



Implementation of Small Group Trainings to Expedite Initial Onboarding for Clinical Research Staff and Increase Connection Between New Employees – One Year Review

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Background

OHSU Knight Cancer Institute (KCI) provides individual onboarding for new clinical research staff, consisting of ~50 topics over ~30 sessions. The target timeline for completion is 150 days, requiring one to two training sessions per week. When fully staffed, KCI employs two full-time trainers, who can each conduct ~20-25 sessions per week.

In late 2019, there was a trainer vacancy. In early 2020, due to COVID-19 and uncertain financial projections, OHSU implemented a hiring freeze. When the hiring freeze ended in August 2020, numerous staff were hired to backfill vacancies. This trend continued into 2021. A second trainer was hired in January 2021. By then, the average time to complete onboarding had increased to 297 days. In addition, COVID-19 modified operations required remote work that hindered staff connection.

Goals

1. Decrease onboarding completion time by increasing trainer touchpoints per employee.
2. Increase staff connection and engagement, in light of increased remote work.

Methods Implemented

- Implemented small group cohorts in August 2021, consisting of 2-4 trainees.
- Approximately 30 topics identified as amenable to group trainings.
- Trainers continued to meet with each trainee for 1:1 training sessions to ensure all initial onboarding training topics were covered.
- Each group was scheduled to meet weekly for 12-16 weeks.

Outcome

- The average time to complete onboarding has decreased from 297 days for those who started in 2021-Q1 to 146 days for those who started in 2022-Q3.
- Formal feedback was solicited in November 2022 from trainees who had completed onboarding and finished their first year at KCI. Six questions were asked regarding the small group cohort trainings, as summarized below (*responses in italics*):

Q1. The small group cohort training was an effective approach:

Extremely effective (3), Very effective (1), Moderately so (1), Slightly so (2)

Q2. How well did you like the small cohort sessions with CRQA trainer:

Like a great deal (4), Like somewhat (2), Neutral (1), Dislike somewhat (1)

Q3. The group trainings introduced me to other team processes:

Strongly agree (5), Neutral (1), Somewhat disagree (1), Strongly disagree (1)

Q4. I felt comfortable asking questions during group session:

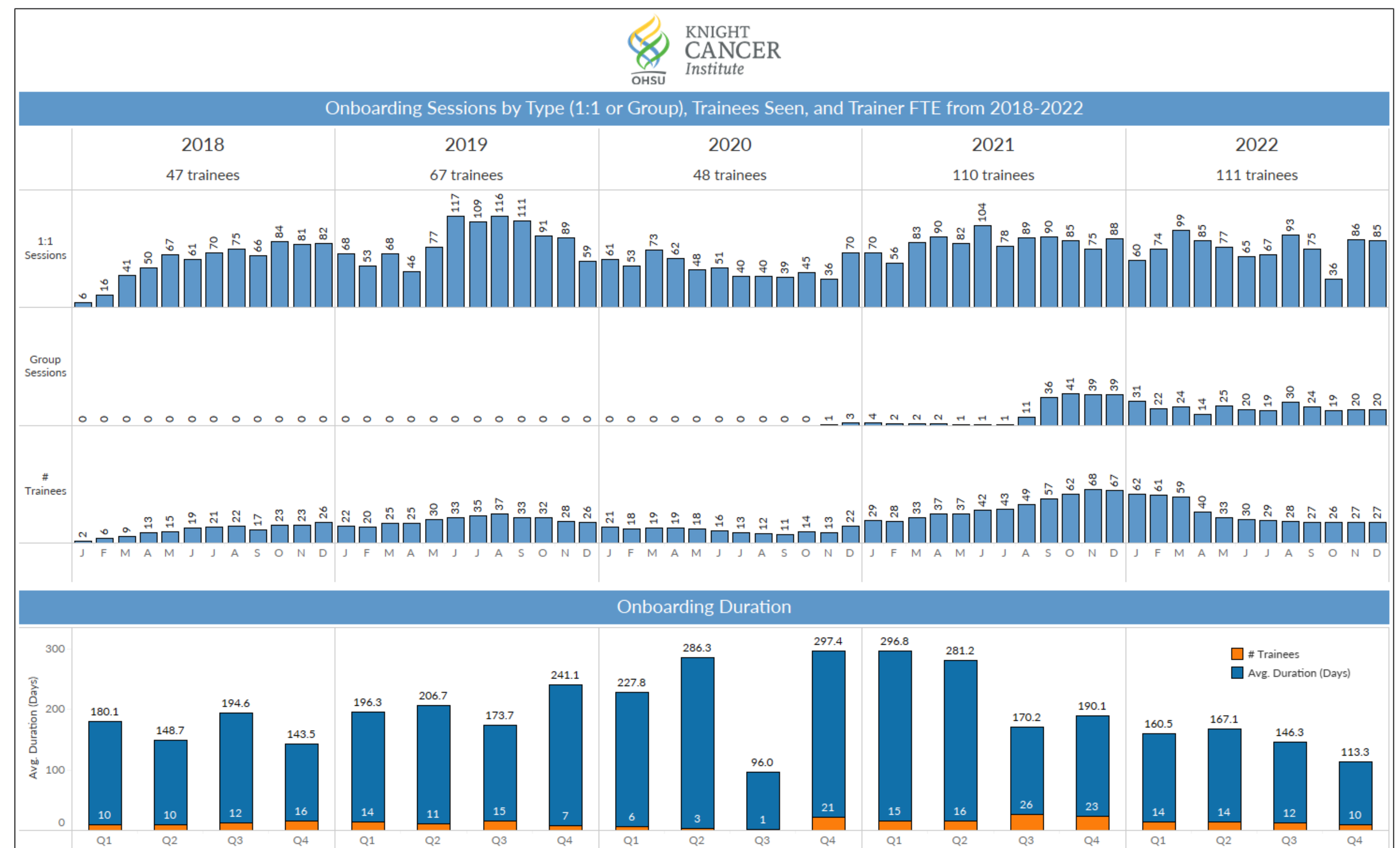
Strongly agree (4), Somewhat agree (3), Neutral (1)

Q5. I felt comfortable reaching out to members on the group outside of sessions:

Strongly agree (5), Somewhat agree (1), Neutral (1), Strongly disagree (1)

Q6. I interacted with group members outside of group sessions:

Strongly agree (3), Somewhat agree (2), Somewhat disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1)



Lessons Learned and Future Direction

- Due to the positive response and efficiency of the small group cohort, we will continue to utilize the group trainings, as appropriate, in conjunction with 1:1 trainings.
- Currently, the average duration of onboarding includes a mix of trainees who did and did not participate in small groups. A future direction of this project is to delineate the two averages for a direct comparison and specifically track/measure individual touch points per trainee.