Ensuring the Fidelity of Offender Risk Assessment in Large-Scale Correctional Settings: The Quality Assurance-Treatment Intervention Programs and Supervision Initiative (QA-TIPS)

December 10, 2014

Karen Maline: My name is Karen Maline. I'm the Director of Membership and Communications at the Justice Research and Statistics Association. It's my pleasure today to welcome you to this webinar on Ensuring the Fidelity Offender Risk Assessment in large-scale correctional settings, the Quality Assurance Treatment Intervention Programs and Supervision initiative, QA-TIPS; it is part of a series of webinars, hosted by JRSA, to promote the sharing of information by and among the state Statistical Analysis Centers, and other justice-related agencies.

Karen Maline: Before we go any further, I want to thank our partners at the Bureau of Justice Statistics for making this webinar possible.

Karen Maline: I also need to cover a few logistical items. We will be recording today's session for future playback. The link to the recording will be posted on the JRSA website under the Resources tab.

Karen Maline: Today's webinar is being audiocast via the speakers on your computer. If you do not have speakers, or would prefer to use your phone, please use the number included in your registration email or on the Event tab located on the left-hand side of the screen.

Karen Maline: There are many people joining us today, so we have automatically muted the phone lines of participants to reduce background noise. If you are not a presenter, please keep your phone muted. If you typed in star-6 to unmute your phone, please re-type it in to re-mute your phone.

Karen Maline: If you have questions for the presenters, we encourage you to submit them using the chat feature on the right side of your screen; if it's not showing up, and you can see the chat bubble at the top of your screen, click on that and the chat feature will appear.

Karen Maline: Please select Host and Presenter from the drop-down menu next to the text box.

Karen Maline: If you would like to communicate with JRSA staff during the webinar, please submit your comment using the chat feature to Jason Trask or Karen Maline.

Karen Maline: This session is scheduled for one 1 hour and 30 minutes, and will end promptly at 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

Karen Maline: If you have technical difficulties or get disconnected during the session, you can reconnect to the session using the same link that you used to join the session initially. You can also call Webex's technical support at 1-866-569-3239.

Karen Maline: In the last five minutes of today's webinar, and this is very important, we will ask you to complete a short survey. The information you provide will help us to plan and improve future webinars, and meet our reporting requirements.
Karen Maline: Now, I would like to introduce you to today’s speaker. Full bios for all the speakers are on the Webex information page for this webinar.

Karen Maline: Stephen M. Haas is the Director of the West Virginia Office of Research and Strategic Planning, and Deputy Director of the Division of Justice and Community Services. The ORSP houses the Statistical Analysis Center and Justice Center for Evidence-Based Practices in West Virginia. He has a BA in Psychology and Political Science from the Ohio State University; and MS and Ph.D. degrees in Criminal Justice from the University of Cincinnati. He served as a Principal Investigator and Project Director on several state and federally funded research projects and evaluations, and has published numerous research reports in academic papers on various topics in the field of criminology, education, and health and human services.

Karen Maline: His most recent work has centered on various issues related to the implementation of evidence-based practices, including the proper administration and use of Offender Risk and Needs Assessment; as well as the use of core correctional practices, and motivational interviewing strategies by correctional personnel. His office is charged with the task of overseeing the statewide implementation of the Level of Service Case Management Inventories, the LS/CMI, and developing a system of quality assurance across all justice agencies in the state.

Karen Maline: Leighann Davidson holds a BS in Criminal Justice, and an MS in Law Enforcement and Administration from West Virginia State University. She’s a research analyst for the West Virginia Office of Research and Strategic Planning, Justice Center for Evidence-Based Practice. Ms. Davidson is the Coordinator for the Quality Assurance Treatment Intervention Programs and Supervision initiative, and monitors its implementation in the field. Leighann is a certified LS/CMI and YLS/CMI trainer, and conducts training for multiple justice agencies as part of West Virginia’s statewide implementation of the LS/CMI. She is Co-Investigator for LS/CMI [norming 00:04:42] study on various correctional populations for the State of West Virginia. Leighann is an Adjunct Professor in the Criminal Justice Department at West Virginia State University.

Karen Maline: I’d like to ask Stephen Haas to start the presentation today.

Karen Maline: Stephen, go ahead.

J. Stephen Wormith: Thank you. Steve Wormith is here.

Karen Maline: Oh, Steve, you’re there. Okay.

Karen Maline: Then, I would like to introduce Steve Wormith. He’s the Co-Developer of the Level of Service Case Management Inventory, and he’ll serve as our moderator in discussion for today’s webinar. Dr. Wormith received his Ph.D. from the
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University of Ottawa. Previously, he was Psychologist and Chief with the formerly named Ministry of Correctional Services of Ontario. He is currently the Director of the Center for Forensic Behavioral Science and Justice Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, where he is also a professor.

Karen Maline: Dr. Wormith, thank you so much for being here today. Take it away.

J. Stephen Wormith: It’s great to be here. You know, there’s just too many Steves on this panel this afternoon.

J. Stephen Wormith: I’m really delighted to have been asked to moderate the webinar this afternoon on the Fidelity of the Risk Assessment in large correctional organizations. Now, there’s no doubt in my mind that quality assurance is essential, and to maintaining the predictive validity of any risk assessment instrument, and the various versions of the LSI are certainly no exception.

J. Stephen Wormith: For years in training, I’d like to use the Ferrari metaphor to illustrate this point. Bear with me for a moment. You know, you can have the fastest high-performance vehicle in the world: but if the driver’s not properly trained, or the machine is not properly tuned and maintained mechanically, you’re just doomed to end up in the ditch probably pretty quickly, and so it is with a offender risk assessment instruments.

J. Stephen Wormith: About 20 years ago, Jim Bonta began talking about generations of risk assessment, with the original LSI being a risk/need tool, being in that third-generation category. Then Jim, along with Don Andrews and I, began referring to fourth-generation risk assessments, which differed from the previous versions. They were defined, in part, by a set of procedures whereby the assessment was inextricably wrapped together with the offender case plan, or an intervention strategy, or a case management scheme; this component has equally important implications for fidelity and assurance.

J. Stephen Wormith: Simply, and to carry the metaphor: if the assessment is not accurate, or the assessment is not applied correctly ... for example, in adherence to the RNR principles ... the offender’s rehabilitation plan will, I suppose like the Ferrari, end up in the ditch. In the last decade we have, and I think perhaps too slowly, become aware of the potential for such an outcome, but the evidence is mounting. A couple of early empirical examples of this kind of shortcoming come to my mind: one is, in fact, Jim Bonta’s own review of the link between LSI assessment and probationers in Manitoba, and their case management planning; in his study, 39% of the identified criminogenic needs were not even addressed in the case plan, let alone in any kind of intervention.

J. Stephen Wormith: Closer to your own home, a second case is some wonderful research by Patricia Harris in Texas with the Wisconsin instrument, or the Case Management Classification System. Again, she found no, or only minimal, compliance to a
protocol in most cases was quite common. Even more importantly, in cases where compliance was lacking, recidivism was actually higher, as measured by various mechanisms.

J. Stephen Wormith: Clearly, our first efforts: the old Nike solution, "Just do it!" doesn't really work in corrections, and there are simply not enough Michael Jordan's to go around, so we need other approaches: conscientious, detailed procedures as those being introduced by Stephen Haas and Leighann Davidson in West Virginia.

