

**DSP Workforce Initiative  
Steering and Advisory Committee Meeting  
Springfield, IL  
December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005**

In attendance:

Jeri Johnson, DDD; Chris Burnett, IARF; Joe Hamlett, DRS; Stacy Yusim, Equip for Equality; Preston Morgan, Illinois Community College Board; Maryam Mostoufi, DDD; Vanessa Hoffeditz, Gateway; Kimberly Lawler, Clearbrook; Julie Marcionetti, Seguin; Kristy Martin, Sparc; Susan Murphy, Cornerstone Services; Amie Norris, Oak/Leyden Developmental Services; Jane O'Melia, The Arc of Rock Island County; Patti Flynn, Sparc; Carlissa Puckett, Sparc; Marie Sonnon, Gateway; Paulette Stark, New Hope Center; Sharon Taapken, Sparc; Brandon VonLiski, Sparc; Tina Conner, Neumann Association; Della Reese, Sparc; Jill Bromstad, Sparc

Project staff:

Institute on Disability and Human Development: Katie Keiling, Mary Rizzolo, Kristen Ball, Tia Nelis, Dale Mitchell

Institute on Community Integration: Amy Hewitt, John Sauer

Human Services Research Institute: Marianne Taylor

Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities: Kerry Flynn, Fred Bortz

Welcome and Introductions

- Kerry Flynn of the DD Council welcomed everyone and emphasized the importance of this Initiative as a key element in strengthening the workforce infrastructure here in Illinois.
- Tamar Heller from IDHD at UIC sends greetings and is currently at The White House Conference on Aging as Senator Obama's delegate.

Year 1 Highlights

- The Vision of the project was reviewed: *People with developmental disabilities, and their families and support networks, have trained, valued, and creative Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) to assist them in living quality lives and fully participating in their communities.*

**Training participation:**

- We had **4 initial training sessions with** 14 organizations and 4 alternates to teach organizations about a variety of intervention strategies they can use to recruit and retain quality DSPs– 61 people from 15 orgs attended the trainings. Courses were on recruitment and selection, orientation and training, fueling high performance and developing an intervention plan.
- **Train the trainer**– 12 orgs with 27 people participated in learning how to teach others about the various intervention strategies.
- **College of Frontline Supervision and Management** is an online curriculum used to present the main content about the intervention strategies– total of 47 learners

### **Individuals and families:**

- 10 individuals and families who are self-directing their own supports are receiving **technical assistance** to improve their individual situation.
- 6 self-advocates and 2 parents are members of the **Steering and Advisory Committee**.
- 2 self-advocates are participating in **Workgroups**.
- A **Toolkit for finding, choosing and keeping DSPs** is being developed and is in the last round of reviews. There is a version for people with disabilities and another version for family members. It will be useful to a wide range of families even those who are not employing DSPs directly, but also those who are working with an organization to get the right staff into the family home.
- Maryam Mostoufi suggested that DHS could put the Toolkit on their website for downloading and could also use it to direct families to other trainings available through DHS.

### **Products Developed in Year 1:**

- A **Realistic Job Preview video** customized for Illinois – The videos have been disseminated to all the organizations and SAC members. DHS has adopted use of the video in its new Culture Shift Project. Several agencies commented on how useful the RJP video has been.
- **Customization of the College of Direct Support (CDS)** – Volunteers from the organizations customized the CDS to specific Illinois policies and procedures.
  - Now, the Division of Developmental Disabilities will look at whether some of the online CDS courses can be substituted for some of the current DHS mandated core training courses for DSPs.
  - Agencies are now using the CDS as a training method and part of their project-related interventions.
- **Workforce Development Plan** – 3 versions of the Plan have been developed and the group will review them in detail later in the day.
- **Customizing targeted marketing plans and recruitment materials**– The Recruitment and Retention Strategies Workgroup has a goal to customize the marketing toolkit for Illinois and disseminate it throughout the state. This marketing toolkit has a manual with information on how to target niche groups and includes a CD-ROM with templates for advertising to different groups that can be customized by an organization or individual.
- **Toolkit for Individuals and Families to help find, choose, and keep DSPs** – This was already discussed during the update on Individuals and Families.

