

CLOSING NON-PARTICIPATION: WHO GETS HERE AND WHY



December 2004

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Submitted to the Utah Department of Workforce Services
December, 2004

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CLOSING NON-PARTICIPATION: WHO GETS HERE AND WHY

INTRODUCTION

As the eight year anniversary of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) comes and goes, it is clear that “welfare as we know it” is gone. New elements of welfare policy such as time limits and participation rates have received much attention. The work requirements and time limits of PRWORA were based on the assumption that most people would be able to secure family sustaining employment and move off the welfare rolls with minimal support. The 20% exemption pool was provided for the rest (Danziger, 2002).

The impact of PRWORA has not ended with time limits and work requirements. As part of the implementation of new policies under the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, there has been a dramatic increase in the types of circumstances that can lead to reduction or termination of cash benefits (Mathematica, 2003). The concept of “carrot and stick” is often used to describe the current work based welfare system. The incentives (or carrots), include supportive services such as child care and transportation assistance for work related activities. Sanctions (or sticks) are used for non-compliance with work and child support related activities (Kalil, 2002). In theory, sanctions are meant to provide serious consequences for non-compliance, thus encouraging participants to fulfill all requirements and retain eligibility for the full cash grant.

Early in welfare reform it was assumed that individuals with multiple barriers would become highly concentrated in the caseloads as those more easily employed exited the system. Such has not been the case. One explanation given is that the hard to serve¹ whose barriers have not been recognized, are being sanctioned and eventually dropped from the caseloads because of the inability to display full participation in their employment plans. “The failure to identify problems puts the ‘hard to serve’ at higher risk of sanctions if their problems make them less likely to comply with welfare program requirements” (Danziger, 2002).

Researchers have been challenged to study whether sanctioning has more to do with an individuals lack of desire to participate or if unidentified and unresolved barriers are the major inhibitors to participation. Time limits intensify the need for rapid barrier identification, making provision of resources possible while a client is still eligible for services. This is not always easy. Seemingly less serious issues such as obesity, high blood pressure or other health problems related to poor nutrition are often overlooked. A lack of understanding of program rules and expectations can be a serious and very real problem for those with limited cognitive and social skills (Kramer, 2). Unrecognized minor barriers, when experienced in combination, can lead to great difficulty in program participation.

In fall 2002 agency administrators from Utah’s Department of Workforce Services (DWS) contracted with the Social Research Institute (SRI) of the University of Utah’s College of Social Work to examine questions inspired by the above discussion. The purpose of this study is: 1) to provide a description (including personal demographics, family composition, barriers, and resources) of Family Employment Program (FEP) participants who have been closed for non-

¹“Hard to serve” does not generally refer to the nature of the client, but to the disparity between the types of services available to TANF clients and what is needed.

participation (NP), 2) to evaluate the Conciliation process through analysis of administrative data and the former program participants' experience, 3) to review a variety of factors that potentially contribute to the non-participation closure and 4) to suggest strategies for reducing case sanctioning and closure due to non-participation.

METHOD

Data for this study was collected as part of an ongoing research collaboration effort between SRI and Utah's DWS. The protocol for this study was modeled after previous and ongoing studies with former program participants and allows for comparison between study samples.

Study Criteria and Population

Participants in this study included those whose cash assistance closed due to non-participation at some time between May 2003 and May 2004. Participants were required to have received at least 12 months of cash assistance, have had their cash closed for between 2 and 6 months, and currently live in Utah. Most were interviewed between 2 and 3 months post closure. For 18 of the respondents, the NP closure was not a new closure but actually a denial indicating a previous NP closure.

During the study period 556 individuals qualified as participants. Of this group 114 (21%) did not respond to the interview request, 79 (14%) were not interested, 26 (5%) were not able to be located, 20 (4%) had the case reopened before being interviewed, 17 (3%) had moved out of state, and 1 person had died. The remaining 299 individuals were contacted and interviewed. It was later discovered that 7 cases (from 6 different offices) had incorrect DWS closure codes and were not NP cases. These were removed from the sample. There were also 3 cases involving undocumented persons. These cases were retained as they had experienced various degrees of involvement in the conciliation process. The remaining 292 qualified respondents reflect a 54% response rate. While this rate is significantly lower than in previous studies (74% - 90%) it remains well within acceptable limits for drawing conclusions regarding the population.

Data Collection

Between July 2003 and July 2004 potential respondents were contacted by mail 2 months after cash closure. If a person had not responded to the letter within a week, three attempts were made to contact them by phone. If no contact was made, three home visits were conducted, each time a card was left, inviting the person to contact us if interested in participating. Participants who expressed a desire not to participate were immediately removed from the contact list.

Data collection methods for both the non-participation (NP) and Time Limit (TL) results reported here were the same. These include in-person interviews, generally conducted in the respondents' home and lasting an average of 70 minutes. Study participants received \$20 each in appreciation for their time. Respondents could refuse to answer any question although this seldom occurred. All names of study participants remain strictly confidential.

FINDINGS

While the survey schedule covered a wide range of issues, the findings reported here are those directly related to one or more of the purposes of this study. Where appropriate, comparisons will be made between findings of this study and a sample of long term (36+ month) respondents closed during approximately the same time period. The sample size for the long term study was 500.

Description of NP Respondents

Study respondents for the NP sample came from throughout the state of Utah. The distribution of the sample across regions closely reflects the actual distribution of closures by region. Interestingly, when reviewing the reasons for case closure during this time, it was discovered that all regions averaged 8% non-participation closure except Mountainland region which averaged 14% NP closures during this time.

Table 1 : Distribution of Sample by Region - May 2003 - April 2004

| | Central | North | Mountainland | Eastern | Western |
|--|-----------|-----------|--------------|---------|---------|
| Study Sample N = 292 | 101 (35%) | 89 (31%) | 66 (23%) | 12 (4%) | 24 (8%) |
| All NP closures N = 1062 | 390 (36%) | 319 (30%) | 200 (19%) | 61 (6%) | 92 (9%) |
| Percent of total closures due to NP | 8% | 8% | 14% | 8% | 9% |

Personal Characteristics

The first purpose of this study was to discover the general characteristics, resources and barriers of the NP sample. These results, presented in Appendix 1: Table A, show that the NP group is very similar, demographically, to the time limit (TL) sample. The average age at *first* receipt of cash assistance for both groups is 22 years. By definition the TL sample should be older as they have all used at least 36 months of cash assistance. The NP sample received an average of 21.5 months. The NP sample was more likely to be from Utah and there was a significantly higher percentage of White (non-Hispanic) respondents who closed NP. But in areas which have been identified as links to work success (education, size of family, marital status) the groups are very similar.

To provide a view of the family situation, several factors contributing to family stability were evaluated and are listed in Appendix 1: Table B. These factors are some of the most likely to be effected by the closure of cash assistance and address areas of family well-being. The overall financial situation of these families is poor. This is understandable as 70% are unemployed, 26% live with extended family, and just over 70% have earned income and monthly resources which,

when combined, do not put the family over the poverty threshold.² Those closed NP were more likely to be living with extended family and less likely to report food insecurity.

The access to and the use of resources after cash closure is another set of factors contributing to family stability and overall well-being. Appendix 1: Table C indicates that respondents in the NP group had significantly lower usage rates for housing assistance, SSI, and food stamps programs at the time of the interview. They were also less likely to have accessed many other community resources since their cash closed. Overall those closed NP were more likely to rely on family, friends and partners for support versus community resources which were more often accessed by those closed TL.

Barriers to Participation

Given the concerns mentioned earlier regarding the influence of barriers to employment on case sanctioning, it is important to have a good understanding of the barriers facing those who have closed NP. Appendix 1: Table D presents the common set of barriers evaluated in both studies. Mental and physical health barriers occurred less often in the NP group, as did child behavior problems and criminal background. The other barriers listed are nearly identical. It has been clear from past studies that people's perceptions of their barriers have an important effect on their ability to be successful. The self-report barrier chart (Appendix 1: Table E) reflects the most common barriers reported as: lack of good jobs, transportation, lack of job skills, and physical and mental health problems. When asked which of the barriers posed the *greatest* challenge to employment, lack of transportation, lack of child care and physical health issues were most frequently reported.

The lack of transportation was an issue raised repeatedly by respondents. There was a statistically significant link between the lack of transportation and unemployment. What this tells us is that, as respondents have recognized, transportation is a significant issue that is tied into many other parts of life and is necessary for many people to move toward self-sufficiency. The impact of this same trend has been noted in previous research on NP closures in Utah. (Derr, 1998)

One way to measure the impact of barriers is to evaluate what happens when cash assistance is no longer contributing to the household income. Respondents were asked to explain how they have "made it" since cash closure. (See Appendix 1: Table F) More than half reported cutting back on extras and necessities, getting help from family or friends, and delayed or stopped paying their bills. About one third of the respondents reported starting or retaining a job, getting money from a boyfriend or partner and getting help from charity. There were 24 (8%) respondents who reported putting their children in someone else's care. Of those who indicated "other" responses, activities such as pawning possessions and selling plasma were most common. (Additional samples of comments regarding the impact of case closure can be found on pgs. 36-37.)

At the end of the interview respondents were asked to evaluate whether life was better, the same, or worse since cash closure. Seventy seven (26%) respondents reported life was better while 116 (40%) said it was worse. Those who found it *worse* tended to focus on financial struggles and providing the basic necessities for themselves and their children. Those who said life was *better*, reported higher self-esteem and more feelings of independence. There was a statistically significant connection between those who were employed and those who felt life was better since cash closure.

² Poverty threshold 2004 for one parent and two children is approximately \$14,800.

Discussion

As noted earlier, much of the research on the use of sanctioning in welfare reform has focused on the characteristics of recipients who have been sanctioned. The core issue being whether sanctions are more often imposed because of an unwillingness on the part of the recipient to participate, or if personal and communal barriers make completing the required activities difficult or impossible. This question parallels concerns about those closing TL. Did these recipients come to the end of their cash without gaining self-sufficiency because they were unwilling or unable to complete the required activities? One wonders if NP closures are really just people who would have closed TL but were not able to keep their cases open long enough to reach the end.

