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TEAM PRIMACY CONCEPT-BASED EMPLOYEE EVALUATION AND
JOB PERFORMANCE

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requirements for the degree of
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We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

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DEDICATION

To my father, Edmundas, who has always believed in me unconditionally, who has instilled in me a love for this beautiful life, and who was the major force in shaping who I am today. To my mother, Zita, for bringing me into this beautiful life. To my stepmother, Albina, for her support in all stages of my child and adult life. Thank you.
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This qualitative case study explored how employees learn from Team Primacy Concept (TPC)-based employee evaluation and how they apply the knowledge in their job performance. Kolb’s experiential learning model (1974) served as a conceptual framework for the study to reveal the process of how employees learn from TPC evaluation, namely, how they experience, reflect, conceptualize and act on performance feedback. TPC based evaluation is a form of multirater evaluation that consists of three components: self-feedback, supervisor’s feedback, and peer feedback. The distinctive characteristic of TPC based evaluation is the team evaluation component during which the employee’s professional performance is discussed by one’s peers in a face-to-face team setting, while other forms of multirater evaluation are usually conducted in a confidential and anonymous manner.

Case study formed the methodological framework. The case was the Southeastern Virginia (SEVA) region of the Institute for Family Centered Services, and the participants were eight employees of the SEVA region. Findings showed that the evaluation process was anxiety producing for employees, especially the process of peer
evaluation in a team setting. Preparation was found to be an important phase of TPC evaluation. Overall, the positive feedback delivered in a team setting made team members feel acknowledged. The study participants felt that honesty in providing feedback and openness to hearing challenges were significant prerequisites to the TPC evaluation process. Further, in the planning phase, employees strove to develop goals for themselves that were meaningful. Also, the catalyst for feedback implementation appeared to stem from one's accountability to self and to the client or community. Generally, the participants identified a number of performance improvement goals that they attained during their employment with IFCS, which were supported by their developmental plans.

In conclusion, the study identified the process by which employees learned from TPC-based employee evaluation and the ways in which they used the knowledge to improve their job performance. Specifically, the study examined how participants felt and what they thought about TPC-based feedback, in what ways they reflected and made meaning of the feedback, and how they used the feedback to improve their job performance.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore how employees learn from Team Primacy Concept-based (TPC) evaluation and how they use the knowledge in their job performance. TPC evaluation is a form of multirater evaluation that consists of three components: self-feedback, supervisor’s feedback and peer feedback. The main difference between TPC evaluation and other forms of multirater evaluation is that during the TPC evaluation process, the employee’s professional performance (consisting of strengths and challenges) is openly discussed by his or her peers in a face-to-face setting and in the presence of all team members, while other forms of multirater evaluation are usually conducted in a confidential and anonymous manner. This study used Kolb’s experiential learning model (1974) as a conceptual framework for the process of discovering how employees learn from TPC evaluation, namely how they experience, reflect, conceptualize, and act on performance feedback received during such evaluation.

Chapter one provides an overview of the study. It begins with a brief background of the problem, followed by the problem statement and description of the purpose of the research study. The chapter continues with a discussion of the conceptual framework, followed by the significance of the study and the definitions of operational terms used throughout the study. Finally, an explanation of the limitations and assumptions of the study is offered.

Background of the Problem

During the late 1800’s, the typical workplace was characterized by autocratic authority, and supervisory feedback that was “random, harsh, and primarily focused on
level of output” (Rogers, Rogers, & Metlay, 2002, p. 45). Decades later, following the Second World War, the focus shifted to participant motivation and job satisfaction, and regular performance reviews between supervisor and employee became the norm. In the middle of the 20th century, organizations began developing streamlined structures to become more competitive. These structures created a larger number of direct reports for each manager, resulting in less available time for these managers to observe each report. Also, these streamlined structures and flattened hierarchies undermined the reliability of traditional supervisor-participant performance feedback and began highlighting the relevance of peer feedback (Rogers et al., 2002). Thus, an expectation grew for employees to communicate and work more with each other. In 1956, Eichel and Bender found that in approximately 50% of companies surveyed, peers or subordinates provided employees with minimal input, usually described as “slight”. A mere 16-19% of the survey respondents indicated that they received “moderate” input from their peers.

The advent of the 1980’s saw the rise in popularity of evaluation by different raters (peers, subordinates, clients) within organizations. During that time, the multirater evaluation was mostly used exclusively as a higher management professional development tool. In this process, such higher managers would receive an evaluation by different raters with the objective of developing their professional skills (Coates, 1998). McCarthy and Garavan (2001) highlighted several significant studies that surfaced in 1980’s, which were primarily carried out by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) in Greensboro, North Carolina. These studies focused on management development and found that feedback constituted an important element of an individual’s professional and personal development. Additionally, the CCL studies concluded that the most effective
executives were those who encouraged learning and development. However, the studies also determined that most employees operated in "feedback-poor" environments. Consequently, CCL's findings influenced the growth and development of multirater evaluation regarding learning and performance in the workplace (McCarthy & Garavan, 2001).

Total quality management, organization surveys, developmental feedback and performance appraisals contributed to the evolvement of multirater feedback (Edwards & Ewen, 1996c). In the 1990's, multirater evaluation, with peer evaluation as one of its components, gained credibility and popularity "as a performance management and career development tool in contemporary organizations" (McCarthy & Garavan, 2001, p. 5). At the same time, organizations began to align their feedback processes with overall strategies and goals. Therefore, multirater feedback was designed around those behaviors, competencies and characteristics that would lead to the accomplishment of strategic objectives (Rogers et al, 2002). Currently, major corporations such as Bank of America, Disney, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, and Motorola evaluate employees using the 360-degree system, which is a form multirater evaluation (Strom, Strom, & Moore, 1999). McCarthy and Garavan (2001) stated that 360-degree feedback gained acceptance and was very popular among Fortune 500 companies. According to Edward and Ewens (1996c, p. 5):

Organizations are reducing hierarchy by removing layers of management and putting more emphasis on empowerment, teamwork, continuous learning, individual development and self-responsibility. The 360 degree feedback model aligns with these organizational goals to create opportunities for personal and career development and for aligning individual performance expectations with corporate values.
Multirater evaluation is a process in which feedback is gathered from those who work most closely with the employee, primarily supervisor(s), peers, direct reports, and internal and external customers. Feedback is provided on the employee's specific work behaviors and skills (Edwards & Ewen, 1996c). Terms used to describe multirater evaluation include "360-degree feedback", "stakeholder appraisal", "full-circle appraisal", "multirater feedback", "multisource assessment", "subordinate and peer appraisal", "group performance appraisal", "multi-point assessment" and "multi-perspective ratings". Multirater feedback has different forms. For instance, in 270-degree feedback, one source of feedback is not used, such as clients' or customers' ratings. In 180 degree feedback, only peers provide feedback to an employee. In some cases, when employee receives evaluation from external customers, an extended version of 360-degree feedback, called 540-degree feedback, is used. In all of these instances, it is acceptable to use the term "360-degree feedback" (McCarthy & Garavan, 2001).

Multirater employee evaluation has been researched in various organizational contexts. For instance, Edwards and Ewen (1996c) conducted a study of faculty members at Arizona State University to determine the effectiveness of 360-degree evaluation at the institution. They found that, following the evaluation, there was an increase in productivity of the faculty and in customer satisfaction ratings. Similarly, Pollack and Pollack (1996) conducted a comprehensive study in order to develop their recommendations regarding the effectiveness of the performance appraisal process. The authors reviewed the appropriate research literature, conducted telephone interviews with members of private and public sector organizations, examined the regulations and practices related to performance appraisals, and conducted focus groups. They found that
the feedback was most valuable for employee performance when such feedback data were used in the developmental plans. Overall, the studies showed positive results of 360-degree employee evaluation in facilitating employee performance.

Another form of multirater evaluation is one that is based on Team Primacy Concept (TPC). As TPC-based employee evaluation includes a component of face-to-face team evaluation, the terms “TPC-based evaluation,” “TPC evaluation,” and “face-to-face team evaluation” are used here interchangeably. The distinguishing characteristic of the TPC-based employee evaluation is that feedback given to an employee in a face-to-face manner, with all team members present at the same time and in the same setting. This approach is different from the other types of multirater evaluation that are confidential and anonymous.

In TPC-based employee evaluation, the team plays an important role in the process of providing an employee with peer feedback. Lawler, Mohrman, and Ledford (1995) found that 67% of all Fortune 1000 firms use the team approach in their organizations for production, quality assurance, and other functions. Moreover, Wellins, Byham, and Wilson, (1991) determined that 37% of organizations that implement self-empowered teams also utilize teams for employee evaluations.

Statement of the Problem

Teams are a rapidly growing form of employee involvement. More organizations are using a team approach for production, quality assurance and employee evaluations, thus promoting open communication among group members, group task focus, and group viability (Druskat & Wolff, 1999). Multirater evaluation was found to be generally effective in enhancing employee performance (Edwards & Ewen, 1996c; Pollack &
Pollack, 1996), but there was still the need to address the role of employee evaluation that includes face-to-face team peer feedback in regard to employee job performance.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was defined by three concepts: (a) TPC-based employee evaluation, (b) empowered teams, and (c) Kolb's experiential learning model. Initially, a description of TPC-based employee evaluation is presented. This is followed by a description of the concept of empowered teams. Finally, Kolb's learning model is presented.

**TPC-based Employee Evaluation**

Employee TPC-based evaluation originated from Garner's (1988) Total Team Model. The Total Team Model provided a theoretical framework for the organization of interdisciplinary groups of human services professionals who work with students, clients or patients. Specifically, Garner's model created a framework for peer supervision that promotes collective responsibility for professional growth and clients' total well-being. In an effort to facilitate professional growth and to ensure that clients' needs are met, organizations use team processes to perform many organizational functions, including team interviews for hiring new employees, team evaluations and decisions regarding client care (Garner, 1988). TPC presents the expectation of an organizational culture that invests both power and responsibility into front-line employee teams. Such a culture facilitates openness, emotional support, and effective feedback by team members (Garner, 1988). According to Painter and Smith (2004), TPC is characterized by the following teamwork guidelines:
1. Teamwork is the highest administrative priority and other administrative objectives are secondary.

2. Research demonstrates that a team with more than 10 members will not be able to coordinate its activities.

3. Attendance and effective participation at the team meeting is mandatory and a requirement for continued employment.

4. Meetings or appointments integral to the job or of a personal nature should not be scheduled at the team meeting time.

5. A team cannot function if numerous internal hierarchical relationships exist. No team member should be in an employer-employee supervisory relationship with any other member of the team.

6. If one team member continually leads and dominates the team functioning, she/he is a liability and not an asset.

7. The most valuable and influential member of the team is one who can develop competence and strength in other team members.

8. If one team member fails to do his/her part, all members of the team are affected and must be responsible for dealing with this failure.

9. Feedback given to peers should be timely, true, kind, and necessary.

10. The team must relate to one higher authority who is not a team member.

11. Express commitment to team members is demonstrated through attentiveness to each agenda item (p. 123).

Painter and Smith (2004) stated that the primary functions of a team include information sharing, emotional support, training and development, and peer supervision. Peer supervision activities include team interviewing and hiring recommendations, provision of home-based services and TPC-based employee evaluations.

The TPC evaluation includes four components: self-assessment, an individual meeting with each team member, the team assessment, and the supervisor's assessment.
The employee, his or her peers, and a supervisor use an evaluation guide (Appendix A) and evaluate each of the employee's skills using a "low," "some," or "high" indicator for competence and accountability (Painter & Smith, 2004).

While the team plays an essential part in this type of evaluation, little is known about how team feedback influences performance. Limited research has been conducted with university students, but not with employees on face-to-face multirater evaluation in a team setting. The findings of limited research revealed a positive effect of such evaluation on participants' performance (Druskat & Wolff, 1999). Thus, the goal of this study was to research what role, if any, face-to-face peer evaluation, involving team members, plays in employee job performance.

**Empowered Teams**

Self-managing or empowered teams became popular in the 1990's when organizations were looking for new ways to increase productivity and employee satisfaction (Hirshorn, 2005). Harper and Harper (1992) believed that the benefits of self-directed work teams include more efficiency and productivity, higher quality, improvement of the organizational systems, a more satisfactory work place, better communication, and the sense of belonging and commitment.

Hirshorn (2005) presented a qualitative study indicating that self-managing teams are effective in operations that require immediate decision making. Furthermore, that study determined that self-managing teams show higher safety performance and can positively influence the safety attitudes and behaviors of team members. Overall, teams were found to be a positive influence on job performance and job satisfaction.
Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model

Kolb’s experiential learning model (1974) was used in this study as a conceptual framework to discover how employees learn from TPC evaluation and modify their behaviors to improve their job performance. Kolb’s experiential learning model, also referred to as the “learning cycle,” explains the process by which individuals and organizations attend to their experiences, understand them, and consequently modify their behaviors (Kolb, 1974). Kolb believed that learning takes an active form and that a learner engages in the processes and makes sense of concrete experiences.

This learning model was influenced by John Dewey’s (1910) emphasis on the need for learning to be grounded in experience, Kurt Lewin’s (1946) work that stressed the importance of a person being active in learning, and Jean Piaget’s theory (1972) on intelligence as the result of the interaction of the person and the environment (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). The cycle includes four elements: concrete experience, reflective observation, conceptualization, and active experimentation. Kolb indicated that this process represents a learning cycle or spiral where a learner “touches all the bases”: experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. The logic of the learning cycle is to make many small and incremental improvements, which constitute major improvements over time.

Concrete experience represents perceptions, feelings and senses that a person experiences in a learning situation. Therefore, in one facet of this study, I explored how employees experience the evaluation process and how they perceive the feedback received from the various sources. Reflective observation means reflecting on how the experience would impact some aspects of an individual’s life. For the purpose of this
study, reflective observation entailed an exploration of the meaning the employees give to the feedback regarding their work performance. *Conceptualization*, according to Kolb, is a process whereby an individual interprets events and tries to incorporate the interpretation into his or her life. To explore “conceptualization”, I examined how employees planned to use the feedback to make necessary changes to improve their performance. Finally, *active experimentation* represents implementing and testing concepts in new situations. I examined active experimentation to determine how feedback was implemented as outlined in the work plans. Figure 1 depicts Kolb’s experiential learning cycle.

In summary, researchers have given adequate attention to confidential and anonymous practice of multirater evaluation, and, generally, the studies have shown positive results of such practice in employee performance. Besides, the use of teams by organizations is increasing; however, research is lacking on employee evaluations that include face-to-face team feedback. Specifically, we know little on how employees learn from such evaluation and how they use the knowledge to improve their job performance. Therefore, in this study I used Kolb’s (1974) experiential learning model to explore how the study participants (a) experienced the process of TPC evaluation, (b) how they reflected on the feedback, (c) what concepts and strategies they identified to enhance their performance, and (d) what actions they took to enhance their job performance. Based on this conceptual perspective, research questions were developed to guide the study.
Figure 1. Kolb’s experiential learning model (Kolb, 1974).
Research Questions

Basic Research Question

How do employees learn from TPC employee evaluation as it relates to their job performance?

Subsidiary research question one. How do employees experience TPC self-feedback, supervisory feedback and peer feedback?

Subsidiary research question two. How do employees reflect on TPC self-feedback, supervisory feedback and peer feedback as it relates to job performance?

Subsidiary research question three. How do employees make meaning of feedback in planning for changes to their work behaviors following TPC self-feedback, supervisory feedback, and peer feedback?

Subsidiary research question four. How do employees implement TPC self-feedback, supervisory feedback, and peer feedback in their job performance?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to research how employees learn from TPC employee evaluation as it relates to their job performance: how they experience the process of TPC evaluation, how they reflect on the feedback, what concepts and strategies they identify to enhance their performance, and what actions they take to enhance their job performance.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant to theory, practice, and policy in the field of human resource development, particularly as it relates to individual and organizational performance. In this section, the need and implications of this study are described.
Need for the Study

The need for a study of how employees learn from TPC evaluation and how they apply knowledge in their job performance was evident within the practice and theory of human resource development.

Need within practice. Although employee evaluations involving face-to-face peer feedback in a team setting are emerging as an accepted form of evaluation, there is little research on its role in employee performance. This study aimed at finding out how employees learn from such evaluation as it relates to their job performance. Through interviews with participants and reviews of their developmental plans, I intended to understand how the employees experience TPC-based feedback and how they incorporate the feedback data to improve performance.

Need within research and theory. A review of literature on the subject revealed a noticeable lack of research on employee evaluation involving a face-to-face team approach. I also noticed a methodological pattern among the evaluation studies reviewed. The majority of the studies exploring job performance used quantitative methods in determining the relationships between employee performance and other organizational variables. The need for in-depth exploration of participants’ perceptions on the process of performance improvement was apparent.

Implications for the Study

This study has the implications for practice, theory and policy within the field of human resource development.

Implications for practice. I expect that the study results will be used by other organizations to increase their knowledge of employee evaluation that includes a face-to-
face peer team feedback component. While the qualitative nature of the study limits generalization of the results for application in other settings, some recommendations of this study may be beneficial to organizations that apply or consider the application of face-to-face employee evaluations.

*Implications for research and theory.* The study shaped and influenced the theory on effectiveness of employee evaluations as it described how employees learn from TPC feedback, and demonstrated how employees used the knowledge gained in regard to their job performance. Also, this study is significant as it may raise awareness and stimulate additional research on employee evaluations involving face-to-face peer feedback in a team setting.

*Implications for policy.* The findings of this study will inform the employee evaluation policy at the Institute for Family Centered Services. Based on the outcome of this study, the current policy may be modified to better meet the needs of the employees and to ensure the effectiveness of employee evaluation. Finally, the outcome of this study may affect employee evaluation policy in other organizations that choose to implement face-to-face team evaluations.

**Operational Definitions of Terms**

The operational terms presented here are for the purpose of this study.

*Collateral*

“Collateral” shall mean representatives from a variety of agencies that work and are involved with client and family, such as representatives from departments of Juvenile Justice, Mental Health, Social Services, Education, Public Health/Safety and Child Advocacy, or Criminal Justice. Also, “collaterals” may be representatives from private
and public managed care agencies that authorize or fund the service delivery (Painter & Smith, 2004).

_Job Performance_

"Job performance" refers to a human action, involving work behavior that results in valuable accomplishment (Gilbert, 1996).

_Kolb’s Learning Cycle_

"Kolb’s learning cycle" refers to a learning model that describes learning as a four stage cycle, in which “immediate and concrete experiences” provide the basis for “observations and reflections”. These “observations and reflections” are assimilated and distilled into “abstract concepts” producing new applications for action, which can be “actively tested”, in turn creating new experiences (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

_Multirater Evaluation_

"Multirater evaluation” refers to a job performance evaluation process, in the private and public sectors, in which an employee is provided by feedback on his or her performance from multiple sources: supervisors, subordinates, peers, and customers (Pollack & Pollack, 1996, p 507).

_Organizational Culture_


_Performance Improvement_

“Performance improvement” refers to “a process for achieving desired institutional and individual results” (Performance Improvement: Developing a Strategy for Reproductive Health Services, 2003).
Team

"Team" refers to "a work group, which is made up of individuals who see themselves and who are seen by others as a social entity, who are interdependent because of the tasks they perform as members of a group, who are embedded in one or more larger social systems (e.g. community, organization), and who perform tasks that affect others (such as customers or coworkers)" (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996, p. 308).

Three Hundred Sixty Degree Employee Evaluation

"Three hundred sixty degree employee evaluation" refers to the "performance evaluation system whereby the work performance of an individual is evaluated not only by a supervisor but also by self, peers, subordinates, customers, and others familiar with quality of that person's work" (Fox & Klein, 1996, p. 20).

TPC-Based Evaluation

"TPC-based evaluation" refers to employee evaluation involving "structured and detailed face-to-face performance feedback by the employees in a group setting, which allows a team member to develop a strategic plan to improve his or her performance in challenged areas" (Institute for Family Centered Services, 1994).

Assumptions

Because the TPC is a significant part of the organizational culture, it was assumed that employees of the selected site understood the practices of TPC-based evaluation. Additionally, I assumed that all the employees of the selected site had received equal training on TPC, which included training on effective ways of giving and receiving feedback, team functions and responsibilities, behaviors promoting team functioning, and reaching group consensus.
Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

The results of this case study are limited to data gathering from one region, specifically to two teams from one organization, namely the Institute for Family Centered Services (IFCS). Therefore, a limitation of generalizability should be applied to this study, meaning that the findings of the study may not apply to other settings. Furthermore, the qualitative study described how employees learned from TPC evaluation as it related to their job performance. However, such a study was not intended to determine the degree of correlative relationship between TPC evaluation and employee performance. Similarly, it was not my intent to explore whether TPC employee evaluation was more or less effective in improving employee performance than other forms of employee evaluation, such as supervisory evaluation or confidential and anonymous 360-degree evaluation.

I work in a higher administrative position at IFCS in Florida; thus, Florida regions were excluded from the selection process. This strategy was used to reduce my biases and increase participants' openness as I did not have a working relationship with them.

Summary

As the popularity of multirater evaluations has grown since the 1980's, many organizations have implemented 360-degree feedback. Often, 360-degree evaluation is conducted in an anonymous and confidential way, in a “pencil and paper” format or electronic medium. TPC employee evaluation, as distinguishable from other forms of multirater evaluations, includes peer feedback that is carried out in a face-to-face manner, with all team members present. Although confidential and anonymous 360-degree evaluation has been found to be generally effective in employee performance (Edwards &
Ewen, 1996c; Pollack & Pollack, 1996), there was a need to explore the role of TPC-based evaluation in employee job performance. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to research how employees learn from TPC employee evaluation and how they apply their knowledge in their subsequent job performance.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to explore how employees learn from Team
Primacy Concept (TPC)-based employee evaluation and how they apply the knowledge
in their job performance. Based on Kolb’s experiential learning model, learning embraces
the components of “experience”, “reflection”, “conceptualizing” and “actions” (Kolb,
1974). Thus, I sought to find out (a) how employees experience the process of TPC
evaluation, (b) how they reflect on the feedback, (c) what concepts and strategies they
identify to enhance their performance, and (d) what actions they take to improve their job
performance.

Chapter two is organized as follows: first, an analysis of literature on the
approaches to employee evaluations in work organizations is presented. The way in
which organizations apply employee evaluations is then discussed with a focus on the
characteristics of successful multirater evaluation utilization, and the negative aspects of
peer and multirater evaluations. Then, a presentation of the theoretical and empirical
literature on the effectiveness multirater evaluations on employee performance is
outlined. Finally, Kolb’s experiential learning model is explained and discussed.

Chapter Two is organized as follows:

Approaches to Employee Evaluations in Organizations

Employees in organizations want to know how well they perform. A simple
statement like this, according to McCarthy and Garavan (2001), caused much discussion
in the field of organizational management. The challenge is to provide employees with
effective feedback which can facilitate both performance improvement and effective
career development processes (McCarthy & Garavan).

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Organizations have used several types of employee evaluations, such as supervisory evaluation, multirater evaluation, as well as the different subtypes of multirater evaluation. After World War II, more traditional supervisory evaluations became popular (Rogers et al., 2002). In the middle of the twentieth century, some organizations started applying processes where peers or subordinates provided feedback to an employee (Eichel & Bender, 1956). Multirater feedback, where an employee receives confidential and anonymous feedback from different sources - such as subordinates, peers, supervisors and customers - gained popularity from the late 1980’s to the early 1990’s (McCarthy & Garavan, 2001). Subsequently, the wave of self-managed teams, which came in vogue in 1990’s, introduced a modified multirater evaluation wherein an employee received face-to-face feedback from one’s peers. In this modified 360-degree employee evaluation, behavior-based feedback is used to enhance performance and behavior in team settings (McCarthy & Garavan). The following subsections discuss the different types of employee evaluations. Table 1 outlines the major differences between the traditional supervisory approach to evaluation, multirater evaluation, and TPC or face-to-face team evaluation. I will begin with a discussion of supervisory evaluation, as this type of evaluation is a predecessor of the other forms of employee evaluation and still remains prevalent in many organizations today.

**Supervisory Evaluation**

Supervisory evaluation is a type of employee evaluation in which an employee meets with a supervisor, and he or she is provided with one-way supervisory feedback. In most cases, supervisory evaluations are conducted on an annual basis and are based
on job description and performance expectations. Relative to other types of employee evaluations, researchers (Toropov, 1999; Van Ekeren, 1984) have given more attention to supervisory evaluation in relation to various organizational variables.

Fedor, Davis, and Maslyn (2001) investigated the dimensions of supervisory power and recipient self-esteem as predictors of performance improvement efforts following negative performance feedback. The authors used mixed-methods for that study. They measured job performance improvement using a self-reporting scale, which included six items, such as “I increased my productivity,” “I put more effort into my work.” The authors found that supervisor’s expert and referent power were significant predictors of performance improvement. Thus, it appeared that supervisory power and employee perceptions of such power played a significant role in how an employee improved performance following a supervisory evaluation.

According to Edwards and Ewen (1996c), “supervisory appraisals are generally time consuming, and typically both those who give them and those who receive them dislike them” (p. 6). The authors also stated that supervisory evaluations are not usually effective because they do not differentiate between levels of performance and also do not result in performance improvement. Moreover, due to the fact that supervisor-only performance assessment relies on a singular perspective, it may reflect a self-serving attitude and other biases towards an individual. Politics, favoritism, or friendship may also influence supervisory evaluation (Edwards & Ewen, 1996c). Similarly, the
Table 1

*Distinguishing Characteristics of Typical Supervisory Evaluation, Multirater Evaluation, and TPC Employee Evaluation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Evaluation</th>
<th>Typical Supervisory Evaluation</th>
<th>Typical Multirater Evaluation</th>
<th>TPC Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor's Feedback</td>
<td>Is given by a supervisor while meeting with an employee and providing him or her with one-way feedback.</td>
<td>Is typically confidential. Supervisor assesses employee's performance using paper and pencil or electronic format, then submits the assessment without employee being able to identify the source.</td>
<td>Supervisor meets with an employee face-to-face (following the peer team evaluation) and discusses with the employee his/her self feedback. Also provides employee with supervisory feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Feedback</td>
<td>Not applied.</td>
<td>Is typically confidential. Peers assess employee's performance using paper and pencil or electronic format, then submit the assessment without employee being able to identify the source.</td>
<td>(1) Each team member meets with an employee individually and discusses with him or her strengths and challenges in job performance areas. (2) Each team member in a group face-to-face setting shares with an employee his or her strengths and challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Feedback</td>
<td>Not applied.</td>
<td>Is typically anonymous, meaning that employee does not share his self-assessment with his supervisor or peers. Employee performs self assessment and meets with an organizational consultant to process self-feedback.</td>
<td>Employee performs self assessment and presents the report to his or her peers and supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Plan</td>
<td>(1) Not applied or (2) is developed by an employee based on supervisor's feedback.</td>
<td>(1) Not applied or (2) is developed by an employee based on confidential supervisor's peers' and self-feedback.</td>
<td>Is developed by an employee based on supervisor's, peers' and self-feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-Up</td>
<td>(1) Not applied or (2) is conducted by a supervisor while meeting with an employee and providing him or her with one-way feedback regarding performance following the evaluation.</td>
<td>(1) Not applied or (2) is conducted by an employee while meeting with an organizational consultant and/ or supervisor and discussing performance change following multirater evaluation.</td>
<td>Is conducted by supervisor and peers in face-to-face meeting on ongoing basis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
supervisor may have insufficient opportunity or motivation to observe employee performance, or the supervisor may be unwilling to confront poor performance (Edwards & Ewen). Supervisor-only ratings, when viewed in comparison to other sources of evaluation, tend to be more inflated, and show less distinction among criteria and between people (McCarthy & Garavan, 2001). In Edward's and Ewen's (1996c) opinion, supervisors rate more honestly and more rigorously when their ratings are supported by other informed sources.

Thus, these arguments brought forth the belief that supervisory ratings are only a reflection of the employee performance based solely on the perspective of the supervisor, and that such ratings cannot capture all behaviors of an employee. These unmeasured behaviors may include whether such employee is a good team player, supporting his or her peers. These arguments led to the development of 360-degree, which is a subtype of the multirater evaluation.

*Three Hundred Sixty Degree Evaluation*

Three hundred sixty degree employee evaluation is "a performance evaluation system, whereby the work performance of an individual is evaluated not only by a supervisor but also by self, peers, subordinates, customers, and others familiar with the quality of that person's work" (Fox & Klein, 1996, p. 20). This type of evaluation is typically conducted in an anonymous and confidential way.