### **Organization intervention plans – themes from assessments and intervention strategies:**

The 14 organizations have developed intervention identifying areas they will focus on to improve recruitment and retention of DSPs within their organizations. The following are themes from the interventions plans that identify the main areas that were assessed as problematic to organizations and then the main areas they are focusing on for interventions.

#### **Assessment themes:**

- New hires quit within first 6 months (11 orgs)

- Inadequate benefits and wages (9 orgs) (Note: this refers to the small differentiation between salaries of new DSPs and long term DSPs)
- Lack of recognition (8 orgs)
- Conflict and/or poor communication among staff and supervisors or managers (8 orgs)
- Lack of training or enhanced training opportunities for DSPs and/or FLS (6 orgs)
- New hires unsure of job roles and functions (4 orgs)
- Lack of opportunities to be promoted (3 orgs)
- Lack of opportunities for staff to participate in decision making (3 orgs)

**Intervention themes:**

- RJP and structured interview (7 orgs)
- Support and train supervisors (6 orgs)
- Study workforce challenges further (4 orgs)
- Improve socialization practices (4 orgs)
- Increase employee recognition (4 orgs)
- Reward long-term employees (3 orgs)
- Improve effectiveness of orientation (3 orgs)

**Discussed problem in flat pay scales** – Few state budgets annualize cost of living and base rates so this does not permit enhancement of wages. Some states have successful wage campaigns, but often the legislative mandates that every DSP and only DSPs get that money increase. Poorly crafted language can serve to make the problem worse by not recognizing supervisors and longer term employees. Agencies often use bonuses as a way to reward long-term employees without annualizing the base wage. We have to be careful that the legislative language does not restrict flexibility or force organizations to raise costs of health insurances.

**Spotlight on Excellence – Sparc**

- Sharon Taapken provided an overview of the Sparc’s intervention plan. (See powerpoint slides for details.)

**Discussion of Sparc approach:**

- DHS recommends blending formal OJTs with the classroom training. DHS will be rewriting the DSP course this summer as well as the QMRP curriculum. DHS supervisor training will be adapted to a Train the trainer model. DHS encourages involvement of self-advocates and families.
- Does extending the training period open people up to “liability” concerns? Project staff find that it’s the pressure of the vacancies that force acceleration of the initial training to a 40 hr classroom block, but this excludes many applicants who work full time elsewhere and will never be able to spend a full week completing the orientation. Agencies have managed this issue by providing some required up-front training before deploying a person and making sure new employee works with an experienced employee.
- Kristy Martin at Sparc says the travel industry experienced the same problem but increased retention significantly by doing OJT with skill mentors over an extended period. This significantly cut down on turnovers. But, it does require an investment initially in skill mentors and the new employees.

- Maybe we should develop a mentor's guide to how to do effective mentoring. Agencies involved with this kind of intervention should document learning that can contribute to a guide book that will be helpful to others.
- OJT must be seen as an extremely powerful form of training – in most cases, better than classroom training
- It would be good to train consumers as training monitors – providing feedback – there is greater accountability when consumers are familiar with job expectations

### **Workgroup updates**

Reviewed work group plan goals and updated members on current status.

### **Workforce Data & Statistics:**

- It has been hard to get consistent involvement with the groups' membership attending conference calls.
- There is a gap in the members state agency representation and the group asked for the SAC members to identify key people who should be part of this groups work.
- The group is focusing on identifying data systems that currently exist in the state, looking at what information is already being collected, and determining what information is still needed and how to add this into currently existing systems.
- Dale Mitchell from IDHD at UIC will begin working with Sherri Larson of ICI-UofMN to facilitate this workgroup.

