CHAPTER 1
FACING THE CHALLENGES OF MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER OUTLINE

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Summary
What do we mean when we talk about human service organizations and the ways in which they should be managed? An organization can be any group of people—large or small—working together toward common goals. In a human service organization, however, these goals are always focused on improving the lives of the people and communities being served. Managers and direct service providers work toward the enhancement of human development in many ways and many settings, but their shared focus on human development brings with it a common outlook, a mutual set of problems, and the need for an approach to management that may differ from the business models in the profit-making environment.

TYPES OF HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES

Human services are most often delivered in the context of the human service agency. An agency is a human service organization that is designed specifically to provide services to the community. Examples of human service agencies include (a) community agencies that provide a variety of service to meet the needs of people who live within a specified geographic area; (b) agencies that focus on particular issues or problem areas, such as mental health concerns, substance abuse, or developmental disabilities; (c) population-oriented agencies that meet the service and advocacy needs of a particular cultural group, age group, or gender; (d) career, employment, or rehabilitation agencies that help individuals gain skills and opportunities for positive career growth and economic security; and (e) advocacy organizations that work on behalf of populations that are subject to marginalization and prejudice. Educational institutions are not normally called agencies, but they too provide human services to students, families, and communities.

Although human service organizations are commonly described in terms of the kinds of help they provide and the populations they serve, they can also be differentiated on the basis of size. Human service organizations, all of which share a goal of life enhancement, can vary tremendously, from the tiny storefront agency, to the multifaceted community organization, to the statewide public service department. Human service agencies can also be categorized in terms of whether they are non-profit agencies, for-profit organizations, or governmental entities. Most of the examples used in this book are drawn from non-profit organizations, given that they have long played a central role in the human service world. A non-profit or not-for-profit organization is required to use its revenues for the purpose of carrying out its mission and cannot distribute profits to owners or shareholders. A for-profit organization may also have a mission that is focused on service, but its investors expect the revenue that is earned to yield a surplus that can be distributed as profit. A governmental entity, or public agency, can also be involved in the provision of human services but it does so as an official part of a local, state, or federal government.

The differentiations among human service agencies provide important descriptors, but it is important to be aware of how fluid these differentiations can be. Because human service agencies have people’s needs as their first priority, they may change over time as their consumers’ needs change. And because human needs do not always divide neatly into categories, an agency will often find it important to broaden programs and implement new helping strategies.
The Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) provides an excellent example of a community-oriented organization in that it addresses a very clearly delineated neighborhood, but the primary focus of the HCZ has always been children and the search for ways to facilitate their success. In the attempt to help children, the HCZ has steadily moved in the direction of providing services to families and in fact to all members of the community.

For children to do well, their families have to do well. And for families to do well, their community must do well. That is why HCZ works to strengthen families as well as empowering them to have a positive impact on their children’s development. (Harlem Children’s Zone, 2009).

Aunt Martha’s Youth Service Center, near Chicago, also exemplifies growth and change in response to community needs. Aunt Martha’s began as a small drop-in center designed to give young people a welcoming environment for sharing their thoughts and addressing their problems. Over the years, the agency’s mission, to be a caring community resource for children, youth, and families, has remained intact, but the services have become far more complex.

As was true of the Harlem Children’s Zone, the need to enhance the health of families and communities came to the fore. By 2010, Aunt Martha’s operated a network of community health centers and had completed its 1,000,000th patient visit (Aunt Martha’s Youth Service Center, 2010). What is particularly noteworthy about this organization is its growth from the category of “tiny storefront agency” to the category of large, multifaceted community organization.

Many human service agencies cross categories. Mental health programs that work with recovering patients provide direct mental health services but also carry out education and advocacy. Advocacy organizations created to meet the needs of a particular population expand to deal with issues related to multiple forms of discrimination. Even the distinctions among non-profit, for-profit, and governmental entities have become less clear as agencies work in collaborative networks and as boundaries between public and private financing have begun to blur (Gibelman & Furman, 2008).

THE NEED FOR MANAGERIAL COMPETENCY

Within a human service agency, we often find a number of programs. A program is on a smaller scale than a human service agency or institution and might be developed within a larger agency in order to meet specific needs. For instance, a mental health center might have a special program for families of children with mental illness or an agency providing employment services might have a special program for people who have been unemployed for a long period of time.

Especially at the program level, management becomes a major concern not just for agency directors and supervisors but also for the people who see themselves primarily as professional service providers. Human service professionals used to hesitate at the thought of being managers, assuming that they would be cut off from the lifeblood of day-to-day work with clients. Unfortunately, this stereotype led many human service providers to avoid becoming competent in management.
for fear that they might somehow be turning their backs on their clients or losing their professional identification as helpers. Now, more and more professional helpers have come to recognize the importance of having management skills, even if they have no plan to change their job titles or career goals.

Management can be defined rather simply as the process of (a) making a plan to achieve some end, (b) organizing the people and resources needed to carry out the plan, (c) encouraging the helping workers who will be asked to perform the component tasks, (d) evaluating the results, and then (e) revising plans based on this evaluation. This process can be shared by managers and by people who currently and essentially identify themselves as human service professionals.

Today most people recognize that awareness of managerial functions is important in any human service organization. Many professionals find themselves in supervisory roles because such positions in human service agencies and institutions are normally filled by people with training in the helping professions. Even professionals who spend all their time in direct service delivery know that they should understand how their organizations work so that they can implement new ideas, help improve operations, and influence others to make needed changes.