*Confidentiality and anonymity.* Three hundred sixty degree and other types of multirater evaluation are typically conducted in an anonymous and confidential manner in most companies applying these employee evaluations. Rogers et al. (2002) conducted research with 45 global companies to uncover the critical factors and best practices with
respect to the application of 360-degree feedback. Their research was conducted using a survey method, after which they concluded that confidential and anonymous feedback occurred in 97% of all companies in this survey. The authors believed that maintaining confidentiality and anonymity is an important factor of 360-degree evaluation because a lack of anonymity can lead raters to soften their ratings. Atwater and Waldman (1998) also argued that 360-degree feedback should be collected anonymously and provided to an employee confidentially. According to these authors, "exposure to the feedback in a confidential manner gives [employees] an opportunity to make changes without revealing their weaknesses to others" (p. 96). This statement begs the question: how could somebody’s weaknesses or challenges be “revealed” when challenges have been already observed and identified by peer employees? Nonetheless, other sources suggested that feedback should be anonymous and confidential (Brotherton, 1996; Edwards & Ewen, 1996b; Dyer, 2001; Gregory, 1998; London & Beatty, 1993; Vinson, 1996; Wimer & Nowack, 1998).

Fox and Klein (1996) described how one organization successfully implemented a modified version of 360-degree evaluation, where evaluations between employee and peers were anonymous. However, in this case, a typical evaluation between a supervisor and employee was conducted face-to-face and incorporated review of peer ratings, but peer names still remained anonymous.

Yukl and Lepsinger (1995) indicated the usefulness of having employees identify their raters prior to evaluation. However, they still maintained that feedback given by raters should, in any case, remain anonymous and confidential. As an example, an employee would identify 8-10 peers and 8-10 subordinates. This would mean that he or
she has knowledge of who is submitting ratings, but does not know who is submitting which ratings. Yukl and Lepsinger (1995) stated that by identifying raters, an employee has a greater sense of control. However, critically speaking, this method raises a question whether the raters identified by the employee were those that were most likely to give favorable ratings about the employee's performance.

_Administration of 360-degree evaluation._ Three hundred sixty degree evaluation is usually completed in either “pencil and paper” form or electronically (Atwater & Waldman, 1998; McCarthy & Garavan, 2001; Meyer, 1998). According to Rogers et al. (2002), paper and pencil methods used for completing the 360-degree questionnaires remain the primary tools used in 90% of organizations. However, some companies have implemented automated systems using computer software and company networks for completing such evaluations (Edwards & Ewen, 1996a). The use of specialized software that tracks respondents by name, yet maintaining their anonymity, overcomes many of the problems involving data integrity because invalid respondents can be identified and removed. The automated system saves respondents’ time, paper consumption, and administrative overhead (Edwards & Ewen, 1996a). However, the initial implementation of automated evaluation systems would require an upfront financial investment.

_Advantages of multirater evaluation._ The advantage of peer evaluation as part of 360-degree appraisal is that it gives a much broader perspective than supervisory evaluation alone, which is based on one person’s view of employee performance (McCarthy & Garavan, 2001). Cummings and Schwab (1973) stated that peer evaluations reduce the threat associated with status differentials and social distance built into the typical evaluation by a supervisor. Moreover, Strom et al. (1999) argued that employees
preferred peer evaluations because coworkers see them on a daily basis, know their daily performance, and can accurately identify their deficiencies.

The superintendent of a major school district (Santeusanio, 1998) used 360-degree feedback as an evaluation model in his school district. Firstly, he applied a 360-degree evaluation approach for his own evaluation by asking the school committee, parents, teachers, secretaries and administrators to rate his performance. Secondly, he used 360-degree evaluation approach to evaluate school administrators, and, finally, he used the approach to evaluate the teachers. According to Santeusanio, an approach involving peer and subordinate evaluation was much more fair, accurate, useful, stimulated collegiality, and shifted administrators' roles from judge and jury to coach and mentor. Moreover, it motivated specific behavior changes towards professional improvement among all who participated.

In conclusion, multirater evaluations have gained credibility and popularity within work organizations in the past 20 years. The most common form of multirater employee evaluation is provided in a confidential and anonymous way. In recent years, another form of multirater evaluations has emerged. Along with the popularity of self-managing teams, some organizations have implemented employee evaluations involving peer feedback in a team setting.

**Evaluation Involving Teams**

Sixty seven percent of Fortune 1000 companies use the team approach in organizational functions. These teams (also known as "semi-autonomous work groups", "self-regulating", "self-directing work groups", "empowered teams", or "self-empowered teams") appear to be a growing form of employee involvement (Lawler et al., 1995). At
least 37% of companies that use teams in organizational functions involve the teams in employee evaluations (Wellins et al., 1991). However, while the use of self-empowered teams is increasing, the effectiveness of multirater employee evaluations with face-to-face peer feedback has not been fully explored. Some research described here was conducted with university students rather than employees in work organizations.

Druskat and Wolff (1999) conducted a study of face-to-face team evaluations with a group of university students, and their study revealed a positive effect of such evaluations on participants' performance. An experimental design was used to examine the immediate and long-term impact of a structured, face-to-face developmental peer appraisal on 294 undergraduates in 44 self-managing work groups, and 217 MBA students in 36 self-managing work groups. The study results showed that face-to-face peer feedback had an immediate positive impact on open communication, task motivation, group viability, cohesion, and satisfaction among group members. Additionally, the closer to the task deadline a student was, the more effective feedback by group members on his or her performance appeared to be. Overall, the results showed that peer appraisals exerted a positive effect on relationships and task focus, demonstrated an increased influence proportionate to the immediacy of the task deadline, and showed great potential with respect to work teams. However, though the results of the study revealed positive effects of team evaluation on performance, Druskat and Wolff's (1999) study was conducted with university students and not with members of work organizations. Thus, the need was yet present to explore the phenomenon of employee team evaluation within a working environment, and also to determine the role
that such evaluation plays in employee performance. This is particularly necessary in organizations that use self-empowered teams in the service and production industries.

_**Empowered employee teams.**_ According to Wellins et al., (1991) a self-managing work team is "an intact group of employees who are responsible for a “whole” work process or segment that delivers a product or service to an internal or external customer", (p. 3). The concept of self-managing teams originated in socio-technical systems theory (Hirshorn, 2005; Wellins et al, 1991). Based on experiments in Great Britain, Scandinavia, and the United States in the 1950’s and 1960’s, the socio-technical theory assumes that the employee teams with more flexible roles are more effective than the teams with highly structured roles (Hirshorn, 2005).

In the United States, the application of self-managing teams was initiated in the mid 1960’s and 1970’s by such companies as Procter & Gamble and the Gaines Dog Food Plant (Wellins et al., 1991). Self-managing teams became very popular in the 1990’s when organizations were looking for new ways to increase productivity and employee satisfaction (Hirshorn, 2005). In their survey of Fortune 1000 firms, Lawler et al. (1995) found that 67% of the responding firms used teams with at least a small portion of their employees, and that such teams were one of the fastest growing forms of employee involvement. Similarly, Hirshorn (2005) surveyed 178 MBA graduates, most of whom had already been employed as managers, to find out their beliefs with regard to usefulness of self-managing teams. She found that most of these graduates (95%) believed that self-managing teams constituted a helpful work structure in today’s organizations.
Wellins et al. (1991) outlined several factors characterizing self-managing teams, such as sharing various management and leadership functions; planning, controlling, and improving work processes; setting goals and inspecting work; creating schedules; ordering materials, keeping inventories, and working with suppliers; acquiring training as needed; hiring and disciplining members of the team, and taking responsibility for the quality of products and services. Wellins et al. (1991) believed that teams can be a strong influence on overall competitive organizational strategy for the following reasons: employees who are closest to the work know best how to perform and improve their jobs; most employees want to feel that they “own” their jobs and make meaningful contributions; and, finally, the teams can provide possibilities for empowerment that are not available to individual employees. These authors stated that “the biggest reason for the movement toward empowered work teams is the fact that teams work” (Wellins et al., 1991, p. 13).

Research conducted by Cohen, Chang, Ledford (1997) found that teams often exhibit high performance and high member quality of life. Similarly, Harper and Harper (1992) argued that the benefits of self-managing work teams include more efficiency and productivity, higher quality, improvement of the system and the process, more satisfactory work place, better communication, and the sense of belonging and commitment. Hirshorn (2005) described a qualitative study that found self-managing teams to be effective in operations that required immediate decision making. Furthermore, that study found that self-managing teams showed higher safety performance and positively influenced the safety attitudes and behaviors of team members. In addition, Feifer, Nocella, DeArtola, Rowden, and Morrison (2003) stated
that "teams create a synergy toward coordinated problem-solving efforts in areas of
specialized knowledge, provide a competitive advantage to their organization, provide
flexibility and speed, and provide for an outcome that is greater than the sum of its
individual members" (p. 21). These authors asserted that self-managing teams do best
when the tasks to be accomplished are self-contained and organized around products,
customers or services.

On the other side of the spectrum, some researchers and organizational
consultants advise against the application of self-managing teams. One reason given is
that self-managing teams can be difficult to implement and may consume a fair amount
of resources (Hirshorn, 2005). Another challenge is that teams’ development can take
between two to five years and may require a high-involvement environment, including a
culture of management support. The lack of feedback and supervisors’ guidance may
increase the anxiety level of team members. Furthermore, these teams may feel that they
cannot make key decisions or resolve interpersonal conflict (Hirshorn, 2005). Hirshorn
(2005) discussed a case of the negative experience of a clothing manufacturer that
implemented self-managing teams and combined this implementation with sales quotas
and incentives. This combination negatively affected staff morale as evidenced by “peer
pressure” and threats by more skilled employees toward slower employees. Wellins et al.
(1991) concluded that failure of teams within organizations can be mostly attributed to
lack of preparation and failure to anticipate the magnitude of change that implementation
of teams require. These authors suggested that prior to implementing teams, the
management of an organization needs to assess whether teams are the right strategic
decision for an organization. Specifically, an assessment of an organization’s long-term

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business needs must be conducted, defining the role and importance of teams within the larger business context. Additionally, an organization should determine if its values and mission are compatible with enabling self-managing teams to operate.

Capozolli (2004) emphasized that in an effort to ensure successful outcome of self-managing teams, it is important to change the culture to support the teams. He stated that “the change must be a result of incremental steps so everyone will understand the vision and philosophy behind the change” (p. 26). The organization needs to have resources and commitment to this type of change. Furthermore, performance expectations of the teams must be developed so team members know what is expected. In addition, the feedback method through which teams would know how well they are performing needs to be established. Finally, an organization needs to set boundaries to define teams’ operations (Capozolli, 2004; Orsburn, Moran, Musselwhite, & Zenger, 1990). Harper and Harper (1992) believed that the following organizational actions are needed for self-managing team success:

1. Management support
2. Participative leadership
3. Elimination of traditional supervision
4. Patience
5. Training in new attitudes, new roles and new skills
6. Union-management partnership
7. Empowerment
8. Rewards
Leadership in self-managing teams. Self-managing teams are interdependent groups that work on group tasks high in autonomy. Self-managing teams often have considerable authority to make decisions concerning personnel and other matters for the group. However, a self-managing team bears a hierarchical authority, even though the authoritarian role may be different from a traditional supervisory role (Cohen et al., 1997). Similarly, Capozolli believed that “supervisors will not completely be replaced, but they develop a new role of coaches and advisors to teams” (2004, p. 26). Orsburn et al. (1990) also strongly suggested making managers available to the teams through conferring, clarifying and coaching, particularly in the first stages of team development.

Druskat and Wheeler (2004) stated that in order to manage and sustain the success of a team, the leader must effectively manage the boundary between the team and the larger organization. The authors indicated that team autonomy is not a given state. It is, rather, a process during which a leader should be guiding and developing a team so that it would become increasingly independent. Druskat and Wheeler explained that the process of team development can be grouped into four basic phases: relating, scouting, persuading and empowering. “Relating” includes the following behaviors of team members: being socially and politically aware, building team trust and caring for team members. “Scouting” consists of seeking information from managers, peers and specialists, diagnosing member behavior, and investigating problems systematically.
"Persuading" signifies the obtaining of external support from peers and influencing the team. Finally, "coaching" is construed to mean the act of the manager working one-on-one with the employees, giving feedback to the team and facilitating effective meetings (Druskat & Wheeler, 2004).

Similarly, Wellins et al. (1991) believed that leadership responsibilities do not disappear once self-managing teams emerge; rather, they gradually change over time. According to these authors, as teams emerge they may require fully emerged management at the beginning, which can later be transferred to a fully empowered group leader outside the team, who is in a higher supervisory position for multiple teams. Subsequently, the leadership of the fully empowered group leader outside the team is transferred to an empowered leader inside the team. Finally, as a team develops, the leadership is transferred to team members themselves (Wellins et al., 1991). The authors surveyed a number of organizations and found that 68% of those organizations participating, over time, were able to run their team-based organizations with fewer managers (Wellins et al., 1991).

Development stages of self-managing teams. Self-managing teams go through several stages of development. Harper and Harper (1992) described stage one as a stage that fosters a lot of confusion, uncertainty, and frustration. There can be some excitement on the part of some – but definitely not all - team members. During stage two, the team members become united, and start experiencing a sense of belonging, trusting each other, and making good decisions. Stage three, according Harper and Harper, is the final stage when the team is effectively carrying task duties as well as maintenance duties. At this stage, team members feel ownership of the team and the work (Harper & Harper, 1992).
The stages described by Wellins et al. (1991) are similar to those described by Harper and Harper. In Wellins' et al. perspective, each team goes through four stages, and what Harper and Harper identified as stage one, Wellins et al. broke down to stages one and two. Stage one is the “who am I?” stage, where team members may feel frustrated, may question each other and withhold their full participation. Stage two is a stage where commitment tends to be towards subgroups, members may assert themselves, and communication may be direct and aggressive. Members sort out those whom they feel they can trust and those they feel they cannot trust. The description of stages three and four in Wellins' et al. is similar to that of Harper and Harper (1992) and Orsburn et al. (1990).

When the organizational structure moves from classic supervisory designs to work teams with leadership dispersed throughout the team, team members offer highly credible multirater performance feedback (Edwards & Ewen, 1996c). Among the organizations using 360-degree feedback systems for this reason are Motorola, Glaxo, General Motors Acceptance Corporation, Allied Signal, Digital, and Kino Hospital (Edwards & Ewen, 1996c). The Institute for Family Centered Services also utilizes a multirater system involving the team members, namely employee evaluation based on Team Primacy Concept. Hence, the next subsection will describe the Team Primacy Concept-based employee evaluation which is the focus of this study.

Evaluation Based on Team Primacy Concept

It has been established that members of self-managing teams may offer highly credible performance feedback. However, according to Wellins et al. (1991), among organizations who implement self-empowered teams, only 37% of organizations use
teams for appraising performance. The reasoning behind many companies displaying this low ratio is that it is difficult for teammates who work closely with each other to give constructive critical or negative feedback. The team members may be better at giving positive feedback due to the close relationships with their colleagues (Wellins et al., 1991). Nonetheless, some organizations, such as the Institute for Family Centered Services (IFCS), have been applying Team Primacy Concept-based (TPC) employee evaluation that involves peer feedback in a team setting for 18 years (Painter & Smith, 2004).

Evaluation based on TPC is a structured and detailed performance feedback process by self, supervisor, and peer employees that allows team members to develop strategic plans to improve performance in challenged areas (Painter & Smith, 2004). Because of the TPC culture, which considers a team to be the highest administrative priority, the TPC employee evaluation places responsibility and accountability on the team member. The responsibility and accountability are evidenced by the development of individual improvement goals, followed by specific strategies, and the follow-up on how these strategies are being implemented. Another important characteristic of a TPC-based evaluation is the peer feedback component carried out in the presence of all the team members at the same time and in one setting. Participation in the evaluation of a team member allows all the team members to recognize that they also face challenges in some areas. This realization helps form an organizational culture where one’s problems, weaknesses, and challenges can be discussed openly (Garner, 1988).

IFCS (Painter & Smith, 2004) advanced face-to-face evaluation based on Garner’s Total Team Model (1988). Firstly, the employee evaluates himself or herself in
the four core performance areas - clinical interventions, documentation, collateral relationships, and teamwork - and self-scores using a “low”, “some”, or “high” indicator for competence and accountability in each skill listed in each core area (Appendix A). Each member of the team also completes an evaluation guide for that employee and scores each skill using “low”, “some” or “high” indicators for competence and accountability. Competence is evidenced by knowledge and transferable skills; accountability is evidenced by enthusiasm and confidence in ability to perform without close supervision (Painter & Smith, 2004). Each team member then meets individually with the employee to discuss, one-on-one, his or her strengths and weaknesses in the four main performance areas. Then during a weekly meeting team members collectively share with the employee, in a group face-to-face setting, his or her strengths and challenges in the four main performance areas. The strengths are identified first, followed by the challenges. As the evaluation session focuses on only one team member, it can be specific and detailed. This allows the person being evaluated to gain a complete understanding of how others perceive him or her (Garner, 1988). A supervisor attends this meeting, but does not share observations and perceptions. The supervisor’s goal at this point is to understand how other team members perceive the employee who is being evaluated (Garner).

The next step involves meeting with the supervisor – in IFCS’s case the regional director - who evaluates the employee’s skills and performance in the four core performance areas. The joint perceptions of team members, the employee and the supervisor are recorded, and each skill is evaluated using “low”, “some”, or “high” indicators for competence and accountability. An employee and his or her supervisor
work together to summarize the strengths and challenges of the employee (Painter & Smith, 2004). Consequently, the employee puts together a developmental plan including specific goals and strategies to improve performance in challenged areas. The employee chooses 3-4 areas that require improvement based on the challenges identified during the evaluation process. The goals for working on these areas along with the corresponding specific strategies are then developed. An employee introduces his or her goals and strategies to the team and, as time goes on, updates the teammates on how the strategies are helping him or her and how he or she is reaching the set goals. Figure 2 illustrates the process of TPC employee evaluation.

IFCS has been implementing TPC employee evaluation since the inception of the company 18 years ago. In 2004, IFCS implemented a change in the TPC evaluation process. Prior to 2004, employees would evaluate themselves and each other in the four core performance areas – documentation, collateral relationships, clinical work with families, and teamwork. However, at that time FCS’s did not utilize a specific list of skills in any of those core areas. Evaluation was more “fluid” and many times FCS’s were evaluated based on their personality features (such as “friendly”, “easygoing with team members”) as well as their job performance. In 2004, IFCS’s Organizational Development department made the evaluation process into a more structured one. The family centered specialist’s evaluation guide (Appendix A) was developed and implemented at IFCS regions. The evaluation guide includes the four core areas and outlines the corresponding skills required for successful performance in those areas. For example, the corresponding skills for the “Documentation and Recording” area include
1a. Employee develops a self-feedback report regarding performance strengths and challenges in the core job areas. Refers to previous Developmental Plan.

1b. Each team member develops a peer feedback report with respect to employee's performance, strengths and challenges in the core job areas. Refers to previous Developmental Plan.

2. Employee meets with each team member individually (6-8 employees) to discuss peer feedback regarding his/her performance.

3. All team members share and discuss with employee the feedback regarding his/her performance in a team setting, with all team members present.

4. Employee meets with supervisor, and supervisor provides employee with supervisory feedback.

5. Employee puts together a Developmental Plan, based on self, peer, and supervisory feedback.

6. Employee presents the Developmental Plan to the team and the supervisor.

Figure 2. Team Primacy Concept (TPC) based employee evaluation process.
writing progress notes and completing the family-centered assessment report, the
treatment plan, and the discharge summary. Before the 3-month or annual evaluation
takes place, FCS’s assess the team member for the skills outlined in the guide, marking
the relevant “high”, “some”, or “low” scores for competence and accountability. Thus,
the implementation of the FCS’s evaluation guide was tailored to help FCS’s to stay
focused on job skills rather than personality characteristics.

Garner (1988) stated that a “growth is a complex process of learning new skills,
of overcoming difficulties, and of gaining confidence and competence” (p. 105). He
further explained the importance of creating an environment where problems as well as
employees’ weaknesses and inadequacies are discussed openly. In the Total Team Model,
giving and receiving feedback is an ongoing process. Garner (1988) suggested
conducting “structured feedback sessions” every few months, which are guided by a
procedure that facilitates the sharing of perceptions and feelings among team members.
The goal of this process is to allow all team members to hear how they are appreciated by
colleagues and to recognize how their job performance can be improved.

Garner (1988) described the structured feedback process as follows: Team
members are asked to think of two positive perceptions of each other’s work, skill,
attitudes, and contributions to the team. Team members are then asked to think of one
concern regarding each other’s work. The concern may be an observation, a feeling or an
intuitive insight. Consequently, each team member shares the two positive perceptions
and one concern with the first person to receive feedback. The person receiving feedback
is asked to listen. Once all the team members are finished sharing their perceptions, a
recipient of feedback is allowed to respond. The team member is then asked about his
thoughts and feelings during the feedback. This structured session may be somewhat emotional and may require vulnerability on a team member's part. According to Garner (1988), structured feedback sessions increase trust and decrease anxiety within a team so that future problems can be discussed between team members without arguments and/or conflict. Furthermore, it allows team members to practice giving and receiving feedback prior to annual evaluations. In his training handbook, Garner (2002) included concrete training exercises on how to give and receive feedback. He emphasized descriptive versus evaluative feedback; and avoiding labeling, psychoanalyzing, blaming and pontificating (Garner).

In conclusion, employee evaluation based on TPC involves structured face-to-face feedback, with its main component conducted in an open, group setting. This approach promotes a team culture and helps all team members be aware of what is expected within an organization. Evaluation based on TPC is conducted for both developmental and administrative purposes at IFCS.

How Organizations Apply Multirater Employee Evaluations

Employee evaluations in work organizations can be applied for developmental or administrative reasons, or a combination of both. Developmental reasons include employee professional skill development and professional growth while administrative reasons include employee promotions and salary increases. Although a number of organizations apply multirater evaluations for both developmental and administrative reasons, several authors (Fedor, Bettenhausen, & Davis, 1999; Pollack & Pollack, 1996) differentiated between multirater application for developmental and administrative reasons and caution against multirater evaluation application for administrative reasons.
Moreover, a review of the literature on this topic found several theoretical articles and empirical studies that indicate the negative aspects of employee evaluation (Pfau & Kay, 2002; Saavedra & Kwun, 1993), and the predictors to the success of multirater evaluations (Antonioni, 1997; Atwater & Waldman, 1998), both of which are discussed below.

**Peer and Multirater Evaluations for Developmental or Administrative Purposes**

Pollack and Pollack (1996) differentiated between peer feedback for developmental reasons and for administrative reasons. The authors believed that employees and managers are much more amenable to receiving feedback from subordinates and peers when ratings are used for developmental and not for administrative purposes. According to them, if ratings are collected for administrative determination purposes, the ratings are more lenient, less reliable, less valid, and contain more halo effect than ratings for developmental reasons. The halo effect is the result of the rater in evaluating an individual high on many traits based a belief that the individual is high on one trait (Jacobs & Kozlowski, 1985). Fedor et al. (1999) also favored multirater evaluations for developmental reasons. Contrary to evaluations for administrative purposes, evaluations for developmental purposes were viewed as win-win situations, and they assisted coworkers in the development of their interpersonal and task related skills (Fedor et al., 1999).

Dyer (2001) also stated that 360-degree feedback should be for developmental and not for administrative purposes. Similarly, Edwards and Ewen (1996b) explained that multirater feedback for only developmental purposes has substantial advantages. According to the authors:
1. Providers of feedback may be more willing to be totally honest because neither they nor the recipient have anything to lose.

2. Receivers of feedback may be less defensive, more open to other's views, and more apt to regard the feedback as credible.

3. The feedback itself does not impinge on legal requirements surrounding selection decisions (e.g., promotions), because the information has no direct impact on careers. (p. 41)

Additionally, Edwards and Ewen (1996b) argued that using 360-degree feedback for administrative purposes is not effective for the following reasons:

1. When feedback is used for administrative reasons, it negates the value for developmental purposes: when information is used for performance management, feedback providers may hold back on their ratings for fear that negative comments may hurt the career and pay opportunities of the feedback recipient.

2. It inflates ratings: when feedback providers worry about the effect of their responses on a co-worker's career and pay, they may inflate ratings.

3. It encourages users to “game the system”: feedback providers may use invalid rating strategies – that is, give responses that are uniformly at the top or bottom of the rating scale or are systematically different from those of all other respondents – for reasons of friendship or competition. (p. 42)

Lepsinger and Lucia (1998) suggested that multirater feedback should be used solely for developmental purposes, especially if it is the organization's first experience. A purely developmental approach gives people experience using multirater feedback and helps them understand how it can contribute to other human resources (HR) management systems. Additionally, it is easier to sell an idea of multirater feedback for developmental purposes to stakeholders, since they may be more resistant to implement it for purposes of appraisal and compensation, due to potential problems that could arise as a result of improperly used feedback. Once employees get used to multirater feedback for...
developmental reasons, the system can be “upgraded” to be used for administrative purposes (Lepsinger & Lucia, 1998).

On the other side of spectrum, Greguras, Robie, Schleichler, and Goff (2003) did not find significant differences using multirater evaluation for administrative versus developmental purposes. They investigated the accuracy of multirater ratings when evaluation is conducted for developmental and administrative purposes. The authors collected quantitative data in a large telecommunication company in which a multirater rating instrument was administered to rate job performance for developmental purposes. Six months later the same instrument was used for administrative (pay increase or promotion) purposes. The original data set contained 499 ratees, of whom 454 were rated for both purposes. The multirater instrument was designed specifically for the study. The instrument was composed of 16 scales with each scale containing 3-5 items, such as “empowers and delegates authority” and “communicates effectively.” Greguras et al. (2003) did not find significant difference in peer interrater reliability for administrative and developmental ratings.

Overall, Bohl (1996) found that out of 765 surveyed companies in the US, 90% used 360-degree appraisals for administrative decisions, such as merit increases and promotions. However, in Canada, the picture is different. Brutus and Derayeh (2002) surveyed a total of 506 Canadian organizations and found that out of those who used multirater employee evaluations, 74% used them for developmental purposes. Only remaining 26% of organizations used multirater evaluation for both administrative and developmental purposes.
In conclusion, some of the research studies reviewed recommend that 360-degree feedback be used mainly for developmental purposes, even though there is evidence of no significant difference in ratings for developmental versus administrative purposes. Furthermore, if an organization chooses to use multirater evaluation for administrative purposes, it is recommended that additional application measures, such as preparation, be applied.

Negative Aspects of Peer and Multirater Evaluations

Despite the fact that many sources have indicated the positive aspects of multirater application, peer evaluations and/or multirater evaluations are not well accepted in some organizations because it is assumed that they are inconsistent with the goal of promoting a cooperative team climate (Saavedra & Kwun, 1993). Bettenhausen and Fedor (1997) stated that individuals tend to give higher scores based on their friendship and personal relationships with raters. They also found that participants feared the repercussions of providing the individual with negative feedback and often they altered the ratings to avoid unpleasant consequences.

Other researchers explored the role of conflict in evaluation processes. For instance, Fedor et al. (1999) argued that raters had a considerable role conflict when asked to evaluate their peers’ performance. Such role conflict was heightened when an appraisal was used for administrative purposes, as evaluating performance is traditionally part of a supervisor’s job and is one of the defining distinctions between hierarchical levels of command. Cardy and Dobbins (1994) pointed out that the peer evaluation process influences individuals to alter their ratings to enhance their own standing within the team.
Pfau and Kay (2002) discussed Human Capital Index study by Watson Wyatt (2001), which explored the linkages between 360-degree evaluation and shareholder value. The study determined that 360-degree feedback programs were associated with a 10.6% decrease in shareholder value. The study also analyzed over 600 studies and found that one-third of these studies indicated improvements in organizational performance, one-third reported decreases in performance, and the rest reported no impact at all (Pfau & Kay, 2002). The authors indicated that the roots of ineffectiveness are lack of training, a gap between the organizational objectives and the 360-degree measures, high costs associated with the programs, and a lack of goal implementation. Pfau and Kay emphasized the importance of preparing people before implementing 360-degree feedback. They asserted that “providing constructive feedback takes instruction, training, and practice” (p. 58).

While some literature outlines these negative aspects, other literature sources also discuss the successful predictors of multirater evaluation. These successful predictors, or characteristics, are expected to decrease or eliminate negative aspects of multirater evaluation, and lead an organization to an effective implementation of multirater evaluation.

*Characteristics of Successful Use of Peer and Multirater Evaluations*

The literature on this topic outlines several important aspects of successful peer and multirater evaluation application within organizations, such as (a) training and coaching (Antonioni, 1997; Atwater & Waldman, 1998), (b) organizational culture (Garner, 1998; Gregory, 1998), (c) developmental plans and support resources (Pfau &
Kay, 2002; Pollack & Pollack, 1996), and (d) application of employee evaluations at appropriate frequency (London & Beatty, 1993; Pollack & Pollack, 1996)

Training and coaching. Antonioni (1997), Atwater and Waldman (1998), and Pfau and Kay (2002) emphasized that organizations should provide training to all evaluators before implementing 360-degree evaluation systems. This training needs to include strategies that prevent rating errors, such as halo effect, central tendency, range restriction, leniency and harshness. The training also needs to explain the objectives of the feedback. Employees should also be trained on how to provide constructive and behaviorally oriented feedback (Atwater & Waldman, 1998). Antonioni (1997) also suggested that employees who are being evaluated require training in four areas: (a) analyzing the data and selecting improvement targets; (b) processing feelings associated with receiving unexpected negative feedback; (c) discussing the summary results with their evaluators; and (d) setting specific goals and action plans.

