

# PENNSYLVANIA FAMILY SUPPORT ALLIANCE

## Mandated Reporter Training – Program Evaluation

### Summary Report of Findings

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One of the primary purposes of the Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) is to encourage more complete reporting of child abuse. The child protection system cannot respond, nor can children and families receive help, without community involvement. A key segment of the community is mandated reporters of child abuse – those persons who come into contact with children in the course of their employment, occupation or practice of their profession.

In recognition of the vital role mandated reporters play in identifying and preventing child abuse, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency has provided funding for the development and provision of standardized mandated reporter training. The Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (*formerly Parents Anonymous® of Pennsylvania*), with input from the Department of Public Welfare and a diverse group of

*“In addition to thanking you for a fine workshop, I want to relate to you several instances of how I used the training information. I have restructured my presentation of information to ChildLine to incorporate key phrases. I have refined my information process when speaking with children and youth agency workers, and I have utilized the differences between a GPS and a CPS referral.”*

Supervisor – West Shore School District

*The trainer “was great and after all these years (trained 1/2002), staff still refer to her training and things she said are remembered.”*

Family and Community Partnerships Manager, Head Start of Fayette County

education and religious community leaders, has developed a comprehensive curriculum for education, childcare, community service, and religious professionals.

Since November of 2000, the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance has provided training on the responsibilities and process of mandated reporting to thousands of professionals during hundreds of three, six and twelve-hour sessions. Additional mandated reporters have received training from personnel trained as local instructors through the self-perpetuating Train-the-Trainer format.

*The post-training results unambiguously show a substantial increase of participant’s knowledge and ability to report abuse. We thus conclude that the expected outcomes of the Mandated Reporter Training are fully met.*

#### Key findings:

- Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance’s Mandated Reporter Training has a lasting effect on the participants’ knowledge of the law and reporting requirements.
- The results of the sponsoring agencies survey indicate favorable reports of the training’s relevance on the agency’s mission and needs.
- The quality of Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance’s Mandated Reporter Training was judged to be higher than that of alternative services or resources.

<sup>1</sup> Institutional affiliation for identification purpose only. The views expressed in this report are solely those of the author acting in the capacity of a private consultant.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

The evaluation effort concentrated on the process, outcome, and impact of the Mandated Reporter training program. The methodology utilized Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance’s administrative records of the program, specially designed surveys, and the Department of Public Welfare records of the disposition of reported cases of child abuse and neglect.<sup>2</sup>

The expected outcome of the program is an increase in the confidence and competence of the mandated reporters to recognize and report child abuse and neglect, and work with local child welfare agencies and law enforcement in protecting the interest of children at risk of abuse and neglect. Specifically, the training aims to achieve the following three objectives:

- Increase participants’ familiarity with the Child Protective Services Law, related systems, and requirements;
- Increase participants’ ability to recognize elements and indicators of child abuse or neglect; and
- Increase participants’ proficiency in using the reporting procedures.

*“We have used the information we received on at least three reporting incidents since the training. Having the right tools made a huge difference; we received an immediate response.”* Director of Student Services, Springfield School District

## OUTCOMES

To measure the outcome, an instrument was designed that asked MRT participants a series of questions before their participation in the program and the same set of questions four weeks after their participation. The purpose of the four week time lag between pre- and post-training was to examine the long term retention of the knowledge and skills acquired in the training.

The instrument was distributed to 644 participants taking the training between January 25, 2005 and May 14, 2005. Four weeks later, an identical questionnaire was mailed to them accompanied by instructions on how to complete and return them. 110 post-training surveys were returned and analyzed for this evaluation.

### Competence

The survey asks ten multiple choice questions testing the participants’ knowledge of the CPSL, reporting requirements and procedures, and the mandated reporter’s responsibilities. The maximum possible score was ten, indicating correct answers to all questions.

*“The training assisted us in developing our own safe church policy and critically looking at our programming and facility for possible ‘danger spots’... Keep up the great work! Continue to make this training available to churches.”* Director of Children’s Ministries, Grove Presbyterian Church

Measure		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Paired Differences (Post) - (Pre)
Knowledge of CPSL and reporting procedures	Pre-training	110	4.2	2.4	4.0 **
	Post-training		8.1	1.8	
** p < 0.01					

**Paired pre- and post-training scores on participant knowledge measure**

### Key findings:

- The pre-training survey indicated that participants’ existing level of knowledge was relatively low – about 42 percent, highlighting the need for this training.
- Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance’s Mandated Reporter Training increases participant knowledge of the Child Protective Services Law and reporting requirements from the grade of F (4.2) to the grade of B (8.1).

<sup>2</sup> Discussion of the DPW findings can be found only in the full version of the report.

## Confidence

Participants' confidence in institutions and their own ability to recognize and report child abuse and neglect was measured by eight paired questions using a scale ranging from 0 (low confidence) to 10 (very high confidence). The first item in each pair represents results of pre-training testing, and the second item shows the post-training results. The difference between the scores within each pair measures the effects of the training on the respondent confidence in the respective aspect. Post-training scores that are higher than the corresponding pre-training ones indicate a positive effect of the training.