Everyday incidents tend to remind professional helpers that they must learn how to manage people, programs, and resources, if only to safeguard the humanistic, people-centered orientation that should permeate human services. Many human service workers are being forced to choose either to participate actively in the administration of their own programs or to leave leadership in the hands of others who may have little understanding of the helping process. Many find that their choice is to learn to manage their own programs or lose them altogether.

The following incidents—all typical of the kinds of conflicts professional helpers face every day—speak for themselves.

Keith Michaels

As soon as he had earned his master’s degree, Keith Michaels decided to put all his time and energy into the creation of a center that would serve the youth of his community. Now in the fifth year of its existence, that center has grown from a storefront office in which Keith saw a few walk-in clients into a major community center, complete with recreational facilities, a peer counseling project, an ongoing consultation program, a busy staff of individual and group counselors, and a major role in the local youth advocacy movement. Most of the clients, counselors, and community members involved with the center are convinced that the explanation for this growth lies in the fact that the staff has always been close to the community’s young people and responsive to their needs. They feel that Keith, with the help of the energetic staff he has recruited, can realize a dream they all share, and they want his promise that he will stay with the center as director.

Keith is hesitant, for the agency no longer “runs itself” the way it used to. There is a need to departmentalize, to organize staff hiring and training, to lay out appropriate plans for further change. Keith is afraid to place the management of the center solely in the hands of a professional administrator because he fears that the community responsiveness that has been a hallmark of the program might be lost. He wants to continue to have an effect on the center’s future, but he knows that he will have to learn how to plan, organize, and budget on a larger scale.
Shirley Lane
Shirley Lane has spent several years working in a community agency for developmentally disabled adults. She has developed an approach for working with her clients that she has found highly effective and knows that her approach might be helpful to others. In fact, it would provide a major innovation in the field if research showed it to be as effective as she thinks it is.

Because her approach is so promising, Shirley has consistently been encouraged to submit a proposal for federal funding. Finally, her proposed project is being funded; she will now have the chance to implement a training and research project that can make a significant contribution to the field. She knows, however, that if the project is to be successful, she must develop effectiveness in planning projects, supervising the trainees who will help carry out the project, maintaining the budget, and evaluating the results of interventions. She can meet this challenge only if she can successfully carry out the required managerial functions.

Bill Okita
As the harried director of a small community mental health project, Bill Okita never has enough time. He spends half his time in direct service, working with individuals and groups, and this is an aspect of his job that he would not want to give up. He finds his work with clients to be a positive part of his workday; it is what keeps him going and makes all his efforts worthwhile.

Bill has a small staff of professional service providers, all of whom are highly competent. Perhaps this high level of competence accounts for the dramatic rise in the number of clients. The project now has a waiting list for appointments, which conflicts with Bill’s belief that counseling should be readily accessible for community members. Yet the agency’s funding does not allow Bill enough financial resources to hire additional counselors. He has to make do with the present staff members, but they are all stretched too thin as professionals.

Bill has just been approached by a local citizens’ organization whose members are interested in serving as unpaid volunteer counselors at the center. If they could participate in this way, Bill’s time problems would be solved. He would finally have enough personnel available to provide the immediate service that he thinks counselees should have. With the pressure off, he could still devote some of his time to direct services instead of having to spend all his time dealing with pressing administrative problems and fund-raising.

Bill has no doubt that these volunteers could do an effective job of serving clients if he provided training and supervision. It is his own skill in supervising and coordinating their efforts that he questions. In fact, he recently turned down the opportunity to have doctoral-level psychology students complete internships at the center because he was not sure that he could handle their needs. Now, however, the situation is desperate. He needs the help of these volunteers, but he must be able to train, supervise, and coordinate them. If he performs his managerial functions more effectively, he can spend less time on them.

Lillian Sanchez
Lillian Sanchez began her career as an elementary school teacher. She spent many years working with young children and found the work fantastically rewarding. Yet, when she received training as a counselor, she wanted the chance to experience that side of helping, too. She accepted a position as a high school counselor because her city did not employ school counselors at any other level.
That work, too, has been fulfilling. But Lillian has always wished that she could combine the rewards of working with young children with those of working as a counselor. She feels that elementary school is the place where effective counselors should be working, for only at that level might there be a chance to prevent the personal and educational problems her high school clients all seem to be facing.

Suddenly, Lillian has the opportunity of a lifetime. A new elementary school is being built in her area, and the potential principal, a longtime professional colleague, has asked her to join the staff as the district’s first elementary school counselor. She will build her own program in the direction she thinks best and perhaps have the chance to consult with other schools in the development of additional programs. Lillian has no doubt that this position would be a dream come true. She has always wanted to counsel at the elementary school level, and now she can create a truly innovative program based on the concept of prevention.

Still, she hesitates. She knows she can counsel the children effectively, but she does not know whether she can build a program where none existed before. She will need to learn how to plan effectively, how to provide leadership for teachers and parents, how to consult beneficially with other counselors, and how to evaluate her efforts. The only way she can have the opportunity to practice her child-counseling skills is to develop administrative skills at the same time.

David Williams
David Williams is one of a group of human service workers conducting a preventive program under the auspices of a child and family service center. In recent years, the financial situation of the center has changed. The agency is being forced to cut back services in some areas to maintain adequate funding for other programs.

David and his colleagues have been called into the executive director’s office and told that, as much as she appreciates their fine work, their program might be eliminated within the next year or two. The director recognizes that the preventive program is very popular in the community; calls have been coming in constantly from schools, churches, and recreational centers to request assistance from it. Although she knows that the program is doing something right, she does not know just what it is. She does not know how important it is in comparison with the functions being performed by workers providing direct, clinical services to troubled families.