In an effort to analyze the impact of coaching along with 360-degree feedback, Luthans and Paterson (2003) conducted a field study at a small manufacturing company located in the Midwest. The study participants consisted of 20 managers and 67 workers. After the initial multirater data collection, the senior researcher met with each manager individually to analyze and discuss the results. The coaching sessions were confidential in that they were conducted between manager and researcher and focused on enhancing the managers’ self-awareness. Acknowledging the limitations of the study, the authors revealed several outcomes. Firstly, feedback-coaching helped the managers to raise the ratings of others with respect to their performance during the subsequent evaluations. Secondly, feedback helped managers to enhance their self-awareness as indicated by a
decreased statistical difference of self-ratings and ratings of others after the coaching session. Finally, feedback, combined with the systemic coaching, had a positive impact on both managers' and their employees' work performance (Luthans & Peterson, 2003). Luthans and Peterson's study was significant as it clearly shows the importance of coaching as the follow-up of the evaluation. Luthans and Peterson's study also supported the recommendations of several authors (Antonioni, 1997; Atwater & Waldman, 1998; Pfau & Kay, 2002) regarding the necessity of training in the multirater evaluation process.

Organizational culture. Cummings and Schwab (1973) asserted that in order to facilitate the effective use of peer evaluations, there should be a high level of interpersonal trust and sharing among peers. Likewise, Garner (1988) indicated that for successful and effective peer feedback to take place there should be trust within a team, which can be increased by frequent feedback and open communication. In order to avoid the politics that can surround 360-degree feedback, organization leaders need to make sure that all employees' questions are answered – how 360-degree feedback works, why it is done, and why it is important for employees to be honest (Gregory, 1998). Furthermore, Gregory (1998) asserted that the implementation of 360-degree feedback should start with the evaluation of a company's CEO and executives as this would feel less threatening and intimidating to the front-line employees.

Moreover, Brotherton (1996) agreed that 360-degree feedback may facilitate positive changes in organizational culture, such as the value of honesty among employees. Also, Covey (1996) identified 360-degree feedback as one of seven essential components for a high-performance culture.
Developmental plans and support resources. Another important predictor of successful multirater evaluation is the development of action plans as soon as feedback is received (Pfau & Kay, 2002; Pollack & Pollack, 1996). Pollack and Pollack (1996) in their study revealed that the feedback data carry most value when used in the development of action plans. It therefore appeared that the developmental plan is a necessary ingredient in a successful 360-degree evaluation. Moreover, it is also important that employees receive the support and resources necessary to improve developmental areas after feedback (Pollack & Pollack, 1996). Similarly, Dyer (2001) believed that following 360-degree feedback process an employee should develop a plan of action. He stated that an employee would need to identify a developmental need and build on it as well as to identify a previously unrecognized strength and capitalize on it.

Application of employee evaluations at appropriate frequency. Pollack and Pollack (1996) recommended the focusing of evaluation on three to five areas of development. If the number of evaluation areas exceeded five, employees tended to not allocate sufficient time towards the evaluation of performance of their peers. Approximately half of the organizations surveyed by Pollack and Pollack (1996) indicated that their employee evaluation process was conducted once during the length of employment. The literature emphasized the importance of conducting evaluations at least yearly, or better, twice per year (London & Beatty, 1993; Pollack & Pollack, 1996).

McCarthy (2000) and Garner (1988) also stated that feedback should be given to employees frequently and it should not be limited solely to an annual evaluation. According to McCarthy, “conducting an annual review or performance appraisal is a good idea as long as it is not the only time managers and employees discuss
performance” (p. 22). Likewise, Garner explained that, in the Total Team model, giving and receiving feedback is an ongoing process. Garner suggested conducting “structured feedback sessions” every few months. He explained the process as a guided group procedure that facilitates the sharing of perceptions and feelings among team members.

In conclusion, research indicates that multirater evaluation can be successful. Employees have to be trained, prepared, supported and provided resources to improve their performance following the evaluation so that multirater evaluation becomes effective.

How Multirater Evaluation Relates to Job Performance: Theoretical and Empirical Studies

Several authors in the reviewed literature make a strong assertion on the positive role that multirater evaluation plays in job performance. DeNisi and Kluger (2000) stated that peer feedback constituted an essential component of an effective performance improvement strategy. Moreover, Strom et al. (1999), and Yammarino and Waldman (1993) maintained that peer feedback improved productivity and held greater credibility than supervisory feedback. According to Strom et al. (1999) feedback of coworkers was not so easily dismissed and their recommendations for improvement were generally taken more seriously. Similarly, Edwards and Ewen (1996c) stated that feedback is the most powerful motivator for behavior change, and this is why 360-degree feedback serves as a catalyst to increasing productivity. These authors asserted that “no organizational action has more power for motivating employee behavior change than feedback from credible work associates” (p. 4).
According to Garner (1988), the main benefit of peer evaluation in a Total Team Model is performance improvement. He stated, “employees can then develop goals for improving their job performance, knowing that a team is aware of their weaknesses and will support their efforts to gain increased competence” (p. 105). Similarly, Luthy (1998) explained the importance of a development plan in the process of employee performance improvement. In Luthy’s idea of an evolved system, supervisors and employees work together to create a developmental plan that is specific to the employee and his or her position. The foundation for guiding professional growth and development as well as assessing performance consists of the goals, or desired outcomes, identified in the development plan.

Further, research studies demonstrated that multirater evaluation improved employee performance within organizations. Renn and Fedor (2001) examined the relationship among a set of feedback-seeking, social-cognitive, and goal-setting constructs and the work performance of sales and customer service representatives. Work performance was measured at two dimensions: work quantity and work quality. Work quantity was measured as an employee’s average sales per hour over a one week period. Work quality was measured by a summative measure of participants’ ratings on 20 service quality criteria, including adherence to scripts, sales procedures, and general helpfulness toward the customer. Supervisors evaluated their subordinates each along these criteria in a call monitoring format. The authors calculated an average between 9 to 12 overall quality ratings for each participant. The study determined that feedback seeking and self-efficacy related to two dimensions of work performance (work quantity and work quality) through feedback-based goals. In addition, the study found that self-
efficacy and feedback seeking mediated the relationship between the two individual differences (personal control perceptions and external feedback propensity) and the two dimensions of work performance (work quantity and work quality). Renn and Fedor’s findings were relevant to this study as they demonstrated that feedback seeking behaviors correlate with work performance.

In a quasi-experiment type study of 38 self-managed undergraduate teams, Erez, Lepine and Elms (2002) examined the effects of team structure on performance. In their study, teams had different forms of member evaluation and team leadership. Relative to teams that relied on external evaluations, teams with peer evaluations displayed higher levels of workload sharing, voice, cooperation, performance, and member satisfaction. Overall, the results of the study demonstrated the potential importance of peer evaluations in self-managed teams. However, Erez’s et al. study included teams of undergraduate students and not teams of employees in work organizations. Therefore, the following questions still remained: what role does team evaluation play in work organizations? How do employees learn from team peer evaluation? How does evaluation contribute to their job performance?

Dominick and Reilly (1997) conducted a study examining the effects of peer feedback on team behaviors using a 4-dimensional model of team behavior. Participants were randomly assigned to teams under one of three experimental conditions: feedback, exposure, or control. In the feedback condition, participants rated themselves and each other using a 24-item behavioral observation scale after completing the first of two decision making tasks. Those assigned to the exposure condition completed the behavioral observation scale after the first task for their peers, but were not informed how
peers rated them. Participants in a control group neither gave nor received feedback. The results showed that participants who gave and received behavioral peer feedback demonstrated effective team behavior more frequently than participants who did not give or receive feedback. Participants who gave, but did not receive feedback demonstrated effective team behavior more often than participants who did not give or receive feedback (Dominick & Reilly, 1997). Once again, the participants of the study were graduate and undergraduate students. Thus, even though the study demonstrated positive results of team feedback on effective team behavior, these results could not be directly applied to employees within work organizations.

Beehr, Ivanitskaya, Hansen, Erofeev, and Gudanowski (2001) conducted a study to determine the relationship between 360-degree ratings and performance appraisals by supervisors. In this study, 360-degree rating focused on "higher order" competencies, such as communication skills and cognitive ability. Performance appraisal focused on more specific job behaviors, such as facilitation of others. Data were collected from 2,213 employees of a Midwestern insurance company. In order to determine the relationship between 360-degree ratings and performance appraisals, the researchers used data from the company’s 360-degree feedback program, and the three- to four-year-old supervisory appraisals. Their finding showed modest positive correlations of manager and peer 360 ratings with performance appraisals. Overall, this study demonstrated that higher order competencies, determined by 360-degree evaluations, moderately relate to everyday job performance tasks. This present study expanded the research conducted by Beehr et al. in that this study explored the role of multirater evaluation, involving a face-to-face component, in regards to employee job performance.
The Leadership Software Corporation of Nyack, New York studied the 360-degree assessments of five organizations over a 5-year period from January, 1999 to September, 2004 (Seiler, 2005). The objective of the study was to determine the correlative relationship between 360-degree evaluation and continuous performance improvement. Researchers examined 211,465 rating events relative to 1,670 employees during this period. The study included a hospital, three police departments, and a public library. The organizations used software that included qualitative and quantitative measures of performance in order to gather 360-degree ratings. The analysis of quantitative data has revealed an upward trend of average performance ratings. The pattern of quantitative ratings was supported by qualitative feedback, which was illustrated with specific examples of how employees improved in the performance of their duties year after year. The researchers, therefore, concluded that the 360-degree system gave objective and realistic performance assessments, and that it also drove continuous performance improvement as evidenced by greater ratings on a year-to-year basis (Seiler, 2005). While this study empirically confirmed the positive relationship between 360-degree evaluation and employee performance, it did not address the component of face-to-face team evaluation.

Furthermore, Yukl and Lepsinger (1995) noted that when people receive honest, specific feedback from their coworkers, they realize that their behavior affects others – and they recognize the need for change in certain behaviors. Similarly to Yukl and Lepsinger (1995), Dominick and Reilly (1997) believed that behavioral improvements should occur simply through exposure to and completion of the feedback instrument. Firstly, feedback provides all team members with learning opportunities, considering that
the evaluation tool is a prescriptive one. Secondly, introducing a formal feedback system into a group may sometimes be sufficient to cause spontaneous goal setting. Thirdly, the process of completing self- and peer ratings provides individuals with an opportunity to reflect on their own behavior and to establish normative standards and personal improvement objectives.

Conclusively, research indicated that multirater and peer feedback positively influenced an employee’s performance. The multirater feedback was shown to be effective with respect to increasing positive team behavior, such as decision making. Furthermore, 360-degree evaluation was proven to positively relate to continuous improvement of daily tasks. Finally, it was found that employees could improve their own performance by simply participating in the evaluation of their colleagues.

Additionally, I discovered that the majority of the studies reviewed used quantitative or mixed methods to identify relationships between evaluation and performance improvement. There was a considerable lack of description of the performance improvement process; that is, what internal and external processes are experienced by an employee while he or she listens to feedback or tries to improve job performance. It seemed important to address this need to better understand TPC-based employee evaluation. The more we know about the internal and external process of performance improvement following evaluation, the more we can facilitate or assist employees with their job performance improvement. Thus, this study explored a performance improvement process from a deeper, qualitative perspective.
Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model

Kolb developed his experiential learning model in 1974. In his model, Kolb emphasized the role that experience plays in the learning process. He believed that learning occurs in a four stage repetitive cycle (Carlson, Keane & Martin, 1995). Although learning can start occurring at any of these stages, the concrete experience stage is considered to be the first step in the learning process. During this stage, an individual is performing a task or experiencing a certain situation. Reflection consists of reviewing what has been done or experienced. Conceptualization involves the interpretation of the events that have been noticed and understanding the relationships among them. Finally, experimentation enables a learner to actually apply what has been learnt in new life situations. “Immediate, concrete experience is the basis for observation and reflection. These observations are assimilated into “theory” from which new implications for action can be deduced. These implications or hypotheses then serve as guides in acting to create new experiences” (Kolb, 1974, p. 28).

Ricci (2000) completed a phenomenological study of the experience of learning in adult higher education. The study was conducted with twelve undergraduate college students, ages 20-50. The study revealed the essential nature of the complex interaction of several components (themes) in adult learning, while also highlighting the unique expression of learning structure by each individual. The study supported the perceiving and processing dimensions of Kolb’s model; however, it also revealed more factors, such as learner’s self-motivation, the learning situation itself, and other environmental factors that facilitate successful learning (Ricci, 2000). The findings of Ricci’s study are
important in the context of this study as Ricci’s study confirmed the dimensions of Kolb’s model.

Similarly to Ricci’s study, Decker’s (1996) dissertation study examined whether the Interpersonal and Intercultural Adjustment curriculum moved the student through the four stages of the experiential learning cycle proposed and described by Kolb. Decker also sought to identify the essential curricular and pedagogical components of the curriculum that contributed to the effectiveness of the course. A qualitative research methodology consisting of participant observation, narrative analysis, and ethnographic interviewing provided strong support to the hypothesis that students did show evidence of movement though Kolb's four stages of learning. The research concluded that the particular curriculum was effective in moving the majority of participating students through the first three stages of Kolb's model (concrete experience, reflective observation and abstract conceptualization) and moderately successful in precipitating movement through the fourth stage (active experimentation). Once again, Decker’s (1996) study confirmed the existence of Kolb’s experiential learning model stages that are important in the context of this study.

Jensen (1995) completed a similar study among college students pursuing an accounting major. His quantitative study was conducted using control and treatment groups of college students. The control group was taught in a normal lecture type environment. The treatment group was taught based upon instructional strategies designed to insure that the four learning phases are experienced. The study found that the four phase model exerts a significant impact on course development. According to Jensen (1995), the application of the four phases learning model was highly effective. Jensen’s
study (1995) appeared to be relevant to this study as it empirically proved the four stage learning process.

Petkus (2000) applied Kolb’s experiential learning cycle with students in his marketing course. He organized and provided students with real-world situations in which students can experience, reflect on, conceptualize and implement their marketing skills. He found that participation of students in real world learning situations increased their satisfaction with the course and also increased the potential of learning the curriculum.

Overall, the research studies verified the stages of Kolb’s model, and showed that these can be effective when applied in a learning situation. However, a number of researchers also critiqued Kolb’s experiential learning model. Anderson (1988) believed that the model takes little consideration of cultural differences. He asserted that representatives of different cultures may have differences in cognitive and communication styles; while Kolb’s model based mostly on “Western” assumption. The author continued his critique by stating that Kolb’s model empirically was tested on a fairly limited range of cultures.

Another critique presented by Smith (2001) stated that Kolb’s model did not pay sufficient attention to the process of reflection. He believed that while the learning cycle can be helpful in planning activities and in engaging learners, the learning cycle did not uncover the elements of reflection. Further, Smith (2001) believed that the sequence of Kolb’s model stages does not reflect the reality. Kolb’s model is based on the belief that learning occurs in a cycle. Smith, however, believed that in reality several learning stages
can occur at the same time, and other stages can be avoided at all depending on a learning situation and individual differences.

Jarvis (1995) critiqued, noting that “knowledge” and “learning” in the model appear to carry the same meaning. According to Jarvis, Kolb’s model does not differentiate between learning and knowledge, and therefore, does not explore the nature of knowledge in depth.

The purpose of this study was to explore how employees learn from TPC employee evaluation as it relates to their job performance. While some studies in the reviewed literature confirmed Kolb’s learning stages, and other studies critiqued those, the purpose of this study was not to examine Kolb’s experiential model. Rather, Kolb’s experiential learning model was used to gather data and to organize the ideas and concepts identified by this study. By using the model, I explored how employees experience the evaluation process and how they perceive the feedback received from the various sources; what meaning the employees give to the feedback in terms of their work performance; how employees plan to use the feedback to make necessary changes for performance improvement; and how feedback is implemented in their job performance.

Summary

Historically, supervisory evaluation appeared to be the predecessor of multirater evaluation. The popularity of peer and multirater evaluations was growing only in recent decades. Literature on this topic indicated that peer and multirater evaluation is largely reliable, gives a broader perspective than a supervisory evaluation, and positively influences organizational culture. The research reviewed showed that multirater evaluation is positively related to performance improvement. However, multirater
evaluation may bring negative effects such as the halo effect, the altering of ratings to preserve popularity in the group, and may also be depreciated if used for administrative purposes. Successful peer evaluation was predicted by the establishment of training and coaching for those who give and receive feedback, the creation of development plans right after evaluation, supportive organizational culture, and the adequate frequency of employee evaluations.

"Multirater" employee evaluations are typically conducted in a confidential and anonymous way. Distinctively, a component of TPC employee evaluation is conducted in a face-to-face manner, in the presence of all team members. Literature was rich in theoretical articles and empirical research findings regarding 360-degree and supervisory evaluations. Overall, the studies demonstrated that multirater evaluation gave more objective performance assessments, and that it also drove performance improvement (Seiler, 2005; Beehr et al., 2001). However, few sources explored employee evaluation that includes face-to-face peer feedback conducted in a group setting. As the result of the gaps in the literature, I used qualitative research design drawn on Kolb’s experiential learning model to explore how employees learn from TPC evaluation, and how they use the knowledge in their job performance.
CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of the study was to explore how employees learn from Team Primacy Concept (TPC)-based employee evaluation; namely, how they experience, reflect upon, conceptualize, and use knowledge gained from their TPC evaluations to improve their job performance. This chapter is organized in the following way: First the research design and rationale are presented. This is followed by an overview of the study site and participants. Finally, the data collection and analysis procedures used in this study are described.

Research Design and Methodological Rationale

Teams are a popular form of employee involvement, and some organizations involve teams in employee evaluations. However, little insight about the role of TPC evaluation in employee performance could be gathered from research conducted up until now. Thus, it was important to research the phenomenon of TPC employee evaluation and its role in employee performance. I used a qualitative case study design (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Newman & Benz, 1998) to explore (a) how employees experience the process of TPC evaluation, (b) how they reflect on the feedback, (c) what concepts and strategies they identify to enhance their performance, and (d) what actions they take to enhance their job performance.

I sought in this study to answer the “how” question – how an employee perceives feedback from his or her colleagues and supervisor, how that employee makes meaning of feedback received, how he or she plans, and finally, implements changes in his or her job performance. One cannot understand human actions without understanding the
meaning that participants attribute to these actions; their resulting thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptions (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Marshall and Rossman stated, "qualitative researchers are intrigued with the complexity of social interactions as expressed in daily life, and with the meanings the participants themselves attribute to these interactions. ... Thus, qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people" (1999, p. 2). I chose to employ a qualitative case study design for two main reasons. First, I intended to research the process during which learning occurs as a result of TPC evaluation; specifically, I focused on the process of how employees experience, reflect, plan, and implement feedback following the evaluation process. Therefore, the case study was found to be a suitable design for researching this process (Merriam, 1998). Second, the study was limited to a "bounded unit" - the Southeastern Region in Virginia (SEVA) of Institute for Family Centered Services. The SEVA region was composed of two teams, with thirteen employees total. One team consisted of six employees, and other team consisted of seven employees. Thus, the chosen population of employees in the SEVA region created a bounded system, which reflected Merriam’s (1998, p. 27) description of a case study as "a single entity around which there are boundaries." Thus, a case study appeared to be a suitable qualitative research design for the study.

Using this research design, I explored the relationships, perceptions, feelings, and thoughts of the persons within this bounded system. The study participants knew each other, were performing their jobs in similar environments, had the same supervisor and similar job expectations, and, most importantly, had relationships with each other. Case studies are different from other types of qualitative research because they are
intensive descriptions and analysis of “a single unit” (Merriam, 1998), and that unit can focus on a group, a program, or an organization (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Development of the Interview Guide

I used a semi-structured qualitative interview guide to collect data from the study participants. In the process of developing the guide, I conducted a pilot study with two randomly selected IFCS employees.

Qualitative Interview Guide

The qualitative interview guide developed for the study was based on the research questions, the conceptual framework, and other concepts from the literature. Figure 3 displays the domains of the interview questions organized around the components of Kolb’s experiential learning model: (a) experience, (b) reflection, (c) conceptualization, and (d) implementation. For instance, in an effort to explore how employees experienced feedback given by peers, the guide contained questions such as, “What feelings did you experience when you heard about your challenges in clinical performance area from your peers?” I explored how employees reflected on feedback, by asking questions such as, “What thoughts came to you as you looked back and remembered your supervisor’s feedback?” To find out how employees made sense of, or conceptualized, the TPC evaluation, I asked questions such as, “How did your peers’ feedback affect your decision in choosing goals for your performance improvement?” Finally, to explore how employees acted on the feedback, I used questions such as, “How different would your performance be if you were not evaluated by your peers?” and “What specific tasks in clinical work are you doing differently as a result of TPC evaluation?”
Basic Research question: How do employees learn from TPC employee evaluation as it relates to their job performance?

Subsidiary Question One:
How do employees experience TPC self-feedback, supervisory feedback, and peer feedback?

Sample Interview Questions:
- What feelings and thoughts did you have before your face to face team evaluation?
- What thoughts did you have when you heard positive feedback about your performance from your peers?
- What thoughts did you have when you heard about your performance challenges from your peers?
- What was the most positive experience during your face-to-face team evaluation?
- What was the most negative experience during your face-to-face team evaluation?

Subsidiary Question Two:
How do employees reflect on TPC self-feedback, supervisory feedback, and peer feedback as it relates to job performance?

Sample Interview Questions:
- How often do you recall feedback given by your peers in your everyday performance in a. clinical work area? b. documentation area? c. collateral relationships? d. teamwork?
- How often do you recall feedback given by your supervisor in your everyday performance in a. clinical work area? b. documentation area? c. collateral relationships? d. teamwork?
- What triggers your recollection or what helps you remember TPC feedback?

Subsidiary Question Three:
How do employees plan for changes to their work behaviors following TPC feedback?

Sample Interview Questions:
- How did your peers' feedback influence your decision in choosing/developing goals for your performance improvement?
- How did your supervisor's feedback influence your decision in choosing/developing goals for your performance improvement?
- How did your self-feedback (self-evaluation) influence your decision in choosing/developing goals for your performance improvement?

Subsidiary Question Four:
How do employees implement TPC self-feedback, supervisory feedback, and peer feedback in their job performance?

Sample Interview Questions:
- Tell me how TPC evaluation influenced your performance: a. right after evaluation? b. one month after evaluation? c. 3 months after evaluation? d. 6 months after evaluation?
- Can you please give me some examples of what specific tasks you are doing differently as a result of TPC evaluation in: a. clinical work area? b. documentation area? c. collateral relationships? d. teamwork?
- How do you think TPC influence this change in performance? Why do you think this change occurred?

Figure 3. Interview guide framework and sample interview questions.
Pilot Study

As part of the preparation for the present study I asked two IFCS Florida employees to participate in a pilot study. I chose these employees for the pilot study because Florida regions were among the best performing regions in the company and resembled the selected site, SEVA region. I conducted a pilot study in an effort to test out the clarity of the questions of the interview guide (see Appendix C) and to ensure that the questions would capture sufficient data on how employees experience, reflect upon, conceptualize, and implement TPC feedback. The interviews were semi-structured, as that format allowed me to further explore issues and topics raised during the interview process. Also, for the piloting purpose, I reviewed the development plans of the participants in an effort to determine the relationship patterns between their interview data and their plans.

Pilot interviews were completed with two IFCS Florida employees who were given the pseudonyms Ana and John. I selected both of them randomly and invited them to participate in the pilot study. I explained to them the purpose of pilot interviews and assured them that their participation in the pilot interviews was confidential. Both pilot interviews lasted for about an hour.

Pilot interviews with Ana and John. I interviewed Ana at IFCS office in North Miami. She appeared at ease and calm and expressed that she would like to help me with my study. She gave me feedback on questions and asked for further clarification as we went through the interview questions. Several times during the interview she stated: “What do you mean? I do not get it.” Her questions helped me to better structure the questions in the interview guide.
I met with John at a busy Jamaican restaurant. It did not appear to be the best place for recording the interview; however, as I encouraged John to choose the place for our meeting, it appeared to be the place that he really liked. Despite the activities around us, we both were able to concentrate and to remain focused on the interview questions.

Based on the feedback of these two participants during the pilot study, I revised the qualitative interview guide. First, I deleted four questions from different parts of the interview as they clearly appeared to be repetitive. Both participants were giving repetitive responses to those questions, and several times stated “as I already told before.” I also reorganized the questionnaire to establish a more natural flow instead of going back and forth to particular topics. I asked both participants if the interview questions addressed all significant pieces of information surrounding employee evaluations and job performance. Ana suggested that I explore how participants would like/would envision TPC evaluation to be different in order to be the most effective to the employee’s performance. Thus, I added this additional question to the interview guide.

Following the pilot study, I reviewed the data and critically evaluated the amount and the content of data relevant to the research questions. As the semi-structured qualitative interview guide was divided into four parts according to the research questions, I could clearly see how participants’ answers were aligned with the research questions on (a) how employees experience the process of TPC evaluation, (b) how they reflect on the feedback, (c) what concepts and strategies they identify to enhance their performance, and (d) what actions they take to enhance their job performance. Also, I could identify several topics emerging for further exploration. For instance, several times John used the word “systemic”. When I asked him how he takes in consideration self,
peer, and supervisory feedback while developing his goals, and then how he acts upon all
these pieces of feedback, he explained that it is “systemic”. He did not break it down to
self, supervisory, and peer evaluation, but rather took it as “whole,” internalized it and
acted on this “systemic” feedback. For another example, Ana used the descriptor
“superficial” several times while sharing her perceptions and expectations of team
evaluation. These tentative themes gave me additional direction while later interviewing
employees in Virginia.

_Pilot review of developmental plans._ I reviewed Ana’s and John’s developmental
plans to find the relationship patterns between their interview data and developmental
plans and to determine the affirmations or contradictions between interview data and
developmental plans. For instance, several times throughout interview Ana mentioned
that her challenge was “completing and turning paperwork on time.” When I was
reviewing Ana’s developmental plan, I noticed that her performance improvement goals
did not include a goal on completing and submitting clinical documentation in a timely
manner. Thus, I made a note for myself to pay special attention during data collection to
compare information from the interview data with the actual development plan.

**Site and Participants**

The site of the study was the Institute for Family Centered Services (IFCS). The
IFCS is a multi-site organization founded in 1988 in Richmond, Virginia. The founder
and president of IFCS is John P. Sullivan, Ph.D. IFCS is located in four states throughout
the United States - Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, and Florida - and provides home-
based, family centered counseling to children and families. The stated mission of the
company is to enhance family strengths and resources through direct family involvement
that preserves the dignity of all families within their communities (Painter & Smith, 2004).

The IFCS' family counseling approach uses practical and experiential activities to promote relationships and communication in families, and to improve parenting and behavior management skills. The approach also aims at providing services to families in the least restrictive and most therapeutically appropriate treatment (Institute for Family Centered Services, 2005).

The organization employs nearly 300 people throughout 18 regions and serves over 2,500 and families annually. A large part of the company's growth has been the result of responding to requests by social and juvenile justice agencies to provide services in areas with the most need. In recent years, IFCS has also expanded its home and community based services to include in-home services for adults, substance abuse services, and services for sexual offenders (Institute for Family Centered Services, 2005).

The IFCS was chosen for the study because the organization has been continuously applying TPC evaluation for all front line and supervisory level employee teams for 18 years and has a history of outstanding organizational performance on the four core performance criteria: clinical work, documentation, collateral relationships, and teamwork as indicated on such measures as client satisfaction surveys and clinical productivity.

The SEVA region of IFCS was purposely chosen as a case for the study based on the above four effective performance criteria. It is essential to identify criteria in order to use purposive sampling well. The goal is to select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 1998). I used the aforementioned performance criteria because they
reflected the four performance areas of family centered specialists. The indicators for successful performance in these areas are established by internal IFCS policies. For instance, an indicator of effective clinical work is a positive outcome of client satisfaction surveys and by clinical productivity as measured by client billable hours. Secondly, one of indicators of effective performance criteria in documentation area is the percentage of complete client files as indicated in monthly Client Record Review (CRR). Thirdly, an indicator of effective collateral relationships is an absence of complaints by collaterals. Finally, an indicator of effective team work is the reported satisfaction by team members.

Based on these performance indicators in official performance records of IFCS, SEVA Region was the best performing region at IFCS. Therefore, I was able to derive the rich data surrounding TPC evaluation and the processes on how employees learn from such evaluation.

Florida teams were excluded from the selection process because I work in a higher administrative position at IFCS in Florida. This sampling strategy helped me to avoid biases that could influence the research, and it also helped to increase participants' openness. SEVA employees were not my direct reports, and I did not have a working relationship with them.

