



CUISR:

Community – University Institute for Social Research

***Integrative Wraparound
(IWRAP) Process Training***

by Dinah S. Amankwah



Building Healthy Sustainable Communities

Community-University Institute for Social Research

CUI SR is a partnership between a set of community-based organizations (including Saskatoon District Health, the City of Saskatoon, Quint Development Corporation, the Saskatoon Regional Intersectoral Committee on Human Services) and a large number of faculty and graduate students from the University of Saskatchewan. CUI SR's mission is "to serve as a focal point for community-based research and to integrate the various social research needs and experiential knowledge of the community-based organizations with the technical expertise available at the University. It promotes, undertakes, and critically evaluates applied social research for community-based organizations, and serves as a data clearinghouse for applied and community-based social research. The overall goal of CUI SR is to build the capacity of researchers, community-based organizations and citizenry to enhance community quality of life."

This mission is reflected in the following objectives: (1) to build capacity within CBOs to conduct their own applied social research and write grant proposals; (2) to serve as a conduit for the transfer of experientially-based knowledge from the community to the University classroom, and transfer technical expertise from the University to the community and CBOs; (3) to provide CBOs with assistance in the areas of survey sample design, estimation and data analysis, or, where necessary, to undertake survey research that is timely, accurate and reliable; (4) to serve as a central clearinghouse, or data warehouse, for community-based and applied social research findings; and (5) to allow members of the University and CBOs to access a broad range of data over a long time period.

As a starting point, CUI SR has established three focused research modules in the areas of Community Health Determinants and Health Policy, Community Economic Development, and Quality of Life Indicators. The three-pronged research thrust underlying the proposed Institute is, in operational terms, highly integrated. The central questions in the three modules—community quality of life, health, and economy—are so interdependent that many of the projects and partners already span and work in more than one module. All of this research is focused on creating and maintaining healthy, sustainable communities.

Research is the driving force that cements the partnership between universities, CBOs, and government in acquiring, transferring, and applying knowledge in the form of policy and programs. Researchers within each of the modules examine these dimensions from their particular perspective, and the results are integrated at the level of the Institute, thus providing a rich, multi-faceted analysis of the common social and economic issues. The integrated results are then communicated to the Community and the University in a number of ways to ensure that research makes a difference in the development of services, implementation of policy, and lives of the people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

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ABSTRACT

The Integrative Wraparound (IWRAP) Process is a holistic approach to human and social services delivery that ensures that needy families and individuals play active roles in planning their own development. IWRAP training was provided to fifty-two participants from the Saskatoon, Saskatchewan area in June and September 2001. An evaluation of the training sessions was undertaken to measure its effectiveness in terms of both its education value and impact on the participants' attitudes towards delivery of integrated social and community services.

INTRODUCTION

This report, sponsored by the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) and the Saskatchewan Rural Wraparound Project, is an evaluation of the Integrative Wraparound (IWRAP) training sessions that measured the training's effectiveness in terms of both learning and impact on trainees' attitudes towards the delivery of holistic, or integrated, social and community services. Quality assurance evaluations can help define guidelines and standard operating procedures, assess performance, and take tangible steps toward improving program performance and effectiveness.

The IWRAP process is a holistic approach to human and social services delivery that ensures that needy families and individuals play an active role in planning their own development (Saskatchewan Human Services, 2000). Fifty-six participants from various agencies and community groups were trained in the IWRAP process in June and September 2001. Training was provided through the Saskatoon and Area Wraparound Network (SAWNet) as an initiative of the provincial Human Services Integrative Forum. The Saskatchewan Rural Wraparound Project and Westmount Absentee Assessment Team organized the training events. The lead trainer was from the Saskatchewan Rural Wraparound Project.

This report provides participant and trainer observations of the training's effectiveness. A secondary issue that emerged from the responses addresses IWRAP's implementation within the community and the mutually exclusive roles of School-Based Wraparound and Integrated Wraparound processes, and others' desire to blend the two.

As a quality assurance study of the provincial training package (Level I), this

study did not require approval by the University Ethics Committee.

