

The Effects of Mentoring and Coaching Programs

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of a formalized mentoring and coaching program on job satisfaction, intention to stay, and preparation for job duties. The study focused on the Field Training Specialist Program within the Cabinet for Families and Children in Kentucky. A quasi-experimental design was utilized to compare groups of employees who participated in this program to group of employees who did not. Subjects were selected and included all new employees who started training in September, October, November and December 2002. These employees were surveyed in their fourth month of employment, a time when all their core training should have been completed. Findings revealed that there was a significant and positive correlation between participation in the Field Training Specialist Program and intention to stay and preparation for job duties. The study revealed no significant difference between the level of job satisfaction and participation in the program.

Introduction

A mentor is a wise and trusted teacher, according to Webster, and the process of mentoring has been present as far back as Greek Mythology when Homer wrote the poem "The Odyssey". Homer illustrates the story of Odysseus who must leave home, therefore places his son in the care of Mentor, a friend with whom he gives the responsibility of guiding his son to a successful life (Chao, 1997).

Description of Problem

Mentoring and coaching is a method organizations sometimes use in order to foster and mold new employees. "There have been mentors and protégés in philosophy, the arts and letters, the military and even in professional sports. In the business world, however, the importance and existence of mentors have been largely unheralded" (Roche, 1979).

Significance of Problem and Rationale for Study

Mentoring and coaching coupled with classroom training can be time consuming and relies on several people, other than just the trainer or new employee, to be invested in the progress of each new employee. Organizations are often hesitant to invest this level of time and energy, viewing it as a luxury and not a necessity. Yet organizations are concerned with retention and job performance, both affected by employee's individual level of job satisfaction. A study of 5000 United States households found that "only 50.7% of respondents overall said they're satisfied with their current jobs. And that's a downward change of 13.5% from 1995" (Anderson, 2000). Therefore if mentoring and coaching programs show a positive relationship to these variables, organizations may see the formal mentoring and coaching relationship as a financial bargain in comparison to constantly recruiting and training new staff.

Purpose of Proposed Study

This study is intended to analyze the relationship between mentoring and coaching and employee job satisfaction, retention (measured by intent to stay) and preparation for job duties. The study will examine this relationship through the Field Training Specialist Program within the Cabinet for Families & Children in Kentucky in order to identify whether or not this formalized mentoring and coaching program is a valuable training resource for employees.

Literature Review

Summary of Previous Studies

Literature on mentoring programs in organizations dates as far back as three decades. The Harvard Business Review conducted a study in 1979 and found "executives who had a mentor earned more money at a younger age, were better

educated, and were more likely to follow a career plan” (Roche, 1979). The most profound and comprehensive research to date began in the 1990s. For example, a 1996 study conducted by the Personnel Decisions International Human Resource Consulting firm determined that “90% of American workers who have had on-the-job coaching or mentoring believe that it was an effective developmental tool” (McShulskis, 1996). The research also concluded “the most effective way to ensure real development progress is through coaching and learning in the workplace” (McShulskis, 1996).

While mentoring programs are now beginning to leak into the large organizational structure, the most profound existing mentoring programs are present within school systems across the country. California has several programs including the New Administrators Program at the University of California Santa Cruz and the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program. Both programs are based on one to one mentoring and support for employees in their first two years of employment (Bloom, 1999). The research concluded that first “there is a need for one-on-one intensive coaching and support” (Bloom, 1999). Secondly, “the cost of such a program is insignificant when compared to the real costs of failed leadership” (Bloom, 1999).

Other programs exist in school systems across the country including the Leadership Initiative for Transformation or LIFT in the Chicago Public School System (Anderson, 2001). This program for new school administrators pairs a veteran principal with two new principals and has produced similar positive results.

Education is not the only profession that utilizes mentoring programs. A study on mentor-protégé relationships was conducted in large public accounting firms in 1991. This study determined that mentoring occurred on a “nonformal” basis but provided “a process for developing personnel who understand the complexities of public accounting and integrate into the firm’s culture” (Viator & Scandura, 1991).

Ohio State University conducted a study within two of their departments to look at the relationship success of the mentor-protégé pairing. It concluded “the majority of the protégés feel mentoring has increased their skills in program planning and implementation” (Kutilek & Earnest, 2001). It also concluded “the most significant barriers to a successful mentoring relationship are distance and schedule conflicts (time)” (Kutilek & Earnest, 2001).

Viator’s 1991 study found that 66% of employees with a mentor intended to stay with their current firm in the same or promoted position for the next five years. Only 29% of employees without a mentor intended to stay (Viator & Scandura, 1991). Georgia Chao, the leading researcher in the field of mentoring and has focused her work primarily on the mentoring relationship. While this study will not address the specific phases of this relationship, her data has concluded that careful consideration should be made to the mentoring relationship and that a formalized mentoring system within an organization is critical (Chao, 1997).

While this study will focus on how mentoring and coaching affects job satisfaction, retention or intent to stay, and preparation for job duties, there are several other factors that affect these variables. Job satisfaction has been studied for decades with the first published research dating back to 1918 (Baverdam, 2000). More recently, Baverdam Research has concluded through various organizational studies that employees with higher job satisfaction “believe that the organization will be satisfying in the long run, care about the quality of their work, are more committed to the organization, have higher retention rates, and are more productive” (Bavendam, 2000). If this is true, then it is extremely valuable to determine what affects job satisfaction as in turn that affects productivity and retention. A study by the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect determined that the specific factors that affect job satisfaction

are “achievement, recognition for accomplishment, challenging work, increased responsibility, and growth and development” (NCCANI). The study went on to specify each of these factors and determined that a strategy for enhancing employee responsibility is “asking an experienced caseworker to model specific aspects of practice for a new CPS worker” (NCCANI).

Baverdam Research concluded similar findings in a study of 15,000 white-collar employees. The study identifies six factors that influence job satisfaction in order of importance; “opportunity, stress, leadership, work standards, fair rewards, and adequate authority” (Baverdam, 2000).

Therefore if high job satisfaction increases productivity and mentoring and coaching programs increase job satisfaction then employees who have participated in mentoring and coaching programs are more likely to be prepared and productive.

Gaps in the Literature

Most research on mentoring and coaching identifies an informal mentor/protégé relationship. Few of the studies identified a clear selection process for appropriate mentors, other than the length of time they had been working in their field of study. This selection process could be a key element for an organization that is interested in creating and instituting a formalized mentoring program.

In addition, there was little information on formal coaching or evaluation. A plethora of information is available on the level of support a protégé feels in response to the mentoring relationship, but little data on how that support directly affects the protégé’s performance. Formal evaluation from a mentor to their protégé could show these affects.

Lastly, the research is lacking data on mentoring in coaching in the social service or clinical arena. The social services arena requires employees to make life or death

decisions that permanently affect the well being of families on a daily basis. Crisis management is a constant expectation. This varies from the role of many in the financial or education fields therefore the results of the relationship could vary.

Theoretical and Conceptual Basis for Proposed Study

The theory of organizational development begins with assessment. An organization interested in development is responsible for conducting a thorough self-assessment utilizing various methods. Assessment should include observation, survey, and direct feedback from employees. Once the assessment is completed an organization must identify gaps in productivity and identify the source of the gap whether it be performance, leadership, morale or in another area.

Once the gap is identified, an organization is responsible for making the necessary changes. The Hawthorne Effect is often discussed in organizational theory. For example, employees state in an assessment that the lighting in their offices is poor. Therefore the organization changes the lighting and in response the productivity of the affected employees improves. The increase in productivity is not necessarily related to the lighting, instead related to the emotional response the employee has to having their need met.

For organizations that find gaps in performance, leadership, and morale, mentoring and coaching programs may be an effective and appropriate response to meet these organizational needs.

Research Question

This study explored the relationship between a formalized mentoring and coaching program in the workplace and employee job satisfaction, intent to stay and preparation for job duties. In particular, this study focused on the Field Training

Specialist Program, a formalized mentoring and coaching program beginning to be utilized within the Cabinet for Families and Children in Kentucky.

Methodology

Proposed Design and Data Collection Procedures

New employees to the Cabinet for Families & Children hired during the months of September, October, November, and December 2002 in the Social Services Worker Series and Family Support Specialist series were surveyed in their fourth month of employment. The sample included 104 respondents. I used a quasi-experimental design.

Data was collected through a three-section questionnaire (Appendix A) delivered to each new employee via email. A private fax number was included and respondents were instructed to print the survey, complete it and fax it to the private number included. One week after the surveys were initially sent out, I emailed a follow-up request asking all respondents who had not completed the initial survey to do so.

