Historical and Contemporary Synopsis of the Development of Field Education Guidelines in BSW, MSW and Doctoral Programs

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Addressing Specialization and Time to Enhance Adult Learning: Workshop Participants' Perceptions

Alamdari, Walton and Moynihan

Abstract

Interdisciplinary workshops trained and supported supervisors and coaches to implement common assessment tools in practice across social service sectors. By applying adult learning, learning transfer, and situated learning theories, this qualitative study elicited perceptions of trainers and trainees to identify improvement training and technical assistance strategies. Ten semi-structured interviews were completed. Using thematic analysis, six themes emerged (specialization, time, engagement/interest, content, marketing, and technology). Specialized training for experienced adults helped match new knowledge and skills to practice. Addressing time constraints of busy professionals required consideration of participants' availability and training duration. Consistent with applied theories, suggestions for improvement included interactive training, small group discussions, realistic examples or vignettes, and helping participants comprehend the importance of the content. The creative use of technology, pre-training need assessment, reflexive practice, and supportive organizational factors can be helpful to advance continuing education in social service professions. Utilization of suggestions to modify workshops improved engagement and the transfer of knowledge to practice.

Introduction

Training, a necessary component of promising practices, can be an efficient way to share knowledge (background, theory, philosophy, and values), introduce key practices, and offer opportunities to practice new skills (Daley, 2000; Fixsen, Blasé, Naoom, & Wallace, 2009). To improve service effectiveness, social service agencies often focus on implementing evidence-based practices (EBPs; Bertram, 2014). Implementation science literature has identified drivers that are central in the implementation of EBPs with fidelity, sustainability, and effectiveness (Bertram, 2014). Training and continuing education are one driver that can help improve implementation of EBPs in practice through enhancing service providers' competency (Bertram, 2014; Proctor et al., 2009; Rieckmann, Abraham, Zwick, Rasplica, & McCarty, 2015). The focus of such training includes supporting the implementation of a specific program, often within one profession, one organization, or across a service system (Omar et al., 2009; Prelip et al., 2011; Ray, Wilson, Wandersman, Meyers, & Katz, 2012).

Since 2007, multiple state systems (mental health and addiction, child welfare, and Medicaid) and local service providers (community mental health centers, child residential providers, state hospitals, and other social service organizations) have used the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS; Lyons, 2009) and the Adult Needs and Strengths Assessment (ANSA; Lyons & Weiner, 2009) tools to assess the needs and strengths of youth, adults, and families; to plan services; and to monitor progress. The state mental health authority sponsored online training and certification to use the tools and in-person training of mid-level managers and supervisors to support implementation.

To support local implementation, facilitators recruited mid-level management professionals to become local implementation coaches (SuperUsers). Trainees' roles included training, supervision, program management, quality improvement, upper management, or specialized services. After completing basic online training and receiving certification to use one or more tools, potential coaches participated in one-and-a-half-day workshops that followed the Praed Foundation's train-the trainer curriculum. Included were an introduction to the tools' underlying Transformational Collaborative Outcome Management (TCOM) framework (Lyons, 2009), reliably rating the assessment tools, a certification test, using information to plan and to monitor progress, writing and rating a vignette, and developing an elevator speech.

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To retain SuperUser certification, coaches were required to maintain online certification at a higher level than other clinicians and to participate in an annual 'booster' workshop. The three-hour 'boosters' focused on specific implementation topics (e.g., engagement, trauma-informed assessment, reliability, treatment planning, clinical supervision, monitoring progress). Over time, SuperUser certification became a requirement for specific programs and roles (wraparound facilitators, recovery specialists, and program quality reviewers). Due to high turnover rates in the social service and behavioral health workforces, requests for training remained constant.

Within the state, over 300 social service and behavioral health organizations have used the CANS/ANSA tools. Between 2006 and the end of 2017, over 2,600 people had participated in initial workshops, followed by about 4,400 participants in boosters (Division of Mental Health & Addiction [DMHA], 2018). Annually, 250 to 1000 participants attended CANS/ANSA workshops (DMHA, 2018). Some participants returned annually. Workshop size averaged about 50 participants, ranging from 25 to 70. At the end of workshops, facilitators invited trainees to participate in a modified Impact of Training and Technical Assistance (IOTTA; Walker & Bruns, n. d.) survey to measure perceived competence, satisfaction, and knowledge transfer to practice (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

This qualitative study further examined the training of local coaches and supervisors to support statewide cross-system implementation of the outcome management tools. Cross-disciplinary trainees included social workers. A literature search found no study related to cross-system, interdisciplinary statewide training.

