



Caseworker Core Module 4

Note Taking Guide

Slide 5

Assessment

The cornerstone of child welfare practice.

Notes

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Assessment

- ✓ Gather
- ✓ Document
- ✓ Analyze
- ✓ Synthesize

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Assessment is routine.

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8*****Purpose:***

Guide decisions about solutions to problems, services, and interventions.

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Assessments can be complex.

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Assessment may be complex when...

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Quality Assessment is critical to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families.

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What questions must be answered to assure safety, permanency, and well-being?

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Assessments guide case decisions. CAPMIS tools promote sound decision making.

Notes

CPS Activity

1. Point of Referral - Screening Decision

Purpose: To determine if this referral should be accepted as a report

What we need to know:

Casework Action:**2. Pathway Assignment Decision**

Purpose: To determine if this report should be served via the Alternative or Traditional Response Track.

What we need to know:

Casework Action:**3. The Assessment of Safety for TR and AR Cases**

Purpose: To identify if there are active safety threats.

What we need to know:

Casework Action:

4. The Assessment of Risk for AR and TR cases

Purpose: To determine what, if any, level of agency services is necessary.

What we need to know:

Casework Action:

5. Selecting a Legally Authorized Out-of-Home Placement When Children Cannot Be Maintained Safely in Their Own Home (may be conducted at the intake level as well as at the ongoing services level).

Purpose: Must determine what the least restrictive out-of-home placement setting is.

What we need to know:

Casework Action:

6. Assess reunification readiness

Purpose: To determine if active safety threats are controlled or eliminated and if the family is ready to reunify.

What we need to know:

Casework Action:

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The CAPMIS framework requires immediate and ongoing assessment of safety, family strengths and needs, and risk of future harm. Assessment is not a one-time activity, but must be an ongoing process.

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Safety and Risk

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16*****Define Safety and Risk******Safety:******Risk:***

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Child Safety must be assessed throughout the life of the entire case. Assessing safety is the responsibility of all caseworkers.

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Safe =

Unsafe =



See Handout #4, CAPMIS Tools

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20****Consequences of Poor Assessment**

- Serious harm to children
- Increased trauma to children and families
- Unnecessary interventions, including separation
- Needs remain unmet
- Wasted time and resources
- Fail to achieve desired outcomes

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21****Other types of assessments you will see in Child Welfare**

- Family and Child Assessments (aka Home Studies)
- Specialized assessments

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23****7 Steps of Critical Thinking:**

1. Determine the purpose
2. Identify assessment criteria or questions
3. Gather information
4. Analyze information
5. Test Hypotheses
6. Synthesize information to draw conclusions
7. Make well-informed decisions

Notes

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Critical Thinking Step 1: Purpose of Assessing Safety:

Examine present danger of serious harm.

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Initial Assessment of Safety

Assessed at first contact:

- Determines if the child is safe in their home or if they need protective intervention.
- Documented in SACWIS on the Safety Assessment Tool.
- Must be completed within four working days of screen-in and documented in SACWIS within 7 working days.

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Assessed at Specific Case Points

- Family Assessment
- Case Review
- Semi-Annual Review
- Ongoing Case Investigation
- Specialized Assessment
- Reunification Assessment

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28****Safety Must be Assessed at Every
Face-to-Face Contact***Notes***Slide
29****Safety of Children in Substitute Care**

- Safety in removal home
 - ☐ Use CAPMIS tools
- Safety in current placement environment
 - ☐ Can use the same framework, but not CAPMIS tools
 - ☐ Many agencies have tools specific to this assessment

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Regardless of their role within the agency, all caseworkers must keep safety as their primary focus. Caseworkers must ensure that their actions reflect their assessment of the safety of the child at all times.

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3-Pronged Approach to Assessing Safety

1. Identify which safety factors are present
2. Assess child vulnerabilities that are present or absent
3. Assess parental protective capacities that are present or lacking

Consider:

- ✓ historical information
- ✓ use the additional information to determine if the safety threats need to be controlled

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Assessing Safety Factors

15 safety factors

- Consider each safety factor and determine if the safety factor is present.