Sampling Design and Description of Proposed Sample

The Cabinet for Families and Children in Kentucky is divided into sixteen geographical regions. At the time of the survey four of the sixteen regions had implemented the Field Training Specialist Program. These four participating regions were pre-selected as part of the sample. Two non-participating regions (KIPDA Jefferson and Bluegrass Fayette) were excluded from the sample due to their urban location. No urban region was participating in the Field Training Specialist Program at the time of survey therefore there was not an urban to urban comparison available. In total fourteen of the sixteen regions were used as the sampling frame. The sample

totaled 104 new employees. The return rate was 47% with 49 surveys returned. Of the 49, 14 participated in the Field Training Specialist Program and 35 did not.

The sample included all new employees classified in the Social Services Worker and Family Support Specialist series. This includes the employment classifications of Social Services Worker I, Social Services Worker II, Social Services Clinician I, Social Services Clinician II, Family Support Specialist I, and Family Support Specialist II.

All new employees in the chosen regions in September, October, November and December 2002 were asked to participate. The employees were participating in the new employee core-training academy, which is the standard training curriculum that new employees begin immediately upon employment. This participant list was obtained from the Training Records and Information System (TRIS), the office that maintains all training registration information for the Cabinet for Families and Children. Employees were asked to participate voluntarily and were not required to complete the instrument.

Description of Plan to Protect Human Subjects

Institutional Review Board approval from the Cabinet for Families and Children was requested and received. Surveys contained no identifying information and all results were reported as a group, eliminating the ability to identify any specific individual.

Description of Data Collection Procedures and Instruments

There were four variables of interest in this study. Mentoring and coaching was the independent variable and was determined by an employee's participation in the Field Training Specialist Program. This program is the structured pairing of a new employee with an experienced employee who is responsible for mentoring and coaching a new employee throughout their first three months of employment. During these first 90 days the new employee divides their time between formalized classroom

training and on-the-job practice of these skills with a mentor called a Field Training Specialist (FTS). The new employee is evaluated by the FTS on a formal basis using behavioral anchors. Behavioral anchors are the series of skills determined that an employee must possess in order to perform the job. The anchors identify skills such as 'employee is able to identify the criteria for a physical abuse report'. The employee is given a numerical rating between 1 and 7 and then is given behaviorally specific feedback, which explains why an employee received a certain rating. Then the employee is coached for improvement with specific behaviorally based instruction. This formalized process is called the Field Training Specialist Program. New employees will be compared based on whether or not they participated in the program.

There are three dependent variables. Job satisfaction or an employee's emotional response towards their position was evaluated utilizing the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Short Form. This tool contains 15 questions rated on a scale of 1-5. The scale ranges from not satisfied to extremely satisfied. Questions include 'how satisfied are you with your chances to do something that makes use of your abilities' and 'how satisfied are you with the way company policies are put into practice.' The reliability of this scale is .87-.92 and the validity is .89 on a 1.00 scale. This scale has been utilized in several organizational studies including a study on mentoring in the workplace.

An employee's intent to stay is the employee's plans for continued employment within the same organization either in the same position or a promoted one. This was evaluated using several questions adapted from various instruments including questions such as 'how likely is it that you plan to be working for this agency in three years' and 'how likely are you to seriously look for another job within the next year.' This tool

included a total of 4 questions answered with a 1 to 4 scale ranging from extremely likely to not likely at all. The reliability and validity of this measure is not known.

Preparation for job duties is defined as how prepared does the employee feel they are able to complete specific skills upon completion of training. This variable was measured using a 24-item scale. Due to the variety of job duties, there were two surveys, one for Protection and Permanency staff and one for Family Support staff. The scale ranged from 1 for not at all prepared and 5 for extremely prepared. This measure's reliability and validity are not known at this time. The measure is currently being utilized in another study within the Cabinet for Families and Children but has not yet had the number of respondents necessary to determine validity and reliability.

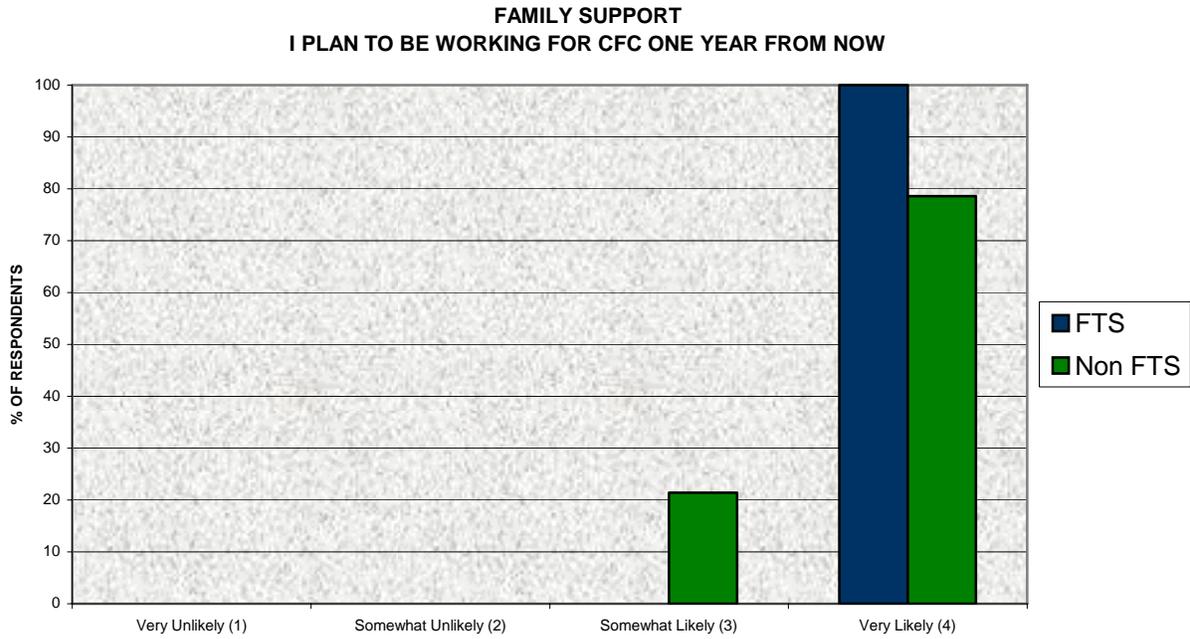
This research design was quasi-experimental. Comparison groups were determined by the employee's participation in the Field Training Specialist Program. This study was the largest of its kind within the Cabinet for Families and Children to date as this particular program has only recently moved from pilot phase to general implementation in several regions within the state.

Results

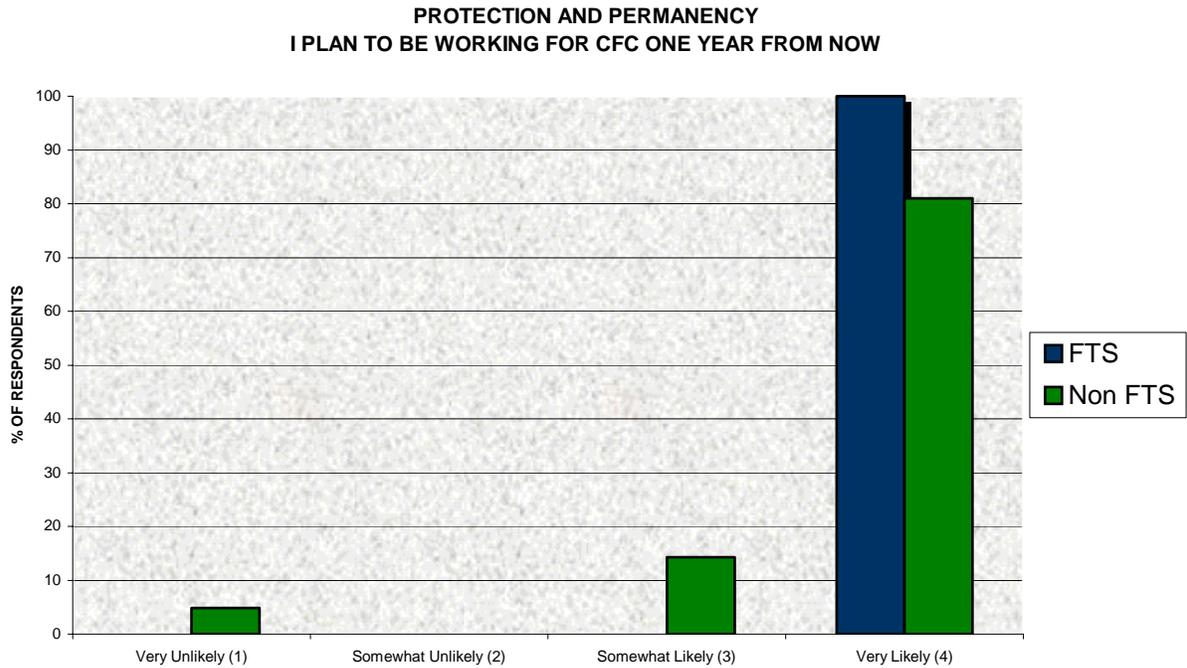
The data were analyzed using a culmination of various Cross Tabulations and T-tests. The data concludes that with an alpha level of .05 intention to stay and preparation for job duties are both positively and significantly affected by participation in the Field Training Specialist Program for both Protection and Permanency and Family Support staff. However, job satisfaction scores showed no significant difference between employees who had the mentoring program and those who did not.

