

Practice Profiles: Feedback from the Field

Ohio's Practice Profiles were developed to support caseworkers and supervisors as they work with families. They describe 10 core behaviors that guide best practice: engaging, assessing, partnering, planning, implementing, evaluating, advocating, demonstrating cultural and diversity competence, communicating, and collaborating.

In January 2018, OFC and Ohio's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Advisory Team challenged PCSAs to go "Back to Basics" and focus on the core behaviors in 2018. To support this effort, the Statewide CQI Community Subcommittee and the Ohio Child Welfare Learning Collaborative began offering the Practice Profiles Webinar Series, which highlights a different Practice Profile each month. The response to the webinars has been very positive, with attendance ranging from 225 to 375 a month. Many of those who have attended provided the following feedback.



Carroll County

"What I like about the Practice Profile webinars is that they use real life scenarios to put the concepts in perspective. Especially for someone being new to the field, it is helpful."
—New Caseworker

"It's always good to get a refresher on things we think we already know. Pointing out the difference in perspectives (client, caseworker, supervisor) makes me stop and think about situations differently also."
—Program Director

"I enjoy watching my workers get that AHA moment. Whether it is a new worker getting a new idea, or a seasoned worker being refreshed on a new approach. Sometimes it is just good to realize that you are not doing so bad after all."
—Supervisor

"I like how they incorporate new information while going over what we already practice. My favorite tool is the "house" worksheet."
—New Caseworker

"It has been nice to have a refresher course and has been a good reminder of things that are out there available to assist us in our everyday practice of working with families. I enjoyed being introduced to some of the tools used in helping to break the ice with a child."

—Seasoned Caseworker

"I like that staff get to learn about the practice profiles as a unit and process ideas on how to improve the services that we provide to our families. The opportunity for training credit for participation is an added bonus."
—Director

"I enjoyed the recap on all the webinars as I practice majority of these every day working with youth and their families. Sometimes we need a refresher to help us through each case effectively and efficiently. I did learn about some new charts that I was not aware of and how to properly use and maintain them."

—CCMEP Worker



Fairfield County

"Getting back to the basics is a theme adopted by Fairfield County Protective Services for 2018 because it is the simplest way to strengthen our foundation. Our goal is to move away from the compliance mindset to a culture supporting learning and improving practice. The Child Family Service Review and Child Protection Oversight Evaluation show evidence to support this shift is needed to improve outcomes for children and families. Ohio's Practice Profile webinar series gave us a structured starting point to engage staff in this learning opportunity. Focusing on one skill set at a time allows for meaningful conversations amongst attendees where they are assessing their own behaviors and hearing what works for others. The tools and supporting documents provided for each module are invaluable for current staff as well as new caseworkers beginning their career in child protection. I know our staff also appreciate current practitioners providing their practice wisdom, including lessons learned. We look forward to continuing this learning journey and ultimately improving practice and outcomes for children and families."

–Kari Akins, Community Response and Outreach Manager



Henry County

"I enjoy attending these webinars as part of a group because it allows us to discuss specific cases within our Agency and protocols of our Agency."

"As I have been in this field for almost a decade and have always engaged in best practice, these webinars have been mostly a refresher for me. What has been helpful is some of the tools/forms/checklists that have been provided."

"The webinars are helpful in a group setting as it allows Caseworkers to discuss the topics amongst one another as it applies to our specific agency. It is also helpful to get an idea of how other Caseworkers approach their families with the ability to gain some insight into what works best for them that one can be utilize in their own practice."

"I enjoy how each webinar focuses on one specific Practice Profile. This allows each of us to reflect on our own case practice in each specific aspect of casework."

"It has been beneficial to participate in the Practice Profile Webinars in a group setting to allow the opportunity for discussion to take place pertaining to the materials being covered."

Muskingum County

"Participating in the Practice Profile Webinars has provided me with lots of beneficial information that I can apply to my work with families. Most specifically, the Assessing Webinar encouraged me to remember to not shy away from asking family's specifically about their strengths. It is easy to get caught up in focusing on the concerns and allegations. The Family Circle tool shared during that webinar is something I am beginning to utilize in my work with families. It helps take away from the repetitiveness of the interview questions and helps in engaging families better in the process."

