

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc.

July 30, 2009

Today's Topics:

- Continuous Quality Improvement at GDB
- Our Clients' Wants and Needs
- How we met those needs traditionally
- Challenges for Our Clients
- Program Changes
- Regulation

IMPETUS

Our clients and applicants expressed their desire to spend less time away from their home, work and family. We are listening and we have developed innovative models for providing comprehensive educational courses in guide dog mobility in a shorter timeframe

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) at GDB

- GDB formally started the Continuous Quality Improvement Program summer of 2008
- Groups have been set up to work on improvements in various areas of our program
- These groups all use a combination of Lean Manufacturing and Six Sigma tools

CQI/Lean Manufacturing History

Concepts developed during WWI and WWII to aid war effort by producing supplies with reduced labor

- After WWII these concepts were shared with many Japanese companies during the Training Within Industry program
- Companies that use these techniques become "Time Based Competitors"

Goals of CQI / Lean Organizations

Provide value to the Customers (external)

- Provide value to the Community at large
- Provide for the needs and individual growth of the companies' employees
- Continually learn to provide more value to the customers, the community and the employees

Varied Service Delivery CQI Workgroup

Group formed September of 2008

- Goal of improving the quality of services for our clients
- Team members include: instructors, field staff, supervisors, staff guide dog users
- Meet weekly with assignments in between

Client Wants and Needs

- Guide Dog (well trained with good behavior)
- Support in class
 - Long enough time frame to be successful, but also
 - Minimizing time away from home
- Support in the home environment

How have we met new clients' needs in the past

- 4:1 Client to instructor ratio for 28 day training program
- Approximately 8% of a client's day was spent doing "value added" activities (activities that are necessary for the client to succeed, waiting and sleeping are not "value added")

A Day in the Life of Our Clients in Traditional Class

- 1.5 hours of one on one instruction (working guide dog and obedience)
- 1 hour of group lectures per day
- 1+ hours of dog care (relieving, feeding, grooming, etc)
- 2 hours of traveling to various locations to work their dogs
- 3 hours of waiting for their turn with an instructor

4-Week Classes are Challenging for our Clients

- Emotionally
- Financially
- Logistically
- Physically (health)

Emotional Challenges

- Being away from family and support people for 4 weeks
- Being away from children (or other dependents)
- Being away from pets
- Spending a full 4 weeks with people you just met
- Stress about depending on others to take care of dependents, pets and home
- Stress about leaving a job for 4 weeks

Financial Challenges

- Employed clients often do not have 4 weeks vacation and take unpaid leave
- 4 weeks of alternate dependent care costs
- Arrange for someone (and pay someone) else to pay their bills
- Pet sitting/boarding fees
- House sitting fees

Logistical Challenges

- Arrangements for dependents
 - Difficult to find services for dependent care for only one month

Health Status of Our Clients

- Many of our clients have complicated health care needs which are monitored closely by specialists
- Increasing numbers of clients are on autoimmune suppression medications
 - Pancreas transplants (diabetics)
 - Kidney transplants
- Many of our clients have limited health insurance coverage particularly out of their local area

Health Challenges Imposed by a 4-Week Class

- Cumulative rigors of a 4-week training program
- Sleep Patterns change
- Eating habits change
- Exposure to viruses from various parts of the country (from classmates)
- Stress from being away from home and learning something new

Health Challenges Continued

- Being away from primary care physicians and specialists for 4 weeks can be very challenging for someone with a closely managed condition
 - An example = dialysis patients
- Out of network insurance issues while in class

Providing the Same High Quality Services for New Clients with Less Time Away from Home

In California: 3-Week Class Trial

- Increasing the amount of individual instruction each client receives per day
- 3:1 Client to Instructor Ratio

- Maintaining or increasing the amount of critical learning activities
- Decreasing the amount of activities that do not contribute to the learning experience (waiting time, etc.)

In Oregon: 2-Week Class Trial

- Further increases the amount of individual instruction each client receives per day
- 2:1 Client to Instructor Ratio
- Maintaining or increasing the amount of critical learning activities (valued added)
- Decreasing the amount of activities that do not contribute to the learning experience (waiting time, etc. (non-value added)

Upcoming Plans

- Provide more information and instruction prior to class
 - Improve resources available to our clients both prior to and after class
 - Answering lecture questions on the phone prior to class
 - Teaching the client in their home environment prior to class
- Continue to provide instruction after class
 - Class Transitions (an instructor who goes home with the client for a few days) as needed
 - Yearly Follow up visits as needed
 - Instructor visits at other times as needed

Trial Class Results So Far

- 42 new clients completed 3 week trial (CA)
- 12 new clients completed 2 week trial (OR)
- 16 retrain clients completed 2 week trial (OR)

Trial Class Client Responses

- Positive Exit Interviews
- Proficiency equal or greater than other graduating teams
- 2-week trial instructors believe teams were better prepared for home environment
- Continuing to assess results in home environment

Trial Class Client Responses

- “Liked the pace of the three week class, thoroughly enjoyed it. Did not feel rushed and that there was plenty of time to cover all the material.” 3-week class
- “I learned what I needed to learn in the time frame. Work and Home situations made this a great option for me.” 2-week new client

- “I liked the amount of one on one time with my instructor.” 2-week new client
- “loved 2:1 ratio, 3 weeks seems like too long now.” 2-week retrain

More Trial Client Responses

- “From a life maintenance standpoint it was much easier to make reservations for dog care (for her pet dog), arrange for a house sitter, take care of bills, etc. She also mentioned that she saved a lot of money needing only to pay for two weeks of services rather than a full month. Coming in for two weeks seems less daunting prior to training as well.” 2-week new client
- “Being away for a month would have been very challenging. She would have found all of the "wait" time frustrating if it would have been a 4:1 ratio.” 2-week new client
- “a 4-week class left the students with too much time on their hands; causing conflicts and boredom.” 2-week retrain

State Regulation

Current Regulation:

- Minimum of 80 hours of instruction over a period of four weeks
- In no case shall less than 15 hours nor more than 25 hours of instruction be given in any one week

Proposed Regulation:

- Clients training with their first guide dogs must receive a minimum of 30 hours of practical in- harness instruction spread over a two to four week period under the supervision of a licensed instructor
- Clients training with successor guide dogs may be trained in a shorter period but this shall not be less than 20 hours of in-harness instruction under the supervision of a licensed instructor

Proposed Regulation:

- The training must be individualized and there is no maximum training time within which the team must achieve safe and effective guide dog mobility
- Instruction must be conducted in the most appropriate venue(s) depending on client need and may be in-residence, in-home or a combination of both.