Transfer of Learning Guide

WHAT IS TOL?

Transfer of Learning (TOL) is the degree to which trainees apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned in training and the degree to which the new learning is maintained over time.

Because we invest time, effort, and resources to create learning interventions, we hope to get a return on those investments in the form of some tangible benefit—usually some form of improved work outcome. Learners who are motivated to apply what they've learned to their work will be more successful in transfer. Learners are more likely to achieve transfer success if they have early opportunities to take what they've learned and utilize it in their work.

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE TOL

- ✓ Providing practice on tasks that are similar to those learners will have to perform in the future.

- ✓ Using more hands-on exercises, more real work and more simulations gives learning a context which will remind learns about what they learned back on the job.

- ✓ Motivating learners to try something new; learners who are motivated to apply what they have learned to their work succeed in more transfer.

- ✓ Helping learners to identify opportunities to use a new skill or concept when back at work and then building skill practice around those identified situations.

- ✓ Asking learners what goal they have for using what they've learned, what situation they will be in when they can act on their goal and what specific action they will take when in that situation.

- ✓ Engaging learners in activities that support remembering and retrieving what they learned.

✓ Helping learners identify obstacles they may face in applying their learning and strategies to overcome obstacles.

BEFORE

The Right Training for the Right Need

TOL is enhanced when supervisors are clear about what knowledge and skills are being addressed by training. Discussing workshop learning objectives helps staff link training content to their day-to-work.

Training objects should be:

✓ Smart, Measurable, Attainable/Action-Oriented, Realistic, Time-specific (SMART)
✓ Provide course description and opportunities for participants to state their expectations and desired outcomes
✓ Course description should include intended audience and current skill level/knowledge

It is also important for supervisors to help staff get the training that is right for their level of expertise.

BEGINNER	*Learner:* Little to no experience or understanding of the TIC concepts; looking for basic information and application *Training:* Provides a broad overview.
INTERMEDIATE	*Learner:* Basic experience & understanding of TIC concepts but seeking to increase understanding and application *Training:* Provides comprehensive, factual information.
ADVANCED	*Learner:* Competent in addressing TIC in practice and teaching; seeking additional depth and specific application of concepts and practices; familiar with research supported concepts and practices *Training M*ay include demonstration, modeling, experiential exercises, guided practice, feedback and coaching, self-assessment and action planning.

Making Sure Learners Get the Support They Need

Transfer of learning can be enhanced when the following elements are in place:
✓ Support from top management, supervisors and peers
✓ Reduced task constraints: time, workload
✓ Establish an incentive "program" that really motivates staff to attend trainings
✓ Proactive selection of learning cohorts
✓ Develop simple individual action (learning) plan
  o Develop an action plan with staff member(s) for how the new knowledge and skills will be implemented.

- Identify goal(s)
- Why is this goal important?
- Behavior change (to make progress on this goal, what behavior might learner need to change? What new behaviors might learner need to include?)
- Make goals SMART
✓ Joint selection of training with the staff member/caregiver
✓ Pre-workshop discussions regarding the importance of the training
✓ Arrangements to cover work while staff member attends training
✓ Provision of resource materials or direction to information/resources pertinent to the training topic

DURING

During training, the following elements can help enhance transfer of learning:

✓ Active self-monitoring; do not use cell phones; no multi-tasking
✓ Provide ways for staff to support each other by giving feedback & engaging in meaningful discussions.
✓ Provide opportunities for reflection and self-monitoring (worksheet)
  - Think of a challenging client or event:
    - What strategies have tired or used before that did not work?
    - Do you think what you have learned will work?
    - If not, why not? (Barriers/challenges)
    - Will anything you have learned in this virtual training be of value in responding to a challenging client or event?
    - What was missing from this training?

AFTER

The following are some recommended strategies organizations can use to help staff connect new knowledge & skills to future use on the job.

✓ Provide examples of where staff can apply what they are learning
✓ Meet with the staff member within a week to review key points in training and their action plan
✓ Create regular methods, such as a sharing library, for staff to share what they learned in training with supervisors and colleagues
✓ Create standing item for staff meeting agendas
  - Utilize "microlearning" format for discussion/learning; short very specific topics
✓ Use soft/open and hard/closed skills
✓ Implement peer coaching/support
✓ Create support network for learners; learning communities/pods
  - Ability to share the context for learning
  - Exposure to many and varied examples and opportunities for practice encourages transfer

   o Plan activities that allow learners to practice new skills: case reviews
- ✓ Develop checklists and/or tools for supervisors that assess fidelity on new skills and trainee performance
- ✓ Provide opportunities for staff to shadow other experienced staff
- ✓ Demonstrate skills for the staff
- ✓ Provide opportunities for staff members to practice skills by conducting role plays, and provide feedback
- ✓ Observe staff working with clients/foster children/families and provide feedback
- ✓ Be a good role model by attending trainings and modeling the sharing of new information.

REFERENCES

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