### **Education, Training & Career Development Workgroup**

- Amy Norris updated the group and announced that a third co-chair will be Carolyn Hassenmiller at the Arc of Rock Island.
- The group tries to meet monthly in person (usually in Bloomington).
- At the last meeting Dr. Leah Adams-Curtis of IL Central College in Peoria explained the certificate in Developmental Disabilities they have that is 30 credit hrs. It includes DHS's core DSP training including the OJT hours. This certificate is also transferable to an Associates Degree in Applied Sciences. They work with local area agencies whose employees come and do the instruction and the agencies are reimbursed for instruction. The group will try to have Judy White, Coordinator of the certificate program at ICC present at their next meeting and will also speak with agencies served by the program to get their perspective.
- Now we have several options. Harry Dispensa of DOL will give a presentation at the Jan meeting on apprenticeship – what it means and doesn't mean- there's a lot of misunderstandings about it.
- The group will be developing a list of the different possible training options and survey DSPs in organizations to get feedback on what they may be most interested in.

### **Recruitment and Retention Workgroup:**

- Kim Lawler of Clearbrook reported that the group is currently focusing on the first goal, developing a legislative advocacy campaign to enhance wages.
- The group created a list of key people to be involved in this effort, especially representatives from the unions, and these people are being contacted to get involved.

## **Status and Awareness**

- Susan Murphy reported that the group has focused on the implementation of the first goal, to establish a state chapter of the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP).
- Lorraine McCormick is the new chair of this group and she contacted the NADSP for more information on how to start the process.
- The group asked for more agencies to get involved, especially DSPs. Please let Katie know if there are DSPs within your organization that can get involved.

## **Supervision and Mentoring**

- There was limited participation in the last meeting because there has been some turnover in the group. The group will be scheduling regular conference calls.
- The group is focusing on educating about mentoring and supervision
- Discussion: The SAC members discussed whether it would be beneficial to start a state association for supervisors like the NADSP chapter for DSPs. The project team recommended starting as an integrated group and possibly create internal tracks for DSPs for supervision, etc.

## **Lunch**

### **Workforce Development Plan**

- Three versions of the Plan were created at the request of the SAC members: A one-pager, an Executive Summary, and the full version.
- General comments for changes included the following: do not use the word “workers”, update the Education Workgroups goal, and use the word “supporting” instead of “serving”

## **Commitments for implementation**

- Chris Burnett of IARF will talk to her Board and membership and ask where it fits into their public policy agenda. She will also determine areas to potentially collaborate on legislative activities as well as incorporate a session into IARF’s Fall conference as a track.
- The 3 co-chairs of the Education Workgroup are spreading the word by presenting at the upcoming Arc of IL and AAMR of IL conferences.
- Amie Norris of Oak/Leyden will talk it up at her agency to make sure DSPs know they are valuable and know the importance of this Initiative.
- Carlissa Puckett of Sparc will bring it to their Board and educate them about the project, its goals and activities and the agencies role.
- Maryam Mostoufi of DDD will use it to help an agency that has been in trouble to teach them about strengthening services.
- Tia says in Illinois not a lot of people direct their own services at this time – we need to explain this in simpler terms so self-advocates can understand this. Tia, Maryam, Mary Kay, and Paula would like to work on this.
- Julie Marcionetti suggests focusing on providing this information to other agencies through state conferences. She feels we need to reframe this in customized ways to get the word out, but DSPs don’t always go to the conferences. We need to get the DSPs

involved in getting the message out – maybe develop a team of DSPs. Maryam said she would help work with a group of DSPs to get this out.

- Arc of Illinois is weaving it into their legislative agenda.
- Project staff suggests that Medicaid home and community based waiver renewal application (coming up in June) could include some \$ for interventions that could be used by agencies for proposed interventions. CMS has new expectations and 3 of 5 new quality indicators can easily be connected to direct support workforce issues.
- Have the unions committed to this Plan? AFSME is still reviewing whether they are on board.
- DDD will distribute the one-pager Plan at all their trainings and conferences.
- Each of the 14 organizations will network with other orgs. and spread the information using the one-pager or the executive summary. Also, people will bring it up at network advisory council meetings.
- Preston Morgan of the Illinois Community College Board will send out copies of the Plan to all 44 community colleges and provide copies to board members.
- Stacy Yusim of Equip for Equality will try to integrate the “Toolkit into their training efforts with individuals and families. Also, she could add information on DSPs to their guardianship training focused on self-determination. And, she would be happy to help make materials accessible for people with disabilities.
- Joe Hamlett of DRS indicated that they have to be neutral regarding any wage and benefit changes. They could use materials to teach consumers on how to select and retain employees.
- Fred Bortz of the DD Council feels the Plan will be a major part of their legislative work and they can have committees take up different portions of the Plan.
- Maryam Mostoufi of DDD is building pieces of this initiative into a culture shift project they have started to make a big systems change effort

### **Future Meetings:**

In future meetings the format will be changed slightly to try to bring together the Workgroups.