The participants included all members of the Southeastern Virginia (SEVA) region who had at least two TPC evaluations during their work history with IFCS. The criterion of having at least two evaluations was significant because the results of the second evaluation were used to determine the extent to which employees have been successfully implementing the strategies for enhancing performance. Eight employees, all that were qualified, participated in the study. The remaining five employees of SEVA
were not asked to participate in the study because they were employed for less than a year. Before the interviews began, I obtained signed consents from each employee. I asked participants to choose a pseudonym to ensure their confidentiality. Thus, I used participants' pseudonyms throughout the study: Joann, Hattie, Sandcofa, Julie, Queen Esther, Laufey, Serena, and Wenrobe. The participants included 7 women and 1 man. Their length of employment with IFCS ranged from 1 year and 3 months to 16 years and 5 months; thus, the number of their annual evaluations ranged from 2 to 12. Six participants were African-American and 2 participants were Caucasian.

As SEVA region included two teams, the participants belonged to these two teams: Alpha team and Beta team. I chose the team pseudonyms for confidentiality reasons as well. Hattie, Sandcofa, Julie, and Laufey belonged to Team Alpha, while Joan, Wenronbe, Queen Esther, and Serena belonged to Team Beta.

Data Collection

I collected data for the study through interviewing and the analysis of employee development plans. Two interviews with the employees were conducted. The content of data regarding employee learning from TPC evaluation consisted of employees' experiences surrounding TPC employee evaluation, their reflections on the evaluation, their conceptualization (or making sense out of their employee evaluation) and the ways they act upon these reflections and conceptualizations in their job performance. The data also included the employees' general perceptions of the process as they experienced it. I collected data according to the following sequence: the first interview, the review of employee development plans, and the second interview.
As I began this process I organized a case study data base. I developed a paper folder for each participant where I included participant’s demographics survey, interviews transcripts, field notes, and the copies of developmental plans. I kept the study records in locked drawer, where no one else had access.

First Interview

The interviews were semi-structured and allowed for further exploration of topics occurring during the interview process. The purpose of the first interview was to gather data on the participants’ perceptions of their experiences with the TPC evaluation process, to explore how they reflect on the feedback they receive, how they plan for performance improvement, and how they actually act on the feedback given to them.

I conducted the interviews in the SEVA region. I flew to Virginia and spent over 2 days, June 18th-20th, 2006 at the SEVA region, interviewing the participants. I met with the participants at IFCS offices in Chesapeake. The first interview lasted from 50 minutes to just over an hour with each participant. I used the interview guide described above. As I began interviewing participants, several new directions and questions for exploration arose, which I later used with the other interview participants. For example, in my interviews with Serena and Hattie, the length of employment, (which I later named a theme of “seniority”) came out as a significant topic. Thus, I also asked the other participants how significant the length of employment was in TPC employee evaluation. Participants, who had been already interviewed the first time, were given such a question during the second interview. For another example, during my interview with Hattie she was describing conflict that was caused by a peer bringing a challenge to the team that the peer had not brought to Hattie in the one-on-one evaluation before the team meeting.
Thus, the topic of “the conflict” gave me an additional direction for exploration with other participants. So, in my interviews with the rest of participants, I explored how they would react if a peer brought a challenge directly to the team without discussing this challenge one-on-one during the individual meeting.

Document Review

I reviewed the employee development plans of the participants to determine their performance goals and to find relational patterns with the interview data. I reviewed all developmental plans that were developed by participants during their length of employment. For instance, I reviewed nine developmental plans of Wenronbe, who has been employed at SEVA region for over eight years. A sample employee developmental plan is included in Appendix B. For instance, if a participant expressed that specific feedback from a peer was helpful in improving his clinical skills, I looked for specific clinical skills improvement strategies in the plan based on that feedback. Further, as the study sample consisted of employees who have had at least two evaluations, I examined the consecutive development plans and compared them to determine how the employee changed his or her work performance in the period from one annual evaluation to another.

Second Interview

The second interview lasted from 35 minutes to an hour and included the follow-up questions arising from the review of data from the first set of interviews and the development plans. For instance, a question arising from the review of development plans with one of the participants was, “I see that one of your goals in your development plan is to increase your clinical assessment skills. Can you please describe the process you used
to make a decision about setting this goal for yourself?” Also, the second interview explored the identified tentative relational patterns from the first interview and the document analysis as they related to the research question. For example, during the second interview I asked all participants what role relationships between peers play in TPC evaluation.

Data Management and Analysis

In qualitative research, data collection and analysis is an intertwined process (Merriam, 1998). Therefore, I simultaneously collected and analyzed data. Analysis focused on participants’ views, experiences, and actions as they relate to the research questions.

I used NVivo7 qualitative research software to manage the data analysis. Following the first interviews, I imported the interview transcripts into NVivo7 and created a separate case for each participant. I assigned case attributes to each participant, such as gender, race, length of employment, and age. Then I coded each participant’s interview transcripts into information units, in NVivo7 language called “nodes.” In my first level of analysis and interpretation, I came up with 66 codes, or “nodes”, or units of information. “A unit is a meaningful (or potentially meaningful) segment of data” (Merriam, 1998, p. 179). Also, the unit must reveal information relevant to a study and must be the smallest piece of information that can stand by itself (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In some cases, I named a node exactly the way participants referred to something that they described. For instance, Queen Esther, in describing and explaining why she thought one-on-one evaluation with a peer was useful before the all-team evaluation, used the term “parallel process”:
I think that helps us practice with our families because you don’t ever want to put your family in a position where you’re giving information in front of the treatment teams in the community, you know, or in front of the referral source and it just knocks them out of the box. So first I think that it helps, you know, us practice that parallel process.

Thus, I created a “parallel process,” node and used this node for information that also was given by other participants about parallel process. In other instances, I decided on a name of a node. Several participants spoke about “nervousness” or “some nervousness” before the team evaluation. I created a node “anxiety,” which I used to gather information about participants’ nervousness or anxiety that they experienced before the team evaluation.

NVivo7 allows one to retrieve each node in a separate “window” or document that can be viewed separately or printed out. Thus, following the initial coding, I retrieved and critically reviewed all 66 “nodes” or information units. I compared each unit with another looking for recurring regularities. Then, I grouped most of the units and created “parent” tree nodes – the themes of the study. Also, I merged a few pairs of nodes that appeared to include similar information into single nodes. For instance, I merged “ongoing supervisory feedback” and “ongoing peer feedback” into one category, which I labeled “ongoing TPC feedback.” Consequently, I was able to identify 17 themes, such as “honesty and openness”, “seniority”, “mental schemes”, and “meaningful goals”. A theme was decided either by a number of participants that agreed on the theme, or by uniqueness of the information (Merriam, 1998). Finally, I grouped the themes under eight major concepts of the study. For instance, I included “seniority” as a theme in “Power dynamics” concept as that theme described power dynamics between more senior and novice employees.
The units that were not included in the major categories, but appeared to carry some significance, were grouped under NVivo as parent tree, named “other findings”. I made the decision to classify a finding as a minor if (a) a concept was identified only by one to three participants, yet deemed important, or (b) a concept appeared to be irrelevant to the research questions, but provided important information on employee performance.

Consequently, during the second interview I tested the themes (Harry, Sturges, & Klingner, 2005) by asking participants for their feedback and perceptions on these themes and relational patterns. For instance, during the initial analysis, I identified the relational pattern that newer team members perceive feedback given by more senior members as more valuable than feedback given by more junior team members. Thus, I explored this relational pattern with participants during my second interview. Following the second interview, I adjusted and reorganized some of the themes, and finalized data analysis. Finally, I developed descriptions of the participants, and the final case report conveying a holistic understanding of the case as well as interpretation of themes and patterns.

The Accuracy of Findings

In qualitative research, determining validity actually means determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, and the reader (Creswell, 2003). Merriam (1998) states that “internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality” (p. 201). Terms used to describe the internal validity or accuracy of findings in qualitative research are “trustworthiness,” “authenticity,” and “credibility” (Creswell, 2003).
The length of my own experience with TPC employee evaluation has also served as a validating strategy for the study. Further, in an effort to enhance the validity of my findings I used peer review, triangulation of data, and member checks.

**Researcher’s role.** The role of the researcher differentiates all forms of qualitative research from quantitative research, because “...the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis” (Merriam, 1998, p. 7). I have been an employee of IFCS for almost seven years. My employment started in 2000 in a position of a family centered specialist. In April, 2003 I was promoted to the director of state operations, and I am currently employed in this position. My motivation for studying TPC employee evaluation started shortly after I started my employment with IFCS. TPC employee evaluation was a different form of evaluation than I had experienced with my previous employers. I found that while TPC employee evaluation was more challenging and required a higher level of vulnerability, it also greatly facilitated my professional and personal development.

However, as a qualitative researcher, I worked to separate my perceptions from the perceptions of the study participants, so that I would avoid influencing the findings of the study. The most important researcher characteristics, identified by Merriam (1998) are (a) tolerance of ambiguity, (b) sensitivity, and (c) great communication skills. Despite my connections to IFCS, I was able to hear and highlight negative or conflicting participants’ experiences with TPC employee evaluation, and I included those in my analysis and findings. To a great degree, my sensitivity and good communication skills have come from my experience as a family therapist. I was able to successfully apply these skills in the study. Finally, to increase my participants’ openness and to enhance the
validity of findings, I chose to exclude Florida regions from the purposeful sampling. This strategy allowed me to gather richer data, as I did not have any working relationship with the participants. In fact, upon our first interview in Virginia, all participants saw me for the first time, and most of them had not heard my name and did not know my position with IFCS; however during my introduction, I revealed to them that I was an employee of an organization.

“Prolonged time” in the field promotes a researcher’s in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study and can convey detail about the site and the people that lends credibility to the narrative account (Creswell, 2003). In my almost 7 years of experience with IFCS, I have had a prolonged experience with TPC employee evaluation: being evaluated and evaluating others, using the TPC approach. Since my start date with IFCS, I have been evaluated 8 times, and I have participated in at least 40 evaluation sessions of other employees, including family centered specialists and management personnel. My length of experience with TPC employee evaluation helped me in formulating meaningful and relevant questions during the interviews. Also, it helped me to be more insightful when identifying categories and themes in the process of data analysis, as I reflected on my own thoughts and feelings. For instance, when I was developing an interview guide, I reflected on what was driving my own performance in relation to TPC evaluation. As a result of this reflection, I included a question about accountability – to what extent employees feel accountable to themselves, to their peers, and to their supervisors.

Peer review. “Peer examination” or “peer review” is a validation process of colleagues reviewing and commenting on the findings as they emerge (Merriam, 1998).
employed a peer reviewer to review my findings, and also to analyze three randomly chosen interview transcripts and two development plans of the participants of the study. I asked the peer reviewer to independently identify categories and themes and then to comment on how closely they compared to my findings. I also asked the reviewer to critically read and review all my findings and raise appropriate questions.

My peer reviewer was a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, and Certified Addiction Professional who has had experience with TPC employee evaluation for the last 4 years. She started her employment with IFCS in December 2002 as Family Centered Specialist. In 2004 she was promoted to the position of a regional director of IFCS. Thus, this individual had a strong experience of being a participant in the TPC evaluation process. Additionally, she had participated in at least 20 TPC-based employee evaluations as a supervisor, which allowed her to observe the process of TPC evaluation among her staff of family centered specialists. Further, this reviewer was a doctoral student in a family therapy program at the time of the review, and she was skilled and experienced in analyzing qualitative data. Thus, she served as a qualified peer reviewer for the study. Though I had a working relationship with my peer reviewer, we were not in a superior-subordinate relationship.

The reviewer examined the selected interview transcripts and the developmental plans of three participants. The transcripts included the first and the second interviews of these participants. The reviewer manually coded and identified categories, and then themes of the interviews and the developmental plans. She then read my findings and analysis of the findings. Subsequently we met, compared our themes and discussed our analyses. The categories and themes identified by her were similar to the ones that I
identified. Though the titles of the themes that she identified appeared slightly different, they essentially carried the same meaning. For instance, a theme that the reviewer identified was “feelings of anxiety” while I named it “anxiety before and during team evaluation.” Similarly, she titled a theme “level of honesty,” while I called the similar theme “honesty and openness”. A couple of themes that I initially identified, such as “filtering negative feedback,” and “timeliness of task accomplishment” were not initially identified by the peer reviewer. However, after she read my findings, and then looked back at the transcripts, she commented that these themes do appear to be valid. Thus, a peer review confirmed the validity of the findings for this study.

Data triangulation. Triangulation is a confirmation of emerging findings by using multiple sources of data (Merriam, 1998). I triangulated the data by comparing themes and patterns derived from interviews and the employee development plans. For example, when a participant remarked that peer evaluation helped him or her increase clinical skills, I looked for a supporting pattern in that participant’s developmental plans. For instance, Wenronbe was describing how during her first years of employment with IFCS, peers challenged her to improve her clinical skills working with sexual offenders. I reviewed Wenronbe’s developmental plans, and I saw the supporting evidence to her interview data in her developmental plans. In her developmental plan for her second year of employment she had a goal of “pursuing training hours in relationship to sex offenders and share information with the team.” In the following developmental plan, she did not have this goal anymore. The evidence in the developmental plans that the goal was attained confirmed interview data provided by Wenronbe on increasing her clinical skills with sexual offenders.
Member checking. Member checking is a process that assures the accuracy of findings through taking the final report, specific descriptions, or themes back to participants and determining whether participants believe that findings are accurate (Creswell, 2003). Following my data analysis after the first interviews, I asked five participants – Wenronbe, Hattie, Julie, Queen Esther, and Laufey to review the tentative themes and patterns. Specifically, I asked them if the tentative themes and interpretations, derived by me, represented their experiences and if they were accurate. These five participants read a draft of findings and responded back to me by e-mail stating that the findings accurately reflected their reality, and their perceptions. Only Queen Esther asked me to make two minor changes in her participant description by giving me corrected information on the length of her employment with IFCS, and also clarifying one of her interview statements. Additionally, I e-mailed each employee who participated in the study, his or her “participant description”. I asked for validation of my perceptions of the participants. All of them responded that my descriptions of them were accurate.

Summary

In summary, I used a qualitative case study approach to answer the research questions. The IFCS served as a site for the study. Using a purposive sampling method, the most effectively performing region - the SEVA region - was chosen for the study. The selection of SEVA region was based on four performance criteria: documentation, clinical work, collateral relationships, and teamwork. The participants were eight family centered specialists, who each had at least two TPC evaluations. Data were collected through interviews and the analysis of employee development plans. I used NVivo7...
qualitative research software to manage the data analysis. I examined the accuracy of data through a peer review, triangulation, and member checking.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study concerning employees’ experiences with Team Primacy Concept (TPC)-based evaluation, their reflections about the process, planning for performance improvement, and application of the knowledge gained during the process. First, the chapter presents the description the Southeastern Virginia (SEVA) region. Then it presents the study participants’ profiles. Finally, the major themes of the study are presented.

Description of the Case

The study was conducted at the Institute for Family Centered Services (IFCS). The study’s specific IFCS site was Southeastern Virginia (SEVA) region located in Chesapeake, Virginia.

Southeastern Virginia (SEVA) Region

The SEVA regional office was housed in a suburb-house-like building, among tall green trees in Chesapeake, Virginia. The two storey building has a team room, a staff room, an office for the office assistant, and a kitchen on the first floor. The regional director’s office, the office manager’s office, and a play therapy room were on the second floor. As soon as I entered the building, I was taken by the home-like atmosphere that was created by the look and layout what used to be an old family home. After speaking with the supervisor and several participants, it was clear to me that they liked this atmosphere. Also, several of the participants indicated that the client families who come to the office for group meetings prefer a “home-like” environment which does not feel
"intimidating" or "too official." The IFCS SEVA region has been housed in this building since 1997.

I met with the study participants in the play therapy room on the second floor. The entire second floor was very quiet throughout both days, and the interviews were conducted in very peaceful, focused environment. However, when I went down to the first floor during my interview breaks, I encountered a different pace: There were family centered specialists (FCS's) and client families coming in and out of the office, and the phone rang constantly. Later in the evening, FCS's were conducting substance abuse treatment groups in the team room downstairs.

Participant Profiles

Interviews with participants were carried out in an open and friendly atmosphere. Most of the participants appeared engaged and forthcoming from the start of their interviews, while a couple of participants took their time to warm up and feel comfortable. Overall, data from all the interviews appeared to be rich in participant insights and perceptions.

Julie. Julie worked with IFCS as a family centered specialist for just over two years, and had three employee evaluations. Prior to starting with IFCS as a full time employee, Julie completed an eight-month internship at the SEVA Region. I met with Julie late in the evening for the interview. Despite the fact that she had a long intense working day behind her, she appeared very energetic. A few times throughout the interview she laughed and appeared very engaged with the interview process. After the interview was over, she took her time talking to me about her interest in play therapy and general career aspirations.
Julie shared her thoughts about how she prepares for face-to-face team evaluation. According to Julie, she would always focus on the challenges that she was going to present to the team. She felt that she always took a stand about being up front with her challenges rather than being self-conscious about them. Julie shared that when she hears positive feedback about her performance, she gets introspective, “kinda shy”. It is “hard” to take a compliment, but at the same time, “it feels very good to hear it.” When Julie hears about her challenges, it becomes more like “a cognitive” process, rather than “a feeling”.

Further, describing her most surprising moments, Julie noted that one of her team members brought up a specific challenge of hers that she was trying to overcome since her previous evaluation. The challenge was related to turning in her clinical documentation on time. The peer noticed that Julie had improved in this specific area. Another, this time negatively surprising, experience from Julie’s first year evaluation within a team was when a team member described Julie’s challenge as Julie “still needed to learn the IFCS way.” Julie was not quite sure what “IFCS way” meant. However, she did not ask for clarification as the team member had been with IFCS for much longer, and Julie felt somehow intimidated. Finally, Julie wanted to avoid a conflict that could have been caused by disagreement: “I wanted to not have a conflict over something that I could just think about.”

I asked Julie about her feelings and thoughts brought up by negative and positive feedback from her supervisor. Julie shared that positive feedback from the supervisor, the regional director of SEVA region, was “usually rare,” but when she receives positive feedback from the supervisor it was “profound”, and “mentally rewarding.” As for
challenges identified by her supervisor, Julie felt that it is a “hard” part of evaluation, because a supervisor’s feedback carried a lot of weight; it had administrative consequences more so than peer feedback.

I explored with Julie her performance strengths and challenges. Julie’s challenge in the documentation area was timeliness of her reports. However, the quality of the reports was her strength. The timeliness of her reports was an area that Julie had been working on, and she thought it had gotten much better. In the collateral relationship area, Julie shared that she worked well with collaterals, meaning community representatives, and represented IFCS well. The challenge in this area though was arranging for weekly contact with collaterals as expected by her supervisor and IFCS. In the clinical area, Julie felt that she really excelled. Her only challenge she experienced at times was establishing boundaries when working with families, for example, if she lets a case “get to her”.

A trigger for Julie for recalling feedback was “deadlines”. Once she put the actual report due date in her calendar, it served as “a constant reminder” for her. She felt that she was accountable to herself and also to anybody who was going to see her outstanding paperwork. However, the documentation timeliness was an ongoing struggle area for her. Even though she used reminders in her calendar and she felt accountable to herself and to her peers, often she procrastinated. Julie believed that her procrastination was caused by internal thought processes, as she tended to “dwell on things too much.”

Julie shared that feedback from both supervisor and team was “fluid” or ongoing. She remembered and reflected on feedback from her team members and her supervisor often, because they presented cases and shared clinical strategies on a weekly basis. Also,
every time she needed help with a client family, she called her supervisor “to pick her brain.”

We continued talking about Julie’s developmental goals from her most current annual evaluation. She shared that her current goal was “being organized and punctual.” She also said that even though she did not have “a problem” with collateral relationships, she had a developmental goal of maintaining weekly collateral contact as an expectation of IFCS. In addition, she had a current goal of increasing her boundaries with families, which meant “defining role with families” and “compartmentalizing” her own emotions that come up during clinical work with families. Even though Julie put together her developmental plan, goals, and strategies with her supervisor, she felt that peers’ feedback was the most valuable in completing and prioritizing her developmental goals.

I continued discussing with Julie how employee evaluation impacted her performance changes throughout the year. She felt that her performance and implementation of her developmental goals is the highest right after an annual TPC evaluation. As time goes by, she is more likely to “slip back in the old patterns.” In Julie’s perception, the overall role of TPC employee evaluation in job’s performance is “vital”.

Towards the end of my interview with Julie, I asked her what other factors on the job and outside the job contributed to her job performance. She shared that a significant factor is the type of case that FCS’s were assigned at a given time. Some cases can be very challenging, requiring lots of attention. Also, a good affirmation of a positive performance is clinical progress that families make. Finally, Julie said that an important
factor positively affecting her job performance was a good life balance: going to
conferences and having enough time for herself.

Joann. Joann was an IFCS employee for over 8 years, and she experienced 8
employee evaluations. As we met in the middle of work day, and she still had
appointments with families planned throughout a day, she appeared in a little bit of a
rush. Nevertheless, she gave thought to her answers, and she was insightful in the
information she provided.

Joann indicated that before a face-to-face team evaluation her focus was to look
deep inside herself to become aware of her challenges and strengths. She wanted to make
sure that she was honest with herself in acknowledging her strengths and the things that
she could change. When she heard positive feedback from her peers during TPC
employee evaluation, she felt appreciated.

She remembered one of the most positively surprising moments from her face-to-
face team evaluation. At that time, she had been with IFCS for 2 years, and during team
evaluation, her peers noted her expertise in working with ADHD (attention deficit and
hyperactivity disorder), and bipolar diagnosed children. Some of her peers also thanked
her for her clinical input in their cases.

Joann shared that she became anxious when she heard challenges from peers.
But, at the same time when peers shared with her their perceptions of her challenges, they
gave “push” to her; they positively energized her to perform better.

Referring to the TPC-based evaluation format change two years ago, that
implemented a structured evaluation guide, Joann shared that face-to-face employee
evaluations became less “personal”. She also thought that the “old way” of conducting
evaluation was more effective as it was more personal and included more aspects of her life. Additionally, Joann thought that the new evaluation format made it more difficult to evaluate in those areas that are hard to be observed by peers, such as completing a structured family assessment with families.

We continued discussing Joann's feelings and thoughts when receiving feedback from her supervisor. Joann shared that she usually did not have any anxiety before or during evaluation sessions with her supervisor. In Joann's experience, her supervisor could “always pull the positive out” of negative situation. Also, supervisor’s feedback was ongoing throughout the year, so Joann receives feedback from her supervisor often.

I continued exploring with Joann what specific tasks she was doing differently as a result of TPC evaluation. She shared that her productivity concerning clinical hours had improved since her last evaluation. She stated that she had made progress in keeping more constant contact with collaterals. However, preparing and submitting the reports in timely manner, was still “definitely a major challenge” for Joann. Since Joann had been with IFCS for eight years, and had participated in a number of TPC evaluations, I asked her to talk about a challenge that was evident in the beginning of her employment, but did not appear to be a challenge for her any more. She shared that when she started working with IFCS, it was difficult for her to share her own feelings with her team. That challenge later became a strength. Throughout the years she had become the leader, and now not only she shared her own feelings, but she also facilitated the sharing of feelings and opinions among team members.

We continued discussing the role of the passage of time following evaluations on her job performance throughout the year. Specifically, I explored how Joann would
implement her performance goals right after evaluation compared to implementation half a year or 9 months after evaluation. Joann thought that timing throughout the year would not be significant on implementation of her performance goals: she would implement her goals at the same pace throughout the year.

I discussed with Joann other factors played a role in her daily performance on the job. She thought her own family was the major factor, in the way that family was emotionally supportive to her working long evening hours. Also, her spirituality kept her grounded and reminded her about her accountability to others, including her peers.

Queen Esther. Queen Esther worked as FCS with IFCS close to 3 years, and she had three TPC-based employee evaluations. Queen Esther presented herself with a calm, polite demeanor. During the interview she presented being very pleasant. She also appeared to be very insightful. In addition, contrary to most of the other participants, who took some time and thought about understanding and answering my questions, it seemed that the answers to Queen Esther were coming more spontaneously. I got the impression that she did some reflection on her own, before participating in this study. She often elaborated on her relevant responses to my questions.

Queen Esther thought that her first 90-day evaluation with IFCS was “superficial” because team members focused more on her personality rather that on her specific job performance. Some of her team members described her as “nice”. Following such a superficial evaluation, Queen Esther spoke to team members individually or two at a time, and expressed that she was ready and expecting to receive more honest and constructive feedback from them. It helped her for the second evaluation, almost a year later. Queen Esther thought that the feedback she received during the following
evaluation was much more honest and specific. Also, when the feedback was not specific enough, Queen Esther asked her peers questions to help “boil down” their feedback to specifics.

I explored with Queen Esther what was the most surprising experience from her team face-to-face evaluations. She shared that during her second evaluation, a peer brought up that Queen Esther would need to strengthen her clinical skills. Queen Esther herself had thought that she has really good clinical skills. She asked her peer questions to find out what exactly the peer meant by “clinical skills”. Finally, it came down to the clinical language that Queen Esther was using during her team case presentations. Thus, it appeared that while Queen Esther had really well developed clinical skills, she was using “layman’s” language during her case presentations that led her peer to believe that Queen Esther lacked clinical skills.

Like most of the participants interviewed at SEVA, Queen Esther noted that the recent year’s change of TPC evaluation being based on the Employee Evaluation Guide was not a very helpful change. Just going by the guide, team members were missing on more holistic, personal feedback to each other. Additionally, some of the fields indicated in the guide are not actually observable, so team members were not able to give feedback on these specific job performance requirements.

Queen Esther thought that the individual component where FCS’s give one-on-one feedback to each other before the team evaluation was definitely important. She said, that first, it would not be in accordance with IFCS “parallel process” value if feedback was brought up directly in a team without discussing it one-on-one with the person being evaluated. When FCS’s have concerns about families with whom they work, they first
bring feedback or concerns directly to the family themselves. As the following step, the concerns are then brought up to other involved parties. So, family members are able to know any professional concerns about their family before anybody else. Similarly, FCS's bring feedback to each other first, and then they discuss their feedback in a team setting. Secondly, it may take more of team’s time when feedback needs to be explained in detail without preparation - what the person who provided feedback actually meant.

I explored with Queen Esther her specific strengths and challenges. She had good relationships with collaterals. However, she acknowledged that she still needed to work on calling collaterals “on a regular basis.” Another challenge that had been brought to her during her first evaluation for not using clinical language was not a challenge any more for her. Queen Esther made efforts to sound “clinically professional”, and it was never brought up as a challenge during the second year evaluation. Queen Esther’s remaining challenge was preparing and turning in reports on time. She still had not figured out “a good system” to turn in the reports on time. Thus, Queen Esther had a goal in her developmental plan to increase the timeliness of her reports.

Queen Esther believed that she and her supervisor were “equal participants” in setting her developmental goals. Her peers provided her with performance feedback and helped her to “assess performance”. However, her peers’ feedback did not have equal weight with self and supervisory feedback. Queen Esther expressed that self and supervisor feedback had the most informative power in creating her developmental goals.

I continued my discussion with Queen Esther on how she remembered and reflected on peer and supervisory feedback. She said that feedback would “come back to her head” all the time. Specifically, she often remembered feedback on her challenge of
her not using professional language. She said she had made sure to use more professional language with her peers during case presentations, while still continuing to use “layman’s” language in her daily clinical work with clients.

I continued exploring with Queen Esther her sense of accountability to herself, her peers, and her supervisor. Queen Esther felt as accountable to her supervisor as to client families for her performance. Regarding improvement of TPC evaluation, Queen Esther believed that it would be helpful if the supervisor shared his or her feedback during team evaluation. She thought that especially it would be useful in regards of implementation of the new evaluation format. Some job performance evaluation areas, listed in the evaluation guide, such as “individual supervision” may go unanswered unless the supervisor shares his or her feedback.

Towards the end of our interview I asked Queen Esther what would be other internal or external factors influencing her job performance. She was candid and straightforward in her answer: “money”. Because she had reached the certain level of expertise, and it “costs money to earn a certain level of expertise,” she believed that she needed to be compensated for her expertise, and that such compensation would be a significant motivator for her performance.

Sandcofa. Sandcofa was employed by IFCS for close to 2 years, and he had two evaluations as of the day of interview. He was very specific and “to the point” in his answers. He gave much thought before answering the interview questions. At the end of interview he shared that the interview process was “thought provoking”.

Sandcofa shared that during face-to-face team evaluation process, it made him feel “good” that peers were noticing the positives in his performance. For example,
Sandcofa said that team members noticed his participation and positive interactions with team members. Overall, Sandcofa thought that team evaluation was "a humbling" experience.