The following figure highlights the intent to stay variable for Family Support employees. The key to this figure is that 100% of all employees participating in the

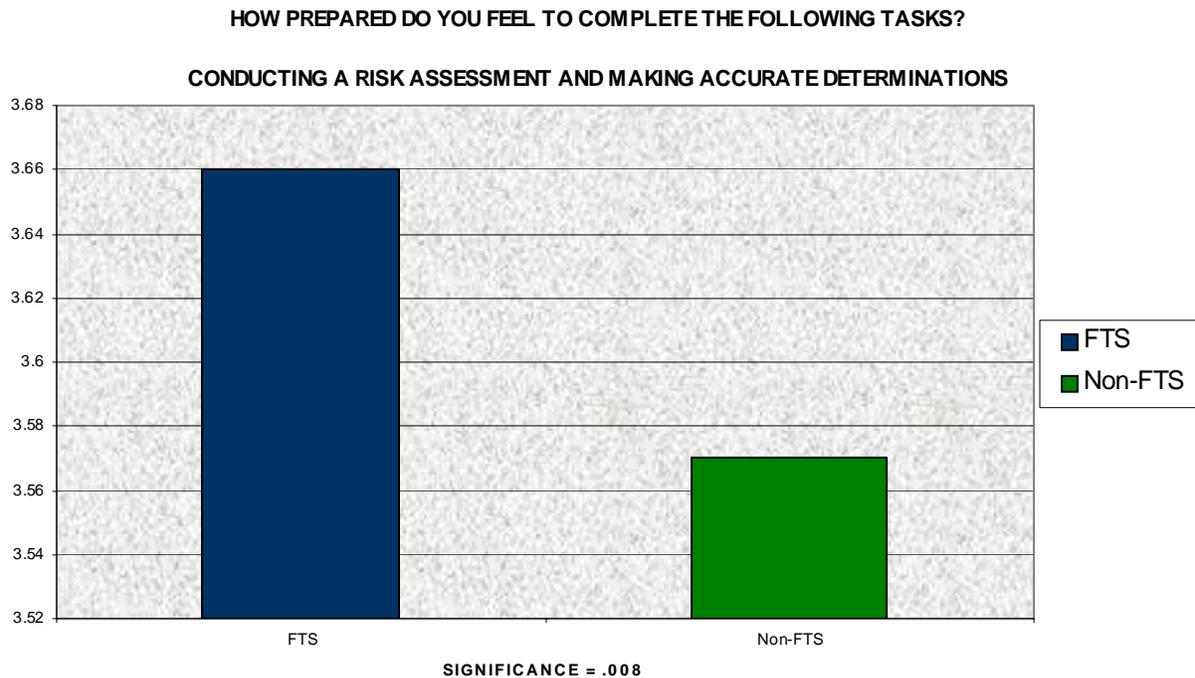
Field Training Specialist Program plan to be working for the Cabinet for Families and Children in one year.



The results were similar with Protection and Permanency employees.

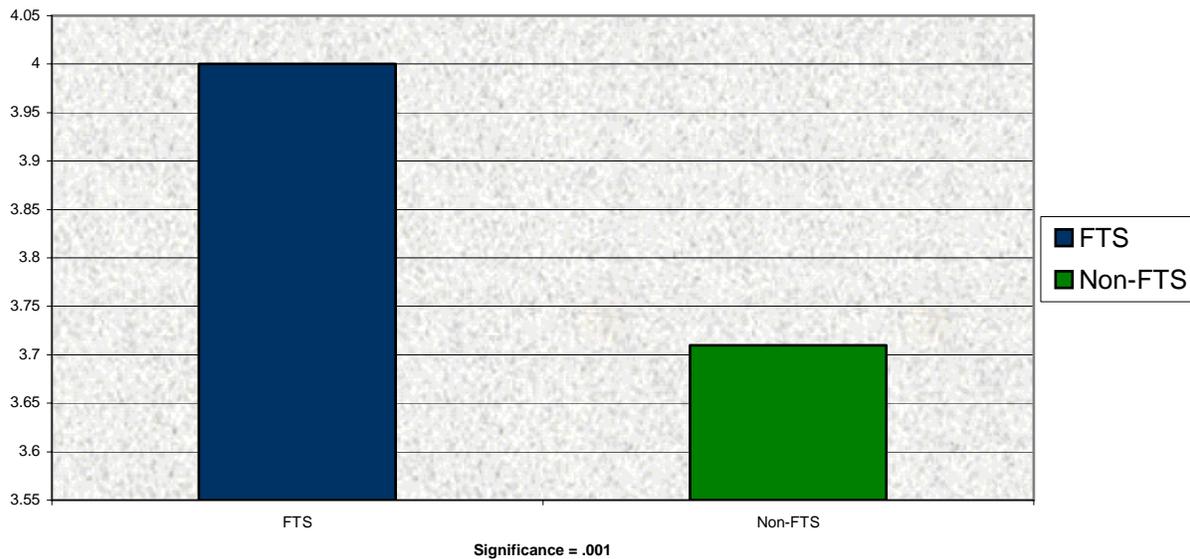


In measuring preparation for job duties a series of skills specific to either Family Support or Protection and Permanency were examined. For Protection and Permanency, the survey included 25 variables. In 23 of the 25 variables, employees who participated in the Field Training Specialist Program showed a higher level of preparation, indicating they felt more prepared to complete the job duties than those who did not participate in the program. 7 of these 23 had statistically significant differences with a p value of less than .05. The following figure highlights the ability to conduct a risk assessment and make accurate determinations based on the assessment.



Family Support employees rated a series of 24 variables. In 15 of the 24 variables Family Support employees scored higher, indicating they felt more prepared to complete the specific skills. Of the 15, 2 showed statistical significance. The following figure highlights a key skill required in most Family Support cases. The skill is to correctly consider income of all household members and then classifying it correctly.

CORRECTLY CONSIDER ALL INCOME OF ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS AND CLASSIFY IT CORRECTLY



Discussion

Interpretation of Results

The data shows that the original hypothesis was correct in most areas. The lack of statistical difference in job satisfaction scores was the only surprise and there are many factors that could have contributed to this. For example, employees who participated in the Field Training Specialist Program received caseloads for the first time in their fourth month of employment, the time of survey. This could play a role in their level of job satisfaction. Employees who did not participate in the program have had four months carrying caseloads and may be more accustomed to that responsibility at the time of survey.

The data supported the original hypothesis that employees who participated in the Field Training Specialist Program felt more prepared to perform the job duties they were assigned. This is likely due to the amount of time they had to practice and be

coached for improvement before carrying the responsibility and liability of cases in their own name.

The data also showed that employees who had formalized mentoring and coaching intended to stay with the agency longer than employees who did not. This is likely because the employees feel more comfortable in their role and with their responsibilities and therefore see the agency as one that is concerned with employee well being. This is significant because as positions are lost due to budget restraints, it is extremely important to have qualified staff that intends to stay with the agency.

Overall this data is positive and demonstrates that mentoring and coaching programs can and do work in the social services arena and should be implemented in all areas of a field experiencing high turnover.

Implications for Practice

For the Cabinet for Families and Children this data is extremely valuable. The agency is in the midst of a devastating financial crisis yet must continue to deliver quality services to the families and children in the community. In addition the agency is committed to being an employee friendly work environment and has struggled with ways to provide services to their staff. The Field Training Specialist Program already exists within the agency and uses resources already in place to provide services to staff that affect their performance and retention. An administrative push could be made to implement the program in other regions, therefore offering these benefits to all the Cabinet's staff.