As was noted, those closed NP tend to use personal supports more often than community resources. It would make sense that those who knew they had support available if cash assistance was closed would feel less pressure to comply. In addition, the barriers of those closed NP were less likely to exempt them from participation activities (for example doctor and/or therapist notes) than those closed TL. This puts more focus on moving into employment immediately.

The importance of personal supports and barriers, leads one to ask, are there differences within the NP group that point toward employment? In the 2002 report there were significant differences between those closed "increased income" and those closed NP. The current NP sample also indicates significant differences within the NP group regarding employment. Table 2 outlines a list of barriers showing significant differences between those who were employed at the time of the interview and those who were not. This data clearly indicates that the inability to secure

Table 2: Factors Significantly Related to Employment Status

| Barrier | Employed | Unemployed |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|
| Clinical depression indicated ($p < .05$) | 25% | 75% |
| Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) indicated ($p < .001$) | 0% | 100% |
| Difficulty going in public alone ($p < .05$) | 17% | 73% |
| No access to car ($p < .001$) | 40% | 60% |
| No High School diploma/GED ($p < .001$) | 18% | 82% |

employment is directly related to the presence of specific personal barriers.

It is also important to note that employment rates post NP closure were significantly associated with where the respondent lived. The unemployment rates of those living in the Central, Mountainland and North regions ranged from 72 to 76% while in the Western region it was 50% and the Eastern region only 42%. It was also in the Western and Eastern regions where people were most likely to complain about the unavailability of good jobs.

The Conciliation Process

Under TANF policy each state is allowed to design and implement its own sanctioning procedures. Several years ago, in an effort to move away from the "carrot and stick" model

referenced earlier, DWS implemented a process which attempts to address and resolve non-participation issues before sanctioning occurs. “Conciliation,” as defined in DWS policy, was designed to be a *“problem solving process focused on re-engagement of a customer in employment plan activities, avoiding sanctioning and eventual NP closure.”* Two sources of data, administrative and self-report, were used to understand the use and effectiveness of the various steps of the conciliation process.

Administrative Data Collection and Evaluation

Administrative data were gathered primarily through the use of PACMIS and UWORKS. When information from these sources was incomplete or unclear, DWS personnel including the PACMIS help desk, policy help desk, and program specialists provided assistance in gathering data.³ This group helped identify the cases which had inappropriate NP closure codes and communicated directly with DWS front line personnel to clarify notes and uncover answers to important questions.

To complete the Administrative Data portion of the Conciliation Activity data found in Table 3, many portions of UWORKS were reviewed. The seeker history, correspondence history, PACMIS history, UWORKS note and any other pertinent screens were accessed and thoroughly evaluated to discover what activities had been completed for each study participant. There were a portion, 18 (6%), who had been previously closed NP, reapplied for assistance and were denied further assistance. Data regarding this group was at times more difficult to find because of the time lag since the case was active. DWS personnel were especially helpful in these cases.

Conciliation - Self-report Data

Study participants were asked about their experience with the conciliation process. Many respondents were familiar with the term “conciliation” but they varied widely in their memory of the steps of the conciliation process. Each person was oriented to the topic prior to being asked to relay their experiences with the conciliation process. The self-report data displayed in Table 3 reflect the experiences and opinions of respondents regarding conciliation. This section of questions ended with respondents reflecting on the overall experience, providing their view on the reasons underlying cash closure and their overall experience of the conciliation process.

Conciliation Activity Results

A review of the administrative and self-report data regarding the conciliation process reveals significant differences between the two data sets (Table 3). Overall, the administrative data reflects higher meeting occurrence and lower participation rates than recalled by study respondents. These disparities mirror the experiences of the interviewers gathering the data regarding the conciliation process. Many people were very confused and did not understand the process very well. For some, things just seemed to happen without their knowledge of why. Only 68% of respondents remember discussing problems of participation, even once - formally or informally, with their

³ Special thanks to Rebecca Curry, Kathy Koller, Bethany Stillman and Cathie Pappis for their patience and persistence in helping us obtain accurate information in this area of data collection.

Table 3: Conciliation Activity

| Conciliation Activity - N = 292 | Administrative Data | Self-Report |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Level One | | |
| Initial discussion of participation issues | 282 (97%) | 203 (68%) |
| Customer attended meeting | 90 (31%) | 203 (68%) |
| Changes were made to employment plan | 74 (25%) | 66 (22%) |
| Respondent felt their views considered in making changes to plan: | | 43 (65%) |
| Home visit made to home around this time | 84 (29%) | 40 (14%) |
| Did you find this first attempt at problem solving to be: | | Helpful 59 (20%) Unhelpful 102 (34%) Neither 48 (16%) Didn't happen 90 (30%) |
| Level Two | | |
| First formal meeting to discuss participation | 281 (96%) | 156 (52%) |
| Customer attended meeting | 109 (39%) | 110 (71%) |
| For those not attending, why not attend: (Can give up to three reasons) | | Too intimidating 1 (1%) Working 3 (4%) No child care 7 (10%) No transportation 8 (12%) Didn't know about 3 (4%) Tired of hassles 13 (19%) Family Problems 5 (7%) It wouldn't matter 4 (6%) Forgot 10 (15%) Other (See pg. 32) ⁴ 14 (21%) |
| Changes were made to employment plan | 108 (37%) | 53 (18%) |
| Respondent felt their views considered in making changes to plan: | | 33 (59%) |
| Did you find this second attempt at problem solving to be: | | Helpful 42 (38%) Unhelpful 55 (50%) Neither 14 (13%) |

⁴ A summary of important "other" comments can be found by page number in Appendix 2 of this report.

| Conciliation Activity (Con't) - N = 292 | Administrative Data | Self-Report |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Cash benefits were reduced | 287 (98%) | 264 (91%) |
| Number of months cash reduced | | |
| 0 months | 5 (2%) | 27 (9%) |
| 1 month | 9 (3%) | 72 (25%) |
| 2 months | 233 (80%) | 129 (44%) |
| 3 months | 32 (11%) | 41 (14%) |
| 4 months | 9 (3%) | 8 (3%) |
| 5 months | 3 (1%) | 5 (2%) |
| 6 or more months | 1 (.3%) | 6 - 18 months = 6 (2%) |
| Average # of months: | 2.2 months | 2.2 months |
| Level Three | | |
| Second formal meeting to discuss participation | 262 (90%) | 147 (50%) |
| Customer attended meeting For those not attending, why not attend: (Up to three reasons possible) | 64 (24%) | 80 (54%) |
| | | Too intimidating 2 (2%) |
| | | Was working 6 (6%) |
| | | No child care 8 (8%) |
| | | No transportation 8 (8%) |
| | | Too ill 3 (3%) |
| | | Didn't know about it 4 (4%) |
| | | Tired of the hassle 16 (16%) |
| | | Family problems 8 (8%) |
| | | Felt it wouldn't matter 2 (2%) |
| | | I forgot 24 (24%) |
| | | Other (See pg. 33) 20 (20%) |
| Changes were made to employment plan | 39 (13%) | 25 (9%) |
| Respondent felt their views considered in making changes to plan: | | 6 (24%) |
| Did you find this final attempt at problem solving to be: | | Helpful 17 (21%) |
| | | Unhelpful 52 (65%) |
| | | Neither 11 (14%) |
| Cash Closure | | |
| How did you learn that your cash would be closing? | Final decision made at Level III meeting 43 (15%) | |
| | Telephone call from someone at DWS 16 (6%) | |
| | Received letter in the mail 186 (64%) | |
| | Check just stopped coming 17 (6%) | |
| | Other (See pg. 33) 28 (10%) | |
| To what degree did you find the conciliation process to be a helpful problem solving process? | Completely 7 (2%) | |
| | Mostly 18 (6%) | |
| | Somewhat 67 (23%) | |
| | Not at all 199 (68%) | |

employment counselor. This level one meeting was reported in the administrative data for 97% of the cases. In one quarter of the cases the employment plan was adjusted around this time.

Level II was remembered by even fewer respondents (52%). (Interestingly, client attendance at the Level II formal meeting was the only piece of data from this section where the administrative and self-report data are essentially the same. It appears this result is quite accidental.) According to DWS records just over a third of the plans underwent changes at that time. There was a statistically significant connection between those who had changes made to their plan and who said the Level II meeting was helpful ($p < .001$).

For the Level III staffing, only 50% of respondents remembered such a meeting being offered, while the administrative data reported it happening in 90% of the cases. When there was difficulty in finding documentation regarding conciliation activities it was often for this Level III meeting. DWS personnel called case workers to inquire about the lack of narrations regarding this meeting. Often they were informed that letters regarding this meeting were generated by the employment counselor and not recorded in the system. Only 39 (13%) plans were adjusted at this point and only 21% of those who reported attending the Level III meeting found it helpful.

Discussion

The most obvious issue in evaluating the conciliation data was the difference between the self-report and administrative data. There were challenges both in helping respondents remember various aspects of the process and in finding all the administrative data to reflect what really happened in each case.

Some have proposed that the reduction in benefits (sanctioning - “the stick”) is a key turning point in participation. The findings here reflect that 34% of respondents believed their cash had been reduced for one month or less. The administrative data shows this was true for only 5% of respondents. Indeed many more had reduced benefits for more months but were unaware of the reduction. This was but one of several areas in which lack of information and/or understanding of the process was clear. Those who reported attending the conciliation meetings were significantly more likely to experience the overall process as at least “somewhat helpful” for problem solving. Early in the process respondents were more likely to feel their views were taken into consideration and that the meetings were helpful. By the end of the process, attitudes were generally more negative.

A majority of respondents did not know their cash was closing until receiving a letter in the mail. Several noted discovering this fact when they were unsuccessful in using their Horizon card or when calling eligibility for another reason. This was a very frustrating experience for people. This apparent lack of communication might have resulted in more blame being placed on the employment counselor.

Overall, just over a third of the respondents found the conciliation process to be at least somewhat helpful. It should be remembered that these cases are in fact the ones for whom the process *did not work!* It is not a cross section of all who have experienced the conciliation process.

Other Program Components

Experience with DWS personnel

A central element of the conciliation process is the interaction between the customer and the employment counselor. Given the nature of the process under study, it would seem likely that the customer - employment counselor relationship might be strained. Table 4 shows that 137 (47%)

report at least a good relationship with their most recent employment counselor. In the 2002 report, comparisons were made between the NP and TL closures relative to the customer - employment counselor relationship. The relationships were statistically significantly different. This is also true with the NP and TL samples from 2004. It should be noted that, overall, the relationships in both categories are improving.

