



ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS SERVICES

Client Experiences and Testimonials

The following testimonials were solicited following direct, on-site services provided by APHSA's OE staff. Testimonials presented here are unedited and, therefore, questions posed to clients were left in the body of the document whenever the client response also included the specific questions asked.

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Testimonial 1: Washington, DC Child and Family Services

What challenges did you have for which you used APHSA OE's help within your agency?

The DC Child and Family Services Agency is participating in the PPCWG Institute. Our team of three employees took on the challenging, long-term project of expanding the agency Practice Model beyond direct services to include administrative functions and, in the process, introducing a model of change that the agency could adopt. DAPIM included in the PPCWG guidance provided a ready-made and proven change model that we decided to use. The team of three participating in the Institute brought varying levels of facilitation experience to the project and had never used DAPIM before. Nonetheless, we approached the task at hand with enthusiasm and determination. In our fast-paced, high-pressure agency culture, we expected to have to compete for buy-in and resources. But as novice facilitators, we were also concerned about whether we could attract and sustain engagement in the DAPIM process, which would be a sharp departure from the agency's characteristic focus on speed.

What did APHSA do to help you?

As our "mentor" through the PPCWG Institute, Phil Basso supported us in two major ways. He provided invaluable coaching to our project team that improved our understanding of DAPIM, clarified our role as facilitators, and spurred creative thinking about how to structure and lead the work. When we described our agency culture, Phil quickly grasped the implications and was soon talking and considering options with us as if he had been in our work environment for years. He combined insights based on experience with a large measure of encouragement so that we were able to draw on Phil's considerable skill while also gaining inspiration from his enthusiasm. At key points in the project so far, Phil has stepped in to provide hands-on support. As part of defining issues, he facilitated three focus groups within the agency and provided written findings. He also facilitated a meeting of the Continuous Improvement Team that helped the group go deeper in defining issues. Expert, outside involvement at these points in our process moved the work forward and also to a higher level.

What have been the results in your agency so far?

In contrast to agency "business as usual," use of DAPIM has slowed the group process while making it much more deliberative. The diverse Continuous Improvement Team is highly engaged. In fact, group members have moved from grumbling about devoting time to two 90-minute meetings a month to being pleasantly surprised at the depth and meaning of the discussion—and eager for more. Phil's coaching has been instrumental in helping the three-member project team bring the CIT along, and his hands-on work has lent extra expertise when needed to get through delicate or difficult points in the work. This approach is supportive and empowering and will leave our project team and agency with valuable capabilities that we didn't have before.

Mindy Good, Director, Communication, DC Child and Family Services Agency

Testimonial 2: Texas Child Protective Services

The challenge we first faced was CPS worker retention. APHSA's OE staff were able to assist regional directors and their teams in learning the process of DAPIM and applying it to their own regional issues. While we still have not eradicated CPS worker turnover, our leaders have seen the power in bringing staff together to understand root causes and to do gap analysis. I knew this approach was successful when I started hearing regional directors spontaneously say - "We need to DAPIM this issue". Additionally our front line staff began to spontaneously use this approach in working with families. That convinced me that we are on the right track to building a sustainable approach to Organizational Effectiveness.

Colleen McCall, CPS Director of Field

Testimonial 3: Texas Department of Family Protective Services

DFPS/CPS first looked to an organizational effectiveness strategy in 2008 when facing serious issues with retention in one part of the state. Once APHSA was brought in to work on that issue it was determined that building critical decision-making across all regions and at the state office level was a key strategy to building an organization that thinks and acts strategically. After determining which CPS staff would be best to be trained as OE facilitators, CPS determined that it had very experienced and able quality assurance staff that would be an excellent fit with this initiative. Regional management staff began to identify areas that they wanted to focus on to improve outcomes for children and families and improve how staff approaches their work. Several facilitations were launched across Texas using the OE DAPIM model to carefully and clearly define the issue before continuing on the step by step approach. The defining stage has been a valuable addition to CPS staff being able to think and act strategically and begin to move from being reactive and moving right on to attempting to resolve an issue (more of an APIM mode) to one where they begin to seek the root cause for what is getting in the way of achieving what they want -- to getting to their desired future state. This facing of the root cause is true whether working with direct service delivery or with managing system resources. And, related to managing resources, a strategic organization can be much more efficient regarding utilization of resources. CPS staffs at various levels, from caseworker, supervisor, to director, assistant commissioner and chief operating officer have participated in OE sessions and have found them helpful and worthy of support by DFPS to the point that additional facilitators from the original core group were trained and even more are planned to be added.

