

Supportive Supervision and Resiliency

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

Coach Ohio, a multi-level supportive supervision intervention, was designed as part of the QIC-WD project to help child welfare staff within the six Ohio implementation counties prevent and mitigate the effects of burnout, secondary trauma, employee dissatisfaction, and disengagement from families and children served by the agencies (for more information see the [Site Overview](#)). *Coach Ohio* initially included two components:

[Resilience Alliance](#) (RA) was developed by the New York City Administration of Children’s Services-New York University Children’s Trauma Institute to mitigate the effects of secondary trauma, create a healthier work environment for child welfare staff, and to help staff develop skills and behaviors that improve their well-being, increase job satisfaction, and reduce turnover.

[Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center \(ACCWIC\) Coaching Model](#) developed by the federally-funded Atlantic Coast Child Welfare Implementation Center (ACCWIC), consists of six steps: being present, listening, reflecting and clarifying, questioning, giving feedback, and holding staff accountable. Supervisors learned the ACCWIC Coaching Model and how to use coaching to support acquisition of RA skills of their staff.



The goals of the intervention were to:

- Decrease stress by enhancing resilience skills, increasing social support, and changing the organizational culture
- Help staff regulate their emotions and not engage in avoidance coping behaviors in response to traumatic situations
- Reduce symptoms of secondary traumatic stress
- Increase job satisfaction
- Reduce attrition
- Improve casework practice with families

The intervention began when directors, managers, administrators and frontline supervisors were trained in the ACCWIC coaching model to prepare to reinforce RA concepts once that part of the intervention began.

The intervention required all agency administrators, middle managers, frontline supervisors and caseworkers to participate in 24 weeks of RA sessions facilitated by trained facilitators, see the RA [facilitator’s manual](#). Frontline caseworkers participated in 1-hour, weekly RA groups and practiced the skills in between sessions with support and coaching from their supervisors, see the RA [participant’s manual](#). Supervisors also participated in 1-hour, weekly RA groups with other supervisors to gain coping skills, obtain social support from their peers, and learn what their staff are learning to further support their growth.

Each county determined which staff would participate in the RA groups and a number of RA groups varied across the agencies. Several of the implementation counties created special rooms for the RA sessions that included special lighting, decoration, and general improvements to provide a comfortable setting.

In early 2020, as a result of continued challenges related to supportive supervision, the QIC-WD and the workforce intervention team decided to provide additional training to directors, administrators, middle managers, and supervisors. The purpose of the training was to:

- Ensure supportive supervision occurred throughout the organization - from administration to management to frontline supervisors to frontline staff;
- Enhance skills to effectively build healthy relationships with direct reports; and
- Build on the ACCWIC coaching model to enhance supportive behaviors in order to retain staff and help them be more effective in their work with families.

Directors, administrators, and middle managers from the implementation counties participated in the online training across two afternoons. They then joined the QIC trainers as co-leaders in the training their supervisors to reinforce concepts and facilitate breakout groups. The trainings included the following topics:

- The role of attachment orientations to the workplace
- A model of social support
- Review of the ACCWIC Coaching model skills and how each could be enhanced (such as use of mindfulness techniques at the beginning of a meeting with a direct report to ensure “being present”)

QIC-WD staff met with the frontline supervisors four months following the trainings to provide the supervisors an opportunity to check in on the actions they and their peers were taking to enhance supportive supervision, and to reinforce concepts they learned in the training. Most participants found this to be a safe space to share concerns and to discuss the challenges of their day-to-day work.

Coach Ohio was designed to help staff acquire enhanced skills of reflection, emotional regulation, coping, and social support – so they would feel less stressed, experience fewer trauma symptoms and higher levels of job satisfaction. In turn, this would promote intentions to stay with the agency, retention and perhaps higher quality service provision to families and children.