**March 13<sup>th</sup> in Chicago**

**June 12<sup>th</sup> in Chicago**

# Illinois Direct Support Professional Workforce Initiative



*A Partnership of the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration, the Institute on Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the Human Services Research Institute. Supported by the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities.*

## **Steering and Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting**

**December 12, 2005**

**10:00am-3:00pm**

**Springfield, IL**



# AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Year One Highlights
  - Training participation
  - Individuals and families
  - Product updates
  - Organization intervention plans-Themes from assessments and intervention strategies
- Spotlight on Excellence
- Workgroup Updates
- LUNCH
- Workforce Development Plan
  - Three versions
  - Commitments for implementation
- Future Meetings





# Welcome & Introductions

## IL Council on Developmental Disabilities

- Commitment of stakeholders
- Implementation of Workforce Development Plan

# Illinois Direct Support Professional Workforce Initiative



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University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration

Institute on Disability and Human Development at the  
University of Illinois at Chicago

Human Services Research Institute

Funded by the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities



# Vision

***People with developmental disabilities, and their families and support networks, have trained, valued, and creative Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) to assist them in living quality lives and fully participating in their communities.***



# Year One Highlights-Training

## ■ Four Training Sessions

- 61 different people from 15 organizations
- Course one-- Recruitment and Selection
- Course two--Orientation and Training
- Course three-- Fueling High Performance
- Course four-- Developing an Intervention Plan

## ■ One Train-the Trainer Session

- # of Participants = 27
- # of Organizations = 12

## ■ College of Frontline Supervision and Management (CFSM)

- Total # of Learners = 47



## Year One Highlights-Individuals+Families

- **Individuals & Families**

- 10 individuals and families are receiving technical assistance

- 6 self-advocates and 2 parents are members of the SAC

- 2 self-advocates are participating in Work Groups

- **Development of Toolkit for finding, choosing and keeping quality DSPs**

# Year One Highlights-Product Updates

- A Realistic Job Preview video customized for Illinois
- Illinois customization of the CDS
- A Workforce Development Plan to implement statewide
- Customizing targeted marketing plans and recruitment materials
- Toolkit for Individuals and Families to help find, choose, and keep DSPs



**Direct Support Professionals exploring relationship building thru an interactive exercise**



# Year One Highlights

## Organization Intervention Plans

### Themes From Assessments

- New hires quit within first 6 months (11 orgs)
- Inadequate benefits and wages (9 orgs)
- Lack of recognition (8 orgs)
- Conflict and/or poor communication among staff and supervisors or managers (8 orgs)
- Lack of training or enhanced training opportunities for DSPs and/or FLS (6 orgs)
- New hires unsure of job roles and functions (4 orgs)
- Lack of opportunities to be promoted (3 orgs)
- Lack of opportunities for staff to participate in decision making (3 orgs)



# Year One Highlights

## Organization Intervention Plans

### Themes from Intervention Strategies

- Realistic Job Preview and structured interviewing (7 orgs)
- Support and train supervisors (6 orgs)
- Study workforce challenges further (4 orgs)
- Improve socialization practices (4 orgs)
- Increase employee recognition (4 orgs)
- Reward long-term employees (3 orgs)
- Effective orientation (3 orgs)





# Spotlight on Excellence:

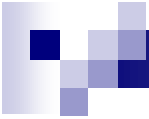
- Sparc



# Sparc DSP Workforce Intervention Plan

2005





**Goal: To increase our overall tenure by 8%. Increase each of the following stayer categories by 2%:**

**Stats as of 1st Quarter FY05**

**132 Budgeted DSP Employees**

Less than 1 year	38%
1-3 Years	34%
4-7 Years	17%
8-12 Years	8%
13+ Years	3%



# Phase I Collect and Assess the Data

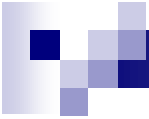
- Exit Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Staff Satisfaction Surveys
- Sparc Workforce Change Group

