

# Strengths-Based Supervision



## OBJECTIVES

**At the end of this unit, participants will be able to:**

- Define the strengths-based approach to supervision in the workplace
- Illustrate four elements of strengths-based supervision using real-life supervision examples
- Practice providing strengths-based feedback in supervision sessions



## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prior to the session, from the handout Strengths Based Supervision, write each attribute of great supervision (1–20) on a strip of paper and place in a bowl.
2. Welcome participants and review the session objectives.
3. Conduct the “Word Toss” activity (slides 3–4).
4. Review and discuss strengths-based supervision (slides 5–10).
5. Distribute the handout Why Do the Warriors Dominate the 3rd Quarter? from The New York Times, and facilitate discussion (slide 11).
6. Review the slides on reflective supervision (slides 12–16).
7. Ask participants to select two strips of paper with attributes written on them, and give an example of how they have applied the attribution during supervision (slide 17).
8. Distribute the handout Attributes of Great Supervision.
9. Wrap up. Ask participants to share what they are willing to commit to incorporating into supervision sessions with CHWs. Summarize strengths-based supervision as a practice that can be used as a coaching approach with CHWs during either clinical or administrative supervision.



## Method(s) of Instruction

Small and large group discussions, case study



## Estimated time

1.5 hours



## Key Concepts

Strengths-based approach, supervision, reflective supervision

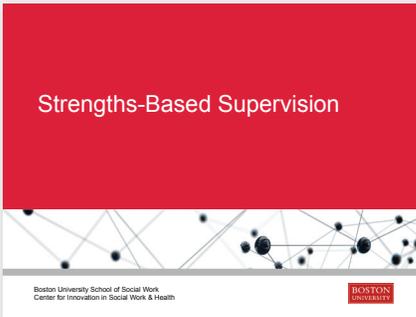


## Materials

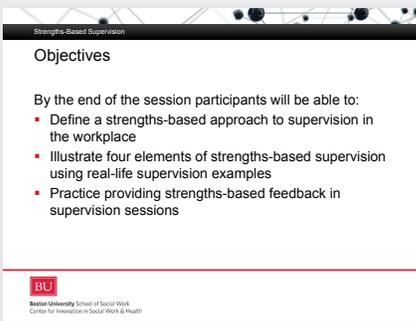
- Computer with internet access and projector
- PowerPoint slides
- Flip chart
- Markers
- Sheets of paper
- Bowl or basket

## Handouts

- Why Do the Warriors Dominate the 3rd Quarter? The New York Times
- Strengths Based Supervision

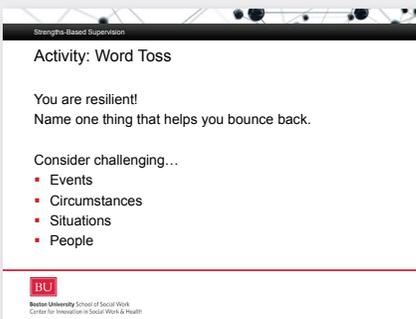


## SLIDE 1



## SLIDE 2

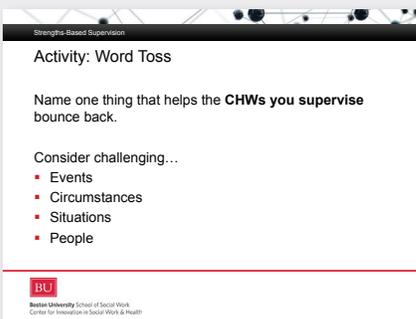
Review the objectives.



## SLIDE 3

Following popcorn style, each person is asked to share one word. What helps you bounce back when you experience challenges? Responses can be related to events, circumstances, situations or people.

Emphasize that despite challenging circumstances, we all can think of our strengths as we manage difficult situations, because we have all done it and acknowledge that we can build on our strengths during adversity.



## SLIDE 4

Repeat the activity asking, "What helps the **CHWs you supervise** bounce back when they experience challenges?"