Limitations of Study

There are three significant limitations to this study that deserve mention. First, at the time of the study only four of sixteen regions were participating in the Field Training

Specialist Program. Of those regions, all are extremely new at utilizing the program. Mentors will become more confident in their role as they coach more employees. Therefore if experienced coaches were used, the results may be more significant.

The results will be limited to generalizations in rural geographical locations as there is not an urban area utilizing the mentoring program. While the study utilized comparison groups, which improves the validity of the response allowing clear comparisons between the groups; the control group is not randomly assigned due to limitations in participation of the program. Secondly, of the three measures being used to gather responses, only one has clear reliability and validity due to extensive testing and use.

The third and most significant limitation is the lack of a long-term evaluation period. While initial judgments regarding new employee job satisfaction, performance, and intentions to stay are extremely valuable; a comparison to employees after five years would comprise of more significant results and verification.

Implications for Further Research

While a great deal of research already exists in the field of mentoring and coaching, a five year study evaluating employees who participated in the Field Training Specialist Program and those who did not would be valuable. It would be interesting to see if these employees are promoted at a higher rate and if their performance over the long term demonstrates more strength than those without the program.

In addition it would be interesting to evaluate the Field Training Specialist and see how being a mentor and coach affects his or her own job performance and promotional opportunities. It would also be valuable to evaluate the relationship between mentor and new employee to see if there are differences in the employee's success based on the relationship.

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Field Training Specialist Program

May 9, 2003
Amy Whitaker

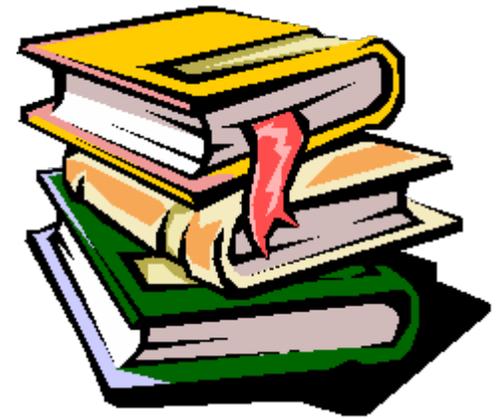
What Is It?

- ✦ The FTS Program is a mentoring and coaching program for new front line staff
- ✦ Allows a new employee to collaborate with a tenured high performer while participating in core training
- ✦ Intended to increase job performance, job satisfaction, and in turn, retention



How Does It Work?

- ✿ For a selected period of time (usually 3 months) a new employee attends core training and spends the out of classroom time with a Field Training Specialist



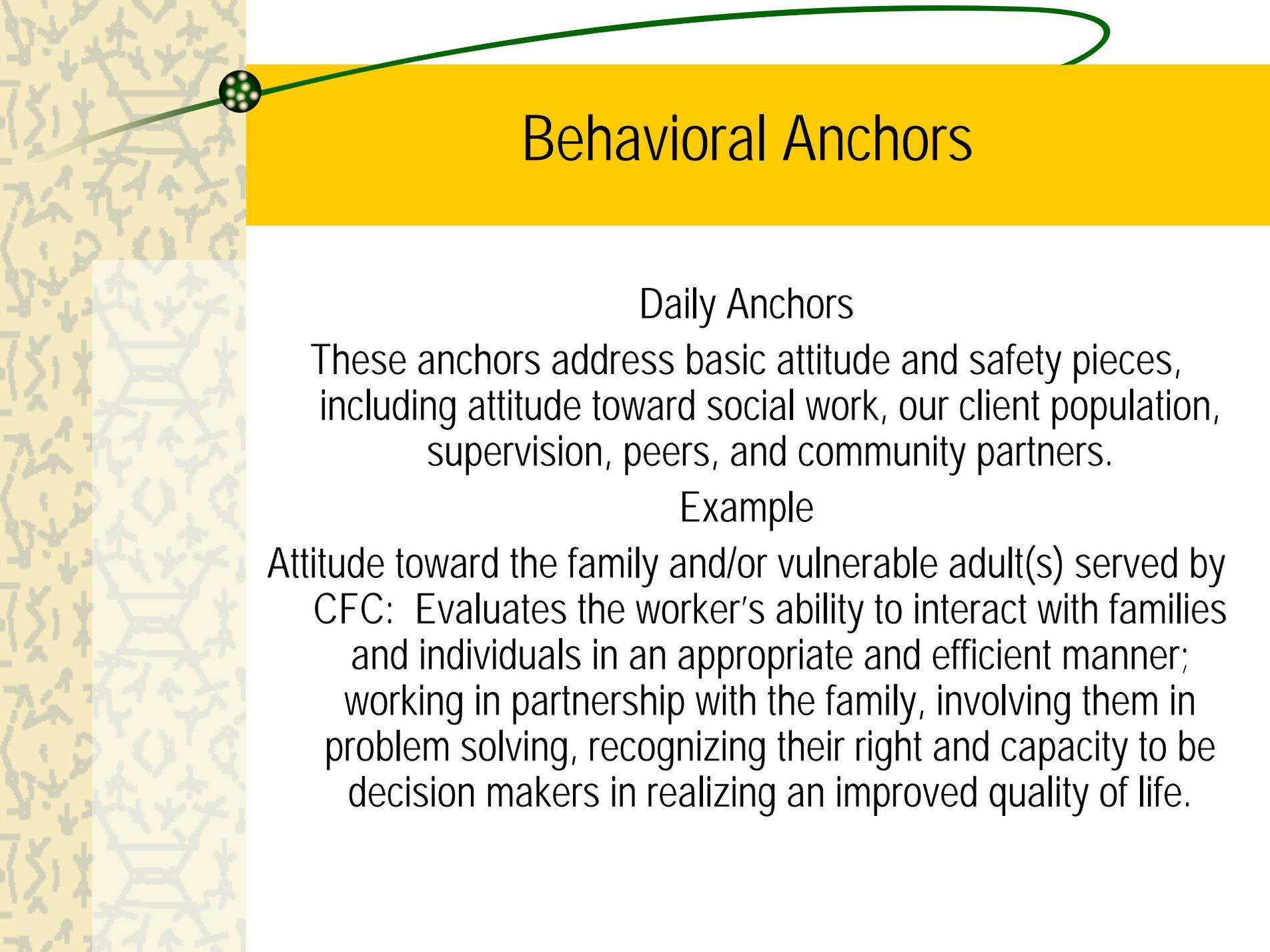
More of How It Works...



- 💡 The new employee is evaluated on the ability to apply basic core skills through a system called behavioral anchors

Behavioral Anchors

- ✦ Core skills for each program area were identified using a DACUM job analysis as well as involvement from front line staff, supervisors, specialists, and trainers.
- ✦ These are the basic skills that an employee must exhibit in order to be proficient in this position.



