

One way to consider change is by examining the SOC grant in the context of adult learning and our ability to move from awareness of a new topic to the acquisition of skills and application of those skills. **Level I** is awareness—the goal at this level is to provide a broad overview of the topic, a conceptual framework, or to present and clarify the rationale for information. **Level II** is knowledge and understanding—the goal at this level is to provide comprehensive, factual information about the topic and to promote an understanding of the linkages as part of a whole. **Level III** of adult learning is the application to the job—to understand “what’s the point in my knowing this” and begin to be able to apply the knowledge to everyday job activities. **Level IV** is skills application—this level is not only knowing how to apply the knowledge, but gaining proficiency in doing so.

In Jefferson County, and in sites across the country, the overall goal is to accomplish *Level IV*—to operationalize the principles of a Systems of Care so that inter-agency collaboration and communication, cultural competence, family involvement, services based upon individual strengths and community-based delivery, and accountability are no longer “topics” or “principles” but just “the way we do business.” Therefore, it is useful to think about what level of learning has been attained in Jefferson County. In reviewing the comments from all of the focus groups and interviews, it appears that over the course of the past year *Level I* has been largely accomplished for DHS staff—the level of awareness of the broad concepts are very high among staff and court representatives.

The grant activities have also made significant progress in accomplishing *Level II* of learning. In general, staff and court representatives are linking the concepts of this and other grants’ aligned principles (such as those of Family to Family) to a more comprehensive whole and have a clear understanding about the rationale for changing practice. It appears that it’s at *Level III*—application to the job—where the work of the grant is now most poised to make significant progress. Staff and court representatives commented that staff need to better understand how the principles apply to their own jobs and what it looks like when applied to day-to-day practice with families and colleagues. The *Level III* of learning appears to be occurring within certain aspects of CYF and DHS, such as the practices of TDMs or the more frequent communication and collaboration between TANF and Child Welfare caseworkers. It is at *Level III* where families begin to see the impact of the grant, as the quality of their interaction with staff, providers, and the courts begins to change.

Over the course of the next year, grant activities will emphasize building cultural awareness, working more closely across Divisions, and fully implementing TDMs. It has the potential of being a year of significant progress in moving DHS more fully into *Level III* of learning, as staff will have more fully attained an understanding of “how I am to use this information.” Achievement of *Level IV* at the system level is an ideal; with competing demands, turnover in staff, etc., it’s not possible to attain a universal level of the highest degree of skills proficiency. However, at the individual and case level, it is possible to begin to see more and more staff and community providers, along with the courts, attain the integration of SOC principles into day-to-day practice.