*"I appreciate all the useful information I thought I knew, but I was wrong."*  
Teacher – Nazareth Area School District

As shown above - right, the post-testing results are higher in each of the

eight pairs. *The paired pre- and post-training test shows significant increases in the participant's confidence in institutions dealing with child welfare as well as in their own ability to recognize and report suspected abuse.*

## Satisfaction

In addition to outcome, participant satisfaction with the training process was measured by a continuing survey administered between March 2001 and December 2004. The evaluation instrument consists of ten evaluative statements pertaining to various aspects of the mandated reporter training process and participant satisfaction with the training. The participants indicated the degree of their agreement with each statement by making a selection on a 5-point scale.

An analysis of the response patterns revealed that over 90 percent of all respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with all ten evaluative statements. This response pattern suggests a generally high level of participant satisfaction with the training

Measure		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Paired Differences (Post) - (Pre)
Local schools protect children well	Pre-training	110	6.4	2.2	0.6 **
	Post-training		7.0	2.0	
County Child Welfare Agency protects children well	Pre-training	111	5.5	2.3	0.8 **
	Post-training		6.3	2.0	
Local police protect children well	Pre-training	108	5.8	2.2	0.8 **
	Post-training		6.5	1.9	
I understand my responsibilities as MR	Pre-training	110	7.6	2.5	1.7 **
	Post-training		9.3	0.8	
I can recognize abuse	Pre-training	111	7.0	2.0	1.4 **
	Post-training		8.5	1.2	
I know how to report abuse	Pre-training	110	7.5	2.4	1.6 **
	Post-training		9.2	1.0	
I know how to report neglect	Pre-training	111	7.0	2.5	2.1 **
	Post-training		9.1	1.1	
I can work with child welfare agency	Pre-training	111	6.8	2.7	1.8 **
	Post-training		8.5	1.8	

\*\* p < 0.01

### Paired pre- and post-training scores on participant confidence measures

Rs group	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	10-item avg.	Number of Rs
<i>percent of the total number of Rs</i>												
Education	84	83	86	93	85	90	74	88	77	61	82	3,630
Religion	67	63	71	87	75	85	49	75	56	52	68	417
Early education	81	82	83	88	83	86	72	85	72	66	80	473
Social Services	75	73	81	88	81	82	64	82	71	63	76	411
<b>All groups</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>4,931</b>

#### Evaluative statements:

- E1 - Training objectives clear
- E2 - Training objectives met
- E3 - Materials and presentation well organized
- E4 - Instructor's knowledge comprehensive
- E5 - Instructor's ability to facilitate excellent
- E6 - Adequate opportunity for questions
- E7 - Exercises of high quality
- E8 - Training relevant and valuable
- E9 - My confidence increased
- E10 - I'll be comfortable training others

### Shares of Respondents (Rs) who "Strongly Agree" with evaluative statements, by statement, by group of Respondents.

#### Key findings:

- Mandated Reporter Training participants are highly satisfied with the training
- The highest satisfaction level was reported for instructor's knowledge

and its process.

## Impact

The long-lasting effect of the training on the participating agencies' policies and practices was measured by a specially designed survey. The survey measured the opinions of the leaders of the organizations sponsoring the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance Mandated Reporter Training regarding the training's relevance for the sponsoring organization and its quality. The responses were measured on a 10-point scale, where lower values represent unfavorable opinions and higher values represent favorable ones. In addition, the respondents were asked to provide narrative comments, suggestions and examples of utilizing the Mandated reporter training information. These narrative responses were then coded for tabulation purposes.

Item	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>MRT impact on sponsoring organization</b>					
Q1 MRT resources relevant	56	5	10	9.3	1.1
Q2 Would recommend MRT to other professionals	56	5	10	9.6	0.9
Q3 We have referenced MRT info	50	2	10	8.5	1.9
Q4 MRT enabled us to assist more effectively	54	5	10	8.9	1.2
Q5 Our policy was updated pursuant to MRT	45	2	10	8.2	2.0
Q6 Individual instruction to other staff provided pursuant to MRT	49	1	10	7.9	2.3
Q7 Relationship with C&Y improved pursuant to MRT	46	1	10	6.9	2.5
<b>Quality of MRT vs other resources</b>					
Q8 Internet websites	40	1	10	8.5	1.8
Q9 MRT material	56	5	10	9.3	1.1
Q10 ChildLine	51	5	10	8.5	1.6
Q11 Local CYS/DHS agency	51	1	10	7.8	2.3

### MRT impact on sponsoring organizations

The survey was sent to 227 organizations who sponsored training between November 2000 and December 2004. Sixty responses were returned, 4 were unreadable due to poor fax quality. The 56 responses included for this evaluation represent a 25 percent response rate.

*The Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance "has been helpful in answering questions and referring to additional resources. We began development of Abuse Prevention for Lutheran Churches in 10 counties of central Pennsylvania."* Program Coordinator, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

All respondents answering this survey reported a favorable view (scores 5 or higher) of Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance's mandated reporter training quality and relevance, and the majority (57 percent) gave a very favorable evaluation (score 10, maximum possible). The respondents also highly evaluated their willingness to recommend the MRT to other mandated professionals.



For more information, or to schedule training for your organization, contact –  
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A copy of the complete Report of Findings is available from Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance at 1-800-448-4906.