Dan Capouch, Administrator, Division of Disproportionality and Accountability

Testimonial 4: Charlottesville, VA Department of Social Services

What challenges did you have for which you used APHSA OE's help within your agency?

In one year, 50% of our agency's top management left. APHSA helped our Program Managers to come together as a cohesive team, and give this team tools to engage the entire staff to define and cultivate a culture in our agency that meets with our goals of providing for positive outcomes for our clients and to be a workplace of choice.

What did APHSA do to help you?

APHSA helped to facilitate our team development in a transparent way, so we could learn and eventually use the techniques and strategies needed ourselves to define our issues, conduct a root cause analysis, developing actionable tasks to address the issues, and set up monitoring to observe and celebrate success. APHSA's facilitation in the beginning was also an effective tool in developing a process that allowed for the most critical and controversial issues to be brought to light, but then turning over the process to our Continuous Improvement (CI) Team to implement the solutions.

As the Project Manager, APHSA was there for ad hoc consultation regarding the practice model, and an excellent venue to test strategies before implementing them. Their support was extremely helpful to me in developing effective communications at multiple levels in order to sustain the change initiative. During these consultations, APHSA staff was very good at redirecting the questions back to the CI Team for solutions, and were not prescriptive of the solution. The APHSA staff reframing of questions developed an environment where I became decreasingly reliant on their services, and could work through issues in our CI Team.

What have been the results in your agency so far?

Our CI Team is the first time in the history of our organization that Program Managers regularly meet and have an agenda that drives us to continue to meet. This meeting includes all of the divisions in our agency, and we are able to talk openly about the challenges in communicating effectively and to develop a holistic approach to providing for the welfare of families. This meeting has evolved from a limited number of active participants during the meeting to one where every member, at some point, has raised an agenda item for discussion.

Our Interim Management looks to the Continuous Improvement Team to inform them regarding staff needs, and organizational needs. They meet regularly with the co-facilitators of the CI Team and have acted on several of the requests of the CI Team regarding agency wide communications and staff recognition.

A very tangible result was that during an Agency Day Out, a workgroup from the CI Team created and facilitated teamwork exercises that everyone participated in to address roadblocks in communication and sensitivity training to the need for cross-divisional communication. We also are working on an automated notification to assigned workers when other workers open cases to encourage collaborations.

Brad Wentz, Social Work Supervisor

Testimonial 5: Charlottesville, VA Department of Social Services

[NOTE: the following is a letter to all staff forwarded to APHSA by the Charlottesville, VA Continuous Improvement Team]

Friday, December 3rd, was the last face-to-face meeting with the Positioning for Child Welfare Guidance Institute in D.C. Kelly Logan, Doris Dodson, Brad Wentz and Jenny Jones all participated in using the guidance to begin the process of implementing change within our agency to better services for our clients. (The guidance is available at www.ppcwg.org.)

The change area we selected was addressing barriers in our agency culture that limit cross-divisional collaborations, preventing effective service to our clients. The Institute Staff and other participating agencies asked us to pass on that they were VERY impressed with the willingness of our organization to address agency culture during a time of interim management. Instead of it being a time for self-preservation, we have taken this opportunity to build trust with each other, and identify things we can work on as a unified team to provide services that translate into better outcomes for our clients.

We have success! All the Supervisors are now meeting regularly to learn from all the information we have, increase collaborations between our divisions and be more consistent in how staff is supervised. The Day Out activities was our attempt to have all of us explore how we can contribute to a positive agency culture.

While the Institute may be over, the work will continue. Beginning in January, we will begin the process of convening work groups to address the issues that many of you have raised (ex. more comprehensive training for new hires, improving communication between divisions, etc.). We hope everyone is beginning to see that in order for this initiative to be a success, we need all of you to help make it happen.

The Institute Staff will remain available for technical support, and we have peer agencies that we can consult as needed. The Supervisors continue to meet on a regular basis as the Continuous Improvement Team (CI Team) and we are increasing communication so that we are more consistent in how staff is supervised. C-Team remains supportive of this effort, and has made resources available for us to continue this effort. Our plans to sustain this change are located on J://Socserv/Cultural Initiative

Thank you for doing your part in contributing to a culture that will better help those who come to us to find help. We believe we are achieving what Coach Phil Jackson said when he was with the Chicago Bulls- "The strength of the team is each individual member...the strength of each member is the team."