Literacy Review

The use of theoretical frameworks in empirical studies on training were often missed or not articulated, especially when studying outcomes (Jerardi et al. 2013; Luca Sugawara, Carlson, Makki Alamdari, & Vukoviæ-Èoviæ, 2017; Makki Alamdari, Hahn, Price, & Studer, 2019; Malet, Reynaud, Llorca, & Falissard, 2006; Parrish & Rubin, 2011; Ray et al. 2012; Sisson, Hill-Briggs, & Levine, 2010; Villegas, González,

Barraza, & Bustos, n.d.). By incorporating learning theories into the survey and discussion, this study addressed the theoretical gap in training research.

Merriam (2004) and Taylor and Hamdy (2013) acknowledged that many theories explain how adults learn. Although each theory has merits, no single theory fully explains adult learning. Categorizing learning theories into groups (Merriam, 2004) yielded six types: instrumental learning (e.g., cognitive and behaviorist theories), humanistic, transformative, social, motivational, and reflective learning theories (Taylor & Hamdy, 2013). From these types, this study applied humanistic, transformative, and social learning theories.

Humanistic theories are learner-centered, focusing on the development of self-directed, motivated individuals. Within this category, Knowles's andragogy theory (1984) recognized that adults have different characteristics than children, suggesting that the adult learning process differs from that of children (Knowles, 1980, 1990). Adults are autonomous, wanting to choose instead of being told what to do. Adults' prior experience affects the learning process. For adults, a problem-solving approach is appropriate, using real problems and participants' own examples. Practicality and relevance for their work or individual needs are fundamental (Knowles, 1980, 1990). Active, learner-centered, and meaningful engagement in the learning process are necessary. Informal learning environments provide better learning outcomes (Knowles, 1980; 1990; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2014). Despite this theory's contributions, it is limited by the exclusion of the social processes of constructing and transfer of knowledge and the lack of attention to context. Therefore, this study applied two other theories (learning transfer and social theories of learning).

Transformative learning theories are concerned with how critical reflection can challenge a learner's assumptions and perspectives (Harris, Lowery-Moore, & Farrow, 2008; Mezirow, 1990). In this category, learning transfer theory focuses on the transfer of knowledge to practice, crucial for practical professions such as social work. Learning transfer theory provides a framework to inform training and implementation strategies (Harris et al., 2008). Transfer of learning happens when

learning in one context influences performance in another context (Eggen & Kauchak, 1999; Perkins & Salomon, 1992). Perkins and Salomon (1992) and Misko (1995) discussed near and far transfer. Near transfer refers to learning transfer to closely similar performances and contexts. Transfer of learning to different contexts is considered as far transfer (Misko, 1995; Perkins & Salomon, 1992; Salomon & Perkins, 1996). Two different mechanisms play roles in learning transfer. Low road, automatic or reflexive transfer is one mechanism that triggers well-practiced responses and happens when the transfer context is similar to the learning context. This often happens in near transfer. In contrast, high road or mindful transfer needs deliberate abstraction and an effortful search for possible connections (Perkins & Salomon, 1992; Salomon & Perkins, 1996). This mechanism needs time and mental efforts and accomplishes far transfer. Trainee characteristics (e.g., perception of importance, motivation, and openness), training design (e.g., active learning, not much content, and involvement in the design), and work environment (e.g., supervisory support and training's alignment with organizational goals) influence the transfer of new knowledge to practice (Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2010; Hutchins & Burke, 2007; Lim & Morris, 2006; Velada, Caetano, Michel, Lyons, & Kavanagh, 2007).

