

Assessing an Innovative Method for Training Child Protection Investigators

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CFRC | Children & Family Research Center

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Illinois Department of
DCFS
Children & Family Services



Three Teams with Important Roles

- **Illinois Department of Children & Family Services,
Office of Learning & Professional Development**
Monico Whittington-Eskridge, Associate Deputy Director
- **Simulation Training Program at Child Protection Training Academy,
University of Illinois at Springfield**
Betsy Goulet, D.P.A., Principal Investigator
Susan Oppegard Evans, Executive Director
Amy Wheeler, Lead Facilitator
Taylor McCarthy, Coordinator
- **Program Evaluation Team at Children and Family Research Center,
School of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**
Theodore Cross, Ph.D., Principal Investigator
Yu-Ling Chiu, Ph.D.



Value of simulating child protection work in training

- Practicing the behavior
- Getting feedback from debriefs
- Observing other trainees' actions and debriefs
- Trainees are more engaged
 - Sensory – visual, auditory, olfactory
 - Emotional
 - Critical thinking
- Best way to determine the field is not for you

Child Protection Training Academy (CPTA)

- Developed family residence and courtroom simulation labs at UIS for CPS investigators
- Partnership with Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
- Training all new Illinois investigators since February 2016 (N=572)



CPTA Training Team

- Simulation trainer
 - Former DCFS investigator and long-time classroom trainer
 - Has trained hundreds of DCFS investigators
- Standardized patients
 - “Actors” who play role of family under investigation
 - from Southern Illinois University School of Medicine’s Standardized Patient Program
 - Also trained to provide feedback to professionals (doctors and now child protection investigators)
- Courtroom professionals
 - Current and retired judges and lawyers
 - Play roles resembling their real life experience

A Simulation Training week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Introduction	Door Knock	Scene Investigation	Fishbowl Interviews	Pre-Hearing Meeting with Parents
Collateral Calls	Interspersed with Individual Debriefs	Interspersed with Individual Debriefs	Court Prep Training	Court Simulation
Debrief	Overall Debrief	Supervision	Overall Debrief	Overall Debrief
		Overall Debrief		

Program Evaluation

- Initial Evaluation (FY2017)
 - Post-training satisfaction survey analysis Interviews with key formants, including two trainees
 - Observation of simulation training
- 2nd Year Evaluation (FY2018)
 - Study of simulation training process: focus groups and interviews
 - **Investigator survey**
- 3rd Year Evaluation (FY2019)
 - Turnover study
 - Daily Experience of Simulation Training

Investigator survey

- To assess the impact of simulation training on DCFS investigators' experience of their work.
- An online survey was sent to all current DCFS investigators
- 259 DCFS investigators (35% response rate)
- Analysis compared investigators with simulation training (n=122) and investigators without simulation training (n=115)

Scales

How well Certification Training prepared them for their job	9 items	1-very poor to 5-very well
Difficulty of acquiring different skills as an investigator	9 items	1-very easy to 4-very difficult
Job Satisfaction	11 items	1-very dissatisfied to 4-very satisfied
Turnover Intentions Scale	6 items	Yes/No
Which simulations were useful (simulation training group only)	4 items	1-strongly disagree to 4 strongly agree
Effectiveness of simulation training for preparing them for their work (simulation training group only)	6 items	1-useless to 5-very useful