Sandcofa shared that his major performance challenge was completing clinical documentation. It was not a surprise to him when his team members identified paperwork completion and timeliness as his challenge. He had already identified the documentation completion as a challenge as he finds the completion of this task to be a struggle. Sandcofa had a degree in chemistry, and never learned how to type. Thus, he found it very challenging to complete and submit clinical documentation on time.

I explored with Sandcofa how significant the individual meeting with a peer before the team evaluation was to him. Sandcofa shared that if feedback was brought directly in the team, without sharing it with a team member prior to the team meeting, he would feel "blind-sided... not knowing what to expect." He shared that in his first evaluation at SEVA, a peer brought up a challenge in a team setting that had not been shared with him in an individual conversation prior to the team meeting. Sandcofa said that he felt "shocked, confused, and offended."

Sandcofa shared that his evaluation meeting with a supervisor made him feel "respected" when she noticed and shared her perceptions of what he was doing well in his job performance. The challenges that were brought up by his supervisor were actually the same ones that Sandcofa identified as his own challenges. For Sandcofa, his supervisor's feedback was more significant than his peers' feedback. He believed that a supervisor had more authority to direct him to "work" on the identified performance areas. To the contrary, while he still respected his peers' feedback, he would filter it out -
he would find the specific feedback pieces that would fit his perceptions of himself. At the time of my first interview with Sandcofa, he was in the process of putting together his developmental plan. He thought that his supervisor’s feedback would have the most weight on which specific goals he would later choose for himself.

He thought that timing of an evaluation is not essential to him, commenting that he would try to improve his performance the same way right away after an evaluation, 6-months past an evaluation, or 10-months past an evaluation. Sandcofa shared that in his daily performance, he did have peer and supervisory feedback “on his mind.” For instance, when he wrote his reports, he thought about this feedback, because he wanted to be respected by his peers and his supervisor. He also wanted to avoid “people saying negative things” about him. He elaborated that his main trigger for better performance was an intent to avoid the negative feedback.

Sandcofa noted that his supervisor remained positive about him improving his paperwork, but at the same time she kept him on his “toes”. Overall, Sandcofa thought that from his 90-day evaluation to his one-year evaluation, he made progress by being more mindful about completing and turning his paperwork on time. Further, he wanted to perform well to represent IFCS well in the community, given that sometimes collaterals would know about his good performance with families only from his reports and client related documentation. Also, Sandcofa liked his job working with families. Finally, “getting paid” motivated him as well.

_Serena_. Serena was employed by IFCS for just over a year. When I was interviewing her in Chesapeake, she reported having her first year evaluation completed a couple of weeks ago, which was her second evaluation experience at IFCS. Prior to
becoming a full time FCS, Serena completed a 3-month internship with IFCS. She appeared very collected and quiet. I could sense some precaution in the beginning of the interview as her answers were short. However, as the interview progressed, I noticed that she became more at ease; her answers became more elaborated and extensive. She smiled several times throughout the interview, especially at times when she was reflecting on her feelings and thoughts surrounding team evaluation, and when she was talking about the client families that she was serving.

Serena shared that before her face-to-face employee evaluations she felt “a little bit nervous,” especially because she had been with IFCS for a relatively short time, and many of her team members had been employed by IFCS for a much longer time. Hearing positive feedback from her peers gave her a sense of reassurance about her performance, especially in those areas where she was not quite sure herself that she was performing well. None of the challenges shared by her peers surprised her. She felt that her peers presented her challenges in a manner that made her feel supported. One of the surprising moments for her during her last team evaluation was when she heard from her peers that she “handles conflict well,” which she never thought about herself. Following her face-to-face team evaluation, Serena felt relieved, but at the same time she felt validated and supported by her peers. Also, after her 90-day evaluation with her supervisor, Serena felt very encouraged and re-assured and realized that she may have been harder on herself than her supervisor or her peers had been. The underlying feeling that she received during TPC evaluation was not “you are not doing the things right”, but rather, “you can do some things differently.”
As did most participants, Serena said that TPC feedback received from her supervisor and her peers was "ongoing". Serena shared that she recalled and reflected on supervisory and peer feedback every time she encountered a situation triggering reminiscence of her challenge area. For example, one of her challenges was working with families who resisted treatment. Thus, every time she drove up to the home of a resistant family she remembered the feedback she received and she put together "a mental plan" of how she would approach the family, and what specific words she would use with a client. She also reminded herself that she should not to take their resistance personally.

Serena shared that her present challenge was preparing and turning in paperwork on time. The developmental goals that she would set for herself following her most recent employee evaluation were preparing and turning in documentation on time and increasing her skills in treatment planning when working with resistant families.

As with the other participants, at the end of our interview, I explored with Serena some other factors that influenced her performance. She was very clear that clients and collaterals in the community influence her performance on the job.

_Hattie._ Hattie was with IFCS in FCS position for over 16 years. Hattie appeared cheerful; she smiled and laughed many times throughout her interview. She was quite at ease and appeared thoughtful before giving most of her answers. At times she became emotional. I noticed her eyes tearing up as she reflected on her experiences. She spoke about how she felt appreciated by her team and her supervisor. Several times throughout the interview she referred to the length of her employment with IFCS. It should be noted that she was one of the employees who had been with SEVA region for the longest time.
Hattie shared that before her latest face-to-face team evaluation she felt some anxiety, because most of members on her team were new. She felt that new team members may not know her as well as team members who had been with IFCS for a longer period of time. Based on her prior experiences, she felt that seasoned team members were more honest and open in giving really important and relevant feedback, while new team members may not have known her challenges, and also may not be reluctant to provide such critical feedback because of their own fears of opening themselves in a team.

She shared that when she heard positive feedback from her team members, it made her feel “really good” for two reasons. First, she felt acknowledged as the leader, who other team members looked up to, and who provided other team members with valuable feedback. Secondly, she felt appreciated for her effort and dedication to her job as a FCS. When I explored with her how she felt and what she thought when she heard about her performance challenges, she described a negative experience from her last team evaluation that caused a conflict between her and one of her team members. During the team evaluation, Hattie described her clinical relationships with her families as a strength, and shared an example that some of families that she worked with many years ago still would call her “to give her updates, and let her know how they are doing.” Apparently, her peer interpreted that differently, more negatively, as a challenge of keeping appropriate clinical boundaries, and brought that up when her turn was to share with Hattie her challenges. As Hattie and her peer disagreed, the level of anxiety in the entire team increased. Thus, they had to stop what they were doing and process the conflicting situation. Hattie thought that this conflict during the face-to-face evaluation could have
been avoided if the peer had brought her perceptions about her challenges during their individual conversation, before the team evaluation. Nevertheless, she still thought that the conflict had a positive outcome as the team members were given an opportunity to find out about IFCS expectations regarding clinical boundaries; that is Hattie was pleased and received approval from her supervisor on the continued contact with her previous client.

Hattie also shared that she would always take into consideration “correct” peer feedback. In my further exploration with her of what she would consider “correct” peer feedback, it appeared that for Hattie, this would be consistent with her self-evaluation of her challenges.

After further probing, Hattie acknowledged that this year she had a couple of challenges that were carried over from the previous year. For instance, she acknowledged that a challenge identified by her peers was increasing the number and frequency of her case presentations in a team, or clinical presentations and discussions of the cases in a team. Since she had a lot of experience, and good clinical insight, her peers would have liked to see her present and discuss cases in the team more often. However, Hattie still presented her cases only with her supervisor. When I explored with her the reasons for her not presenting cases with the peers, she shared that usually they had many cases in the team to present, and she tried to prioritize by giving more attention to peers rather than herself.

Like most of the participants interviewed, Hattie shared that feedback from the supervisor and peers was solicited throughout the year. Thus, if she had a problem with a
client family, she would go to her supervisor, and she would say "Oh, I don't know what to do. I need help." Similarly, she would ask for input from her team members.

Hattie said she recalled self, peer, or supervisory feedback regarding her performance on a daily basis. She especially made a conscious effort to complete her progress notes and paperwork on a timely basis. She understood that it was essential to complete paperwork in this job on a timely basis so that she could give adequate clinical attention to the families that she served.

As with other participants, I also explored with Hattie what were other factors, apart from employee evaluation, influencing her performance. Laughingly, she answered that raises would impact her performance. Also, she said that she wanted to perform well because she wanted to assist families with resolving problems to the best of her abilities. Additionally, she felt accountable to the community for her performance. The better she was performing, the better the SEVA region was performing, and in turn, it increased the number of referrals from the community, and ensured that everybody in the regional office had a job.

Laufey. Laufey was with IFCS for a year and a half. During our first interview she shared that due to family circumstances, she was transferring to another region of IFCS in a different state. So, when I was conducting my follow-up interview with Laufey on the phone, she was already working at IFCS region in North Carolina. Laufey appeared very easy going and engaged in the interview process. She also expressed her interest in the study and its outcomes. Therefore, she asked me to notify her when the entire study was published. Laufey shared her experiences, thoughts, and feelings throughout the interview without reservation. She smiled and laughed a few times during interview.
Laufey was very supportive of team values, and several times throughout our interview it became clear that she really believed in TPC. She said that even though most corporations have some teamwork ideas in place, none of these ideas are quite like IFCS's TPC that the organization had been utilizing for the past 18 years. She remembered that before her first, 90-day face-to-face evaluation, she was nervous. Laufey also noted that before her first year evaluation, she was not as nervous; knowing her team members and practicing the process lessened her anxiety. The positive things that she heard during team evaluation made her feel “good” about herself. She remarked that even challenges that she needed to work on were delivered to her in a positive light.

Laufey described that the evaluation piece where peers gave feedback to each other individually before the team meeting was significant to her. Otherwise, if one heard negative feedback, and was not prepared to receive it, one would be “totally surprised” or “alarmed”. She noted that a significant factor in her evaluation was that from the time of her 90-day evaluation to the time of her 1-year evaluation, there was little team turnover and most of the team members remained the same. Thus, the same people were able to observe her changes, and to give her a follow-up feedback at her 1-year evaluation.

Laufey shared that evaluation with her supervisor was anxiety provoking for her. She had high expectations of herself, and her supervisor had also high expectations of her. Laufey indicated that even though her supervisor thought “highly” about her work, it still made her feel anxious when her supervisor provided her with “constructive criticism”.

She noted that the language that IFCS used for the area of performance improvement was “challenge” rather than “weakness”. Thus, the language itself did not
carry a negative connotation. In contrast, Laufey remembered some supervisory evaluations from her former jobs that were negative experiences, and "it took her years" not to take those evaluations personally.

Laufey shared how she can felt stressed out when much paperwork is due in a short period of time. I explored with her how stress hindered or helped her performance. She noted that anxiety could actually mobilize her. She did things faster and better when she knew that "something needs to be done." Laufey also said that she reflected on self-feedback and feedback that was given by her supervisor almost daily. She also utilized deadlines for turning paperwork to motivate herself for accomplishing the task.

In discussing her challenges, Laufey expressed that one of her challenges was completing documentation on time and avoiding overstressing; another one was keeping clinical boundaries while working with families. Based on these challenges, she developed her goals. Between her 90-day evaluation and 1-year evaluation, she made performance progress in the area of documentation: thus, even though documentation was "the biggest challenge" for her, it was also the area of "the biggest progress".

Laufey shared about the importance of relationships between teammates. Even on a personal level she may liked some teammates more than others, on a professional level she respected the opinions of all of her teammates. Also, she thought that teamwork promotes a healthy sense of competition. For instance, teammates tend to compete when trying to get licensed and attain higher degrees.

As with the other participants, I explored with Laufey outside of job related factors, what other factors influenced her performance. She thought that the first factor
was her own home environment, then the search for a well balanced life, and finally a monetary reimbursement.

*Wenronbe.* Wenronbe was employed by IFCS in a family centered specialist position for over 8 years and she had 9 employee evaluations. During our interview, she appeared very expressive about her experiences and her thoughts in regards to TPC employee evaluation.

I explored with Wenronbe her feelings and thoughts before team evaluations. She expressed that prior to the most recent face-to-face team evaluation, she did not have much enthusiasm. Wenronbe said that the new format of evaluation that was implemented by IFCS a couple of years ago was not “her favorite”. She was missing the old evaluation, remarking that it took place on a more personal level, saying that the new format appears to be “by the book.” Wenronbe noted that the new format appeared to be not as effective, especially for seasoned FCSs, who were with IFCS for a number of years. While they have now mastered most of described job skills, they would benefit from more open, holistic evaluations. Wenronbe shared that when IFCS started using its new format, she did not feel “challenged”. Moreover, a few performance skills, such as completing the clinical reports, which are listed on the evaluation guide, are really difficult for team members to observe.

Wenronbe remembered a negative evaluation experience from the year before. A team member brought up in the team some feedback about her, which the team member had not shared with Wenronbe before the team meeting, during their individual conversation. It appeared to be very emotionally upsetting experience for Wenronbe, and she felt angry and disappointed.
Wenronbe also remembered her 90-day evaluation, which occurred over 8 years ago, as a positive experience. Even though the evaluation was "confrontational" as team members brought up to her areas that she needed to work on, the evaluation had a positive impact on Wenronbe as she openly accepted the feedback from her peers. She was also prepared to hear challenges in a team setting, as her team members brought up those challenges to her beforehand. Therefore, there were no surprises.

Wenronbe expressed that during her evaluations with her supervisor "it feels like she [the supervisor] knows what contribution" Wenronbe made to the company. Also, she felt that the last evaluation with her supervisor was "interesting". The supervisor described her as a "strong person", and spoke with Wenronbe about how this can be positive and, sometimes, challenging in her interactions with team members. Overall, Wenronbe felt that supervisor trusted her and relied on her.

Relationships for Wenronbe played a very significant role in teamwork and in region’s overall performance. She described her region (peers and supervisor) as "a very-close knit" region and elaborated on how team members interact not only on the job, but also off the job. Also, seniority in a team was significant as well for her. Wenronbe thought that newer FCS's look up to and value feedback of more senior FCS’s who had been with IFCS for a while.

As one of her significant growth and performance improvement experiences, Wenronbe described the growth of her clinical skills working with sexual offenders. When she started with IFCS, one of her struggles was working with sexual offenders. She remembered her team confronting her about her trying to avoid cases involving sexual
offenders. Reflective of how she has changed, nowadays, she was a co-facilitator of the
sex offender treatment group.

She shared that one of her performance goals this year was developing a
substance abuse treatment curriculum. Wenronbe also noted that it was important for her
to set up goals that were reachable to avoid setting herself up for failure.

Throughout our interview, Wenronbe mentioned her faith in God several times. I
explored with her what role spirituality played in her performance. She said that her
spirituality was the foundation of all elements in life: her marriage, her being a mother,
and her job.

Thematic Presentation

In this study, I identified the process of how employees learn from TPC-based
employee evaluation and how they use the evaluation feedback to improve their job
performance. In this section, the significant components of employees’ experiences with
TPC evaluation are presented first. This is followed by employees’ descriptions of the
processes of reflecting and conceptualizing the TPC feedback. Finally, the components of
feedback implementation following TPC employee evaluation are described. Table 2
outlines the study domains and the themes of the study.

Experiences of TPC Employee Evaluation

I identified eight themes that described employees’ experiences with the TPC
employee evaluation, namely (a) preparation before evaluation, (b) honesty and
openness, (c) anxiety before and during evaluation, (d) appreciation and
acknowledgement, (e) conflict during TPC employee evaluation, (f) seniority of team
Table 2

*Domains and Themes of the Study*

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<th>Study Domains</th>
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members, (g) relationships between team members, and (h) the need for a more holistic feedback. The findings suggest that the TPC process of evaluation was anxiety producing for most employees, specifically the team evaluation aspect of the process. Also, preparation appeared to be an important consideration of TPC evaluation, as participants emphasized the importance of adhering to the individual meetings before the team evaluation meeting. Non-adherence to this component often caused conflict between the evaluator and the team member who was being evaluated. Also, the positive feedback delivered in a team setting made team members feel appreciated and acknowledged. The participants clearly felt that the honesty of a peer who delivered feedback and a sense of openness by a recipient were essential to successful TPC evaluation. Most participants held the view that TPC feedback was as honest as feedback that was delivered in a confidential and anonymous way. Further, the feedback from a more senior member was perceived as being more valuable than that of a novice. Finally, the study participants identified a problem that an updated TPC evaluation format, which was implemented by IFCS in 2004, was lacking “a holistic” component.

Preparation before team meeting. A significant theme was preparation for a component of TPC where an employee gets evaluated by all of his or her team members in a team setting. Essentially, two sub-themes occurred: (a) an individual meeting with a team member before team meeting, and (b) evaluating one’s challenges and strengths honestly.

Participants thought that an individual meeting with a peer before the team evaluation was a significant component as it allowed one to know beforehand what the peer was going to share with other team members later in a group setting, thereby
avoiding negative surprises. The individual meeting also allowed the person being
evaluated to have a discussion with the team member. They could clarify perceptions by
both parties. Also, some participants noted that it helped to save time during team
meeting as the feedback could be discussed more in depth during individual meeting and
could be shared in a more summarizing format during the team meeting. Julie shared
how an individual meeting between two members was helpful in preparing for the team
meeting and in avoiding negative surprises:

If somebody thinks that you have a challenge in something that you
haven't processed or don't know, without having a chance to discuss with
that person in a more intimate setting, there is always that chance of being,
"Whoa, I didn't even know that was coming."

Likewise, Hattie noted that meeting with a peer one-on-one before the team
evaluation allowed for the opportunity to check the mutual perceptions about
performance strengths and challenges:

I think that's good that you call that person before you meet with them.
"Am I on the right track or do you feel that I'm wrong in what I'm saying?" I always give them the opportunity say, "You know, yes, you're correct" or "No, you're not."

As for the second sub-theme, several participants, including Joann and Julie,
spoke about the thought process of looking deep within themselves and honestly
identifying strengths and challenges while preparing for a team evaluation. As Julie
noted,

As I prepare for evaluations, I focus on the challenges that I'm going to
present. I've always taken the stand on being upfront about my challenges
rather than being self-conscious about them because I know the areas that
I struggle in and I also know the areas that I excel. I think about those and
I guess I wonder if anybody is going to point something out to me that I
don't know. So, I try to get prepared for being open and hearing what my
peers have to say about me.
Thus, it appeared that these employees assigned great significance to the preparation phase before team evaluation. The employees thought that this phase was significant as it allowed knowing beforehand what feedback would be delivered in a team setting. Also, for some employees, preparation time was used to self-evaluate challenges and strengths honestly. The sub-theme of looking into one's challenges deeply and evaluating oneself honestly is closely related to the following theme of "honesty and openness" during TPC employee evaluation.

**Honesty and openness.** The study participants referred to honesty providing feedback and openness to hearing challenges as significant prerequisites to the entire TPC evaluation process. Also, the perceived TPC feedback, provided in a face-to-face setting, was as honest and open as confidential and anonymous feedback would be. It must be noted, however, that none of the participants actually had any experiences with multirater evaluation conducted in anonymous and confidential way. The exploration of the participants' experiences was solely based on a "what if" question. Strauss, Schatzman, Bucher, and Sabshin (1981) called it a "hypothetical question". Finally, as TPC evaluation was provided for both developmental and administrative purposes, I explored with participants their perceptions concerning whether feedback would be more honest if evaluation were solely provided for developmental purposes. All the participants thought that if evaluation were delivered only for developmental purposes, it would not impact the level of honesty of feedback given by peers.

It appeared that a prerequisite to effective feedback was "honesty". Employees assigned great significance to honesty, as only honest feedback could help them to develop professionally. For instance, Hattie noted,
It doesn't help you to develop professionally if your team members are not open and honest with you and do not give you the challenges that they see that you need to work on.

Similarly, Joann shared,

When people can give you honest feedback, whether it's strengths or challenges, and they can be bold enough to say, "You know, I just see some things that you may need to work on," to me that's caring enough about me to let me know that I need to work on.

In addition to honesty in delivering feedback, most participants highlighted the importance of openness by a recipient to hear feedback, including feedback about challenges. It appeared that employees in this study were willing to "be challenged" by their peers and supervisor in an effort to develop professionally and improve job performance. Some of the participants noted that a trusting and safe environment facilitates the acceptance of feedback provided by peers. As Julie shared,

I think, from a peer evaluation standpoint, I'm always looking for a way to improve in the areas that I feel like I fall short and I'm really open to the sort of more constructive feedback from my peers, maybe because it's such a safe environment and I trust what people are saying. I really don't believe that anything that I'm doing is way off or really unpracticed, so I feel that I have got a pretty good handle on things, so any constructive criticism is going to come out as somebody's objective viewpoint of me working.

Similarly, Wenronbe noted,

I received my challenges from [peers]. I was like, "Okay. Thank you for the feedback", and it was genuine. I didn't feel that it was cutthroat and trying to, you know, undermine me in any way.

Queen Esther described experiences of her first 90-day evaluation, which was "superficial" and felt like peers were not providing her with honest feedback. Thus, following her evaluation, Queen Esther spoke to her team members individually, and asked them to be honest with her:
I actually after the evaluation talked to the team members two at a time or one at a time and said, "You know, I need, you know, you to be totally honest with me and, you know, give me constructive feedback."

As Queen Esther noted, honest and constructive feedback was essential to her growth. She added,

I'll start by saying that I am a person who could not live, could not breathe without growing. You know, wake up in the morning, learn something new every day type person. And so I regularly tell everybody, "I need feedback." You know, I mean I just I can't be productive. I can't, you know, do anything with my families if I'm not growing. And so, again, I need to be able to trust that you're going to give me feedback.

Several participants also shared how their supervisor "challenged" them. Feedback from a supervisor was usually accepted and desired. For instance, Sandcofa described how the supervisor kept him "on his toes" by challenging him to get his reports in on time.

I think that she's knowledgeable of a lot of different situations and, you know, it's always a learning process; so she just kind of challenges you to keep on learning, keep on improving.

However, at the same time he felt respected by his supervisor when she provided him with feedback about his strengths. Also, he respected his supervisor because she was "a good clinician" herself.

As TPC employee evaluation includes a unique component of an employee being evaluated by his or her peers in a team setting, I explored with participants what role this face-to-face team meeting component plays in their evaluation. I also asked the participants how it would be different if peer feedback was delivered to them in a confidential and anonymous way. Participants thought that in regards to information provided, feedback would not be different if it was delivered in a confidential or
anonymous way. However, if feedback was confidential and anonymous, it would undermine the philosophy of openness in a team. Additionally, an employee who is being evaluated would not get a chance to receive suggestions from a team member on how she or he could improve his or her performance. Laufey noted,

And if I don't give you my name, then you don't have anyone to turn to ask, "Well, what exactly is it that makes you feel that way - why do you feel that way? Why do you feel like that's a challenge for me, or why do you feel like that's a strength for me?" If everyone is anonymous then all you're going to have is just anonymous checklist at the end and who are you going to follow up with for feedback?

Most participants identified that TPC feedback provided in a face-to-face setting was as honest and open as feedback provided in a confidential and anonymous manner would be. Only Sandcofa and Serena thought that if evaluation was handled in a confidential and anonymous way, peer feedback would be more honest. However, even in this case, Serena noted that she would not be able to know what specific suggestions a team member would have for her for improving her performance.

IFCS is applying TPC evaluation not only for developmental, but also for administrative purposes. That means that peer feedback may be used by the supervisor to inform his or her decisions for salary raises and promotions. Some literature sources strongly advise against the application of any kind of multirater evaluation for administrative purposes. For instance, as discussed in chapter two, Edwards and Ewen (1996a) believed that if used for administrative purposes, feedback given by peers was less honest, and it would caused defensiveness on recipient's part. Pollack and Pollack (1996) also stated that if used for administrative purposes, feedback was more lenient and less reliable. Thus, I explored with the participants whether they would have provided
and received feedback differently if TPC evaluation would not impact their salary
increases and promotions. Most of the participants indicated that it would not affect their
honesty; they still would provide feedback with the same level of honesty, and they still
would receive feedback the same way. For instance, Julie noted,

    I think it would be the same process if it was strictly for development. I
think that people would still use it in the same way because we still at least
in our region are so focused on professional and personal development.
We really kind of look out for each other when we're struggling and that's
not for any sort of a raise. That's just so the team can keep functioning the
way that we expect the team to function, so we have certain standards that
we place on each other.

    Again, this finding appeared significant as it showed that TPC feedback for both
developmental and administrative purposes was perceived to be as trustworthy and
honest as feedback delivered solely for developmental purposes would be.

    Moreover, Laufey pointed out that if TPC evaluation did not have any
administrative impact, the employees would not invest so much energy into the
preparation and delivery of TPC feedback.

    Honestly, I don't think a lot of people would put that much time and effort
into [evaluation]. If somebody was just going to give them a good pat on
the back and say, "Well, you know, you've been with the Institute for five
years" but you haven't gotten not a nickel raise.

    Thus, in summary, it appeared that honesty by an employee who delivered
feedback, as well as openness by the feedback recipient, were essential to successful TPC
evaluation. Also, most participants viewed TPC feedback as honest as feedback delivered
in a confidential and anonymous way. Finally, the participants thought that if TPC
evaluation was solely for developmental purposes, it would not impact the level of
honesty of feedback given by peers. As important as honesty and openness was, the
participants also identified that they experienced some anxiety before and during TPC evaluation.

_Anxiety before and during TPC evaluation._ Most of the participants interviewed described experiencing some anxiety before the face-to-face team meeting evaluation component. However, none of the interviewed participants experienced having an overwhelming anxiety or fear. For instance Laufey, who was employed at SEVA region close to two years, shared:

> Because of the concept of the teams and the philosophy of how IFCS does evaluations, even if you have things you have to work on, you don't go into it with like your nerves are on edge or you have a lot of anxiety about it. Well, I just took everything in a positive light. I didn't take it in a condescending way.

It also appears that the employees who have been with IFCS for a shorter time experience more anxiety before their first 90-day or annual evaluations. Employees who have already had several team evaluations experience little or no anxiety during the evaluation process. As Laufey shared,

> When you go through the first initial evaluation, I think it makes you nervous – because it kind of puts you in a situation where you can feel somewhat vulnerable if you have not experienced that process before.

She also noted that at her following one-year evaluation, “I wasn't as nervous because I knew what to expect.”

Similarly, Joann, who was with IFCS for 8 years, shared that she had some anxiety before her first evaluation. However as time progressed she was experiencing less anxiety. As she stated,

> My second one probably less [anxiety], but after that no more anxiety. You actually start looking forward to them because it’s your time to get your plans, your goals for that upcoming year on what you need to work
on or what you’re good at, and you go off on those and continue to work. So I actually look forward to them.

That said, it should be noted that during the process of team evaluation, the employees apparently do experience some anxiety. A few participants shared the idea that anxiety for them was caused by a possibility of hearing surprising feedback about challenges – that they never thought about themselves, or that peers did not bring to their attention during their individual meeting. For instance, Joann noted,

I guess it can bring about a little anxiety when it’s some things you may not have noticed. You go, “Oh my goodness”, I didn’t even know that had took place or I didn’t realize that had happened. So I guess it can bring about some anxiety, but it also can bring about like a push, “Okay, I need to do that, and use my goals and work towards these goals”.

Most participants did not experience anxiety during the TPC evaluation component of meetings with their supervisor. Only Laufey and Julie shared that they experience some anxiety during meeting with their regional director. Laufey remarked,

I felt really good, and then if I had constructive criticism that came from [my supervisor], that makes me anxious. I feel anxious because I have a high level of expectation for myself and [my supervisor] has high expectations of all her FCSs, but nothing beyond what is reasonable.

Thus, the TPC evaluation process, especially the team evaluation component, can be at least somewhat anxiety producing for the employees in this study. However, anxiety that the participants described appears to be on a manageable level, and it decreases with time as employees experience more annual evaluations.

Appreciation and acknowledgement. Participants identified feelings of being noticed and appreciated by both their peers and their supervisor as a significant part of their TPC evaluation experiences. It appeared that employees’ feelings of being appreciated were even more significant when they came from their peers as opposed to
coming from their supervisor. Because their peers were performing the same job
requirements, employees believed that their peers could really relate to them well. As

Julie shared,

[I am] proud that somebody is acknowledging the things that I believe are
my strengths and then people will always lift up what they most like or
what they see are my particular strengths; so it's always interesting to hear
how people perceive you.

Similarly, Joann noted,

It makes me feel really good that people appreciate what you bring and
what expertise you bring to the team, and it also lets you know that people
appreciate some of the things you do, and sometimes you don't even
realize that you're bringing that piece.

More senior employees such as Hattie, Joann, and Wenronbe, who have been with
IFCS for over five years, commented that evaluation by their peers allows them to feel
acknowledged for their expertise. For instance, from her peers' acknowledgement, Hattie
knows that she is a good “role model” to her more novice team members.

I felt really good. I felt happy because a lot of the feedback was related to
me being a leader and how they look up to me and know that whether it's
critical or not, that I'll give them the feedback that they need to be a better
person or to make this job better. “Wow,” I thought, “Wow, they really
appreciate me and they really see, you know, how much effort and how
much sacrifice I give and how dedicated I am to this job.” And, my
thoughts would be, “I have peers that are observing me and look up to me
as a leader, so I try to be a leader.”