J. Stephen Wormith: So, over to you, Stephen.

Stephen Haas: Thank you very much, Steve, and welcome. I want to say welcome to everyone. I'm glad to have the opportunity to share what we've done in West Virginia in terms of trying to assess quality on a large scale.

Stephen Haas: You know, there's a lot of challenges that come about when you try to think about how you're going to do this in a way that will limit some resistance, and at the same time get us measures that can be utilized to improve performance of staff in the field in terms of assessing, and helping agencies also identify training needs. Our office also does training as well, and we use the data to identify areas where there might be additional training, if necessary.

Stephen Haas: I want to thank all of your for participating; but I want to emphasize, I guess, in this presentation, that our approach here is one of many approaches that could be utilized. As we go through this webinar, you'll see we're describing essentially a peer-to-peer process with supervisory oversight, and this decision was made for specific reasons to go with this type of quality assurance mechanisms, and I think it achieves a lot of the goals that we had in mind. So, if I go through here, I think you'll get the details on exactly why we chose this, and how it's worked thus far.

Stephen Haas: What I'd like to do is just start with the overview here. We're gonna go ahead and talk about what West Virginia Statewide Implementation involved. We're a little bit unique in the sense that we are an agency, and my office is within an agency that is the state planning agency in justice, it's within the executive branch; and we have been charged, through our Justice Center for Evidence-Based Practice, to make sure that the statewide implementation went through properly, that we had good performance measures, good quality measures, and those sorts of things. We're a little bit unique because we're an outside agency and we're setting policy and procedures for a whole host of agencies, including Juvenile Services, Division of Corrections, Parole, and our State Day Report Centers; we're gonna talk about that.

Stephen Haas: We're gonna talk about the accuracy, and the importance of accuracy, in offender assessments; I think it goes without saying that we want to mention why it's so important. We're gonna talk about the challenges of implementing
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on a large scale, and we're gonna describe the peer-to-peer approach in West Virginia's basic approach for assessing quality; and we do this through a peer-to-peer type of quality assurance procedures that are also electronically submitted on a statewide scale, and then we take the data and we report that data back to agencies and key personnel, so that they can then plan using that data. So, we'll be talking about those things.

Stephen Haas: Just as a brief introduction, this is who we are. I just wanted to mention that I'm the Director of the Office of Research and Strategic Planning. Leighann Davidson works closely with me as a research analyst within the office. We're comprised of two units, which you might find interesting out there. Most of you are probably familiar with Criminal Justice and Statistical Analysis Centers; these were formed many years ago through the Bureau of Justice and Statistics and were established around the country in each of the states; but what we've added is what's called the Justice Center for Evidence-Based Practice. This is a state initiative; it was funded by the legislature in 2009 for the purposes of doing some of this work that we're talking about today, which is ensuring that evidence-based practices are in fact implemented in the field.

Stephen Haas: So, if you look at the range of services that we provide, you can see that generally we're focusing on evidence-based practices in multiple areas; but we also have services related specifically to the LS/CMI, as well as other types of trainings, but the LS/CMI. So, our goals have always been to make sure that it gets implemented properly, that there's minimum standards for training and certification in place; that there's quality assurance procedures in place so that we can do ongoing monitoring and correct wherever we see problems.

Stephen Haas: Also, we manage the LS/CMI online system. This is another area where we're probably unique in the sense that all agencies in the state, executive agencies currently in the state, all enter into this online system; and this online system can be accessed by all those different agencies and staff, so that they can review and see LS/CMI assessments on anybody that they're getting ready to serve, and really get a historical record on what the assessments have said in the past, as well as what services they've received.

Stephen Haas: You can see the types of things that we do: it's conducting training, setting policy, managing the online system; and we also conduct motivational interview, interviewing user and trainer workshops, because it's obviously a very important approach to interviewing in order to get valid assessments with the LS/CMI.

Stephen Haas: Over the years, we've been using the LS/CMI in the state. We first implemented the LS/CMI in 2006 in our Day Report Centers across the state; the Division of Juvenile Services quickly followed in 2008. In 2010, DOC adopted the tool really on the heels of an early legislative initiative calling for a new program called Accelerated Parole in our state. So, DOC began using the tool to assess people
who would be eligible for accelerated parole. Parole followed the institutions in terms of getting trained, and probation and drug courts are also utilizing the tool.

Stephen Haas: So, this is very good in the sense that we have really all sectors of the justice system using the LS/CMI to inform their decisions, from the beginning to the end of the system, and a key part of it has been, and one of the reasons why we feel like the LS/CMI is so important, is we feel it helps us to solve this notion of the sorting issue. We currently have the Justice Reinvestment Initiative undergoing in our state, through the Council of State Governments, and collaboration with others; and one of the things that they had pointed out, which was something that we'd noticed over the years with some of our population forecasting and other things that we do, is that oftentimes we were not getting the right people in the right levels of supervision, and not getting them the right services, and we've had a few studies that have shown that in the state, and then the Justice Reinvestment Initiative reiterated the importance of that. So, we think that the LS/CMI helps us in that regard, with getting the people in the right services and in the right level of supervision.

Stephen Haas: All of you on this phone: I'm gonna assume that most people on this phone call obviously know what the purpose of risk and needs assessments are, and why they're so important. So, I'm just gonna say this: one thing that we have to recognize is that assessment, and offender risk assessments in particular, are a very important first step towards achieving evidence-based practices and effective intervention. If we're not assessing properly, then we're not likely making subsequent decisions that are in tune with what the offender actually needs in terms of supervision and treatment, and many people view this as being the first step; you've got to get an ample and proper assessment done on people coming in the system, and leading out into re-entry and parole, and so forth.

Stephen Haas: Obviously, accuracy is critical. It does us no good to assess offenders and have error associated with those assessments. If we falsely score people too high, there's consequences to that; if we falsely score people too low, there's additional consequences on the other side to that, and you see some of those listed there. But, generally speaking, scoring too high or scoring too low violates the risk principle, which we know is very important for achieving effective correctional intervention, and not scoring it correctly is gonna impact our ability to really approach recidivism, could jeopardize public safety, could waste resources, so it's very important and we knew that from the get-go, extremely important that we needed to make sure that the assessments were being done as good as they could be done in the natural environment.

Stephen Haas: We know, and James Bonta has articulated this quite well: we know that the research tells us that small-scale demonstration projects that are related to the RNR principles, tend to show greater effect sizes, in terms of reductions and
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Stephen Haas: In 2013, Jim Bonta and his colleagues wrote an article for the JRSA's journal, Justice Research and Policy, that spoke very clearly to this notion that because we're seeing this reduction in effect sizes as we move from these demonstration projects that are small scale to these larger contexts in that natural correctional setting, we see that reduction in effect size that it probably has something to do with the implementation itself; not necessarily the principles or the treatment or the theory behind it; but, in fact, it's probably linked to quality of implementation. So, when we see the reductions in effect sizes, there's enough evidence to suggest that implementation is playing a role in that.

Stephen Haas: What are some of the challenges that we faced in thinking about the statewide implementation? First off, there's multiple agencies and hundreds of users, so I had to take into consideration that this is something that's beyond direct observation, and we weren't gonna be given resources of a number of quality assurance monitors throughout the state. So, we had to use some existing staff in order to make this happen. We've developed a very strong and cohesive network of trainers. Our office here trains trainers, and then the trainers go out and train users, sort of a standard type of approach, and we utilize those trainers essentially in a similar as what we've heard in the literature as "communities of practice," this notion that we have groups of people who serve as the champions, and the people articulating the vision and the goal. So, we use our trainers for those; and in some cases, in most cases, key mid-level managers as well, in the different organizations, to do that.

