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Social Work Awards for Excellence

The Committee of Management of the AASW (WA Branch) has decided to introduce Social Work Awards for Excellence. The first awards will be presented in April 1998 in conjunction with the Margaret Stockbridge (UWA) and Barbara Kinna (Curtin University) social work student awards.

Background

The WA Branch believes that it is important to recognise excellence in the work of our social work colleagues. Some initial work on guidelines for awards was undertaken several years ago but not fully developed.

Last year, the 50th Anniversary of the AASW, saw the recognition of a number of WA social workers through the awarding of medallions in recognition of their contribution to the AASW at both national and branch level. This initiative provided a timely reminder of the need to progress the Branch's earlier work on developing awards for excellence. In September 1997, the Branch formed a small working group to examine both student and practitioner awards. The members were Lynn Selepak (Convenor and Vice President Education), Virginia Scott (Vice President Ethics and Professional Practice), Naomi Shattock (Convenor Recent Graduates Subcommittee AASW WA Branch), Peter Clissa (Social work student representative) and Chris Coopes.

Outcomes of the working group's efforts were the development of a branch policy for the awards, and new proposals for the presentation of the social work student awards, incorporating the Social Work Awards for Excellence.

Social work awards for excellence policy

The Social Work Awards for Excellence will be awarded for performance of an exceptional standard in an award category, recognised by the presentation of a Certificate of Excellence and a medallion. Some details of the policy are outlined below.

Underpinning principles for the awards

- A social work award for excellence is intended to reward consistently high standards of performance as well as individual or specific examples of meritorious performance.
- An award will only be made where it is considered that there is a nomination of exceptional standard in an award category.
- Awards may not necessarily be made in each category each year.
- Good practice standards generally, as well as for the category of nomination, will be taken into consideration.
- The award categories cover a number of aspects of social work practice, irrespective of the context in which the social worker is working; they focus on the competencies and qualities demonstrated by the social worker in terms of professional practice standards, values and ethics as well as the outcomes achieved.
- Awards may, however, recognise differing circumstances in which social workers practice, such as regional/rural/isolated areas as against metropolitan-based practice.
- The award will take the form of a Certificate of Excellence and a medallion.
- Membership of the AASW is a requirement for an award.

Award Categories

- Professional Practice
- Ethics
- Innovation/Pioneering
- Management
- Policy Development/Implementation
- Contribution to Learning
- Research
- Leadership

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CPE Update

by Barbara Meddin, National Vice President, Professional Practice & Standards

As many people would be aware, the AASW's policy regarding Continuing Professional Education (CPE) was implemented in July of 1996. CPE is well and truly up and running now, and judging by the feedback, both members and employers are very supportive of the concept. And why not? CPE provides members with the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to ethical and accountable practice by being up to date in their knowledge and skills and will provide employers with a way of knowing that social workers in their agency are able to provide services based on this knowledge and skill development.

Lots of things have been happening since July of last year. All members have received their CPE logs and should by now be on the way to achieving the 15 CPE points required for this membership year. Remember if you attend an AASW sponsored CPE activity, you get double CPE points. This means the State Conference would have been a way to acquire most of the required points. Reading journal articles and professional books counts as does receiving ongoing professional supervision, supervising students and being a member of a professional relevant committee. A glance at your log book will show you many other ways you can easily acquire points.

At a National level, you may have seen that the Association has joined, on behalf of all members of the Association, the Oz Child human services lending library network. In each edition of the National Bulletin is an annotated bibliography of 30 of the library's newest acquisitions. The abstracts of their entire library holdings are available in the Branch office. Any articles you wish to have photocopies of, just simply fill out the form enclosed in the National Bulletin, (if you've lost yours, ring National Office on 1 800 630 124 and they'll fax you another which can be photocopied to use as often as you like.). Anyway just fill in the form and send it to Oz Child with $3.00 and a copy of the article will be on its way to you. You can also borrow training videos from Oz Child for a small fee to cover return postage.

The CPE policy was officially launched at the AASW's national conference held in Canberra in September. At that time, members who played a significant role in bringing CPE to fruition were recognised. WA Branch President Brian Wooller was recognised for initially putting CPE on the Association's agenda in 1978, Joe Calleja, whose vision as national vice president gave leadership to ***Self regulation - the way forward***, which provided the mandate for the CPE policy, and Imelda Dodds under whose national presidency the vision became a reality. I was fortunate to have chaired the National CPE Committee which actually developed the policy. What I'm sure you've figured out by now - all the people who have made CPE possible are, or were West Australians!!!

At both a national and a state level, we have sponsored a remote practitioner to attend the National and State Conferences. National Office is in the process of purchasing a video camera for loan to Branches so that they may video their CPE activities and make them available for loan through Oz Child.

The Association called for tenders nationally for curricula that would be provided in regional centres as well as in the major metropolitan centres in the areas of Ethics, Supervision, and Case Management. These tenders are now in, and a nationally based committee will be selecting from among the tenders received. It is anticipated that the courses will be up and running during 1998.

