Assessing Retention Outcomes

The Research and Training Center on Community Living at the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota is dedicated to providing state-of-the-art resources on DSP workforce development strategies to states, organizations, families, and individuals that are facing DSP workforce challenges. The RTC has conducted research on direct support and frontline supervisor recruitment, selection, retention, and training for over 35 years. Research findings have led to the development of numerous evidence-based strategies and products to help build a stable and competent DSP workforce.

This tool is designed to help you begin to address workforce development challenges by assessing recruitment and retention outcomes within your organization.

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Why assess recruitment and retention?

A good workplace assessment is important for several reasons

- It can help agencies to identify the precise nature of the staffing problems in various sectors of the agency.
- It can also help in selecting intervention strategies to address identified challenges.
- A workplace assessment provides a baseline or point of comparison against which the results of intervention can be compared.
- Finally, assessment results can be used to identify and encourage strategies that are working and to identify what is not working, so changes can be made.

What to assess

The process of assessing workplace recruitment and retention practices and problems requires many types of information. To establish a baseline the agency must clearly define who counts as a direct support worker, and how workers who work at several sites, or only "on-call" hours will be counted. It is most efficient if the same definitions and formulas are used for all sites and services within the agency. The procedure for establishing a baseline has several components including: developing an accurate job description, examining retention outcomes and recruitment practices, gathering specific information about positive and negative job features, describing any changes or special incentives that may have influenced recruitment or retention, and summarizing the information gathered. This handout describes how to measure retention outcomes.

Examining retention outcomes

Retention outcomes that should be assessed include:

- turnover rates (crude separation rate) for direct support
- workers and for supervisors, average tenure (months worked),
- vacancy rates (% of positions vacant), and
- percent of workers who leave the site within six months of hire.

Computing current outcomes and setting goals for each site and for the agency as a whole allows the agency to identify sites that are struggling and those that are doing well. This facilitates information exchanges within the agency to identify why experiences differ across sites.

Tenure of current workers (stayers)

Tenure is the length of time an employee has worked for a site or agency. The average tenure of stayers is a convenient measure to use when comparing retention success for sites within an agency or to compare an agencies retention success to that of similar agencies. To compute the average tenure of workers at a particular site, list each worker and the number of months the worker has been at the site (or in the agency). Add the number of months for each worker at the site (or in the agency) and divide by the total number of workers. The result will be the average number of months workers have been at the site. This average can be compared across sites within the agency. Be sure to consider the number of months the site has been open when evaluating the results. Separate computations for direct support workers and supervisors can be helpful.

> **AVERAGE TENURE =**
> Sum of number of months tenure of current staff at the site
> _____
> **Number of staff at the site**

Average tenure of leavers

To compute the average tenure of people who have left a site or an agency (leavers), identify all leavers in the past 12 months. For each leaver, note the total number of months worked before quitting. Add the number of months for each leaver and divide the total by the number of leavers. The result is the average number of months a worker stayed before leaving. Computing separate numbers for workers who were fired versus those who quit voluntarily may be helpful. Be sure to include all workers who were paid for one or more hours of work. It is very common for some workers to quit after training or in their first few days. Including those workers in the calculations is important. In the Minnesota staff study, the average leaver had seven months tenure (Larson, 1997).

> **AVERAGE TENURE OF LEAVERS =**
> Sum of number of months in site for all leavers
> _____
> **Number of leavers**

Tenure Category (for stayers or leavers)

Examining tenure in more detail can assist agencies in targeting interventions to workers at a particular point in their career. One strategy is to divide stayers or leavers into groups according to the number of months they have worked. For example, to compute the proportion of leavers who stayed less than six months, count the number of workers who left in the last 12 months. The count the number of workers in that group who stayed less than six months before leaving. Divide this number by the total number of workers who left and multiply

the result by 100. This same formula can be used to compute the proportion of leavers who stayed six to twelve months, and the proportion who stayed more than twelve months. In the Minnesota staff study, 45% of all new hires left before completing six months and 23% left between six and twelve months after hire (Larson, 1997). When many leavers have six or fewer months tenure, intervention strategies that address the needs of recruits and new hires are likely to be helpful (e.g., using inside sources, providing realistic job previews, providing mentors for new hires, conducting socialization interventions).

PERCENT OF LEAVERS W/LT SIX MONTHS TENURE =

$$\frac{\text{Num leavers w/lt six months tenure X 100}}{\text{Total number of leavers}}$$

Turnover (Crude Separation Rate)

The crude separation rate compares the number of people who quit to the number of positions in a site or agency. Like tenure, turnover is a convenient measure to used to compare retention problems across sites within an agency or to compare an agency to similar agencies. To compute the turnover rate in a particular site, count the number of workers in a particular category (e.g., direct support workers) who left the site within the last twelve months (leavers). Include all workers who left, even if they quit one day after hire or were hired but never showed up for work. Divide this number by the average number workers at the site during the last twelve months. Multiply the result by 100. The resulting percentage (which may be higher than 100%) reflects the annual crude separation rate. Turnover rates can be compared across sites and can be computed for the agency as a whole. Over the last 25 years, crude separation rates have consistently averaged between 50% and 70% for residential direct support workers.