David and his colleagues now have a real challenge before them. They know that they are helping the community; the informal feedback they have been receiving from young people, parents, and community agencies tells them that. They also know that right now they have no way of proving it, no way of showing that the prevention program is accomplishing something important. They have a short time in which to prove themselves, and they know that their only chance is to plan their program on the basis of goals that the administration agrees are important, to coordinate their efforts with those of other programs, and to develop an accurate evaluation method. If they are going to survive, they need to learn how to carry out these tasks. In short, they need to be able to manage.

Keith Michaels, Shirley Lane, Bill Okita, Lillian Sanchez, and David Williams are all typical human service professionals. They are not necessarily interested in changing their professional identities or in moving up an administrative ladder, but they are interested in improving and enhancing their human service delivery systems. It could be argued that they should not make the professional move they are contemplating. Perhaps Keith should turn over the management of his counseling
center to someone whose original training was in business administration. Possibly Lillian should stay at the high school level, where she can spend all her time on direct service, and wait until the program is fully established by someone else before moving into an elementary school situation. Conceivably, David and his fellow human service workers should seek employment at an agency where preventive programs are already appreciated and where they would have no pressure to prove themselves or to sell their program.

If they do make these decisions, however, they should make them freely, based on their evaluation of all the possible options and their values, priorities, and professional judgment. They should not be in the position of having to choose inaction just because they lack the skills needed to bring about change either in their careers or in their programs. This book is intended to provide human service workers and students with basic management knowledge that may help them in their current jobs or prepare them to take on managerial work. Human service organizations will be presented as complex, purposeful organizations with the potential of bettering social conditions and enriching the lives of employees, clients, and community members.

THE PURPOSES OF HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS

Human service programs deal with the personal and social development of individuals, families, and communities. Sometimes they enhance this development through the provision of direct services such as education, training, counseling, therapy, or casework. Often they work indirectly, through consultation, advocacy, referral, information dissemination, community development, or social action. The ultimate purpose of these programs, regardless of the methods used, is to enhance the well-being of clients or consumers. In one study addressing excellence in human service organizations (HSOs), Harvey (1998) found that purpose was the dimension of excellence that was cited most frequently by survey respondents. According to Harvey, “having a very clear sense of purpose, direction, mission, or vision and a focus on its accomplishments is necessary to achieve excellence in an HSO” (p. 37).

Taylor and Felten (1993) have defined an organization’s purpose as the “business mission of the system and its philosophy of human values” (p. 39). They see an organization as having four interactive and interdependent elements. First, an organization is a transforming agency, which produces outcomes of value. In the case of human service organizations, people (clients or customers) are typically transformed, from individuals, groups, families, or communities with needs or problems to those with needs met or problems ameliorated. Second, an organization is an economic agency, which either produces a profit or, in the case of governmental or not-for-profit agencies, maintains a balanced budget or surplus. Third, an organization is a mini-society, with norms and a culture that guide members’ behavior and indirectly impact organizational effectiveness. Finally, an organization is a collection of individuals, who all come with unique values, beliefs, needs, motivational profiles, expectations, and skills.

The first two elements, concerning performance and fiscal health, comprise an organization’s mission: its distinct competencies and reason for existence. The second two elements address organizational norms and member quality of working
life and shape the organization’s philosophy and values. Purpose, then, is the combination of mission and values: it tells its employees, clients, community, and larger environment why it exists, what it will focus on, and how it intends to treat its staff, clients, and community. Purpose in this sense, when fully articulated and regularly enacted, provides direction, energy, and vision for the organization’s employees, who are engaged in a cooperative endeavor to enhance individual and community well-being in some way.

Managers, as leaders of an organization and stewards of its resources, must always maintain focus on purpose, designing systems and behaving in ways consistent with it. Management is a set of systems and processes designed to help employees accomplish organizational and individual goals. In the demanding day-to-day life of a manager, it is important to resist the temptation to focus only on procedure or management needs rather than on organizational results. Management processes and leadership are both essential and should be jointly well executed, and this is a manager’s contribution to the success of the organization.

FUNCTIONS OF HUMAN SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Across the categories of human service agencies and programs, the focus should always stay on the organization’s ability to bring positive change to individuals and communities. All types of human service programs also share the need to carry out effectively the major components of management. Whether programs provide direct or indirect services and whether they are housed in public or private agencies, they tend to share similar managerial functions. The management of human service programs includes the following major components:

- **Planning**: Developing visions for the future, developing strategy, setting goals and objectives for attaining them, and selecting program models
- **Designing**: Structuring and coordinating the work that needs to be done to carry out plans
- **Developing human resources**: Mobilizing the people needed to make the program work and taking steps to enhance their productivity
- **Supervising**: Enhancing the skills and motivation of service providers
- **Managing finances**: Planning the use of financial resources for reaching goals and controlling expenditures
- **Monitoring**: Tracking progress on program objectives and activities
- **Evaluating**: Comparing program accomplishments with the standards set at the planning stages; using the results as the basis for change

The force that binds together and energizes these processes is leadership: working with employees to articulate a vision, manage the external environment, oversee the design of organizational processes, link elements of the system together, create a supportive organizational culture, and manage change. This model is represented in Figure 1.1.

Human service professionals who know how to perform these functions can play important roles in managing their programs. They can make plans to achieve human service goals, organize the people and resources needed to carry out the plans, encourage and assist individuals delivering services, and evaluate the results.
The planning process in human service settings begins with the assessment of community needs and visions of a desired future state, from a perspective that reflects the agency’s purpose (mission and values). Planners use a variety of methods to determine what problems and opportunities exist within a given population and, just as important, what community members see as their most pressing priorities. If currently offered services are also analyzed, planners can recognize gaps in the human service system.