Members who comply with CPE requirements will be eligible to be recognised as Accredited Social Workers and will receive a membership certificate next year that acknowledges that they have achieved Accredited Social Work status. The Association has contacted major state and national employers informing them of the Association's CPE policy and urging them to consider giving preference in recruitment, selection and promotion to Accredited Social Workers. Branch Committees of Management and CPE committees have been asked to assist with this employer strategy.

All in all it has been an exciting time for CPE. The next stage involves undertaking an evaluation of the policy after its first 12 months. The purpose of this is to get feedback from the membership and to look at suggested changes or needed development for the policy and process. Also happening after the end of this membership year will be a random audit of members regarding their CPE claims.

Further down the track, members will be asked to respond to options for the

Liz Retamal (on behalf of Brian Wooller), Barbara Meddin, Joe Calleja & Imelda Dodds with CPE log book at launch of CPE policy, National Conference Sept 97

Procedural Arrangements

- The Vice President (Ethics and Professional Practice) has responsibility for calling for nominations and organising the awards process.
- Social workers may apply for an award(s) or can be nominated for an award(s).
- Each nomination is to be made on the nomination form provided and may be accompanied by additional supporting information.
- Each nomination is to include the names of referees who are able to comment on the social worker's practice or performance that forms the basis of the nomination.
- A panel consisting of representatives from the Committee of Management and the Professional practice and Ethics Committees will consider each nomination and make recommendations to the Committee of Management.

Award presentation arrangements

It is proposed that an evening event be held in April 1998, at which both the student awards and the new "Social Work Awards for Excellence" will be presented. The event will also include a prominent guest speaker and light refreshments, along with the opportunity to socialise with others in the profession.

The Branch is keen to interest students and new graduates in its activities and it is hoped that an event in April, around graduation time, will be an attractive option. This is also seen as an opportune time to launch the Social Work Awards for Excellence as it provides a focus on what will hopefully become an important event in the Branch Calendar, well separated from other activities of the State Conference and Annual General Meeting held between August and October.

Further details will be provided early in 1998.

Award information and nomination

A pamphlet containing more detailed information about the Awards, including the criteria in each Award category, will be mailed to you shortly, along with a nomination form. Social workers may apply for an award(s) or can be nominated.

Additional forms may be obtained from Liz Retamal, Branch Executive Officer Tel: (9443 2934). Virginia Scott (9450 2833) and Lynn Selepak (9426 9366) would be happy to provide further details and assistance. Nominations will close on 28 February 1998.

The Branch encourages student social workers, new graduates and social workers to join in this celebration of excellence in social work.

Report on National Directors' Meeting 8-9 November 1997

The Annual General Meeting held on Friday the 7 November was the last AGM presided over by Imelda Dodds, Past National President. Imelda's period of presidency has been earmarked by her ability to get people to work together within the Board and her conciliatory approach to difficult and contentious issues. Significantly, while President, her ability to ensure that CPE was a reality has certainly been a landmark achievement.

I, as Branch President, as I am sure all our Branch members would echo, say "Imelda a job well done and the very best for the future". Our new President Jo Gaha chaired the Directors' meeting held on 8-9 November.

The restructure was revisited and essentially the outcome was of minimal change from a structural point of view but at the same time maintaining an open door to alternative legal/structural arrangements in the longer term. In the short term however, changes to the Articles and the to the structure of the Association are likely to be minimal, with a definite commitment to the existing branches and to the establishment of a sub-branch structure within the Association.

It was also important to note that while it was debated, the notion of opening up the membership to other groups via the "associate" clause was rejected and the Directors universally accepted that the Australian Association of Social Workers was an association for social workers as defined by their tertiary qualifications.

The indemnity insurance issue was raised and the Directors agreed to increasing the policy cover beyond the current 1 million. It is still to be decided whether cover ought to be $5 million or $10 million and this will depend on feedback from the constituent branches. The increase in indemnity cover will however increase the insurance premium and lead to a fee increase for all members in 1998/99. The premium increase for $5 million indemnity cover

Advance Notice

The WA Branch and the Social Work Department SCGH will be jointly hosting a seminar on Tuesday, 20 January 1998 from 2 – 5.30 pm.

Dr Karen Kayser, will be presenting "Partners in Coping: A Psychosocial Program for Cancer Patients and their Partners". This is a skills-based program that promotes adjustment of the patient and their partner. Dr Kayser will also spend some time talking about her research on cancer and women.

Mark your diaries now – a flyer providing further information and registration details will be circulated with the January issue of the newsletter.

will be $7.00 per annum and the increase to $10 million cover, an increase of $12.00 per annum per member over the current $15.00. The increase for student members would be respectively $1.00 and $1.50.

It is important however, that we increase our indemnity insurance in this era of tendering and privatisation, because those offering service will be required to maintain at least a 5 million-dollar professional indemnity cover. To remain competitive in the market place, the Association has decided it has this responsibility for its members. For an individual member to indemnify themselves to the level required would cost between $300 and $800 depending upon the insurance company and the requirements of the policy.