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## Strengths-Based Approach

- Concentrates on inherent strengths
- Personal strengths aid in recovery or empowerment
- Asset-based approach
- Goal is to promote the positive

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## SLIDE 5

Review the slide.

Ask, “What is a “strengths-based approach to supervision?” Ask a volunteer to write responses from the group on flip chart paper.

Note similarities and differences between the slide and the responses on the flip chart.

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## Strengths-Based Supervision

We define **strengths-based supervision (SBS)** as a process in which supervisors and supervisees collaboratively assess and build upon supervisee **strengths**, including cultural assets, and in which supervisee contributions to **supervision** are valued.

What words come to mind when you hear strengths-based supervision?

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## SLIDE 6

Ask for a participant to read the definition of strengths-based supervision (SBS)

Ask participants, “What words come to mind when you hear strengths-based supervision?”

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## Goals of Strengths-Based Supervision (SBS)

- CHW empowers clients to make good decisions
- Supervisor identifies CHW competencies and amplifies them through supervision
- Use client cases as opportunities to foster skill development
- Actively uses solution-focused language
- Creates an environment of trust and safety
- Collaborative relationships
- Ongoing mutual evaluation of performance and relationship

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## SLIDE 7

Review the slide.

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## Four Elements of Strengths-Based Supervision

1. Parallel the principles of your organization.
  - Supervision parallels the work we expect CHWs to provide to clients
  - Supervisor models principles
  - Application of C3 CHW Core principles in supervision.
2. Integrate the use of individual and group supervision.
  - Individual supervision allows for relationship building, development of trust, and open communication
  - Individual supervision allows for strengths assessment
  - Group supervision fosters efficiency, team cohesion, increased critical thinking, rich connections, and strength in community
  - Problem solving through group reflection leads to better decision making

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## SLIDE 8

Ask for a volunteer to read each element.

After each bullet, ask participants for examples of how they have incorporated these elements into their supervision of CHWs.

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### Four Elements of Strengths-Based Supervision (cont.)

3. Integrate the use of both crisis and in-depth supervision processes.

- Supervisor available for crisis-orientated supervision to process complicated situations
- Crisis supervision is episodic, scheduled supervision allows for in-depth analysis
- In-depth supervision allows exploration of struggles and successes
- In-depth supervision leads to reflective dialogue that moves away from problem-focused supervision

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## SLIDE 9

Ask for a volunteer to read each element.

After each bullet, ask participants for examples of how they have incorporated these elements into their supervision of CHWs.

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### Four Elements of Strengths-Based Supervision (cont.)

4. Fully engage all three functions of supervision.

- **Administrative**
  - Monitoring and evaluating service delivery
  - Holding CHWs accountable for quality services to clients
- **Supportive**
  - Stress management
  - Supervision is empathetic and genuine
- **Educational**
  - Professional growth and development

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## SLIDE 10

Ask for a volunteer to read each element.

After each bullet, ask participants for examples of how they have incorporated these elements into their supervision of CHWs.

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### Reflection and Application of Strengths-Based Supervision

Apply a strengths-based approach to a supervision case study

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## SLIDE 11

Distribute the handout: Why Do the Warriors Dominate the 3rd Quarter? from The New York Times. Give participants 15 minutes to read and think about the strengths the coach offered to the team.

Ask participants, "What about these strengths can be applied to your supervision of CHWs?"

Facilitate a group discussion.

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### Reflective Supervision

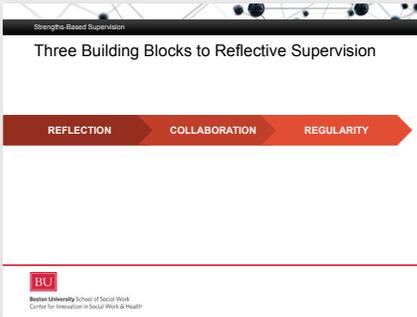
- Promotes and supports the development of a relationship-based organization
- Supervision provides an environment for learning and professional development

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## SLIDE 12

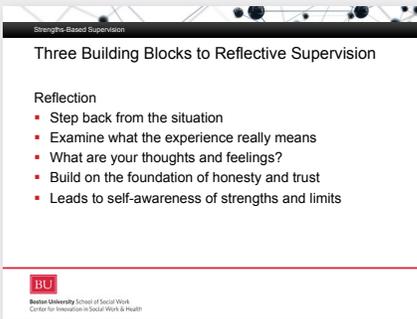
Reflective supervision is another approach for consideration in delivering supervision.