Charlottesville, VA Continuous Improvement Team: Doris Dodson, Jenny Jones, Kelly Logan, and Brad Wentz

Testimonial 6: Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program

What challenges did you have for which you used and/or are using APHSA OE's help within your agency?

PA is a state-supervised, county-administered state. Impacting practice at local level is essential to moving outcomes forward across the state. Many of Pennsylvania's findings from the 1st CF SR were also found during the 2nd round. APHSA's DAPIM model is the vehicle to accomplish change at the local level. This structured approach allows local systems to drive their change efforts and build capacity towards continuous quality improvement. This approach is supported by the National Implementation Research Network's framework.

What efforts have you engaged in with APHSA?

Pennsylvania has engaged in APHSA's learn by doing approach with key stakeholders throughout the state. Key stakeholders included the Office of Children, Youth, and Families, The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program, and other technical assistance providers. This approach has focused on internal continuous quality improvement efforts amongst these organizations as well as the development of organizational effectiveness facilitation skills. These efforts were critical toward creating a collaborative, integrated child welfare system.

Are these efforts linked to supporting your PIP strategies, if so please explain how, specifically which CF SR outcomes you hope to impact and how you hope to achieve this?

This work is a part of our sentinel approach to Continuous Quality Improvement, which is one of our main PIP strategies. This strategy is intended to improve all CF SR outcomes, by allowing counties to address their specific areas of improvement through the DAPIM process and development of a county improvement plan. This in-depth approach will be phased in across the Commonwealth over a 5 to 7 year period. Each phase lasts one year with counties continuing the work upon completion of their phase. County level sponsor and Improvement teams will continue to drive (turn) the DAPIM flywheel with support from the state. Furthermore, those entities that support the efforts of the counties in their continuous quality improvement efforts will also be utilizing APHSA's enhanced OE model to utilize our own "systematic and systemic approach to continuously improving an organization's performance, performance capacity and client outcomes."

What have been the results in your agency so far?

Internal improvement plans are in various states of implementation. The plans will be monitored for completion and intended impact. We will be evaluating CF SR outcomes on a long term basis to ensure we are impacting outcomes at the practice level. Internal outcomes include enhancing improved organizational climate and other staff morale measures.

What are your planned next steps for building OE capacity?

As described above, we will continue to roll this work across the Commonwealth. We will continue to expand the pool of staff with the skills necessary to facilitate the DAPIM process.

Mike Byers, PA Child Welfare Training Program

Testimonial 7: Arlington County Department of Human Services

Challenges: As a proactive measure to improve service delivery, we contracted with APHSA to perform a program audit of our County's child welfare services. We were concerned about staff morale, staff turnover, and lack of staff depth and breadth.

APHSA audit actions: APHSA conducted an independent review of our child welfare service including meeting with management and staff, judges, attorneys, foster parents and others. The consultants identified root causes to issues and developed key recommendations for changes. APHSA presented findings and recommendations to staff

Second phase: We amended our contract so that Jon Rubin could facilitate an in-house staff group that would develop a child welfare practice model. We will be rolling this document out at the end of the month. It will be used as the foundation for our practice, training, and communication with key stakeholders outside the department. We also plan to link performance expectations to the practice model.

Results:

- A 7-pronged action plan for improvement. We have tackled several of them at this point: the practice model, the administrative/contracting process, the training plan, role clarification/teaming, and the cultural environment.
- Development of a practice model. We are proud of the product.
- Review of contracting and administrative processes underway – work thus far is promising.
- Training plan and curriculum for staff
- Improved staff morale
- Filled supervisory and front-line vacancies with experienced staff

Jon Rubin was instrumental in helping us look critically at our service delivery system. He offered specific recommendations for improvement. His expertise with child welfare practice and level of professionalism – response time, quality of professional guidance, and communication skills -- were invaluable. We have made substantial progress since receiving the report.

Joan Planell, Deputy Director, Arlington County Human Services

Testimonial 8: Washington, DC Department on Disability Services

What challenges did you have for which you used APHSA OE's help within your agency?

Our agency was undergoing a lot of change at the time APHSA visit. We needed some assistance on grabbing a foothold on the all the issues and putting together a plan to improve them.