It was decided at this stage to not purchase Directors' liability insurance but that the Association should continue to monitor this in view of changes to the law in relation to companies and any legal decisions within courts in Australia.

The National Conference in Canberra was extremely successful and it is worth noting that the 2005 National Conference will be held in Western Australia. The frightening thought here is that that is only 8 years away.

The NOOSR (National office of Overseas Skills Recognition) is devolving and the AASW will be taking on the assessment of overseas-qualified social workers. It is pleasing to note that we will not be doing it for welfare workers, and this is being accepted by NOOSR.

The issue of regular meetings between AASW and Heads of Schools was discussed and the possibility of a joint education body comprising the AASW and Schools was once again mooted.

The Self-regulation Working Party continued its work under the Boards of Practice Committee and had a name change from Boards of Practice to Quality Practice.

The private practice fees (although these are likely to be reviewed in the future, as Rebecca Naylor, Executive Director with the portfolio responsibility for occupational and industrial reform, will do this at the next meeting) is Casework $95, Supervision $95, Consultancy $130, Education Consultancy $130, Family Therapy $120 and Groupwork $110.

It is worth noting that the next World Congress of the IFSW will be held in Jerusalem in July 1998 and the following one in Montreal in July 2000. There is a possibility that 2002 will be Zimbabwe and 2004 Adelaide. The IFSW Regional Conference in Thailand is in November 1997. Our National President will be attending that conference as will the Convenor of the International Relations Committee.

The Branches all reported in their Annual Reports very successful years and it is fair to say that in terms of activities, energy and productivity the Association is travelling very well.

BRIAN WOOLLER, BRANCH PRESIDENT

Letters

The Editor
Sunday Times

Dear Editor

Your guest columnist Kevin Moran appears to want to blame social workers for all of society's ills and turned his considerable vitriol against them in his guest column in your newspaper on Sunday 26 October. Not only is his column inaccurate, it is an ignorant attempt to debase the work of social workers in our community. It makes assumptions about particular cases and over-generalised statements about others.

It might be of interest to Mr Moran to know that social workers are not only accountable to the organisations within which most of them work, but if they are members of the Australian Association of Social Workers, they are also accountable for ethical practice to that professional body.

Social workers in Family and Children's Services, not as he suggests Department of Community Services, are subjected to a number of processes ensuring their accountability. On matters of children's protection and service delivery to young people, decisions are taken about the appropriate course of action at a variety of levels, from Team Leader through to Senior Casework Supervisors and Managers.

Unfortunately, when working in difficult areas of practice, such as children's protection or family conflict, outcomes will not always be ideal. Human problems and social issues are matters that not only take compassion, but also considerable expertise to manage.

Mr Moran, I'm not sure where you get your 25,000 social workers in WA from but I would suggest to you this is a far from accurate figure. Indeed, I would suggest strongly that you research a little better in future before vilifying the activities of people whose job is difficult at the best of times.

Yours sincerely

Brian Wooller
Branch President
28 October 1997

Mr Brian Wooller
Branch President

Dear Brian

Please accept my congratulations on your letter which was published in the Sunday Times on 2 November 1997 in response to an article written by K Moran and published on 26 October in the Sunday Times.

It was particularly pleasing to read your well composed letter and the way it effectively dealt with the very ignorant and ill-informed article by Mr Moran. This department considered a reply to the Moran article but decided that it would not have been appropriate for us to engage in public debate with him, as this would have more than likely given more prominence to his article than it justified. However we were pleased that you and the Association addressed the matter in the form of your letter.

Thank you very much for your letter to me of 30 October 1997 in which you responded to my letter of 21 October 1997. I do appreciate the points you made and I am grateful that you took the time to clarify these matters for me.

Please accept my best wishes to you and the Association.

Yours sincerely

Gary Bowler

Executive Director, Country Services
Family and Children's Services
3 November 1997

Mr Gary Bowler
A/Director General
Family and Children's Services

Dear Gary

In your letter to me of 21 October 1997 you note some disappointment in the way I responded to what, I still believe was a particularly negative and unfair front-page article about our colleagues in the profession of social work.

When I mentioned the difficulty of children's protection, my comment was not specifically related to Family and Children's Services, it related to all social workers working in the area of children's protection. For any of us who have read widely and understand the field, it is a complex and confusing field of practice. There are not just policies extant in Family and Children's Services but there are policies in children's hospital, other government agencies and the non-government sector. They are often, as are the laws of this land, in conflict and do from time to time create confusion. This is sometimes best exemplified by the various Acts of Parliament requiring disclosure on the one hand, and on the other compelling confidentiality and secrecy.

My comment was not meant by way of a criticism per se, but merely a statement of fact, attempting to point out that people who work in this area face, as I said, a shortage of resources, a difficult job involving themselves in the deepest and most intimate details of family life, and an array of conflicting and confusing policies.

Significantly a number of inquiries into children's death has pointed out that workers are often having to make decisions between and across sometimes conflicting policies and sets of procedures.