This assessment of needs and the identification of community strengths or assets provide the basis for selecting the potential goals of the agency or program. Community members, potential consumers, and service providers, as well as policy makers, must all be involved in setting service goals. Actual programs, or collections of related activities, can be developed on the basis of these goals. Instead of assuming that a given activity should form the heart of a human service program, planners examine alternate methods for achieving the objectives that have been set. Only then can specific plans for service implementation be laid.
DESIGNING THE PROGRAM AND ORGANIZATION

If the planning function helps human service workers determine what should be accomplished, the designing function helps them carry out the plan. Designing is done at three levels: the organization as a whole, the program, and individual jobs. There are two aspects of design. First, structure is the element traditionally associated with the “organizing” function: what functions are in the various units and how the chain of command is set up. Second, design includes organizational processes such as communication and decision-making mechanisms. These are not apparent on the organization chart but are crucial to effective functioning.

Furthermore, design is both a noun and a verb. As a noun, it describes structure and processes; as a verb, it is the process for creating the organization—deciding what needs to be done and determining the best structures and processes. Organization design flows from the result of the planning phase: mission, goals, objectives, and overall strategies.

A design, or, as is more often the case, a redesign, of the organization results in the structure and processes that allow all people and units involved to understand what part they are to play in the organization, how ongoing communication and coordination of effort are to occur, and what the lines of authority and responsibility are expected to be.

Within these parameters, the types of structure possible vary tremendously, depending on the goals, needs, resources, size, and environment of the organization. They also vary in accordance with the values, philosophy, and theoretical approaches of the designers. These will be discussed in Chapter 4.

DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES

An organization’s plans and design are put into operation by people: human service programs are labor-intensive. A major part of each budget goes toward salaries and benefits for service deliverers and support personnel. The success of services depends on the manager’s ability to mobilize valuable human resources so that the immediate and long-term needs of the organization and its clients are met. Especially in times of retrenchment, when financial resources dwindle, human service managers must plan carefully both to bring needed people into the organization and to enhance their development once they have begun to provide services.

The development of human resources involves using the unique contributions that all of the workers of the human service enterprise can make. Special attention needs to be paid to the knowledge and skills that women and people of color bring to the organization (Asamoah, 1995; Bailey, 1995; Healy, Havens, & Pine, 1995). Feminist and transcultural perspectives, as represented by a diverse workforce, enhance the capabilities of human service programs to provide relevant and compatible services to diverse client populations.

Careful recruitment, selection, training, and appraisal processes should be used for both paid employees and volunteers. Hiring practices normally take into account the abilities, experiences, and characteristics of potential human service workers, but managers sometimes forget to consider the organization’s unique needs. Job responsibilities and priorities should be defined precisely even before vacancies are advertised.
This analysis should then form the basis for screening applicants and for hiring those candidates whose qualities best fit the actual jobs to be performed. After hiring, the new employee should be fully oriented to the agency in areas ranging from the governance structure and policies and procedures to agency history and organizational culture.

The environment and program activities of human service organizations change so rapidly that ongoing development of staff is essential. The function, formerly known as “personnel and training,” has recently been reconceptualized as “strategic human resource management,” reflecting the principle that training and development should be guided by the key strategies, priorities, and programmatic needs of the agency. When an agency implements a new program or adopts improved service delivery methods, staff will need appropriate training. As will be discussed later, treating agencies as learning organizations (Senge, 1990) and encouraging lifelong learning on the part of staff are becoming increasingly common principles of staff and organization development. Beginning and advanced training in computer usage will become more necessary as agencies increasingly tap the potentials of the Internet, database management, and other software.

Once people have been hired, performance appraisals should occur regularly. They should be based on objective analyses of the tasks and behaviors that lead to successful job performance. Fair, objective performance appraisals serve dual purposes. They can be used for evaluating individuals and also for identifying areas of needed development in the individual or in the organization. Performance appraisals can point the way toward new behaviors that should be learned and practiced, allowing services to keep pace with client needs.

One way to expand an agency’s human resources is to encourage volunteer participation. This approach works as long as recruitment and assignment of volunteer service providers are planned as carefully as is the hiring of professional employees. Volunteers can add significantly to a program’s thrust because they provide fresh ideas and strong links to their communities. Community members’ participation increases the agency’s service delivery capacity, but only if these contributions are respected as highly as those of paid personnel.

**SUPERVISING**

Supervision involves helping a worker maximize his or her effectiveness in service delivery by providing support and encouragement, helping build skills and competencies, and overseeing the supervisee’s work. The nature of the supervisory relationship depends on the supervisor’s leadership style, the supervisee’s motivation, and the organization’s needs. In essence, however, the supervisor’s primary task is to ensure that each supervisee (a) views his or her own work as a key component in helping the organization achieve its goals; (b) develops the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for carrying out this work; and (c) remains motivated toward growth.

The supervisor encourages the development of professional excellence in his or her supervisees in the roles of clinical supervisor and educator. In fulfilling all of the functions of the supervisory role, the human service manager provides, as a leader, emotional and psychological support to his or her staff as a means of
preventing worker burnout and enhancing motivation and job satisfaction. Educational supervision, in addition, addresses workers’ needs for professional growth and development in the provision of job-related services designed to improve client outcomes (Shulman, 1993).

The human service supervisor also fulfills a management, or administrative, function. As such, the supervisor must possess knowledge and skills relevant to the day-to-day direction and control of unit operations—for example, assigning and delegating work, coordinating workers’ activities, planning unit goals and objectives, and so on. In addition, the supervisor must have a keen awareness of the agency’s broader organizational and administrative concerns, including strategic and tactical planning, structure, staffing, fund-raising, budgeting, and program evaluation.