Stephen Haas: We also do direct observation when possible. A lot of the direct observation is done ... and you'll hear an example from Leighann Davidson a little bit later in this presentation where she's going to talk about a success story where the Division of Corrections, for instance, was able to use some of the data that was being provided to them to identify potential problem areas; and then they went out and did some direct observations, did some case file reviews, and were able to solve that problem. So, we'll talk a little bit about that.

Stephen Haas: We're an external agency; I already mentioned that. We're an external agency, we're working across multiple agencies, so it's important to develop a method that does not over-reach in terms of our day-to-day involvement and operations of these facilities, and these sorts of things. We wanted to do something that could be managed in-house. You know, we set the framework, set the standards, help monitor and get it going, and monitor over time, but we wanted to recognize that the agencies themselves had to have a vital role in this.

Stephen Haas: Lastly, I would assume most of you, if you've worked in this area for long, have probably heard the phrase "roll with resistance" from time to time. You've got to recognize that any time you're implementing something new, you're going to
have some resistance among staff, maybe sometimes administrators and others. It's important, then, to recognize that resistance could exist, so we also tried to develop a strategy that we thought would create buy-in from some of the lowest levels, all the way up to administration. So, that was some of our thoughts in developing our strategy.

Stephen Haas: As I said right at the beginning, I want to recognize that there are multiple valid methods for monitoring assessment quality out there. There's a give-and-take with whatever you choose in terms how you're gonna monitor. Some of you are probably familiar with the assessment checklist or matrices that can be applied, and you can take some random case file reviews. You can also get taped interviews and videos to do critiques. There's all sorts of approaches out there for assessing quality in this area, but there's gives and takes to whatever you choose: some are more resource intensive; some require more time; others diffuse responsibilities a little bit and lessen the amount of work on small numbers of individuals, and so forth. So, you've got to take that into consideration.

Stephen Haas: What we did is we developed a peer-to-peer approach with supervisory oversight, as you see on the slide; it was intended to be bottom-up rather than top-down. While we have administrative support, and while obviously my office, and others who may be are in administrative capacities, have a heavy hand in this, we wanted an approach, though, that really created what we call a culture of quality or learning. We wanted the people who are doing the assessments to understand and feel some responsibility for the quality of these assessments; this concern was, quite frankly, very magnified when we went with the LS/CMI online system.

Stephen Haas: Again, these are assessments coming in from multiple agencies throughout the state. So, if we have people who were insufficiently trained in one agency, and they were submitting those assessments to the same system, we could have bad data, and people could be making decisions based off those prior assessments for informing their decisions working with the offender presently, and those sorts of things. So, what we wanted to do was create standardized processes where all agencies were going through the same processes, had the same requirements for training and other things, so that we could create that level of standardization, but also create a culture of quality and learning so the people felt invested in the process.

Stephen Haas: Our approach also obviously was designed to minimize resistance to try to create that ownership in the importance of these assessments.

Stephen Haas: So, I'm gonna give you an overview here of the infrastructure of how we set this up. Then, Leighann Davidson's gonna go through some of the basics regarding collecting and reporting, and then we'll go from there.
Stephen Haas: From a bird’s eye view, our infrastructure is based on the development of statewide policies and procedures and data collection. So, we thought, "How are we gonna do this on a statewide level? We need to create a successful infrastructure." If you've done these kinds of things before, you know that it has to start with some level of policy to say, "These are the things we think need to be in place," so the people have clear guidance on what's expected of them, so we did that. Our goal in this was to basically create a level of competence among all the decision-makers that the results are accurate, assessors are qualified, and ample oversight is in play.

Stephen Haas: With any kind of initiative, for instance the Justice Reinvestment Initiative which we are currently working through now: it takes judges, for instance, to feel comfortable being able to make some decisions based off of these assessments, and know that these assessments are valuable and accurate, and they’ve been done properly; same thing on the back end. The Division of Corrections uses the LS/CMI to inform the parole decision-making process. Very important that people who are sitting on that Parole Board feel very confident that the LS/CMI was done properly, and proper collateral information was used, and all of these sorts of things; if you don't get that, then you get people being very conservative in their decision-making, and maybe also placing people in areas of maybe traditional punishments which they may or may not need, or too intensive levels of supervision which they may or may not need, and you begin to violate the RNR principles which we’re all trying to adhere to.

Stephen Haas: So, we developed a series of quality checks we’re gonna be talking about today. We also developed certification and re-certification standards. We developed an electronic system for monitoring the reporting, and we also developed some methods for sharing the LS/CMI information, primarily, and really I guess I should say the LS/CMI online system serves this function for us.

Stephen Haas: First things first, we developed some minimum standards. Now, they're minimum standards in the sense that we’re saying, "This is what we want to have done as a minimum." You can do more. You could take the information and we report back to you, identify areas of need, and do more training, do more oversight, do some of your own quality checks, do a pull in case files, or however you want to do that; but we set just simple minimum standards, and these standards do not apply to just one agency; they apply to all of the agencies under the executive branch, and you can see those policies there.

Stephen Haas: The first thing I want to say is that it all starts with policy. So, in order for that to be successful, you have to develop some user-trainer certification policies, right? What I’m presenting to you now, and I hope all of you can see that well, but what I'm presenting to you now is just a summary table of our requirements for minimum certification on the LS/CMI; these are for user minimum requirements and user trainer minimum requirements. So, if you look at the first column, you see the different areas that we're requiring in terms of
prerequisites and certification, the second column is the user minimum requirements, and then the third column is the user-trainer minimum requirements. Now, these requirements go beyond the minimum requirements set by Multi-Health Systems in terms of the distribution of this tool, and there's a reason for that.

Stephen Haas: Multi-Health Systems has encouraged states to develop what it needed in order to maintain quality on their own; and Multi-Health Systems is not in the business of setting state policy, so what they do is just simply set minimum requirements in relation to tool; and we set minimum quality requirements in relation to the agencies that we're responsible for administering, and making sure that the tool is used properly.

Stephen Haas: So, just a few highlights here because it is detailed. Again, these things will be posted, as well, on the JRSA site, since you'll be able to look at these kinds of things. But, to give you a good example: we have prerequisites, we have those required and preferred for the trainers, because we're trying to provide guidance for what we'd like to see; but at the same time, we have our requirements at a certain standard. Our requirements exceed Multi-Health Systems; none of them go below Multi-Health Systems.

Stephen Haas: A few things that I think are worth highlighting here, and maybe I'll just use the user-trainer column at this point because it's the most intensive, but we have people go through the training that's required by Multi-Health Systems. Trainers have to be certified by a master trainer, either master trainer on the LS/CMI; and in this office, I basically work with the trainers to make sure that the trainers are prepared to go out and train others.

Stephen Haas: As you know, if you're familiar with multi health systems requirements, there is a test at the end in terms of the content test, and you have to score an 85% or greater. As part of the user requirements, you have to do a rating test; that's already been completed by the time you're being selected as a trainer, so we accept that as a score.

Stephen Haas: From the standpoint of motivational interviewing: we ask users to submit one motivational interview, to be scored, to their user trainers, and the purpose of this is to see if people are actually conducting interviews proficiently. Then also for trainers, we ask them to submit two: one for the user, and then one for the trainer, and they get feedback. So, if you're a trainer you'd get feedback from our office here, and we would provide feedback, and we use the Mighty 00:34:36] for scoring. We score those interviews out, give feedback. The purpose is really just to give feedback on what they can improve, and see if they're reasonably proficient.