My comment in relation to your organisation, Family and Children's Services, relates to workers' stress. There is no doubt that workers in Family and Children's Services are currently under considerable stress. This is a most unfortunate aspect of organisational change that is often paid scant regard to by those intimately involved in the change process.

The point I was attempting to make in my comment in relation to Family and Children's Services, is, and I think I made that point, that we have seen in recent time a new approach by way of response to allegations of child abuse, followed reasonably closely by a major restructure, and one that would appear to be on the face of it more encompassing than that in 1985. My point, and I hope it has not been lost, was to point up that social workers, working particularly in the area of children's welfare and protection, have a very difficult job to do.

My comment about a kangaroo court relates specifically to the way in which it would appear this current matter is being managed. Once the issue hits the press, there is always the danger that people will be judged in an unfair manner where they will be more than likely unable to offer their own story in their own defence. This is something that needs to be avoided and my comment is more by way of caution than criticism.

I have made a point of (as I believe it is my responsibility as President of the WA Branch) to offer for public viewing the Association's position in relation to social work practice. I will not shirk from this responsibility and it is somewhat distressing that there isn't more comment in support of social workers when they are faced with the kinds of stress that this kind of situation produces.

Yours sincerely

Brian Wooller
Branch President
30 October 1997

The Editor
The West Australian

Dear Editor

It was reassuring to read your report in the West Australian of Thursday 20 November on the publication *Seen and heard: priority for children in the legal process* presented to Parliament from the Australian Law Reform Commission and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, and your follow up editorial on Friday 21 November.

Alan Rose, President of the Australian Law Reform Commission's comments as reported by your newspaper, highlights the importance of children and the need to protect them from many of the inequities and inappropriate processes within our social sys-

Net Watch

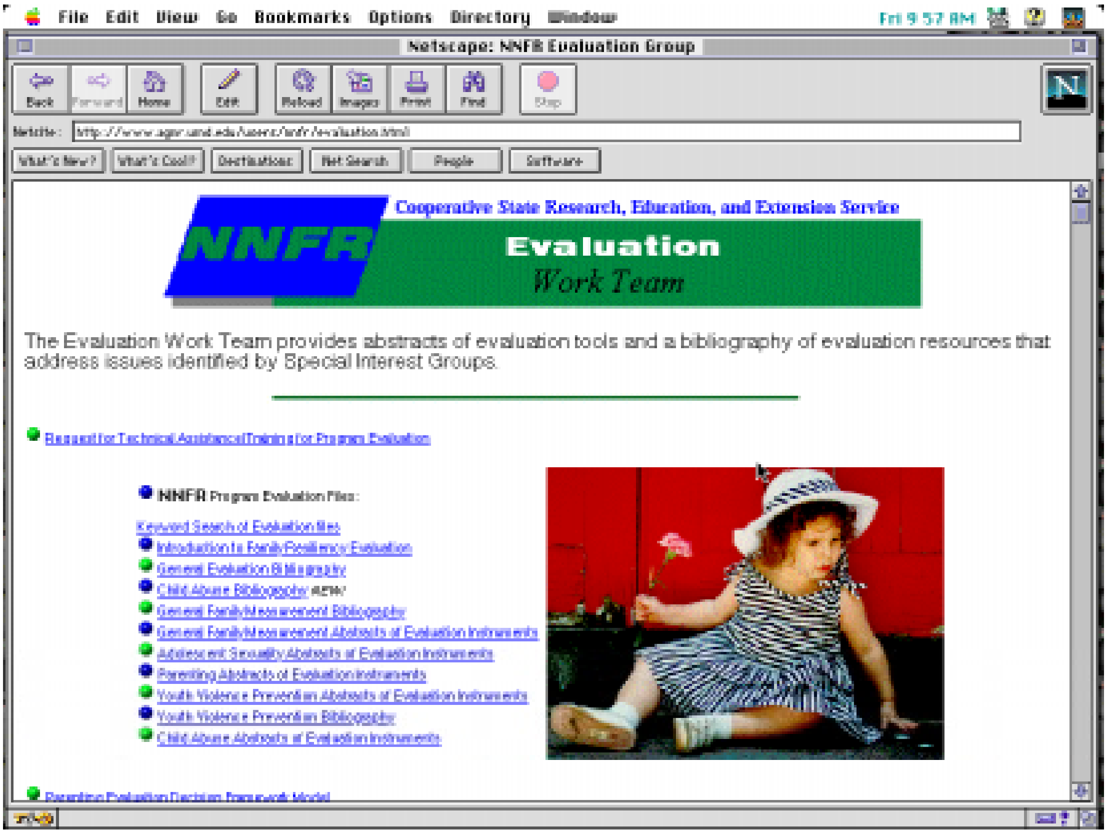

Figure 1: NNFR's Home Page

tem. Too frequently we have in recent time ignored our responsibility to our children. It is hoped that *Seen and heard* re-awakens our conscience when it comes to children enabling us to ensure that they are supported, nurtured and assisted taking their place, in an increasingly complex and at times excessively competitive world.