What did APHSA do to help you?

APHSA helped our agency understand process improvement. The DAPIM model provided a structure for us to following in assessing and implementing the necessary changes in our organization.

What have been the results in your agency so far?

We have recently completed work on an internal process improvement project following the DAPIM. The model has assisted us in identifying the barriers we face. We are currently in the implementation phase, and look forward to creating positive change.

Jason Todd, DDS

Testimonial 9: Greene County OH, Children Services

APHSA OE staff was engaged to assist the agency with two aspects of its strategic plan: succession planning for senior staff and staff retention. This was accomplished by developing a Leadership Development opportunity for interested staff. We were very pleased with the learning by doing approach used in this consultation. While the agency had a QA focus in place, the staff participating benefited greatly from learning the DAPIM process and applying it to real agency problems. Staff was able to identify, assess and problems solve issues as well as plan for evaluation and monitoring of their planned interventions. The outcomes were two separate plans that were ultimately presented to the Board for their approval and action. Aspects of the staff retention plan were used in union negotiations and the work is on-going. The succession plan proposal involved some expenditures that the agency has not been able to afford but it has helped with imminent retirements of key staff, particularly the Executive Director. A number of staff who participated in this development opportunity have promoted or moved to other positions in the agency. The OE staff was easy to work with, accessible when off-site and helped us identify some of the "blind spots" in the agency. It was a positive and growth producing experience.

Rhonda E. Reagh, Ph.D., Retired Executive Director, Greene County Children Services

Testimonial 10: The County of Ventura (CA) Human Services Agency

What were your and your organization's biggest needs when you decided to work with the APHSA on a consulting basis?

The County of Ventura Human Services Agency completed organizational assessments in 2003 and 2005 to identify the performance and possible interventions for closing any performance gaps. The assessments were undertaken with the goal of moving the agency toward a customer centered, integrated services model.

The Agency contracted with APHSA in April 2005 to consult in the areas of organizational system assessment, followed by a second contract to assess and functionally redesign our Human Resources Division. Ancillary benefits to the Executive Team include increased understanding about how to lead change, improve trust, and create healthy intra-organizational relationships.

Were there any ways that APHSA adapted their services to better meet your needs after your contract with them was initially underway? How did that work out for you?

The APHSA Organizational Capacity-Building Mechanisms Assessment reviewed efforts to integrate and improve capacity-building and support systems. The assessment process involved conducting detailed interviews, reviewing 2003 and 2005 Organizational Assessment Climate & Readiness data, and providing highly actionable decisions and plans.

To further understand the underlying issues and perceptions of the Climate and Readiness Assessment conducted by another consultant, the Agency requested APHSA to conduct six focus groups with line staff, supervisors and managers. I was deeply impressed how respectful APHSA was of the earlier work and integrated the findings into overarching themes. APHSA was extremely flexible and adapted to the needs of the Agency. The data collection was mapped and categorized into assessment themes for actionable decisions and plans.

What do you see as the results now and in the future from your consulting work with APHSA?

The Agency has greatly benefited from our partnership with APHSA in the areas of change management and human resource administration capacity building. APHSA is a powerful resource that understands the important nexus of cutting-edge management theory and human services administrative practice.

Looking back, what would you have liked APHSA to have done differently?

No. We unanimously agree that Phil Basso is the most professional and effective consultant we've ever worked with.

Any additional comments?

APHSA successfully synthesized key strategic outcomes of the organizational assessment and provided a strategic map for pacing change in an organized fashion. APHSA understands and appreciates the work of the County of Ventura Human Services Agency which is an ideal foundation from which to form a fruitful partnership.

Ted Myers, Director, County of Ventura (CA) Human Services Agency

Testimonial 11: Arizona Department of Economic Security

What were your biggest needs when you started working with APHSA on your project?

When we began we did not believe we had any needs. Our statistics were good. It was not until we began that we saw that we needed work on our "soft" skills. The undercurrent of the office was not as good as we thought it was. It had been easy for us to ignore.

What makes APHSA different from similar services you may have experienced in the past (e.g., classroom training)?

The process was very hands on. We felt that it pushed us to work hard, find the best and put it forward.

So far, what were the results of your work with APHSA, focusing on any or all of these aspects:

The Bullhead City Family Assistance office is definitely running more efficient. More importantly the staff are happier. The effects are showing in the quality of the work they are producing. Attendance has improved and our employee turnover has been reduced. This all results in faster, higher quality services for the public we serve.