More novice employees indicated that positive feedback from their peers was
significant as it validated their performance in the context of overall team performance.

For instance, Serena shared,

It’s like, “you’re not really doing so awful.” And if you make one mistake
or one thing doesn’t go well, it is not the end of the world, you know. So
that’s really helpful in the evaluation process, both from the peers and
from my supervisor.
While most participants highlighted acknowledgment by their peers, acknowledgement by their supervisor appeared significant to some as well. As Julie said,

So, it's always extremely rewarding when she tells you how she feels about the work that you're doing because her role, it is more to kind of team manage, and not so much to live up individual stuff. So when we're one-on-one [with a supervisor] and we're going through [evaluation], it's very rewarding. I feel very confident when I hear [feedback about strengths] from her.

A few participants identified that their supervisor highlighted positives as opposed to negatives, or challenges. Joann shared, “Even in the times when negative stuff [comes] she always can pull something positive from it, and she always has done so since I've known her.”

Also, Sandcofa noted that his supervisor’s feedback made him feel respected. He said,

It just makes you feel good to know, like, that you're doing what you're supposed to be doing, part of your job. I mean, especially if it's something that you think you're good at and it's noticed by your supervisor; it makes you feel respected.

Thus, TPC experiences were significant for these participants as they made them feel acknowledged and appreciated for their performance by their supervisor and peers.

In the literature on teams, Garner (1988) likewise noted that a benefit of a team member being evaluated by his or her team members is that this actually allows the team member to hear the appreciation for his or her contributions to the team.

*Conflict during TPC team evaluation.* Three of participants interviewed – Sandcofa, Hattie, and Wenronbe - described experiences of conflict during a team evaluation. All three conflict experiences occurred when participants received feedback that was negative and surprising and that was not delivered to them during an individual
meeting with a peer prior to a team evaluation. This theme clearly relates to the previous significant theme of “preparation before evaluation.” It appears that a lack of preparation by peers regarding feedback beforehand can cause conflict and defensiveness on the recipient’s part. In Hattie’s case, she received feedback from a peer that was based on information that Hattie herself delivered during team evaluation. Specifically, when the face-to-face team meeting evaluation started, Hattie described her clinical relationships with her families as a strength, and shared an example that some families that she worked with 12 years ago still would call her “to give her updates, and let her know how they are doing.” Apparently, one of her peers interpreted that as a challenge of keeping appropriate clinical boundaries, and brought that up when it was her turn to share with Hattie her challenges. Hattie and her peer disagreed; the anxiety in the team was getting higher. Thus, they had to stop the team and process the conflict situation. According to Hattie,

That was a major piece in that evaluation and my thoughts was like, "Wow, I've never seen myself this way, so this must really be a touchy situation" and that's when I say, “I know I have good boundaries and you all are not going to tell me I don't, because I know I do, and I'm not backing down”. Everybody was okay, because we processed it before we left.

As a follow-up. the team wrote an official question to IFCS vice president of organizational development asking to clarify whether clinical boundaries were jeopardized by Hattie answering the phone calls of families with whom she had stopped working years ago. The vice president responded clarifying that the boundaries in that case were not challenged, and Hattie was ethical in answering families’ phone calls. Hattie thought that this conflict during the face-to-face evaluation could have been
avoided if the peer had brought up her perceptions about Hattie’s challenges during their individual conversation, before the team evaluation. Nevertheless, she still thought that the conflict had a positive outcome.

So, that made it really clear for all of us. It was a learning example because I felt that with my evaluation I was okay with what came out. Because if that particular issue hadn't come up, then we wouldn't have known.

Similarly, in Sandcofa’s and Wenronbe’s cases the conflict experiences were caused by their peer describing a challenge in a team meeting that was never brought to their attention beforehand. All three participants – Hattie, Sandcofa, and Wenronbe - described their feelings of anger, frustration, and confusion. Sandcofa noted, “I was shocked and confused. I was offended.” Likewise, Wenronbe shared,

I was really pissed off because this person was allowed to say something to participate in my evaluation and she had not given me feedback prior to the evaluation. I know what she was elaborating on was – it was almost like she was the spokesperson for someone who wasn't on our team and getting her point across. I just felt – I was really pissed off, and I was really angry.

Moreover, Laufey described her experience that she witnessed during one of her team evaluations. A peer delivered feedback to another peer that had not been discussed before. While the recipient of the feedback did not openly confront the peer during this team meeting, it still caused tension and a latent conflict between the two. As Laufey noted, “Basically that person kind of let it slide and then what it ends up doing – is creating dissent.” As did other participants who experienced the conflict situation, Laufey noted that the conflict could have been avoided if the two peers had discussed the feedback beforehand.
Thus, it appeared that the lack of a serious one-on-one discussion before a team evaluation session that includes sharing an employee’s performance challenges with him or her beforehand may cause conflict during TPC employee evaluation. The conflict may appear open, as in Hattie’s, Wenronbe’s, or Sandcofa’s cases, or latent as witnessed by Laufey.

**Seniority of team members.** Seniority of team members came up as a significant theme. The participants indicated that senior team members provided them with more valuable performance feedback, as they have more experience with IFCS. It appeared that feedback from senior team members had more weight than feedback from novices in the eyes of both groups: senior members and novices. Serena, who was employed by IFCS for just over a year noted,

> So they [senior team members] have a lot to pull from and a lot to draw on. Whereas for me, this may be my first resistant family, whereas they’re looking saying, “I’ve had so many resistant families.” So, I really can look up to them and respect what their experience is. That is extremely helpful when you have an FCS who has been doing this for seven years.

Also, Serena thought that novices may not be able to provide her with valuable feedback because of their lack of experiences with IFCS,

> Somebody who’s just entering the job, how can me, an employee who’s been there for 3 months, tell you, who’s been here for nine years what to do – I have nothing to say to you about that. I can’t even remember the half the stuff I have to do. So how do I say to you, “Oh, you know, you got to get better at getting your reports in on time?”

In addition to having more experience with IFCS and being able to provide more specific feedback, senior members also felt more comfortable providing challenges when compared to more novice team members. As Julie noted,
I think maybe being more objective is a skill that somebody more senior can provide, because in the beginning people are really eager to make a very good impression, so they wouldn't want to say anything negative or know-it-all to their peers. Somebody more senior can be more very objective and speak out from an experiential place.

On the other hand, the presence of senior members participating in the evaluation process could be intimidating to newer team members. For instance, Julie shared that during her 90-day evaluation, she received feedback from a more senior team member telling her that she still had to learn “IFCS ways”. While this feedback was general, and Julie would have liked to ask for clarification, she did not do so as she felt intimidated because the giver of the feedback had been employed by IFCS much longer than her.

The participants who are senior team members also noted that their feedback in a team is more valued, and has more weight on newer team members. For instance Wenronbe, who worked in an FCS position for 8 years shared,

I think that you bring into it your experience and it's well thought out feedback that you're giving and I think that with having a lot of years there, people look at you and really listen to your feedback. We just had somebody new on our team, and he told me, "You know what? I listened to you when you all interviewed me and I listen to you and see and your feedback, man, you sound like you really know what you're doing." and I was, "Thank you".

At the same time, Hattie, who was one of the senior FCS's in SEVA, noted that senior members were able to provide more critical feedback, while newer team members tended to opt out with more superficial feedback, especially surrounding challenges. This perception of a senior team member actually related to the earlier perception of newer team member Julie, who shared that the presence of senior team members may be somewhat intimidating. It is possible that novice members tended to provide senior
members with more superficial feedback, because they perceived senior members as more experienced, therefore the novices felt intimidated.

However, senior members as Hattie, may interpret a lack of critical feedback by novices as “opting out”, or taking easier way out. Hattie noted,

[More senior team members] are open and they're honest and they give you feedback. I mean, even if it's critical feedback, they give it to you. So, that's the difference, because a lot of times when they're new, they go, "Oh, well, I don't see the challenges" of which I know I have some. Thus, when they call and they'll go, "I don't see the challenges" and I'll say, "Well, think about it and call me back."

Thus, this finding is significant as it revealed differences in perceptions between novice and the more senior team members, as to the roots of why novices’ feedback tends to be less valued than feedback of more senior members. Newer team members tend to provide more superficial feedback because either they feel that they do have enough contextual information surrounding peer’s performance or are somewhat intimidated by the seniority of their fellow team members. On the other hand more senior members perceive that novices choose to “opt out” even though they would be able provide more critical feedback.

The TPC theoretical framework promotes the value and acceptance of each employee’s feedback, regardless of that employee’s length of employment. The finding showed, though that in reality, seniority may play a significant role in the perceived value of an individual employee’s feedback.

A need for more holistic feedback. As noted in the literature review, in 2004 IFCS implemented a change in the TPC evaluation process. The TPC evaluation process was adapted to be more specific based on an FCS’s expected job skills. The findings of
this study revealed that the change appeared significant for FCS's. It must be noted that four out of eight participants experienced both formats of employee evaluation: the less structured format before 2004 and the more structured format that was implemented in 2004. Surprisingly, however, the four participants that experienced only a new format of the employee evaluation, made references and compared both formats of evaluations. Thus, it appeared that through conversations with more senior team members, the newer team members were very familiar with the previous process, nevertheless that they did not experience the previous process themselves.

Most participants interviewed, and especially more senior employees, thought that the change had a more negative than positive outcome on TPC evaluation, especially on the team evaluation component. On the positive side, a few participants acknowledged that the new format appeared to be more skills specific and more structured than the previous one. As Julie shared,

I think, as far as the advantages go, it's a great tool for keeping focus on what the job description is. Somebody might be a great therapist, but, you know, to be concentrating on what expectations are as a Family Center Specialist at IFCS, it's important to have those core concepts. Then we know the specifics about the areas you need to work on and how we can become better as a family center specialist. So, those are some of the advantages of having streamlined [evaluation].

However, on the down side, the new format took away a more personal, relationship oriented component - a holistic component. Participants noted that they still try to incorporate a more personal component, when they come to the “Other” category on the list of skills in the evaluation guide. Most participants shared the importance of attending to more personal, relationship oriented component in addition to attending to and evaluated one’s job skills strictly based on the job description. As Hattie shared,
The core areas that we have now are really good, but I think the older way allowed more input as far as in the "other category" where you could just say "You know, they're fun to be around". "You know, they're hard workers". So I think I like this way because it's really specific as far as what we need to work on, but I also think it's important that we add that other piece to get, you know, the qualities of that person. "That person is a good cook."

Likewise, Julie shared,

In the open format, you know, people could talk about a great variety of issues, like personal characteristics on the job and how much that person benefited the other team members in a number of different ways, so I think the disadvantages of the streamlined, more specific evaluation, is that it cuts out some of the more candid conversations.

Serena also noted the value of receiving feedback that is outside of the skill list in the guide,

When we get to the end of the evaluation, there is a section where people are given the chance to just give their opinion of you, based on just the interacting with you that has nothing to do with the different categories in the evaluation, and it always surprises me what people have to say outside of the structure, as far as how they see and perceive me as a person, and what experiences that they appreciate that I bring to the company.

As Wenronbe noted, the new evaluation format felt more like "by the book". Also, the new format appeared to be not that "challenging" for more senior employees, who had mastered most of their specific job skills, and who would benefit from the more "holistic" old evaluation format. Wenronbe and Julie felt that most of the senior members would probably have mastered all the skills in the guide; thus, it appeared to be repetitive year to year. As Wenronbe noted,

With the new process, you have to say specifics to the things that are in the "Wheels of Change" book, whereas in the old process, your team members were able to give you what they felt were your strengths and challenges as they saw it. It incorporated personal, as well as work-related [feedback]. I'm missing the more personal part. I just feel like with the new process, if you've been there longer than 5 years or so, it's just going
through the motions because you've kind of mastered all of the stuff that you're expected to do, or you wouldn't still be working there.

Thus, in summary, the study revealed that while the new evaluation format, incorporated in 2004, brought in structure and specifics about expected job skills, it took away the more personal, holistic nature of TPC evaluation. The more personal and holistic nature of the evaluation is perceived to be important as much it highlighted the importance of relationships in a team process, as the following theme revealed.

*Relationships between team members.* A relationship between team members appeared as a significant theme of the overall TPC-based evaluation process. First, this relates to the previous theme that highlighted employees' perceptions of a new evaluation format that is lacking the previous format's more holistic and relationships-related focus. As Joann noted,

Right now to me it's just all about work and what you've done and just takes out the personal piece. Most of the teams have become personal. We know each other. You become a family.

Also, most of participants thought that it was important to establish relationships with team members beyond work to know and to connect with each other better. For instance Julie noted,

It is very important for the team to have opportunities outside of team meetings to get to know each other, understand how other people work or work together. I think it's really important, and without that, there's not really a clear understanding of who that person is as a therapist.

Further, the findings showed that closer personal relationships that team members establish beyond their working relationships did not appear to affect the honesty and openness of feedback on performance challenges between two teammates. Moreover, some participants, such as Queen Esther, Julie, Wenronbe, and Joann, thought that having
a personal relationship with a teammate actually helped in providing more effective feedback on one’s challenges.

I would probably know them a little more and so probably the feedback would be easier to give, because this person knows that evidently you’re coming from the heart because they’re a friend of yours. So it’s not like you’re just trying to pick or to get at them. So I think that it’d be easier with a personal relationship.

Wenronbe also noted that closer personal relationships facilitated more effective feedback among team members. She also thought that the longer teammates were on a team, the stronger relationship they could establish, thus being able to provide each other with more honest and effective feedback. This theme related to the previous theme of “seniority”, according to which employees value the feedback of senior team members more so than feedback of novices. As Wenronbe explained her point in regards of importance of relationships,

Because the people like myself that we've been there awhile and we've established relationships with people. We have a close knit relationship where we can accept feedback. It's not feeling as though somebody is deliberately trying to hurt you or undermine you. It is just for your best interest we're telling you what we've seen, you know, as far as your performance. You need to tighten up on doing this. You need to get better with this or get better with that, and we accept it and take it, and there are no hard feelings behind it.

Thus, it appeared that relationships were viewed as significant facilitator in delivering effective TPC feedback, especially feedback concerning challenges.

Reflection on TPC Feedback

In this study, I identified two themes that showed how the employees reflect on feedback: (a) filtering challenges or negative feedback, (b) situations as triggers to reflection. The findings revealed that the receiver of feedback took information and
filtered it, especially information that concerned challenges. Also, a specific work situation served as a trigger for employees to reflect back on peer or supervisory feedback. Finally, participation in the evaluation of other team members actually facilitated reflection on one's own performance.

**Filtering challenges or negative feedback.** The findings suggested that the participants reflected about challenges or negative feedback identified by peers, the supervisor, or themselves. The challenges identified by peers or supervisors may be different than those identified by an employee during the self-evaluation. However, the identifiable pattern was that the participants did not dismiss a challenge received by peers immediately. They would think about it, or “sleep on” it (as Julie described), or “marinade it” (as Wenronbe described). For instance, Hattie noted,

> I would examine for myself what I need to work on and what I don't need to work on. If I got the information and it was something that I knew within myself that I needed to work on, then I would be open and honest about that with them.

Laufey also shared how she would reflect on feedback given by her peers,

> Sometimes I need to think on it and it may not be something that I necessarily agree with. But I'm thinking “they said it for some important reason,” so I always think that if someone says something, whether it be positive or negative about your performance, if you take it into advisement, it might make you a better person.

Julie also described how she emotionally would protect herself if a challenge, verbalized by her peers contradicted her own perceptions,

> I think I try to just be respectful of that person and hear what they have to say and I maybe cushion myself from feeling negatively about it and say, "It's not the biggest thing I need to work on. I know what my challenges are. You know, I can let them tell me that. That makes sense, maybe."
The participants would dismiss a challenge identified by the peers, if that challenge contradicted their own perceptions. Also, some of the participants revealed that they assessed the challenge verbalized by their peers, and saw which pieces, or parts, fitted their perceptions. As Joann noted,

If I heard it in the evaluation and I thought that it was not a challenge, I definitely would process it after the fact and – and see which pieces of it that I’m not seeing. Probably not right then, because on an evaluation you might not want to focus on that, because it’s a big process. But I will take my time and process it later just to see what pieces of it I’m not seeing.

Several participants also noted that their thinking process would be different if a challenge was verbalized by their supervisor rather than a peer. In this case, they would not question or “filter” a challenge so much, but would take it more “for granted”. As Sandeofa said,

Because if your supervisor says you need to do something, you have to do it. If she said, "I think you're not doing this as responsibly as you think you're doing it," you have to maintain.

So, after receiving feedback on their challenges that was different from their self-perception, the employees in this study would filter the feedback, assessing which pieces actually suited them. As Serena noted, as she incorporated the feedback, it just became “a natural part” for her. Finally, supervisory feedback about one’s challenges was taken different from peers feedback, and employees were more likely to take it seriously rather than filtering such feedback.

*The situation as a trigger.* Most participants interviewed shared that they would usually recall and reflect on peer or supervisory feedback when they encountered a specific and challenging situation. A few participants specifically identified clinical situations with client families that triggered their recollection of feedback. For instance,
Serena noted, “I reflect on [feedback] pretty much every time I go to approach a client that’s going to have something to do with one of my challenges.”

For Queen Esther, one of her challenges identified by her peers was her not using appropriate clinical language while she was presenting cases in a team. Thus, she would remember the feedback to use clinical language each time in her team while introducing and presenting cases with her peers.

Joann described how a certain situation would trigger recollection of feedback provided by peers,

If it was a challenge, maybe something one of my team members said to me may pop in and, well maybe “I need to go on and call this collateral and update her sooner than tomorrow, instead of waiting till the next day.

Also, for Joann, it could be “a keyword” or “the reaction of a person” triggering recollection on feedback provided by her peers.

I also explored with participants whether timing after feedback was received was significant in recalling the feedback; that is, if they tended to recall feedback more often right away following the evaluation as to opposed to 6 or 9 months following the evaluation. The responses varied. For instance, Julie would recall and think about feedback more intensively and more often immediately after her evaluation, while timing for Wenronbe would not be significant in recalling feedback. Overall, it appeared that the timing after the evaluation was not as significant in recalling and reflecting on feedback as is the situation triggering the memory.

The participants noted that participation in team evaluations of other team members facilitated reflection on their own job performance. By hearing a team
member's challenges in a particular area, it actually triggered reflection on their own areas needing improvement. As Joann noted,

> When you're hearing other people's challenges or when you giving someone challenges, it is also reflection of you, too. You may see that this person needs to turn in their notes more on time, more often than they do, and so it may be something that you yourself are working on. So, it may just be a reflection. So, I think it helps you as well as the person you're giving information for just hearing his strengths and challenges.

Similarly, Wenronbe thought that participating in evaluation of others could actually help her to look back on her challenges and could motivate her for acting on these challenges,

> It was a learning experience because throughout the year you're always learning and listening to your peers to find out how they are growing also as part of our family. So, it was a learning experience for me where I could be like, "Okay, man, such-and-such has really made some big accomplishments over last year as far as with goals or working on improving it, and maybe that's something I should be doing too."

Also, participation in team members' evaluation not only could facilitate reflection on one's challenges, but also it could facilitate reflection on one's strengths. Laufey thought that participating in a team evaluation of other team members allowed her to look at her own strengths and challenges from different perspectives:

> I think when other people get evaluated, it helps me in on my own strengths and weaknesses because it gives me a different perspective on how they may do things. It gives the team perspective where you get to hear more than one person's opinion on how to respond to various situations. I just think it gives you more to go on versus just having an evaluation one-to-one with somebody.

Likewise, Julie shared how hearing a team member's challenges could facilitate reflection on her own strengths, and encouraged her to assess whether she could provide specific help to that person, "If somebody has challenges in areas that I don't have
challenges, you know, is there anything that I can offer to that person?” Thus, this finding showed that participation in evaluation of other team members in a team setting can actually facilitate an employee’s own reflection on his or her strengths and challenges.

**Conceptualization and Planning for an Action**

I identified three significant themes in the process of conceptualizing and planning to improve one’s job performance. The process involved (a) goals based on internalized feedback, (b) mental schemes, and (c) utilizing timeliness or deadlines for task completion.

*Goals based on internalized feedback* It appeared that employees developed their goals based on internalized meaningful feedback – feedback that appeared to be meaningful to them after they had reflected on it. A few participants, such as Julie and Joann, noted that peer feedback was the most valuable advice in the process of developing annual goals. However, most participants acknowledged that the supervisor had the final and most powerful determination in setting one’s goals, since she was ultimately responsible for the performance of all employees in the region. It also must be noted that many employees developed their goals during their evaluation component with a supervisor, looking back at self and peer feedback. As Julie noted,

> When I go over it with [supervisor], I feel, because she is in a supervisory position over me, that something is maybe more imminent, because she makes it a priority. But I really think that the most valuable of that is the peer, what they say.

Somewhat differently, Queen Esther described the process, during which she and her supervisor developed her goals,

> I think that I have the most influence on putting the goal in my developmental plan. [Supervisor] helps with verbiage. She helps to put it
in words that are workable and professional for that plan. Or she may say, “Well, you know, these are the challenges that four out of five of your peers say that you have. I don’t think it’s an issue.” And so I may say, “Well, you know I really agree with you.” And then that’d be a challenge that we won’t even add as a goal. So I think that both equally, I and my supervisor are equal participants in setting goals.

Participants emphasized that above all, they wanted the goals to be meaningful to themselves. Also, they tried to set goals that are attainable. For instance, Wenronbe noted,

Basically, I'm not going to set any goal that I do not feel is obtainable and reachable to me. I'm not going to set something that I know I cannot achieve and then you're setting yourself up for failure. I'm not going to do that.

Therefore, it is safe to say that these employees strove to develop goals for themselves that are meaningful and attainable, while acknowledging that their supervisor had the most guidance power in the process.

Mental schemes. All participants described how they put conscious effort into planning for an action to improve their performance. While each participant used different expressions to describe “a conscious effort,” it appeared that each of them had developed a “thinking frame” of how to better his or her performance. For Sandcofa, the conscious effort to perform better was based on the tendency to avoid negative feedback and to seek positive feedback in the future.

As I'm writing the report, I always think, "I want to make sure this report is on time." I don't want anybody else to be able to say that “he doesn't turn his stuff in on time.” Because if I'm late, then it's late getting to the collaterals and a lot of times, [community people] don't know us by our excellent work. They know us from the paperwork that we do.
Wenronbe described “burning goals” in her memory. As she developed the goals, she carried them with her throughout the year, and she reassessed herself on an ongoing basis.

Personally for me, I'm keeping [the evaluation] out the year because I keep a copy of my evaluation and look at my strengths and my challenges. I just burned in my memory what was said.

For example, she described how she was trying to be aware of and improve her communication style in a team as her challenge was at times coming across as “overassertive”. She was making a conscious effort to use a specific strategy in her team to be effective in her communication with team members,

I stop and I think. I utilize a strategy that I give to my guys in my substance abuse group. I stop and think before I say something. I stop and think, “Okay, and am I using the right word to get what I need to say across, or do I need to rephrase it?”

Also, Serena described how she developed “a mental plan” when encountering resistant families in her clinical work:

And then, where is the resistance? Is my challenge with their resistance because of them or is it because of something within me? And then, I just have a mental plan. Sometimes I write it down, but I’ll have a plan. When I go to these people, how am I going to handle this resistance? So it helps me mentally come up with a plan for individual clients as to what I’m going to do to meet this resistance.

Thus, it appeared that employees made a conscious effort on following-up on their developmental plans that were meaningful to them. In the process of planning for an action, they developed individual “mental schemes,” which they then used when encountering challenges in their daily job performance.

Timeliness for task accomplishment. A few participants elaborated on deadlines for task accomplishment, especially those surrounding paperwork completion. It
appeared that deadlines that employees made for themselves and external deadlines that were made by regional administration were significant as they helped employees plan. Deadlines also served as reminders for accomplishing a task. As Queen Esther noted,

I actually, in my planner, have the last names and then I put the date that the case was opened. You know how some people set their watch ahead of time? I set my report date ahead of time to be able to do that.

Julie shared that she used deadlines to serve as a reminder of task due dates. Even though Julie acknowledged that the deadlines were not always effective, as she didn’t always complete clinical paperwork by the due date, it was still beneficial in her daily work, as it increased her sense of accountability to her team members and to herself,

I think when I have to turn something in and have a deadline and be responsible for the deadline, I put the actual day that I’ve completed the report onto it. If it’s past the deadline, then it’s a constant reminder that somebody’s going to see this and I am being accountable for myself. I’m taking responsibility for the fact that I’m late.

Laufey also noted that having deadlines for a task, especially paperwork completion, was actually helpful to her. It produced some anxiety for her; however, having some anxiety actually mobilized her to accomplish tasks on time.

So, it appeared that timelines and deadlines often played a positive role in employees’ planning and completion of the for daily tasks.

Implementing TPC Feedback

From the database three significant themes emerged that supported the process of implementing feedback, namely (a) accountability to self and client families or community, (b) improving in performing job tasks, (c) clinical documentation completion as an ongoing challenge, and (d) ongoing feedback from supervisor and peers. The findings showed that feelings of accountability to self, along with accountability to
consumers (client families) and community appeared to be significant catalysts for performance improvement. Data from interviews with participants and also from a review of employee development plans suggested that participants were, for the most part, improving their performance as evidenced by them achieving annual goals identified in developmental plans. In the implementation phase, the most common challenge and a recurring goal appeared to be the completion of clinical documentation in a timely manner. Further, the participants shared that they received feedback from peers and their supervisor on an on-going basis; thus the implementation of goals and the experiences of receiving feedback were intertwined.

Accountability to self and client families. The participants identified and described feeling accountable to themselves as a major catalyst for performance improvement. Also, most participants interviewed described accountability to self intertwined with accountability to client families that they serve and to the community representatives. Being accountable to themselves means doing the best to provide quality services and help families in the community. Most participants interviewed shared that their feelings of accountability to themselves actually supercede feelings of accountability to their teams, or accountability to their supervisor. Serena shared how she wants to perform her best,

I need for me to do a good job, and so, therefore, I'm very accountable. Where I fall short, I know that I do, and I'm honest about it, and I don't make excuses. I need to do a good job, not only for the company but for me. I need to do a good job for me, as well as for the clients that we serve.

Similarly, Hattie described how she learned as a child to be accountable to herself. She remembered how her mother would say to her, "Never put off for tomorrow what
you can do today, because tomorrow is not promised." This upbringing helped her develop into a woman who did not procrastinate, and who put forth her best efforts in everything that she did. Hattie said, “One thing, I want my performance to be good because I want to assist my [client] parents, my families in any way that I can.” Sandcofa also shared that he enjoyed his work because he helped families: “You know, I love the fact that I think I improve people's lives.” Likewise, Queen Esther described how she felt accountable to herself. She explained,

Accountability to myself – I need to make sure that the family understands what’s going on and what’s written in the progress notes. I want the families to understand, the process in relation to this is what the collateral wants. This is what you want.

Laufey also explained how she felt accountable to herself for not only doing her best for client families, but also knowing and acknowledging to herself when she could not do any more for the families.

There is a real art to having a good clinical ability and clinical skills that are beyond the book, beyond the DSM-IV. Sometimes being accountable to yourself is just kind of knowing where you are, who you are, where you've been and where you're going and exactly what can you do to help a family. Sometimes you know, you just have to be able to say, "I can't do anymore," or "I just can't help this family because they're not willing to help themselves." You have to be able to get up and go home, and know that you did all you could do.

Laufey also noted that in this particular kind of job, accountability to self was even more important than accountability working in any other industry. The nature of the job dictated that employees came to the office several times a week. The rest of the time they were on their own, working with families in their homes; there was no constant supervision of employees. Thus, the key to the performance was being accountable to oneself. She emphasized,
Nobody is going to tell you what to do unless you get into a bind. If you have something due and a supervisor needs to talk to you, she's going to call you on your cell phone, but you have to be able to make your own schedule weekly and do your hours and be accountable to yourself, because if you aren't accountable to yourself, then you cannot meet all of the criteria at this job.

So, it appeared that accountability to oneself, which was intertwined with accountability to client families and community, was the major catalyst for performance improvement. Moreover, accountability to oneself appeared to be important in this specific line of work since the employees worked with families outside of the office most of the time, on a schedule of their own making.

*Improving in performing job tasks.* All the participants were able to identify specific job tasks that they were performing better following a TPC evaluation. A review of the developmental plans supported the employees' perceptions concerning job performance improvement. The data suggested that the study participants gradually improved their performance, particularly in teamwork and clinical work areas.

For instance, at her 90-day evaluation in 2005 Laufey had a challenge identified by team members as “chairing team meetings”. She did not have that same challenge at her one-year evaluation as she had improved her skills as a chair of the team. As I explored with Laufey the process of improving her skills of chairing team meetings, she explained, “I felt like I succeeded in meeting my comfort level in being able to do that.”