*Sparc* 



# Reasons for Leaving – Based on 26 Exit Interviews from 47 DSP Leavers

- More money
- Lack of promotional opportunities/growth
- Lack of appreciation



# Top 5 Reasons for leaving based on Results of Focus Groups March, 2005 - All Staff Levels

- Lack of Financial Resources
- Conflict and poor communication between & among departments.
- Need for training that is timely, leads to competency of DSPs and FLS
- Find programs and training that helps staff reduce and manage stress
- Increase the respect and recognition of DSPs and FLS

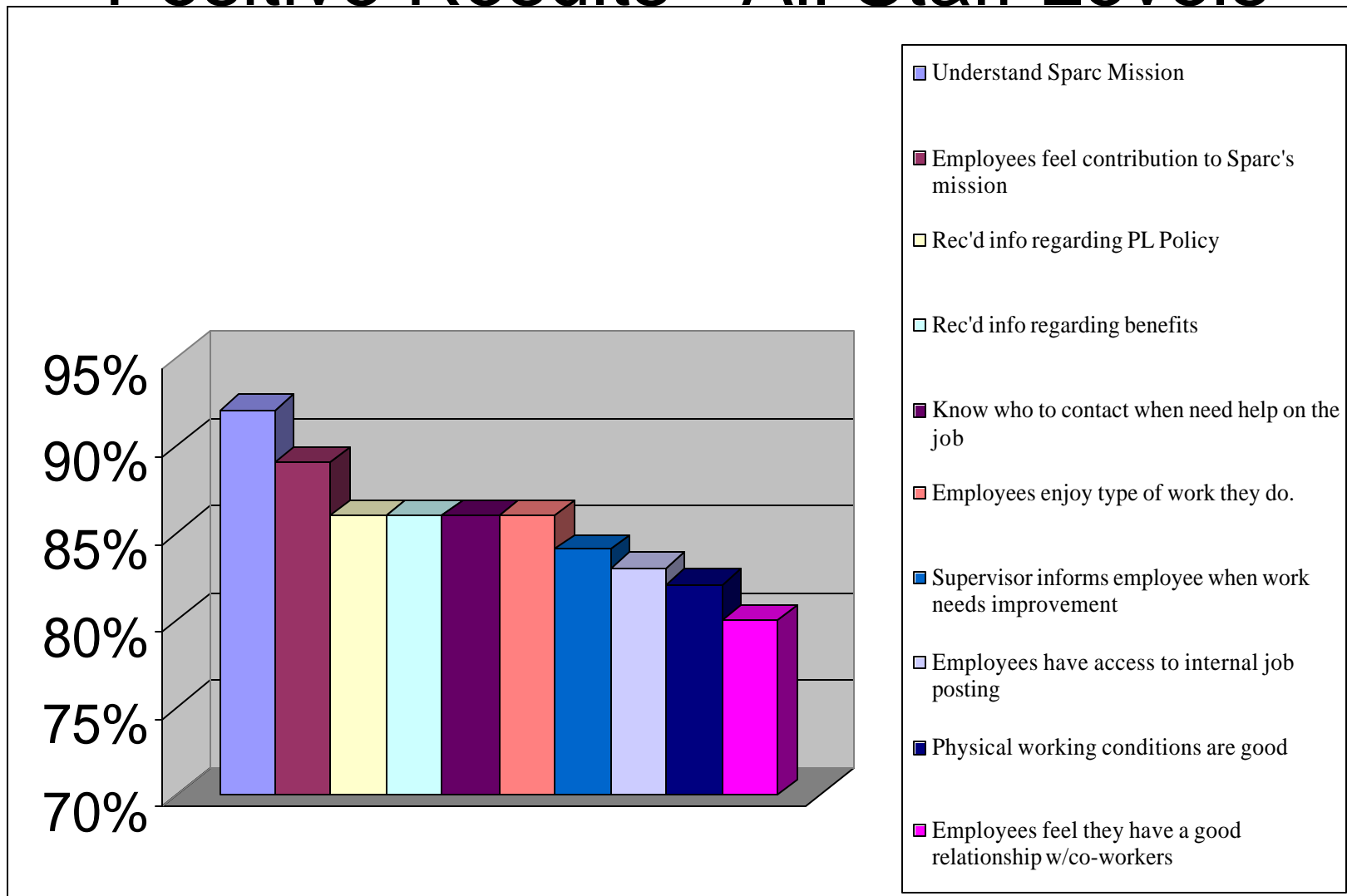


# Top 5 Reasons determined by Sparc Workforce Change Group - All Staff Levels

- Staff morale is low
- Not feeling a part of or connected to Sparc
- Recognition
- Not enough staff
- OJT does not exist or does not exist well.