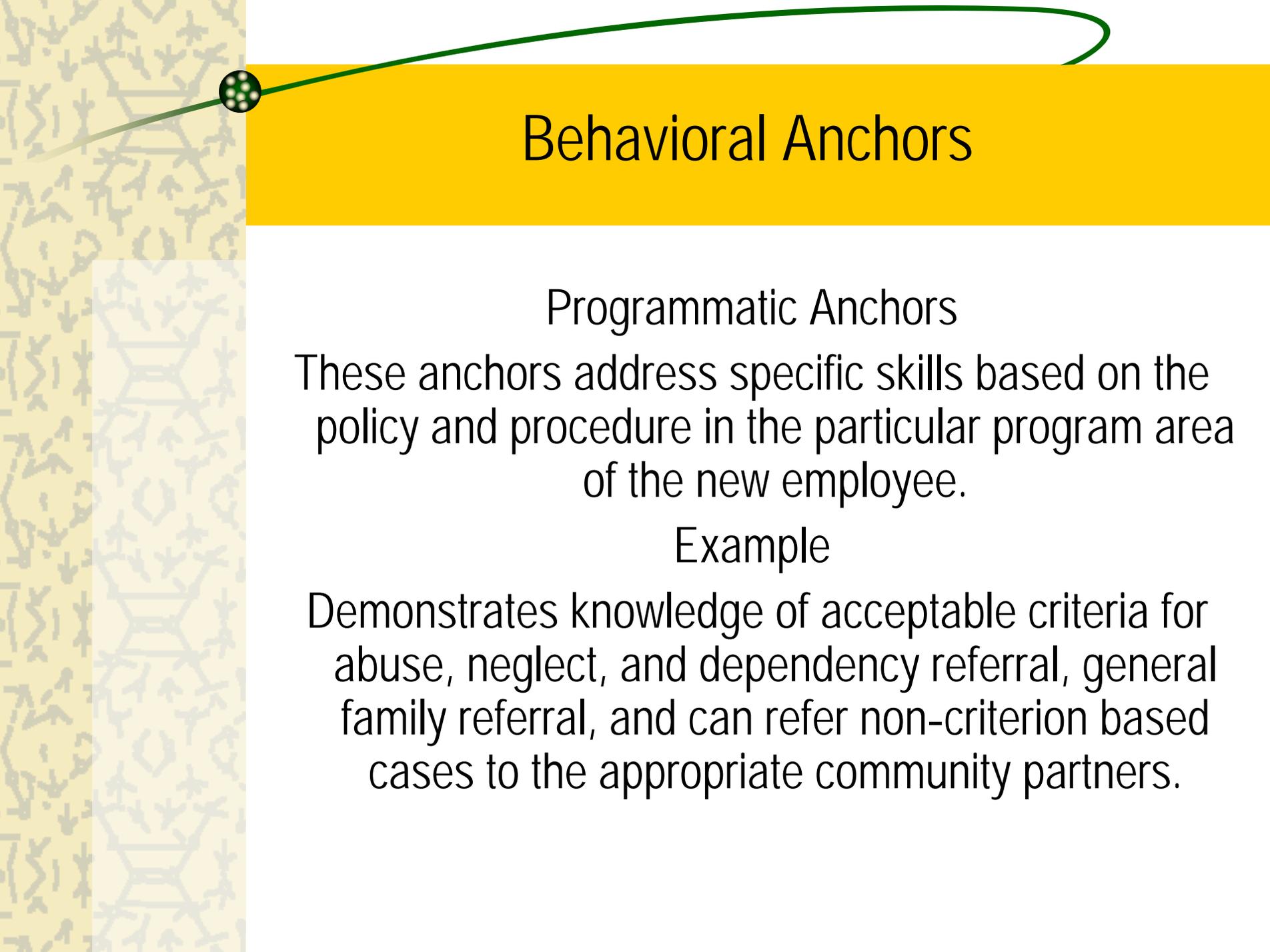
Behavioral Anchors

Daily Anchors

These anchors address basic attitude and safety pieces, including attitude toward social work, our client population, supervision, peers, and community partners.

Example

Attitude toward the family and/or vulnerable adult(s) served by CFC: Evaluates the worker's ability to interact with families and individuals in an appropriate and efficient manner; working in partnership with the family, involving them in problem solving, recognizing their right and capacity to be decision makers in realizing an improved quality of life.



Behavioral Anchors

Programmatic Anchors

These anchors address specific skills based on the policy and procedure in the particular program area of the new employee.

Example

Demonstrates knowledge of acceptable criteria for abuse, neglect, and dependency referral, general family referral, and can refer non-criterion based cases to the appropriate community partners.

Benefits to New Employee

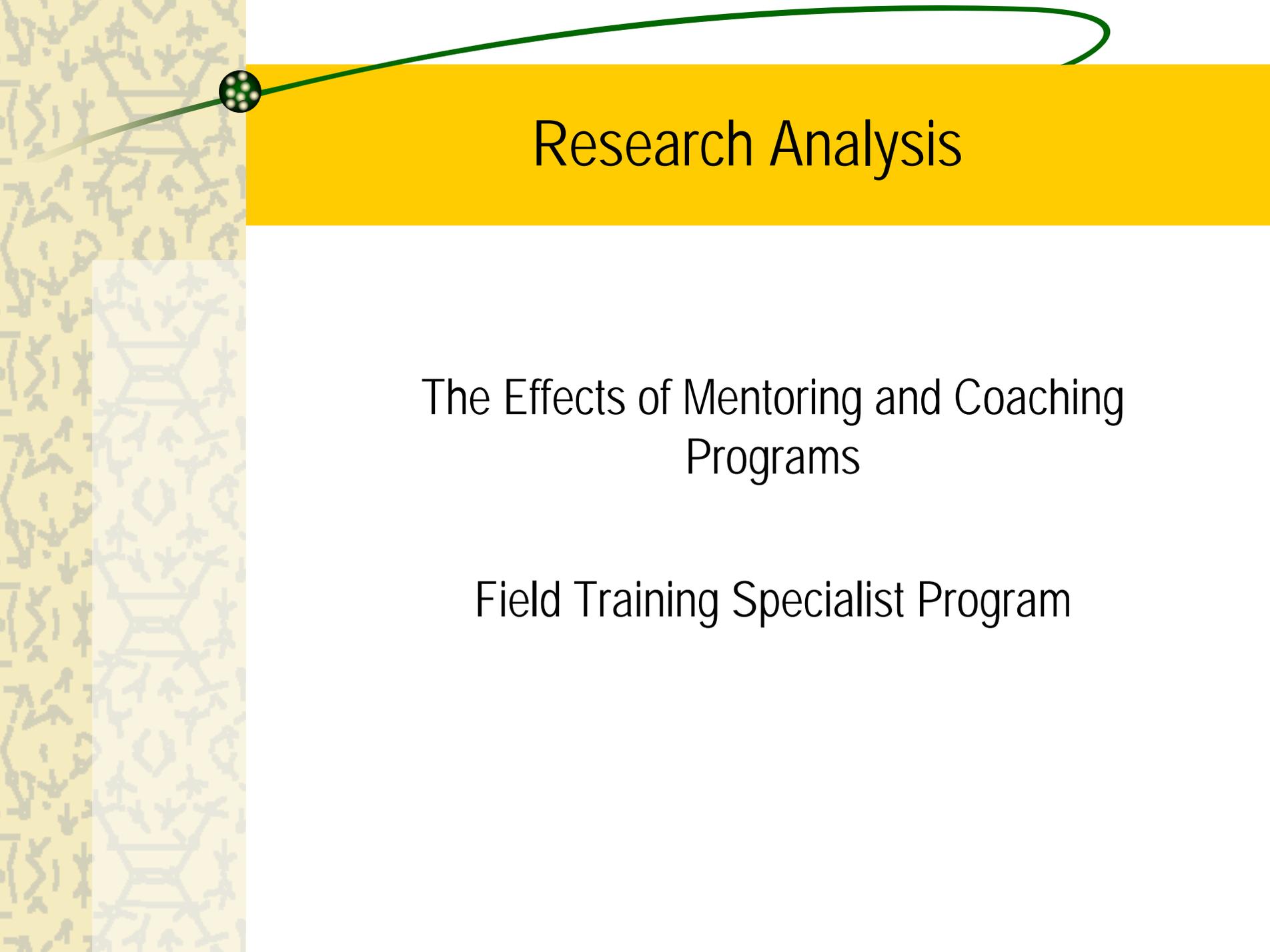
- ✦ Given opportunity to practice the skills taught in the classroom in a real and safe environment
- ✦ Given the freedom to learn and enhance their skills without the pressure of a caseload



Benefits to the Region



- ✦ Better prepared and skilled employees at the end of the training period
- ✦ Clear and consistent method of evaluation for new employees
- ✦ Increased morale among teams



Research Analysis

The Effects of Mentoring and Coaching
Programs

Field Training Specialist Program

Sample

- ☀ All new front line employees from September 2003 – December 2003
- ☀ Excluded Jefferson and Fayette counties
- ☀ 102 employees, 50 respondents
48% return rate