Finally, social theories of learning emphasize the importance of context and community of practice (Choi & Hannafin, 1995; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Within social theories, situated learning/cognition theories (Taylor & Hamdy, 2013) conceptualize learning as sociocultural activity, the result of social process, acquired and applied in daily living, structured by the available tools, and influenced by the context in which learning occurs (Anderson, Reder, & Simon, 1996; Kirschner & Whitson, 1997; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wilson, 1993). This learner-centered theory relates the training to the needs of learners, and emphasizes transfer of knowledge to the practice in order to address real world challenges (Stein, 1998). Meaningful strategies include placing learning in the social service context and environment involving other learners, and activities (Anderson et al., 1996; Stein, 1998). Content, context, community of learners, and participation are critical components in acquiring

knowledge (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Stein, 1998; Wilson, 1993).

Putting emphasis on adult learners' characteristics, knowledge transfer to practice, contextualized learning, and meaningful participation, these three theoretical frameworks (i.e., Knowles's adult learning theory, theory of learning transfer, and situated learning theory) can help advance continuing education for professionals. These frameworks informed data collection and interpretation of findings in this study. Another gap in existing literature is sole reliance on quantitative methodology (Makki Alamdari & Jalaiepour, 2012; Parrish & Rubin, 2011; Robinson, Gook, Yuen, McGorry, & Yung, 2008). Addressing the existing gaps, this study applied the theoretical frameworks and exploratory qualitative methodology to gain in-depth understanding to improve future professional workshops.

Methodology

Interview Guide

By applying a phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2013), this study looked at the experience of participants in training workshops. Based on the research purpose and aforementioned theories, interview questions were developed, discussed, and approved by the research team. Later, the research team examined questions through preliminary interviews. Then, the team modified probable errors or vague points. Triangulation ensured trustworthiness. Specifically, two different sources were interviewed to gather data (Creswell, 2013): facilitators and trainees. Interview questions differed based on whether the interviewee was a facilitator or a trainee. Questions fell into the following domains: perception about workshops' effectiveness, understanding of the workshops' importance, the role of active engagement, workshops' usefulness for work, and recommendations for workshops' improvement. Only trainees were asked about the workshops' importance and usefulness.

Recruitment

Purposive sampling was applied to recruit participants. To recruit trainees, an email introducing the research team and explaining the purpose of study, interview questions, and the

duration of interview was sent to potential participants. These potential participants were selected from the registration list, which has been collected over time. Facilitators participating in the study were recruited from leads from current facilitators through in-person or email invitation from the interviewer. Participation was voluntary. Seeking diversity, the research team attempted to recruit interviewees from different ethnicities, ages, years of experience, and agencies (including mental health organizations, child welfare, and other social service agencies). The University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study.

Interview Procedure

Interviews were semi-structured, with each taking approximately one hour. The interviewer was a member of the research team. Before the interview, participants filled out a demographic information form including information on their role, ethnicity, age, years of experience in general and in particular with CANS/ANSA. If there was a vague comment during the interview, interviewees were asked for clarification. If an important idea emerged during the interview, the interviewee was asked to explain further, and the idea was added to subsequent interview questions. All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the interviewer. To maintain anonymity, all identifications were removed. After transcribing, if there was a vague point in the transcription, the interviewer checked the accuracy with the interviewee.

Data Analysis

Transcriptions were analyzed through thematic analysis. At first, the research team (three members) read transcriptions individually several times to become familiar with the data. After creating initial codes by categorizing similar ideas, the team came to a discussion that led to six main themes. Over the process of analysis, the team was cautious about the connection of the themes with the overall context of each interview. After creating the themes, to test the rigorousness of analysis, themes were verified by recoding the interviews reversely to improve trustworthiness (Creswell, 2013). Further, one independent qualitative researcher (university course instructor) evaluated and confirmed emerging themes.

Findings

Participants

Ten people, including three facilitators and seven trainees, participated in the study. All facilitators were employed by the University. Two trainees worked for the state's Department of Child Services (DCS). Three trainees worked for DMHA. Two trainees were from different mental health providers. In terms of race, eight interviewees were White and two were African-American. Three participants were under 34, three were between 35 and 44, and the rest were more than 45 years old. Participants had 195 years of work experience overall, ranging from 7 to 45 years. Three interviewees had less than four years of experience using the CANS/ANSA tools, and seven participants had more than five years of experience using these tools.

Identified Themes

Six workshop improvement themes emerged: Specialization, Time, Engagement/Interest, Content, Marketing, and Technology.