**MANAGING FINANCES**

Human service professionals can understand their own programs only if they know how they are budgeted. When they are directing specially funded projects, full-time service providers control the allocation of limited financial resources. Even when their programs make up only parts of total agency structures, human service workers should try to gain access to and understand the financial reports that affect them.

The process of setting and controlling the budget is closely related to planning and evaluation. In fact, a budget is fundamentally a program in fiscal terms. The more closely related the budget is to goals of people who hold a stake in the agency’s success, the more effectively it is likely to work.

A budget must be seen as the concrete documentation of the planning process, bringing ideals into reality. An annual budget does not have to be based simply on a slight increment over the previous year’s figures. Instead, it can be based on a recognition of program goals and the costs of activities expected to attain those goals. For instance, zero-based budgeting requires that each set of activities be justified in its entirety before resources are allocated. Program budgeting places accountability on programs by allocating resources for the attainment of specific objectives rather than simply to “line items” such as personnel costs or supplies.

Budget making is thus a decision-making process through which allocations are made to one service rather than another. If it is to be closely related to the program development process, human service providers should be involved. At the very least, they need to be aware of how the planning process has been translated into financial terms.

Even when traditional line item budgets are used, planners can ensure that the budget reflects program priorities by following careful procedures for allocating resources to specific activities. The objectives that have been set as part of the initial plan can be analyzed in terms of the activities that need to be performed before the objectives have been met. Each activity can then be broken down in terms of time span, personnel costs, and non-personnel costs until a total cost for the activity has been determined. The costs for these activities can be either budgeted according to program or placed in the context of a line item budget. In either case, the budget that finally sees the light of day is one that has been derived not from assumptions about what items should always be included in a budget but from analyses of program goals and priorities.
Once an effective annual budget is in place, ongoing financial reports help determine whether expenditures and income are as expected or whether significant deviations from what was planned have developed. The human service worker who understands the budget does not need to give it a great deal of attention after the initial stages. Managers, of course, need to pay attention to money matters when there are variances that need to be accounted for or acted on.

Closely related to budgeting is the whole question of funding mechanisms. Public agencies depend for their funding on legislative appropriations as well as other possible sources of revenue. Private, nonprofit agencies tend to depend on some combination of grants, contracts, contributions, and fees paid for services, either by clients or by third parties. For-profit companies operating in the human service field typically are funded by contracts and fees (often paid by third parties) and have the added benefit of using their own capital. The brand of funding can have a major effect on an agency’s programs because funding sources vary in terms of long-range predictability and the services they tend to encourage. Program planners and budget makers need to be aware of the agency’s major focus and should not lose sight of program goals when new funding possibilities appear. The integrity of agency goals is especially difficult to maintain in times of resource scarcity. At such times, it is most important to recall that budgeting and fund-raising should remain subsidiary to planning.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATING**

A program must have information systems to enable all staff to keep track of what is being done and accomplished. Such a system is variously referred to as “documentation,” “keeping stats,” or a “management information system.” Such a system should keep track of not only program activities but also the ultimate outcomes, or results, as they relate to clients. Information systems are used both to track organizational activities and progress and to provide data for evaluation. Evaluating a program involves comparing program accomplishments with criteria and standards set at the planning stage. Evaluation is not necessarily a specialized activity carried on only at special times by outside experts descending on an organization. It should be seen as an ongoing self-assessment process in which all human service workers participate.

The agency’s information system allows for a constant monitoring of agency activities and provides data for evaluation—an assessment of the effects of services on clients. Human service professionals need to know whether the services being carried out are in accordance with what was planned within a certain time and budget. They also need to know whether the program is meeting its objectives in terms of client change.

When criteria and standards are clear, evaluators can identify the data needed to measure the degree to which objectives have been attained. The next step becomes identifying the source of the data and designing a system for obtaining and reporting information.

If an ongoing information system is in place, evaluations of effort and effectiveness can be implemented either by external consultants or by agency workers. Once evaluation results have been reported, needed program changes can be identified and implemented.
It is difficult to separate evaluation from planning because an effective plan must include an evaluation component, but an effective evaluation must be based on the goals and objectives identified as part of a plan. Most important, human service professionals must be aware of the need to gather appropriate data as part of normal, ongoing program operation. Only then can evaluation gain its rightful place in the management and coordination of all activities. When this takes place, human service workers who already “know” that their services are effective will be able to prove it to others.

**HUMAN RELATIONS SKILLS**

Management is never a solo performance. It involves the orchestration of complex human elements into a whole that is characterized by harmony rather than discord. In any organization, managers must be able to work effectively with individuals and groups. They must encourage communication, build personal motivation, and form cooperative problem-solving groups. These interpersonal skills are as important in planning and budgeting as in direct supervision.

Effective application of all of the management functions just described requires polished interpersonal skills. If a plan is to be a living document, its formation must involve active participation of the people who will be affected by it, including potential service consumers as well as policy makers, board members, funding sources, managers, and agency employees. The human service professional who is involved in developing any program plan or innovation must be able to encourage and work closely with a variety of individuals and groups, each of whom might have a special priority in mind.

Budgeting requires far greater skill with people than with dollars and cents. Although the budget is closely involved with the planning process, it invariably attracts more conflict than any other planning component. Allocation of scarce resources means that funds are distributed to some programs, services, or individuals at the expense of others. Even when the most rational possible procedures are used to make the necessary decisions, both the processes and the results need to be sold to participants. When more traditional budgeting approaches are used, political processes and the balancing of conflicting interests come to the fore and need to be accepted as realities. No one can build a budget without being in close touch with the needs of funding sources, consumers, and workers.

