



## Know Your CQI Team

This month's featured CQI team member is Bob James, a DFS Supervisor based in Cody. Bob has spent nearly his entire life in Wyoming. He has been happily married to a wonderful woman for 30 years, and has one daughter and a new grandchild who live in Billings.

Bob graduated from Cody High School in 1978 and took a couple of years off before deciding to return to school, graduating from U.W. in 1984.

Bob states that he has been a person of faith for most of his life. His top priorities are: God first, then his wife and family, then friends, job, and everything else. Being a Christian and trying to live a Christian life is the highlight of Bob's life. He says that he has varying degrees of success and failure with it like most folks. The people that have had the most influence on Bob's life, besides his parents, are childhood friends, teachers and certain authors.

Bob likes to play tennis and won the "B flight" of a doubles tournament this past summer in Cody. He also loves fly fishing and light 4 wheeling in his pickup. He is a movie buff and amateur critic, and other interests include history—particularly ancient history—and online gaming, although he does not play as much as he used to.

Bob states that he is still an idealist at work but has also become more pragmatic over the years. He is excited about the CQI team, and hopes it will continue to have a positive effect on the agency as well as on each team member.

## Roadmap to Success

The CQI Team had two great reviews in Wheatland and Torrington at the end of November, and enjoyed another such experience when they reviewed Cheyenne on December 16<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup>. Although it has been fun seeing all the local offices and the beautiful scenery around Wyoming, it was nice for some of us to be located a little closer to home! But the Team isn't going to get too comfortable—the next review is scheduled for the week of February 2nd in Sheridan.

## Casework Tips and Tools- SOAP

Narrative writing is commonly known as one of the less enjoyable parts of casework. Quality narrative should give both an *accurate* and *objective* description of events. This is no easy task. Thankfully, the **SOAP** method of record keeping was developed in order to assist in clear, concise documentation of events. **SOAP** is an acronym that stands for **subjective, objective, assessment, and plan**.

### SUBJECTIVE

**(S)** – Focuses on what brought the client in contact with DFS, and can also include information gathered from family members, stakeholders, and collateral contacts. This section should be as brief and concise as possible without losing necessary details.

### OBJECTIVE

**(O)** – Includes all factual information, and also your observations of the client and the situation. Keep it real: that which can be seen, heard, smelled, counted, or measured. This is also where you include objective information from outside sources, such as police and medical reports, assessments, IEPs, and other pertinent documents. Avoid using labels to describe the client or making judgments.

### ASSESSMENT

**(A)** – Where you include your professional opinion by taking the information collected in the first two sections and assessing how to address the problem and needs of the client. This portion should also include other steps that might need to be taken in order to further the client's chances for success.

### PLAN

**(P)** – Where you address short term plans such as next appointment, items or tasks the client needs to complete or you as the caseworker need to complete. This area can also include referrals, decisions regarding case planning, or dismissals .

### KEEP IN MIND...

When writing the SOAP note narrative, it is important to discuss presenting issues and progress being made. The discussion of progress will be in the **ASSESSMENT** section. The issues may be talked about by the client in the **SUBJECTIVE** section, be shown in the **OBJECTIVE** section or analyzed in the **ASSESSMENT** section.

The SOAP method is a great way to incorporate all of the necessary elements required in narrative. Keep it in mind the next time you are struggling to write the right notes.

## CQI Think Tank

### Getting the Important Information into Narrative

Often we see paperwork as a burden, and it helps to sometimes put into words how important paperwork is for our jobs. In particular, narrative is important to our work, and serves to increase the quality of the services we offer to children and families. Here are just a few of the tangible positives that narrative provides:

- Provides a history of case activity for the future
- Documents how a family has responded in the past to an agency intervention
- Documents major decisions
- Measures client progress
- Means of communication for future services providers
- Evidence in court testimony
- Supports worker in the event of client challenges
- Ensures services to the child
- Provides a means of supervision
- Allows worker opportunity to process case decisions
- Provides for cultural competence assurances
- Allows worker to look for patterns
- Provides information in the absence of the worker

Although it's challenging and the paperwork is often burdensome, effective narrative can support better outcomes for Wyoming's children and families.

### WHY CQI?

Last issue we asked how to make visits with parents a priority—one suggestion is to view visits with parents as an element of what we are already doing. Rather than thinking of monthly visits with children as separate events, try to make sure to visit with parents during these visits. Just as important, be sure to record visits with parents in narrative so you get credit for the visits!



### CQI Featured Worker

Kevin Wolz, Casper Probation

Kevin Wolz is a native of Casper, Wyoming. He earned his degree in Sociology and Criminology from the University of Utah, and worked for the Salt Lake City School District as an after school community manager and student advocate. Kevin has been working for DFS for about 10 years as a probation officer in Natrona County and is one of the two ISP Officers in the Casper Office.

Kevin utilizes several tools he learned about through Signs of Safety, particularly the Three Houses tool and scaling questions. He utilizes Three Houses in the form of "three columns," so they are applicable to any age level. He uses the three columns anytime he feels that a direction and clear view of what is going on in the case is needed. Kevin says that often this will happen in MDTs and in the home when meeting with the family during a sign-up or during situation/crisis interventions.

Additionally, he uses the scaling question to give kids and their families a visual of where their behaviors are at and spark the conversation of what behavior changes we will need to see for them to be closer to competing probation. This can also be used to show how their current behaviors are moving towards revocation.

Those around him say that Kevin does a great job using the tools available to him to engage children and families, and demonstrates a clear commitment to the job. Great work, Kevin!

**"The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned."**

- Maya Angelou