Table 4: Relationship With Employment Counselor

| Rate Relationship with most recent employment counselor | NP 2002 N = 67 | TL 2002 N = 260 | NP 2004 N = 292 | TL 2004 N = 500 |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Excellent | 5 (8%) | 66 (25%) | 21 (7%) | 126 (25%) |
| Very Good | 4 (6%) | 40 (15%) | 35 (12%) | 100 (20%) |
| Good | 11 (16%) | 48 (19%) | 81 (28%) | 114 (23%) |
| Fair | 21 (31%) | 40 (15%) | 69 (24%) | 69 (14%) |
| Poor | 26 (39%) | 66 (25%) | 86 (30%) | 91 (18%) |

In addition to the ranking, respondents could add general comments about their employment counselor. As expected there were a mixture of experiences. (See pg. 31 for additional comments) Some felt very supported by their worker:

- ▶ Employment counselor was kind and tried to work with her to accomplish her goals. Felt that she listened and tried to make things work for her even though many things couldn't at the time.
- ▶ "If I would have done things her way it would have been very helpful to me, I really liked her a lot"
- ▶ "She really did everything she could. The law is the law."

Others were not as happy with their experience:

- ▶ "She wouldn't help further education after she found out I was on drugs. I feel like I shouldn't have opened the door and said anything to her."
- ▶ "It's not her fault - I know she is busy - but I was just a number file to her."
- ▶ "I didn't know what was available and wasn't told. She was nice, but wasn't able to help much. The employment counselor said, 'my hands are tied.'"
- ▶ "He'd just hand me the plan and say if I wouldn't do it I'd go into conciliation"

This relationship translated into similar percentages who were able to trust their employment counselor, be open and honest, and discuss barriers to employment.

Yet the quality of the relationship did not always translate into customers feeling they were helped in reducing barriers so as to move toward employment. Of study respondents, 239 (82%) said their employment counselor knew about their biggest barriers to employment, but of this group only 108 (46%) said their employment counselor was somewhat or very helpful in assisting them in managing the barriers.

Table 5: Interaction With Employment Counselor

| EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR - N = 292 | Completely | Mostly | Somewhat | Not at all |
|---|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| To what degree were you able to trust your employment counselor? | 81 (28%) | 48 (16%) | 94 (32%) | 69 (24%) |
| To what degree were you able to be honest with your employment counselor? | 161 (55%) | 58 (20%) | 49 (17%) | 24 (8%) |
| To what degree were you able to discuss your barriers to working with your empl. counselor? | 119 (41%) | 58 (20%) | 49 (17%) | 24 (8%) |

Respondents were asked what they felt the employment counselor could have done (that was not done) to better help them resolve their barriers to employment. There were 69 (24%) who could not think of anything else the employment counselor could had done. Another 65 (22%) asked for more listening, understanding and better communication. There were 48 (16%) respondents who wanted help obtaining specific resources, while 17 (6%) just wanted the quantity of activities reduced as they found it overwhelming. (See pg. 30 for additional comments.)

There were 54 (18%) respondents who said they did not reveal their biggest employment barriers to their employment counselor. The barriers most often kept hidden were, physical/mental health problems (12), transportation issues (11), problems with partner (6), and drug and/or alcohol issues (6). When asked to explain *why* the employment counselor was not aware of such important issues, 22 (41%) of the respondents said the attitude of the worker was the main difficulty in sharing about employment barriers. Ten (19%) of the respondents were too embarrassed or afraid to tell the worker. As one person said, “I needed help, the benefits, so I did what I could on the plan. If I told her I couldn’t work I wouldn’t get help.” (Additional comments, pg. 29)

The Licenced Clinical Therapist (LCT)/Social Worker is another person with whom the respondent could have met as a resource in the conciliation process. There were 129 (44%) respondents who remembered the employment counselor speaking of an LCT / social worker / counselor etc. with whom they could meet. Only 117 (40%) respondents reported their employment counselor had suggested meeting with the social worker. This is very similar to the administrative data which shows 132 (44%) referrals to in house counseling. Of this group, 80 (68%) respondents did meet with the LCT. Fifty-four percent of those respondents only met once with the worker. Two thirds (53) of those who did meet with the LCT reported feeling comfortable discussing problems and issues with this person. (Additional comments: see pg. 32) Many of these referrals were made due to positive responses to CAGE and TALE questions, not necessarily connected with NP issues.

Employment Plans

Another significant element of the conciliation process is the employment plan. It is “non-participation” in completing the tasks listed on the plan that generally leads to case closure. In reviewing this portion of the customers’ experience, both administrative and self-report data were used. Table 6 reflects the DWS information provided by UWORKS for the time period during which the conciliation process took place. Activities that were listed even once during that time frame were counted. If an activity was on more than one plan it was only counted once. Table 6 also details the self-report data reflecting each respondent’s memory of the activities on the plan. Additional

activities, discussed and declined by the customer or requested by the customer but refused by the employment counselor, were also included.

Clearly there are large differences between the understanding of customers and DWS records regarding employment plan activities. In general, respondents reported being required to do many more activities than were listed on the DWS plans. There were three undocumented persons who reported not having employment plans (which would be an option under DWS policy). Others who were undocumented reported “plan” activities, but these plans were “participation” focused and included activities such as cooperation with ORS, ESL classes and various forms of treatment.

Table 6: Employment Plan Activities

| Employment Plans - N = 292 | Administrative Data (On Plan) | Self-Report Data | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| | | On Plan | Discussed & declined | Requested not received |
| Assessment of Skill | 200 (69%) | 54 (19%) | 6 (2%) | 1 (.3%) |
| Referral to DWS social worker | 20 (7%) | 37 (13%) | | 1 (.3%) |
| Basic Education: GED; HSD | 33 (11%) | 67 (23%) | 8 (3%) | 9 (3%) |
| Employment | 41 (14%) | | | |
| Employment Ed. (Certificate level) | 26 (9%) | 35 (12%) | 4 (1%) | 21 (7%) |
| Employment Education (higher ed.) | 6 (2%) | 22 (8%) | 12 (4%) | 19 (7%) |
| Job search workshops | 57 (20%) | 125 (43%) | 5 (2%) | 2 (.7) |
| Job Search | 122 (42%) | 221 (76%) | 2 (.7%) | 1 (.3%) |
| Worksite | 26 (9%) | 31 (11%) | 2 (.7%) | 2 (.7%) |
| Mental Health | 46 (16%) | 65 (25%) | 4 (1%) | 2 (.7%) |
| Physical Health treatment | 29 (10%) | 30 (10%) | — | 2 (.7%) |
| Substance abuse treatment | 12 (4%) | 13 (5%) | 4 (1%) | --- |
| Family Violence treatment | 7 (2%) | 17 (6%) | 2 (.7%) | --- |
| Life skills workshops | 25 (9%) | 40 (14%) | 3 (1%) | 1 (.3%) |
| Life skills - resource supports | 91 (31%) | 24 (8%) | 7 (2%) | 7 (2%) |
| Job coach | 4 (1%) | 8 (3%) | 2 (.7%) | 1 (.3%) |
| Supportive Services | 58 (20%) | 63 (22%) | 5 (2%) | 11 (4%) |
| Partner Programs | 12 (4%) | 19 (7%) | 5 (2%) | 1 (.3%) |
| Other | 7 (2%) | 44 (15%) | — | 3 (1%) |

In addition to understanding the scope of actual activities, it is also important to reflect on the experience of creating and implementing the plan. When discussing the creation of the employment

plan, 17 (6%) reported creating the plan on their own, 140 (48%) said the employment counselor alone decided what the customer should do, and 131 (45%) reported that they worked with the employment counselor in creating the plan. Given the low level of involvement in the creation of the employment plan it is not surprising, as the results in Table 7 reflect, that most respondents did not feel their views or desired activities were included in the employment plan. As one customer put it, “I didn’t have a say so in it. She was adamant ‘This is what you’re supposed to do.’ I thought they should talk to me and find out what’s best for me.” (Additional comments: see pg. 27) It also somewhat explains the low level of confidence respondents expressed in being able to successfully complete the activities listed in their plans.

Table 7: Employment Plan Creation

| EMPLOYMENT PLAN | Completely | Mostly | Somewhat | Not at all |
|--|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| To what degree were your views taken into consideration in making the employment plan? | 52 (18%) | 57 (20%) | 104 (36%) | 78 (27%) |
| To what degree were the activities you wanted included in the employment plan? | 60 (21%) | 51 (18%) | 107 (37%) | 73 (25%) |
| To what degree did you understand your employment plan? | 200 (67%) | 53 (18%) | 30 (10%) | 8 (3%) |
| To what degree did you feel confident you could accomplish the tasks on your plan? | 86 (30%) | 57 (20%) | 90 (31%) | 58 (20%) |

There were also those who took primary responsibility for their employment plans. As one customer said, I had so many counselors that I would just tell them what’s going on.” The customers who experienced partnerships in the process were typically appreciative of the experience. “My employment counselor was receptive to my concerns about wanting to finish GED and obtain CNA. The counselor listened to my ideas and we formulated the plan together.”