# Staff Satisfaction Survey

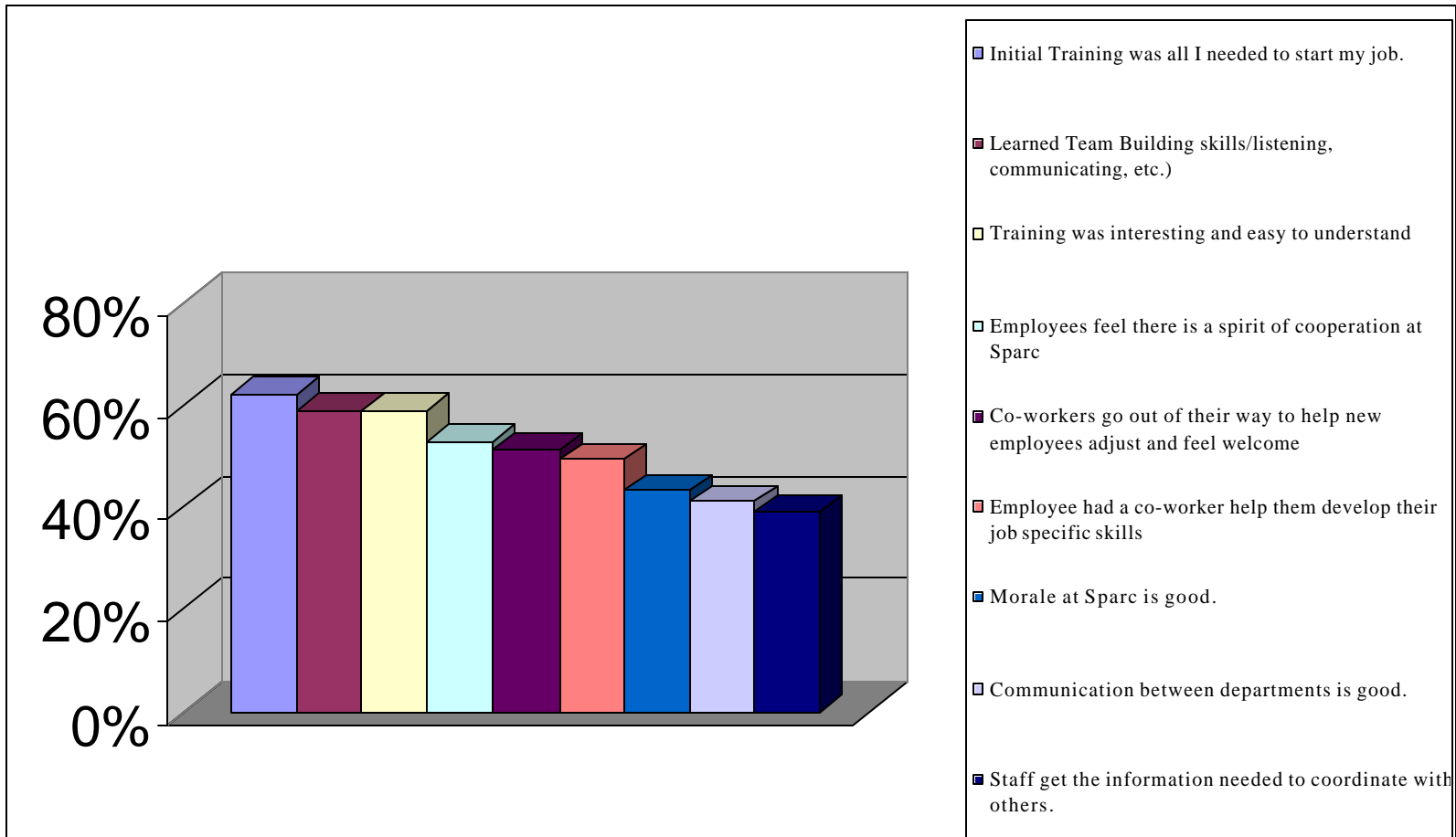
## Positive Results - All Staff Levels





# Staff Satisfaction Survey Results

## Intervention Needed - All Staff Levels





# Top 3 Areas Interventions needed.

- Communication between departments
- Communication within departments
- Training



## Phase II

# Review *Available* Resources for Intervention Strategies

- Illinois DSP Workforce Initiative Resources
