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Jaqueta Taylor

Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services

Rynika Polk

Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services

Jackie Gooch

Louisiana Department of Children & Family Services

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Perspectives from a Prevention Team (Blog Post)

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By Jaqueta Taylor, Rynika Polk and Jackie Gooch

Louisiana's redesign includes the creation of prevention teams. The prevention teams include one supervisor, three child protective services (CPS) workers, two family services (FS) workers, and one child welfare team specialist. Over the course of the past year each team was established, trained, and worked together to build a cohesive unit. Team members expressed a mix of excitement and concern about their new roles. The redesign meant the supervisor was managing new team members, workers were delegating tasks they were previously responsible for, and team specialists were new to the team and had to establish trust with their coworkers. The following submissions are from members of one of Louisiana's newly established prevention teams. They shared some of their challenges and successes as their role changed as part of the redesign supported by the QIC-WD.

Jaqueta Taylor, Prevention Team Supervisor- *Although the job redesign sounded like a good idea, there were a lot of unknowns. I had to take a step back and really look at the long-term benefits of the program, because in the beginning everything was overwhelming. There were a lot of trainings, surveys, meetings, etc. that I had to balance along with getting the regular work done. Different people were asking for different mandatory things in regards to the pilot and it was a lot. Plus, there was a new person who was onboard, who had to learn the programs in order to see how she would be most beneficial to the workers. I talked to my workers about their feelings in regards to the program and had to see what concerns they had and how I could help get on board also. But I will say that our teaming specialist was probably one of the biggest helps in overcoming all of the barriers. She showed her face to everyone on a daily basis and really helped them to get comfortable in trusting her to take over some of their daily tasks.*



One of the biggest challenges was, and still is, the FS unit. The caseloads have remained high so it presents a challenge for me in the timing of whether to transfer the case to FS right away or to allow the CPS worker to continue to monitor the family for a little longer.

Since getting into a routine with the job redesign, I see that interviews and case information is being inputted much earlier than before. Referrals are happening sooner and we have been securing progress reports on a more frequent basis. Also, with having huddles, the workers are able to bounce ideas off of each other and I think that allows the team to learn about available resources that they may have not known about previously. Also, I noticed that when cases are transferred to FS, the workers are working together more than before and therefore the transition is much smoother. There is no confusion in regards to who is going to follow up with what because they work as a team and they also have assistance from the specialist.

Our teaming specialist has definitely helped to take some of the burden off of everyone in the unit. Because she is involved in the case from the beginning, she is able to assist workers in

both programs and is knowledgeable of the families. She definitely complements the teamwork aspect and helps bridge the gaps. By doing some of the more tedious tasks such as requesting progress reports and scanning them in, making referrals, sending clients for drugs screens and assisting with transportation as needed, delivering court reports, inputting interviews into programs for the workers, and so many other things, it has really helped in ensuring that the workers can spend more time in the field with their clients and focus on them.

Rynika Polk, Prevention Worker - Going into implementation of the job redesign I was excited about the changes to come, especially for the children and families that we serve. I found it difficult, at times, to delegate tasks to the teaming specialist, as I had become acclimated to ensuring all case-related tasks were completed independently. It was a must that I tap into being a team player and relieve myself of some of the daily tasks. The job redesign has afforded me the opportunity to strengthen and build trustworthy relationships within our unit and with the clients we serve. We help one another and lift each other's spirits up when needed.



I find that the job redesign has helped workers improve the quality of services overall and clients are more receptive to services with the agency because the job duties are being handled in a unified fashion with a multidisciplinary approach. Our teaming Specialist is AWESOME!!! I'm grateful for this opportunity, happy for the changes it has brought about so far, and excited about the future success to come.

Jackie Gooch, Team Specialist - I feel that as a team specialist, I take a lot off of the worker's plate by doing the office tasks that are time consuming. There are a lot of small tasks that take up time for each worker. I would say that at the beginning it was a little difficult to get everyone on board with the new program. I just continued showing my face to my team members, reminding them that I was here and willing to help/assist each one of my team members. After a few months, I saw a change with my team trusting me to do my job. It all started falling into place. And our team does communicate with each other, which is really important. I would say we all keep our unit intact and working in the right direction together.