Specialization. Diversity in terms of interdisciplinary, cross-system trainees both improved and hindered learning. Respondents indicated that obtaining different ideas and learnings from each other was beneficial. On the other hand, some participants preferred specialized learning tailored to their agency's function and needs (e.g., child welfare or mental health facilities). Some trainees disliked inclusion of the child and adult versions of the tools in the same workshops. Participant differences in levels of knowledge and experience sometimes was challenging.

> ... because the workshop is designed to provide this large overview of both the CANS and ANSA, and it's also intended to be broad enough to apply to DCS, and community mental health and residential, ...that a lot of the specifics or how to apply for individual centers still is very cloudy when we leave the workshop... I think it might be beneficial that after providing that wide overview, that ... they would put together [clinicians], and ... child welfare together, and residential together, so they can specifically drill down into how it's utilized in their specific jobs (Trainee 6).

Some suggested offering more practical, in-depth, and specific knowledge for mental

health and addiction, residential services, family case management, or child welfare services.

I think that one thing that would increase my participation would be to provide more tools, and I'll use an example, ... [in] the high intensity programs, giving more tools to help them score [items], ... if they [offered] ... inpatient or outpatient specific course ..., I think that could make [workshops] more interesting, and more streamline, and give people more the information they really want. Because scoring somebody that's in intense service is really ... extremely difficult ... (Trainee 7).

Time. Participants frequently discussed accessibility of the workshops. Because of time constraints and intense workloads, some mid-level management professionals were not likely to attend in-person workshops. Missing two days of work resulted in a heavy workload after returning. One child welfare trainee mentioned that specialized training could decrease the time of workshops.

...because we [specific organization] do an extra half day after the day and half is over, ... we learn more ... than [in] the day and half. I think that's because there's a lot of generalities and history in the first part, ... so, ... if you had a child welfare geared workshop, just by itself, I don't think it would be as long. I don't think that would be those two days. I think you can probably do that in a day, because you don't have everyone to address. That would seem to me to be the most beneficial at this point (Trainee 3).

To address the challenge of long travel times, suggestions included holding workshops at local agencies.

Engagement/Interest. Although there were small group activities, much of the training for new implementation coaches was lecturer-based. Since some participants did not have enough experience and knowledge, it was necessary to familiarize them with basic information on the CANS/ANSA tools. Compared to initial trainings, half-day booster workshops had more engaging and interactive activities.

Three trainees said the workshop was not very interesting. Engaging discussions were limited within large groups of trainees. Some suggestions to increase interest and engagement included providing a more comfortable environment and

beginning with an ice-breaking activity. To increase engagement, respondents suggested breaking down large groups to smaller groups, using vignettes and real stories, creating new and interesting activities, and limiting the size of workshop enrollment.

[For more interaction] I would have people come with, without identifying information of course, with an ANSA that they struggled with. ... I think just saying I don't know how to score this [case], I've got this client, I think walking through a real case might be helpful... (Trainee 2).

Having two instead of one facilitator would change the pace of the workshop. Allocating more time for discussion was suggested. Facilitator 3 mentioned that having a purpose such as discussing a vignette or passing the exam makes participants more attentive. One trainee highlighted the importance of providing new information and activities each year to increase engagement in the trainings for people who participate annually.

...you have to learn different ways to engage, ... they've been SuperUser longer than me, they've been trained more often than that I have, and it's been about the same information, so when they come to the training, they're looking for new things that they didn't know about, not review the same information that was ... review[ed] last year (Trainee 5).

Content. Identified workshop strengths included being practical and providing a useful manual and a clear agenda. Further, technical assistance remained available through phone calls and email. Challenges regarding the content included an ongoing need to clarify rating questions of the tools. Although clinicians and case managers maintained online certification to reliably rate the tools, understanding of all items varied. Sometimes the meaning of specific items was misunderstood. Study participants suggested strategies to address rating challenges that build on the experience and skills of workshop participants.

If we have people in the room that have been [using the tools] for one year and people ... for 10 years, if they're able to communicate with each other, to discuss real life experiences, ... they would be able to learn from each other (Trainee 5).

To improve the content, respondents suggested asking participants or guest speakers from different agencies to share their experiences and reframing the training content and usefulness for those who are new to the process.

