Panelists:
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Bryn Bakoyema: This is as you see here the topic is about evaluating Tennessee State-wide Performance Management Implementation System. I do need to just let everybody know that this session is being recorded. The audio for this session will be digitally recorded and once formatted for accessibility standards will be made available through the summit website. In the event of written consent of participants who ask questions or provide comments during the session will be giving their permission or consent to this recording. If you have any questions about this recording please feel free to talk with any of the summit support staff. There were supposed to be three people here today, my name is Brenda Buck Williams and I am with the Tennessee Centre for child welfare at middle Tennessee State University and we work with the Tennessee department of child services, Daryl Chansuthus is also with the Tennessee Centre for child welfare, our third presenter was going to be Sherry Richards who is a Regional Administrator with the Department of Children Services. She unfortunately was unable to make it to the summit, which is unfortunate because she was going to be providing the voice from the field around evaluation in the way that the field perceives evaluation and the benefit that they see out of it, the difficulties they see out of it.

So, if we have anybody who is representing that field perspective we greatly welcome you to chime in at any point. That was we felt a very important perspective and we are really sad that she was not able to make it here today to contribute. Okay, the approach for the round table session today, I am going to give a project summary about, fifty minutes project summary, where I talk about our evaluation approach and the feedback that we have received, changes that we have made and then we will move into the round table discussions. There are three different discussions that we will kind of work our way through those and then pull up the highlights of those discussions. Okay, so first of all, this project, we have been working with the Department of Children Services to implement a revised performance management system State-wide, for the entire State. Tennessee has a State run child welfare system, the key, differences with the performance management system being implemented is that is competency based and specific competencies have been identified for the various positions.

It is goal oriented, there is a critical part of the performance management system where supervisors and their direct reports set up goals and have action plans and associate personal development related those goals and it has a development focus and that means a professional development focus, which has been largely absent in the performance management systems that have been used previously within the department. The implementation began with field supervision, actually the Regional Administrators and

the highest level of field supervision. So, it has kind of taken a top down approach with implementation and that the supervisors understand and are able to roll it out with people. They supervise and then it rolls down to the field in that manner. The objectives, why this revised performance management system was put into place, the primary reason was to improve quality casework.

This revised performance management is part of Tennessee's PIP and it is seen as being very critical to help improve that middle management supervision to help improve quality casework, there are some other factors that, it is hoped that it will also work to improve such as fewer disciplinary actions less decreased staff turnover and increased employee satisfaction. But, the primary reason for this initiative, for this revised system is to improve quality casework. I want to also talk about the relationship between the implementation, the group that is implementing and then the evaluation and I think it has been a very good relationship, it has been a relationship where the evaluator is embedded in the implementation project. The evaluators have been part of the implementation team, there is a steering committee and that evaluation voice has been present throughout, so has had the ability to collect information on an ongoing basis to kind of provide that kind of feedback from an evaluation perspective on an ongoing basis and this evaluation process has been rather iterative process, where it was not designed from the outset, this is what we are going to do and set this big evaluation framework, instead it has been very iterative as the project has kind of adjusted and morphed, so has the evaluation to fit the changes of the project itself.

So, I wanted to talk about some of those changes that have happened as part of this iterative process. Initially the evaluation approach was that, we wanted to know what; there were three main areas that we wanted to be able to measure in regards to this revised performance management system. The first was, understanding there are pretty significant changes with this revised process. Are those people who are responsible for implementing this, carrying this on, do they understand the process? Do they understand the basis behind these changes? Do they understand how this is supposed to impact their supervision? How they supervise? A second area was fidelity to the model of the revised performance management system and then a third was behavior change. Are the supervisors who are using this process actually changing their behavior in terms of how they supervise, and we had tools associate with all of these that we were going to be using and you know, some of them we did carry out for example the behavior change, we had a pre-post self-assessment for the supervisor and the supervisor's direct reports to assess the supervisor's approach to supervision to performance management, to various aspects of it and then we were going to have that same survey administered at the end as a post test to see if there is any reported behavior change since it would be hard to get at that behavioral change in other ways.

But as part of this process and as part of us being embedded in the steering committee we received a lot of feedback around the evaluation itself, the evaluation plan and the evaluation approach and this is an area where the voice in the field would have been very good for all of you to hear directly from her but, I am going to kind of summarize some of the things that came up. One was that this evaluation seemed to be very much like

monitoring and there was a lot of resistance to that. We are, I am sure like many other States in Tennessee there is lot of monitoring going around, we are under a law suit, with the PIP, with all these different things there is a lot of monitoring that is happening and in trying to ensure that there was fidelity to the model we wanted to make sure that the tools and the process was being carried out as it was designed.

