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2012 Aging Network Workforce Competencies (ANWC) Project: AAA Director and Staff Survey Preliminary Results

Background

The Aging Network Workforce Competencies Project is being conducted by the ANWC Partnership, consisting of n4a, the National Resource Center on Participant-Directed Services (NRCPDS), and the Council on Social Work Education's National Center for Gerontological Social Work Education (CSWE Gero-Ed Center). The Partnership shares the goal of an Aging Network workforce that is prepared with knowledge, skills, values, and abilities (competencies) in four key domains—**gerontology, cultural competence, person-centered care, and participant-direction**—to promote the dignity and independence of older adults to remain in their homes and communities. As a first step toward that goal, Partnership members have implemented the ANWC Project: a study of competency-based workforce initiatives and needs within the Aging Network.

Objectives

1. Evaluate the extent to which staff in social work-oriented positions (e.g., options counselors, case managers, intake specialists, support brokers) utilize competencies in the four key domains.
2. Identify the educational background and professional training of staff in social work-oriented positions.
3. Document directors' and staff's training needs related to a competency-based approach in the four competency areas.

Survey Distribution

n4a distributed an online, AAA Director Survey to all 629 AAAs, ensuring that the results reflect the wide variation and diversity within the Aging Network. Directors provided data on their agency background and existing competency-based training efforts and needs. In the survey, directors were asked to distribute a AAA Staff Survey to up to five mid-level supervisory staff (in larger agencies) and direct service staff in social work-oriented positions; these positions are targeted since social work is the largest profession within the Aging Network.

Preliminary results of the surveys follow on pages 2-4 of this handout.

AAA Director Survey Results (N=224)

Agency Background

- Total staff employed: 30 or less (47%); 31-99 (38%); 100+ employees (14%).
- Total volunteers: 20 or less (30%); 21-99 (31%); 100-199 (10%); 200-399 (16%); 400+ (13%).
- Across respondents, 49% of staff are full-time paid employees.
- Percentage of staff in human/social service-oriented (H/SS) positions: 29%.
- 54% of respondents indicate that most or all direct services are subcontracted to other providers.
- Percentage of agency's annual budget allocated to staff training/development: < 5% (82%).

Staff Training

- Require/mandate regular staff training: 79%.
- Regularity of H/SS staff professional development training: monthly (22%), quarterly (47%), or yearly (29%).
- Top 3 most effective H/SS staff training formats: in-person, small group training (68%), webinars (64%), and in-person, large group training (56%).
- Top 2 training barriers: lack of funding (82%), lack of time (78%).

Competencies Usage

- Use a competency-based approach to workforce development: 65%.
- Barriers to implementing a competency-based approach: Time and lack of funding (41%), other (37%) (e.g., "Do not have a dedicated manager at a senior level to focus on workforce development," "...shifting the paradigm to person-centered and connecting with the appropriate resources to do the training," and the need for more precise performance outcome measures - identifying competencies for each position.).
- Attempts to measure workforce competencies: Very great or great extent (26%), to some extent (56%), very little (14%), not at all (5%).
- Barriers to measurement: lack of measurement tools (46%), unsure how to measure (43%), lack time (59%).

Human/Social Service Staff Areas of Knowledge

- The following table lists the eight areas of knowledge addressed in the survey, including corresponding percentages of AAA directors noting the importance of each area and if development/training has occurred in the areas of knowledge:

Area of Knowledge	Respondents Noting Importance	Respondents Noting Development/Training
Long-Term Services and Supports	89%	66%
Communication	77%	46%
Risk Ident./Mitigation, Crisis Prevention & Conflict Resolution	77%	40%
Supporting Independence	73%	41%
Documentation	72%	68%
Health and Wellbeing	70%	46%
Quality	68%	49%
Ethics, Laws & Regulations	65%	54%

AAA Staff Survey Results (N=192)

Education & Current Position

- Highest education level: Bachelor’s Degree: 42%; Master’s: 35%; Associate’s: 8%; High School/GED: 7%.
- Current position: Case Manager: 31%; Info/Referral Specialist: 17%; Social Worker: 16%; Caregiver/Program Staff: 9%; Benefits Counselor: 8%; Intake Specialist/Screeners: 6%.
- Years employed at AAA: 10+: 36%; 6 to 10: 13%; 3 to 5: 27%; 1 to 2: 13%, Less than 1: 11%.

