



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services

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In Support of Refugee Minors: Skills for Caseworkers

Training Manual

by

Migration and Refugee Services

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BRYCS is a joint project of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) and
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**IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEE MINORS:
SKILLS FOR CASEWORKERS**

TRAINING MANUAL



Migration and Refugee Services

This manual was produced under a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, Family Support Administration, Office of Refugee Resettlement. The contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Health and Human Services and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

**This manual supplements the training film entitled,
"In Support of Refugee Minors: Skills for Caseworkers,"
produced by
the Office of Migration and Refugee Services of
the United States Catholic Conference.**

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In Support of Refugee Minors: Skills for Caseworkers

Purpose of Training Program:

To provide resettlement workers with basic knowledge and skills needed for assessment, placement and follow-up of refugee minors in the initial phase of resettlement and adjustment to American life.

Objectives of Program:

To provide participants with:

- 1) Knowledge essential to actualizing the goals of resettlement in their work with refugee minors and families.
- 2) A system for a) assessment of the refugee minor needs, strengths and limitations in relation to resources in the environment; b) assessment of the sponsoring relative's homes and c) for obtaining and monitoring follow-up services.
- 3) Ways of meeting the requirements of the cooperative agreement.
- 4) A model for interviewing during the resettlement and placement process of refugee minors.

IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEE MINORS: SKILLS FOR CASEWORKERS

INTRODUCTION

Enriching an Educational Program

This curriculum has been carefully constructed, and includes a variety of teaching techniques and educational content which can be enriched, refined, rearranged and augmented. Each trainer has had unique professional and personal experiences which come into play with the uniqueness of every group of learners. With growing experience in teaching, the trainer can tailor the curriculum to the changes in needs and services which occur over time. We hope that the users of this curriculum will adapt it to fit their own styles and introduce new content as needed.

Following are some comments on educational philosophies and approaches which we hope are liberating to future trainers.

Educational Philosophy and Approaches

A body of knowledge can be organized in many different ways in a curriculum. Once organized it can be "delivered" or taught in even more ways to the learner. From the many options open to us, we have chosen to combine ideas about how adults learn to be competent in the tasks required in carrying out specific functions, with educational approaches which maximize learners' capacities for thinking and problem-solving. This choice requires an examination of who the learners are, whom they serve, what they do and under whose auspices. From this information we can set objectives and lay out the content (knowledge, attitudes and skills) to be included in a curriculum and identify methods of teaching and learning which will achieve the objectives. We can then teach people how to engage learners in an interactive process which maximizes an active rather than passive process.

Adult Education Theory

Malcolm Knowles is a leading theorist in adult education methods. In his books, The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species and The Theory and Practice of Adult Education, he reviews various theories of learning. His own view is that learners' active involvement in identifying learning needs and engaging with each other and the teacher are possible because adults, in contrast to children, expect to be autonomous and independent. They have established patterns of problem solving, are motivated to learn what will be immediately useful to them in their work, family and social roles and can evaluate the outcomes of their learning. These assumptions are congruent with the ideas of Dewey, Whitehead, Bruner and others who posit the value of discovery and learning by doing. Freire uses the phrase "reflection and praxis" to characterize the mode of learning which frees human beings to use their unique capacity for conscious learning and decision making. No other species in the animal kingdom has that ability. This philosophy conveys the greatest respect for learners by not viewing them as empty vessels, blank slates or in need of correction of their erroneous ideas. Education is viewed as a creative rather than rote process which provides people with freedom and opportunity to gain knowledge through means which go beyond passive listening and memorization.

How do these concepts of education fit with something called "training"? Training does connote learning to do something in a prescribed way. It prepares the learners to carry out particular tasks in their jobs. Rigid training is a necessity for dangerous, very precise, technical or bureaucratic tasks. However, when the tasks are in the sphere of human services, training must parallel or model the way the learner is to regard clients and work with them. There must, therefore, be combinations of education and training in a curriculum. Such links are

provided by the ideas presented by Mager in Preparing Instructional Objectives. He teaches teachers how to write clear, achievable, behavioral learning objectives which can be measured in outcomes and performance. These objectives based upon the learners' needs, in relation to work performance provide the structural element for planning a course, a workshop or a curriculum. They point to the knowledge, attitude and skills needed and the methods which will best enable a group of people with particular characteristics to learn the content. There must be a flow from learner, their tasks and objectives, to content and method in an educational plan.

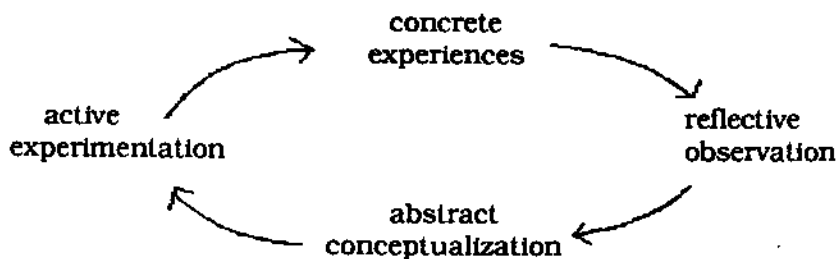
The Agency

A curriculum must be related to the system in which it will be offered. The agency provides the means, support, and resources needed for putting learning into practice and evaluating the performance of the job by the learners. Case load size, case consultation and staff morale are all factors influencing whether learning continues to be reflected in performance.

Supervision is key to reinforcing learning after a training program has been presented. Supervisors have three functions: management, support and education. These are blended in the process of supervising staff members, individually or in groups. To carry out the educational aspect, supervisors must understand the knowledge that has been taught, the skills that have been acquired and the values and attitudes that have been explored. By referring to the original objectives and outline of a training program, the supervisor can assess the level of each supervisee and together with her or him focus on teaching in more depth. This necessitates that the agency guard the time of supervisors and recognizing their achievements as teachers.