BACKGROUND

The Saskatchewan Rural Wraparound Project received Prevention and Support Grants on behalf of government departments and secretariats participating in Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children. Training evaluation occurred during the project's third year and has been recognized for its demonstrated leadership in the area of intersectoral collaboration within both the Saskatoon region and across the province. The Saskatchewan Rural Wraparound Project's objective is to enable families in need and their communities to share responsibility in support planning and provision, and build on individual and collective strengths (Saskatchewan Rural Wraparound Project mission statement, Human Services, 2000; Highfields, 1985). The Saskatchewan Rural Wraparound Project comprises various professional institutions, also known as project partners. These partners are Gabriel Springs Health District; Saskatchewan Valley School Division; R.C.M.P. (Rosthern); Saskatoon (East) School Division; Saskatoon (West) School Division; Saskatoon District Health; provincial Department of Social Services; Early Childhood Intervention Program; Muskeg Lake Cree Nation; and Beardy's Okemasis Cree Nation.

The Associate and Assistant Deputy Minister's Forum on Human Services was formed in the fall of 1994 in response to a need for more senior government coordination of several initiatives and a growing demand for holistic and integrated human services. Opportunity to develop IWRAP trainers arose through a provincial initiative of the Human Services Integrated Forum in February 2001. The Saskatchewan Rural Wraparound was one group selected from the Saskatoon region to take advantage of this opportunity. Their first training session occurred in June 2001; the second followed in September. The two training groups comprised a selection of individuals from diverse backgrounds. Trainees collectively represented the project partners, as well as community groups, the faith community, and parents from SAWNet.

RATIONALE

The IWRAP process' uniqueness is that it encourages needy families to have authentic ownership over their support plans. To achieve this objective, a family invites people whom they trust to be on their child/family team, with a goal of having no more than fifty percent of the team from professional agencies (i.e. service providers from provincial Health, Social Services, Justice, and Education, and private practice). The team then develops support plans that address priority needs through family strengths as identified

by the family and team, and with respect and recognition for the “family culture.”

It was considered necessary to evaluate the training component to ascertain its impact and effectiveness on trainees’ professional outlooks. The evaluation was expected to produce recommendations for appropriate adjustments/changes to the training manual and IWRAP’s strategic training plan itself. Training involves a great deal of interaction, practice, and in-class discussion. Through a combination of large- and small-group activities, trainees work through IWRAP principles, culminating in a development of simulated IWRAP family team experiences. Instructions for a simulation are tailored to a specific fictitious family. Information is not provided at once, but in waves, similar to how families actually experience different cycles of stress and trust. By simulating an IWRAP family team within a controlled instructional environment, it is anticipated that trainees will be able to transfer their learnings to actual work with children and families.

METHOD

A CUISR research intern was hired to design, recommend, and develop the evaluation process. The original evaluation procedure utilized both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Two sets of questions were designed. A set of survey questions intended to gather data for quantitative analysis was developed first. Another set of questions was designed for one-on-one interviews with a stratified sample of trainees in order to collect data for qualitative analysis. The initial plan was to analyze both qualitative and quantitative data and juxtapose the findings with an earlier post-training quantitative survey in order to determine the training’s immediate and long-term impact on trainees’ professional overview.

However, the CUISR research intern did not receive an appreciable number of survey questions from participants to allow authentic quantitative reporting. The authors therefore decided to use the interview responses and juxtapose those findings with the earlier post-training survey’s quantitative findings. An evaluative survey had been undertaken at the end of each training session in order to assess trainees’ reactions. As those surveys yielded a response rate of between 85% and 100%, it was decided that findings based on post-training data would constitute an authentic quantitative evaluation of the two training sessions.

Themes were extracted from trainees’ comments. To acquaint readers with the training experience and their varying appreciation levels, major themes were linked with the survey’s quantitative findings. These are presented below.

THEMES

TRAINING EXPERIENCE

From all indications, the training experience was positive. Trainees appreciated the friendly and diverse environment. Some comments included simple appreciative utterances, such as: “it was positive”; “the training experience was very good”; and “it was an excellent training service.” Others provided more expansive statements, including: “It was a well-rounded experience because of the variety of people that was [*sic*] involved in the training aspect as well as in the student body that was there” and “It was fast and it would be good for families and staff like that to work on [a] Wraparound program through the school systems.”