Stephen Haas: Lastly, we ask them to demonstrate their ability to use the online system, because we use the LS/CMI online system by Multi-Health Systems, and they
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typically can demonstrate this through the training itself because we ask them to submit an assessment online during the training.

Stephen Haas: Then, lastly, we also ask for our trainers, when they are originally certified as trainers, to submit two modules of them teaching, and/or have direct observation, and our office does it in a couple ways: one is we have had people just submit videotapes of them doing a training, and two modules from that training, and we've scored it and provided feedback; but oftentimes, the ORSP staff, and specifically the JCVP staff, go out and they do direct observation of the trainings where they're offered by the trainers.

Stephen Haas: So, that is the nuts and bolts of the certification, but we also have what's called a re-certification process; just quickly I want to show this. For this one here, the table looks very similar, as you can see, and I can maybe expand that out a little bit. I think maybe it will expand on your end, too, so you can see it a little bit better. How about that?

Stephen Haas: Here, you see a re-certification table; and it looks very similar, but you can see up here where it says "re-certification." Basically, we're asking people who are trainers to come back once a year. We like to see our trainings at least once a year. We have basically a re-certification training agenda; it involves further practice; it involves practicing the quality assurance procedures; it also involves reading new research articles or materials that would help them in their lectures and in their trainings themselves. We also use that time to discuss any issues that came up over the course of the year, and the results of the quality assurance monitoring. What were we seeing? What seems to be common themes in terms of issues and problems, and so forth.

Stephen Haas: If you look at this table, you've got a number of things that we ask. We do ask that they submit a videotape, as well, for the re-certification workshop because we wanna, again, assess motivational interviewing during this phase. That's an overview, and this is the overview table of that, that you can see that.

Stephen Haas: In a nutshell then, quality assurance begins with having the proper policies in place regarding training. It's difficult to get good assessments if they haven't been trained properly; and as we know, training is not a one-shot deal. Multiple trainings are often needed, and that's why we have re-certification trainings in place.

Stephen Haas: With that said, QA-TIPS: this is where Leighann is gonna begin talking here in the next couple slides, but here's the overview for the rest of the seminar. Under QA-TIPS, we measure four central themes, and here is what they are: we measure the quality of the instrument completion, and essentially this relates to things like inter-rater reliability; we want to know where are the discrepancies between reviewers, so that they can inform future training; it can also give us some sense of how well and how consistent these tools, or the LS/CMI is being
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applied. Back end, we look at the quality of the case management plan; this is focusing mainly on the congruence between the assessment, and what the assessment results say, and the case plans being developed. Then, the third area is obviously the proficiency in the use of motivational interviewing is assessed, and then the fourth is relationship skills. Leighann will explain this, but once a year we do ask that supervisors review their subordinates with their annual employee appraisals on relationship skills, which is deeply rooted in the core correctional practice literature and measures. Okay?

Stephen Haas: One of the things that we try to do in these four areas is we try to measure quality, not just quantity. I'm sure many of you have spent time thinking about performance measurement and how best to do that, have heard this discussion about, "Are we counting beans or are we counting relevant practices?" Well, most of you know that an evidence-based practice in our field is to measure things that are relevant, and then provide people with feedback on those things, and that's what we try to do here. Relevant for us is not always how many assessments are completed, but how well those assessments are completed; that's the quality issue. So, if you look here, I've got an example, just to give a couple examples, but I'll give you one here you can see on the slide.

Stephen Haas: Quantity would be the percentage of clients that received an LS/CMI assessment; that is an okay performance measure to say, "Are people doing them?" but it doesn't rise to the level to say it's really getting us down to the quality level and saying those assessments have quality. So, what we have done with our QA-TIPS is go one step further and say, essentially, "Of all the LS/CMI assessments that are done, to what extent was there agreement among reviewers? To what extent is there quality there?" That gives you an example of what we tried to do here.

Stephen Haas: I'm gonna turn this over, I believe, at this point, to Leighann Davidson. She's going to take it from here to talk a little bit about the policies and procedures; and she's gonna walk you through the forms themselves that are submitted electronically, as well as how we report those results back.

Stephen Haas: So, Leighann?

Leighann J. Davidson: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm going to briefly discuss a little bit of what Dr. Haas has already talked about, the QA-TIPS and our policies and procedures, and they are really centered on a peer-to-peer approach with supervisory oversight.

Leighann J. Davidson: What we train in our training course is that the people within the facilities they get together, and they provide immediate feedback to each other, and they're trained by our office, as well as other trainers that are in our office, and we try to get the focus on, "What are we doing?" and we identify what services are needed for the offenders, as well as whether or not there's any training gaps.
Now, we do this twice a year, and each time we are doing it on June 30th, and then on December 31st, and each LS/CMI user is required to do this and then submit it to our office. They don't have to mail it in, it's just completely electronically, and provided to us, and we can pull that information.

Leighann J. Davidson: Now, the relationship skills, which are the supervisors, they complete those only once a year, and we usually have them do that in December so they can look at the whole entire year; but we wanted to do it from a peer-to-peer perspective because we didn't want all the users to feel like not only that their supervisors were watching everything; but that sometimes coming from a colleague, you can learn something that you may be doing wrong, and understanding it a little better than if it's coming from your supervisor. So, this was an approach that we decided would be the best way to go about handling this information.

Leighann J. Davidson: One of the ways that we have pulled in, and this is the way we actually train it in our training course, is that a reviewed user gathers the collateral information prior to even scheduling an interview, so they already looked at whether another LS/CMI assessment has been completed, they look at the [inaudible 00:44:19] reports, or the [triple-line 00:44:20] report, or anything that's in the file, and they gather that information. Then, they get with another reviewed user, and they can sit-in on the interview together. So, one person is conducting the interview, and the other person is actually sitting there with them; or the interview could be recorded, and the other person can listen to the recording at another time.

Leighann J. Davidson: Once the interview has already taken place, then the reviewer and the review user separately go into separate rooms and they score the assessment. Once they've completed their score, they come back together and they have a discussion to see if there's any discrepancies in the score; and if there are, where the discrepancies occurred. Now, we do get questions a lot of times [inaudible 00:45:15] office where they can't [inaudible 00:45:16] a mutual agreement on whether or not one was right or one was wrong. So, our office has that oversight. We try to help them come to a mutual agreement on whose score was the correct score; and at their office, and if we're not available, then we have a trainer available at almost every facility who they have contact information for, who they can notify to try to help them resolve whether or not a discrepancy actually did occur, and then they can come with a mutual decision on a score. Now, the mutually agreed-upon score is the one that actually gets put into our database; the other two are just used for the peer-to-peer sections that actually report into their office.

Leighann J. Davidson: So, the official assessment is the agreed-upon score; that's the one that the offender would actually utilize for programing purposes; and the other one is just used at our office so that we can do some quality assurance on maybe some better training on that area, or maybe cover that area a little more in depth when we go through the LS/CMI training.
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Leighann J. Davidson: Then, once they have the agreed-upon score, they share that information. The [inaudible 00:46:27] feedback is actually given to the offender at that time, and they create a case plan based on the agreed-upon assessment. Now, once the case plan and the assessment is actually agreed upon, then they do a case management review; and the case management review will be based upon the case plan that was created, and then they determine whether or not that was the best way to go for that offender.