Review the slide.



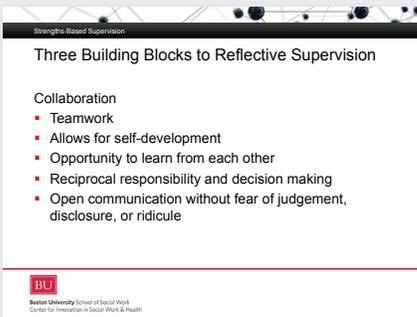
## SLIDE 13

Review the slide.



## SLIDE 14

Ask a volunteer to read the slide.



## SLIDE 15

Ask a volunteer to read the slide.

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### Three Building Blocks to Reflective Supervision

Regularity

- Information is routinely scheduled
- Sufficient time for supervision
- Time is protected from rescheduling, cancellation, or procrastination
- If supervision time needs to be cancelled, it should be rescheduled as soon as possible

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## SLIDE 16

Ask a volunteer to read the slide.

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### Attributes of Great Supervision

- Choose two strips of paper
- Provide an example of when you applied these attributes in your supervision

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## SLIDE 17

Ask each participant to select two strips of paper from the bowl or basket. Ask them to read the attributes aloud and provide an example of when they applied the attributes to their supervision.

# Why Do the Warriors Dominate the 3rd Quarter? Consider Their Halftime Drill

By Marc Stein and Scott  
Cacciola May 31, 2018

OAKLAND, Calif. — Kevin Durant gets his ankles re-taped. Zaza Pachulia changes into a fresh jersey. Draymond Green removes his sneakers. Some of the players even check their phones, because of course they do.

The Golden State Warriors do a lot of mundane stuff at halftime.

Yet what happens next is extraordinary. Their explosive third-quarter runs have become a phenomenon, and nobody knows quite what to make of it. The players themselves are mystified.

“I honestly have no idea,” Stephen Curry said.

We are not about to solve that riddle, either. Entering Game 1 of the N.B.A. finals on Thursday night, the Warriors had outscored their opponents by an unprecedented 130 points in the third quarter this postseason. It defies easy description. But a closer examination of their halftime rituals may provide some illumination.

[Game 1 Live: Follow Marc Stein and Benjamin Hoffman’s updates]

The 15 minutes between the end of the second quarter and start of the third are a carefully choreographed production, featuring clips of game footage, wardrobe changes and managerial strategies straight out of business school. Coach Steve Kerr, based on interviews with players and coaches, has worked to create an environment of inclusion. This is not a place for Lombardi-esque rah-rah speeches. Rather, the Warriors’ halftime locker room is a high-speed 360-degree team review.

“Everybody is a leader here,” said Pachulia, the veteran center. “At least you have a feeling that you’re a leader.” The Warriors actually begin preparing for halftime as soon as the game begins. Assistant coaches will identify plays that the team may want to review at halftime by signaling them to Willie Green, an assistant and 11-year N.B.A. veteran who sits one row behind the bench. Green is in charge of keeping track of the time and score for each of the plays in question.

“Put that on edit!” the coaches shout. Or simply, “Clip that!”

Periodically throughout the first half, various other members of the staff — including Samuel Gelfand, the team’s analytics guru, and Kyle Barbour, the strength coach — run portions of the list back to the locker room, where James Laughlin, the video coordinator, assembles the clips on a computer.



Kevin Durant and Stephen Curry. Ezra Shaw/Getty Images

Laughlin also has the freedom to pull clips that he thinks should be included. He aims for a total of eight to 10 for the halftime reel — but that number tends to stray into the 15 range in a high-pressure playoff game.