When asked “do you feel like you had a choice whether or not to sign your employment plan?” a majority (59%) said no they had no choice. In addition, many who responded *yes* to the question followed it up with clarifying comments such as, “I could *choose* to sign the form and get my benefits or not sign and not get the benefits.” Respondents were very aware that reception of benefits was dependent on agreeing to sign the employment plan. As one respondent said, “I just did it. I told him I couldn’t do what was in the plan but that didn’t mater.” This reality reduces the ownership of the decision as free choice. Signing the plan was clearly different from believing the activities on the plan were right for them, or were activities they could realistically accomplish. (Additional comments: see pg. 27)

When asked about their ability to complete all the activities on their plan, 47 respondents felt they had completed all that was required of them. These respondents were often confused as to *why* the case had closed. The other 214 (83%) knew they were not able to complete the activities and were able to identify the barriers (see Table 8) that had hindered participation. Respondents could chose up to 3 responses. There were a large number (76) of “other” responses. These included things such as: DWS classes conflicting with current employment, not enough jobs in the area to complete job search, not wanting to leave children alone at home, and frustration over “working for free” at a worksite. (Additional comments: see pg. 28)

Table 8: Employment Plan Participation

| Employment Plan Participation - N = 292 | YES | NO |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Were you able to complete all the activities on the plan? | 47 (16%) | 214 (83%) |
| If not, WHY were you unable to complete the plan activities? (Up to three chosen) | | |
| Physical health issues | | 35 (12%) |
| Mental health issues | | 23 (8%) |
| Needs of a dependent | | 15 (5%) |
| Another person threaten or influenced me | | 3 (1%) |
| Transportation issues | | 97 (33%) |
| Just too much / overwhelming | | 67 (23%) |
| Child care issues | | 71 (24%) |
| Too hard | | 14 (5%) |
| Didn't believe it was right for me | | 32 (11%) |
| Other | | 76 (26%) |
| (Additional comments on pg. 28) | | |

While reviewing the employment plan content there were some plans and sets of narrations which stood out. While gathering the actual content of each plan and narration set, the “tone” of the documentation was also evaluated. This purely subjective evaluation was used for evaluating general trends in the administrative data. Three categories were used. The “positive/self-directed” category was used for plans that used first person language (“I will, I understand, it is up to me”, etc.), reflecting the customer’s ownership of the plan. The positive comments written by the DWS worker often included mention of the customer’s successes and anticipation of future accomplishments.

The “negative/other directed” category was used for plans focused on directing the customer (“you must, you can not, under no circumstances will you”, etc.). The negative tones reflected unnecessary judgements pertaining to customer appearance, family and lifestyle. Such comments would clearly have the potential to prejudice future workers. As is reflected in Tables 9, the vast majority of comments fell into neither of these categories but were neutral.

Table 9: Tone of Employment Plans and Narrations

| | Administrative Data Report N = 292 | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
| | Employment Plans | Narrations |
| Positive/Self Directed | 30 (10%) | 8 (3%) |
| Negative/Other Directed | 12 (4%) | 13 (5%) |
| Neutral | 241 (83%) | 269 (92%) |
| No plan/narrations | 9 (3%) | 2 (1%) |

Non-Participation Case closure

One of the main purposes of this report was to learn more about what lead to case closure and what could have been done to avoid this situation. Respondents were asked to identify what they felt DWS could have done differently to avoid this outcome. The most common response (21%) involved participants seeking help with barriers including transportation, child care and physical/mental health issues. There were 43 (15%) respondents who wished department personnel could listen and be more understanding of their situation. There were also 31 (11%) respondents who did not feel anything could have been done differently. Only 13 (4%) respondents suggested a change in employment counselor to avoid the outcome. (Additional comments: see pg. 33)

Respondents were also asked to reflect on what *they* could have done differently to avoid the closure. There were 66 (23%) respondents who did not feel they could have done anything different. (Recall that 47 respondents thought they had done all that was required on their plan.) A few others revealed their personal frustration in sarcastic answers such as: “been superwoman” and “robbed a bank to get the money to get my drivers license.” But most could name at least one thing they could personally have done to avoid the result. Things such as:

- “Be more pleasant; be consistent with job logs”
- “Tried harder to make child care arrangements”
- “Asked more questions; I didn’t know about all the help I could have gotten”
- “Could have been more open about my pregnancy.” (She was embarrassed.)

(Additional comments: see pg. 34)

Finally, respondents were asked to reflect on what, overall, they felt was the main reason behind their cash closing. Table 10 provides the most common responses to this question. The variety of responses reflects the diverse experiences of this group. There was a small group (7%) who just didn’t want to do all that was required. There was also a group (13%) who were simply tired of the hassles, paperwork, meetings, etc., and just wanted to leave the system. Given the high number of respondents (30%) who reported a poor relationship with their employment counselor, it was surprising that only 12% reported this as the primary reason for case closure. “Barriers to participation” was clearly the most common reason for case closure. Some of the “other” responses reflected miscommunication between customer and worker. Others did not feel the activities were appropriate for them, for example, leaving school to work fast food. A few respondents admitted drug use was a problem at that time and participation in their plan was not a priority.

Table 10: Main Reason for Cash closure

| What was the main reason your cash assistance closed NP? | N = 292 |
|--|----------------|
| It was just more work then I wanted to do. | 21 (7%) |
| My barriers to participation made it too difficult for me to do what was on my plan. | 127 (44%) |
| The poor relationship with my employment counselor got in the way. | 35 (12%) |
| I was tired of the hassles and just wanted to move on. | 37 (13%) |
| Other (Additional comments: see pg. 35) | 72 (25%) |

Discussion

While the conciliation process is an important tool in helping those struggling with participation to re-engage with employment activities, it does not function in a vacuum. The ongoing elements of DWS program participation, the employment counselor, the LCT/social worker, and the employment plan all continue to play critical roles in customer success.

Attention to the relationship between the customer and the employment counselor has been a major focus of attention over the past two years. The effects of attention to this important aspect of customer relations are apparent in the steady improvement in outcomes. While it is too early to see the long term results of this change, it will certainly have a positive effect in the long run. Improving relationships will not necessarily lead to fewer NP closures, but it will help the customer (and the employment counselor) feel better about the process.

The lack of customer ownership of the employment planning process as well as the specific activities was revealed in several ways. While there were a handful of respondents who admitted not revealing their greatest barriers to employment to their employment counselor, most felt they were up front in making their needs and limitations clear. The greatest frustration was expressed when customers felt they were being asked to do things the employment counselor knew to be impossible. Of course, “impossible” is a subjective judgement. As has been noted in the past, the *perception* of a barrier is almost as important as the presence of the barrier itself.

CONCLUSION

This study provides an extensive data set regarding the experiences of those whose cash assistance case closed non-participation. The diversity of experiences reflects the different needs and resources of both the respondents and the various DWS offices and workers. Even though all the cases in this study did close NP, it is clear that those who were more involved with the conciliation process as it is designed to be used, benefitted from this process. As is recommended, this data set could be enriched through the collection of data in a comparison group of those who engaged in the conciliation process and ultimately did not close NP.

The core question, “are sanctions based more on the customers unwillingness to participate or their barriers to employment” does not have a definite answer. Almost a quarter of the respondents here would say, “yes, it is just more than I want to do, I am tired of it all.” About half the respondents would blame it on the barriers they face. Thus, the answer is mixed. Moving forward, it seems the main goal would be to find ways to better distinguish those who are truly from those participating to the best of their ability, from those who are not committed to the hard work of moving toward self-sufficiency.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Twenty percent of study respondents, admitted, for various reasons, “choosing” not to participate in their employment plan. Another 12% felt a poor relationship with the employment counselor was the primary reason for case closure. There were 44% who felt their own barriers to participation were the primary reason they were unable to participate.
2. Many customers were unaware of what was happening throughout the conciliation process. Lack of clear communication or miscommunication between employment counselor and customer was a major factor contributing to NP case closure. Nearly one fifth of respondents thought they had completed all required activities and did not know why their case closed.
3. Customers who attended conciliation staffings and had adjustments made in the employment plan were more likely to report that individual meetings and the overall conciliation process was at least somewhat helpful.
4. The relationship between the employment counselor and the customer continues to be an important element to engaging in DWS activities and processes. For both those closed NP and TL, these relationships have improved between 2001-2002 and 2003-2004.
5. Less than half (44%) of the respondents remember hearing about the DWS LCT or social worker. Only 40% remember their employment counselor ever suggesting that a meeting with the LCT/social worker might be helpful.
6. Those closed NP are more likely to rely on help from family, friends and partners than community resources to make ends meet after cash closure.
7. Those closed NP focused on barriers such as problems with “transportation”, “lack of good jobs available”, and “lack of job skills” as primary barriers to employment.
8. The factors which are significantly linked with unemployment post NP closure include: depression, PTSD, no high school diploma or GED, fear of being in public, lack of transportation, living with extended family, and living in the Central, North or Mountainland regions.
9. Personal ownership of the employment plan (including participation in creation of the plan and belief in ones ability to complete the activities) increases the likelihood of success in participating in and completing employment plan activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conduct additional assessments with those in conciliation to discover barriers to employment. Particular attention should be given to barriers which correspond with continued unemployment post NP closure (See key finding 8).
2. Provide recipients entering conciliation with a simple chart explaining the stages of conciliation. Refer to this visual aid at each stage of the process to help customers understand the process and the consequences of non-participation. Both the customer's and the employment counselor's responsibilities should be clearly outlined and discussed throughout the process.
3. Include more activities in the Conciliation process which direct the employment counselor and customer to specifically discuss barriers which may be hindering participation. Distinguish between customers "choosing" not to participate and those who have barriers which severely limit the customers ability to complete required participation activities.
4. Encourage opportunities for involvement of additional DWS personnel (such as the LCT/social worker) so that if a poor relationship with the employment counselor is part of the issue, outside intervention can be used to mediate the situation. Continue efforts to support and strengthen the relationship between the customer and the employment counselor.
5. Updating and ongoing education of employment counselors, supervisors and LCT/social workers regarding the purpose of the conciliation process. Given the current description of the process, emphasis should be placed on the problem solving (not punitive) nature of the process.
6. Gather community advocates, social service providers and all who work with the low income populations to hear the results of this study, ask questions and learn more about how they might assist their clients involved with the conciliation process in moving toward success.
7. This report represents only one side of the story - those who have failed in resolving their participation issues and closed NP. In order to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the conciliation process, further research should be done with a sample of recipients who entered into conciliation but did not close NP. This group would represent the "success" of conciliation (no case closure due to NP) and would serve as a comparison group for the current sample.