- Doing something more effectively
- Improving staff capacity and performance
- Improving services and/or outcomes for the individuals and families that you serve

Looking back on your work with APHSA, what would you have liked to do/liked APHSA to do differently?

The only thing is maybe a formatted manual with exercise templates that would make continuing the process easier. Remembering the entire process is sometimes difficult.

Comments for APHSA from Arizona 2 (Arizona Department of Economic Security)

What were your biggest needs when you started working with APHSA on your project?

Communication Skills , to feel open to involve upper management, stable management , improving attendance , and creating a plan and allowing enough time to be effective .

What makes APHSA different from similar services you may have experienced in the past (e.g., classroom training)?

Open communication with each other in the local office . Open Forum , discussion style . We were allowed to say what our opinion's are and not feel that retaliation would happen . In a class room you

are just given the instructions and you have to follow their flow of the materials presented but with this way we were able to develop what would work for our office .

So far, what were the results of your work with APHSA, focusing on any or all of these aspects:

Excellent results . Attendance improvement. Timeliness and Accuracy were both below expectations and now all are at the correct level they need to be . Customer Services complaints have decreased . More lax environment . Staff members feel more in control of their workload . Thinking outside the box. Community Connections Days . Online staff are making more accurate decisions - By building confidence in them . Staff are also being more considerate to their customer needs . Maintained a full staff with no turn over's. We also received many request for other employees to transfer in to our location .

Looking back on your work with APHSA, what would you have liked to do/liked APHSA to do differently?

Refresher after process - Follow up .

Phil you were a true asset to my team . Your help went beyond any words that can be expressed. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to my team.

Robin Lee APM, District One Central

Arizona Department of Economic Securities (continued):

On the following page we have included among these testimonials a letter received by Phil Basso following the completion of his work in Arizona. The letter is from one of the Local Office Managers with whom Phil worked.



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

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Janet Napolitano
Governor

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Phil Basso
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4-29-08

Phil,

As you know, I am the Local Office Manager for the Family Assistance Administration in Show Low Arizona. Having recently experienced the DAPIM process through your agency, I feel I am qualified to explain some of the advantages and differences between this process and other, more conventional types of trainings, workgroups, etc. I'll leave the explanation of how the process works to others more articulate than me.

I do feel qualified, however to discuss why it worked for us and some of the results we've seen because of our participation in this process. I call it a "process", but it is more than that. It was a way of mentoring and guiding our management team to go beyond surface fixes and change the way we thought or perceived things at an almost core level. Once this process (again, I'm at a loss for a better word) began, it allowed us to go beyond the conventional "corrective actions."

The beauty of this DAPIM is that it allowed us to determine what issues we felt were important to address in our individual office, and, through experienced guidance, come up with our own solutions. We were given a safe venue for open discussion without fear of judgment or retribution. This allowed us to be truly honest with our feelings and opinions. Without this, the process would have failed before it began. Nobody dictated how or what needed to be changed. Nobody dictated what results were expected, or how long we would be given to achieve results. We determined all of that. In essence, it allowed us to be masters of our own destiny.

Because this process works so well, it actually becomes a way of thinking and doing business. Again, I can't explain how it works, but it does. DAPIM is something we now practice in our local office on a daily basis without even thinking about it.

A few of the issues we decided to tackle in our local office were trust, staff empowerment, accountability and motivation. Pretty lofty goals, if I do say so myself. To be honest, we were quite skeptical at first. However, when we

started seeing results in a matter of weeks, I must say we changed our tune pretty quickly. I won't go into great detail, but here's the "Reader's Digest" version of how this was accomplished a few of our goals.

We discovered that a large part of the reason staff did not trust management, was because management did not trust staff. We felt there were only one or two individuals capable of managing the office in our absence. Once we started giving all individuals this opportunity, we discovered that everyone was capable of succeeding at this. In addition, we discovered that the more we empowered staff, the more confident and competent they became. Another advantage was that, as our trust grew in them, their trust grew in us. It was a win-win!

We determined that accountability can not be achieved without recognition. We started posting monthly timeliness and accuracy for all staff through a "Super Star" board. We discovered that those who were Super Stars were proud of their achievements and strove to maintain that status. Those who were "Future Stars" were more motivated to achieve goals and move up on the "Super Star" board. Simple, but effective.