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Safety Factors

Assessed in each of the CAPMIS tools
AND at every Face-to-Face Contact:

- Safety Assessment
- Family Assessment
- Case Review
- Semi-Annual Administrative Review
- Ongoing Case Assessment/Investigation Tool
- Specialized Assessment/Investigation Tool
- Reunification Assessment

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Child Vulnerability

- Degree to which a child can avoid or modify the impact of safety factors that are present or risk concerns
- Must consider child's behaviors, characteristics, or temperaments that challenge caregiver's patience and coping skills

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Child Vulnerability Must be Assessed When?

- Initial Assessment of Safety
- Every face-to-face contact
- At certain points along the case continuum
 - Family Assessment
 - Case Review
 - Ongoing Case Assessment/Investigation Tool
 - Specialized Assessment/Investigation Tool
 - Semi-Annual Administrative Review
 - Reunification Assessment

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Must Assess the Following Domains:

- Physical
- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Behavioral
- Historical

Notes

List characteristics or traits that increase a child's vulnerability to abuse or neglect:

Vulnerability Characteristic	Reason	Domain



See Handouts 5 & 6: Guidance Article on Child Vulnerability

Characteristics or Traits that Increase Vulnerability

Vulnerability of a child relates to...

- Age of a child
- Ability to escape or get away from a situation
- Ability to care for one's self
- Behaviors or conditions that are irritating or demanding

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When documenting child vulnerabilities, it is important to document **why** a particular characteristic or trait makes a child more vulnerable to imminent harm as a result of safety threats.

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46****Protective Capacity**

- Caregiver's capacity to adequately care for and protect their children.
- Family Strengths or resources that reduce, control, or prevent threats of serious harm from arising.

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Each adult in the home must be assessed to determine if protective capacities are present or lacking:

- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Behavioral

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Caseworkers must consider child vulnerability, protective capacities, and safety threats to make a determination about child safety.

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See Handouts #7 and #8: Assessing Parental (Caregiver) Protective Capacities and Adult Protective Capacity Checklist

Protective Capacity Activity

How would you recognize if adults in the home had the examples of protective capacities listed on the handout?

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Assessing protective capacities requires observation of behavior and emotional responses and conversations.

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52****Historical Information**

Caregiver's past history of abuse or neglect of other children must also be considered in the assessment of safety.

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Twister

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1. What part of the clip affected you most? Why?
2. What type of music or sound was playing?
3. What were the two main characters wearing?

4. Why do you think Jo (Helen Hunt) stared at the coming storm?
5. What emotional response did you have to the clip?

Salient

Relevant

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Documenting the Assessment of Safety in Activity Logs

Must provide enough information in the Activity Logs to justify the caseworker's actions regarding safety of the child:

- Discontinue safety plan
- No change in safety status
- Changes in protective capacities, child vulnerabilities and safety factors that are present

Notes



See Handout #9 & #10: Safety Assessment Safety Factors Guide & Kelley Family Initial Report