- Other Agency DSP Workforce Intervention Plans
- Sparc Workforce Change & Sub-Committees Suggestions

Sparc 



# Review

## Communication Intervention Strategies

- **Supervisor Training**
- **DSP Training**
- **Professional Empowerment Program (mentor)**
- **Email for all Sparc Staff**
- **Peer Partnership Teams**
- **Specialist Facilitator**



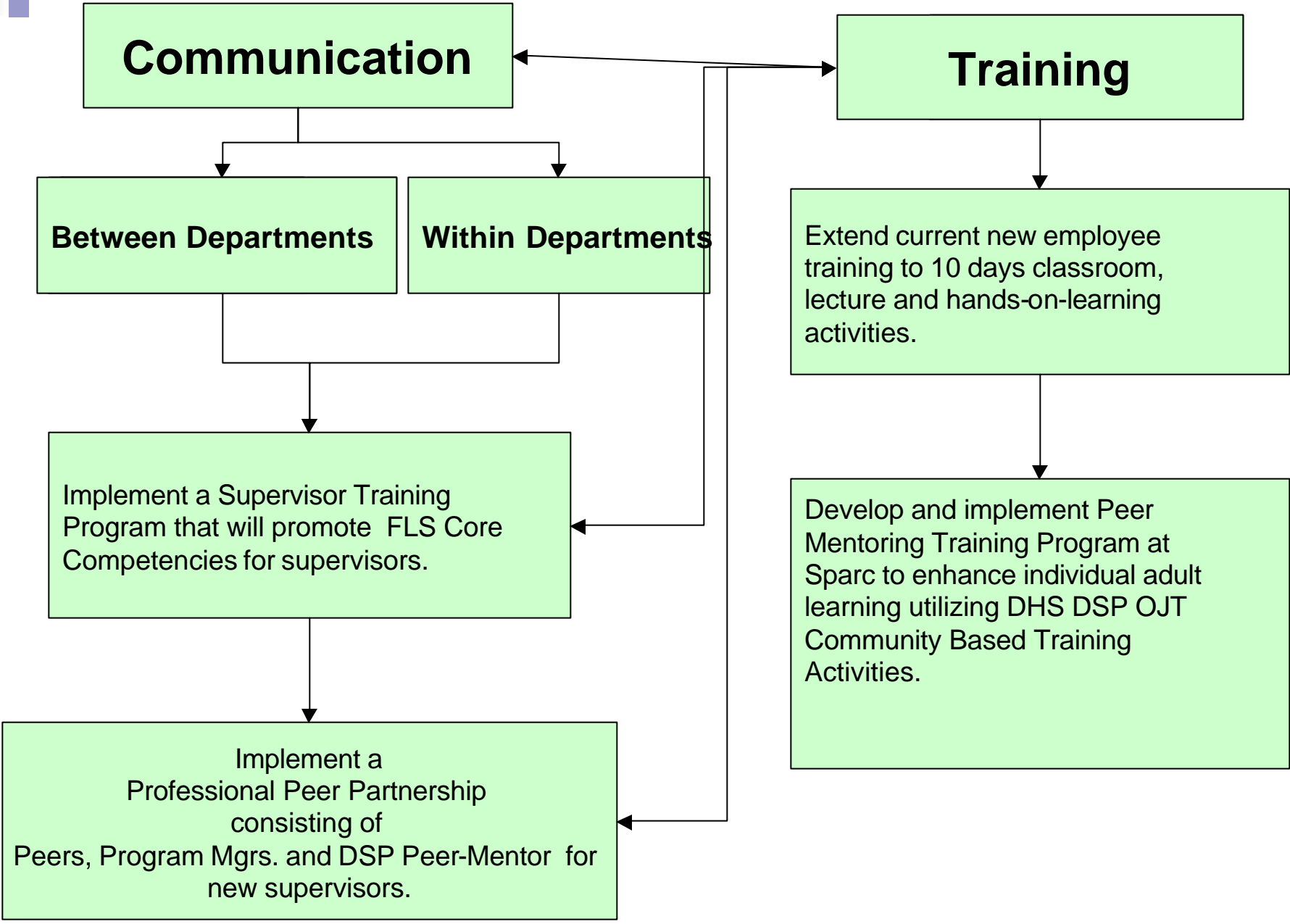
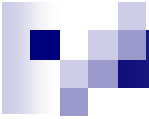
# Review Training Intervention Strategies

