

Human Capital

Breakout Session Conclusions

NIEHS WETP Strategic Planning Meeting

November 1-2, 2001

How Do We Define Human Capital?

- Full-time trainers
- Worker trainers (part-time instructors)
- General staff (including administrators)
- Curriculum developers
- Technical staff
- Stakeholders
- Funding Sources
- Media – reinforce value of the programs

Instructor Issues – What Causes Burnout?

1. No stimulus/challenge once information is mastered
2. Under-utilized due to lack of funding
3. Instructors are pigeonholed; training becomes repetitive
4. Lack of defined career path/opportunity for upward movement
5. Travel adds additional stress
6. Little opportunity to expand topic of discussion during training courses
7. No resources to deal with diverse audiences (cultural/ethnic)
8. Teaching material by the book when realities in the field vary widely

Administrator/Staff Issues

1. Pressures to do training “on-the-cheap”
2. Travel
3. Doing more with less
4. Staff Turnover – Constantly retraining workers
5. Need for institutional ownership support
6. Sustainability vs. growth conflicts
7. Dealing with multiple bureaucracies
8. Demonstrating that money is being well-spent
9. Staying on top of current training needs
10. Tension among grantees

How Do We Keep Trainers Excited?

- Need to be constantly challenged and tested
- Raise expectations by:
 - Setting priorities within the organization
 - Establishing mentoring programs
 - Offering incentives through effective communication regarding the health and professional development benefits of continued training
 - Demonstrating active institutional support for trainers' missions
 - Encouraging advocacy/skill development

Addressing the Issues

11 to address
4 to address
1 issue

Primary Goal

- Increase frequency of worker/trainer/administrator exchange by:
 - Regional exchange programs
 - Bringing in creative training ideas from outside
 - Establishment of a master plan to assist trainers in developing and clearly defining career paths
 - Establishment of mentoring programs
 - Leveraging resources with other agencies

Considerations for Mentoring/Apprenticeship Programs

- Pair experienced with less-experienced instructors
- Intra-organizational vs. external resources
- Impose formal structure while retaining degree of flexibility
- Concentrate on mentoring from the beginning; from the 1st year
- Use third party evaluators to evaluate the instructors
- Forum for skill/curriculum development
- On-going peer review process

What Can NIEHS WETP Do?

- Create a reference document to be used by grantees during the hiring process that identifies skill standards criteria for trainers
 - Caveat: Must not be an exclusionary document that discourages applications from potential worker trainers
- Establish guidelines for potential mentoring programs
- Develop and offer a core curricula program intended to promote professional development among trainers