Assessing Safety - Answer the following questions about the Kelley Family

1. What characteristics does Tammy Kelley have that make her vulnerable?

Physical

Emotional

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Cognitive

Behavioral

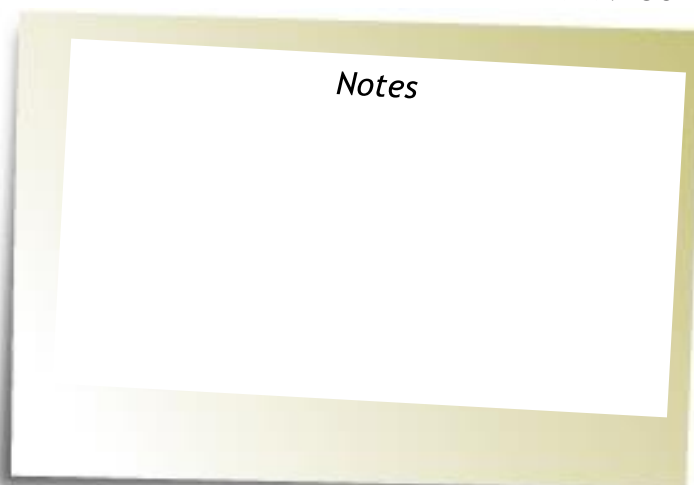
Historical

2. What Safety Factors are present? (Hint: Use Handout #9)

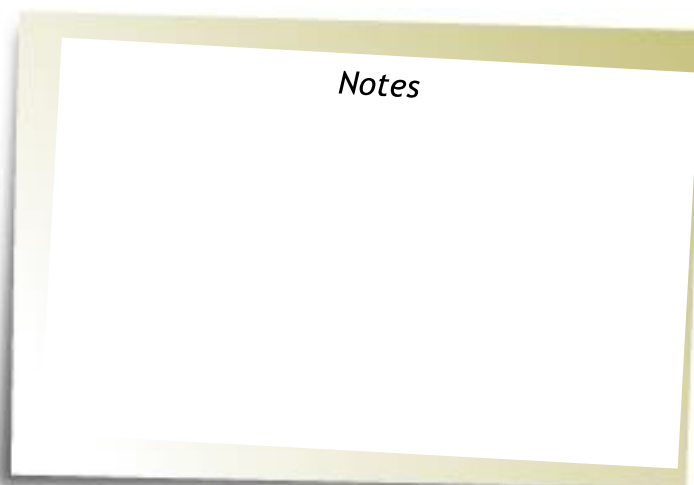
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Child Vulnerabilities and Safety Factors also documented in the Reassessment of Safety in the following tools:

- Family Assessment
- Case Review/SAR
- OCAIT
- SAIT
- Reunification Assessment
- Activity Logs

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Bias in Analysis:



Critical Thinking Step #4: Analyze Information

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1. Is the information we have on the Kelley family relevant? Reliable?
2. Is there enough information to make hypotheses about safety or child vulnerabilities?
3. What bias may be influencing your interpretation?

4. Be prepared to share with the large group.

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Critical Thinking Step #5: Test Hypotheses

Hypotheses about Safety and Risk

Safety Hypotheses:

This child is in immediate danger of serious harm.

This child needs an immediate response to control safety threats.

Risk Hypotheses:

This child is at risk of future harm.

These services would reduce the risk of maltreatment to this child.

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Develop hypotheses about whether Tammy Kelley is safe.

Be prepared to share with the group.

More Information: Protective Capacities

What strengths and resources (protective capacities) can the family use to reduce, control, or prevent harm to Tammy Kelley in each of the following domains?

Cognitive

Emotional

Behavioral

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What deficits in protective capacities put Tammy in danger of serious harm?

What would you need to see Mrs. Kelley say or do to be able to identify additional protective capacities?

What, if any, additional safety factors are present? (Add to Handout #9)

What information is presented that confirms or denies our hypotheses?



Handout #8: Adult Protective Capacities

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Protective Capacities is documented in
SACWIS:

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More on the Kelley Family

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- What, if any, new protective capacities did you identify?
- What, if any, additional deficits in protective capacities did you identify?
- What, if any, additional safety factors did you identify? (Add to Handout #9)

Be prepared to share with the group.

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Critical Thinking Step #6: Synthesis

As new information is gathered it is continuously integrated into our understanding about the safety of the child.

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Practice Synthesis

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Synthesize the information you have about Tammy Kelley's safety:

- Does the presence of any protective capacities control any safety factors that are present?
- Do the child vulnerabilities exacerbate the safety factors that are present? If so, how?

- What has changed in your understanding about the safety of the child?
- What new meaning or understanding do you have about the Kelley family and the safety of the Kelley child with the information you have gathered up to this point?

Be prepared to share your response.