That those sentiments were echoed throughout the interviews suggests that trainees appreciated an instructional course that they could easily connect to their daily professional activities. Of her professional unit, Sheri,¹ a program coordinator from Saskatoon, said, “We are already implementing the principles of Wraparound.” Sheri’s unit, a branch of the health ministry, has developed its own manual underlying the support-based, client-oriented, and community-focused nature of their dealings with colleagues who mainly consist of traumatized individuals. The manual has been in operation for the last two years. For Myron, the training was an opportunity to further an initiative. He stated, “I had read about it, heard about and it seemed to be a natural extension to the interagency that I created.”

Trainees came from diverse professions. It was accessed because either IWRAP was recognized as an avenue to enhance service delivery or their professional department/units were attempting to operate principles similar to ones advocated by the integrative processes. The general impression given by those interviewed was that the IWRAP process is a way of life and highly meaningful to a society trying to incorporate holistic approaches. A community leader summed it up by stating, “It has to work. If it doesn’t our communities will suffer.” In a way, this trainee’s statement neatly sums up the enthusiasm with which trainees viewed the Wraparound training sessions, as well as explaining their expectation of the training (see rows 1, 4, and 11 of **Tables 1** and **2**).

TRAINING FORMAT/PRESENTER(S)

All the trainees praised the lead presenter’s delivery skills. Some clearly enjoyed learning from someone obviously thoroughly prepared. A selection of the responses included the following: “is a wonderful presenter”; “she knows her stuff so well”; “presenters were excellent”; “they were very good”; and “they are excellent people.” Others admired the presenter’s ability to deliver in an excellent manner a tremendous amount of material within the two-day session:

- *the presenter was able to get through a tremendous amount of material within a*

short time

- *the presenters were really excellent in the way they presented their stuff, but there was a lot of information that we had to grasp*
- *did a god job of giving the overview, the other was also good, knowledgeable*
- *The presenters knew their stuff very well*
- *was more of a facilitator², the actual trainer³... was very good.*

Other trainees simply blended presenter and presentation and declared the days to be well-spent.

It was evident that the two trainers handled the sessions well, although one did more presenting than the other. Nevertheless, they managed the training sessions ably and their efforts were obviously appreciated.

A WORKABLE MANUAL TRAINING MANUAL

It takes fine preparation, adequate resources, and strong teaching skills to create an atmosphere conducive to learning. From all indications, the lead presenter combined all three elements during the two training sessions. The CUISR research intern explored the amount of preparation made before training sessions, the availability of resources to presenters, and the lead presenter's personal contribution to the training's success. During the session, the trainer explained that the "Train the Trainers Training Service" held in the spring of 2001, and of which she was a trainee, "helped to sharpen her training skills." That first training service "helped [her] to develop [her] skills as a trainer" and "enabled [her] to become more familiar with the training package" that was utilized in training others in the spring and fall of 2001. The trainer admitted that the information contained in the training manual was "very detailed." She also indicated that her impact on training/trainees was due, in part, to her "aware[ness] of the training objectives." She added that recent additions have made the training manual even more "user-friendly" than before. The trainer summed up her role primarily as being one who had access to a highly detailed trainer's manual. However, she supplemented this by utilizing her connections and experiences of working with families. She also tried to accommodate trainees' learning styles through her teaching talents.

TRAINING CONTENT

Trainees unanimously believed that they received too much information during the two-day sessions. One participant who viewed the training as an excellent experience nevertheless believed that "there was too much information for two days" and that "it was a short period." Another participant believed that there was "a tremendous amount of information within a short period." Charles, a community leader, described the training as "very jam-packed with information." Consequently, information delivery to trainees

was rapid. Charles observed that “all the information was given to us as a ‘bam-bam’ impact, and then we left.” The general impression was that the presenter did an excellent job in spite of the quantity of information delivered. Trainees offered ideas for alternative training sessions that would ensure information delivery at a more comfortably-paced level. Charles suggested that, “The information could have been enhanced more by having a two-week-two-day session, instead of cramming it all into two days.” Other comments, while not necessarily advocating a four-day package, recommended extra time for training sessions.

