Client Centered Management

- Also referred to as “Social Administration”

- Framework rests on the assumption that the principal justification for a human service agency is to improve the lives of the clients it serves.
Management As Performance

- It is almost impossible to separate a manager’s performance from the performance of the organizational unit.
- It is rare to see a “superior” manager in charge of a poorly performing program, or a superior team being run by an “inferior” manager.
- This perception is common in the business sector, but rare in the human/social services sector.
Areas of Human Service Performance

- Client Outcomes
- Productivity
- Resource Acquisition
- Efficiency
- Staff Morale
Client Outcomes

- Affective Changes
- Learning
- Behavior Changes
- Status Maintenance or Change
- Environmental Modifications
Productivity

- Amount of service provided
  - **Client Count**: number who receive services
  - **Service Episode**: complete period of service provision from intake to termination
  - **Service Event**: tally of specific actions by worker, client or both
  - **Elapsed Time**: amount of time devoted to service
Resource Acquisition

- Obtaining what you need to do the job
  - Money
  - People
  - Time
  - Physical Plant
  - Community Support
  - Equipment
Efficiency

- Ratio between resources acquired and outcomes
- “bang for your buck”
- Cost per hour, service, etc.
- Percentage of the population served
Staff Morale

- Job satisfaction of employees
- Social Service organizations should contribute to the well-being and satisfaction of employees, too.
- Job satisfaction can be linked to productivity (not always)
Separation of Management and Clients

- Current management practice strongly separates the human services manager from the real life of the agency’s clients.
- Can drastically alter the effectiveness of the organization.
- Manager is “blind” to the realities clients face.
Signs of Separation

- **Goals**
  - Means-oriented, not goals oriented
    - “We will teach…” as opposed to “they will learn.…”.
  - Abstract language
    - “improved quality of life”
Signs of Separation

- Daily Agency Practices
  - Staff meetings
  - Data kept
  - Employee performance appraisals
    - Process, not results oriented
Consequences

- **Goal Displacement**
  - What are we really trying to do?
  - Means become the ends – process orientation

- **Reactive Management Practice**
  - Technique of the day

- **Client Displacement**
  - End up feeling even **more** displaced
Principles of Client-Centered Management

* Principle #1: Venerating the People Called Clients
* Principle #2: Creating and Maintaining the Focus
* Principle #3: Healthy Disrespect for the Impossible
* Principle #4: Learning for a Living
Principle #1: Venerate the Clients

- Create an environment in which consumers are seen and treated humanely – more like people and less like patients, or clients, or “welfare moms,” etc.
- Managers play the key role in communicating the values of the program to those who use it and work in it, and to the community in which it operates.
How do we do this?

- Know the people who use the program
  - Stories, history, families. First name basis. Common courtesy. Managers model this behavior and demand it of their staff

- Promote the idea that clients are heroes.
  - Overcoming problems. Achievements. Resiliency
How do we do this?

- Employees manifest a client-advocacy perspective toward their own jobs.
  - Clients’ perspectives become the focal point everything else is organized around
  - Managers in particular have the formal authority, control over resources, and control over information necessary to make this happen.
Principle #2: Focus

- Organizations that perform are the ones that have clearly defined their mission purpose and performance, and commit all knowledge, resources and talents to getting it done.
- For client-centered performance managers, that focus is defined in terms of clients and client outcomes.
So what does that mean?

**Rules:**

- Selecting and establishing organization focus is manager’s job
- Focus should be defined in terms of client outcomes
- Defining focus requires elimination of other potentially worthwhile goals and activities (can’t do it all)
- Defining a focus requires a COMMITMENT to achieving that focus
Principle #3: Never say “Impossible”

- Chronic lack of funds, staff, community interest and public support coupled with incessant demands.
- Do you give up and just try for status quo, or look for creative solutions?

**Both groups work equally hard, but the creative ones get more done!**
The “Make It Happen” Attitude

- Perceive self as powerful and responsible (self-efficacy)
- Flexibility and invention based on clear focus on people’s needs
- Problem-solving skills
- Blending disparate agendas
- Persistence (don’t take “no” for an answer)
Principle #4: Learning for a Living

- Continuing to learn is more effective than just putting in one’s time.
- As opposed to “working for a living.”
- Open to experimentation, trying new things.