It is important, as was pointed out, that all of us discharged with our various responsibilities to young people, work together in a positive and protective fashion and get away from the need to blame young people for matters that are clearly outside of their control. Young people don't need to be blamed for the things they do, they need to be supported, encouraged and assisted in taking their place within our society. They do not need to be used for political gains, or organisational posturing. Their behaviour does not need to be criminalised and their position within the social system marginalised. It is hoped that *Seen and heard* provides us with a re-focus on our responsibilities to our children.

Yours sincerely

Brian Wooller
Branch President
21 November 1997

Evaluating social programs

In this issue information is provided about a useful Internet resource that discusses a number of key principles and steps in evaluating social programs.

The following edited article highlights the inter relationship between good program design and outcome, for without the former evaluation will be difficult. This material has been extracted from the web site of the National Network for Family Resiliency (NNFR) - see Figure 1. [The URL for the full article is: http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/nnfr/pareval_whole.html.]

A Parenting Evaluation Decision Framework

Abstract

As part of the National Network for Family Resiliency, a parenting education special interest group (SIG) was organized to examine evaluation models for Extension Educators across the nation. In May, 1996, a small group of the SIG met to discuss evaluation options and models. What resulted is the Parenting Evaluation Decision Framework. The framework includes the following steps:

- Needs and asset assessment
- Issue identification
- Goal writing
- Objective writing
- Program intervention
- Assessing outcomes
- Reporting results
- Redesigning program based on evaluation results

Program Vision

Program planning generally begins with a vision. It is assumed that Extension Agents and Specialists have a larger strategic plan with a written vision of where they are going in the next three to five years, a Plan of Work, a written mission statement of what their Cooperative Extension system is about, and larger state-wide needs assessments through their state specialists and other land-grant university faculty.

Additionally, their community may have already established community benchmarks such as decreasing juvenile violence, school dropout rates, or decreasing domestic and child abuse rates. These larger social indicators are what stakeholders and decision makers often use to guide funding decisions and to seek information about program success. It is not necessary to repeat this involved process of assessing global needs, but it is important to keep the values, vision, and mission in the forefront of one's thinking to assure one is staying focused and in synchrony with one's county and state strategic plans.

Reflecting on Your Personal Perspectives

Good program planning leads to good evaluation and vice versa. Agents and Specialists must examine their own values and perspectives. They must consider where these perspectives came from so that they can consciously use these to make program planning decisions. To begin the journey, take time to reflect on your personal history, values, and traits. This provides an added dimension that gives you a lens with which to view each step. Your past experiences flavor how you plan, teach, and interact with others. Some questions to guide the reflection may include:

Am I more comfortable in groups of parents who think like I do and have similar families to mine? Am I challenging myself to teach to parents with the greatest need? Do I offer programs broadly then claim that the ones that "need" it won't come? DO I make an effort to really explore what parents need or do I determine that because I am the professional? Do I plan programs to deliver without asking parents what their greatest needs are? Do I accept speaking engagements before parents without asking questions about the audience to refine planning? How can I make the greatest impact? Do people really change after a 2-hour workshop? How can I be sure I am teaching the right things to parents?

After you have taken time to truly think through your personal contributions, strengths and limitations, consider:

What is it that you want to accomplish in your community, county, or state?

What are your unique strengths and limitations? What is your perspective?

Through what lens do you see the world?

Knowing your own values and beliefs can help you know with whom you work best and in which areas you may need to invite a colleague with other strengths that complement your work. If you want to work with limited resource families, for example, and this is not currently a strength you hold, you may want to recruit a number of volunteers indigenous to the community to make direct contacts. Think about how you can complement the strengths of your co-workers with the strengths you bring and the strengths that others bring to the program planning and evaluation process.

Stakeholder Perspectives

To sustain broad support, it is important to consider the stakeholders in your program. Stakeholders consist of a variety of people who have a concern and interest in the work you do and the outcomes you and your team produce. They include first and foremost your clientele—the potential participants in your educational programs. Other stakeholders are Extension personnel on all levels, state Extension administrators, other county and state agency representatives, city officials, county commissioners and boards, school representatives, other family life professionals, state and national legislators, and advocates for your program area. Consider your most important stakeholders. Informally or formally ask them some broad questions such as: What results would you like to see over the next year for parenting education? What results would you like to see in two years?

Some stakeholders will not have a clue as to the needs of parents and how educators approach these needs. Use this opportunity to educate them about the field of possibilities. For example, tell stakeholders about the ways we approach child abuse and neglect, how we work towards an increased understanding of what is appropriate to expect from children at various ages of development, or how to discipline appropriately at different ages, or how we work on helping parents manage anger and stress. These are prevention programs and can lead to decreases in domestic and child abuse at the macro level. At the end of the Extension Parenting Evaluation Decision Framework Model, you will eventually report back to your stakeholders about program successes. The end of the model is the beginning of adjusting and redesigning programs which are even more beneficial to local clientele.