–Sara Hillis, Assessment Worker



The Practice Profiles webinars have prompted Muskingum County Adult and Child Protective Services Assessment Worker Sara Hillis to use the Family Circle tool to ask families about their strengths.



Richland County

"Benefits of CQI:

- Connecting with others who want to make a difference and sharing experiences that work and/or don't work.
- It is empowering to run a thought and/or method used to receive peer feedback. For example, utilizing a briefcase that resembles a purse for field work. Also, planning HV on days you don't have court, so you can dress casually in the field.
- Respecting the families and different techniques to increase the collaborative team.
- Incorporating different techniques, research methods and/or community resource to REALLY help the family and keep them from returning with a new case.
- Holding yourself accountable and acknowledging areas of improvement and asking the questions during the webinar to strengthen the areas.
- SHARING your areas of strength, so others can incorporate and learn to improve the experience our families have with CPS.
- Bouncing ideas for the future growth and development in a positive work environment with all CPS agency.

- Making those connections with our families and co-workers and community support. When I started I was sending "thank you" cards to my family. However, early on in our series Lorain County shared they send cards to their community supports. As a result, I expanded on what I had already started. I am going to present to my Agency on June 14th the positive responses I have received from incorporating the community. For example, fast responses, complete reports, increased information sharing, etc.
- Not being afraid to "THINK OUT OF THE BOX" to help our families. Not being afraid to go the extra mile to set an example to others.
- Having the support from the CQI team is empowering. It is refreshing to know other people are looking to better performance on all levels. Something we might find insignificant could be the CHANGING factor to someone's life."
–Catherine Cook, Caseworker



Summit County

"The webinars provide quality tools for use in the field to enhance the work that supports each of the Practice Profiles."

–Jessica Miller, Coordinator of Quality Improvement



Union County

"Union County has made it a priority for workers, when available, to attend as many webinars as possible. We have also been doing our own trainings called "Back to the Basics" to help our new workers and seasoned workers understand the various areas and items that they need address in referrals, case plans, safety plans etc. We see the webinar series as another opportunity to provide our employees with sound fundamental skills that can take be used in the field to help them be consistent with each of their cases."

–Nicholas Digel, CPS Supervisor



Wood County

"The online practice profile webinars have been a nice refresher from the original trainings and a reminder of best practice."

–Liza Swartz, Screener

"As a senior worker, the practice profile webinars have been a good refresher on the things we need to make sure we are doing in the field. We often get into a rut of how we do things and forget these basic concepts."

–Melissa Tokar,
Ongoing Caseworker

"The webinars have given me new ideas on how to engage with families that are resistant."

–Lynzie Zimmerman,
Independent Living Worker

"The practice webinars have helped me gain knowledge of different techniques that I can use to engage with families, and how to give them guidance to achieve their established goals."

–Bri Gillis, Ongoing Caseworker

"I think the webinars are a great refresher for us workers, sometimes we get into a routine and it is nice to have them once a month as a reminder on how to effectively work with our families!"

–Abby Batterton,
Ongoing Caseworker

"The practice profile webinars have provided a lot of helpful information on how to make sure that we are really engaging our clients and involving them in the decisions being made on their cases."

–Kendra Campbell,
Ongoing Caseworker

"The practice profile webinars have given great examples of case scenarios and the proper ways to handle them."

–Laura Richmond,
Ongoing Caseworker

"Practice profiles helped me implement best casework practice in my more difficult cases."

–Kristi Beall, Adoption Specialist

"It is very beneficial to have fresh ideas of Best Practice Standards."

–Monica Gazarek, Supervisor

"Practice Profiles have been a good reminder of best practice and implementing it on every contact with each of my families. They have helped me encourage my foster parents to be more proactive with engaging the birth family and being a positive support."

–Shelby Smith,
Foster Care Specialist

"I've learned a lot about engaging with clients in different ways!"

–Alisha Chamberlain,
Intake Worker

"The practice profile webinars have been helpful in giving me a broader viewpoint of the clients' perspectives of case planning and services, what it means, and how we can help them achieve their goals by being a team player."

–Christina Haver,
Ongoing Caseworker

"The practice profile webinars are a great refresher and reminder on how to conduct casework in all units."

–Brandy Laux, Supervisor

"The Practice Profile webinars have been an excellent refresher on best practice. It reminds us of the need to reintegrate positive habits that may have fallen by the wayside."

–Tonya Camden, Supervisor