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Appendix 1: Additional Tables

Table A: Respondent Demographics

| Personal Characteristics and Current Situation | NP Study N = 292 | Time Limit N = 500 |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Age (average) | 29.0 years range: 19 - 62 | 32.8 years |
| Gender | 96% female 5% male | 97% female 3% male |
| Place of birth: | | |
| Utah | 188 (64%) | 278 (56%) |
| Other state | 91 (31%) | 173 (35%) |
| Other country | 13 (5%) | 49 (10%) |
| Race/Ethnicity: | | |
| Hispanic | 48 (16%) | 134 (27%) |
| White (non-Hispanic) | 204 (70%) | 288 (58%) |
| Black (non-Hispanic) | 7 (2%) | 24 (5%) |
| Native American | 12 (4%) | 23 (5%) |
| Asian - Pacific Islander | 4 (1%) | 9 (2%) |
| Other | 4 (1%) | 3 (.5%) |
| Mixed Race | 13 (5%) | 19 (4%) |
| Marital Status | | |
| Married | 29 (10%) | 39 (8%) |
| Separated | 51 (18%) | 77 (15%) |
| Divorced | 74 (25%) | 147 (29%) |
| Domestic Partnership | 48 (16%) | 71 (14%) |
| Single - never married | 89 (31%) | 160 (32%) |
| Widowed | 1 (.3%) | 6 (1%) |
| Average # of children total | 2.6 | 3.2 |
| Average # of children on case assistance case | 2.0 | 2.4 |
| Education | | |
| High school diploma | 131 (45%) | 237 (47%) |
| GED | 55 (19%) | 79 (16%) |
| No high school diploma or GED | 106 (36%) | 184 (37%) |
| Average number of years of schooling completed | 11.5 years | 11.4 years |
| Currently in school | 27 (9%) | 61 (12%) |
| Of the percent of each studying: | | |
| HS/GED | 11 (41%) | 19 (31%) |
| Certificate | 9 (33%) | 19 (31%) |
| Associate Degree | 3 (11%) | 12 (20%) |
| Bachelor Degree | 4 (15%) | 11 (18%) |

Table B: Factors Contributing to family stability

| Family Stability | NP Study N = 292 | Time Limit N = 500 |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Current living situation: | | |
| Rent | 179 (60%) | 384 (77%) |
| Own | 20 (7%) | 20 (4%) |
| Living with friends | 12 (4%) | 12 (2%) |
| living with extended family | 79 (26%) | 71 (14%) |
| Live in shelter | 5 (2%) | 2 (.4%) |
| Other | 4 (1%) | 11 (2%) |
| Average number of times moved in past 2 years | 2 | 1.7 |
| Average length of time at current residence | 21 months | 23 months |
| Current employment: | | |
| Part-time | 56 (19%) | 88 (18%) |
| Full-time | 32 (11%) | 94 (19%) |
| Unemployed | 204 (70%) | 318 (64%) |
| Food Security | | |
| Food Secure | 148 (51%) | 168 (34%) |
| Food Insecure without hunger | 70 (24%) | 161 (32%) |
| Food insecure with hunger (moderate) | 61 (21%) | 130 (26%) |
| Food insecure with hunger (severe) | 13 (5%) | 41 (8%) |
| Resources result in income below the poverty level: | | |
| Calculated using all sources of income: | 205 (70%) | --- |
| Calculated using earned income only: | 244 (74%) | --- |

Table C: Resources

| RESOURCES - Those used at time of interview | NP Study N = 292 | Time Limit N = 500 |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Public Housing | 86 (30%) | 207 (41%) |
| SSI | 15 (5%) | 54 (11%) |
| Educational assistance | 11 (4%) | 19 (4%) |
| Food Stamps | 196 (67%) | 413 (83%) |
| Medicaid for children | 239 (82%) | 421 (84%) |
| Child care assistance | 15 (5%) | 38 (8%) |
| RESOURCES - used at any time since cash closure | | |
| WIC | 73 (25%) | 138 (28%) |
| Food Pantry | 104 (36%) | 222 (44%) |
| Thrift Store | 86 (30%) | 238 (48%) |
| Homeless shelter | 10 (3%) | 19 (4%) |
| Help from Church or religious organization | 72 (25%) | 142 (28%) |
| Drug / alcohol treatment | 22 (8%) | 46 (9%) |
| Mental health services | 72 (25%) | 161 (32%) |

Table D: Barriers

| BARRIERS | NP Study N = 292 | Time Limit N = 500 |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mental Health | | |
| “fair” or “poor” indicating a mental health problem | 98 (34%) | 218 (44%) |
| Has been diagnosed with mental health issue | 131 (45%) | 273 (55%) |
| CES_D - Depression indicated | 161 (55%) | 333 (67%) |
| Screen positive for PTSD | 27 (9%) | — |
| Screen positive for anxiety disorder | 44 (15%) | --- |
| Physical Health | | |
| “fair” or “poor” health indicating a health problem | 100 (34%) | 243 (49%) |
| Poor work history: (less than 6 months as any one job in past 5 years) | 48 (16%) | 92 (18%) |
| Has no high school diploma or GED | 106 (36%) | 184 (37%) |
| Has been diagnosed with a learning disability | 51 (17%) | 106 (21%) |
| Has trouble reading or writing | 34 (11%) | 89 (18%) |
| Client has considered cutting down on alcohol in past year | 34 (12%) | 67 (13%) |
| Client has considered cutting down on drug use in past year | 27 (9%) | 57 (11%) |
| Has child with behavior or severe health issues | 73 (25%) | 228 (46%) |
| Criminal Record | 73 (25%) | 156 (31%) |
| Of those with a record, record includes: | | |
| Felony | 31 (43%) | 60 (39%) |
| Misdemeanor | 47 (65%) | 106 (71%) |
| Severe domestic violence indicated: | | |
| In the past year | 47 (16%) | 74 (15%) |
| Ever in lifetime | 197 (66%) | 368 (74%) |
| Lack of transportation | 144 (49%) | 238 (48%) |
| Lack of telephone access | 56 (19%) | 75 (15%) |
| Referral to Intervention Specialist | 37 (13%) | 94 (19%) |

Table E: Self-Reported Barriers and their Impact

| BARRIER | Non-participation N = 292 | Of these % which Prevent Work | TL N = 500 | Of these % which Prevent Work |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Child health/behavior | 25% | 8% | 46% | 13% |
| Alcohol / Drugs | 10% | 10% | 10% | 14% |
| Family Illness | 9% | 4% | 14% | 13% |
| Homelessness | 2% | 33% | 3% | 40% |
| Read/Write problems | 11% | 9% | 18% | 15% |
| Physical Health | 46% | 21% | 52% | 35% |
| Mental Health | 45% | 23% | 55% | 25% |
| Caring for elderly relative | 3% | 30% | 5% | 7% |
| Lack of Education | 39% | 14% | 41% | 22% |
| Lack of job skills | 48% | 10% | 52% | 22% |
| Criminal Record | 25% | 14% | 29% | 17% |
| Current legal issues | 29% | 19% | 33% | 7% |
| Spouse/partner objects | 2% | 43% | 2% | 33% |
| Wages too Low | 42% | 7% | 58% | 10% |
| Caring for infant | 10% | 43% | 12% | 35% |
| More than 3 children | 10% | 10% | 21% | 17% |
| Language Barrier | 2% | 20% | 8% | 56% |
| Lack of transportation | 49% | 35% | 48% | 28% |
| Lack of telephone access | 19% | 16% | 15% | 22% |
| Lack of good jobs | 61% | 14% | 67% | 22% |
| No medical if employed | 29% | 4% | 29% | 12% |
| No child care funding | 33% | 32% | 33% | 45% |
| Choose to stay home | 25% | 100% | 19% | 100% |
| Other Barrier | 17% | 51% | 15% | 45% |

Table F: Activities to “make it” Post-Cash Closure

| What others things have you done to make ends meet since your cash closed?* | NP N = 292 | TL N = 500 |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Got a job | 97 (33%) | 189 (38%) |
| Cut back on necessities | 177 (61%) | 367 (75%) |
| Got money from family or friends | 200 (67%) | 288 (59%) |
| Got money from boyfriend or partner | 97 (33%) | 140 (29%) |
| Cut back on extras | 206 (71%) | 410 (83%) |
| Delayed or stop paying bills | 181 (62%) | 349 (71%) |
| Got more child support | 31 (11%) | 44 (9%) |
| Got benefits from another program | 43 (15%) | 106 (22%) |
| Got help from charity | 78 (27%) | 157 (32%) |
| Got cheaper housing or moved in with others | 92 (32%) | 137 (28%) |
| Went to a shelter | 7 (2%) | 12 (2%) |
| Put children in someone else’s care | 24 (8%) | 36 (7%) |
| Sold Food Stamps | 7 (2%) | 22 (5%) |
| Participated in illegal activity | 10 (3%) | 14 (3%) |
| Other | 42 (14%) | 103 (21%) |

Based survey question reported in:

Cherlin, Andrew J. (Sept. 2002) Operating within the rules: Welfare recipients’ experiences with sanctions and case closings. *Social Services Review*. Vol. 76(1). Pp 387-405.

Appendix 2: Non- Participation 2004 Survey - Sample Qualitative Responses

EMPLOYMENT PLANS

7. Additional comments on creation of employment plan:

- 9105 I told them my ideal plan, but when it came down to it they wanted me to do the job search
- 9106 Mostly, they just do it and you just gotta do it. I ended up taking jobs I didn't want to take just to not get kicked off.
- 9111 I was tired of arguing with her. We disagreed but went ahead.
- 9117 She was trying to force my kids into daycare. She would cancel our appointment if I brought my kids.
- 9119 I tried to tell her what wasn't working for me - but I was frustrated.
- 9121 She'd often throw out all these ideas to put on my plan that overwhelmed me.
- 9122 I told him what I would do and he wrote it down.
- 9132 She would promise things and not follow through.
- 9133 They always tell me what I have to do. I never got to put in my input. They'd deny my suggestions.
- 9134 I just sat and watched her type it in.
- 9161 Had so many counselors that she would just tell them what's going on.
- 9168 Tried to work together but she didn't understand other things.
- 9173 I told her what I wanted to do she said "fine, whatever." No guidance given. Wouldn't return calls or would take four days to call.
- 9176 She would just write what she needed to get something down so her job wasn't on the line.
- 9181 He was nice at first. It got to where he expected so much out of me. It was overwhelming.
- 9182 2 different directions from the 2 different EC's made it hard.
- 9183 She would only support CNA schooling.
- 9187 EC didn't do what she was supposed to do...to sign up client for nursing. EC didn't return calls, sent letter saying sorry, no time to return call but got messages.
- 9202 Changed EC part way through. At first, I understood and was complying - then the new EC told me I was doing it all wrong and not complying.
- 9215 She just put on there whatever she wanted and I just went along with it. I would have been in assistance if I would have had more input into the plan.
- 9222 Too scared of him. Afraid of saying what I wanted. Just did what he said. Not easy, things he gave me to do.
- 9224 They need to dig a little deeper in getting the information that will make a good employment plan that suits their needs.
- 9227 I picked a school to go to that was on their list and they said "no." So I could do things only if it was okay with them (DWS).
- 9281 I already knew what I was doing and it didn't include getting a job - they never ask you what you want.
- 9292 I started it - I knew what I needed - everyone knows what they need for themselves.
- 9306 She said we'll do what you want to do once you do what I (EC) want you to do.
- 9328 I could tell her what I wanted it would have been easier, but it was mostly her.
- 349 "She told me some things that weren't appropriate. They offer you \$1000 if you get a job and my case worker told me "with your history you don't qualify." She pissed me off.
- 9359 Employment counselor was receptive to concerns about wanting to finish GED and obtain CNA. Counselor listened to my ideas and we formulated the plan together.
- 9361 Told me what I was going to do, "I was told that I would accept the employment plan as written or they would kick me off the program
- 9366 Employment counselor told me that she got to make my plan and I had to agree with it
- 9387 My Employment Counselor, she said you have to do this, this, this, this whether I wanted to do it or not.