Leighann J. Davidson: The other part is the motivational interview. They look at whether or not the interviewer was using the active listening skills. Were they using open-ended questions? Were they getting enough information from that interview to do an accurate assessment and to do an accurate case plan? Because motivational interviewing we do touch on when we do our LS/CMI training, and that's very important because the more open-ended questions, and affirmations, reflections that we use during an interview, the more information we can actually get from an offender; and we're building that rapport, which is very important when we're doing an LS/CMI assessment.

Leighann J. Davidson: So, after those are completed, the reviewer submits all of those forms into our office through Survey Gizmo, that's what we use right now, and I can collect that data at the end of the year. Then, I analyze the data, I create a report, and that is sent to the individual facilities. I also create a report that's based on an entire agency. So, not only do I do reports for individual facilities, but I do it based on the entire agency as well. So, when I send back the feedback, I give each facility two reports, and I also do a comparative report that they can look at to see where they stand from an agency basis.

Leighann J. Davidson: Now, getting into the actual forms that we use, one of the things that we look at is the assessment review. We look at that inter-rater reliability, and we try to determine whether or not there was a discrepancy within a score, which actually helps us build a consensus, and we can determine which area may been more training. Now, when we look at the inter-rater reliability, the reviewer is reporting on the reviewed user's score. When we report this back, we give them the exact number that the discrepancy occurred. So, not only do we look at the section, but we also look at what number the question was on the LS/CMI assessment, we give the direct score, and this information, and if there was any notes. There's a place on there where they can put notes, so all of that is included on the report that we give back to them; and this allows us to determine, when we're doing reporting for other research, whether or not we have access to all of this information. Sometimes, what we are finding is that when this person actually conducted the interview, they may not have had all of the information at that time, and then that would be one of the things that we would take into consideration for our report.
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Leighann J. Davidson: Now, what I want to do is actually I created a video, and I want to actually walk you through the video, which I thought would be the easiest way for you to get an understanding of what we ...

Stephen Haas: I’m going to maximize the screen.

Leighann J. Davidson: Now, what you can do is if you look on your screen, there’s an expanding arrow over here that will allow you to make your screen full, so that you can better see the video. The quality on this was not as good as I would have liked, but I can at least walk you through the actual information.

Leighann J. Davidson: The surveys are actually loaded onto our website; and when the users come through, they can just click on the link for the survey and it takes them directly to the survey. So, there’s no login. There’s no information that they have to give.

Leighann J. Davidson: So, on this page, they’re giving us their information: their name, their email address, which agency they’re with, and what facility they’re with, and then they click Next.

Leighann J. Davidson: On this one, we are looking at the user: what their name is, what their email address is, which facility they are with, and the facility name, because we do have users that are in different facilities that are reviewing each other.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, what we do is we’re looking at the dates: we’re looking at the date of the intake, the date of the LS/CMI, and the date that the interview has taken place, and then you click Next.

Leighann J. Davidson: Now, on this screen, this is one of the screens that’s what we’re looking at. This is what kind of interview this was. Was it an initial LS/CMI, was it a re-assessment, or was it a discharge summary? That’s important because that’s the information that we go give back to the facility so that they know which type is being assessed more on the quality. Then on this page, also we look at what was gathered, what collateral information was gathered in the beginning for them to do the peer-to-peer? Was all of the collateral that was available to them utilized? Sometimes we find that it’s not. So, that’s an important thing that we need to cover in training, is to make sure that all the collateral information that is available is looked at, and you click Next.

Leighann J. Davidson: Here is where the discrepancy occurred. Once each user and reviewed user has completed their scores, then then will put this information in here. Then, it’ll ask, "Did a discrepancy occur in the use of an override?" If so, then they would click Yes; if not, they would click No. Now, based on this, we have scores that are different here in the Companions area. So, then we click Next here, it brings up this scree here, "Were there any discrepancies?" Yes, there was; it occurred in section one. Here, we give an example to show them exactly how to fill-out the form, and another example so that they can have exactly how to complete
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Leighann J. Davidson: So, for this particular discrepancy, the reviewed user was not really certain about whether or not the companions they had were to be considered criminal friends, so that's a discrepancy. One of those things was, when we sat and talked, is that could have been resolved, and then the official thing was put in, and then that would have been the official assessment that was placed. Now, if other discrepancies would have occurred on that, they would have completed this section; but if there were no other ones, then you would just go down here and click Next at the bottom.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, on this section, we just ask that each reviewer type their name, the reviewed user's name, and the date that the feedback was given. Then, we have them check that box below that's just certifying that they completed that assessment to the best of their ability, and with all honesty.

Stephen Haas: And the supervisor.

Leighann J. Davidson: And the supervisor did sign-off on it. Because it's very important for them to be as honest as possible. Then, this screen here gives you a snapshot of the entire form before you actually submit it to our office, in case something needs to be revised, but then a lot of the agencies will ask the users to print that out so that they can put that into their employee file or their personnel file.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, at the bottom, after they look to make sure that everything is complete, then they can click Submit.

Leighann J. Davidson: That is the Assessment Review form. That, like I said, is based solely on the LS/CMI assessment itself.

Leighann J. Davidson: The next form that we actually have them do is the Case Management Review. Like I said earlier when I was talking about how they get together, this can be completed on one offender. So, they can do the interview together, the Case Management Plan will be done, and this can all be done on the same offender. So, what our Case Management Review form looks at: it assesses the quality of the case plan. What are the top criminogenic needs that were discovered on the LS/CMI assessment? Were those placed at the top for the Case Management Plan? Was the court order, anything that was in that court order, was that completed and put into the Case Management Plan? We want to make sure that the Case Management Plan is complete, and that it does actually reflect the assessment, so that we want to make sure that the RNR is actually being met, so that these offenders can get the correct programming that is needed. So, I'm gonna just walk you through that; I've got another video for that one.
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Leighann J. Davidson: Again, here's that arrow; if you just want to click onto that, that will help make it a little bit bigger.

Leighann J. Davidson: Again, that was also on our website, and you click straight into it, it takes you straight to the Case Management form. The same information is gathered at the beginning; and the reason why we gather this at the beginning is I can sort this when I do my report by facility, and that way I can make sure that I'm including all the users for that facility at the beginning. Also, this is for the reviewed user, and we also report this to the facilities because they want to make sure that all of their users are actually submitting these forms. So, when I get an email from a supervisor that asks me if this user completed their forms, I can to straight to this screen on my reporting site, and I can let the supervisor know whether or not they actually did complete their Quality Assurance.

