Training and Mentors Are Key to it All

Training:

1. **Initial Training:** Staff new to SSIS:

   ❖ Pre-training
     ➢ Terminology
     ➢ Big picture
     ➢ Skills inventory
     ➢ Workflow

   ❖ Lab hands-on training
     ➢ Local or state
     ➢ Resource notebook

   ❖ Post-training
     ➢ How we do things in Wadena County

2. **Initial Training**: Staff transferring from another county:

   ❖ Review of their knowledge base

   ❖ Post-training
     ➢ How we do things in Wadena County

3. **New Releases:**

   ❖ Options:
     ➢ In-house lab
     ➢ Demo with use of LCD projector
     ➢ Handouts
     ➢ Update resource notebook

4. **Updates & Refreshers:**

   ❖ Presentation at unit meetings
      ➢ Videotaped so those absent can view later

   ❖ Problem areas are noted based on
      ➢ Feedback from Clearing staff
      ➢ Questions
      ➢ Errors
      ➢ Claims issues

5. **Miscellaneous**:

   ❖ Before training, I glean what is needed for which staff

   ❖ Training is presented in the order of usage, so some staff can be excused for part of it

   ❖ Use a variety of methods, such as:
      ➢ Hands-on in a lab setting
      ➢ Secondary mentor floats as helper in lab
      ➢ Demo
      ➢ Handouts
      ➢ One-on-one

   ❖ For new staff, I prefer to wait until they have a handle on case management and workflow before SSIS training

   ❖ Accommodations are sometimes made to allow new workers to report time on paper initially and have someone do data entry to avoid losing revenue

Selecting a Mentor:

1. **Program Knowledge**
   - ➤ Having the big picture makes it easier to know what effect one area will have on another
   - ➤ Can explain better to workers <u>why</u> things are done in a certain way
   - ➤ Can explain what data means and how it is used
   - ➤ Easier to troubleshoot

2. **Technical Skills**
   - ➤ Quicker navigation
   - ➤ Efficiency
   - ➤ Troubleshooting hardware/software issues vs. user issues

3. **Problem Solving Skills**
   - ➤ Methodical
   - ➤ Consider consequences of an action

4. **Communication Skills**
   - ➤ Ability to explain things in a way workers understand
   - ➤ Keep things simple
   - ➤ Present information in a variety of ways for different learning styles

5. **Decision Making**
   - ➤ Confidence in making decisions on their own
   - ➤ Administration gives mentor authority to make decisions as appropriate
   - ➤ Understanding of when administration should be consulted

6. **Acknowledges Workers as a Priority**
   - ➤ Willing to give precedence to workers who need assistance
   - ➤ Ability to multi-task
   - ➤ Can set priorities between worker requests, and with their own duties

7. **Respected by Workers**
   - ➤ Workers trust what they are saying
   - ➤ Workers take direction from the mentor

8. **People Skills**
   - Does not make workers feel foolish for needing assistance or making mistakes
   - Can sympathize with workers without trashing SSIS

9. **Relationship with State Staff**
   - Gets to know state staff and who they can call on for various needs
   - Serve on committees if the opportunity presents itself
   - Attends mentor meetings

10. **Foresight**
    - Plan ahead for new versions and updates
    - Ability to know how releases will affect agency operations and procedures
    - Can prepare staff for change

11. **Member of Services Unit**
    - Receives more program information
    - Takes part in staff meetings
    - More contact with primary users
    - Our structure gives even greater incentive to ensure accuracy of data because the mentor is also responsible for reports, claims, and payments

12. **Physical Location**
    - Office is located near the social worker's offices for easy accessibility

13. **Flexibility with Schedule**
    - If it assists the mentor, allow them flexibility with their work schedule if other duties are assigned

14. **Longevity**
    - Though not possible to guarantee, it is beneficial if a mentor is someone who expects to be employed at the agency for at least a few years.