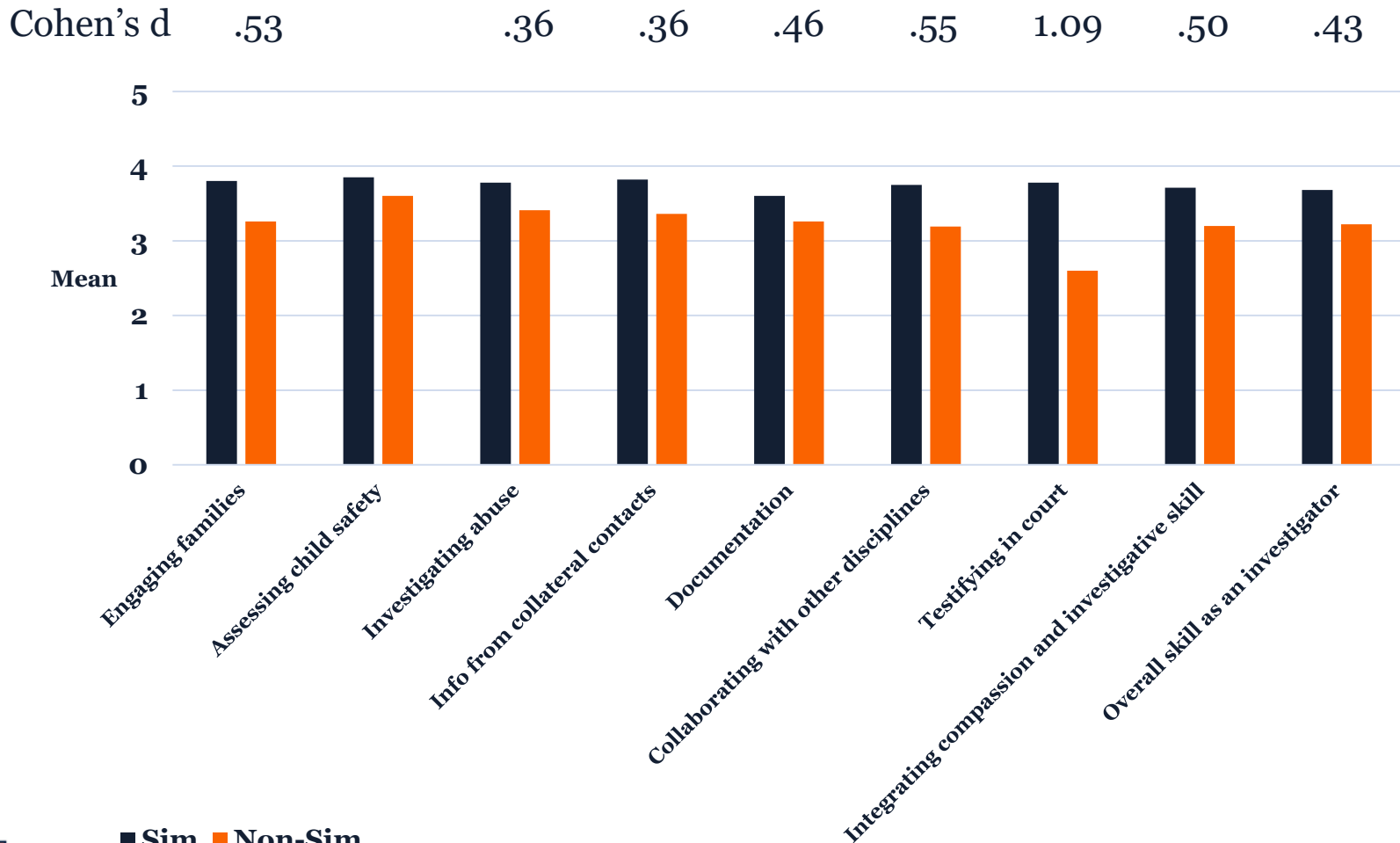


See the attachment for more details

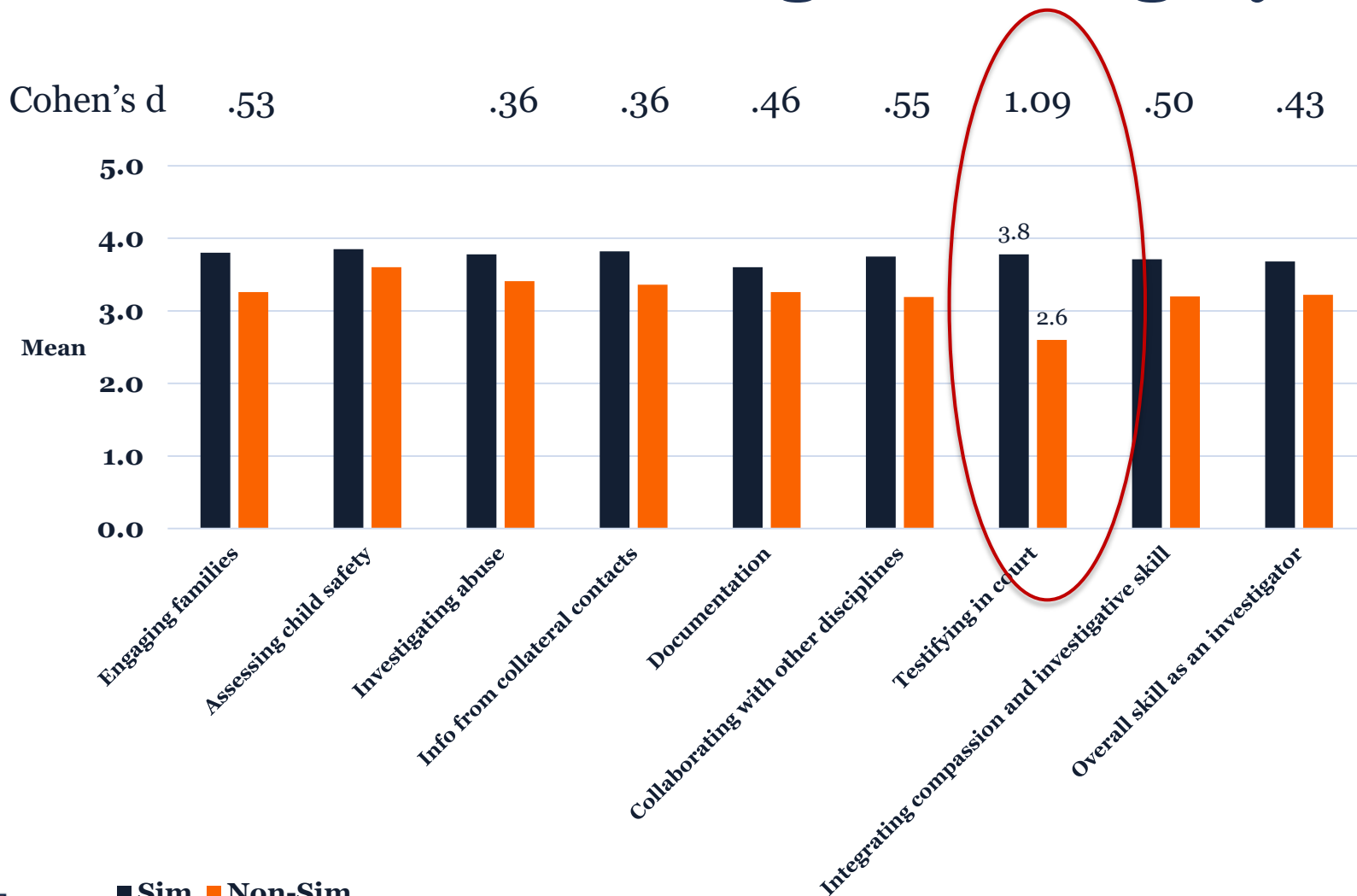
Sample characteristics

Gender	83.5% were females
Age	The median age was 41 to 50
Race	58.1% were white
Education Background	65.7% had a master's degree 55.5% had a degree in social work
Tenure in Child Welfare	61.7% had more than 10 years
Tenure as a DCFS Investigator	51.3% had two years or less
Caseload in the past 30 days	53.1% had a caseload of 11 to 25 cases 33.1% had more than 25 cases
Simulation Training	51.5% had received simulation training

Sim-trained group rated their Certification Training more highly



Sim-trained group rated their Certification Training more highly



Difficulty of Acquiring Investigation Skills

	Creating evidence-based documentation			Testifying in court		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Simulation Training-No	0.445	0.221	0.280*	0.684	0.275	0.375*