Much of the training content focuses on rating, the quantitative part of assessment. It would be valuable to consider the qualitative side and applications to practice, such as case conceptualization, better understanding individuals and families, and planning effective interventions. In addition, one participant suggested increasing the focus on using the strength items in practice, especially as related to the development of intervention plans.

I feel like really the CANS itself, the assessment does focus on the needs, because we're looking for level of service and that's great, I feel like we could probably add a lot more strengths in too, ... because [child welfare] builds case plans around this [strengths], not just treatment plans, ... in a treatment plan, you'd say, ok we should try these services ..., whereas in [child welfare]... however, we need more strengths ... to say we can help with this, ... that be great[!] (Trainee 3).

Marketing. Facilitators and trainees mentioned that trainees were often asked by employers to attend training, but not always given an explanation regarding the relevance for their work. Respondents indicated that trainees did not always recognize the importance of training. Suggestions to improve people's understanding about the importance of training included marketing techniques. Send a little card, something tactile and with a personal touch to show the importance of workshops, especially for people who are in direct care. Due to time constraints and workloads, potential trainees were less likely to check the online training calendar. Some trainees highlighted that participants have to be told why they are attending the workshops and the relevance of the content to their work.

I think just the whole ANSA/CANS stuff needs to be presented in a way the people understand why they're doing and why it's important, how will affect the clients, what the state does with the information. If I can understand why, I can do a lot of things, and I cannot believe that I'm the only one that thinks on that way (Trainee 1).

Technology. Most interviewees asked about the use of internet or phone conference disagreed with using the internet and phone calls for trainings for a variety of reasons. Available statewide, online training and certification to use the tool has been effective for basic training, feedback, as a technical assistance resource, but does not require consistent training or address how to effectively implement or use the tools. Online videos, multiple choice items, and practice tests are available, but they limit the opportunity of open discussion and participation. Conference calls can be useful for technical assistance, but are often limited to agency managers.

[The issue of location is not solvable by phone conference] or such things, because questions come up during sitting and talking about things, they would not come up in a phone conversation, ... some people ask questions in phone conversation, but I cannot imagine a lot of people agree with that. I think managers ... will do fine, calling and asking for directions. That might help some agencies (Trainee 2).

In this study, some interviewees pointed out potential benefits of technology. One facilitator suggested using low-tech tools to facilitate the participation of people who are not comfortable to talk in the group. Another participant recommended using the internet for the lecture part of workshops prior to the scheduled workshop.

The lecture part of workshop could take place online; people could listen to the lecture online at work the day before, and then, go to the workshop and participate in other activities, group activities or the other information building activities (Trainee 5).

Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore training improvement strategies through applying theoretical frameworks. Conducting semi-structured interviews with training facilitators and workshop participants, six themes emerged: specialization, time, engagement/interest, content, marketing, and technology. All themes relate to areas for improvement and provide criteria to guide and design continuing education programs. These interrelated themes are consistent with adult learning theories (Knowles, 1984, 1990; Perkins & Salomon, 1992; Stein,

1998; Wilson, 1993), with clear implications for professional training. Acknowledging practical system/cross-system implementation challenges, with the passage of time and applying this study and IOTTA information, many suggested changes have been made or are in process to enhancing training and technical assistance, moving from theory to application (Makki Alamdari, Walton, & Moynihan, 2017; Walton & Moynihan, 2017a).

Specialization and Time: Two Principles to Improve Training Design

Outside of formal graduate study, in continuing education and technical assistance, strategies including specialization and responding to time constraint realities are necessary. Consistent with adult learning theories, effectively addressing these principles potentially increases participants' interest, training's meaning, and the likelihood of sharing or using new knowledge in practice. Likewise, consideration of these two themes addresses practical challenges for busy, experienced adult learners.