12. Did you feel you had a choice whether or not to sign the plan? If no, explain how you understood it worked:

Summary: If you don't sign, you don't get assistance: 131

- 9103 They put it down - if you don't sign it then you won't get your money
- 9105 Pretty much, if I didn't sign the plan it would prolong things. They didn't understand where I was coming from.

9106 Either you sign it or you don't get anything, so...

9111 She was intimidating. I had to sign or get no help - get my benefits docked.

9114 Because you don't get the benefits if you don't sign. You'll do whatever they want.

9117 I just thought I had to - She made up the final plan and mailed it to us for us to sign

9126 I feel they put pressure on me. They didn't threaten me, I could just tell.

9167 I just did it. I told him I couldn't do what was in the plan but that didn't matter.

9225 I thought I just had to do it, there was no choice.

9235 She said if I didn't go with what they say they'd close my case.

9253 She was pushy and I felt I had no choice. She made it clear that I was going to lose cash unless I signed plan.

9260 Either sign or my case was closed.

9262 There were things on my plan I didn't want, but she made me sign it anyway, "Sign it or you're cut off."

9265 Did I have one?

9277 He told me if I didn't sign the plan I knew I couldn't complete I wouldn't get the benefits.

9293 If I didn't sign I wouldn't get the benefits - but it was impossible.

9346 I felt like I was being bullied into it-she said "if you don't sign you won't get this or that"

9350 I knew I needed their help, would've signed anything

9361 "There was no choice. I was told flat out that I would either do this plan or be off the program. I've been to court and the judge ruled that I am unable to work."

9363 I had to do what she said or I got no assistance, she's the boss!

9379 He(employment counselor) said "Either you do this (sign the plan) or you lose your benefits

13. Were you able to complete all the activities that were listed on your employment plan? If not, why not?

10. Other:

9116 There are not enough jobs in this rural area to complete the number of contacts wanted by DWS.

9118 Cause I'm lazy

9133 No phone to communicate with.

9139 Missed meetings for job interviews.

9171 Dr's notes needed to be signed in a week and they couldn't get that done. I didn't have an appointment and they were too busy.

9187 EC didn't follow through with her part of the plan.

9193 They wanted it all done in too short a time frame.

9198 School didn't work out for me. I owed the school money and couldn't pay it.

9201 Just forget about appointments.

9202 Classes scheduled at DWS conflicted with my job.

9211 I didn't bother - I didn't care.

9214 Couldn't do plan and do child care for my rent.

9215 New EC wanted to change things.

9225 No time as there was so much else to do with 2 kids and a part time job.

9226 Child was really young and sick and I couldn't take him on the bus with me.

9234 It's hard to remember all the little things they want me to do.

9236 Dealing with many other problems at the time.

9247 Went to jail - couldn't go to school.

9270 We constantly played phone tag - and then I didn't have a phone.

9272 Couldn't get a hold of the voc rehab people.

9281 I didn't have any intension to do it - I only wanted a couple of months.

9286 Couldn't get more hours at my job.

9300 Had lots of personal crises - miscarriage, car totaled, divorce - separation, etc.

9304 On drugs, nothing else mattered.

9305 I didn't want to be away from my kids all day and all night long.

9313 I was in school full-time.

9314 I didn't want to work for free at the worksite 4 days per week.

9319 My drug abuse

9321 Parents health issues, client had to take care of parents

9330 I didn't want to do it, I was lazy and wanted to stay home with my babies

9331 Lack of interest, overwhelmed with the repetitiveness of getting in trouble all the time.

- 9349 More schooling. I asked for more schooling and they wouldn't give it to me.
- 9364 Not enough jobs out there to job search for for 40 to 50 hours a week
- 9365 I didn't have the money to pay for my CNA certification
- 9366 Employment counselor wasn't clear on what she expected
- 9367 The way I was treated, was treated poorly

EXPERIENCE WITH EMPLOYMENT COUNSELOR

20. Did your employment counselor know about the things that most got in the way of your working?

20a. If no, what specific barriers was the employment counselor not aware of?

Summary: Drug and/or alcohol issues: 6
 Physical/Mental health problem: 12
 Partner problems: 6
 Transportation: 11

- 9118 Lack of incentive to do it
- 9124 Relationship with husband, mom, mental health issues.
- 9131 Insecurity in going to public and working. That I just needed a little help.
- 9189 Attachment to kids - wanted/needed to be with children.
- 9198 Money I owed to school.
- 9202 That I really liked my job, despite not getting paid enough. I was taking care of step-dad's wife who was paralyzed.
- 9211 My drug dealing.
- 9215 Transportation issues. Finances to continue school.
- 9216 Some of my depression problems.
- 9264 Partner was stopping her from following through with her employment plan.
- 9268 Relationships/boyfriend.
- 9288 I was hiding a pregnancy.
- 9295 Private issues, lack of car, phone.
- 9335 Drug and alcohol use
- 9351 My husband would threaten me about working. He didn't want me to work. He was jealous.
- 9355 I think she just didn't know or understand the depth or degree of my issues.
- 9357 Ex-partner caused stress
- 9372 I have fears looking for work. Fears about being around people.
- 9374 Drug abuse, low self-esteem, illegal activity
- 9382 The fear I had of my husband. Fear he would get my kids from me.

20aa. Why did the employment counselor not know about these barriers?

Summary: Attitude of worker:22
 Embarrassment/Not her business/Too personal: 10

- 9124 Too abrasive. He was a man, I'm not telling him stuff about me. I also heard the way he talked to other women.
- 9127 Some things are not people's business.
- 9131 I am too shy to tell her.
- 9138 I told her what she needed to know so I could get my assistance.
- 9141 It's embarrassing, you already feel like crap.
- 9142 I really don't think she'd care, so I didn't tell her.
- 9144 She didn't listen. She didn't take it to heart what was really going on.
- 9150 She always acted like she was better than me. I knew she wouldn't care.
- 9162 She didn't care. She acted like nothing mattered but work. She didn't listen. Why should I tell her anything?
- 9163 It's embarrassing - so I knew I wouldn't be able to complete my plan.
- 9173 Just didn't tell her. Every time I went in she was really busy and short with me. She was overwhelmed.
- 9188 Kept getting a new counselor every 3 months with a letter and never get a phone call back from anyone.

9192 Would you tell someone giving you money you were using? Couldn't risk losing my assistance.
 9215 They acted like they were better than me. I felt inferior to her and embarrassed to say what was happening.
 9216 She never asked me, and they're personal things I just don't blurt out.
 9219 I didn't feel close to her. Didn't think she could.
 9222 She scared me, she didn't care.
 9224 I didn't feel like I could trust her and I didn't think she cared to know. Too much energy to explain it all.
 9228 Acted like it didn't matter. I wanted to tell her, she just kept saying "Get a job!" That's all that mattered to her.
 9268 I didn't feel I could trust her.
 9327 She was a "take a number" kind of worker, didn't care
 9372 She acted like she didn't care, didn't listen, always in a hurry to get me in and out and on to the next person
 9374 I didn't trust her, I am an addict and admitting use goes against the addict in me, but I want help

21. What more do you feel the employment counselor could have done to assist you in resolving your barriers to employment?

Summary: Nothing more could be done by EC: 69
 Listened/communicated better: 33
 More understanding: 41
 Help with specific resources (transportation, child care, schooling, etc.): 48
 Reduce requirements/less overwhelming/too much: 17

9101 Be more flexible and not so harsh with me. She had no feelings. She could have been more sensitive.
 9103 Referred me to places, schooling, job coaches, referrals for domestic violence help
 9106 Been supportive of me going to school or even job training. Seems like people with drug issues can go to school, yet I couldn't.
 9111 Helped transportation barrier (car insurance), child care assistance, further education, more options - she only gave me one.
 9114 Let me focus on one thing and let me accomplish it before moving on to another goal.
 9115 She wasn't trained for helping me overcome trauma related to my divorce. They don't know how to cope with the barriers.
 9117 Listened to my concerns - more understanding with how I deal with my kids. My former counselor was much more understanding.
 9121 She could have given me the money to get the GED taken care of (\$40). Given me a monthly bus pass and child care so I could go to school and get a job.
 9124 Had a better attitude, treat me like a human.
 9125 Transportation was biggest issues. Help me get my car fixed. Glasses. I need glasses in order to work. I can't see anything.
 9131 She could have let me know what resources that were available to help someone in my situation.
 9137 Nothing. She was great. I was the non-participant.
 9141 You feel so small when you go into the office - lift me up!
 9149 Referred me to the social worker. Got me bus passes.
 9151 She could have pushed the WEAT program more, this could have lead to employment.
 9158 She could have been nicer and more understanding.
 9162 Let me follow my original plan of school, work, and provide child care. I lost the counselor who made the original plan. When I get the new counselor she said "your last E.C. was too easy on you. I won't support your schooling, you need to get a job."
 9171 She couldn't really have done anything - but she could have called me earlier instead of waiting for so long. Treat me with respect - this was the biggest problem.
 9181 More understanding of my situation. Not overwhelmed me with tasks.
 9185 At least give me a bus pass to help make it easier for me to participate.
 9213 She could have done meetings over the phone when I couldn't come in for appointments.
 9216 She could have showed up to our appointments and communicated better about how to contact her about our next appointment. Try to challenge me and listen to me more.
 9224 Empathy of my situation. Treat me better - it was like I was asking for too much. She told me she would help at one point but she didn't.
 9230 Worked with her a little more on transportation issues. Help her make and keep appointments.