Age	-0.008	0.071	-0.011	0.009	0.088	0.010
Race-White	0.199	0.137	0.121	0.069	0.170	0.037
Graduate Degree	0.028	0.143	0.017	0.094	0.184	0.050
Social Work Degree	-0.085	0.135	-0.053	-0.036	0.171	-0.020
Caseload in the Past 30 Days						
0 to 10 cases	-	-	-	-	-	-
11 to 25 cases	0.110	0.202	0.069	0.002	0.251	0.001
More than 25 cases	0.460	0.209	0.276*	0.009	0.255	0.005
Tenure in Child Welfare						
Less than 2 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 to 5 years	0.596	0.263	0.226*	0.677	0.308	0.244*
6 to 10 years	0.310	0.225	0.146	0.415	0.289	0.171
More than 10 years	0.144	0.223	0.089	-0.298	0.307	-0.162
Tenure as an Investigator						
Less than 6 months	-	-	-	-	-	-
6 to 12 months	-0.543	0.275	-0.231*	-1.022	0.375	-0.369**
1 to 2 years	-0.234	0.247	-0.134	-0.604	0.336	-0.294
3 to 5 years	-0.188	0.369	-0.071	-1.001	0.490	-0.306*
More than 5 years	-0.538	0.332	-0.331	-0.797	0.443	-0.435