But, our plan to determine whether or not that was happening felt too much like monitoring and so we had to think about that and make some adjustments. A second concern was that it was too onerous, that we are asking too much of departmental staff, that they need to focus on their work as you know, case managers, case manager's supervisors etc. and that they can't take all the time to provide all this feedback. There were concerns that there is just too much for them. A third concern, kind of associate with the onerous piece is, they didn't, there was mixed feedback, but, there were some leaders didn't feel like the benefit of the evaluation justified all the things that were we wanting to do to see whether or not it was being implemented appropriately, what the feedback was etc. and the last concern actually came primarily from the evaluators ourselves and that is in relation to this behavioral change piece. We realized as part of the behavioral change we were looking at the self-assessment of the supervisor and then also the assessment of those direct reports, assessing how the supervisor's behavior is and after we distributed, administered the initial survey we realized that there were very, very inflated self-assessment and we were going to have to change the approaches here because we were not going to be able to see any change overtime because the initial, to baselines are so inflated so we had to make some adjustments.

So, our evolved design of what the changes that we have made is to one, and this is as we rolling, as the implementation was starting there was recognition there are concerns with the implementation itself. So, we focused a lot heavier, on actually evaluating the implementation and looking at the components of implementation, looking at those drivers and evaluating what are the issues with these different drivers of the implementation. I don't know if any of you are involved with the implementation centers, I actually didn't know what their evaluation plan was but, I had been familiar with some of the material and the different drivers that they were using and actually used a lot of that to design an evaluation myself that was looking at the drivers of implementation and that has actually been very beneficial. So, some of those drivers include communication, leadership, we have a technology one because technology was really critical to this implementation, kind of the agency support, there was a number of different, I think there were about eight different drivers that we were focusing on and looking at how this implementation was going.

A second adjustment that we made and this is in regards to this behavioral piece that we were struggling with was to look and see if we can maybe do a retrospective impact survey. So, instead of just trying to use the self-assessment pre and post, at the post have them retrospectively think about how they were at the beginning because in many cases, it is a situation, if you don't know what you don't know. So, I am a supervisor, I am doing performance management, I think I am doing a real good job, my supervisor seemed to be responding well to me, I think our case looks pretty good but, I don't know

what I don't know and through this learning process I am learning a lot of new things and after the fact I may be able to reflect back to the beginning and say, 'wow, yeah that was something I was really struggling with, wasn't even able to identify it at that time' so we are changing our approaches on that.

We are also relying more on informal methods and this is in response to that onerous piece because we are in a sense embedded evaluators we are participating in lot of the meetings, we are part of the steering committee, we are highly involved with implementation so we are able to pull out the informal feedback into the evaluation process so we don't have to use these formal tools, formal interviews that take up even more of staff time, and then the last thing we are trying to focus more on, is using the existing data. A lot of the tools that are part of the performance management system, we are actually able to get access to some of those, some of those are web based so we are actually able to get access to the data without having to disturb any of the individuals that are busy completing these, so we are able to look at fidelity by looking at the existing data instead of going out and seeming to be monitoring. So, we are making those adjustments as well. Before we move into the round table piece, are there any questions just about what I've presented around what is happening in Tennessee? Yes.

Participant: Was there resistance to the performance management or the evaluation?

Bryn Bakoyema: There was actually, well the resistance is about, but, there was resistance, not so much from the field but, from the agency leaders there was resistance towards the evaluation itself in that it is taking too much staff time and that there was not that perceived benefit to all that staff time. So, we are trying to really consolidate tools, really do just do the essential tools, one survey in regions were setup so in state administration there are twelve regions and there are a couple of regions who were very interested in having more in-depth information, so for those regions we are doing more involved, we are doing some interviews and some focus groups, but, we are being much more careful about what it is we are asking their staff in terms of their time.

Participant: Can you talk little bit more about how the system either overlays current data, you know, data on the case management? Is it case management system or is it the piece that has been added? So, is it the double entry of different kinds of data? Tell me a little bit more about it what is going on?

Bryn Bakoyema: Okay, sure. This might, I have to give you a little bit background about Tennessee because as with any state you have your state level department of human resources or personnel, whatever it is called that sets some basic standards as to what you can do with performance management. So, that is where we had to start. What is it that the state requires? And, then what is it that DCS wants to build into that to make it a more meaningful process? So, there are a number of different things, one is what in Tennessee is called the job performance plan and that is the one that was transformed to be competency based, it is not a job description but, it details what are the competencies are essential for whatever position it is developed for and that is a state requirement. So, it is just a change from being task to being competency based. Then another piece of this

is the professional development piece. So, using those competencies there was an assessment to determine where, so that the supervisor could sit down with his or her direct reports and go through, hey these are the competencies that you should have the knowledge skills or the abilities to do the things in order to carry out your job as a supervisor or a case manager whatever you job maybe.

So, what are those areas where you feel you have need to learn more or to develop a skill, because you can't hold somebody responsible for actually doing the work if you first have not made sure that the person has the knowledge skills and ability to do that work. So, that is the professional development piece, which was very new for supervisors in Tennessee. Another piece to the performance management system was the goal setting and the approach that was taken in Tennessee is looking at cascading goals. So, we have state-wide goals associated with exiting our law suit associated with our PIP and other things. So, starting there, what are the state-wide goals? And, then look at the regions. So, this region if we have five state-wide goals, this region may really need to focus on these two or these three and then so the regional administrator has these three that is the focus for the region and then you take that and go one level down and say, 'okay, so if this our regional goal, what should be the goal at this next level? And, then what should be the goal at this next level? So, that it cascades all the way down. We are actually in the middle of implementation right now so, implementation is kind of finishing up with the supervisors and the next phase is about to start, which will be the frontline supervisors and the actual case managers. So, there is the goal setting and there was actually a plan that is associated with those goals that were identified.