Once the first half ends, the coaches spend three or four minutes talking among themselves. At home, that happens in the coaches' office adjacent to the locker room. On the road, they improvise. For example, when they were in Houston for Game 7 of the Western Conference finals, they met in the hallway outside the visiting locker room because the coaches' quarters were so cramped.

Bruce Fraser, an assistant coach, described these sessions as think-tankish: Kerr solicits input from his staff, then listens. Sometimes, though, he takes advantage of the opportunity to vent, which is partly by design. By ridding himself of his frustrations, Kerr can act like a more rational human once he appears in front of his players.

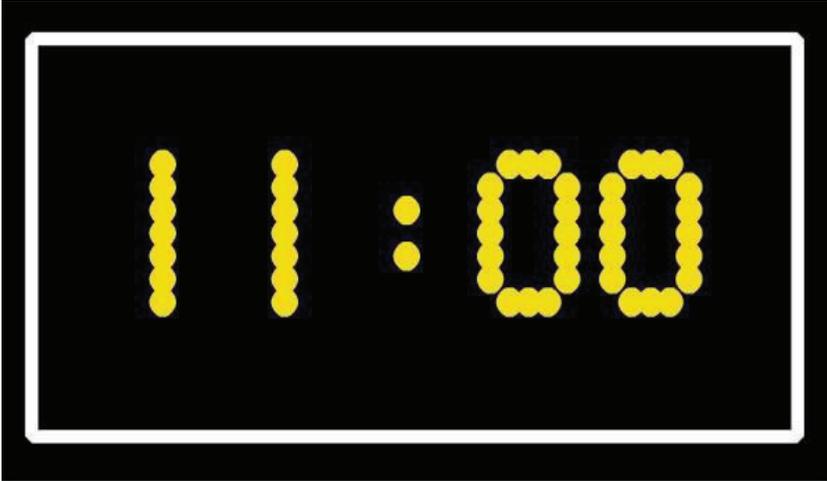
"He's got a fiery side to him," Fraser said, "and he'll be screaming and yelling in the coaches' room for 30 seconds."

Many of the players spend that time attending to their various health and equipment needs — in addition to checking their phones.

"We have time until Coach walks in to do our little things," Pachulia said.

(As an aside, nobody in franchise history had a more curious halftime ritual than Gilbert Arenas. He famously used that time to take a shower — including once in his uniform.

# The New York Times



Once Kerr has a good grasp of the material he wants to cover with the team, he and the rest of the coaches enter the locker room with about 11 minutes left before the start of the third quarter. Kerr does not obsessively check the clock. He chooses to keep time by feel.

Kerr is the first coach to address the team — “Steve makes, in a brief way, sense of what just happened, good or bad,” Fraser said — before the clips that Laughlin collected in the first half are projected onto a large screen. Kerr runs through them.

But he trusts his staff so much that he does not need to know in advance which clips Laughlin and his assistants have selected for the halftime show. Kerr’s staff members seem to have an intuitive understanding of the types of plays he will want to highlight.

During the first half of Game 7 against the Rockets on Monday night, the Warriors played so poorly their assistant coaches kept simultaneously shouting, “Clip that!” whenever the team had a decent possession. They knew that Kerr, who loves to emphasize the positive, would want to show the players those plays at halftime. When he did, the sequences reinforced the message that good things happened whenever they moved the ball, and reminded the players at a fragile moment that they were better than the 11-point deficit suggested.

Kerr, a former television analyst, also has a special ability, Fraser said, to take the information he gathers from his staff and deliver it to the players in digestible morsels.

“The broadcasting definitely helped him to articulate lots of thoughts in a condensed way,” Fraser said.

# The New York Times

Yet Kerr does not want to be the only voice in the room — far from it, in fact. He has carved out time for others to speak. Once Kerr finishes making his main points, the associate head coach, Mike Brown, often speaks to the group. Then, the senior assistant coaches, Ron Adams and Jarron Collins, add their thoughts. Kerr likes to close by seeking input from the players, too, especially in the playoffs.