9231 Not be so overloaded with work. Get things done when she says she will.

9232 Call client back, let her know about appointments. Be responsible.

9241 Tell me everything that was available to me. Let me make my own employment plan so I could have planned it out better.

9250 She could have been more strict - make me go - needed to push me - I was too depressed to do what I needed on my own.

9258 Been understanding about my mental health issues. Given me a referral for social worker - counseling.

9267 She could have understood my time constraints - I asked her to schedule appointments in the afternoon when daughter is at school but she always did then early mornings. Help set up daycare or give me time to get daughter in full-time school in 5 months.

9300 She did everything she could do - it was me, I just couldn't take care of everything.

9310 Listen more, understand the client's situation.

9311 She understood that I was waiting for disability and had no intention of looking for work.

9312 Be realistic! Support me in job search!!

9315 Give me more resources instead of being my babysitter. I needed more time to finish my HS diploma instead of 50,000 other things.

9330 We only met for like 10 minutes each time, he could have met longer to talk more about what I'd do.

9331 She was stuck by the rules of the system. She couldn't do anymore.

9339 Nothing he went out of his way to help me. He would see me without an appt.

9352 My employment counselor did all she could for me.

9354 She could have actually listened to me. She could have told me about the available resources which I was in need of at the time.

9365 She could have listened to me, ask me what I wanted to do. Be honest and consistent be more respectful about my personal problems. Not pressure me into everything she wanted me to do.

9366 Be more on my side, not make up a plan for me that is impossible for me to accomplish, be nicer.

9374 I wish she could have seen through me and helped me get over the drug use.

9394 Just give me a little more time, understand that I really was trying to get a job, take into consideration my problems with mental health and children

22. Additional comments regarding employment counselor:

9101 I tried to change workers when I moved; they wouldn't let me. She made me feel awful - like I wasn't anything, not human. Thought she was better than me. She had no interaction with my [disabled] daughter.

9103 Personality conflicts. Always threatening me, never really listened

9106 Was saying things like "Hispanic men never take care of their families." You don't feel like you can say anything or you'll lose benefits, so you have to sit there and say ok. They told me I couldn't change workers.

9115 She did all she could. It just wasn't enough to refer me to classes. That doesn't 'fix' things.

9116 Relationship started out good but got bad over the yrs as office manager got between us and turned her on me.

9117 Not at all understanding. Very rude and uptight. She had toys for the kids but wouldn't let kids use them.

9122 It wasn't a good fit for me. My workers were switched, I got transferred offices and didn't connect with him (my new worker).

9127 "You need to get off welfare. Us taxpayers are paying your way."

9134 She felt I was hiding things from her.

9137 She was great. I just didn't want to participate anymore. Husband got a job, I got housing so I got lazy.

9140 She looked down on me because I wanted to stay home with my son.

9144 She wouldn't help further education after found out I was on drugs. I feel like I shouldn't have opened the door and said anything to her.

9145 E.C. was good. Eligibility worker was good at first, then wouldn't return my calls. She just kind of dropped me, never tried to work with me.

9147 It wasn't up to her. Her supervisor just said was I eligible or not.

9149 She was great - over-worked, though.

9159 He wanted her to do job searches when she was nine months pregnant. He was rude. He didn't care at all. His attitude changed when she was honest with him and told him she was a recovering drug addict.

9164 It's not her fault - I know she is busy - but I was just a number file to her.

9170 She really did everything she could. The law is the law.

9174 We kept doing the same things over and over again. I never progressed. Meetings weren't helpful.

- 9176 I didn't know what was available and wasn't told. She was nice, but wasn't able to help much. "My hands are tied." said the EC.
- 9181 He was rude - when he found out I was pregnant he said, "oh great."
- 9182 We had our differences of opinion on whether I was doing the best I could.
- 9204 The people there thought I wanted to be on assistance, there is no need to be rude to anyone.
- 9212 She wouldn't listen or care about what client said.
- 9215 Changing EC's all the time is to disruptive - this was a lot of my problem in participating.
- 9253 She gave me a nervous stomach ache every time I went in.
- 9265 She was out to ruin my dreams.
- 9325 If I would have done things her way it would have been very helpful to me, I really liked her a lot
- 9330 He'd just hand me the plan and say if I wouldn't do it I'd go into conciliation
- 9352 Employment counselor went out of her way to help me.
- 9359 Employment counselor was kind and tried to work with her to accomplish her goals. Felt that she listened and tried to make things work for her even though many things couldn't at the time.
- 9392 They bounced me around a lot, I went through like four of them(employment counselors) in a couple of months for a while it got confusing.
- 9394 I was afraid to go in and talk to my employment counselor because I knew she was mad at me.

EXPERIENCE WITH SOCIAL WORKER

25aaf. Please rate your overall experience with the LCT/social worker: Explain:

- 9101 He made referrals to other agencies and got me connected to other things. They saw my problems as manageable- I could do it!
- 9102 Listened and was helpful with problem-solving
- 9113 She gave the support I needed.
- 9126 He did everything he said he would do. Never "passed the buck," he was a good guy.
- 9137 I don't have any M/H issues. We just talked about motivation.
- 9143 She supported client to just do her best and told her to just do her best and told her good things about herself, didn't put her down, not pushy.
- 9149 She saved my life...I thought I was losing my mind but I have PTSD and anxiety.
- 9151 She'd help me with paperwork and sent me on a few interviews. She also gave me interview clothes.
- 9158 Her E.C. was in the room during the meeting. She couldn't talk about her issues candidly.
- 9162 The outcome was surprising. I didn't realize how much pressure I was under The anxiety, depression & PTSD.
- 9165 Uncomfortable and unproductive.
- 9349 I really liked her. She saw me yesterday and told me I looked great and gave me a hug.
- 9356 It helped me a lot, helped me understand what I could do with my relationship with my son and ex-husband
- 9364 She treated me like I was a low-life compared to her
- 9369 She knew a lot about the SSI process
- 9394 That was a positive helpful experience, very different from employment counselor

CONCILIATION PROCESS

LEVEL 2: Did you attend the Level 2 staffing? If NO, why not? 11. Other:

- 9122 Never got the letter. Her address was hard to find (some of her mail goes to other wrong addresses).
- 9177 EC said she didn't have to be there.
- 9236 Didn't want lots of people to know my business.
- 9288 Depressed.
- 9296 Was told meeting was cancelled.
- 9317 Didn't care
- 9319 My drug use
- 9329 Didn't want to get chewed out by her supervisor, and I was depressed
- 9397 Funeral

LEVEL 3: Did you attend the Level 3 meeting? If not, why not? 11. Other:

- 9117 staffing date scheduled the same day as husband's surgery - I told her and she had it anyway.
- 9122 Didn't get the letter, it never got to her house.
- 9124 I called them before the meeting and said I got a job. But they still closed me NP. I closed in RC but they put NP on it.
- 9132 Mental health issues that make it too scary for me to go out.
- 9211 In jail at the time.
- 9212 Just had surgery.
- 9215 Tried to reschedule meeting with EC but she never responded.
- 9260 Got the letter the day of the meeting.
- 9267 Tried to reschedule before the meeting but she never called me back.
- 9290 Husband was working.
- 9309 It was scheduled way too early in the morning.
- 9355 I didn't want to have to explain myself to three people I didn't know.

40. How did you hear the outcome of the meeting? 5. Other:

Summary: Client requested it close: 6
Home visit by DWS: 4
Found out when tried to use card/by accident: 9

- 9103 I called eligibility and they told me
- 9111 I went in to tell her I had a job and needed child care. She told me my case was closed.
- 9130 After the \$100 was taken away, a group of three people, including employment counselor came to her house and told her that her cash was ending no matter what.
- 9161 During an appointment with the E.C., she pulled out a letter and said it was closing.
- 9190 Someone from DWS came by to tell her.
- 9196 3 DWS women came to home and told her case closed and she'd receive a letter.
- 9200 They came over to her house to tell her.
- 9232 Client called eligibility - they had closed her case.
- 9246 EC told her in August that she would be receiving 3 more months of assistance but 2 would be reduced to \$100.
- 9296 I went in to find out what was going on because no one had called me back. My case worker came out to the lobby and was screaming at me that they went ahead and had the meeting ; I would get a letter in the mail.
- 9323 Went to use card and there was no money
- 9334 I told her I as employed and they told me it automatically closed my cash
- 9350 I called in to check on an appointment, she told me it (AF) was closed
- 9351 I called them because there was no money on my card and they told me my cash was closed.
- 9394 At meeting DWS worker told her to find a job in a week or cash would be closed. Client couldn't find a job, assumed she was closed.

43. What could DWS have done differently to help you participate in your employment plan enough to keep your cash assistance?

Summary: Transportation help: 35
Nothing/No/Nothing more: 31
Listen to me more/be understanding: 43
It was up to me/Client's responsibility: 8
They did all they could: 6
I don't know: 3

- 9101 Change my caseworker to someone who actually understood what was going on.
- 9107 Job placements
- 9111 Communicate why it closed, be more understanding and helpful and less judgmental
- 9116 They could have stepped out of their own little world to help - I hate that place.