We, through our DAPIM sessions, discovered that we, as an office, had lost focus as to why we were really doing the job we do. We had become so involved in the process and keeping track of statistics, that we had forgotten our basic reason for being there. We do what we do to help families. The fix here was simple. Instead of referring to the people we serve as clients or participants, we decided to call them what they are. Families. Once management started using this language, it was amazing how quickly staff caught on. It renewed our focus and motivated staff to complete their work as timely and accurately as possible, because these were real people we were working for, not just "cases we were completing". Again, Simple, but effective.

These are only a few of the DAPIM changes we have implemented in our local office. There have been dozens and the number grows almost daily. Again, this has changed the way we look at our work on a basic level. Now, not only does management develop "Quick Wins", but the concept has caught on with staff and they are coming up with their own "Quick Wins". It's having a positive snowball effect on the entire office.

We discovered, much to our amazement, that simple fixes can have profound results. Things don't always have to be complicated to work! As you can tell from this letter, I have changed from a skeptic to an advocate of DAPIM and my only regret is that some offices will have to wait longer than others to experience this process.

Thank you for allowing my office to participate in a fantastic program! I have been the Local Office Manager in Show Low for over 12 years and was unable to accomplish what DAPIM did in a matter of weeks and months.

Robyn Trammell
LOM-336C
2500 E Cooley Ste 410
Show Low AZ 85901

Testimonial 12: Tennessee Department of Children's Services

What were your biggest needs with the supervisors and managers when you started the development work with APHSA?

The management team was not working as a team. In addition, much of the management was out of touch with the front-line operations and while they gave policy direction, they did not manage the county to ensure both customer service and a structured, yet pleasant work environment for staff that allowed staff to feel valued and recognized.

Our largest need was getting the managers and supervisors on board with the need to make positive changes and to understand that the support would be there for the changes. The gap between front line supervisors and mid management needed to be lessened as well.

Why did you all decide to shift from developing a supervisory curriculum to the more consultative approach we wound up using?

As the new administration came to understand where the group was developmentally and how ready the group was for change, it became clear that beginning to break down the barriers between the levels of supervision was key to getting buy-in for changing the culture of this District. After the first meeting with the front line supervisors it became clear that they were not only ready for change but were able to define specific areas that needed to be addressed. They were able to perform a self-assessment of their group and recognized and defined where they needed to change. Because of how far along the group turned out to be developmentally, it became clear that we needed to bring mid management and front line supervisors together to begin to lessen the gap and make it clear that they were more on the same page than the groups originally thought. Also, the consultative approach actually was as much of a training tool as a traditional training class. All of management learned how to define areas for improvement, assess procedures, and develop goals.

What do you think the results are and will be over the next few months?

As a result of the work that has occurred, the management team has a clear set of expectations and understands the commitment of the leadership of the County to enforce a customer focused and employee supported environment. Clear and on-target messages about the county's successes and challenges as well as planning that incorporates the needs and interests of staff at all levels will no doubt result in a more satisfactory work environment; encourage staff retention; and develop staff that perform at much higher levels.

The initial results are the level of understanding about where we are headed by all levels of management is great. Additionally, the disconnect between the levels of management has been lessened. The buy-in from front line supervisors on the change process is high as they feel like they have as much input and investment as the highest levels of management. I believe over the next few months we will be able to address each area of improvement and refine the skills of strategic planning and making adjustments.

Looking back, what would have liked to do differently/had APHSA do differently?

I believe things evolved and developed exactly like we needed them to for where we are trying to go as a District.

Because of personnel changes in certain management staff, the pace and style of the APHSA work allowed the personnel changes and the resulting actions coming from different personnel to evolve and develop into a thoughtful roadmap for Davidson County. It became clear early on that the biggest challenge was development of a trusting and cohesive management team. While that is still forming, the link between the front-line and the top management will encourage continued maturing of the management team.

Lori Shinton, District Seven Director

Testimonial 13: Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department

What were your biggest needs when you started working with APHSA on your project?

Hennepin County merged six former departments providing social services and public health into a single Human Services and Public Health Department (HSPHD) in January, 2004. The department's initial year focused on redesigning internal structures and systems. We launched a number of initiatives to strengthen our strategic direction and management methods, including a strategic plan, organizational redesign, role clarifications by level, a balanced scorecard, and performance-based budgeting. We established an executive team to provide leadership to ensure that the department's values and strategic commitment were clearly formulated in partnership with stakeholders.