The balancing of human and organizational needs is also important in creating an agency’s structure. Organizing involves dividing and coordinating the efforts of individuals and departments. These tasks can be done successfully only if the manager is sensitive to the needs of the people contributing to the work effort. The degree of centralization or decentralization, of specialization or generalization, of control or independence built into the organization’s structure is a function of the needs being met. These needs include both those dictated by the tasks to be performed and those dictated by the human characteristics of the people performing them. Like a plan or a budget, an organizational structure depends as much on interpersonal dynamics as on technical concerns.

Human relations skills interact even more directly and clearly with leadership functions. A key to management is that tasks are performed not just by the manager
but by and through the efforts of other people. Motivating, affecting, and supporting others’ behaviors require strong interpersonal competency, whether the object of the leadership activity is a supervisee or a local citizen, an individual staff member, or a group participating in a problem-solving meeting.

Finally, human relations skills affect the human service manager’s ability to carry out evaluation processes. Not surprisingly, many workers find evaluation threatening. Yet the active participation of all agency employees, at least in data gathering, is necessary to carrying out the evaluation function. If evaluations are to be accurate and if their results are really going to be used as a basis for managerial decisions, cooperative efforts are essential.

The skill of working effectively with individuals and groups runs through the performance of every managerial function, and human service professionals may well find their backgrounds more useful than expected. Professional training can also enhance the development of skills in individual or joint decision making.

DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

Management is, in a very basic sense, a process of making decisions. From deciding whether to spin off a new agency to choosing the location of a water cooler, from selecting a new staff member to considering alternate data forms, the manager is in the position of constantly choosing among alternatives. Deciding, along with communicating, is what a manager actually does with his or her time.

Decision making involves identifying and weighing alternate means for reaching desired ends. In human service settings, the selection of the best means for achieving an objective is often far from clear. Because of the high degree of uncertainty that will always be present in dealing with human needs, completely rational decision making is impossible. Basic values, desired goals, and the wishes of sometimes opposing factions need to be taken into account. In this context, decision-making skill requires sensitivity as much as rationality.

When carrying out the planning function, human service professionals need to decide what approaches to use in assessing needs, how to involve community members and other stakeholders in the goal-setting process, and what reasonable objectives for a program might be. These decisions actually precede the real decision-making challenge: choosing the most effective combination of services to meet the specified objectives. No one administrator or service deliverer makes these decisions alone. Involvement in cooperative decision making, however, is, if anything, more complex than choosing alternatives on the basis of one person’s judgment.

Budgeting is also a decision-making activity. Whether working alone or as a member of a planning group, the human service professional must help decide how resources are to be allocated. Especially in times of economic stress, each positive choice can bring with it the need to make a negative decision somewhere else. Choosing to fund one activity means choosing not to fund another.

The decisions that are made as part of designing programs and structuring the organization also have far-reaching implications. In organizing, the manager must weigh the benefits of varying methods of dividing tasks among individuals and
departments. The choices made invariably have major effects on the behaviors and productivity of all members of the service delivery team.

In providing leadership for this team, the manager continues to choose among alternate interventions, methods, and targets for change. Each decision affects both the immediate situation and the life of the agency as a whole. Ultimately, evaluation completes the administrative cycle by measuring the effects of past decisions and laying the groundwork for new choices.

LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT: KEEPING THE ORGANIZATION RESPONSIVE AND VIBRANT

The managerial functions previously described need to be implemented in order for programs to be effectively maintained. Fortunately for human service managers, the practical, human skills that underlie managerial functions are closely allied with the skills of helping. Social work, counseling, and psychology degree programs, in particular, emphasize effective communication skills such as active listening, giving and receiving feedback, group dynamics and facilitation, and positive regard for all individuals. All these skills are important for managers as they design systems and lead staff in accomplishing organizational goals.

In an era of accountability and limited resources, human service professionals cannot afford the luxury of attending to their own customary activities in isolation from general agency goals and operations. Service providers must know how their activities relate to programs and how these programs, in turn, relate to agency and community priorities. Human service professionals, like everyone with a stake in an agency’s continued existence, must be aware of managerial processes that enable them to function on a daily basis (how their check is paid, why they need to keep good client records, why evaluations need to occur). Conveying this information and helping staff come to appreciate the importance of it is a task requiring leadership.

As Figure 1.1 illustrated, leadership is the unifying factor for all management processes. Agency executives and, in fact, managers at all levels need to be leaders who help keep the organization and all staff focused on key organizational outcomes and processes necessary to get there; provide energy, confidence, and optimism regarding meeting the challenges facing human service organizations; and oversee the agency’s constant evolution and change so that it remains responsive to community needs and concerns.

In considering the subject of organizational purpose, too, both the technical and leadership functions of management can be seen. The manager addresses the technical system functions through overseeing organizational processes including planning, program and organization design, human resources management and supervision, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation. The manager addresses the social system by providing leadership and vision, articulating key values and ethical standards, ensuring a vibrant organizational culture and high quality of working life, and overseeing constant organizational learning and change.
Change management is a major responsibility for leaders. Chapter 2 will outline some of the powerful external forces affecting human service organizations, pointing out the need for ongoing adaptation and change. As will be seen in Chapter 11, nearly every viable contemporary leadership approach includes change management. Leaders are not always the drivers of change, however, and even when they desire change they sometimes need expertise from an outside source. Organization development, business process reengineering, total quality management, and other change processes are increasingly being used in human service organizations, with both good and disappointing results. Finally, there are techniques for lower-level employees to identify change opportunities and make proposals for improving agency operations. Leadership and change management are the ways that organizational processes and systems are kept up-to-date and responsive so that the agency can be maximally effective and thrive in an increasingly challenging environment.