In terms of Knowles's adult learning theory, recognizing the prior experience of social service providers, providing specialized training increases learners' motivation and the likelihood of engagement in the learning process and understanding the intrinsic value of training content (Knowles, 1984, 1990; Waight & Stewart, 2005). Specialized, accessible training recognizes and responds to time constraints and the self-directed, autonomous nature of adult trainees who are working in professional settings. Specialized training is often task-oriented, practical, and relevant to real world challenges, in line with adults' preference for problem-centered training (Knowles, 1990). According to the learning transfer theory, specialized training can facilitate near and "low road" transfer through providing training in closely similar context leading to well-practiced responses (Hutchins & Burke, 2007; Misko, 1995; Perkins & Salomon, 1992; Rogers, 2003). Specialized training is similar to instructional strategies recommended by the learning transfer theory. In this theory, nurturing transfer through providing the content and conditions close to the desired performance is recommended (Perkins & Salomon, 1992). Perkins and Salomon (1992) call this strategy "hugging," which should be accompanied with

encouraging opportunities for reflection, practice, and self-monitoring (Eggen & Kauchak, 1999; Perkins & Salomon, 1992). For example, vignettes reflecting the real challenges in rating CANS/ANSA tools are helpful. Finally, according to the situated learning theory (Stein, 1998; Wilson, 1993), specialized training provides effective trainee engagement, knowledge transfer, and meaningful learning through offering contextualized training rooted in real world challenges.

Another practical training component for adult learners with time constraints is accessibility to training, in terms of travel distance and duration. Barrouillet, Bernardin, and Camos (2004) and Park and Choi (2009) highlighted time constraints as critical obstacle in adult learning that may lead them to drop out of training. Specialization and time considerations are factors related to training design that should be incorporated for the success of the transfer of knowledge to practice (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Hutchins & Burke, 2007).

Balancing act: Offering different training formats. Dependent on the context and dynamic of a specific workshop, it might be useful to offer options. In spite of the fact that the advantages of generalized versus specialized training are debated (Bell, 2009), many educational programs balance these approaches (Perry & Boccacinni, 2009). Offering options for cross-system training, specialized, and regional workshops would provide opportunities for participants to select the training workshop that best fits their needs (specialized, location, or timing). Giving these opportunities to adult learners is critical to improve their motivation and engagement during the training (Knowles, 1990).

A needs assessment of participants before training could also help tailor the workshop content toward specific needs through identifying case studies that are relevant to the target audience (Waight & Stewart, 2005). This is an effective strategy to be carried out prior to training to facilitate transfer of learning (Broad & Newstrom, 1992) and is consistent with the situated learning theory as it emphasizes contextualized learning that addresses the learners' daily needs (Anderson et al., 1996).

When participants need general knowledge (e.g., how to rate the tools or use related information to plan and monitor progress), having

diverse participants has advantages as elaborated by the situated learning theory (Kirschner & Whitson, 1997). Cross-system, interdisciplinary, and functional role diversity across workshop participants helps create a common language and addresses cross-system implementation issues (improving inter-rater reliability). The relevance of specialized training is clearer, saving time and providing relevant content and applications as acknowledged in the adult learning theory and learning transfer theory (Knowles, 1990; McDermott, Tricker, & Farha, 1991; Robinson et al., 2008; Wilson, 1993). In an empirical study, Robinson et al. (2008) indicated that training designed specifically for school personnel to manage students' self-harm improved the learning outcomes. To specialize the training, Robinson et al. (2008) used related, up-to-date vignettes, resources, and a focused question and answer session. Similar training strategies could be adapted in specialized coaching workshops focused on trainees' roles and service areas (e.g., child welfare supervision, residential treatment therapy, care coordination, behavioral health treatment for adults). Offering periodic specialized workshops could better meet diverse needs statewide.

To address the need for specialization while preserving the advantages of cross-system training, modification of the workshop formats and specialized content was made. Increasing the use of webinars and documents to share information across systems, agencies, and roles could be helpful. Within regional or workshops with diverse participants, grouping participants by type of organization or roles around tables to encourage engagement is recommended. After general concepts are presented or discussed, small specialized group activities could focus on the application of content to specialized settings or roles. Cross-system, interdisciplinary discussions would follow to identify challenges and best practices for effective collaboration.

