27/19: Durham County DSS, North Carolina

Creating the Optimal Environment to Lead

8/27/19: Ottawa County DHHS, Michigan
8/28/19: Wexford County DHHS, Michigan
8/29/19: St. Clair County DHHS, Michigan
8/30/19: Wayne County DHHS, Michigan

See more information and registration details at:
<https://humanservicesleadership.org/services/upcoming-trainings/>

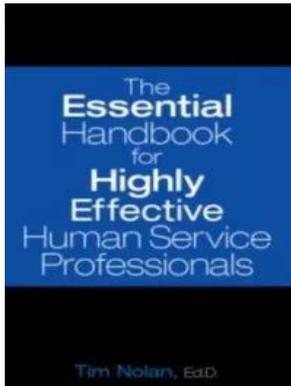
See book reviews and ordering information at
www.HumanServicesLeadership.org/books

About the Human Services Leadership Institute

The Human Services Leadership Institute is led by Tim Nolan, Ed.D., who has worked with over 10,000 human service professionals and dozens of organizations across 21 states. He focuses on developing leadership skills for professionals in the field to support exceptional employee commitment, performance, and retention.

Tim is available to provide a wide variety of training to your staff and also specializes in organizational assessment and performance improvement.

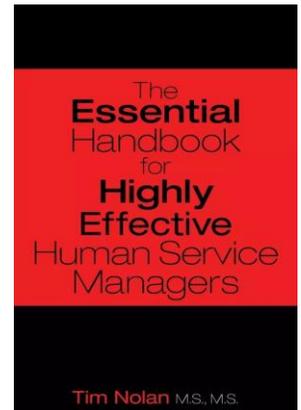
See more information at www.HumanServicesLeadership.org



Written specifically for frontline workers to provide exceptional client care, customer service, and professional performance. Chapters are short and concise.



Written in the same manner as the human services manager book, but geared for management in any other field (i.e. business).



Used by thousands of management staff across the country. Short and concise chapters that are easy to read and packed with skills and strategies that can immediately help elevate your leadership performance and employee commitment, performance, and retention.

This book is also a centerpiece of the **Highly Effective Human Service Managers Program**, a 12-month program that 18 organizations are using to improve leadership skills for managers and staff retention.