Respondent comments should not be taken as negative criticism, but as observations that, in all probability, maximize trainees’ admiration of the IWRAP training and those who conducted the training. Trainees also indicated appreciation for the training binder, which they found easy to use. Many mentioned that it contained useful information and outlined easily followed steps for setting up a Wrap process when the need arose.

REFRESHER SESSIONS

All trainees agreed that they would benefit from occasional refresher recourses. There was a general indication from those implementing Wraparound services that questions crop up and situations emerge that training does not anticipate. For those people, refresher courses would grant them opportunity to ask such questions. Such sessions would also serve as forums where those implementing IWRAP could relate their experiences to fellow facilitators. Such real life experiences could be both helpful and motivational.

ACTIVITIES

Activities such as brainstorming, role playing, small group discussions, and watching and critiquing videotapes portraying families undergoing the Wrap process, constituted a major part of the IWRAP training. Although trainees deeply appreciated the activities, there were individual preferences for specific activities, including role playing, practical training, brainstorming sessions, and case management with real families.

There was, however, unanimity about the training’s relevance. One participant concluded, “Everything was actually very good, very comprehensive.” In spite of specific criticisms, trainees’ overall reactions indicated that the activity set was well-packaged and extremely useful.

UNIQUENESS

Based on trainees’ responses, the IWRAP process can be properly termed ingenious, but the process itself does not differ much, in theory, from most human and social institutions’ existing principles. Henry, from a Social Services branch, indicated that his agency is currently undergoing a major overhaul, intending to make their services more family- or community-centred. Rather than decide what is best for needy individuals and families, Social Services is exploring ways of giving voice to families by reducing

the perceived hostile environment in which it usually deals with clients. Amanda, from a Health Services branch, said that her agency had already started using Wraparound's underlying principles for recreation even before she attended the training sessions. Unlike with Social Services, clients do not perceive a hostile environment within Health Services. Helen, a classroom teacher, said that Wraparound is similar to her school's philosophy. A school principal who initiated an interagency group to benefit her students, Verna believed wholeheartedly in the Wraparound process.

The IWRAP processes' uniqueness, the two training sessions in particular, lies in bringing different professional groups together. That was what most trainees found unique about the experience, and also contributed to its success. Mary, a home-school liaison officer, admitted: "the Wrap is more in depth than the usual assistance programme I plan"; "there are other people and families involved"; and "it is more organized." One other teacher observed that the session's uniqueness was due to "other people besides teachers at the training." Fay, a worker from a different Social Services branch, said that "the unique part is bringing together people from different walks of life." Verna called the approach of training together people from different vocations, with the purpose of opening an opportunity for them to work together in the community, "a shift in paradigm." A non-professional community leader explained, "The idea that you have the social work community, the education community, the medical community, the psychological community, all working on their own playing fields, under the general concept of mine is the only way, has to stop."

Inter-professionally, the IWRAP processes' holistic approach would appear to be its unique quality. However, the underlying difference is the effort to create an awareness that makes it possible for different professional groups to work together (Saskatchewan Human Services, 2000).

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

The information that was delivered in two days may have been too much, but trainees collectively grasped the IWRAP process' operating principles. When asked to list IWRAP's underlying principles, as highlighted by the training, trainees individually and collectively identified that the IWRAP process:

- commanded a strength-based approach
- advocated community mapping / connections
- allowed individual / family voice and choice within the group that worked to help such parties address their needs
- provided unconditional support for needy individuals and families

- blended formal and informal resources (Saskatchewan Human Services, 2002; Myers et al, 1999)
- was family and individual centred
- utilized a single/common plan to address multiple issues, and
- was highly collaborative in nature

Trainees were appreciative that the training addressed their principles to a high degree. On a related theme, trainees recalled the Wraparound's operating tools as being effective in achieving the Wrap objectives. Comments included: community mapping/connections; strength-based Chat Discovery; the three Wrap meetings (Mini-Wrap, One-on-one Wrap, and Full-Wrap); the Difference Game; and crisis planning.