Other Areas to Improve Adult Trainings
The last four themes emerged in this study provide some implications for improvement of continuing education. Helping trainees see how the tools can be useful to them in their professional roles, and to the people they serve, is fundamental (Knowles, 1980, 1990). Perceived importance and relevance of training also influences knowledge transfer and interactions (Clark & Voogel, 1985; Hutchins & Burke, 2007).
Related attention to organizational factors is crucial. Organizational factors influence not only the meaningful use of the tools in practice, but also the attitudes of trainees who are sent to workshops (Hutchins & Burke, 2007). Discuss practical organizational strategies to support the effective implementation of outcome management tools. Clearly state workshop goals and encourage consensus. Apply marketing strategies and keep professionals informed of upcoming training events and opportunities.

Technology can help provide accessibility in terms of time and location (Conceição, Johaningsmeir, Colby, & Gordon, 2014). For example, technology can be helpful to deliver general lectures; participants could gather later for learning collaboratives or have in-person discussion on real examples (Gardner & Korth, 1997). Offering occasional webinars to share new information and technical assistance and disseminating supporting materials through emails are helpful.

CANS/ANSA rating challenges were fundamental reasons for recruiting and supporting local implementation coaches to train their colleagues and to monitor accurate and reliable rating and appropriate use of the tools in practice. As information from the tools is used to make decisions about intensity and eligibility for services, it is important to accurately rate the tool. Consistent with the situated learning theory (Wilson, 1993) and learning transfer theory (Perkins & Salomon, 1992), practicing rating and debriefing relevant vignettes reinforces rating skills and builds competencies. Online training with options for interactive learning to improve reliability provides access to basic training for coaches and direct service staff. Systematic statewide initiatives to increase operational access to relevant rating information for each role (e.g., direct service and supervision) are important (Israel, 2014).

As mentioned in the situated learning theory, community of learners, contextualized learning, and participation are critical components of learning as knowledge acquisition is a social process (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wilson, 1993). In this case, interactive training should be considered to increase satisfaction and

confidence, promote learning, and improve the likelihood of knowledge transfer to practice (Conceição et al., 2014; Hutchins & Burke, 2007; Jerardi et al., 2013; Knowles, 1980, 1990; Omar et al., 2009).

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Studies

This qualitative study provided in-depth feedback to complement routine quantitative workshop IOTTA surveys, helping facilitators better understand participants' perspectives and learning needs. Use of this study and ongoing feedback is continuous, leading to major shifts while maintaining workshops (Makki Alamdari et al., 2017; Walton & Moynihan, 2017a, 2017b). To address the need for specialization while preserving the advantages of cross-system training, workshop formats were modified. By mid-day of the initial training, participants work in small groups, applying new information to rating the tools, using results to develop intervention plans, and discussing utilization of outcome reports. Routine regional boosters group participants by roles, recruiting them to apply activities or information to practice. Each workshop is modified to address initially identified questions/concerns. Themes and content change. Ongoing workshop evaluations documented that changes effectively addressed earlier identified issues, with the exception of being able to address differences in mastery (knowledge and experience).

Current changes involved integrating quality improvement and training/coaching for specific organizations, developing online specialized content for relevant continuing education, and having periodic in-person workshops for new coaches and or smaller organizations that do not participate in the behavioral health quality improvement process. Continued attention to adult learning theories, implementation assessment, routine feedback, and tweaking of the training/coaching processes will continue to be basic strategies for training, coaching, and technical assistance (Makki Alamdari et al., 2017; Walton & Moynihan, 2017a, 2017b).

This study had some limitations. The purposive selection of the interviewees limited making general statements of findings. Further, the results did not represent the opinions of other states' CANS/ANSA workshop facilitators or

participants, or of other adult training programs. Additional studies are needed to further examine principles of time (accessibility) and specialization in continuing education and training for experienced professionals. In addition to routine monitoring the impact of training strategies, future qualitative studies based on other adult learning theories will provide useful knowledge. For example, some levels of Kirkpatrick's model (1998) such as behavioral and organizational changes could be studied through qualitative studies to provide in-depth understanding of long-term effects of trainings.

Conclusion

This study informed strategies to consider in planning or refining training for cross-system, inter-professional participants. It is important to consider accessibility (duration and availability to address time constraints) and specialized trainings for adult learners. To engage participants and support the transfer of knowledge to practice, tailoring training to address the needs of participants and service agencies, offering different training formats, balancing general and specialized training, creatively using technology to improve accessibility, teaching new skills, providing technical assistance, and enhancing communication are recommended.

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