The Learners and Methods of Teaching

A training curriculum, in addition to being based on participants' work functions, must also be tailored to their learning styles. Because adults learn in a variety of ways, there must be a range of learning experiences provided to reach each person. These range from conceptual to experiential. The Kolb Learning Style Inventory suggests a continuously cyclical model:



Learning requires use of each of these modes, even though an individual will tend to have a characteristic way of going about learning. Some people need to "see" something first; others to do it first, while others need the theory or explanation first, before trying to understand or put an idea into practice.

When learners in the same class come from different cultures and have different educational levels, it is imperative that group discussion be kept open and that the instructor avoid terms which may not be understood by all. Agencies often develop "languages" or styles of communication which are clear only to long term employees. Explanations of professional terms are essential in diverse classes. Also when classes are racially or culturally mixed, it is good practice to recognize this with the class so learners will feel free to raise questions about differences and similarities among ethnic groups.

It is necessary to use a variety of ways of communicating content when different learning styles are represented in any classroom. The techniques are many. Some are lecture, critical incidents, case examples, workbooks, self-awareness experiences, support, critical review, theory building, problem solving, group projects, films, role play, panels, logs, interviews, paired dialogues, conversations, games, simulations, fantasy and relaxation techniques.

The key idea behind the selection of techniques is that the technique should be a direct means of achieving the learning objectives and that several different techniques should be used in a training program. According to MacKeachie, the less passive the learner is (the less like a sponge or empty vessel waiting to be filled by the teachers of wisdom), the more the student will grasp new ideas and skills and make them his or her own by connecting them to past knowledge and experiences. An instructor does not have to know how to use all the possible techniques. What is important is that discussion ensues from each experience. Exploring and articulating a new idea or approach are ways of beginning to consciously integrate and own new learnings. Ownership develops with time, practice and support which go beyond the boundaries of the specific course content and its schedule.

IN SUPPORT OF REFUGEE MINORS: SKILLS FOR CASEWORKERS

UNIT OBJECTIVES

METHODS

CONTENT

In Support of Refugee Minors: Skills for Caseworkers

Unit Objectives and Methods

Introductions and Overview

- Objective:** To establish the educational climate and agreement and set forth the purpose and objectives of this training.
- Method:** Distribute and explain the outline of the workshop. Discuss the educational philosophy and approach.
- Content:** A brief presentation of the purpose of the training and the topics to be explored over the next two days.

Unit I

The Functions of the Resettlement Worker

- Objective:** To provide the participants with an overview of their role(s) and tasks which stresses 1) their importance to the agency and clients and 2) the implications for carrying out their responsibilities.
- Methods:** Lecture and class discussion.
- Content:** The focus of the lecture is on the importance of the role of the resettlement worker, the skills and experiences they possess and the professionalism of their work. The value of the role of the resettlement worker, and his intervention with the refugee minor and his family will be addressed. Response from the participants will be encouraged.

Unit II

Social Welfare: Policy and Historical Issues

Section A

Overview of the Social Welfare System in the U.S.

- Objective 1:** To review basic information regarding the social welfare system in the U.S.
- Methods:** Lecture and handouts.
- Content:** Maslow's basic human needs will be examined and how these are met by the social services system. The federal government and the state's role in meeting human needs and the values underlying these services will be discussed. The private sector's role in provision of services will be acknowledged.

Section B

Key Concepts and Trends in Child Welfare Services

- Objective 2:** To examine the concept of formalized child welfare services.
- Methods:** Lecture, handouts, and case vignettes.
- Content:** Topics presented will include the state's role in intervention in the family, current trends in child welfare practice, and the concepts of guardianship and custody. Cross cultural comparisons will be encouraged.

Unit III

Understanding the Individual and the Family from a Developmental Viewpoint

- Objective 1:** To examine the development of the individual using a "life cycle" conceptual framework.
- Methods:** Presentation accompanied by handouts.
- Content:** The Life Cycle and the impact of socio-cultural factors on growth and development.
- Objective 2:** To present the life cycle of the family and identify the stresses of the family in transition.
- Methods:** Lecture and small group discussion.
- Content:** Understanding the family from a developmental view point will be highlighted. Family systems information on how the family copes with the refugee experience (family preservation) will be presented.
- Objective 3:** To focus on the issues of an adolescent from an individual and family perspective.
- Methods:** Case presentation and class discussion.
- Content:** The case will highlight tasks of adolescence and acculturation issues specific to the adolescent and his family. The family and adolescent in the US and in Vietnam will be contrasted.

Unit IV

The Assessment Process

- Objective:** To gain an understanding of the concept of assessment and the steps of the process.
- Methods:** Lecture, discussion, case vignettes.
- Content:** Presentation of assessment as an ongoing process with the tasks of engagement, information gathering, and data analysis, often happening simultaneously. Involving the client in the process will be emphasized.

Unit V

The Interview: A Major Tool of the Assessment Process

- Objective:** To improve the participants' understanding of the function of the interview.
- Methods:** Video: In Support of Refugee Minors: Skills for Caseworkers, class discussion.
- Content:** The stages of the interview will be presented along with interviewing techniques and skills. Issues in cross cultural interviewing will be discussed.

Unit VI

Skills Development in the Interview and the Assessment Process

- Objective:** To give participants an opportunity to integrate and apply the knowledge acquired in previous sessions.
- Methods:** Scripted role plays, class discussion and handouts.
- Content:** The requirements concerning refugee minors in the Cooperative Agreement will be reviewed. Role plays will address the home assessment and follow up issues for refugee minors and their families.