That all trainees recalled the above principles and tools roughly half a year after their training is itself a strong indication of the extent to which the training impacted them.

A number of trainees indirectly applied Wraparound's principles in their day-to-day business. That is, professional units were either operating on similar principles or were working towards such objectives to create more benefits for their communities. The latter constituted workers from Social Services, Health, and various community organizations. Those directly applying these principles were mostly from schools whose divisions used the Wrap project to address individual and family chronic problems (largely in school-related issues, but also in social, health, and financial contexts). Others had not applied the principles because of their job location or current circumstances.

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The surveys' purpose was to collect information about participants' attitudes toward the training format and mode of presentation. These were measured using a Likert scale and represent a summary analysis of trainees' responses (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996).

SIMILARITIES

There is a strong link between the qualitative findings and survey results, albeit varying from one theme to another.

Regarding the presenter(s)' performance, survey results corresponded with responses that emerged from the one-to-one interviews (see *Training Format*). There was general consensus among trainees regarding the presenter(s)' comfort level with fielded questions, knowledge of content material, and information presented.

The June 2001 survey results (N=26) rating presenter(s)'s performance in presentation/facilitation of this workshop were as follows: Poor - 0%; Fair - 0%; Good

- 5%; Very Good - 27%; and Excellent - 68%.

The September 2001 survey results (N=26) rating presenter(s)'s performance in presentation/facilitation of this workshop were as follows: Poor - 0%; Fair - 0%; Good - 0%; Very Good - 27%; and Excellent - 73%.

According to responses indicated in **Tables 1** and **2**, there was a high level of satisfaction with the training. These responses also reflected positive comments received from the qualitative assessment of the training (see *Training Experience*).

The survey results are also indicative of the information's relevance to trainees' professional activities. The figures correspond to trainees' assertion that their respective departments or units are directly or indirectly applying Wraparound's principles (see *Uniqueness*).

The results suggest that trainees desired refresher courses (see *Refresher Sessions*), just as figures related to their expectation suggest highly satisfactory levels. Again, in both instances, quantitative and qualitative results suggest complementary attitudes.

Table 1. Integrative–Wraparound (IWRAP) Technical Assistance. 19-20 June 2001. (N=26; survey yielded an 85% response feedback rate).

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My expectations of this training were met.			27%	73%
2. The information provided was informative.			5%	95%
3. The content of this technical assistance activity will be useful in my work.			36%	55%
4. I plan to use this information in my work.			36%	55%
5. I need more explanation on the topics/issues that were covered today.	14%	27%	50%	9%
6. I need more technical assistance support to implement this information.	5%	14%	64%	9%
7. The content of this technical assistance activity was appropriate for the time allowed.		9%	55%	36%
8. I would like more technical assistance support for implementation of issues/topics covered today.	5%	23%	64%	
9. I would like more direct training in the areas that were covered today.	5%	27%	41%	18%
10. The format of the training was appropriate for the content.		5%	36%	59%
11. I would recommend this technical assistance activity to my colleagues.			27%	68%
12. Presenter was knowledgeable about the information presented.			5%	95%
13. Presenter communicated the information in a manner that was easy to understand.			9%	91%
14. Presenter was comfortable answering questions about the information presented.				100%

Table 2. Integrative –Wraparound (IWRAP) Technical Assistance. 19-20 September 2001. (N=26; survey yielded a 100% response feedback rate).