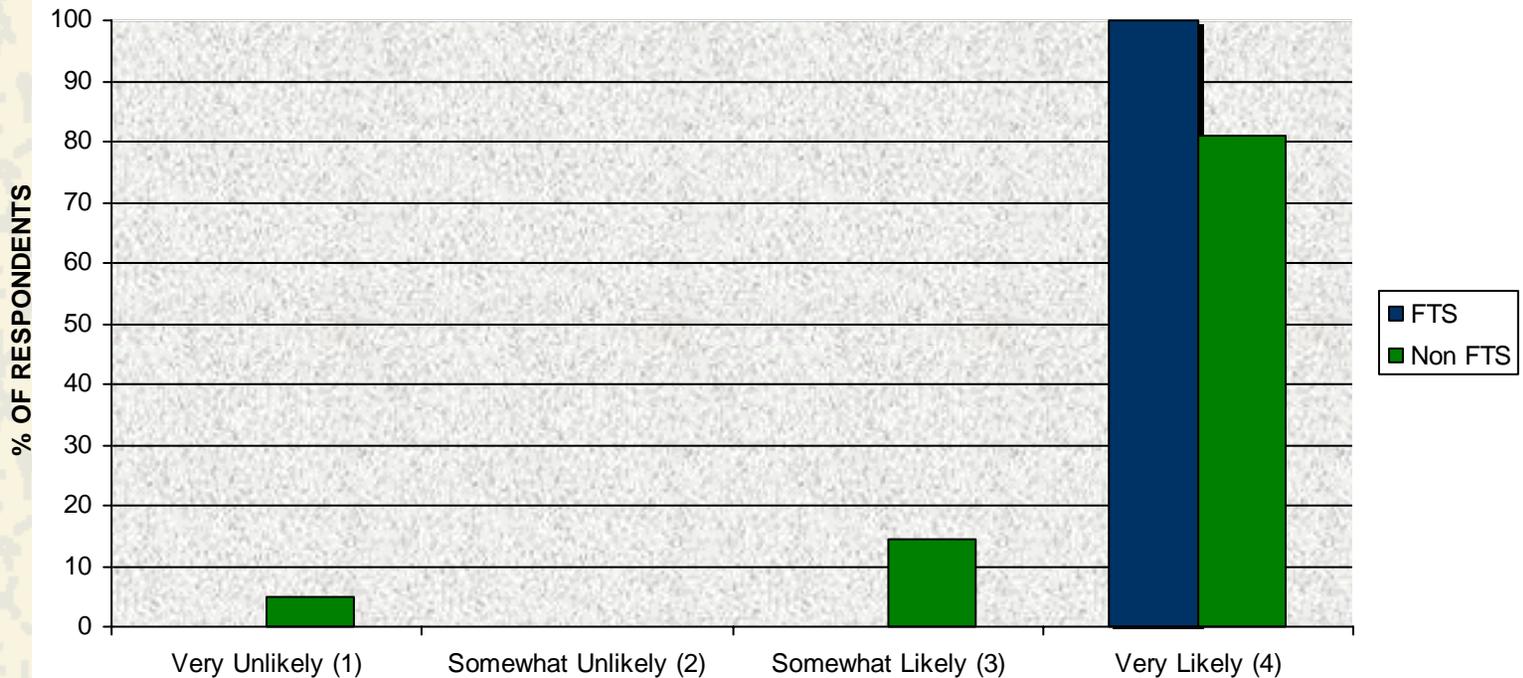


Protection & Permanency Data

- ✦ In 23 out of 25 variables, employees who participated in the FTS program felt more prepared to complete the expected job duties than those who did not have the program.
- ✦ Employees who participated in the FTS Program were also much more likely to stay with the agency than those who did not have the program.

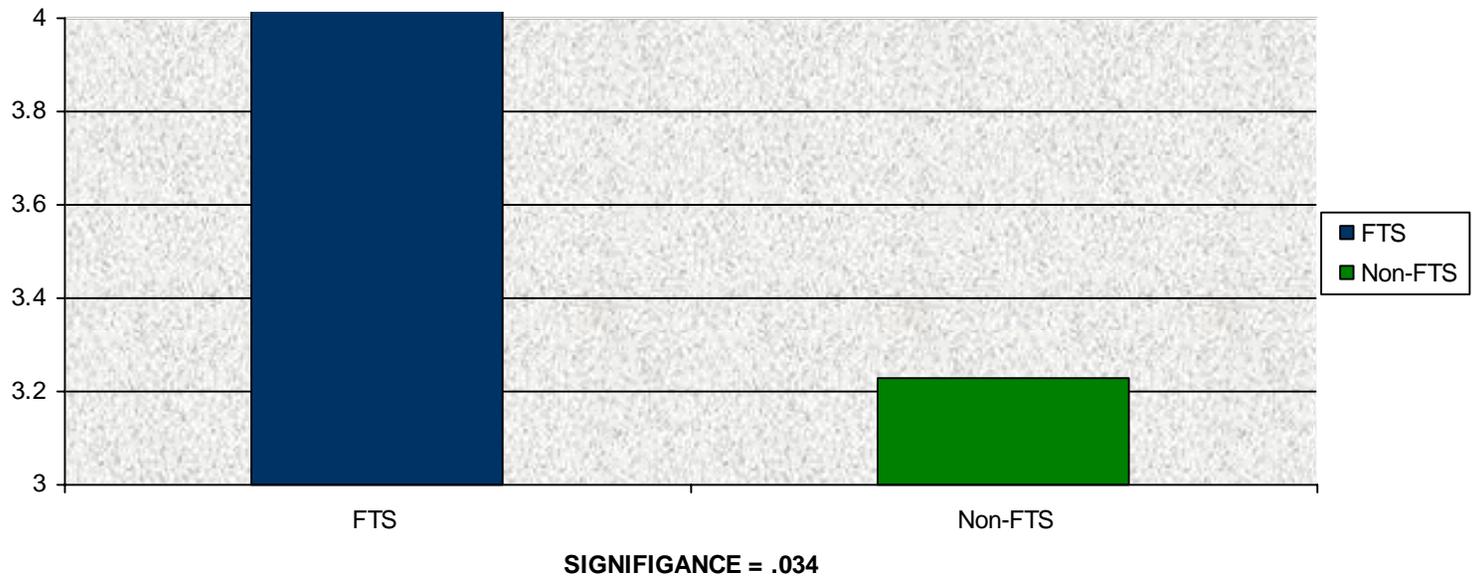
Protection & Permanency Data

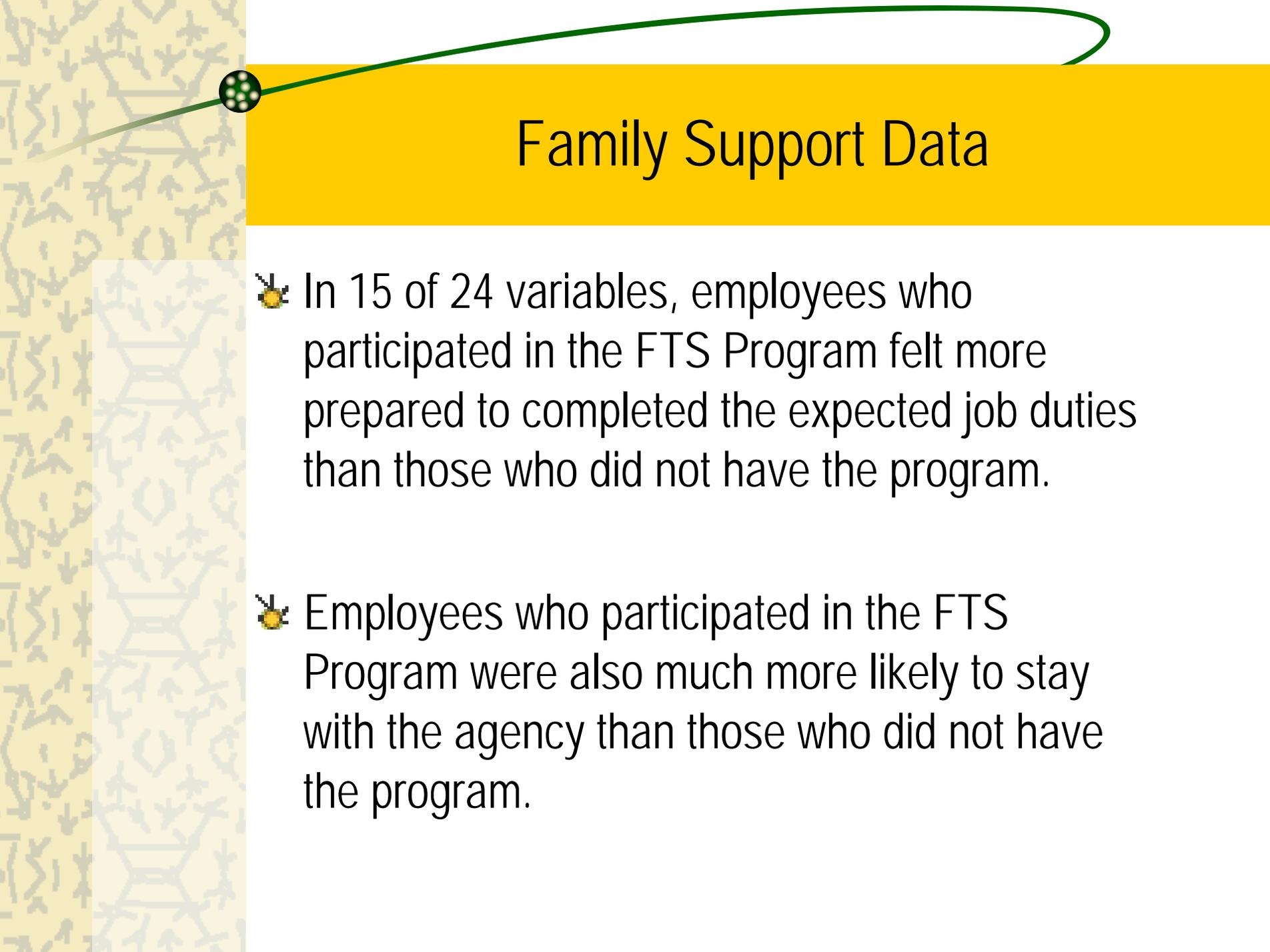
I PLAN TO BE WORKING FOR CFC IN ONE YEAR



How prepared do you feel to complete the following tasks?