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$



Turnover Intention

	Move Inside DCFS (n=190) <u>Exp(b)</u>	Leave DCFS (n=183) <u>Exp(b)</u>
Simulation Training-No	4.192*	3.546 ⁺
Job satisfaction	1.182	1.706
Age		
21-30 years old	-	-
31-40 years old	0.750	0.773
41-50 years old	0.546	0.475
51-60 years old	0.904	1.01
61 years and older	1.208	1.250
Race-White	0.608	1.078
Graduate Degree	1.815	1.340
Social Work Degree	1.166	1.498
Caseload in the Past 30 Days		
0 to 10 cases	-	-
11 to 25 cases	1.559	2.434 ⁺
More than 25 cases	0.886	0.921
Tenure in Child Welfare		
Less than 2 years	-	-
3 to 5 years	0.451	0.287**
6 to 10 years	0.561	1.473
More than 10 years	1.079	1.326
Tenure as an Investigator		
Less than 6 months	-	-
6 to 12 months	1.793	1.796
1 to 2 years	0.611	0.813
3 to 5 years	1.178	0.686
More than 5 years	1.078	2.045

⁺ $p < .06$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

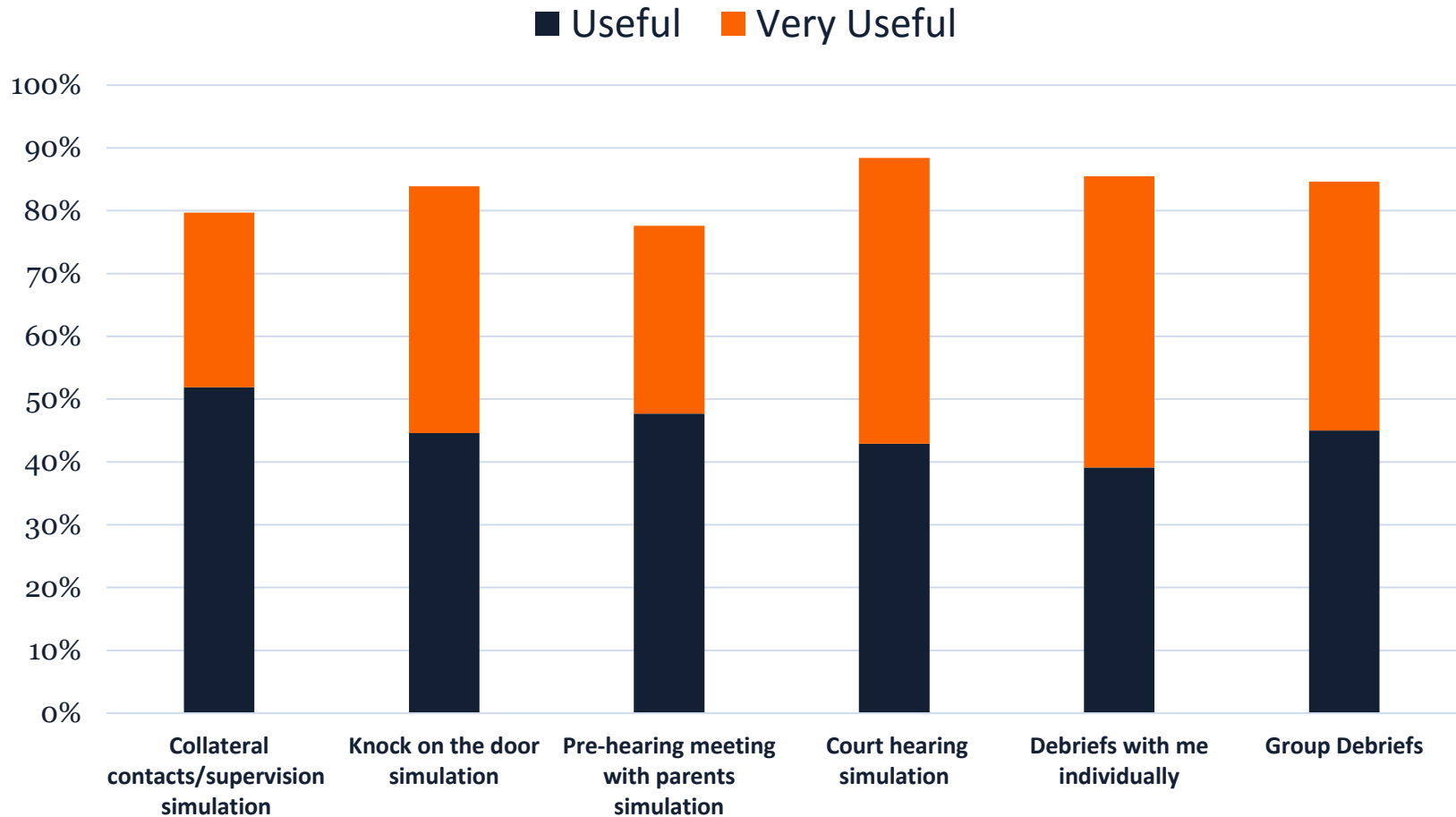
Satisfaction with simulation training

Item	<u>Mean</u> Post-training N=154 (FY2017 Evaluation)	<u>Mean</u> On the job N=110 (FY2018 Evaluation)
The scenario environment was realistic. I was able to incorporate my training into practice	3.8	3.2
The SIM lab provided a realistic experience of the challenges I will face when working in the field	3.8	3.2
Participating in the scenarios helped to increase my confidence in my role	3.7	3.1
The debriefing sessions provided valuable feedback	3.8	3.2

1-strongly disagree to 4-strongly agree



Sim group's appraisal of their simulations



1-useless to 5-very useful

Summary of Findings

- Sim group rated their certification training more highly.
- Sim group reported less difficulty acquiring skills of...
 - Creating evidence-based documentation
 - Testifying in court
- No sim vs. non-sim difference on job satisfaction
- Sim group were less likely to answer yes on:
 - I am actively looking for a position at another department of DCFS.
 - As soon as I find a better job, I will leave DCFS.
- Sim group continued to value simulations even 1 to 2 years after training.

Limitations

- Only a minority of investigators participated in the survey.
- The investigator survey measured investigators' subjective reports and lacks objective data on their performance
- Sim training vs. not receiving sim training is confounded with year started as DCFS investigators