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My expectations of this training were met.			19%	81%
2. The information provided was informative.			15%	85%
3. The content of this technical assistance activity will be useful in my work.			23%	77%
4. I plan to use this information in my work.			11.5%	88.5%
5. I need more explanation on the topics/issues that were covered today.	11.5%	31%	46%	11.5%
6. I need more technical assistance support to implement this information.	11.5%	31%	46%	11.5%
7. The content of this technical assistance activity was appropriate for the time allowed.		8%	35%	57%
8. I would like more technical assistance support for implementation of issues/topics covered today.	4%	15%	62%	19%
9. I would like more direct training in the areas that were covered today.	4%	4%	65%	27%
10. The format of the training was appropriate for the content.			35%	65%
11. I would recommend this technical assistance activity to my colleagues.		4%	8%	88%
12. Presenter was knowledgeable about the information presented.				100%
13. Presenter communicated the information in a manner that was easy to understand.			8%	92%
14. Presenter was comfortable answering questions about the information presented.				100%

It is noteworthy that quantitative and qualitative assessments occurred six months apart, yet the time lapse did not diminish the training’s positive impact. While similarities in both quantitative and qualitative studies strongly indicated the training experience’s overall appreciable nature, responses may also provide a measure of reliability to the study.

OBSERVATIONS

The two training sessions were highly successful. Based on trainees’ appreciation levels and the lead presenter’s acknowledgement of the training manual’s helpful nature, it can be concluded that the manual’s developers produced a highly workable instrument and deserve congratulations. Training activities constituted a crucial part of the training. According to trainees, discussions were excellent, especially those conducted in small cross-agency working groups. The videotapes were also considered helpful.

There is a need to maximize awareness of the Wrap processes. An appreciable

number of trainees are the only members from their professional units or departments who have attended the training. In some workplaces, administrators are barely aware of the Wrap processes. The IWRAP process is time-consuming and calls for genuine commitment, and without that commitment desired changes might not be achieved within human and social institutions (Meyers et al, 1999). One trainee, whose agency operated on principles similar to IWRAP's, indicated that their programme's success depended largely on non-professionals on various teams. She stressed that "the professionals of the team—home-care people [and] physical therapists—are usually the ones who drop off." Trainees agreed that the integrative Wraparound should be introduced to all human and social institutions in the province and extended to other parts of Canada.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Training activities, though strong, might be more effective if trainees were encouraged to relate their own experiences. Such an opportunity might make training more practical. Bringing in individuals or families who have benefited from the process might further authenticate training.

Not all trainees were comfortable with role-playing exercises. This might be improved by providing trainees with their roles at the end of the first day and allow them to practice at home on their own. They might become more familiar and comfortable with their roles by the following day.

The insistence on mutually exclusive roles for the School-Based Wrap and IWRAP processes is a possible hindrance to a whole Wrap initiative. Because trainees did not list many concrete differences between the two, time and resources might be saved if the two processes were (re)designed and harmonized (Eber, 1999). The initiative might benefit from such flexibility, already one of its own operating principles, and be enriched by their differences and common elements (Myers et al, 1999; Moeser, 2001).

Because other institutions are attempting to operate from similar collaborative and community-centred perspectives, it might be easy to mistake the Wraparound for a different process. Caution needs to be exercised lest misconceptions undermine an otherwise exceptional process. Trainers might need to invest more effort or time to help participants more clearly understand the IWRAP concept.

Trainees strongly recommended regular refresher sessions. Judging from the responses, it would be appropriate to schedule such sessions at least annually.

By all indications, the IWRAP process is having a positive impact on those who have been introduced to it. The recounted experiences strongly suggest that workers from a variety of human service organizations appreciate the effectiveness that results from adoption of people-centred principles that call for collaborative, rather than

compartmentalized, approaches:

Across Saskatchewan, social workers, educators, health, justice and community workers, and other human service providers are exploring new ways of working with their clients, communities, and with one another. Their aim is to enhance the effectiveness of the services they provide by engaging the people they serve in identifying needs and solutions. As well, by working collaboratively with one another, they are seeking to provide services that are more coordinated and integrated (Saskatchewan Human Services, 2000).

Although the IWRAP process may be time and resource consuming, in the long term it will help save immeasurable time and human resources. There is a need to train more people in order to maximize awareness for Wrap processes. Furthering community awareness of the Integrated Wraparound processes is an effective means of ensuring its smooth operation and future success within our communities.

NOTES

- ¹ To protect trainees' identities, pseudonyms have been used in this report.
- ² The participant was referring to Lori Pulai.
- ³ The participant was referring to Anne Sloboda, to whom other trainees consistently referred as the lead presenter.

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