- 9117 Understand what I was going through. Everyone else at the office was great. It was just our worker that was uncooperative.
- 9118 No one can help me with my laziness but me
- 9121 They could have helped me with high school diploma help and child care.
- 9122 Better communication overall between met employment counselor
- 9132 Help me get a job. Help me fix my vehicle so I could get around.
- 9134 More positive. Not looked for negative. She made mistakes on dates and said I missed meetings with you.
- 9137 She was so nice. She should have threatened me more!! Child care.
- 9143 Do a home visit. Really sit and talk. Make appointment times for client and call her to tell her (not to leave it up to her to make all arrangements).
- 9144 Switched employment counselor. Listened to me more closely, was vulnerable and needed help. Not tell me I'm a bad person because I used drugs. I'm a good person because I got OFF drugs.
- 9145 Counseling to help through depression.
- 9152 Nothing, really. They have rules about which schools are considered valid to go to, so maybe they could have changed this rule.
- 9155 Kick her off a lot sooner - She would have looked for a job a lot sooner.
- 9167 Take into consideration how many other things are going on for people. Be realistic - don't make things so hard for people.
- 9173 If she would've told me about the LCT that might've helped. Acted like she had time for me. If I could've felt comfortable with her.
- 9175 Realistic hours of WEAT site and job search. Consideration of my transportation issues.
- 9176 Really worked with me, advocate, support me. They weren't there to help - they just had to get something down on the plan.
- 9185 Be more sympathetic to what my problems were. Help me overcome transportation barriers earlier in process.
- 9191 Explain things to me.
- 9207 Notify me sooner of upcoming meetings.
- 9215 Listen to me more. Let people be more involved with the development of their employment plan.
- 9218 Understand her situation better - help her get the real problems solved.
- 9235 Keep in contact with me - return my phone calls.
- 9251 They could have tried to understand what was going on, have a little faith in people.
- 9258 Be more open to what I was trying to accomplish. Understand my situation.
- 9271 Let me know what I was supposed to participate in! Maybe I could have done it if I knew what they wanted.
- 9272 Most of it was my fault so they couldn't really do anything.
- 9279 I didn't have transportation - was at the end of a high-risk pregnancy and they didn't understand that.
- 9291 Additional job search guidance. Return phone calls. Really hard to get a hold of her. Been more available.
- 9298 Nothing - there weren't anymore places to look for work.
- 9326 Not lost my paperwork, job logs. Let me do CNA while on assistance.
- 9327 Could have actually made a realistic plan, something I could be successful at. Less job search hrs.
- 9331 Encouragement, helping me feel good about getting out there and pursuing a job. They just track the job log and throw it in a book. If they don't care why should I?
- 9351 Let me stay in school so I can get a good job.
- 9352 They did all they could for me considering my mental state.
- 9353 My employment counselor could have communicated better with me and let me do a job site work program.
- 9354 My employment counselor could have given me the information that I needed. She could have returned my phone calls and actually allow me to have contact with her.
- 9361 "The program is designed to keep you in poverty. You can't do anything, except work, to get out of it."
- 9366 Give me a plan that I can actually do, help me with the barriers that are really issues
- 9374 Recognize the S.A. issues and help me get the help I need. My "addict" couldn't let me tell her but if she would have known I would have gotten help
- 9389 Helped more with school. Let me attend the school I found. It was free except books.

44. What could you have done differently to participate in your employment plan enough to keep your cash assistance?

Summary: Nothing: 16
 Nothing different/Did all I could: 33
 Did all I could: 17

Participated/Done what they said/Followed plan: 28

- 9101 I could have been a little more flexible and understanding but I tried really hard.
9102 Nothing. I was really depressed - they knew that. I was in treatment.
9111 Controlled my temper
9112 I let my emotions get to me too. If I could've spoke to the therapist freely without fear of repercussion to get to the source of my alcohol and drug problem.
9114 Stayed drug-free.
9118 Not be so lazy
9129 Been more compliant, less attitude.
9134 Jumped through more hoops. Didn't have the energy at that time. I really didn't.
9137 Find a job! Quit dragging my feet.
9139 Not quit my job, but there was sexual harassment.
9140 Put my son in daycare at six weeks, get a full-time job.
9145 Seek counseling on own.
9158 I could have communicated more with them.
9159 Went to the meetings.
9167 Contacted ORS sooner.
9168 I was doing all I could when it closed.
9171 I could have called her more often - but because of the way she treated me I never wanted to call her.
9177 Talked to EC about child care and transportation problems.
9189 Sent in paperwork for job search. Have better attitude toward worker and system.
9191 Talked to the counselor more.
9206 Tried harder to get transportation.
9216 I really feel like it wasn't me who was the problem. My EC never returned my phone call and wouldn't show up for meetings.
9244 Learned the bus route.
9264 Gone out of my way more to met with the social worker.
9270 Be more open and honest instead of being in denial about everything.
9276 Nothing - drop my dream of finishing my education.
9296 What I should have done is kept every little scrap of paper from them in a file so I could make copies of them.
9304 Stop using drugs. Keep my appointments.
9310 I could have kept DWS more informed about what I was doing.
9316 Nothing, I basically achieved everything I needed to achieve.
9325 I could have taken it more seriously, been more responsible, follow the plan we had agreed upon
9331 Given some more effort to it, I got to point it was ridiculous and I gave up.
9334 Worked with her more, I would have if she was nicer
9345 I could have tried harder to be where I needed to in the mornings.
9354 I could have tried to be more consistent in returning my job logs.
9373 I did all I could do with my lack of transportation.
9374 I could have told them the truth about what was going on
9382 Tried harder to make day care arrangement. Worked things out with my mom to use her car for job search.
9397 I probably could have just walked, but it's a long walk when you are pregnant

45. What do you think is the primary reason your cash assistance closed non-participation? 5. Other:

Summary: Mistake: 4
Don't know: 3
Didn't need it: 6

- 9107 I was told my time was up
9121 They wanted to close me 4 months before my 36 were up so they could save the last ones for a "rainy day."
9122 Poor communication between me & counselor. I didn't feel like he would have understood me. We got along, but I assumed he wouldn't understand my issues.
9142 I really don't know.
9157 Legal custody issues.

- 9215 Someone else had too much control over my life - too much "telling me what to do."
- 9226 Because I moved back in with my relatives and didn't need it anymore.
- 9239 Preferred to continue cosmetology school and they don't support that.
- 9258 I had to find my own resources to help myself become self-sufficient. DWS program would have me stay in a rut my whole life.
- 9276 I didn't want to drop my schooling to work at McDonald's.
- 9278 They don't support 4 year school programs.
- 9315 I couldn't get a hold of my EC for months and didn't even know he had stopped working there.
- 9324 I Didn't agree with the CNA on my plan
- 9376 They said I didn't get a job within the time they said.

DWS ACCESSIBILITY

3. Did you experience cultural/ethnic challenges in working with DWS? 3a. List challenges:

- 9108 discrimination against Hispanics
- 9143 Didn't feel comfortable telling employment counselor "cultural" problems at work site. Was afraid of how employment counselor would respond.
- 9189 Probably would have treated me better if I was part of a minority group - didn't help me because I am white.
- 9269 They treated me like a drugy - I have long hair.
- 9275 My grandpa died - funeral for Indians last a long time - she didn't understand the need for me to go.
- 9279 They are prejudice because the kids are Hispanic - against me because we aren't married.

IMPACT OF CASE CLOSURE

9. Since your cash closed are there any other areas or aspects of your life that we haven't discuss that have gotten better? 9a. IF YES, what else has gotten better?

- 9102 I've gotten a job now - it gets me out of the house and helps with my depression
- 9104 I'm in school now
- 9121 My relationship with fiancé, and he finally got a job.
- 9122 I didn't have the stigma of being on cash assistance anymore.
- 9127 No more anti-depressants
- 9132 Moving out of Dad's house.
- 9140 Staying with my family.
- 9144 Relationship with kids because don't have all the running around to meet with people and I got off drugs.
- 9155 Less stress. DWS doesn't bother her anymore.
- 9165 Relationship with God - more religious.
- 9168 Personal relationship.
- 9171 Less stress due to not seeing my EC anymore.
- 9211 I'm kinda glad I got busted for drugs. It's a hard live that I don't wanna live.
- 9224 I have a job now, I am happy about that.
- 9273 Engagement.
- 9276 I don't have to deal with them.
- 9278 Not having to deal with hassles and requirements of department.
- 9283 gotten closer emotionally with fiancé and son.
- 9294 Attitude is better. Not working with state.
- 9299 More independent.
- 9302 Had the support of family - moved in with them.
- 9303 Relief of not dealing with DWS anymore.
- 9304 Off drugs. My spiritual well-being is better.
- 9317 Everything-life in general, sober
- 9335 Social life, works with public. In rehab now for drugs and alcohol
- 9343 All my relationships. Dating!
- 9344 My self confidence has gone up. Have money to finish school.

9136 Panic attacks. PTSD. Anxiety. Insomnia. Depression. Social anxiety.
9209 Bi-polar. Anxiety disorder. PTSD.
9238 Alcoholic.
9271 PTSD and ADD, panic disorders, separation from baby, physical abuse, drug addict - meth for 8 years.
9312 Severe depression, PTSD, Anxiety, ADD/ADHD
9361 Depression, Anxiety, PTSD, ADHD, OCD

6. Do you currently have any specific health problems? 6a. If YES, please describe:

9103 I fell down at the homeless shelter in March - fractured elbow - had surgery, pins, it's still in a cast
9111 Brain injury 6 years ago - memory problems
9130 Adison's: Eats away at kidneys, organs, etc. Chronic disease.
9144 Scoliosis. Migraines.
9171 Lupus. Fibromyalgia. Seizures and numbness in arms/legs. Arthritis.
9176 Respiratory/lung disease. Digestive problems.
9215 Overweight.
9224 Thyroid problem.
9233 Diabetes.
9292 Hepatitis C (I didn't finish treatment). Sleep apnea. Fatigue . Being out of work. Back problems. Neck problems.
9309 Dental problems - taking penicillin and Lortabs.
9310 Metal rods in back - degenerative bone and disk disease.
9332 Epilepsy, overweight
9333 Emphysema
9342 MS
9345 Hep. B, Pre-cancer in throat
9377 Degenerative disc disease.
9383 Back problems, difficult to sit for a long time.

U. SELF REPORTED BARRIERS

24. Any other barriers not listed that impact your ability to work: Other? Please explain:

School: 7

9124 Obese. Because of weight.
9133 No moral support. "It's me against the world."
9143 Unsupportive family.
9182 Scared to go look for work. Want to go out and care for daughter, he just got back from DCFS.
9223 Not used to working - no motivation to work since never really have. Not want to be away from daughter.
9250 In school.
9258 Schooling.
9270 I fear I'll be a workaholic again and not be there for my baby.
9271 Domestic violence
9278 In intensive outpatient program full time now and need to finish that first and DCFS activities.
9321 Low self-confidence
9326 Teeth, my teeth are chipped. It stops me from getting a job because I won't smile at interviews, low self-esteem.
9399 Incarceration