DEMONSTRATING KNOWLEDGE OF ACCEPTABLE CRITERIA FOR REFERRALS



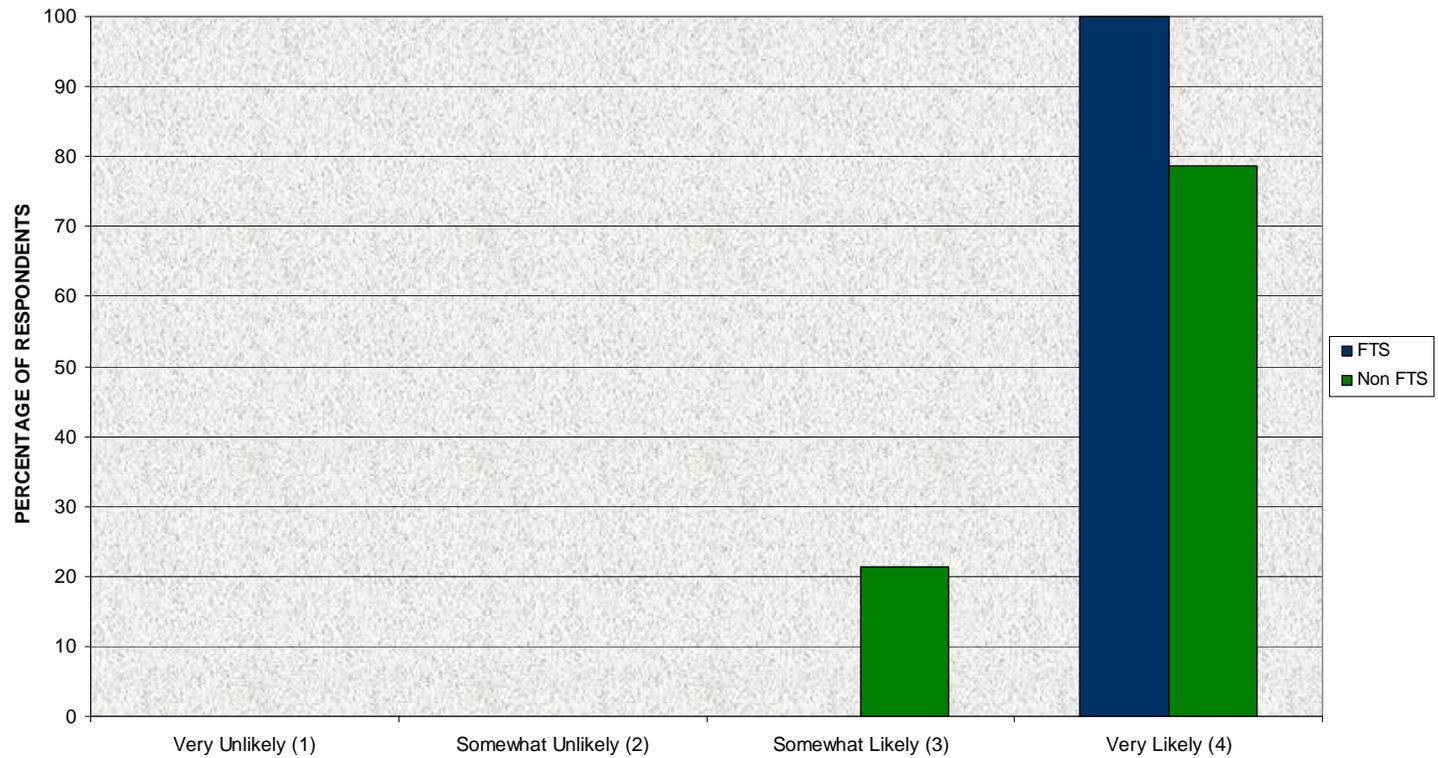


Family Support Data

- ✦ In 15 of 24 variables, employees who participated in the FTS Program felt more prepared to completed the expected job duties than those who did not have the program.
- ✦ Employees who participated in the FTS Program were also much more likely to stay with the agency than those who did not have the program.

Family Support Data

I PLAN TO BE WORKING FOR CFC ONE YEAR FROM NOW





Testimonial

"I want to commend the FTS program for the difference it is making in the preparation of our new Family Support Specialists and in the quality of work they are producing. Several local office supervisors have reported that the "newbies" are much better prepared to assume a caseload after FTS. They are more confident with the interviewing process and are better able to deal with case situations that aren't addressed in training. In reviewing their casework, the supervisors are finding that the newbies have fewer coupon errors than new workers had prior to FTS."

"In fact, I've just approved Food Stamp case decision for an FTS graduate who was appointed Sept 16, 2002 and who has maintained a 100% coupon accuracy rate since completing FTS and assuming a Food Stamp caseload Jan 1, 2003. This is exceptional! Thanks for FTS!"

Myrna Roy
SRAA
Lake Cumberland

Who Should Be a Field Training Specialist?