CRUDE SEPARATION RATE =

$$\frac{\text{Number of leavers in 12 months X 100}}{\text{Number of positions at site}}$$

Vacancy rates

A different indicator of how much trouble and agency or a site is having with recruitment the vacancy rate. The vacancy rate can be computed by counting the number of positions at the site (or agency) that are currently funded but have no specific person assigned (overtime or substitutes may be being used to cover these open positions). Divide that number by the total number of positions at the site (or agency) and multiply the result by 100.

VACANCY RATE =

$$\frac{\text{Number of funded positions currently vacant X 100}}{\text{Total number of funded positions}}$$

Example

On the following page we have provided an example of how these retention measures were calculated for one particular site. We have listed all of the current workers at the site (stayers), positions that have been funded but are currently not filled (vacancies), the workers from this site who have left the site (leavers), and the reasons each person left. Every person who worked at this site in theprevious 12 months was listed.

We computed the months tenure in the home for stayers, rounded to the nearest month, using each persons start date and the date the analysis was conducted as the reference point. We computed the months tenure for leavers, rounded to the nearest month, using the person's start date at the home and the last date worked at the home as the reference points.

Results

In doing the computations we learned that current workers in Group Home A have been with the home for an average of 22.6 months. Among the stayers, 33% had been in the home for less than 6 months when the analysis was completed, 11% had been in the home 7 to 12 months, and 55% had been in the home for more than one year.

Workers who left Group Home A during the last twelve months had worked in the home an average of 11 months before quitting. For this home, the turnover rate was 50% for the last 12 months. Among the people who left group home A, 40% left in the first 6 months after hire, 20% left 7 to 12 months after hire, and 40% had been with the home for more than a year before they left. Four of five of the leavers left voluntarily (they quit). The fifth was fired (20% of all leavers were fired). The vacancy rate in this home was 10%.

This home has two distinct groups of workers, a long term staff, and new hires. Interventions are clearly needed to reduce the number of workers who leave early in their employment at the site. Among the issues that should be explored further are: how well are newcomers accepted by the existing staff, why are so many people leaving in the first six months. However, workforce interventions for this home also need to remember the long term employees. They may need enhanced training or career development opportunities or other supports that can be identified only by asking them about their needs and issues. They may also have valuable insight about workforce issues and strategies to address them.

Example: Direct Care Staff Members in Group Home A *(11/1/98 to 10/31/99)*

Staff Member (ID or Initials)	Status	Hire Date	Compute Date	Months in home	Tenure Group
1	Stayer	11/6/94	10/31/99	60	13+
2	Stayer	8/12/95	11/31/99	45	13+
3	Stayer	11/30/96	10/31/99	35	13+
4	Stayer	10/3/97	10/31/99	25	13+
5	Stayer	7/5/98	10/31/99	20	13+
6	Stayer	1/3/99	10/31/99	10	7-12
7	Stayer	6/14/99	10/31/99	5	0-6
8	Stayer	9/5/99	10/31/99	2	0-6
9	Stayer	10/1/99	10/31/99	1	0-6
10	Vacancy				
Stayer Total	**10**		**Quit Date**	**203**	
11	Quit	2/5/97	3/5/99	25	13+
12	Quit	10/2/97	1/2/99	15	13+
13	Fired	11/1/98	6/10/99	8	7-12
14	Quit	4/30/99	9/25/99	5	0-6
15	Quit	6/25/99	9/1/99	2	0-6
Leaver Total	**5**			**55**	

Average tenure of stayers =	$\dfrac{203 \text{ months}}{9 \text{ stayers}}$	= 22.6 months per stayer

Tenure category for stayers

0-6 months	$\dfrac{3 \text{ stayers have 0-6 months tenure}}{9 \text{ total stayers}}$	X 100	= 33% have 0-6 months tenure
7-12 months	$\dfrac{1 \text{ stayer has 7-12 months tenure}}{9 \text{ total stayers}}$	X 100	= 11% have 7-12 months tenure
13+ months	$\dfrac{5 \text{ stayers have 13+ months tenure}}{9 \text{ total stayers}}$	X 100	= 55% have 13+ months tenure

Average tenure of leavers =	$\dfrac{55 \text{ months}}{5 \text{ leavers}}$	= 11 months per leaver