Leighann J. Davidson: On this screen, again it looks for what type of interview was completed, and were all sections complete? Then, after that it says [inaudible 00:57:49] was, and then you go Next.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, what we look at here is: were the criminogenic needs actually utilized, and we use a [inaudible 00:58:00] down here: one being Completely Disagree, all the way to six being "Completely Agree," and what we look at is whether or not the problems were prioritized correctly. Was there a specific goal put into play? Then, after they actually score these, they can put notes here, which is a recommendation for improvement, so that the review user would know whether or not there's an area they need to improve on. Then, we actually have them calculate an average of this particular section. Then, after that is completed, you would go to Next.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, it looks at the non-criminogenic needs. Was there any non-criminogenic needs that needed to be addressed? If so, how well, and were there specific goals given for that one as well? Again, we placed a box there for Improvement, and then you go to Next.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, we look at the [facial responsivity 00:58:58]. Was there any? If so, how well was it addressed? Then, we give Improvement, and then click Next for that.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, once we get to this screen, we look at the overall case plan. How well was that case planned, and did it look at all the RNR and focus on that situation? If they did, you can even give them a good recommendation here for any improvement, but also let them know that they're doing a good job. That's why we put that information there; they can make notes on that.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, once everything is scored, you can go here and it'll add-up your average score here, and we put that there. We also give another box for feedback, just if you want to include any other information, just to give them "a good job" or anything like that. Again, we also include this so that every time they do a form,
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they can make sure that they check that, and that the supervisor has looked at everything before it's submitted, and then they click Submit. We have that happen every time, because we want them to be able to look at everything before it's submitted to our office, and also have an opportunity to print it out so that they could have it for future references.

Leighann J. Davidson: So, one of the other things that we actually look at is the Quality Assurance, and in the Quality Assurance is the motivational interviewing skills, and what we look at here is we look at the motivational interviewing spirit. Did they ask permission before giving any advice? Did they stay away from telling people what to do? We're just looking to make sure that the things that were acknowledged that were important, did they use the active listen skills? Did they engage in the change talk? Did they ask them where they see themselves in the future? These are things that are important, and also it helps build rapport with the offenders so that we can make sure that all the information that we gather is very accurate as well as honest, because one of the things that is very important is the honesty.

Leighann J. Davidson: If we don't have the honesty, then our Quality Assurance is not really going ... The only way we can go, with everybody just giving everybody six's and we have the perfect scores, the only way we can go is down, there's no room for improvement; which when somebody actually does start to be honest, it doesn't look like we're doing a very good job.

Leighann J. Davidson: Basically, what the Supervisor Annual Review Assessment is: it is a report that's completed annually that focuses on whether or not these things were conducted with honesty and integrity. Basically, our Supervisor Annual Review is rooted in the core correctional practice areas, so it looks at: What are the authorities? Was there reinforcement skills? What were the authority skills? Did they have any problem-solving? Did they have good communication with the offender? Did they have a firm, but fair, approach? Do they recognize and affirm the client's positive behavior? Sometimes, just a little "good job" or "way to go" or "that's great" goes a long way. I know with a lot of our agencies, we don't have a lot of resources to give rewards, but sometimes praise goes a long way, and sometimes we forget about that. So, we just look a those skills, and the supervisor looks at those skills for the subordinate; and then they submit that information to us as well, and that way it helps us develop whether or not these things are being utilized.

Leighann J. Davidson: Now, the supervisors don't have to necessarily be a supervisor in the facility; they just have to me an LS/CMI user who has been actually put into that role, and completes this form once a year, and sends that into our office.

Leighann J. Davidson: When we actually get all this information, so in a few weeks I'll be actually downloading all of the QA forms that are being submitted to our office right now; and once I get all that, I figured out what areas I want to focus on, and I've
created a standardized measure that allows me to look at the way that agencies have been performing over the past year ... or I can do whatever, the past six months ... and I will be able to show them basically where they are now and where they were a year ago, and we'll actually provide the statistics for each individual facility based on their entire agency, as well as just the facility itself. But I can even, if a supervisor contacts me and asks me for an individual user's performance, I can also give them that information as well, and provide them the same statistics based on a user's performance as I could the entire facility's performance. So, I do keep that information so that we can report that if they need to see that.

Leighann J. Davidson: I wanted to just briefly show you, because I know we're running short on time here, just one of the reports. This is what one of the reports looks like that I actually provide, and this is for our Department of Corrections. I show them what type of interview was used. So, for this, 60% of the Quality Assurance Review was used on re-assessment LS/CMIs instead of initials. So, I can break that down for them, and I can break it down by individual count as well as percent.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, I look at, "Did all the reviewed users examine their collateral information? Well, for instance, in this one 1.5% did not utilize all their collateral information, but 98% did.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, I break it down on each individual level, the collateral sources, and we look at what sources were being used: their criminal history, pre-sentence investigations, correctional institutional records; you can see those are some of the primary things that are utilized among the Department of Corrections.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, I start to break it down by the number of assessments that were performed that used that source, and then we base it from a percentage on the overall levels.

Leighann J. Davidson: These are other sources used, and we put in the Other feature there as well because it may not be listed. So, we want to see what one facility might have access to, that we can also reach out to other facilities to look for.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, once we get there, we look at just diagnostic sources, if there were specialized assessments conducted.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, here's one of the many things we look at: Were all the sections completed? Based on this, 100% of the DOC completed all of their sections, which is great.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, we start breaking down the discrepancies. If no, what sections weren't completed, and then we start breaking down into the individual thing. So, did a discrepancy occur in the use of an override? So, there were not that many
because we try to reduce the amount of overrides we utilize anyway. I'm glad to say that count was very low.

Leighann J. Davidson: Then, we start to get into the discrepancies on the scoring. Based on the assessments that we’re [inaudible 01:07:24] for our peer-to-peer quality assurance, there were 22% of the reviewed assessments, a discrepancy occurred. So, we have the count and the actual ones, and then we can look at which sections it actually ... Section one was the big one; that's where we get our score from. So, section one, that's our general risk and need factors, and then we break it down by each individual question here.

Leighann J. Davidson: So, for this purpose, one of the big ones was Companions; we had a big discrepancy in Companions here. One of the other one was the [inaudible 01:08:14] orientation. That can be a matter of personal opinion on those things about how an offender felt. So, that's why we did it, because we want to be able to discuss this with our colleagues because sometimes one colleague may have caught on to some body language that another colleague did not catch on to. So, that's why, when we go through these trainings, we tell them, "Before you score anything in the system: if you’re not sure about something, either call our office, or talk to one of the colleagues that's in your agency."

Leighann J. Davidson: Based on this information that we have actually provided back to them, as well as our policies that we've used: like Dr. Haas had earlier talked about, we set minimum standards, and their Department of Corrections actually went an extra mile. So, this is giving us a little bit of evidence that our peer-to-peer process is actually working.

Leighann J. Davidson: One of the success stories I just want to touch on a little bit is: we provide feedback to our Department of Corrections, or they report [inaudible 01:09:26] and all the facilities that we do oversee, and based on our feedback and the policies implemented, which is the reassessment policy and re-certification policy, and stuff that we've actually discussed earlier.

Leighann J. Davidson: The DOC discovered some discrepancies within their assessments among facilities and users, so what they did was they got together and they decided to send a couple of their LS/CMI trainers to do a direct observation over some of the LS/CMI users. They sat in on a few assessments, did a score; like while they did a score, they actually [done 01:10:10] another score, kind of revealed that there were certain discrepancies occurring at certain facilities, and what they decided to do at that point was to mandate an additional policy directive, and to conduct some additional training within that facility, because what they discovered was that one individual had been training other people to do things a certain way; and based on the peer-to-peer review, that was able to be discovered and corrected. So, that is one way that we have discovered that our peer-to-peer process is actually working; it did create some additional training, but the good thing about that is that now everybody's back onboard with how
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things are supposed to be performed, as well as make sure that it's done accurately.

Stephen Haas: That was a great summary of how they collect the data and how it gets reported back; I think it just adds to her success story. I would say that it really achieved what we really wanted to have done, which is it created this culture of quality; and some of these trainers in DOC, and some of the administrators ... after seeing our data, seeing some of the issues, and so forth ... took it upon themselves to go the extra mile, I suppose, to do the direct observations that were necessary to correct [things 01:11:51]. So, in a way, it created that culture that we were looking for, having people work together to produce quality assessments.

