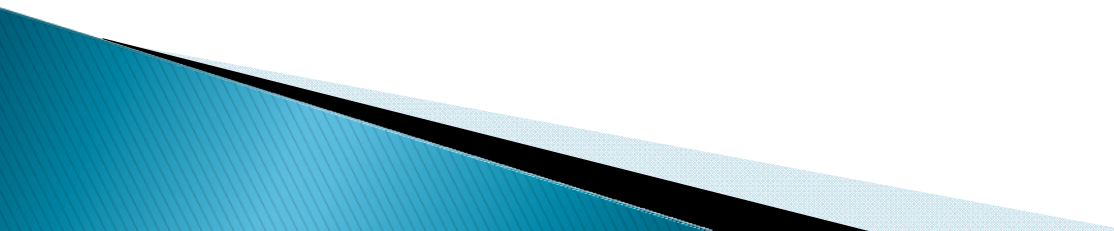


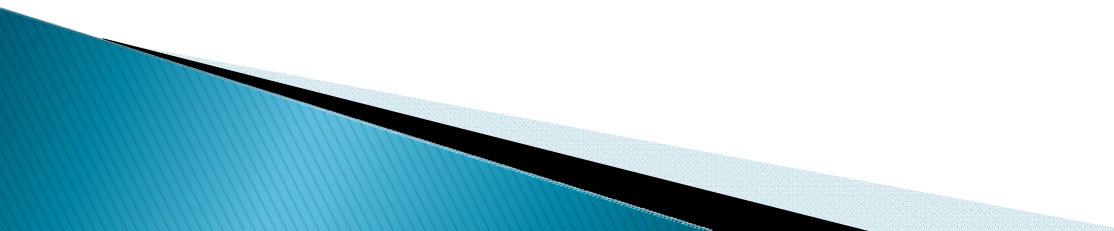
Introduction to Peer Mentoring

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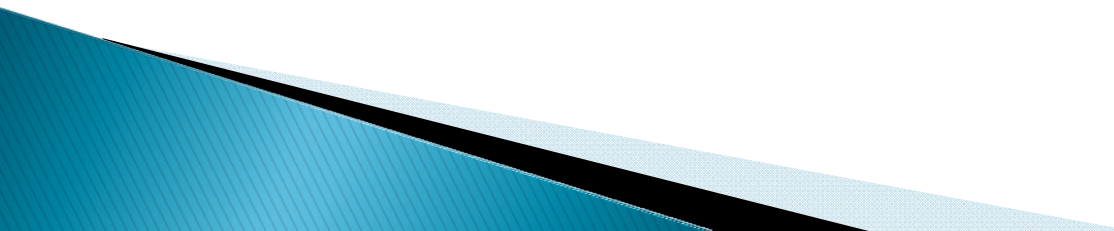
What is Peer Mentoring?

- ▶ Innovative strategy shown to significantly improve retention among direct care workers (aide staff).
 - ▶ Helps new employees become comfortable with their job responsibilities and the culture of the workplace.
 - ▶ Help orient and build skills of new employees
 - ▶ Provide critical link between employee and supervisor
 - ▶ May provide support to any employee who encounters a new challenge and needs additional support
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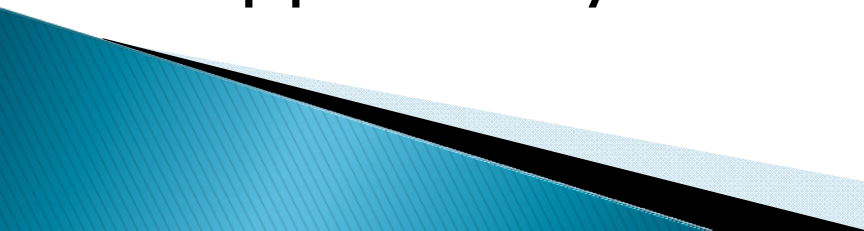
Role of a Peer Mentor

- ▶ Models good caregiving skills
 - ▶ Models effective communication
 - ▶ Supports mentees
 - ▶ Provides information about job responsibilities and the workplace
 - ▶ Gives constructive feedback to help mentees succeed
 - ▶ Demonstrates good problem-solving skills
 - ▶ Demonstrates person-centered focus
 - ▶ Helps mentees develop problem solving skills
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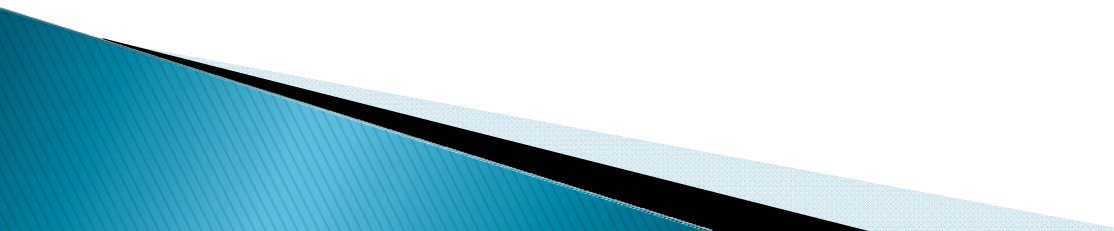
Why Peer Mentoring?