Competencies

The following competencies were assessed in each of the four domains:

Gerontological competencies:

1. Assess and address values and biases regarding aging.
2. Respect and promote older adult clients’ right to dignity and self-determination.
3. Identify the availability of resources and resource systems for older adults and their families.
4. Identify issues related to losses, changes, and transitions over their life cycle in designing interventions.
5. Use empathy and sensitive interviewing skills to engage older clients in identifying their strengths and problems.

Person-centered care competencies:

1. Application of processes for learning how someone wants to live and for developing a plan to help make it happen.
2. Respect and promote older adult clients’ right to dignity and self-determination.
3. Apply ethical principles to decisions on behalf of all older clients with special attention to those who have limited decisional capacity.

Participant-direction (PD) competencies:

1. Assist and support participants to manage their services effectively through informed decision-making.
2. Understand the participant-direction philosophy.
3. Be aware of one’s own assumptions and biases.
4. Set aside assumptions, emotional reactions, and other impediments to participant empowerment.

Cultural competencies:

1. Respect diversity among older adult clients, families, and professionals (e.g., class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation).
2. Deliver outreach and services based on the population’s values and perceptions.
3. Address the cultural, spiritual, and ethnic values and beliefs of older adults and families.

Domain	Competency	Staff Understanding				Education/Profess. Background Prepare?		Receive Job-Specific Training?		Competency Attain. Measured?	
		Adv	Prof	Basic	None	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Gerontology	Values/Biases	42%	48%	9%	0%	75%	26%	76%	24%	44%	56%
	Right to Dignity	68%	30%	2%	0%	77%	23%	83%	17%	53%	47%
	Resources	60%	37%	4%	0%	60%	40%	86%	14%	55%	45%
	Loss/Change	41%	44%	14%	2%	68%	32%	72%	28%	42%	58%
	Empathy	68%	26%	6%	1%	80%	20%	69%	31%	47%	53%
Person-Centered Care	Learning Process	35%	50%	11%	4%	70%	30%	68%	32%	48%	52%
	Right to Dignity	60%	34%	5%	2%	81%	19%	72%	28%	53%	47%
	Ethical Principles	41%	39%	8%	2%	74%	26%	69%	31%	46%	54%
Participant-Direction (PD)	Assist/Support	42%	44%	13%	2%	72%	28%	71%	29%	47%	53%
	PD Philosophy	46%	38%	14%	2%	69%	31%	64%	36%	42%	58%
	Own Assumptions	47%	46%	6%	1%	82%	18%	60%	40%	38%	62%
	Set Aside Assumptions	44%	49%	7%	1%	78%	22%	59%	41%	41%	59%
Cultural	Respect Diversity	55%	40%	5%	0%	85%	15%	72%	28%	43%	57%
	Outreach/Services	35%	53%	11%	1%	70%	30%	61%	39%	40%	60%
	Values/Beliefs	38%	49%	11%	1%	79%	21%	64%	36%	37%	63%

Training Preferences/Needs

- Most preferred training format: Small group in-person trainings.
- Least preferred training format: Conference calls.
- Most necessary work-related training need: Participant-direction.
- Least necessary work-related training need: Gerontological.
- Most relevant work competency domain: Gerontological.
- Least relevant work competency domain: Cultural.

Staff training method preference (1=most preferred; 7=least preferred):

Responses	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7	Weighted Rank (Score)
In-Person Small Group Training	96	39	13	18	12	9	9	1 (1106)
Blended (online and in-person)	36	22	47	36	25	15	15	2 (883)
In-Person Large Group Training	17	64	31	20	29	19	16	3 (879)
Online Learning	22	18	32	44	31	22	26	4 (761)
Webinars	11	26	40	32	37	33	17	5 (755)
Written Materials	12	19	22	31	33	35	44	6 (645)
Conference Calls	2	8	11	15	29	63	68	7 (458)
Total Responses								192

Work-related training needs by competency area (1=need most training; 4=need least training):

Responses	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Weighted Rank (Score)
Participant-Direction	56	56	56	23	1 (527)
Person-Centered Care	34	58	57	42	2 (466)
Cultural	51	41	40	59	2 (466)
Gerontological	50	36	38	67	3 (451)
Total Responses					192

Competency areas relevant to staff's day-to-day job responsibilities (1=most relevant; 4=least relevant):

Responses	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Weighted Rank (Score)
Gerontological	95	28	44	26	1 (578)
Person-Centered Care	58	76	48	11	2 (567)
Participant-Direction	32	56	64	41	3 (465)
Cultural	8	33	37	115	4 (320)
Total Responses					194