- College of FLS Training
- College of DSP Training
- Peer Specialists/Focus Areas
- Peer Empowerment Program (PEP) Trainer Mentor
- Remove the Revolving Door
- Increase Length of New Employee Training using DHS DSP Curriculum
- Peer Partnership Program

# Phase III

## Developing the Intervention Plan Proposal

*Spaarc* 





## **Communication Intervention - Step 1:** *Supervisory Training Program Objectives*

- Exec. Team will approve a FLS training program for all supervisors by July 1, 2006.
- The training will promote FLS Core Competencies.
- All current FLSs will complete the approved Supervisory Training no later than March 31, 2007.
- All new FLSs will complete the approved Supervisory Training within 180 days of initial employment.





# **Communication Intervention: Step 1**

## *Supervisory Training Program*

### *Obstacles*

- Cost
- Staffing time to complete the training
- Staff Trainer time to coordinate & implement identified curriculum



# **Communication Intervention: Step 2:**

## *Peer Partnership*

### *Objective*

- Sparc Workforce Change Group will develop a formal agency wide program that mentors new FLSs using the expertise of experienced FLSs, middle/upper managers/directors and possibly DSPs by July 1, 2006.




# **Communication Intervention: Step 2:**

## *Peer Partnership*


### *Obstacle*

- Scheduling time for partnership meetings.



# **Training Intervention: Step 1:** *Enhance current training program to meet the needs of the adult learner* **Objectives**

- *Increase Length of New Employee Training to include one full day of Orientation, DHS DSP DD Aide Training and Mandt Certification by July 1, 2006.*
- *Initiate Training Mentor program:*
  - ⌘ *Using the Peer Empowerment Program Curriculum, begin training prospective mentors by July 1, 2006.*
  - ⌘ *Training Mentors begin mentoring DSPs by July 1, 2007*



# **Training Intervention: Step 1:** *Enhance current training program to meet the needs of the adult learner* *Obstacles*

- Time/Staffing issues - Trainers will be pulled from regular duties while in extended training
- Will extend training time for DSPs and create overtime.
- Training material expenses
- Find qualified volunteers to become Peer Training Mentors
- Define difference between supervisor and training mentor.




# Work Group Updates

- Workforce Data and Statistics
- Education, Training and Career Development
- Recruitment and Retention Strategies
- Status and Awareness of the Profession
- Supervision and Mentoring



# LUNCH

- Relax
- Enjoy the Food
- Network



# Distribution of Year 1 Workforce Development Plan (3 versions)

- Full Plan
- Executive Summary
- One-Page Summary





# Workforce Development Plan

Strategies for and Commitments to  
**IMPLEMENTING the PLAN**



# Future Meetings

- New meeting structure
- Location of meetings

**March 13th, 2006; 10am-3pm**

Chicago Illini Union

828 S. Wolcott

Chicago, IL 60608

**June 12th, 2006; 10am-3pm**

Chicago Illini Union

828 S. Wolcott

Chicago, IL 60608



[www.Ildspinitiative.com](http://www.Ildspinitiative.com)

Project Website