- ▶ High turnover rates in aide staff
 - ▶ High rates of turnover destabilize a provider's ability to ensure high quality services
 - ▶ Turnover rate produces stress on the workers who stay– leading to more turnover and a culture of instability
 - ▶ Need to find workers and keep them
- 

Elements of a Formal Peer Mentor Program

- ▶ Management Buy In
 - ▶ Program Design– Clarity about mentor role/ how new employees are oriented
 - ▶ Mentor Compensation– wage supplement or career ladder/ wage rate adjustment
 - ▶ Organizational Orientation– mentor's role; supervisors and other key personnel
 - ▶ Mentor selection– open, transparent–Aides who demonstrate informal leadership skills and good interpersonal skills are likely to find mentoring to be a positive career opportunity.
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Elements of a Formal Peer Mentor Program– continued

- ▶ Mentor training– goals, modules, number of days
 - ▶ Mentor oversight– Ensuring that mentors are fulfilling responsibilities, trouble shooting, scheduling, etc.
 - ▶ Mentor/Mentee Matching
 - ▶ Mentor Support
 - ▶ Mentee Orientation
- 



Management buy-in

- ▶ Make sure you have sufficient organizational support
- ▶ “Talk up” the program, letting people know how it will benefit the organization.
- ▶ Solicit input regarding program design



Job Design

- ▶ Write a job description that clearly articulates the new job responsibilities of the mentor.
- ▶ Ask for input from workers hired in the last year
- ▶ Think through issues such as caseload reduction
- ▶ If a career step/ladder–(full time mentor) this is a clear job change
- ▶ Be open to change and evolve the design of the peer mentor program



Mentor Selection

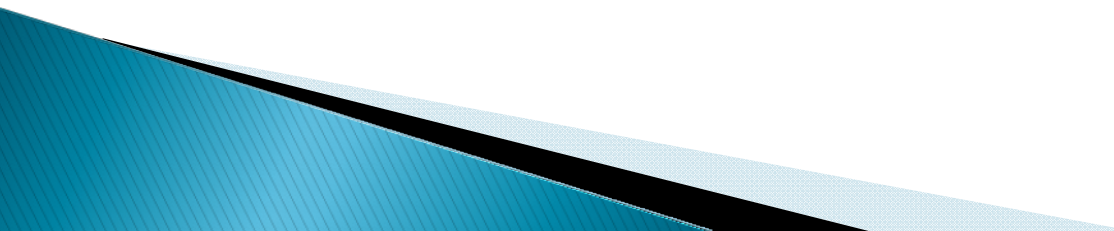
- ▶ Create a fair and accessible system for aides to apply to be mentors.
- ▶ If the system is seen as way to promote “favorites”, mentors will have no credibility with their peers and the program will fail.



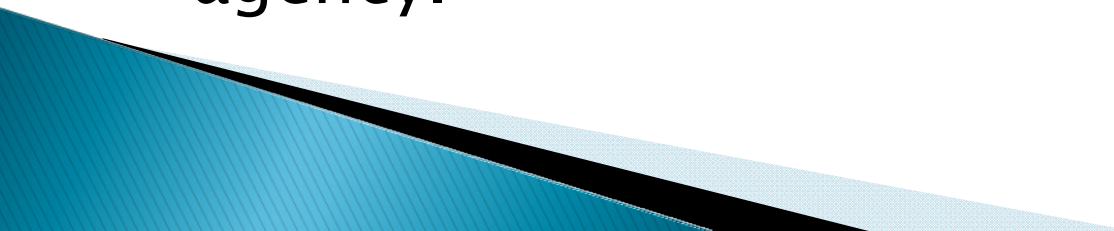
Mentor training

- ▶ Focus initial training on interpersonal skills that help mentors support new employees.
- ▶ Generally, mentors need at least 16 hours of training to learn effective skills
- ▶ Additional in-services, once the mentors are carrying out their new responsibilities are a good chance to build on learning experiences

Mentee orientation

- ▶ Orient new employees to your organization and introduce them to their mentors
 - ▶ Make sure mentees understand the mentor's role and the length of the mentoring period
 - ▶ Make sure mentees know what to expect from their mentor and the limits of the mentors responsibilities
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Part time or Full time?

- ▶ You may want to start out with a couple of part time mentors to test the position before you create a full time position for this. The part time positions could maintain a small case load. Just make sure that the peer mentor duties are not add on responsibilities to a full case load and also make sure the mentor does not end up being an “assistant” scheduler or coordinator during busy times. Make sure everyone is clear on the mentor’s role in your agency.
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Successful Peer Mentoring

- ▶ There is a staff person responsible for program oversight and on-going troubleshooting.
 - ▶ A peer mentor does not take the place of a supervisor.
 - ▶ An ongoing system for evaluating the peer-mentoring program should be in place. The system should incorporate information from both mentors and mentees.
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