- 🌟 Motivated
- 🌟 High Performing
- 🌟 Positive
- 🌟 Leader

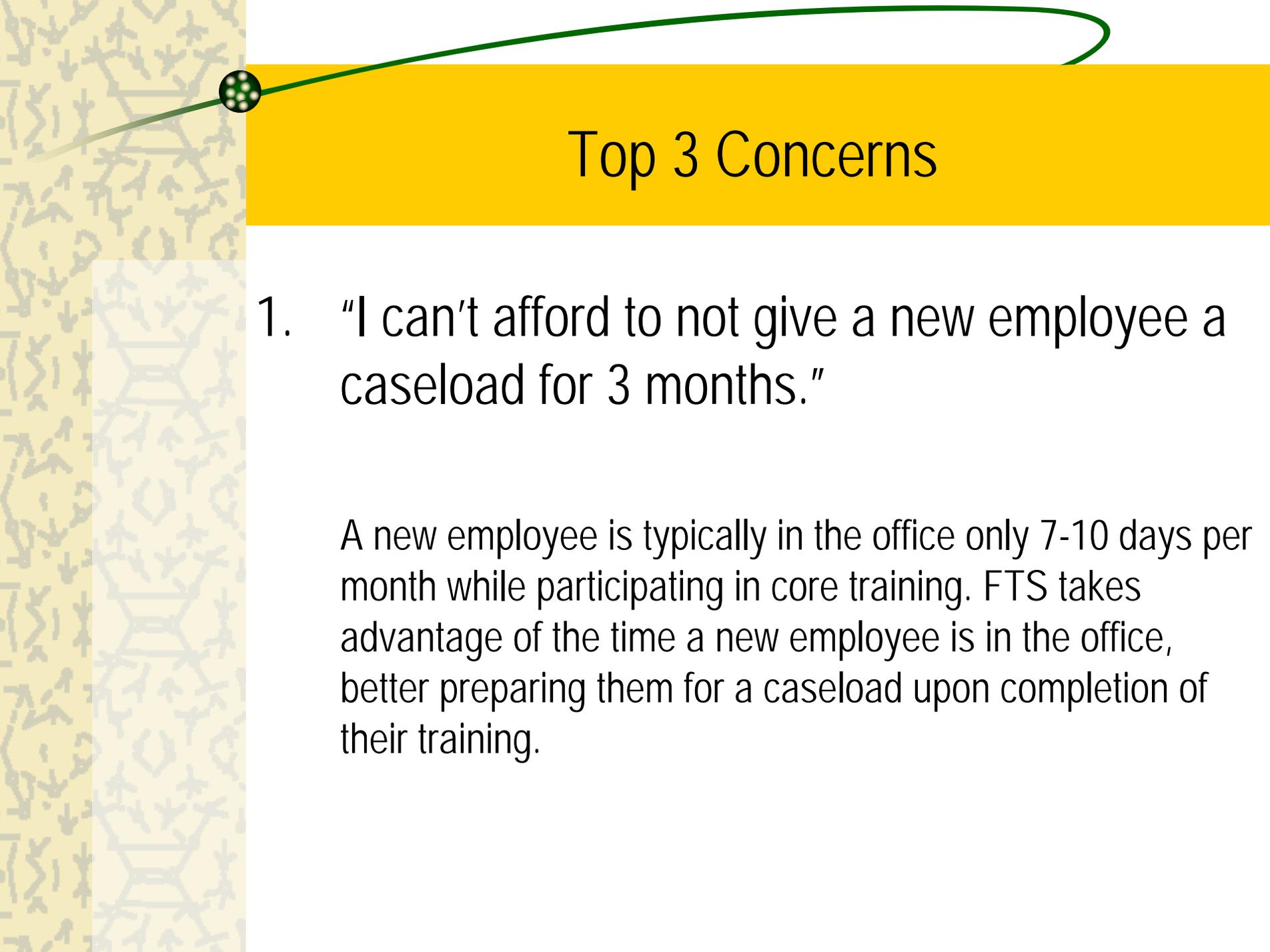


* Specific criteria for Field Training Specialists is determined on a regional level

Who Should Be the FTS Coordinator?

- ☀ Organized
- ☀ Flexible
- ☀ Motivated
- ☀ Positive

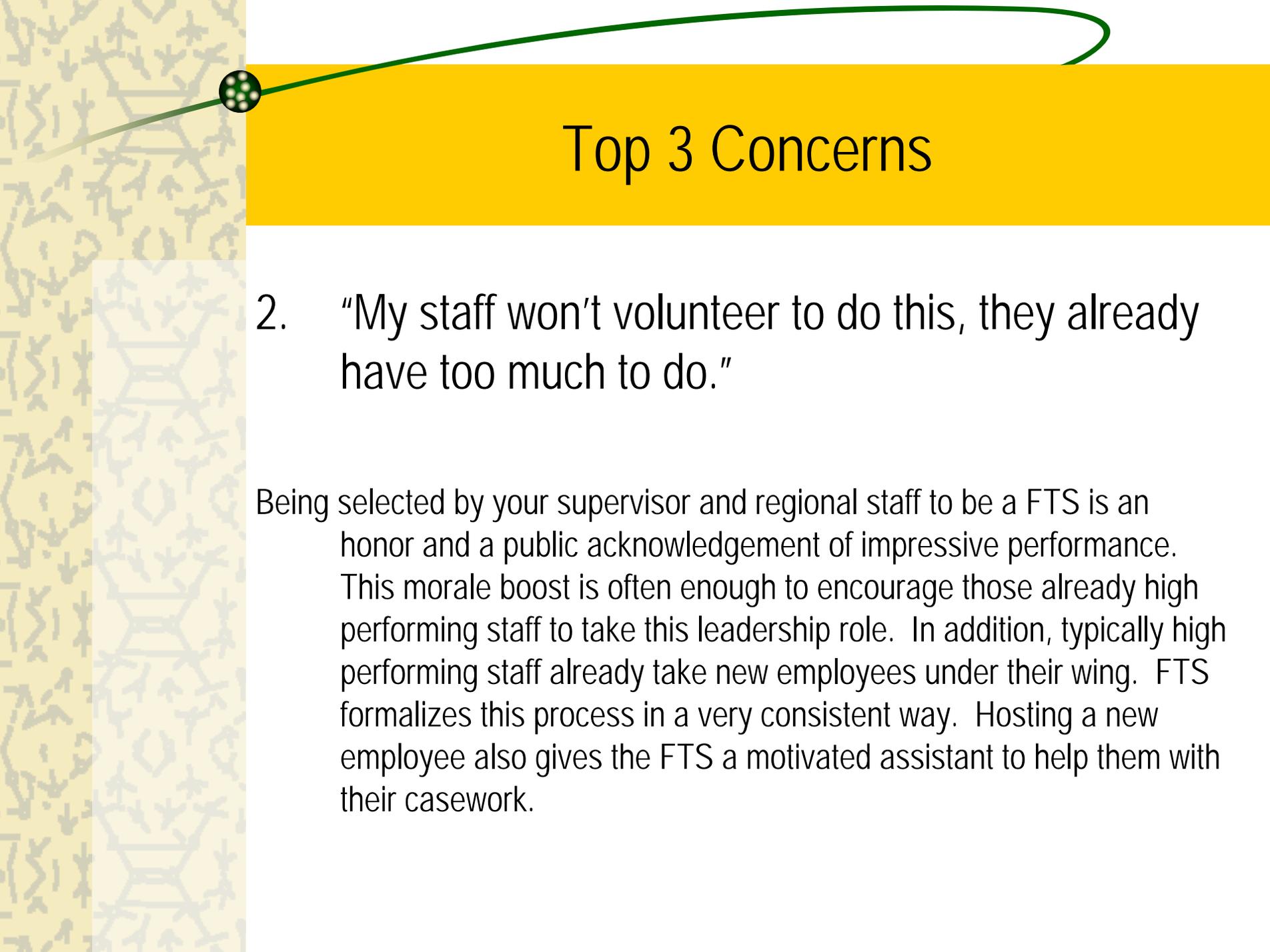
The Coordinator works in collaboration with the regional FTS Team (specialists, supervisors, SRA, SRAAs) and the Field Training Specialists



Top 3 Concerns

1. "I can't afford to not give a new employee a caseload for 3 months."

A new employee is typically in the office only 7-10 days per month while participating in core training. FTS takes advantage of the time a new employee is in the office, better preparing them for a caseload upon completion of their training.



Top 3 Concerns

2. “My staff won’t volunteer to do this, they already have too much to do.”

Being selected by your supervisor and regional staff to be a FTS is an honor and a public acknowledgement of impressive performance. This morale boost is often enough to encourage those already high performing staff to take this leadership role. In addition, typically high performing staff already take new employees under their wing. FTS formalizes this process in a very consistent way. Hosting a new employee also gives the FTS a motivated assistant to help them with their casework.



Top 3 Concerns

3. “If staff aren’t paid any more for being a FTS, they have no incentive to participate.”

While staff are not monetarily compensated they are placed on the leadership track. Being a FTS demonstrates the ability to mentor and coach an employee to enhanced performance; skills vital to supervision. This is also a way to recognize high performing staff in a public way within the region, despite current budget constraints. High functioning teams have a positive attitude and high morale. Recognition and appreciation is the fast track to increased morale.

How Do We Do It?

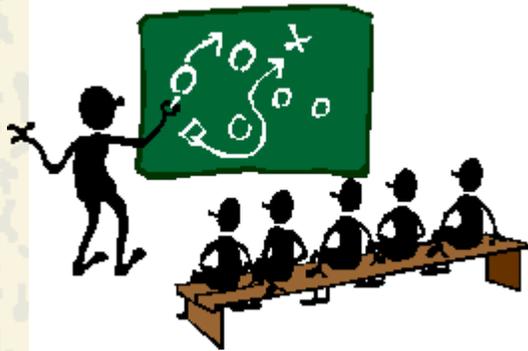
Agree to regionally implement program	Developmental meeting where regional criteria and process are created	Select Field Training Specialists and a FTS Coordinator
FTS are trained within the region or LDT	Start utilizing the program with all new front line staff	The FTS Team will provide ongoing support and consultation

Exactly How We Do It

- ✚ A region must agree to regionally implement the program
- ✚ If they agree, we then facilitate a developmental meeting for the key players in the region
- ✚ At this point the region is ready to begin the selection process



And Then...



- ☀ We provide training to the Field Training Specialists within their region or LDT
- ☀ A region is now ready to begin utilizing the program for all new employees
- ☀ The FTS Team provides ongoing support, consultation, and professional development

Next Steps

- ✿ FTS is currently implemented in the following regions:

KIPDA Rural	1998
Lake Cumberland	September 2002
Kentucky River	September 2002
Green River	October 2002
Cumberland Valley	April 2003
Purchase	October 2003

Is Bluegrass Rural next?

What questions and concerns do you have?