Tenure category for leavers

0-6 months	$\dfrac{2 \text{ left with 0 to 6 months tenure}}{5 \text{ left during the last 12 months}}$	X 100	= 40% left in first 6 months
7-12 months	$\dfrac{1 \text{ left with 7 to 12 months tenure}}{5 \text{ left during the last 12 months}}$	X 100	= 20% left after 7-12 months
13+ months	$\dfrac{2 \text{ left with after more than 12 months}}{5 \text{ left during the last 12 months}}$	X 100	= 40% left after 12 months

Crude separation rate =	$\dfrac{5 \text{ leavers in the last 12 months}}{10 \text{ funded positions}}$	X 100	= 50% turnover rate
Vacancy rate =	$\dfrac{1 \text{ funded position is vacant}}{10 \text{ positions are funded}}$	X 100	= 10% vacancy rate

Workforce Status and Outcomes Worksheet

Agency Name: [_____] **Calendar Year:** [_____]

Please fill in the blanks for your agency focusing on direct support and frontline supervisor positions.
These formulas assume you are making computations based on the calendar year.

1. Crude separation rate (Turnover) for Direct Support Staff

Turnover =

$$\frac{\text{Total number of DSS who left in the calendar year}}{\text{Total number of DSS positions as of Dec. 31}} \times 100$$

$$\frac{5 \text{ (Total N of leavers)}}{50 \text{ (Current Staff)} + 12 \text{ (Vacant positions)}} \times 100 = 8.00\%$$

2. Crude separation rate (Turnover) for Frontline Supervisors

Turnover =

$$\frac{\text{Total number of FLS who left in the calendar year}}{\text{Total number of FLS positions as of Dec. 31}} \times 100$$

$$\frac{\text{[ ] (Total N of leavers)}}{\text{[ ] (Current Staff)} + \text{[ ] (Vacant positions)}} \times 100 = 0.00\%$$

3. Percent of Direct Support Staff leavers with less than 6 months tenure

% of leavers w/lt 6 mons. tenure =

$$\frac{\text{Total number of DSS who left in the calendar year and left before working 6 months}}{\text{Total number of DSS who worked in the calendar and resigned by Dec 31}} \times 100$$

$$\frac{\text{[ ] (Total N of DSS left before 6 months)}}{\text{[ ] (Total N of DSS leavers)}} \times 100 = 0.00\%$$

4. Vacancy Rate for Direct Support Staff

Vacancy Rate =

$$\frac{\text{Total number of vacant DSS positions as of Dec 31}}{\text{Total number of DSS positions as of Dec. 31}} \times 100$$

$$\frac{\text{[ ] (Total N of leavers)}}{\text{[ ] (Current Staff)} + \text{[ ] (Vacant positions)}} \times 100 = 0.00\%$$

5. Vacancy Rate for Frontline Supervisors

Vacancy Rate =

$$\frac{\text{Total number of vacant FLS positions as of Dec 31}}{\text{Total number of FLS positions as of Dec. 31}} \times 100$$

$$\frac{\text{[ ] (Total N of leavers)}}{\text{[ ] (Current Staff)} + \text{[ ] (Vacant positions)}} \times 100 = 0.00\%$$

Definitions:

Direct Support Staff (DSS) - *people whose primary job responsibility is to provide support, training, supervision, and personal assistance to people supported by this home. At least 50% of a DSS's hours are spent in direct support tasks. DSS's may do some supervisory tasks, but their primary job responsibility and more than 50% of their hours are spent doing direct support work. Do not include staff whose position is only "on-call."*

Front Line Supervisors (FLS) - *people whose primary responsibility is the supervision of direct support staff. While these individuals may perform direct support tasks, they spend less than 50% of their hours in direct support roles.*

6. Wages for Direct Support Staff
a) Average starting wage per hour [ ]
b) Average wage per hour [ ]
c) Highest current wage per hour [ ]

7. Annual Salary for full-time Front line supervisors
a) Average starting salary per year [ ]
b) Average salary per year [ ]
c) Highest current salary per year [ ]

8. Advertising expenses in last 30 days: [ ]

9. Hours of overtime paid in last 30 days: [ ]

10. What percentage of your budget for the last 30 days was spent on overtime pay? 0.00%

11. As a result of workforce shortages, has your agency been forced to curtail services to prospective consumers? ○ Yes ○ No

12. Total number of people with disabilities served as of Dec 31 [ ]

13. In how many different sites do you provide services? [ ]
a) Agency sites *(e.g., group homes; DTH locations)* [ ]
b) Parental or consumer homes [ ]
c) Job sites *(e.g., community jobs or enclaves)* [ ]

14. How many people do you employ in each of the following positions:
a) Direct support worker [ ]   b) Frontline supervisor [ ]
c) Administrator/Manager [ ]   d) Others [ ]

15. Describe any changes at this agency over the last 12 months that may have influenced recruitment, retention or training outcomes:

[   ]