THE MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATION

We cannot think of organizational excellence and vibrancy without attending to the vital issue of multiculturalism and diversity. At the center of change-focused leadership is the need to move the organization toward a true commitment in this arena. Effective practitioners across all of the helping professions now recognize that they must be sensitive to cultural differences between themselves and their clients. Less progress has been made, however, in recognizing that multicultural competence is not just an individual characteristic but also a vital organizational characteristic.

Organizational entities that fail to successfully implement diversity into the very structures of their operations will fail to be relevant to their clients or consumers. In the mental health field, clinics and providers must begin to alter the nature of their service delivery systems to recognize cultural diversity. The development of culturally appropriate mental health delivery systems for a diverse population may require major changes in the very structure of the organization. (Sue & Constantine, 2005, p. 213)

The development of excellence in this area may involve a process along a continuum from a monocultural organization to a nondiscriminatory organization to a multicultural organization (Sue, 1995). In the United States, a monocultural organization would be characterized by (a) an exclusion, whether conscious or not, of people from oppressed populations; (b) structures and processes that maintain privileged positions for people from the dominant majority; (c) management based on the values of the dominant culture; and (d) an assumption that employees and clients should adhere to dominant values. A nondiscriminatory organization represents a step forward in cultural awareness, but it lacks consistent organizational policies and practices to support it. Multiculturalism and diversity have not yet become true organizational priorities. As an organization moves toward becoming a multicultural organization, it demonstrates a valuing of diversity and consistently engages in “envisioning, planning, and
problem-solving activities that allow for equal access and opportunities” (Sue, 1995, p. 485). Ideally,

we define a multicultural organization as committed (action as well as words) to diverse representation throughout all levels, sensitive to maintaining an open, supportive, and responsive environment, working toward and purposefully including elements of diverse cultures in its ongoing operations, carefully monitoring organizational policies and practices for the goals of equal access and opportunity, and authentic in responding to changing policies and practices that block cultural diversity. (Sue & Constantine, 2005, p. 223)

According to Sue and Constantine, certain conditions must exist in order for an organization to become multicultural in outlook. These characteristics include the following:

- “Multicultural commitment must come from the very top levels.” (p. 223)
- “Each organization should have a written policy, mission statement, or vision statement that frames the concepts of multiculturalism and diversity into a meaningful operational definition.” (p. 223)
- “The organization should have a multicultural and diversity action plan.” (p. 224)
- “Multicultural accountability must be built into the system.” (p. 224)
- “The organization should create a superordinate or oversight team that is empowered to assess, develop, and monitor the organization’s development with respect to the goals of multiculturalism.” (p. 224)
- “Organizations must be unafraid to actively solicit feedback from employees related to issues of race, culture, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.” (p. 224)
- “Multicultural competence should be infused into evaluation criteria and used for hiring and promotion of employees.” (p. 224)
- “Culturally sensitive organizations recognize that mentoring and support networks for employees of color are vital for their success.” (p. 224)
- “Active coalition building and networking among minorities and women, for example, should be valued.” (p. 224)
- “The organization must be committed to a systematic and long-term plan to educate the entire workforce concerning diversity issues.” (p. 224)

Clearly, the kinds of values, commitments, and processes that lead toward the creation of a multicultural organization are also the characteristics of excellence in all organizational endeavors.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

As potential human service managers become more aware of the opportunities and challenges that lie before them, they always benefit from examples, whether these examples raise questions or model effective practices. Throughout the following chapters, we will present cases that illustrate particular ideas or functions. In particular, we will present one ongoing example to which we will return throughout this book: the Grandview Community Center. Box 1.1 provides a history of this human service agency and an introduction to some of the managerial challenges to be explored.
1.1 GRANDVIEW COMMUNITY CENTER

Leona Estrella is the new executive director of the Grandview Community Center (GCC), a human service agency with a long and diverse history. In a small city in the southwestern United States, a local church had founded the GCC in the 1930s. The center’s mission was responsive to the needs of the time: serving the many immigrants from the Dust Bowl who had moved to this small, southwestern town during the Great Depression. For many years, the community remained white and working class. Over the past 20 years, however, the population has shifted to a heterogeneous mix of ethnic groups, now predominantly Latino, with a growing number of immigrants from Southeast Asia. The socioeconomic class ranges from lower to lower-middle class. The city in which GCC operates now has approximately 800,000 residents.

Upon her employment at the center, Leona saw an agency that had not necessarily kept up with the pace of change in the environment but that offered valuable services to the community. Her experience with this agency forms the core of this case example, which will continue throughout the following chapters.

The Agency’s Work

The agency has four major programs: Counseling Services, In-home Services, Community Development, and Day Care. Counseling services are targeted to children and adults with behavioral health concerns including mental illness and substance abuse. Services by licensed therapists are provided to low income clients, funded by a contract with County Behavioral Health Services to help prevent the need for higher levels of services such as hospitalization. In-home services are provided through a contract with the Public Child Welfare Agency to work with families at risk of child abuse or neglect. Case managers conduct home visits and assist families with parent education, home management skills such as shopping and budgeting, and other services as needed. The Community Development program, which is funded by donations and by two local foundations, works with community members to identify issues that can be addressed through collective action. In recent years, the program has helped community members solve problems such as gang activity at a local park and the need for traffic signals at a busy intersection near a school. The Day Care program receives federal child development funding for subsidized day care for families receiving public assistance.

