TA&D Program Session
Results & Resources

July 2014 OSEP Project Directors' Conference

Thank you to all who participated in the TA&D Program session at the 2014 OSEP Project Directors' Conference. This year we focused on in-depth explorations of technical assistance at each level: Universal, Targeted, and Intensive. The purpose of our discussion was to examine together centers' consideration of GPRA measures. Attendees were split into three groups, one for each level of TA, and asked to discuss how they ensure the quality, relevance and usefulness (QRU) of certain TA activities—activities that TA&D centers had identified as the most common on a TACC survey earlier this year. Attendees were also asked what, if any, changes they would make in their work based on what they heard from two SEA webinar presentations (by KS and MA).

TACC consolidated the notes from these TA&D Program sessions, highlighting a few brief TA takeaways generated from participants' discussion. In addition, TACC has included related resources from the TA&D Network and beyond to help support this work. Also listed are current and future TACC activities concerning each level of TA.

As accessibility is important to consider at all levels of TA, TACC is exploring ways to help support TA&D centers in ensuring all can benefit from their work.

Universal/General TA - Websites

Defined by OSEP as:

Passive technical assistance (TA) and information provided to independent users through their own initiative resulting in minimal interaction with TA Center staff and includes one-time, invited or offered conference presentations by TA Center staff. This category of TA also includes information or products, such as newsletters, guidebooks, or research syntheses, downloaded from the TA Center's website by independent users. Brief communications by TA Center Staff with recipients, either by telephone or email are also considered Universal, General TA.

TA Takeaways

1 — Measure web analytics (with a tool such as Google Analytics) to improve the quality, relevance and usefulness (QRU) of websites and social media.

2 — High quality TA&D Project Websites must be accessible to all audiences. To ensure accessibility, careful consideration should be made when selecting a content management system; organizing content and using color, describing images; and developing tables and forms.

3 — To help improve usefulness of TA&D Project websites for a variety of end-users, content could be clearly differentiated and organized by audience type, such as teachers, parents, and administrators.

Resources

Data about visitor traffic provides important feedback on user patterns which can then be used to modify website features —increasing usability and findability of information.

Romancing the Mighty Search Engines (NICHCY)
PDF link here.
An in-depth look at SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and a variety of analytical tools.

Accessibility Resources (TACC)
Link here.
TACC web page compiling resource guides for achieving accessibility in your documents, pdfs, powerpoints, and web pages.

Google Analytics - Link here.
Analytics Help Page here.
Specific instructions when using the Google Analytic tools.

Targeted TA – Webinars

Defined by OSEP as:

Technical assistance (TA) service developed based on needs common to multiple recipients and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the TA recipient and one or more TA Center staff. This category of TA can be one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national conferences. They can also be episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls on single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the recipients. Facilitating communities of practice can also be considered Targeted, Specialized TA.

TA Takeaways

1 Practice your webinar ahead of time. This makes you more at ease with your material, which demonstrates confidence, which gives you more authority in how you're perceived by your audience –and enhances *their* engagement, ultimately raising the level of interaction.

2 Increase engagement with your audience during your webinar with roll calls, polling, and recognizing specific audience members as they ask questions (say, in the chat box) while encouraging others to respond, comment or ask new questions.

3 Create an online space (e.g., a wiki, workspace, or even just a comments section) for attendees to continue to respond and share after the webinar is done.

Resources

Two excellent resources to help guide you through strategies for improving your webinar presentation skills.

Adobe Systems Improving Your Presentation Skills
Adobe webinar link here.
A webinar hosted by Adobe that provides specific suggestions and tools to enable presenters to engage their audience to full effect.

10 Steps for Planning a Successful Webinar
Techsoup.org document Link here.
A comprehensive look at webinars in general with tips on deciding if a webinar is the proper tool, overall planning and other details that may be overlooked.

Intensive TA – Staff Coaching

One common activity participants identified to represent Intensive TA was staff coaching.

Defined by OSEP as:

Technical assistance (TA) services often provided on-site and require a stable, ongoing relationship between the TA Center staff and the TA recipient. TA services are defined as negotiated series of activities designed to reach a valued outcome. This category of TA should result in changes to policy, program, practice, or operations that support increased recipient capacity and/or improved outcomes at one or more systems levels.

TA Takeaways

1 Feedback from TA recipients is crucial to measure quality, relevance and usefulness. Use various forms of self-report from recipients (e.g. evaluation forms, written feedback) or look at external evaluation results.

2 A critical measure of the relevance or usefulness of staff coaching or staff training is whether or not the content delivered has been implemented. Ask questions such as: To what extent has it been implemented? What was the outcome? How much have you used what you learned? If you're using what you learned, what changes have you seen?

3 An area for exploration is replicability -- how do we better "advertise" our approaches that could work with other audiences/students?

Resources

We have a lot of great resources within our network on coaching, interventions and multi-tiered levels of support.

The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders
Web page link here.
A website page devoted to coaching documents, a manual, presentations, and videos.

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)
General link: http://www.pbis.org/training
Coach & Trainer Resources link here.
Types of Coaching link here.
Coaching Readiness Self-Assessment link here.

NIUSI – Leadscape
Document link here
Coaches to Coaching Skills: Sustaining Multi-Tiered Levels of Support.

National Implementation Research Network Coaching
link here,
Additional evidence for consultation and coaching **here.**

Future Related TACC Activities

Universal/General TA

Social Media Webinar with Benetech

Get Social! How TA Centers Can Leverage and Measure Social Media

Watch the Archived Webinar

Targeted TA

"Webinar Wisdom" tipsheet for presenting successful webinars

Download it Here

Intensive TA

Systems Coaching: An Emerging Discipline

Webinar on Jan 21st, 1pm ET

Focus Group Results (PDF)

As part of an ongoing conversation with OSEP and the TA&D Network, TACC will continue to follow up with other useful tools to help support centers in making technical assistance as effective as possible.