In the spring of 2005 HSPHD conducted an assessment of its progress, and in December 2005 completed an employee survey designed around many of the same topics. The areas identified for improvement coalesced around a central theme of needing to implement a strategy for results that explicitly connected executive-level strategic work with daily operations work through techniques that were led, driven, monitored, and continuously improved by senior and mid-management.

Structurally, HSPHD was moving to client-centered integrated services, requiring increased cross-functional flexibility and collaboration, well-chartered and resourced project committees, effective centralized administrative functions, and improved data for complex decision making. Culturally, the agency sought to foster a climate of trust and empowerment with staff and clients, and stronger partnership with the community, advancing communication and teamwork in the process.

The executive team knew the strategic direction it wanted for the department, but was looking for assistance in determining how to get there. We turned to APHSA's resources to review, facilitate improvements to, and recommend further ways to improve the structural and cultural mechanisms within HSPHD, in order to most effectively advance our strategy.

Why did you select APHSA for this work? What made them/makes them different?

As a member of APHSA our department director was very familiar with the organization's resources and Phil Basso's skills in particular. APHSA's understanding of the clients we serve, the work we do and the challenges we face was invaluable. The time needed getting Phil "up to speed" on our

organization was minimal and would have taken longer and required more resources had we used a private organizational development consultant. Phil designed a process specific to the needs of our department and executive team. He understood the limited timeframe in which we had to work and took the group through a process that was thorough without being tedious. We appreciated Phil's ability to draw on previous experiences when relevant. Affordability and high value for the cost were additional benefits of working with APHSA.

What were the results of your work with APHSA, focusing on any or all of these aspects:

- Doing something more effectively
- Improving agency capacity and performance
- Improving results for the families you serve

Working with APHSA/Phil helped our executive team crystallize several aspects of the work it needed to do. Phil interviewed each executive team member early in the project and was able to explicate 7-10 major themes of work and barriers for the group to address during his time with us.

Doing something more effectively

The executive committee identified communication within the organization as an area for improvement. Since working with Phil the group has initiated and/or solidified action on several fronts to increase the exchange of information among leadership, management and staff:

- An identified member of the executive team is the consistent spokesperson for department leadership.
- The executive team routinely sponsors informal brown bag sessions on topics of significant interest to staff.
- We have regularly scheduled meetings of leadership, management and supervisors to work on department issues. The executive team and senior managers meet monthly; executive team and all department managers meet quarterly; and leadership, management and supervisory staff meet twice annually.
- Department Communications produces a monthly article highlighting service integration efforts occurring in HSPHD.
- Employees complete quarterly surveys inquiring about their views on organizational improvement and job satisfaction.

Improving agency capacity and performance

Recognizing a need for more intentional service integration across the department, the executive team developed a series of "horizontal" projects with specific outcomes to be achieved. The executive team determined that these projects would be conducted using a structured project management approach and subsequently created a senior manager position to coordinate this work.

Improving results for the families we serve

One of the executive team's first efforts after working with Phil was to develop a department-wide initiative, Project Delta, to re-engineer case management services. An explicit purpose of undertaking Project Delta was to produce better outcomes for our customers.

Although case management activities were carried out in several service areas in the Human Services and Public Health Department, we did not have a shared definition of what case management was. Supervisors and staff identified case management functions according to their individual programs' needs and practices. We were not clear about the distinctions and complementary nature of case management, social work and nursing practice. We used case management as an umbrella term when the actual work might have differed significantly among our services areas.

Project Delta presented its recommendations to the executive team in late 2007. We believe the implementation of these recommendations will improve services to clients and make better use of county and state resources.

Looking back on your work with APHSA, what would you have liked to do/liked APHSA to do differently?

We were very pleased with APHSA's / Phil's efforts and would not alter how he approached the work he did with our group. Phil worked quickly and was very effective at diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses of our organization and executive team.

A couple thoughts about what we might have done differently:

- Extend Phil's time with the executive team for additional discussion and problem-solving on issues in the organization that keep us from doing adaptive work. It would have been helpful to delineate specific incremental steps for each of the issues we identified along with the director responsible for each step.
- Schedule follow-up session(s) with Phil to review our progress, assess improvement, revise next steps and clarify assignments as needed to keep us moving forward.

Dan Engstrom, Director, HSPHD