Stephen Haas: I also just wanna just point out the fact that we do have supervisory oversight in terms of these processes, so we have checks and balances in place to make sure that the people who are doing the peer-to-peer are not using the same reviewer every time. As just an example, DOC has set up processes where supervisors actually choose the reviewers each time, not the employee themselves, so that people are being reviewed by different people each time, and that way they're getting different perspectives and different feedback.

Stephen Haas: With that said, I'm gonna turn it over. We started about ten minutes late on this webinar. So, by my measure, unless Jason or Karen is willing to suggest otherwise, I think we have about 20 more minutes on this webinar; and Dr. Wormith has some closing comments he may want to make, and he also will help facilitate the questioning-and-answering session. So, thank you.

J. Stephen Wormith: Thanks very much, Stephen and Leighann. A tremendous presentation. I'm so impressed with the work you're doing there in West Virginia.

J. Stephen Wormith: Just off the top, there are a couple words that come immediately to mind with your presentation and the work your doing, and one is "systematic." I mean this is so systematic the way you've gone about structuring your quality assurance mechanism, doing the data checks, reliability, follow-up, feedback. I don't want to sound patronizing, but this is tremendous work. Organizations through North America and beyond follow your lead.

J. Stephen Wormith: The second thought, or concept, that comes to mind is that old saying about "and the devil in the details." In order to root-out the devil, you go into a tremendous amount of detail here in your work to ensure that the instrument is being applied, is being administered first in the most accurate and precise manner possible, and secondly the follow-up work rolling from the assessment is consistent with the assessment result, I mean two key steps here in the application of risk assessment to correctional practice.
J. Stephen Wormith: I was also reminded, way back when the LS/CMI first began actually with a pilot version, a former graduate student of mine, [Lenny Gerard 01:15:05], did a follow-up review of the first 600 LS/CMIs that were done in Ontario and found a 20% error rate in those assessments; and that was just based on a review of, and the assessment protocol and the documentation, not even with access to the interview. So, it’s an ongoing issue; and tremendous, on your part, to get into those details. So, yes, the devil’s in the details, and I’m reminded of that song. Isn’t it something like, “The devil went down to Georgia”? Good thing he went to Georgia and not West Virginia because you guys would have him rooted out and sent packing.

Stephen Haas: We don't allow devils here.

J. Stephen Wormith: I also see some inquires here about the materials that I know we’d all be eager to have access to, both the slides, the PowerPoint, and the webinar. I understand, Jason and Karen, that JRSA will be posting the information?

Karen Maline: Yes. The webinar will be posted; and all the PowerPoint slides and the videos, that some people were not able to see, will be posted on our website probably by tomorrow, I think, or Monday, under the Resources tab of the JRSA website.

J. Stephen Wormith: That's tremendous. I know I’ll be referring a number of my colleagues to your site in the near future.

J. Stephen Wormith: If we do have some time for questions, let me exercise my prerogative and start off with something like the following.

J. Stephen Wormith: I’m really interested in the peer-to-peer with oversight model, if I may call it that. I've seen various efforts to implement quality assurance, typically more of an audit kind of function, or a random check periodically by a supervisor, but not this particular approach, and I'm quite interested in it. If there's anything more you might add, tremendous, and how you went about implementing it. I'm also thinking, I guess as a corollary to that question: If there were any administrators listening in, I suspect they might be thinking, "Oh, tremendous, but what are the costs to get into this detail of repeating assessments or doing parallel assessments?" Administrators might find this a daunting protocol to follow.

Stephen Haas: Those are both very good points. What I would say is, as I’ve said, there are many different types of approaches that are valid; and we would never suggest that this approach by itself, without following up, and using the data to go to direct observations, and do some case file reviews, and things like this, and that it’s not necessary if you have this. But what we would say is this helps us manage the scope, and it also meets the goals of getting people active so that it's not just administrators who care about quality, but the staff themselves, and
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it's repeated and it's repeated so that once every six months they have to at least pay attention to quality, and it just gets reinforced over time.

Stephen Haas: Once they've realized that no one is gonna be really punished for some of these things ... We're not at the stage of punishment. We're really about providing information, about quality, and then having people working together. The supervisors do play an important role in this, that they need to have some oversight to make sure that the peer-to-peer process was done legitimately, and that sort of thing, as part of this.

Stephen Haas: Some of the things that we've done with this, obviously, is we've encouraged ... We've shown you a glimpse into a lot of this, but in our policies we do talk about alternating assessors and reviewers, and keeping those kinds of checks in place. We talked about using the ORSP, if there's questions they have, or are not able to come to resolution on some of this stuff. So, I think we've put a lot of things in place that encourage people to follow the procedures pretty closely.

Stephen Haas: Now, to your second point about cost and time, and so forth: really, to be quite honest with you, our choice was between ... You know, if we wanted to get, on such a large scale, quality processes in place, it would really require the hiring of quality assurance people in each of these agencies that we're looking at, and I don't think anybody has the stomach for that budgetary request to say, "We need new people, and we need new positions due to quality assurance," this is sort of the way to reduce resistance from the top, for me, was the thing that you can do this by spreading some of the quality assurance so that it's not tied to a small group of people who have to do it, and then have the top-down approach. So, it spread the wealth a little bit, and that was a conscious decision to do that to try to limit the resistance, get everybody involved, and so forth.

Stephen Haas: From a cost standpoint: we didn't have to hire new people to do this, so we didn't have costs associated with that. We provided them with free access to the electronic submission stuff. We put out all the technical assistance that was needed, through our trainings and other places, to follow the processes. So, I thought all of that was great.

Stephen Haas: It does take time, but the minimum standard is one review every six months. So, if I'm a user, I get reviewed once and I review somebody else once; and the way we've set up this procedure, it was in some detail there, is you can essentially fulfill all four areas of our assessment with a single interview because you're storing it, then you're comparing case plans; and then if you record it, for instance, the interview, you can assess Motivational Interviewing; and then, of course, supervisors only do the Relationship Skills once a year with the annual appraisal. So, we didn't feel like it was too cumbersome to say, "At least focus on quality once every six months," and that would be my answer to that. I don't know if that's sufficient, but we felt like there was some cost decisions we had to make.
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J. Stephen Wormith: We can move on. There's a couple of thoughts and queries about the content here; and as a researcher on versions of the LSA, I was interested in the discrepancy analysis of items. Again, the detail here is tremendous. I mean researchers love numbers and detail, and this is a combination of both.

J. Stephen Wormith: I was interested in the Companions and the Attitude sections as being the areas that you've identified, at least in West Virginia, as coming up with a greater degree of discrepancy. Certainly, subjectively I've sensed that, and I get feedback from users around the country and North America, that the Attitudes component is one that can lead to discrepancies, and I hadn't focused-in so much on the companion section. So, that's just a comment; you may or may not have anything to add to that.

Stephen Haas: Well, I would add this: as you know, our office is responsible for validating the LS/CMI, [inaudible 01:24:10], and doing things like this as well. I will tell you that we have produced, going through some adapting things of this nature, but we'll have a validation study coming out just after the first of the year, and I will tell you that the Attitude section in our state seems to be being scored low; in other words, it's not a good distribution, and the Attitude section is not as explanatory as we think should be, and I think that we can reasonably tie that to the fact that there appears to be a lot of discrepancies on that domain that we're capturing in our data.