A Foundation for Evaluation: Program Planning

The foundation of good evaluation is good program planning. The complete planning process is the most critical and sometimes the least considered by Extension Agents whose strength may be working directly with audiences. Extension personnel begin to become frustrated about evaluation AFTER programs have begun. To eliminate frustration, it is better to consider evaluation as a first step in planning, not just a final measure.

To reduce the frustration, one might think about WHAT WILL YOU EVALUATE? What will you evaluate immediately? What will you evaluate via follow-up assessments? Immediate and follow-up evaluations are designed for different purposes. Immediate objectives assist in the assessment of less intense learning outcomes such as skill development and knowledge enhancement. Immediate evaluation refers to an immediate post-test at the end of the last session before participants leave the program. Follow-up objectives usually require more time, are more intense, and assess higher level changes. Long-term follow-up may occur two months to two years later via mail-out surveys or telephone interviews to measure the long-term effects of the skill, knowledge or behavioral change.

Types of Evaluation

There are many different kinds of evaluation. The major kinds of evaluation are quantitative and qualitative as well as process and outcome. Quantitative includes any kind of assessment that involves measurement. For example, we may ask program participants to rate their behavior on a five-point scale. Such measurement is quantitative. On the other hand, qualitative involves word descriptions. Program participants may tell you in an interview after the program that they enjoyed the program but wished that they had more opportunities to ask questions. This is valuable qualitative information.

Process evaluation assesses how well the program or process is working. For example, we may be interested in assessing how many people come to our programs, how much the participants enjoy the sessions or how well the educator handles questions. Those are all process issues in contrast to outcome issues. Some examples of outcome issues include participants' reports of changed behavior and economic benefits to the community.

To assist you in your decision of quantitative and qualititative, use some of these questions as a guide:

- Is your expected outcome a value (number, time,)?
- Do your objectives specify behaviors that must change?
- Are the delivery methods related to the objectives?
- Is there a timeframe outlined in the objectives?

Some quantitative methods include counting participation, measuring knowledge, attitude, behavior, satisfaction levels pre/post/follow-up about process, community changes, economic benefits.

There are creative and effective ways to plan for quantitative outcome evaluation. For example, participants may be asked on a post-test to evaluate their current performance and the amount of change in their behavior since the program began. The change question is one way of directly assessing change.

Qualitative/Processes

Qualitative processes may include professional observation and feedback, judgements and comments by participants, or stories that describe events and historical events leading up to changes. Qualitative process evaluation also is interested in evaluating the process but uses different kinds of information. For example, program organizers might invite other community professionals to visit one or more sessions and evaluate how the process is working. They might address questions like: Are all participants given a chance to participate? Do participants seem to be comfortable and interested? Does the teacher use appropriate examples that teach the concepts well and are sensitive to the life circumstances of the participants? It is very common to overlook this valuable area of evaluation but qualitative process evaluation, can give us very useful information to improve programs that is not obtained from pre and post outcome measures.

Qualitative/Outcomes may be collected and reported in the form of success stories, focus group discussion, or in-person or telephone interviews. Transformative interview data asks participants how they were changed by the intervention. The evaluator interviews participants focusing on how much participants changed or transformed behaviors since the teaching occurred. The evaluator reports this in qualitative (open-ended statements) based on posed questions such as: Has attending the class made parenting easier? What is your best experience from the class? Do you talk to your friends or relatives about changes you have made since attending the class?

Deciding what to measure in your evaluation effort is very important. It would not make sense to try to measure all of the above after a 20-minute PTA presentation. Nor would it make sense to merely ask one question about satisfaction after a program that included six 2-hour sessions. The kind and amount of evaluation you do needs to be commensurate with your program and related to your information needs. Most of us probably do not gather as much information in our evaluations as would be useful.

For quantitative process evaluation you might assess not only the number of people who attend but how their racial composition represents the composition of your community. You might also assess participants' satisfaction. Quantitative process evaluation is one way to measure how well the process is working.

Qualitative outcome evaluation can also provide you valuable information. Some people invite program participants to have an interview with someone other than the program instructor sometime after the last session. The interviewer might ask questions such as: When have you thought of the things you learned in the class? How have you used the ideas? Have you discussed them with other people?

It might also be useful for you to gather follow-up information a few weeks, months, or years after the conclusion of your program. You can see how all these different kinds of evaluation information can help you improve your program and persuade stakeholders of the merit of your program. It is not necessary to gather evaluation information in each of the four areas shown in the chart. But it does make sense to consider what information in each area might be useful for your evaluation objectives.

Framework Focus

While the focus of this evaluation model is PARENTING EDUCATION, the process is generally the same particularly with other human development foci.

A graphical representation of the Program Planning Process is located on the NNFR homepage at: http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/nnfr/pareval_figure.html.

The steps include:

- Assess the needs and assets;
- Identify the problem or issue;
- Write goals at one or more levels;
- Write measurable objectives;
- Choose and use interventions;
- Assess immediate and follow-up outcomes;
- Report results to stakeholders; and
- Redesign program based on evaluation results.

