

# Supportive Supervision and Resiliency

## OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

The Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD) developed a [theory of change](#) for the primary area of need identified in partnership with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the [nine participating counties](#). Through a series of steps and causal links, a theory of change provides a roadmap to address the [root causes](#) of an identified workforce problem and describes how and why changes are expected to lead to the desired outcomes. In Ohio, the theory was informed by various aspects of the needs assessment process (e.g., survey data, implementation team input, and focus groups with supervisors) and relevant research on the targeted workforce problems.

The theory of change associated with the selected [intervention](#), supportive supervision and Resilience Alliance, began with a problem statement about staff burnout and secondary traumatic stress (STS); organizational rigidity and low engagement; and supervisors wanting to help staff prevent and mitigate the effects of burnout, secondary trauma and low engagement. It was felt that if supervisors engaged in supporting, recognizing, and empowering behaviors, they could help staff acquire enhanced skills such as reflection, self-regulation, coping, social support, and better client engagement. This in turn would help staff feel less stressed and traumatized and would improve their relationship with their supervisor. Staff would focus less on their own emotional distress and would be better able to focus on the needs of the families and children they serve. In turn, staff would have increased job satisfaction, leading to improved intentions to stay with the agency, and in turn, improved staff retention. In addition, by improving staff compassion and empathy for the families and children served, the families would be more responsive and less resistant which would lead to improved child and family outcomes such as safety, permanency and well-being.

The following image depicts the theory of change beginning with a problem statement followed by a series of steps that lay out the logic on how that problem will be addressed.

**Problem Statement:** Staff identified high burnout, high STS, low engagement of themselves and families in a context of rigidity as issues with organizational culture and climate. Supervisors identified inability of staff to cope with stress as part of the problem.

**Approach:** Supervisors utilize a model of supportive supervision that emphasizes helping staff prevent and mitigate the effects of burnout, secondary trauma, employee disengagement and dis-engagement from families and children served

SO THAT

Supervisors engage in supporting behaviors (respect, manage stress, concern for needs, active listening, fostering cooperation), recognizing behaviors (praise, positive reinforcement), and empowering behaviors (autonomy, input, flexibility)

SO THAT

Staff acquire enhanced skills of reflection, emotional regulation, coping, social support and client engagement

SO THAT

Staff feel less stressed, less traumatized and build a high quality relationship with their supervisor

Staff can focus less on their own emotional distress and feel more compassionate and empathetic towards families and children served

SO THAT

Staff have better job satisfaction and increased intentions to stay with the agency

Families and children are more responsive, less resistant in interactions with staff

SO THAT

Staff are retained longer

Staff see better child and family outcomes such as safety, permanency and well-being