Stephen Haas: So, what our implication, and policy implication, that we're likely to recommend in this report is that DOC, DRC, DJS, accompany their LS/CMI assessments with a Criminal Sentiment Scale, or an Attitudinal Measure so that they could get some sort of measure, really a responsivity measure, to get at this notion of minimization, rationalization, and this sort of thing, to complement their scoring of the LS/CMI. So, periodically, we're probably gonna recommend that these agencies and personnel adopt an attitudinal assessment to help them in the scoring.


J. Stephen Wormith: Also, I think I heard Leighann mention, and I didn't see it in the slides, about the override and discrepancies there. Did I miss that? Is that being monitored as well?

Leighann J. Davidson: Yes, it's being monitored; and then one of the particular questions that we do ask is, when you completed the assessment review: Was there an override chosen by one, or the other one, that should have been? And if so, was that a discrepancy? Did they agree on that, or was there a discrepancy? We haven't seen that very much throughout the reports. Most of them agree not to do an
override unless it's a very particular, or special case, to get them into certain programing that might not be necessary.

Stephen Haas: Yeah. We have emphasized not to use overrides unless there is a truly clinical or administrative reason for doing so, just like the advice that's given by the instrument. So, we are actually not seeing a lot of overrides being used by DOC, for example.

J. Stephen Wormith: Tremendous. I don't want to put you on the spot, but any idea about percentage of cases?

Stephen Haas: Well, I don't have the percentages; but, you know what, we do have the data.

Leighann J. Davidson: I think it was less than 2%.

Stephen Haas: Less than 2% or so. But in terms of the reviews, we have the online system and we check that periodically, but it's below 5% for all of our agencies.

J. Stephen Wormith: That's tremendous. Then, I think you're giving good instructions to your trainers, to your users.

J. Stephen Wormith: I'm also curious about the impact of your process on the quality of the case management practice and scheme or protocol that's developed. I realize that may be down the road, it's an evaluation question, but do you have any sense to what extent this quality assurance innovation is impacting on the quality of the case management?

Stephen Haas: Not to date, because this was implemented about a year and a half ago, and we've had it up and running in all the agencies. As we start to compile more data that will give us sufficient numbers, and so forth, I think we're gonna be able to start to venture out on a couple limbs; and one is we're undergoing a project right now that is a global professional program assessment of [inaudible 01:28:34] approach where we're trying to validate things by using some other criteria. Because we're collecting information in other areas of quality, we're looking to see whether this kind of data correlates well with some of the other data we're getting on quality. So, this isn't the only piece of quality that we're working on, but we're doing that, and I think at a later date we might be able to ... I have to say not a whole lot of thought has been given to it at this point, but we could and probably should, develop some sort of method for seeing how these discrepancies tie-in to any sort of effectiveness in actual programming or something. I think [inaudible 01:29:30].

J. Stephen Wormith: Understood. I think that's also tremendous. It harkens back to my opening comment reference to the Harris paper in crime and delinquency in 2004, you might want to follow-up on, along this nature. It's really something we need to continue to monitor and work on.
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J. Stephen Wormith: I think perhaps it's time to turn things back, I guess, to Jason and Karen for the poll?

Karen Maline: Actually, I have a question. We've got some questions from participants that I'm not sure that you guys addressed.

Karen Maline: We have a question: What are the implications should a staff member not pass the certification or re-certification process? Is certification tied to compensation or any disciplinary process, or do they simply get more training and coaching?

Stephen Haas: That's a great question, and it's something we struggled with because, as you know, we're an external agency, so technically the employees they don't work for me. So, obviously, we have buy-in from our agencies, and our statewide policy states that if they fail their initial test in the training, then they have one other chance to pass it; if they do not pass it, they have to re-take the training. So, that's our statewide policy on that.

Stephen Haas: In terms of failure to comply with things like quality assurance and do those kinds of things, we report this data back to the administrators. We also report what percent of users that are registered with us. In DOCs, for instance, or DRCs, or whatever, what percentage of users actually completed the QA process this half of the year, and what we're doing with that is just trying to say ... I mean we have 23 Day Report Centers across the state, for instance: we might have 100% completion by all of the staff of several Day Report Centers, but maybe we have one where there's only 60% participation among users. What we do is we communicate that to our Community Corrections Subcommittee that oversees Community Corrections in the state, and they address those things at their grant reviews, and other things, and say, "Well, why was this the case?"

Stephen Haas: We also can follow-up, because we have monitors here in Community Corrections. We can follow-up and say, "What happened here?" Sometimes, it's due to somebody leaving, some turnover or something. Sometimes, it's not due to an intentional neglect. So, we try to address those when we see them, and then it gets handled accordingly by the people who have oversight over those programs, and the administrators in DOC, and so forth. We just communication, and then they ...

Karen Maline: Here's another question: If in another state they try to recreate what you're doing, do you think it can successfully start without the centralized website and electronic form submission and data collection? Was establishing that your first step? Or what were you able to accomplish before that?

Stephen Haas: Well, we did start out actually two years ago with paper, sort of a pilot. We didn't do it statewide. We did it from sort of our Day Report programs because it was basically a pilot, and we did it with our Day Report programs to see
whether the forms made sense to the people in the field, that they understood how to complete them. We made revisions based on that pilot, and we made more than one revision. We made a couple of revisions in our early stages with paper. But if I was going to do this, and you’re trying to do this statewide, I would recommend a pilot period. Maybe you could use paper forms at that point if you’d like.

Stephen Haas: But I would also advise you that we use what’s called Survey Gizmo, but you could use any sort of online survey mechanism to do this. It’s very easy. These forms are very easy. It’s easier than almost putting them on paper; and if you can get it electronic, it’s gonna help your ability to assess the results and change things based on the pilot. So, I’d recommend maybe look into this. It’s not that time-consuming to set this up so they could be electronically entered, so I’d give that some heavy consideration.

Karen Maline: We just have a couple more questions.

Karen Maline: Do any of you think that it would be beneficial to have end users provide scoring justification notes for each item so it’s more transparent why an item is being scored or not?

Leighann J. Davidson: Yes, that’s very important, and we actually tell them that in a training: that if you score something a certain way, make sure you document it in the Notes section so that when another user does review that, they can take your notes in consideration, and that may be a reason why they wouldn’t have scored it as a discrepancy. I make sure to tell that every day during the training course because the notes are very important. I may just see the assessment itself and not know why something was scored a certain way; but if you put it in the Note section, then I would know. It’s also very good and very beneficial or when we do our reassessments six months after we do the initial LS/CMI intake. When somebody looks at that initial LS/CMI assessment: when they’re doing their reassessment, you will also give them a lot of the information that they can use as a collateral source before they do their reassessment interviews.

Stephen Haas: I think it answers the question.

Karen Maline: Thank you so much to Dr. Haas and to Ms. Davidson and Dr. Wormith. I want to thank you so much, and I want to tell everyone to have a great afternoon.

Karen Maline: This will be on our website.

Karen Maline: If anybody has any questions that were not answered, they can email me at kmaline@jrsa.org, and I’ll forward them to Dr. Haas and try to get an answer for you, or get you in touch with him.

Karen Maline: I hope everyone has a great afternoon, and thank you for joining us.
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Stephen Haas: Thank you.

J. Stephen Wormith: Thank you, Stephen.

Stephen Haas: All right. Thank you.