Needs Assessment

Your review of established vision, your personal perspectives, and the perspectives of others will enable you to identify the issue or problem you want to address with a program. This identification can be shaped in terms to meet the interests of your stakeholders. Now it is time to identify your clientele and to assess their specific needs and assets to tailor your program to be most effective for your target audience. Identify the specific needs and assets of your target audience before you select a program strategy or curriculum to implement.

WHO should be assessed or asked about needs? Ask key informants, e.g. local decision makers, local stakeholders, members of the target audience you are already working with, and local agency personnel who work directly with those you believe will be the intended audience. Key people are not necessarily elected officials, but are people in the community who are respected, listened to, and knowledgeable. Involve African-American, Hispanic and other families from diverse backgrounds in program development.

HOW will an assessment be completed? Examples include focus groups, interviews, written or telephone interviews, and self-report surveys. It is often useful to recruit a task force of key people in the community concerned about the issue. Be sure your target audience is well represented on the task force. Ask your task force to help you develop criteria for selection of program strategies and curricula. Encourage the task force to adopt a consensus approach to deal with issues. A decision reached by consensus is a decision each participant can live with without sabotaging the decision.

Review the available social indicators related to the issue you have selected: the percentages, increases and decreases in factors such as abuse, birth, pregnancy rate, etc. If you have an ongoing involvement with your target audience, you can ask yourself: Are clientele that you think should come to programs continuing to participate? Are they dropping out? Why? Are you finding out from clientele who are dropping out why they dropped out of the program? Is lack of transportation or child care reducing participation in your program? Are there other barriers? How well have you connected with your target audience regarding different ethnic groups, different ideological views, etc.? Do you tend to find comfort in hiding behind your materials, an overhead projector, or a curriculum instead of connecting one-on-one or small groups with your participants? How might you better connect with your targeted audience?

Identification of the Problem or Issue

Once you have a clear picture of the needs and assets of your target audience, you are ready to create a one-to-two page statement to enhance awareness of the problem or issue. Determine if there is consensus from your clientele that this is a need? Is there “buy-in” from other community leaders or agencies? Have you facilitated a growing public awareness to build a foundation of support for the program focus you will initiate? Put together your statement to use to create public awareness, seek program and financial support and to present to potential stakeholders from the beginning of the program process (not at the end!)

Writing Goals

Long-term goals are statements of purpose that generally take one to five years to complete and explicitly spell out WHO will DO WHAT for WHAT PURPOSE? They frequently begin with verbs like “provide, change, promote, offer, increase, decrease, train, or enable.” An example of a long-term goal would be: Reported child abuse cases in Anywhere County, will decrease 15% by 1999 as a result of the Parent Training and Abuse Awareness Program conducted by the Cooperative Extension Service.

Goals can be written on several levels. The micro level goals include individual behaviors, family behaviors and interactions. Macro level goals include school/peers and neighborhood/community. The program planners will need to evaluate how comprehensive, lengthy, and intensive a program they are developing. Are they planning on the macro level (school/peers, neighborhood/community), the micro level (individual, family), or both levels? What results are they hoping to accomplish?

Change is easier to stimulate at the micro level, but less likely to last; harder to stimulate at the macro level but more likely to last. Generally, the more comprehensive and intensive a program, the greater the likelihood of lasting changes. Ideally a comprehensive and intensive program will seek change at both the micro and macro levels.

Writing Objectives

As you write measurable objectives, you may want to keep in mind current expectations at the national level. Short term objectives target knowledge, attitudes, skills, aspirations, tax dollar support, behaviors, and other program participant characteristics which will change as a result of the program/treatment. They generally take about one year or less to accomplish. An example of a short-term objective would be: By (DATE) (WHO) will (DO WHAT IMPLEMENTING/ACTION VERB) for (WHAT OUTCOME)? An example of a short-term objective is:

By January 1, 19xx, fifty parents in Anywhere County will learn to manage their anger, decrease their anger levels and increase their anger control levels as a result of their participation in the STRESSFREE program from pretest to post-test in a six weekly two course.

You might first write objectives to assess knowledge, attitude, skill changes, and tax dollar support level. Although these are not behavior objectives with measurable indicators, objectives may be written to address:

- knowledge about parenting and anger management.
- participants in improving their attitudes about parenting and anger management (be sure to include behavior changes).
- participants in making positive behavioral changes like listening to their children better.
- increased problem-solving skills.
- developing reasonable expectations of one's own children/ youth.
- increased involvement in school participation, i.e., within the school year each parent will make at least one school visit with each of their children.
- improved parent-child relationships.
- providing parenting educators programs in which 80% of respondents favor continued tax dollar support for the program.
- increased family coping, quality of life, and self-esteem levels (Fetsch & Gebeke, 1994).
- decreased stress, depression, and family strain levels (Fetsch, 1995).
- decreased anger and violence levels (Spielberger, 1991; Straus, 1979).
- increased scholastic competence, athletic competence, global self esteem levels (cf. Susan Harter's 1985 "What I Am Like").
- maintaining tax dollar support by program participants (Fetsch, 1995; 1996).