“Do you have anything for us?” he asks them. “Do you see anything?”

It probably won't come as a total shock to learn that Draymond Green is the most vocal Warrior. Andre Iguodala, who tends not to say much during the regular season, likes to pipe up in the playoffs — and that might not be much of a surprise, either. Iguodala, though injured in recent weeks, has done some of his finest work in the postseason, on and (apparently) off the court.

Like the Warriors organization itself, the halftime locker room is, above all, an open forum.

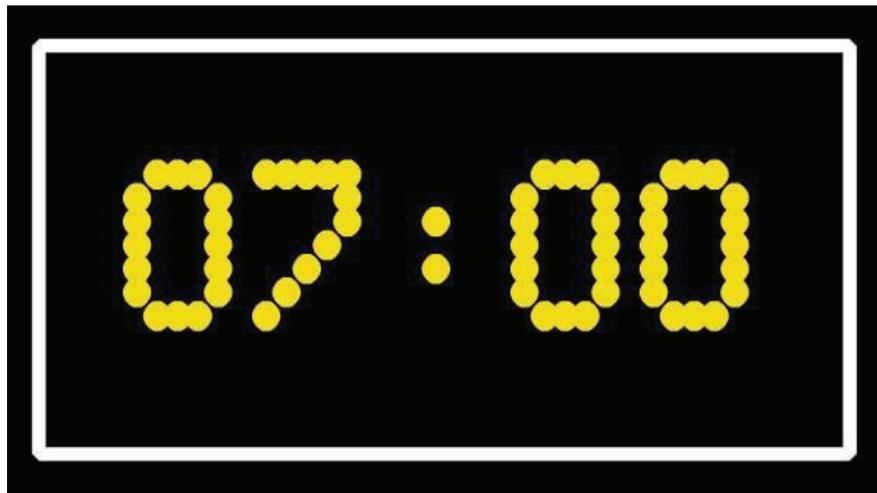
“He is the authority based on title,” Fraser said of Kerr, “but our culture is by community. He's one of them. He doesn't look at himself as a figure that they have to defer to.”

Pachulia has played for nine head coaches during his 15-year N.B.A. career. He said he had never been a part of a more democratic locker room.

“It's open for us, from 1 to 15 — anybody can say something,” he said. “That's how this team is built: If you see something, please say something.”

As for strategy, the Warriors run a read-based offense — meaning they look to pick apart the soft spots in opposing defenses. Halftime gives them the chance to recalibrate.

“After you play a half, you can see what teams are trying to do,” Fraser said.

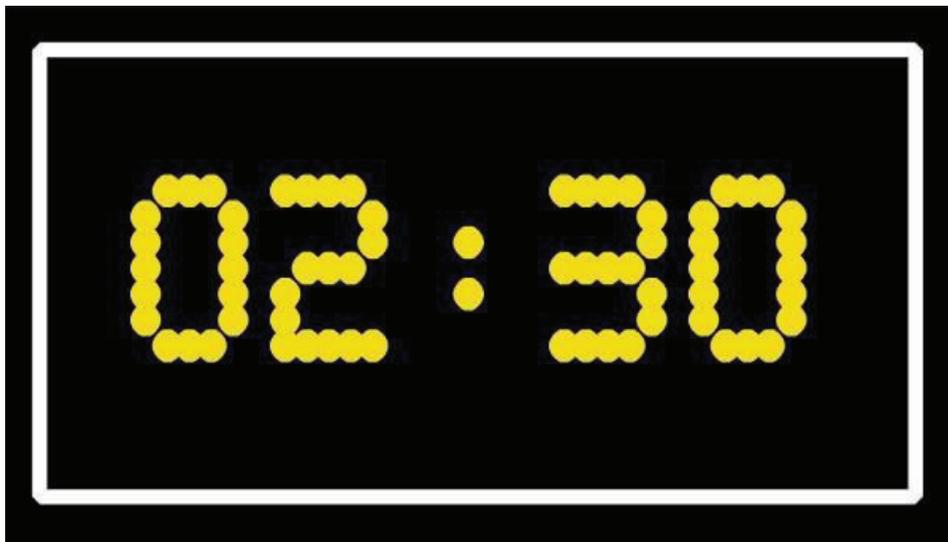


# The New York Times

Perhaps the most amazing feature of the Warriors' halftime routine is its brevity. Kerr tries to wrap up his whole spiel with about seven minutes showing on the clock — six minutes at the latest. He knows the players want to get back on the court to take some warm-up shots. He also probably knows there is only so much he can say.