Participant: And, then, sorry, I am just trying to get a kind of sense of this. Is it then linked to outcomes for the work that we are doing, you know, in terms of permanency *[indiscernible] [00:17:39]*?

Bryn Bakoyema: Yes the goals are absolutely.

Participant: So, then you are able to look at, say, you know, regional performance on permanency *[indiscernible] [00:17:47]*

Bryn Bakoyema: Right, right.

Participant: Okay, all right got it.

Bryn Bakoyema: Yes.

Participant: And, you also have somehow tried, you are using LMS with your professional development and are somehow tied, you know measure competency within LMS.

Daryl Chansuthus: Yes. That is a process we are actually TCC debut have been, we have been in the process of implementing that, which is why we were glad that the department wanted to move to a competency based system because previously there were

tests and there was training and a lot of times the training was not focused on the improvement in practice that the department actually wanted. There was a disconnect between what was being trained and what was actually needed in the field and sometimes it was difficult to assess clearly what was needed because there was an absence of competencies, what, for example, a team leader was expected to be able to know, to do, to understand and one area of the state differed often quite dramatically between what team leader doing essentially the same function in another part of the state might be expected to know, to be able to understand, to do.

Participant: And, when did you start to process the performance of the formal general analysis?

Daryl Chansuthus: The department worked with APHSA I believe in 2005 or 2006, they also did some job analysis, they did some right sizing, they went through a series of steps from, I think about 2005 through maybe 2008 to do exactly that, to get a better sense of what people were doing, of what was needed in order to do the work well.

Bryn Bakoyema: And if you are interested in the model that was used in terms of this revised performance management system, as the starting point was Cornerstone for Kids. I don't know how many of you are familiar with that, but, they have a fabulous website with a wealth of information that has tools and information detailing, very, very detailed of the different steps and the different pieces.

Daryl Chansuthus: It is workforce planning.

Bryn Bakoyema: It is work force planning and then a portion of that is this performance management piece, because the implementation is not finished we are not presenting any data around what was actually found as part of this implementation evaluation but, we have preliminary feedback and, I mean there are absolutely some struggles and there are some adjustments that have to be made and it has been very interesting.

Daryl Chansuthus: Supervision as educative and supportive is a fairly, I don't want to say it is a new concept, but, is not something that has.

Bryn Bakoyema: Been a focus.

Daryl Chansuthus: Been a focus, yeah.

Bryn Bakoyema: Okay, so let's see that is, so moving into the round table piece, we have two, four, six, eight, and nine. You want to do two tables?

Daryl Chansuthus: Yeah. I think so, maybe. If we could invite you to join a table that has some, if we can keep the threes here if you are at three, I think this front table. If I could invite some folks who are in the back, Harriet can you tell if you don't mind coming forward and join either the table that has number two or the table that has number three and I am sorry I don't, and what we are going to do is there are actually three

questions, no one is initially going to be at the first table but, the purpose of the round table discussion is to get you thinking about this work. If you are here then you are interested in, sort of what is involved in working with departments, universities and child welfare agencies working together around interventions initiatives, how to do that well, but, if you are interested in performance management, how to do that well and what is involved in that.

And so we like to get you thinking, your thoughts, you talking about this at your tables there are questions, if you are table two, you have the second question, table three has the third question and then there is a table one, which we will invite you to move to in about twenty minutes. We're going to ;let you, it is a round table discussion and we are doing it ruled cafe style, which means you are going to change tables after twenty minutes if, I could invite someone to service the recorder for your table and then to stay at the table that you are at. In about twenty minutes I will let you know when time is up and invite you to go to a different table.

So, if you are three, invite to go to table two or table one. If you are at two, invite you to go to table three or table one except for the recorder. So, if you are the recorder for your table, I wonder if you would please stay at your table for the two sessions and keep notes of sort of the key ideas that come up, that surface. And the three questions that we are going to invite you to and I am going to start with table two and table three first. For table two the question that you have is on connecting ideas and finding deeper insights and thinking about the Tennessee experience around performance management initiatives, what is missing from what you have heard so far? What would you like to know more about? What is that you feel we are not seeing? What do we need more clarity on?

And, for table three your question is related to creating forward movement, movement with regard to university and public child welfare collaborative partnerships in implementing and/or evaluating systems level change efforts such as performance management what are the challenges and how might we meet them. The question for table one, which I hope some of you will go to in the second round is around focusing collective attention on evaluating performance management initiatives and public child welfare, considering factors such as organizational climate and culture in a public child welfare setting, what's really important to understand about evaluating the implementation and impact of change initiatives such as performance management. Big questions, they are intended to not necessarily to come up with sort of this is the answer to that but, rather to provoke some interesting discussion around these issues.