Program Delivery

When designing a parenting education program, referring to the National Extension Parenting Education Model (NEPEM) can provide guidance in the parenting content areas. There are six dimensions discussed in detail in this model. By considering the six categories of parenting and relating the content to the overall program goals and objective, you are much further along in a strong program. The domains of self, understand, guide, nurture, motivate, and advocate are important when deciding about the content of the program.

Rarely will you find one curriculum that will meet all the needs of your targeted audience. To a large extent, the content and methods of generic parenting programs have been developed based on a parent educator's perceptions of the needs of the parents rather than the self-identified needs or assessed preferences of the parents (Harman & Brim, 1980). Since parents represent diverse family forms, cultures, and characteristics, parent education programs should be as diverse as the anticipated population for whom they are designed (Harman & Brim, 1980). The effects of different types of parent education programs must be evaluated while giving attention to what works for whom and why (Zigler & Weiss, 1985; Barnett & Escobar, 1987; Halpern, 1990; Meyers, 1993).

Consider multi-dimensional offerings for an effective program. You also might consider that each parent is an individual learner; each comfortable with a different learning method. Do some parents prefer learning in a group and do others prefer self-study? So some prefer trained parenting educators as instructors and do others prefer to learn from family members or other parents or even from written materials?

How are you choosing what to use to teach or impart information? After you have a greater understanding of your target audience or potential participants, identify your criteria for selection of materials and information that will be used., e.g. quality parenting program, solid research base, empirical evidence of program effectiveness, and high quality materials that are easy to use.

Assessing Outcomes

There are multiple ways of measuring learning. You could consider:

Using interviews, focus groups, transformative learning (First & Way, 1995), post-test only, post-test then pretest, pretest-post-tests, pretest-post-test-follow-up evaluations, experimental-control groups, quasi-experimental, or comparison groups.

Using measures of knowledge, attitude, skill, aspirations, tax dollar support, and especially behavioral change levels (Bennett, 1975; 1980; Fetsch, 1995; 1996, Fetsch & Gebeke, 1994; Smith et al., 1994). Fetsch).

Using measures of higher level changes with acceptable validity and reliability levels (Fetsch, 1995 in review; Harter, 1985; Smith et al., 1994; Spielberger, 1991; Straus, 1979). There are abstracts of many evaluation measures specific to parenting on the National Network for Family Resiliency Home Page: Evaluation, at: http://www.agnr.umd.edu/users/nnfr/

There are multiple ways to assess how much learning occurred. There are qualitative ways and quantitative ways or a combination of both. If the outcomes are expected to be highly specific and behavioral (changes in self-esteem, anger, family stress or number of times a child is reminded, number of times a parent raises his/her voice), one can use more quantitative evaluation and there are instruments designed to measure many of these traits.

Reporting Outcomes

At the beginning of this process, you identified your stakeholders. Revisit this section. Now is the time to prepare a BRIEF report that can be presented to stakeholders. The tighter the linkages among your goals, measurable objectives, interventions, immediate and follow-up outcomes, the stronger your report will be. Different reports and ways of reporting will be necessary for various stakeholders. A basic outline might include:

- One or two basic demographics about the problem
- Your basic objectives/intention of your program
- What you did
- What results/outcomes you found. What happened as a result of the program?

Summary

Evaluation is a critical component of the non-formal learning system. By assessing what works and what does not work, adjustments can be made as needed. The adjustment may be the choice of delivery method used, in content provided, learner motivational plan, or in other aspects of the program. Evaluation of changing conditions, reactions and progress of the learners is important to the overall success of the educational program. Regardless of the formality of the evaluation approach, this critical component should be a continuous process (Richardson, 1995).

(Note: References have been excluded for space reasons.)

NEW MEMBERS

Kim Branco (Student Associate)
Naomi Bussell (Family & Children's Services)
Shirley Crawley (Cambridge Private Hospital)
Ivonna Danbergs (TAFE)
Jennifer Kerry (Family & Children's Services)
Carmel Lelasi (Student Associate)
Natalie Long (Student Associate)
Laura McDonald
Peta Mullen (Disability Services Commission)
Ian Ozanne (Ministry of Justice)
Andrea Roberts (Student Associate)
Joanne Wraith (Warwick Clinic)

Social Work Employers

A reminder that the WA Branch maintains a social work locum register for members of the AASW. At this time of the year, new graduates are beginning to search for work and contacting the locum register as one point of call in that process.

I have refined the service recently and now ask that members interested in registering with the service complete an information form that can be faxed to employers requiring locum staff.

So if you have any locum positions becoming available in the near future, or positions that you have not managed to fill, consider using the AASW locum register.

Liz Retamal, Administrative Officer

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next tier of CPE. Formally known as the Boards of Practice options, this paper has now been expanded to include a range of options for consideration by members. Keep a look out for this consultation. The options paper, developed by a national committee under the convernorship of Joe Calleja called Options for Quality Practice, will be circulated to members for consultation and comment in February next year. I would urge you to take the opportunity to provide comment to possible next stages in the Association's Self Regulation strategy.