"The one thing we ask him to do is, Steve, let us go at the six-minute mark," Pachulia said. "He respects that. It doesn't matter how good or bad the game is going. At the six-minute mark, we're out."

As the players head back to the court, Kerr reconvenes with his assistants. They keep an eye on the clock. Once it hits 2:30, they make their way to the bench. There is confidence born in the routine of halftime — confidence that the players will heed their message and execute the plan.



"That all adds to what's next," Fraser said.

What's next has become utterly predictable to fans, opponents and even the Warriors themselves: hope-destroying scoring runs that tend to erase any memories — and any deficits — of the first half.

A version of this article appears in print on June 2, 2018, on Page SP1 of the New York edition with the headline: With the Game Half Over, The Warriors Are Starting

# Strengths Based Supervision

## Attributes of Great Supervision

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1. Openness to various personality types (Everyone desires respect)
2. Accepts suggestions and feedback (Partners share power)
3. Confidence in the skills of the coordinators (Everyone has strengths)
4. Allows staff to share concerns (Everyone needs to be heard and understood)
5. Coordinators can call a unit meeting (Partners share power)
6. Focuses on the skills that each member brought to the team (Everyone has strengths)
7. Recognizes successes (Everyone has strengths)
8. Truly embraces a non-judgmental approach (Judgments can wait)
9. Inspires a shared vision (Partnership is a process)
10. Coordinators understand and contribute to the vision (Partners share power)
11. Understand that collective wisdom comes from multiple viewpoints (Everyone desires respect)
12. True dialogue occurs (Everyone needs to be heard and understood)
13. Dangles ideas in a collective conversation (Everyone desires respect)
14. Walks the talk (Partnership is a process)
15. Great listener (Everyone needs to be heard and understood)
16. Flexible (Partnership is a process)
17. Treats others with respect (Everyone desires respect)
18. Employees are empowered to make decisions (Partners share power)
19. Shares whatever information he/she can (Partners share power)
20. Praises family-centered work (Everyone has strengths)



## Strengths Based Supervision

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### **Traditional Supervision Paradigm Goal:**

To produce a competent coordinator

### **Key Attributes of the Supervisor:**

- Believes the supervisor is the source of knowledge
- Views the coordinator as a neophyte and object of teaching and training
- Worries that the coordinator might make a mistake and, as a result, requires constant oversight
- Has primary responsibility for the welfare of clients
- Focuses supervision so that it is situation- and problem-specific, making it difficult to generalize learning
- Emphasizes prevention of mistakes, not skill and competence development
- Supports and engages in traditional authoritarian, hierarchical, linear patterns of supervisory and organizational practices and behavior
- Presents him- or herself as the primary holder of expertise and knowledge
- Engages in evaluation that is supervisor-driven and one-way in direction
- Holds position power

As a result of these attributes, a climate of fear and criticism may be established and intrude negatively upon the supervisory relationship, stunting positive relationship development, creativity and shared engagement and ownership of practice and outcomes, and creating a negative parallel process of behavior and engagement of children, youth and families.

### **Strengths-Based Supervision Paradigm Goals:**

To facilitate the development of a competent coordinator who will make good decisions and empower clients to make good decisions; to identify competencies and amplify them through supervision; to ultimately become peers and colleagues; to share the responsibilities, challenges and rewards of good case practice and achieve desired outcomes.