Similarly, Joann described her progress in sharing and expressing her feelings with team members, which initially, 8 years ago was identified as a challenge by her peers. Throughout the professional growth process her challenge became her strength:

When I first came here, one of the challenges from my team was to be more of a team player, to express my feelings and talk more and just to be
more a part of the team. And as I took that in, I felt myself verbalizing things more and expressing myself. And so I look back now and I, of course, don't have a problem communicating in my team. The amount of time I've been here, it's more of a leader position, so I'm explaining to new people how to do this and how to do that, so I feel my role has changed and my challenge become a strength.

In her 1998 developmental plan, Wenronbe had a goal of increasing clinical skills working with sexual offenders. This same goal no longer appeared in her following development plan in 1999. Not only had she increased her clinical skills of working with sexual offenders, but she also became a co-facilitator of a sexual abuse treatment group. As she noted,

It was very difficult because I felt like, it's worse enough you hurt a child, but to hurt your own child... And so [team members] were confronting me on that, because I would always avoid getting cases that involved sex offenders. But, believe it, now I'm the co-facilitator of the sex offender treatment group and working on my license.

Similarly, Julie, at her 90-day evaluation in 2005 had a challenge of meeting her productivity goal as measured by clinical billable hours with client families. She attained her goal of meeting her clinical productivity before her first year evaluation. Julie described the process of her performance improvement in clinical productivity area,

I had to go into the supervisor and say, "I really don't know how to make all of these hours." It was really upsetting. It was very difficult. It was very humbling. So, I sat down with the supervisor, and we developed a plan that I would write down absolutely every kind of interaction or case management for every client that I had. It was learning a new way of being aware of how I am working and not just writing down when I'm with the family.

So, I had to document everything and then we went through and figured out what was billed and I realized that there were hours and hours that had been missing that I wasn't writing down. But then, after it took just becoming a lot more comfortable with myself, a lot more confident in the work that I was doing, so it was so much easier to achieve the productivity goals and even go past it.
Also, from her 90-day evaluation to her first year evaluation, both in the same year 2005, Julie improved the timeliness of writing and turning in her clinical reports. She acknowledged that she still needed to continue working to improve her performance in that area. What was significant to Julie was the fact that her peers actually observed and acknowledged that improvement at the time of her first year evaluation,

"I'm a really good writer. It's just being on top of when they're due. That was the one area that one of the team members noted that I had worked on a lot and had gotten a lot better in a year. So, that was really surprising and nice to hear."

Queen Esther also described how she made some progress in clinical documentation to turn the reports on time by using strategies from her team,

"Well, Queen Esther, try this. Queen Esther, try this. Try writing in the planner". Because I tried to use an electrical thingy and that just wasn't me. They were just throwing out ideas that I could use that would help me manage better, and so it helped. By the time the second evaluation came, it was helpful.

Also, in her developmental plan of 1998, Hattie had a goal of improving her public presentation skills. Even though she still did not like public speaking, and it was a difficult process for Hattie to overcome a fear of public speaking and feel comfortable in front of groups of people, she progressed a lot in this area. So now she would go to community meetings with her supervisor and would present in front of large groups of people.

In summary, the findings indicated that these employees were able to perform better in their daily job tasks following TPC employee evaluation. This pattern was especially noticeable in the clinical and teamwork performance areas. This finding was significant, as it provided insights and added to the knowledge base on the role that team
evaluation plays in job performance. The finding suggested that TPC evaluation process played a positive role in facilitating employee job performance.

*Clinical documentation completion as an on-going challenge.* A reoccurring data pattern in interviews and developmental plans among all participants was a challenge of improving their clinical documentation completion in a timelier manner. Only two more senior employees – Hattie and Wenronbe – identified clinical paperwork completion as a professional strength, and review of their developmental plans supported their statements. The rest of employees expressed, or their developmental plans showed, that clinical paperwork completion was a performance challenge. Analysis of employee developmental plans revealed that for most employees this performance challenge was ongoing lasting at least 2-3 years. In my exploration with participants about barriers to implementing timely paperwork completion, the participants noted procrastination and the lack of effective organization on their part.

For instance, Serena noted that procrastination got on her way,

The only issue with documentation, really that I have is, getting it in on time. That’s pretty much in black and white. “You know you can get it in. Stop procrastinating and waiting until the last minute. Write it, and get it in.” I know that I have a tendency to procrastinate, wait until the last minute, and part of that is because I write well.

Similarly, Julie also thought that procrastination was her internal barrier for completing and turning paperwork on time.

I have a tendency to let the family work be more important and take precedence over the administrative work, and I just procrastinate. So, that’s just an ongoing barrier. I just dwell on things too much and then pick out negatives or prioritize just in a nonfunctional sort of way so that I get myself stuck.
She also noted that she was not quite sure where her procrastination came from. “I haven't figured out if it's just a bad habit or why I hold myself back from something I know I am capable of doing.” During our second interview, Julie added that her goal for this year was increasing organization around her paperwork.

Joann also explained that an internal barrier for her was procrastination: “It has to be something you have to do within yourself to end the procrastination and to focus on what you need to do.” Externally, she thought she could use some more help and strategies from her team.

Queen Esther noted, “I still haven’t figured out a good system for me to remember to get my reports in by the time, our OA [office assistant] needs to have them.” However, at the same time she described an external barrier of getting all necessary information from families. It was challenging, because they had a short time (a month) to turn in the clinical assessment report. However, during that short time there was a lot of information that needed to be gathered from families in order to do the reports properly. Sandcofa also spoke about the external barrier of a short time period to turn in his clinical documentation.

Also, for Sandcofa, the actual struggle was with typing the reports as his educational background was in chemistry, and he never acquired typing skills:

It’s a lot of work for. When it may take you an hour to type it, it'll take me double it, like two-and-a-half hours. I peck, like tic, tic, so internally, I'm already thinking about that, so I'm dreading it, so I don't want to do. That’s internal.
Thus, completion and turning documentation in timely manner appeared to be the most reoccurring challenge for these FCS’s. The most frequent barriers identified by participants were lack of individual organization and procrastination.

_Ongoing feedback from peers and supervisor._ All the study participants indicated that the process of implementing their goals was intertwined with the process of receiving ongoing feedback from peers and supervisor. During weekly team meetings participants presented their cases and received advice about clinical strategies to use to approach families and collaterals. Also, they met with their supervisor weekly or biweekly or discuss by phone any struggles with a particular issue. As Laufey noted,

> You don't just look at this evaluation stuff twice a year. We are always talking about it and we're always talking about our collateral relationships and the four different areas of clinical service, and what could be considered strengths and challenges.

Joann described how she was asking for and using ongoing feedback from her supervisor and team in the area of clinical performance:

> I would get feedback from them and also if I staffed it with my director, regional director, I will get instant feedback from her too on whatever strategies I chose to use or skills. So, I think it is ongoing because you’re getting feedback from them all different times, not just your evaluation.

Likewise, Julie shared how she would ask for feedback from her supervisor and get it on ongoing basis. She said, “I go to her and I pick her brain about my cases when I'm feeling like I'm up against a wall.” Similarly, Serena would ask for feedback with her cases from her supervisor on an on on-going basis.

> When I'm working with a family that I struggle with, I will say in supervision, “You know, I am really struggling with this family”. She [supervisor] knows which clients I'm really struggling with because I'll just tell her point blank, “I don’t pretend like I know that everything is fine. No, I don’t get along with these people, and I have to figure out how
to make this work.” and she’ll give me suggestions. So, when I know that I have to go and deal with this family, I will pull from the suggestions that she gave as to how to work with this particular family.

Several participants, like Julie and Wenronbe, noted though that ongoing feedback from their supervisor and team members throughout the year was focused mostly on the clinical performance area. They agreed that it would be helpful if more consistent and structured feedback throughout the year was also provided for other performance areas – collateral, clinical documentation, and teamwork.

Thus, it appears that these employees received ongoing feedback from their peers and supervisor throughout the year, particularly in the clinical performance area.

Other Findings

The other findings showed that monetary rewards and spirituality may play a role in facilitating some employee performance.

Monetary compensation. I classified this finding as “other” as it appeared to carry information not necessarily sought by the basic research question. However, I considered this finding to be important to highlight, as it provided an additional insight as to what drove performance improvement. Almost all of the participants interviewed commented that monetary compensation was an important variable and motivator for their daily job performance. Even though they wanted to perform well for themselves, the company, and the client families, they also wanted to perform well to receive adequate monetary compensation. As Hattie said, “You know, you want to do a good job so that you can be rewarded for it.” Similarly, Queen Esther explained,
Right now I can say that money would influence my performance. Candidly, it costs me money to earn a certain level of expertise. And if I’m expected to use it then I need to get paid for it. I think that would influence future performance. I’m going to continue working competently with my families, but again, speaking for myself as an employee, I have to feel that anything that I work extra for that’s going to benefit the company is going to be appreciated. So at the expense of [supervisor] pulling me to the side every day saying, “Thank you Queen Esther. Thank you Queen Esther. Thank you Queen Esther,” it would just be nice to be able to get paid for what I know.

Thus, it appeared that monetary compensation could be an important variable driving employee job performance.

**Spirituality.** Some participants also remarked that their spirituality influenced their everyday performance. For example, Joann described how her prayers kept her grounded and accountable to herself. She noted,

> I think in prayer and different things that I utilize from my spirituality; that’s what keeps and reminds me of what I’m here to do. I’m here to help these people and to move forward and stuff. So it just keeps me accountable of what I’m here to do, what I was put here to do, and what my main goals are.

Wenronbe also described how spirituality was the center of her life; her being a mother, her being a wife, and also her being an employee. She said, “My personal goal each and every day is that the Lord allows me to see another day and every day I place it upon myself to learn something new”. Therefore, spirituality may be an important drive behind job performance for some employees.

**Summary**

I identified the process of how employees learned from TPC-based employee evaluation of their job performance. The findings suggested that the TPC evaluation process can be anxiety producing and that preparation for the team evaluation appeared to
be an important component of TPC evaluation. Non-adherence to this component may cause a conflict between the evaluator and the team member who is being evaluated. Positive feedback delivered in a team setting left team members feeling appreciated and acknowledged. Also, the personal relationships among team members appeared to be significant; the relationships did not hinder the teammates from providing each other with feedback on challenges. Participants indicated that honesty of a peer who delivered feedback, and openness by a recipient were essential to successful TPC evaluation. Further, the feedback from more senior team members was valued more highly than that offered by more novice employees. Finally, the study participants observed that an updated evaluation format, which was implemented by IFCS in 2004, was lacking “a holistic” component.

Second, the study participants described the process of reflection on TPC evaluation. The findings revealed that the receiver of the feedback took information and filtered it, especially feedback that highlighted challenges. Also, a specific work situation may serve as a trigger for employees to reflect back on peer or supervisory feedback. Finally, participation in evaluation of other team members actually facilitated reflection on one’s performance.

Third, the chapter described the planning and conceptualization processes following TPC evaluation. Significant themes in the process of conceptualizing and planning for performance improvement, included goals based on internalized feedback, mental schemes, and using deadlines for timely task completion.

Finally, I highlighted the process of feedback implementation as employees tried to improve their performance. Accountability to self, along with accountability to the
consumer (client families) and community appeared to be significant catalysts for performance improvement. The findings suggested that participants used TPC feedback to improve their performance as evidenced by their achieving annual goals identified in developmental plans. In the implementation phase, the most common challenge and a recurring goal appeared to be the completion of clinical documentation in a timely manner. Further, the implementation of goals and the experiences of receiving feedback were intertwined as the participants received feedback from peers and supervisor on an on-going basis, throughout the year.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings as they relate to the research questions. This is followed by recommendations and implications for practice and policy. Finally, the chapter presents recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

The study explored how employees learn from Team Primacy Concept (TPC)-based employee evaluation and how they use this knowledge in performing their jobs. TPC-based evaluation is a form of multirater evaluation that consists of three components: self-feedback, supervisor’s feedback, and peer feedback. The main difference between TPC-based evaluation and other forms of multirater evaluations is that during the TPC-based evaluation, the employee’s professional performance is discussed with his or her peers in a face-to-face team setting, while other forms of multirater evaluation are conducted in a confidential and anonymous manner.

The study used a qualitative case study approach. The site of the study was the Institute for Family Centered Services (IFCS). The Southeastern Virginia (SEVA) region of IFCS was purposely chosen as a case for the study based on its performance records in four critical areas: clinical work, documentation, teamwork, and collateral relationships. Collateral relationships refer to relationships with other community agencies, such as child welfare, schools, and other mental health agencies. The participants included all the members of IFCS Southeastern Virginia region who had at least two TPC evaluations.
during their work history with IFCS. There were a total of eight family centered specialists who met the criteria to participate in the study.

Data were collected through open-ended interviews and the analysis of all employee development plans that participants had during their employment with IFCS. Two semi-structured individual interviews were conducted using an interview guide that was framed around the research questions and the conceptual framework. Data were collected and analyzed simultaneously. NVivo7 qualitative research software was used to manage the data and assist in the data analysis. The findings were organized under four major domains: experiences of the TPC evaluation, reflections on the process, conceptualization of behavior changes, and implementation of the change.

Discussion of the Findings

Kolb’s experiential learning model was used to guide the study, including data collection and data analysis. Based on the data, concepts were identified that represent Kolb’s experiential learning model. Each concept identified is comprised of the themes presented in Chapter IV. Kolb’s experiential model (Figure 1) depicts the learning process as a four stage cycle, consisting of immediate, concrete experiences; observation and reflection; conceptualizing and planning; and experimentation and testing, which in turn, creates new experiences for learners. I identified eight major concepts in this study that are representative of Kolb’s learning cycle (see Figure 4). Two concepts represent Kolb’s “experience” stage. These concepts are power dynamics among team members and relationships and feelings. Power dynamics and relationships and feelings were significant experiences by the study participants that facilitated further reflection in the learning process from TPC-based evaluation. “Reflection” stage is represented by two
Figure 4. The learning process model of TPC evaluation framed around Kolb’s experiential learning.
concept: reflection facilitated by a situation and protecting self-image. The study found that in the process of reflecting on TPC-based feedback, employees's reflection is triggered by a work situation or by participating in evaluation of others.

"Conceptualization" is represented by one concept: mindframe and timeframe. The concept of "mindframe and timeframe" means that while employees make sense out of TPC-based evaluation and plan for behavioral changes, they use timelines, develop goals that are meaningful to them, and develop mental schemes around which they organize knowledge gained from TPC-based evaluation. Finally, "active experimentation" is represented by accountability to self and client families, meaning that such accountability facilitates performance improvement. This fourth stage has also one more concept identified in this study: unresolved challenges. Unlike the other concepts, unresolved challenges has negative connotation for performance improvement and hinders implementation or active experimentation. The last concept is ongoing feedback. This concept actually represents the connecting links between all four domains of learning, meaning that ongoing feedback in TPC environment is provided and solicited during all stages of learning.

Experiences of TPC Evaluation

Two concepts of this study are representative of "experience" in Kolb’s model: (a) relationships and feelings and (b) power dynamics among team members. These concepts explain experiences that facilitate team members’ learning from the TPC evaluation process.

Relationships and feelings. Data from this study indicate that relationships among employees and the feelings that result from such relationships play a significant role in
TPC-based evaluation experiences that facilitate or hinder learning related to employee job performance. This concept embraces the following themes earlier described: (a) anxiety before and during team meeting, (b) preparation for a team meeting, (c) honesty and openness, (d) feelings of appreciation and acknowledgement, (e) relationships among team members, and (f) a need for a more holistic approach.

Participants consistently remarked that the TPC process is anxiety producing for most employees; specifically, the evaluation component where an employee is evaluated by his or her entire team. However, it appears that the anxiety that employees experience is not overwhelming, and anxiety levels get lower as employees increase their time with IFCS and experience more annual evaluations.

Preparation is an important phase of TPC evaluation. This finding is also supported by researchers, such as Pfau and Kay (2000) and Atwater and Waldman (1998), who believed preparation and training to be important in multirater evaluations.

As the study findings indicate, employees tend to prepare by reflecting on their strengths and challenges, so that they can present accurate self-perceptions of their performance to their team members and their supervisor. Also, employees in this study pointed out that it was important to adhere to the individual meeting component before the team evaluation. Such a component is an expected phase of TPC evaluation at IFCS. The individual component allows the recipient of the feedback to discuss any questions or request clarifications from the giver of the feedback. Also, this component aims at preventing negative surprises and reactions during the team evaluation component. Finally, this part of the evaluation is important as it allows the recipient of the feedback to “correct” or clarify the perceptions of a feedback giver. Barclay and Harland (1995) conducted a
study among public health nurses in the USA and found that the users of peer evaluation were more likely to accept feedback that was “correctable”. Correctable means a peer appraisal system where a recipient of feedback is given an opportunity to correct appraisal errors. Finally, this component contributes to a more efficient time use as a recipient and a giver of feedback would have already discussed their perceptions in one-on-one meeting, and would not have the need to clarify every detail of the feedback in a team setting.

In describing their experiences with the process, the study participants noted honesty in providing feedback and openness to hearing challenges to be significant prerequisites to the TPC evaluation process. The degree to which TPC employee evaluation plays a positive role in improving job performance and professional development apparently depends on the levels of honesty and openness among those involved in the process. The findings suggest that the more honest the feedback giver is, and the more open the feedback receiver is, the more the feedback receiver can benefit from TPC employee evaluation. McCarthy and Garavan (2001) likewise observed that the employee’s acceptance to feedback is an important prerequisite to effective peer evaluation.

Further, the employees in this study perceived information provided in a face-to-face setting to be as honest and open as confidential and anonymous feedback would be. This finding is significant as it contradicts many studies in the literature (Brotherton, 1996; Dyer, 2001; Edwards & Ewen, 1996; Gregory, 1998; London & Beatty, 1993; Vinson 1996; Wimer & Nowack, 1998) indicating that only confidential and anonymous peer feedback would be reflective of true peer perceptions. For instance, Dyer (2001)
stated that raters' confidentiality must be protected. "They have taken a risk in giving data, and they must be able to enjoy anonymity" (p. 3). Vinson (1996) believed that "the promise in anonymity helps convince people that they can be candid" (p. 2). In this case study, feedback delivered in a face-to-face manner was believed to be honest, candid, and reflective of employees' true perceptions. However, I believe that TPC works best within an organizational culture that promotes team work and openness between members on an on-going basis. This type of employee evaluation has been applied and cultivated at IFCS for the past 18 years. If such were not the case, it is quite likely that confidential and anonymous feedback may create more psychological safety for employees.

As TPC evaluation is provided for both developmental and administrative purposes at IFCS, I explored participants' perceptions about whether feedback would be more honest if evaluation were solely conducted for developmental purposes. All the participants thought that if evaluation were conducted only for developmental purposes, it would not impact the level of honesty in the feedback given by peers. Again, this finding brings into question a common belief in the literature (Edwards & Ewen, 1996a; Pollack & Pollack, 1996) about multirater evaluations that suggest using peer feedback mainly for developmental purposes, and not for administrative, such as salary increases and promotions. The underlying reason behind this suggestion is that if peer feedback is provided for administrative purposes, the feedback would be less honest and reflective of candid peer perceptions. For instance, Edwards and Ewen (1996a) and Pollack and Pollack (1996) believed that if used for administrative purposes, feedback given by peers would be less honest, and it would cause defensiveness on a recipient's part. As they noted, "Providers of feedback may be more willing to be totally honest, because neither
they nor the recipient have anything to lose" (Edwards & Ewen, 1996a, p. 42). The findings of this study do not support that position. However, the findings must be interpreted with caution as there is a well established team culture at IFCS, and that influences the experiences of organizational members. Such findings may not be similar in organizations where such culture does not exist.

The findings of the study generally demonstrate that positive feedback delivered in a team setting leaves team members feeling appreciated and acknowledged. For more senior employees, evaluation by their peers allows them to feel acknowledged for their expertise. For more novice employees, positive acknowledgement in a team makes them feel validated for their performance. Garner (1988) similarly noted that an important benefit of evaluation by team is the ability for the team member to receive appreciation for his or her contributions to the team. Similarly, Santeusanio (1998) in his experimental implementation of 360-degree evaluation in his school district found that multirater evaluation stimulates collegiality.

Another significant finding of the study was the importance of relationships among team members. The findings demonstrate that relationships among team members are viewed as a significant facilitator in delivering effective TPC feedback, especially feedback around challenges. The participants thought that closer personal relationships did not inhibit them from providing open and honest feedback to their peers. On the contrary, several participants noted that closer personal relationships, extending beyond the work environment, facilitate even more open and candid feedback on their peers' challenges, as the evaluator knows and is better able to assess his or her peer's strengths and challenges. This finding is significant as it offers evidence of a different role that
personal relationships play in providing peer feedback than the role addressed in the literature. For instance, Bettenhausen and Fedor (1997) found that peers tend to rate their employee peers higher if they have friendship or personal relationship. Similarly, these same authors determined that participants would have a fear of negative consequences or repercussions when providing a peer with a negative feedback. Contrary to Bettenhausen's and Fedor's findings, the participants of this study indicated that closer personal relationships do not inhibit or prevent them from providing honest and candid feedback to their peers.

*Power dynamics among team members.* The themes that support the concept of power dynamics are (a) conflict among team members and (b) seniority of team members. Findings indicate that conflict in a team appears to be precipitated by a lack of preparation. Non-adherence to the one-on-one meeting between the giver and the recipient of feedback can cause a conflict between the evaluator and the team member who is being evaluated. A giver and a receiver of feedback may have different perceptions of job expectations and not clarifying these perceptions before the team evaluation can cause an open argument or hidden tension during team evaluation. Additionally, the self perceptions of a feedback recipient may be different from that of the feedback giver and the recipient may not be psychologically prepared to receive negative unexpected information on their performance, and this may create conflict.

Overall, a conflict is an expected and desirable phenomenon in an organization (Rainey, 1997). Unless it is very intense or destructive, a conflict can improve decision making (Rainey), and cooperation (Winter, Neal, & Waren, 2005) in a group or organization. A fear of conflict in an organization, and a tendency to avoid a conflict
result in a lack of commitment (Fazzi, 2004). Thus, a conflict that the participants of this study experienced can be interpreted as healthy since conflicting parties openly verbalized their differences of opinions as well as expressed their feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction during the team evaluation meeting. It appears that in Hattie’s case, a conflict was resolved by “deferring to status power” (Winter, Neal, & Waren, 2005). Specifically, a senior vice president of the organization was asked to provide clarification on who was correct in her understanding of the “clinical boundaries” when working with client families. In some cases, the conflict can become an unhealthy situation if it is not addressed within the team. It may become a pattern, eroding the trust that members have for each other.

Seniority (or length of employment with IFCS) may also cause a power imbalance during TPC-based employee evaluation. Feedback perceived by senior employees seems to be more valued by both the novices and the more senior employees themselves. The findings have also revealed the differences in perceptions between more novice team members and more senior team members as to why novices’ feedback is less valuable. Newer team members tend to provide more superficial feedback, meaning that their feedback is less critical, less specific, and is focused more on performance strengths than challenges. They either feel that they do have enough contextual information regarding performance of other team members, or they are somewhat intimidated by the seniority of some of their peers. Meanwhile, more senior members perceive that newer team members choose the easier way, even though they are capable of providing more critical and useful feedback. From the organization’s perspective, a team member’s ability to provide feedback is not linked to his or her length of time in the organization. Findings of this
study indicate that contrary to this ideal, in reality, seniority plays a significant role in the perceived value of an employee's feedback. In addition, it is very likely that newer employees do not have strongly formed relationships with more senior team members. Thus, this factor may also place a lesser perceived value on the novice's feedback. In regards to the previously discussed theme of "relationships among team members," it is safe to say that the stronger relationships are formed among novices and more senior team members, the more perceived value could be added to the feedback of novices.

Reflection on TPC Feedback

In this study, I identified two concepts that represent the "reflection" stage in Kolb's experiential learning model. These concepts, (a) protecting self-image and (b) reflection facilitated by the situation, provide insights into the process of reflection on TPC feedback.

Protecting self-image. The findings of the study revealed that the receiver of feedback takes information and filters it, especially information that highlights the challenges. Thus, in a sense, a recipient of feedback protects his or her self-image by reflecting back on challenges provided by a peer, and identifies with those challenges that are most meaningful to him or to her. However, several participants also noted that their thinking process would be different if a challenge was verbalized by their supervisor rather than a peer. In this case they would not question or "filter" a challenge so much, but more likely would take it for granted, meaning they would internalize feedback "as it is". This behavior can be explained by the fact that the supervisor's feedback is viewed as having authority, and carries a higher level of administrative consequences. Therefore,
the employees tend to assign more weight and significance to supervisory feedback rather than peer feedback surrounding their challenges.

The concept of "protecting self-image" can be associated with Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory. Conflicting ideas upset the balance between a person's perceptions, and create psychological discomfort. A person experiencing such discomfort tries to reduce the imbalance (McElrath, 2004). In this study, the employees tended to reduce the imbalance caused by the different information from two sources: self-feedback and feedback of peers. In essence, if an employee had conflicting information between self-evaluation and peer evaluation, the employee filtered the feedback of a peer and accepted those feedback pieces that appeared to most resemble elements of the self-evaluation or that are aligned with supervisory feedback.

Reflection facilitated by the situation. The theme of "situation as trigger" explains this concept. The findings demonstrate that a specific work situation may serve as a trigger for employees to reflect back on peer or supervisory feedback. "A specific work situation" can be the clinical situation or a problem of client families. It can also encompass a situation in a team environment. In some cases, it can be a keyword or a reaction of a client in a work situation. The findings of this study show that timing of feedback (the length of time since the last evaluation) was not perceived as significant factor as the situation itself triggering the recollection of feedback.

Participation in evaluation of other team members also facilitates reflection on one's own performance. "Employees can change behavior merely by becoming aware of the behaviors that are rewarded in an organization" (McCarthy & Garavan, 2001, p. 17). The study participants remarked that while they were evaluating other team members,
they also reflected on their own strengths and challenges. Some of participants also
shared that while they reflected on their strengths, they assessed whether they could
provide tangible assistance to a team member who was struggling in some specific area.
Garner (1988) asserted that participation in a team evaluation helps team members to
recognize their own strengths and challenges and allows the goals and values of the
organization to be highlighted. This finding also supports that of Smither, Wohlers, and
London (1995) who determined that while employees rate their coworkers and leaders,
they can also improve their performance by increasing awareness of the desirable
behaviors in an organization.

**Conceptualization of TPC Feedback—The Mindframe and the Timeframe**

The concept of the **mindframe and the timeframe** identified in this study
represents the “conceptualization” stage in Kolb’s experiential learning model, providing
insights into how the study participants made meaning of TPC feedback. I identified three
themes that compose “mindframe and timeframe”: (a) goals based on internalized
feedback, (b) mental schemes, and (c) utilizing timeliness or deadlines for task
completion. In the planning phase, employees develop their goals based on internalized
meaningful feedback — feedback that appears to be meaningful to them, after they had
reflected on peer and supervisory comments.

For most participants, the supervisor has the final and most powerful
determination in setting the goals they identify for themselves, since she is ultimately
responsible for the performance of all the employees in the region. Many employees
actually developed their goals during their evaluation session with a supervisor where
they looked back at self and peer feedback. This finding relates to a previous finding that
showed that during the process of reflection on their challenges, employees assign more weight and significance to supervisory feedback than to peer feedback. It would appear that because a supervisor has more authority and administrative decision making power, he or she also has more influence in guiding and helping an employee to determine the most meaningful goals for performance improvement. Identifying appropriate goals is important because putting together a developmental plan is an important characteristic of successful and effective employee evaluation (Pfau & Kay, 2002; Pollack & Pollack, 1996). McCarthy and Garavan (2001) also believed that “it is pertinent that [employees] design action plans around their deficiencies” (p. 7). The finding of this study has shown, too, that employees assign importance to the development of meaningful goals to improve their performance.

The study participants shared that following TPC evaluation they put conscious effort into overcoming their performance challenges. Each employee develops his or her own thinking frame of how to improve job performance in the identified challenge areas. The underlying pattern behind the “thinking frame” is that employees “invest” mental energy in identifying the situations where they can perform better, and in actually carrying through their actions in challenging situations. While the participants used different descriptions of their “thinking frames” all of them referred to a pattern of how they organize the knowledge in their memory. For instance, for Wenronbe it is “burning goals” into memory, while Serena elaborated on how she develops “a mental plan”. This finding is supported by Gagné and Medsker (1996) who put forth the idea that a person organizes his or her newly gained knowledge into “schemata”. These authors maintain that schemata are the generic organizing ideas or “knowledge structures underlying
knowledge of specific objects, events, and actions" (p. 90). In essence, the schemata, or thinking frames identified in this study represent and underlie how the knowledge gained from the evaluation is organized in one's long-term memory. Gagné and Medsker also explained that schemata can have the form of “plans and goals” (p. 91). This finding is significant as it provides insight on how employees organized the internalized feedback in their long term memory. Further, this finding provides some empirical support to Gagné’s and Medsker’s theoretical framework.