Managerial History

Until 2 years ago, the agency was run by a minister who had been there for 20 years. He led the agency during a period of moderate but regular program expansion during which time programs such as a day care center, a counseling program, and a welfare advocacy program were implemented. Program administrative functions did not develop as rapidly during this time, and when he retired 2 years ago the board of directors hired an executive director with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and prior experience as an executive with a corporate foundation that funds not-for-profit organizations.

This new director instituted many administrative reforms, particularly in the areas of budgeting and management information systems, but staff resented his hard-driving style and generally did as little as possible to comply with his initiatives. In fact, all the employees in the counseling program sent a memo to him and the board complaining about his policy change toward short-term counseling only, regardless of need. He responded that there were unit cost problems with long-term counseling but did not act on the memo in any other way. He began the installation of computers for data collection and fiscal management; and although they were installed, they were not used on
a regular basis. When funding source program monitors continued to express concerns about the agency’s management and accomplishments (including fiscal controls and progress on objectives), and with staff morale suffering and turnover increasing, the board decided to remove him and hire a new executive. The board consists primarily of local community representatives and other service providers. The board members are committed to the agency and the surrounding community but have not had a major role other than to review reports submitted by the executive.

**Leona Estrella’s Opportunities and Challenges**

Leona had been a program director at another agency and was hired because she had had some administrative experience as well as direct service experience as a Master of Social Work (MSW). The management team she joined consists of a program director for each of the programs and the director of administrative services. The agency occupies four sites in the community, and the main administrative offices are located at the Central site. The Community Development program operates out of Central. The Counseling Program has staff at the East and West sites. Day Care and In-home Services operate at each site.

As a management team, these directors had in the past met every 2 weeks, but the programs had been functioning rather autonomously. At her first meeting, Leona sensed an overall feeling of disorganization. The meeting skipped from topic to topic and there seemed to be no rational decision-making process. She felt that program managers were partly just jockeying for control of scarce resources. Over the past 2 years, the number of clients served by more than one program had grown (for example, many day care clients also receive in-home services). The program directors were used to “running their own shows,” although the executive hired 2 years ago made attempts to link the programs through a common computerized information system. He was also successful in bringing in grants and contracts for four new programs. These had been haphazardly subsumed under the existing program managers, in Leona’s opinion.

Over the past few years, funding has become increasingly tight, and program managers now find themselves faced with competition from other agencies and also among themselves. Community needs have been changing, and Leona knows from her previous job that agencies face increasing expectations to document program success and value to the community. The agency currently has two major contracts that are due to expire in 8 months, with no clear plan for replacement. Their County Behavioral Health source has recently mandated that the agency demonstrate the use of an evidence-based practice model in the mental health program that it funds.

When Leona began reviewing agency documents, she could not get a clear picture of the programs’ accomplishments beyond their scopes of services delivered. Staff records did not clearly show which people were working in which programs, and she had a feeling not all were being scheduled as efficiently as possible. In her initial meetings with staff at all the programs, she sensed disinterest in agency-wide issues and a general lack of positive energy. Staff members were mostly interested in working with their own clients and did not seem to care much about funding, documentation, evaluation, or planning, as long as their own program funding continued.

**Leona’s decision to implement strategic planning**

In this complex and changing environment, and given the internal conditions of the agency, Leona thought that a strategic planning process would help all staff members to develop a clear picture of the challenges facing the agency and to develop plans to thrive in the future.
SUMMARY

This chapter began by pointing out that the goals of a human service organization should always be focused on improving the lives of the people and communities being served. This ideal remains applicable regardless of the category into which a particular agency falls. Among the most common types of human service agencies are (a) community agencies that provide a variety of service to meet the needs of people who live within a specified geographic area; (b) agencies that focus on particular issues or problem areas, such as mental health concerns, substance abuse, or developmental disabilities; (c) population-oriented agencies that meet the service and advocacy needs of a particular cultural group, age group, or gender; (d) career, employment, or rehabilitation agencies that help individuals gain skills and opportunities for positive career growth and economic security; and (e) advocacy organizations that work on behalf of populations that are subject to marginalization and prejudice. Human service organizations can also be differentiated by size and categorized as non-profit, for-profit, or public (governmental) agencies.

Managerial responsibilities fall into the hands not just of professional managers but also of people who view themselves primarily as service providers. Several examples of helping professionals grappling with managerial challenges were provided, and the point was made that managerial proficiency is important for people across varying human service roles. It is important for people with managerial responsibilities, even in the smallest program, to be able to carry out the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes that underlie effect programming.

Finally, this chapter ended by introducing the Grandview Community Center, which will serve as an ongoing case throughout the following chapters.

COMPETENCY-BUILDING ACTIVITY 1.1

Begin the process of creating your own hypothetical human service program. As you think about a program that you would want to develop, address the following questions:

1. What kind of need might your program address? Would you be focusing on a particular population or a particular issue or problem? Identify the population or issue you plan to address.

2. As you consider your program, think about what the central mission of this program would be. Write a very brief statement about this central mission.

3. Give your program a name.

Choose a program about which you feel a sense of passion. You will be coming back to your hypothetical program after each chapter so that you can apply what you have learned.

CASE ACTIVITY 1.1

Transitions into Management

Review the situations of the individuals profiled in this chapter: Keith Michaels, Shirley Lane, Bill Okita, Lillian Sanchez, and David Williams. Choose one with which you can identify in some way and answer these questions from their perspective.

1. What prospective changes in role are facing this person?

2. If you were in this situation, what factors would you consider in assessing your career goals and the kinds of activities you would like at work?

3. If you moved further into management, what additional skills and training would you need?
REFERENCES


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