### **Key Attributes of the Supervisor:**

- Seeks to discover coordinator competencies and strengths
- Intentionally identifies and amplifies coordinator success
- Uses coordinators' cases and other activities and opportunities to foster skill development
- Actively uses solution-focused language and concepts within the supervisory relationship
- Coaches for success
- Encourages coordinator learning and shares responsibility for identifying learning goals
- Creates a climate of trust and safety in supervision, while maintaining professional boundaries
- Develops a collaborative relationship with the coordinator



- Uses the coordinator's frame of reference to increase competency
- Integrates cultural awareness and respect into the supervisory relationship
- Engages in ongoing and mutual evaluation of performance and relationship

As a result of these attributes, a climate of trust and mutual direction may be established that supports a strong and positive supervisory relationship; creativity, shared engagement and ownership of practice and outcomes; and a positive parallel process of behavior and engagement of children, youth and families.

Adapted from: Kim Berg, I., & Kelly, S. (2000). *Building solutions for child protective services*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.



## The Solution-Building Process with Coordinators

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### Describing the Problem

As the “expert on his or her *experiences* with the family,” the coordinator leads the “problem talk” and the process of exploring the concerns of the family.

*Help me understand your perceptions of the family members you say are afraid to attend the conference. What do you think you might help alleviate their fears? What else might help? What are some additional options? Or, tell me about what you have tried with the family thus far?*

### Developing Well-Formed Goals

The coordinator and supervisor engage in “solution talk” to describe what will be different when the obstacles to success are addressed. Goals are small, concrete and meaningful.

*What goals are important for you to accomplish right now? How would you be able to set the meeting up for success if you achieved this goal?*

*Or, what would be there instead when this is resolved? What will be the first small sign that something has changed with the family?*

*What role do you play in making that happen? Is that something that you think could happen, or that you could do?*

*Are there times you can think of when you have been able to do some of these things already?*

### Exploring for Exceptions

The coordinator talks about the “who, what, when and where” of the exception times in the recent past.

*To explore this further, I'm going to ask you a question that you might ask a family. [Introduce an exception, coping, relationship or scaling question, or the miracle question]. For example, have you explored with the family when there was a time when they were all together and things were going well? What was different about that time? Or, have you explored with the mom/dad a time when they felt supported by their family? When was that time and what was different? Or, if the family woke up tomorrow and a miracle had happened what would be different about their family? Their extended family?*



**Providing End-of-Supervision Feedback**

The supervisor uses information shared by the coordinator to compliment the coordinator on what he or she is doing to reach a solution and to develop an "action" plan with the coordinator.

*Based on what you've shared with me, I have been really impressed with your ability to....*

*So, it sounds like what you are hoping to do next is.... Is that right?*

**Jointly Evaluating Progress with the Coordinator**

Regularly assess and evaluate with the coordinator how he or she is doing to reach the established goals. Continue to explore for exceptions to build on.

*What's better today? What else is better? On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being "absolutely no change" and 10 being "the problem is no longer present," where would you say you are today?*

Adapted from: Dejong, P., & Kim Berg, I. (1998). *Interviewing for solutions*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

# Acknowledgements

This curriculum draws from and is adapted from the expertise and experiences of the authors. We are also grateful to the supervisors who participated in the training from the following Ryan White program funded sites: 1917 Clinic, University of Birmingham, Alabama; East Carolina University Adult Specialty Care Clinic; Franklin Primary Health Center; McGregor Clinic; Southern Nevada Health District; CrescentCare; Newark Beth Israel Hospital-Family Treatment Center; the JACQUES Initiative; Legacy Community Health; and the Southwest Louisiana AIDS Council. You all taught us as much about how to be a successful supervisor, as we taught you.

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This project is/was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) number U69HA30462 "Improving Access to Care: Using Community Health Workers to Improve Linkage and Retention in HIV Care" (\$2,000,000 for federal funding). This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

## Suggested Citation:

Boston University Center for Innovation in Social Work & Health. (2019). A Training Curricula for Using Community Health Workers to Improve Linkage and Retention in HIV Care. Retrieved from: <http://ciswh.org/chw/>



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