I also found that employees use deadlines for task accomplishment, especially surrounding paperwork completion. The deadlines that employees place for themselves or external deadlines that are given by regional administration are important as they help employees plan while simultaneously serving as a reminder for accomplishing a task.

Implementing TPC-based Feedback

The study identified two concepts that represent the “active experimentation” stage in Kolb’s experimental learning model. One is the positive “accountability to self and clients”, meaning that accountability serves as a catalyst in implementation or performance improvement phase. The other, “unresolved challenges,” has a negative connotation and hinders the implementation of TPC feedback, meaning that unresolved on-going challenges, such as documentation completion, slow overall performance improvement. Finally, the study identified the additional concept of “ongoing feedback” that relates to the four study domains: experiences, reflection, conceptualization, and implementation.

Accountability to self and clients. The participants identified accountability to self as a major catalyst for performance improvement. Also, most of the participants
interviewed described accountability to self intertwined with both accountability to client families that they serve and to the other collaborative agencies in the community. Many participants interviewed shared that their feeling of accountability to themselves supersedes their sense of accountability to their teams or to their supervisor. Covey (1988) also believed that personal accountability is one of six conditions facilitating employee job effectiveness. He stated that when employees have a clear, upfront understanding of what is expected of them, they are in the best position to keep themselves accountable. Connors and Smith (2004) likewise believed in the importance of accountability. They stated that to create a culture of accountability, a leader should start with himself or herself, and assume full accountability for one's thoughts, feelings, actions, and results.

This finding suggests that accountability to self and to client families facilitates performance improvement of the participants. This finding does not imply that employees perform better because they feel accountable to client families. TPC evaluation is an important factor in improving job performance, and it plays a positive role in facilitating performance improvement. However, the sense of accountability to self, client families and other community agencies is an important catalyst in the process, as it drives and positively facilitates the implementation of the goals that are set by the employee during the TPC evaluation process.

Overall, concerning the implementation phase, each participant identified a number of developmental goals that they attained during their employment with IFCS. This was also supported by their developmental plans. They also attributed the goal attainment in their job performance to the overall TPC employee evaluation. All the
participants spoke about how at some point in their employment with IFCS, their teams and supervisor challenged or supported them towards more effective job performance. However, this finding does not demonstrate a linear correlation between TPC employee evaluation and job performance nor does it claim that TPC evaluation is the sole factor in facilitating effective job performance.

There are several other factors identified by this study that may facilitate effective job performance, such as monetary rewards, and spirituality.

Almost all of the participants interviewed shared that monetary compensation is an important variable and motivator for their daily performance. Participants want to receive adequate compensation for the jobs that they do. This finding supports Van Herpen’s, Van Praag, and Cools (2005) study that discovered that monetary compensation has a strong correlative relationship with extrinsic performance motivation.

Some participants also commented that their spirituality influences their every day performance – engaging in prayer and feeling accountable to a higher power. Although not directly sought by a research question, this finding appears informative. Mohamed, Wisnieski, Askar, and Syed (2004) strongly believed that spirituality plays a significant role in workplace performance. The authors stated that the stronger the spiritual factor of personality the more tolerant the person is of work failure and less susceptible to stress. They added that the stronger the spiritual factor of personality the more the person exhibits altruistic and citizenship behaviors. Finally, Mohamed et al. believed that the spiritual factor positively relates to the person’s commitment to the organization and work group.
Unresolved challenges. This concept is represented in the implementation phase of the process and includes the ongoing challenge of completing clinical documentation within the timeframe called for by the organization. This concept, as depicted in Figure 4, adversely influences the implementation developmental plans following the evaluation.

Most of the participants remarked that they found it difficult to complete their clinical documentation within the IFCS guidelines. Some of them said that they procrastinated and lacked organization. One participant said that she lacked the skills, such as time management and organizational skills, necessary to carry through this task effectively. As for external barriers, participants identified short time frames for completing paperwork, and the difficulty of getting all necessary information from families during those short time frames.

Ongoing feedback. The concept of “ongoing feedback” relates to all four domains of the study (Figure 4). In this study, employee feedback from peers and supervisors was an on-going practice; thus feedback implementation and reception are intertwined. Employees also receive ongoing feedback during their reflection on and conceptualization of the process. During weekly team meetings, participants present their cases and receive clinical strategies on how to approach families and other collaborating agencies in the community. The literature on TPC culture points out that ongoing and direct team feedback provides an opportunity to increase peers’ competence in providing family systems treatment (Painter & Smith, 2004), which is a form of family therapy. McCarthy (2000) and Garner (1988) also pointed out that effective feedback needs to be frequent and on-going, and should not be limited to an annual review session.
It is worth noting here that several participants shared that ongoing feedback from the supervisor and team members throughout the year was focused on the clinical performance area. They thought that it would be helpful if more consistent and structured feedback throughout the year was also provided for other performance areas—collateral, clinical documentation and teamwork—the other three core performance measures.

The study demonstrated the process of learning from TPC employee evaluation as it relates to performance improvement. In the field of human resource development (HRD), the study expands the knowledge base on multirater employee evaluations involving peer feedback within a team setting. Namely, the study provides insights of how employees learn from TPC feedback, and how they use that knowledge in their job performance.

Previous research on multirater evaluations indicated that multirater evaluation played a positive role in performance improvement. Seiler (2005) found that 360-degree evaluation drives a continuous performance improvement. Edwards and Ewen (1996c) also determined that 360-degree evaluation was effective in promoting employee performance. The present study expanded knowledge base by demonstrating that multirater evaluation, that involves face-to-face team feedback, also plays a positive role in facilitating employee job performance.

Further, the findings of this study support those of previous studies (Dominick & Reilly, 1997; Erez, Lepine, & Elms, 2002) on the positive role that teams play in performance process. Erez, Lepine and Elms found that relative to teams that relied on external evaluations, teams with peer evaluations displayed higher levels of workload sharing, voice, cooperation, performance and member satisfaction. Similarly, Dominick
and Reilly (1997) in their study with graduate and undergraduate students determined that
team members who gave and received behavioral peer feedback, demonstrated effective
team behavior more frequently than participants who did not give or receive feedback.
Thus, team evaluation process tends to positively influence performance improvement,
not only among graduate students, but also among employees in organization.

Implications and Recommendations

Until now, research studies of multirater evaluation schemes have focused on
evaluations that were conducted confidentially and anonymously, rather than in an open,
face-to-face format in a team setting. Further, most of the studies exploring employee
evaluations and performance used a quantitative approach to determine the correlative or
predictive relationship of performance improvement, employee evaluations, and other
variables. These studies lacked a focus on the performance improvement process itself,
namely how employees learn and implement their learning – from the time when they
receive feedback to the time when they take action to improve their job performance.
This study has provided insights on the process of how employees learn from TPC-based
feedback, and how they use this knowledge in enhancing their job performance. These
insights may result in more useful employee evaluations in organizations. Further, the
study is significant as it may raise awareness among researchers for multirater evaluation,
involving face-to-face team feedback. It may also stimulate more research on this type of
employee evaluation.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

The study findings have provided some valuable insights regarding the practice
and process of TPC-based employee evaluation. The implications and recommendations
for the practice hereby are tailored to (a) IFCS and (b) other organizations that may consider applying a similar form of employee evaluation involving face-to-face team evaluation component.

Implications and recommendations for practice at IFCS. Based on the study findings, there are specific implications for practice and policy that concern IFCS:

First, TPC-based organizational culture emphasizes the equality of team members, regardless of their length of employment with IFCS. However, the findings show that, in reality, employees often perceive feedback from senior team members as more valuable than feedback from novice team members. Therefore, I recommended that IFCS continues developing the TPC culture within the organization with an emphasis on integrating newer employees into the evaluation process where their feedback is considered as important as feedback from senior employees. Integration of newer team members could be facilitated in two ways: (a) regional director coaching a novice individually, and (b) regional director working with the seniors and coaching them on how to integrate novices into a team and establish relationships with novices. Individually, a regional director can work with a novice on coaching him or her on how to provide effective feedback to the more seasoned members, and defining effective feedback. The coaching should emphasize the value of the novice’s feedback, and should also guide the novice on how to assess and gather more contextual information about a peer’s performance. On a team level, a regional director or the corporate staff involved in team development could promote the value of each employee’s feedback, regardless of their length of employment by guiding team members. Upon their employment with IFCS, each employee brings rich life experience along with experience from previous
employers. Thus, the perceptions of novice team members can be as valuable as perceptions of more senior team members, and at times they can bring fresher perspectives. It is expected that by employing these two strategies, the perceptions of team members regarding the feedback value of more novice team members, over some time would change, and feedback of more novice team members would become more valued more quickly.

Second, completion of paperwork appears to be an on-going challenge for many employees, while they improve their performance in other areas. From an organizational perspective, it is recommended that IFCS (a) address internal barriers, and (b) lighten external barriers. To address internal barriers (i.e., procrastination and a lack of individual organization), IFCS teams could use training, during which they can be guided on effective ways to organize the completion of paperwork. Such training or team development can be provided by those team members who have mastered and are effective in completing and turning their clinical documentation on time. In an effort to lighten the external barriers, such as short time frames for completing paperwork, it is recommended that IFCS complete an assessment on if and how the timelines can be adjusted without jeopardizing the external contractual requirements.

Third, the findings have demonstrated that preparation is important in TPC evaluation, and non-adherence to this phase causes conflict between team members. Feedback delivered directly in a team setting without prior knowledge of the one being evaluated is often experienced as a negative surprise and causes either an open conflict or latent tension. Thus, it is recommended that employees are reminded periodically by the regional director or other management who assist with team development, about the
importance of adhering to the preparation phase and discussing feedback with a peer before team evaluation. Management can also facilitate discussions with the teams about "natural consequences" of a conflict if team members do not adhere to the preparation phase.

**Implications and recommendations for practice for other organizations.** One case was used in this study, specifically one region of an organization, to explore how employees learn from TPC employee evaluation to improve their job performance. While the findings of this study cannot be generalized to other cases, other organizations may learn from the experiences at IFCS. Thus, the recommendations that are outlined below for other organizations should be interpreted with caution. However, if any organization chooses to develop a culture similar to the team culture at IFCS, the following recommendations can be used and be of benefit to those organizations:

First, overall, TPC employee evaluation plays positive role in facilitating learning as it relates to TPC employee evaluation. Therefore, this particular finding can inform the organizations that consider applying evaluations involving face-to-face employee feedback in a team setting. As the literature and the findings of this study suggest, a strong team culture should be in place before this evaluation approach can be implemented. Thus, before employee evaluation with a team component is applied, it is advisable to first develop a strong team culture. Additionally, an organizational structure must be in place that would support this form of evaluation, such as management who has experience and skill with managing teams.

Second, it appears that TPC feedback is perceived by employees as honest and open as feedback handled in a confidential way. Thus, for organizations that have a
developed team culture with trust among team members and that wish to change to a face-to-face team evaluation, a pilot could be first be done to test its feasibility. This approach is recommended before a large-scale change of the organizational process is implemented, so that organization could easier address barriers and resolve difficulties, if any, during the pilot phase.

Third, the findings have shown that TPC peer feedback provided for administrative purposes can be as honest and reliable as feedback for developmental purposes. In an organizational culture that promotes the team approach, peer feedback provided not only for developmental, but also for administrative purposes can be reliable and trustworthy. Thus, those organizations that use multirater evaluation involving teams for developmental purposes may consider using such evaluation for administrative purposes.

Implications and Recommendations for Policy

It is anticipated that the study will inform the employee evaluation policy at IFCS. Based on the outcomes of the study, the current policy may be modified to better meet the needs of the employees and to ensure the effectiveness of employee evaluation. These are the recommendations and implications concerning the policy of TPC-based employee evaluation.

First, in 2004 the TPC evaluation process was adapted to focus on FCS’s expected job skills, rather than personality traits and general behaviors. The findings have clearly indicated that the change of evaluation format is not well accepted by employees. This finding is especially highlighted by the perceptions of more senior employees. For one, the participants perceive that the change took away the more “holistic” evaluation
approach, and the emphasis on personality characteristics that still may be relevant in the context in team relationships. Also, for senior employees, a new evaluation format appears repetitive when employees have been with IFCS for a number of years and have mastered the core job skills. Thus, it is recommended that the current evaluation format is modified to include a more holistic piece, where more emphasis is placed on informal employee relationships and personality traits that play a role in job performance. The current evaluation format could include an additional part or a component (in addition of four core job performance components), such as “General Peer Feedback” or “Holistic Feedback”. During the time of this evaluation component, the peers can share feedback with each other which is less structured, and oriented towards general team behaviors and personality traits.

Second, ongoing feedback is consistently provided in the clinical work area, but not consistently provided in areas of teamwork, collateral relationships, or clinical documentation. Therefore, it is recommended that more structured and ongoing feedback is provided throughout the year not only in clinical, but other performance areas as well. Such on-going feedback, especially in documentation area which appears to be the most problematic, may increase employees’ performance improvement.

Third, the data revealed that accountability to self and accountability to client families are significant catalysts to carrying out the goals and strategies of performance improvement. In essence, when screening and identifying the job candidates for FCS positions at IFCS, their perceptions of self accountability, and accountability to client/families, could be explored. For instance, the questions can include explorative questions, such as how a candidate perceives accountability to herself or himself; what
role self-accountability played in the previous employment; and how a candidate demonstrated self-accountability and accountability to client/ customers in the previous employment. By incorporating this screening approach, a better assessment can be made about candidate’s predisposed tendency to self-accountability and client accountably, which can facilitate better performance at IFCS by a candidate, if hired.

Recommendations for Future Research

First, findings from this study described how employees learn following TPC evaluation, and how they use knowledge gained in their job performance. However, this study did not determine if TPC employee evaluation is more or less effective in facilitating improved employee performance than other forms of employee evaluation, such as supervisory evaluation, or 360-degree evaluation conducted in a confidential and anonymous way. Thus, I would suggest researchers conduct a comparative, possible longitudinal, study where different types of employee evaluations are compared in similar organizational cultures.

Second, study findings have shown that TPC feedback is perceived by employees as honest and as open as feedback handled in a confidential way. To learn more about this perception, I would suggest that experimental studies be conducted in organizations that apply employee evaluations that include a team component where some teams or employees provide each other with confidential feedback while the members of other teams provide each other with open feedback. The goal of such study would be to test the perceptions of participants in this study.

Third, findings from this study have indicated that accountability to self and to clients is a significant catalyst driving employees to improve their job performance.
Therefore, I suggest that future studies look into “self-accountability” and “accountability to clients/customers” with a more in-depth perspective to determine how employees develop accountability to self and to clients. For instance, from a researcher’s perspective, I would be curious to know if it is determined by the factors by how one is raised, or if it is determined by work environment in one’s adult life. I would propose a study with a focus on exploring the genesis and nature of one’s sense of accountability.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

IFCS Family Centered Specialist Assessment Guide and Form
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<td>FCSEval.-A. Documentation and Recording</td>
<td>1. Initial Contract and IFCS Required Documents</td>
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<td>2. Progress Notes – BIRP or PIE format</td>
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<td>4. Service or Treatment plan</td>
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<td>5. Discharge Summary</td>
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<td>6. Court or other contract requested reports or forms</td>
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<td>7. Incident reports</td>
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<td>8. Team Meeting Minutes</td>
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<td>FCSEval.-B. Collateral Relationships</td>
<td>1. Initiation of services</td>
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<td>2. Weekly contact / maintenance</td>
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<td>3. Monthly meeting or collateral team participation</td>
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<td>4. Prediction and education regarding Developmental Stages</td>
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<td>FCSEval.-C. Use of Supervision and Team Involvement</td>
<td>1. Individual Supervision</td>
<td>a. Timeliness / Frequency</td>
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<td>b. Preparation</td>
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<td>c. Personnel file requirements</td>
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<td>d. Crisis and Field</td>
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<td>2. Team Involvement</td>
<td>a. Participation in all meeting components</td>
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<td>b. Peer Development addressing difficult issues</td>
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<td>c. Staffing of cases – MIGS</td>
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<td>d. Chairing the meeting</td>
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<td>e. Conflict resolution</td>
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<td>FCSEval.-D. Clinical Service Delivery</td>
<td>1. Joining and initiation</td>
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<td>2. Quantity of sessions – productivity</td>
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<td>3. Family sessions and Family Centered Practice</td>
<td>a. Holistic</td>
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<td>b. Variance of days / hours</td>
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<td>c. Boundaries</td>
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<td>d. Treatment Planning using IFCS assessments</td>
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<td>4. Working with resistance</td>
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Appendix B

Sample Family Centered Specialist Developmental Plan

**NAME:** Peter Doe

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Family Centered Specialist

**DATE OF EVALUATION:** 03/14/2005

**Documentation/Recording:**

**Identified Strengths:**
- Well written progress notes, explaining clinical interventions
- Detailed and individualized treatment plans
- Very clinically written bio-psychosocial assessments
- Court reports are very descriptive

**Challenges:**
- Documentation is submitted late, behind the timeline identified in client checklist
- Treatment plans require multiple corrections upon submission

**Goal:** Peter will submit the required documents in timely manner at least 95% of all time

**Strategies:** (identify and utilize with both personal responsibility and team member's commitment)
- Peter will place a document due date in his personal calendar.
- Peter will allocate specific dates and times in a week to complete his paperwork.
- Mary will sit with Peter and will share her time management strategies.

**Collateral Relationships**

**Identified Strengths:**
- Invites collaterals to initial sessions
- Meets with collaterals and families monthly
- Predicts crisis to collaterals when necessary
- Calls and updates collaterals on weekly basis

**Challenges:**
None

**Use of Supervision/Team Involvement**

**Identified Strengths:**
- Participation in all team meetings
- Addresses difficult issues with peers
- Provides peer field supervision to peers
♦ Resolves conflicts effectively
♦ Chairs meetings effectively

**Challenges:**
♦ Presents his own cases in a team very rarely

**Goal:**
♦ Peter will staff at least one case each team meeting with his peers

**Strategies:** (identify and utilize with both personal responsibility and team member’s commitment)
♦ Peter will come to the team meeting prepared with MIGS each week.
♦ Team members will remind Peter to staff his cases each week.

**Clinical Service Delivery**

**Identified Strengths:**
♦ Well prepared for sessions
♦ Joining skills (improvement since the last year)
♦ Does not get inducted by families
♦ Good clinical skills- balance between empathy and rationality
♦ Very positive attitude
♦ Uses experiential activities

**Challenges:**
♦ Does not use his own feelings during therapeutic process
♦ Does not trust his instincts

**Goal:**
Peter will learn how to more effectively use his own feelings and perceptions of families in the therapeutic process.

**Strategies:** (identify and utilize with both personal responsibility and team member’s commitment)
♦ Peter will identify and be more aware of his own feelings, which hold him back from being more vulnerable with the team.
♦ Peter will share more of his own feelings, reactions and frustrations with the team.
♦ The team members and RD will ask more questions about Peter’s feelings and reactions of her work with families.

**Date of Follow-up: (1 month)** 04/14/2005

**Signatures:**

________________________________________________________________________
**Employee**

________________________________________________________________________
**Regional Director**
Appendix C

Qualitative Interview Guide

The goal of the study that I am conducting is to explore how employees learn from team primacy based employee evaluation in job performance. Our interview will focus on your experiences, feelings and thoughts as they relate to your employee evaluation and your job performance. There are absolutely no wrong or right answers, and I have no expectations for the content of information that you will provide. I am solely interested in your perceptions and experiences of the evaluation process.

The interview consists of four parts, and I will describe the focus of each part before we start with the questions.

Part I. This part of the interview will explore how you experience TPC employee evaluation.
1. What feelings and thoughts did you have before your face to face team evaluation?
2. What thoughts did you have when you heard positive feedback about your performance from your peers?
3. What thoughts did you have when you heard about your performance challenges from your peers?
4. What was the most positive experience during your face-to-face team evaluation?
5. What was the most negative experience during your face-to-face team evaluation?
6. What was the most surprising during your face-to-face team evaluation?
7. How did you feel immediately after your team face-to-face evaluation?
8. How would your performance be different now if feedback given to you was anonymous and confidential?
9. How do you feel accountable for your performance
   a. to yourself?
   b. to your peers?
   c. to you supervisor?
10. What was going through your mind when heard positive feedback about your performance from your supervisor?
11. What was going through your mind when you heard about your performance challenges from your supervisor?

Part II. This part of the interview will explore how you reflect and think about TPC evaluation process as it relates to job performance.
1. How often do you recall feedback given by your peers in your everyday performance in
   a. clinical work area?
   b. documentation area?
   c. collateral relationships?
   d. teamwork?
2. How often do you recall feedback given by your supervisor in your everyday performance in
   a. clinical work area?
   b. documentation area?
   c. collateral relationships?
   d. teamwork?

3. How often do you recall self-feedback in your everyday performance
   a. clinical work area?
   b. documentation area?
   c. collateral relationships?
   d. teamwork?

4. What triggers the recollection or what helps you remember
   a. supervisory feedback?
   b. peer feedback?
   c. self-feedback?

5. What feelings and thoughts do you have when you reflect back at
   a. supervisory feedback?
   b. peer feedback?
   c. self-feedback?

Part III. This part of interview will explore how you plan for your job performance following TPC employee evaluation.

1. How did your peers' feedback influence your decision in choosing/developing goals for your performance improvement?
2. How did your supervisor’s feedback influence your decision in choosing/developing goals for your performance improvement?
3. How did your self-feedback (self-evaluation) influence your decision in choosing/developing goals for your performance improvement?
4. What specific goals did you include in your development plan in
   a. clinical work area?
   b. documentation area?
   c. collateral relationships?
   d. teamwork?

Part IV. This part of the interview will explore how you act on feedback received during employee evaluation.

1. Tell me how TPC evaluation influenced your performance:
   a. right after evaluation?
   b. one month after evaluation?
   c. 3 months after evaluation?
   d. 6 months after evaluation?
2. Can you please give me some examples of what specific tasks you are doing differently as a result of TPC evaluation in
   a. clinical work area?
   b. documentation area?
c. collateral relationships?
   d. teamwork?

3. How do you think TPC influence this change in performance? Why do you think this change occurred?

4. Can you please give me some examples of performance improvement because of a sense of accountability to your peers?

5. What do you think overall could be different in TPC-based evaluation process to make the evaluation better?
Appendix D

Participant's Demographic Survey

Your First, Middle and Last Name: _______________________________________

Your Gender: ________________________

Your Age: ___________________________

Your Race: ___________________________

Your Ethnicity: _______________________ 

Length of employment with the IFCS (in years and months):___________________

Number of employee evaluations that you have had since your hire at IFCS: ______

Your Pseudo-name: _______________________________________________________

(choose a pseudo-name to be used throughout the study in place of your first and last
name, i.e. fairy tale character name, pet name, grandmother name)
Appendix E

Participant’s Informed Consent to Participate

Florida International University
University Park, Miami, Fl 33199

Family Centered Specialist’s Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study:
Team Primacy Concept Based Employee Evaluation and Job Performance

My name is Eivina I. Muniute, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Adult Education and Human Resource Development program at the Florida International University. In fulfillment of the dissertation requirement for doctoral program, I am conducting a study that examines how employees learn from team primacy based employee evaluation as it relates to their job performance. I am asking you to participate in this research study. The study will be looking into how employees think about the evaluation process and how they implement self-feedback, peer feedback and supervisory feedback in their job performance.

The case study will include your peers, Family Centered Specialists (FCS’s) in your SEVA Region at the Institute for Family Centered Services, and all of them will be asked to consent to their participation. Your region has been chosen for this study as it one of the best performing regions of the Institute for Family Centered Services.

The data collection of the study consists of interviews, review of employee developmental plans and review of video records of employee evaluation sessions. You will be interviewed twice. The first interview will last approximately one hour, the second will last about 40 minutes. The interviews will be audio-taped. I will review and analyze your yearly developmental plans to understand how you incorporate the feedback in your plan(s).

You will be asked to choose a pseudo-name before data collection begins. This strategy is used to ensure your confidentiality. Absolutely nobody, except me, the primary investigator, will be able to know or identify your first and last name.

Your participation in the study is voluntary; your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Likewise, you may discontinue your participation in the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits.
Participants, namely Family Centered Specialists, will not have access to information given by other participants. Under no circumstances will IFCS administration have access to interview transcripts or protocols. Your participation in the study will not affect your employment and/or employer-employee relationship either directly or indirectly. I, the primary investigator, will be the sole keeper of the data. Data will be safely secured in a locked file cabinet throughout the study and shredded after the study is completed.

You may encounter a psychological benefit of reflective experience and self-appreciation. The risks of the study are minimal, and may include slight discomfort or inconvenience during interview or observation process.

If you would like more information about this research after interviews and observations are complete, you can contact me at (954) 571-8511 or Dr. Mary V. Alfred at (305) 348-2094. If you would like to talk about being a subject in this study, you may contact Dr. Jonathan Tubman, the Chairperson of the FIU Institutional Review Board at (305) 348-3024 or (305) 348-2494.

Your signature below indicates that all questions have been answered to you liking. You are aware of your rights and you would like to be in a study.

_____________________________  ___________________________  __________
Signature of Participant        Printed Name                  Date

I have explained the research procedure, subject rights and answered questions asked by the participant. I have offered him/ her a copy of this informed consent form.

_____________________________  __________
Signature of Investigator         Date
Appendix F

Sample of Interview Transcript

Julie, 06/19/2006, 7pm

Interviewer: What was the most surprising experience for you in your last two evaluations?

Julie: Uhm, this one, the most surprising was, I think - I think I felt like I knew what my challenges were going to be and everybody agreed, but one of the moments was that something that I identified as a challenge or an ongoing challenge, another one of my peers lift it up as something that I've been working on since the last evaluation and that really surprised me because, you know, that person was paying attention and had remembered my least evaluation and had brought it up again and then noted that there was a lot of improvement.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Julie: So then, said that probably wasn't a challenge a year anymore and that in a year, it's going to be strength.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Julie: So, I was like, wow, that was really useful and helpful for me that somebody is noticing that much. So that was the real surprising one, and from the first evaluation, I think - I had been with the company at that point for a full year as an employee, but then eight months as an intern. So, from the internship to the employee status was a big jump, so I felt like I already kind of knew the environment and then at the year evaluation, somebody said that I still had to learn the IFCS ways, so I felt like, man, I just feel like I'm treading water.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Julie: So, that was the biggest kind of surprise at that time, that I felt like I hadn't even gotten everything.

Interviewer: What was the IFCS way? What was the difference?

Julie: I don't even really know. That was the challenge that was presented. I think it had something to do with the environment plus the nature of interventions plus how we communicate on the team and I think it was just a combination of those things, and I think what it was is that our team has
changed dramatically over the past few years. We've always been in a state of development - early development, and at that point, we were - this person was coming from many, many years of the same team or something like that. So, I feel like there was like an old way and there was this now, this always in development way. So, I think that person wanted things to be a certain way and that IFCS employee meant this and this and this, and I think it was just a big change for everybody, so I'm not exactly sure what IFCS way meant, and that was hard - frustrating at the time, because I couldn't grasp onto what that idea was because I thought that after a year, I had been making progress figuring out what my way was.

Interviewer: What stopped you at that moment from asking them to be more specific?

Julie: Because that person had a lot of years on me --

Interviewer: Okay.

Julie: - and they might know what they're talking about and then, when you're in the team evaluation and your RD is there, I always wonder, does the RID agree with that or if I challenge that, am I going to sound like I'm being a baby and, you know, not just accepting the feedback for what it is. I wanted to not have a conflict over something that I could just think about.

Interviewer: Okay.

Julie: So, I guess, just being intimidated.

Interviewer: Okay, so you felt intimidated somehow?

Julie: Uh hm. Uh hm.

Interviewer: Was it the only time that you felt intimidated during team evaluations or other evaluation processes or was -

Julie: Yeah, because that was the only time I felt that I couldn't - I didn't want to get more information about the challenge. But now, I have such a well-developed relationship with the people on my team, it's easy - it's really easy to hear to challenges and it's easy to ask somebody, especially when you do the one-on-ones beforehand --

Interviewer: Uh hm.

Julie: - and you can say, "Okay. I don't know what that means. What are you talking about". So that was - I mean, it's a lot better. It's more comfortable that way.
VITA
EIVINA MUNIUTE

June 2, 1973
Born, Kaunas, Lithuania

1995
BA, Psychology
Vytautas Magnus University
Kaunas, Lithuania

1997
MS, Industrial Psychology
Vytautas Magnus University
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1995
Psychologist
Hearing Impaired Children Center
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1999-2000
Family Services Counselor
Florida Department of Children and Families
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

2000-2003
Family Centered Specialist
Institute for Family Centered Services, Inc.
Margate, Florida

2003-current
Florida Director of State Operations
Institute for Family Centered Services, Inc.
Pompano Beach, Florida

PRESENTATIONS