 - We may not be able to control for all differences
 - Can't rule out other history-based explanations for differences between sim and non-sim groups

Implications for CPTA

- “Feedback is the pathway to mastery”
 - Brené Brown
- Improving critical thinking skills:
 - Problem Based Learning
 - Enhancing documentation/Information gathering
- Reality of the environment

DCFS Implications

- Current Implications:

- Expansion of audience beyond new Investigative hires
 - Supervisors
 - Veteran staff
- Adding More Specialties
 - DCFS and Private Sector Agency Staff
 - High Risk Intact Staff
 - Foster Care/Permanency Staff
- Launching of a Simulation Center in Chicago
 - Expanded University Partnership with UIS and UIUC
 - South-side of the City in an Urban Setting
 - Addition of a Multi-purpose Room

- Future Implications:

- Moving Beyond Direct Service
- Experiential Learning for Licensing and Legal Staff
- Foster/Adoptive Parents
- Incorporation of Youth and Parent Voice in the Development of Scenarios
- Partnerships with Community Partners and Key Stakeholders

Thank you

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Attachment

Difficulty of Acquiring Investigation Skills	1. Engaging families
	2. Assessing child safety
	3. Investigating abuse and neglect allegations
	4. Collecting information from collateral contacts
	5. Creating evidence-based documentation
	6. Collaborating with professionals from other disciplines
	7. Testifying in court
	8. Integrating compassion and investigative skill in my work
	9. Overall skill as a DCFS investigator
Job Satisfaction	1. How meaningful the work is
	2. Significance or importance of the work
	3. Ability to help people
	4. My workload
	5. Quality of the supervision I receive
	6. Opportunities for advancement
	7. Being valued for my work
	8. Cultural sensitivity in DCFS
	9. My physical safety
	10. Working conditions in my office
	11. Data entry/documentation
Turnover Intention	1. I am starting to ask my friends/contacts about other job possibilities.
	2. I am actively looking for a position at another department of DCFS.
	3. I am actively looking for a job outside of DCFS.
	4. I am actively looking for a job outside of DCFS because I'm having a concern of my physical safety.
	5. As soon as I can find a better job, I will leave DCFS.
	6. I am seriously thinking about quitting my job.