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Critical Thinking #7: Decide

When sound critical thinking is applied to the CAPMIS framework we are more likely to achieve sound decisions for children and families.

Notes

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Must determine the final safety decision:

Is an immediate response necessary to control any active safety threats?

Notes

Safety Response Decision

Answer the following questions about the Kelley family:

- What is your decision about the safety of Tammy Kelley?
- Is an immediate response necessary to control any active safety threats?
- What might be necessary to control activity safety threats?

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Handout #11: Safety Assessment Key Term Definitions

Errors in Assessment

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Errors?	What causes the error?	How can critical thinking help avoid the error?

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Errors in Assessment

- Errors in Purpose and Criteria
- Errors in Information Gathering
- Errors in Analysis
- Errors in Synthesis
- Errors in Decision Making

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Safety Plan

- Specific and concrete plan for controlling threats of serious harm to a child.
- Implemented immediately upon identification that a family's protective capacities are not sufficient to manage immediate safety threats.

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83****Three types of safety plans:**

- Voluntary in-home safety plan
- Voluntary out-of-home safety plan
- Legally Authorized out-of-home safety plan

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85****Effective Safety Plans**

- Control an active safety threat and/or remove an active safety threat
- Supplement protective capacities
- Can be monitored
- Can be effectively implemented
- Put safeguards in place to ensure children are and remain safe
- Require a responsible person to inform and/or assist to ensure children are and remain safe
- Include parental (caregiver) participant
- Usually involves an outside controlling factor

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86****Safety Planning**

Answer the following questions about the Kelley family:

- How can threats to the safety of Tammy Kelley be controlled in this situation?
- How could you talk about how to control the safety threats with Mr. and Mrs. Kelley in a way that is respectful, engaging, honest, and transparent?
- What kind of safety plan do you think is necessary? How did you come to this decision?
- What will you need to see or hear from the Safety Plan participants to feel confident that they will uphold the responsibilities in the Safety Plan?

Be prepared to share with the group.

Assessing Responsible Party

Must ensure that any parties identified as “responsible” for activities on the safety plan are assessed to determine:

- If they understand of the severity of the situation.
- If their level of concern about the child’s safety is appropriate.
- If their behavior is consistent with their understanding of the situation.
- If they have a history of abusing or neglecting any child.

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Quality Safety Plans:

- Address immediate threats to child safety.
- Are time limited.
- Are realistic.
- Are specific to the child and family.
- Have a monitoring method identified.
- Can include the involvement of others to assure safety.

Rely only on those who have been assessed as able to follow through with the safety plans as “responsible persons.”

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Practice Safety Planning

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Answer the following questions:

- What are the safety threats and serious harm from which the Kelley child needs protection?

Describe specific activities necessary to protect Tammy Kelley.	Who will be responsible for the activity?

- Explain how each activity will control the occurrence of serious harm.

How will the activity(ies) be monitored?	How often will the activity(ies) be monitored?	Who will monitor the activities?

Be prepared to share your responses with the group.

Handouts # 12, 13, & 14: Segment of Safety Planning from CPS worker manual, Safety Plan form, & SACWIS Safety Plan Report

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92****Safety Plan:**

- Authorize
- Monitor
- Modify
- Discontinue

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94****Critical Thinking Step #1: Purpose****Assessing Risk:**

- Family Strengths and Needs (Clinical Assessment)
- Family Risk Assessment (Actuarial)

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96****Strengths and Needs Assessed
during:**

- Family Assessment
- Case Review/SAR

Must be individualized to each family.

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97****Critical Thinking Step #2: Criteria
for Assessing Family Strengths and
Needs**

- Child maltreatment is complex and no single factor has been identified as the cause.
- Many factors are related to child maltreatment, these are used to assess family strengths and needs and risk of future harm.

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98****Four categories:**

- Child Functioning
- Adult Functioning
- Family Functioning
- Historical Functioning

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When assessing family strengths and needs, must consider if each element in each category contributes to risk.

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Risk Contributors Competition

Identify how each risk contributor example contributes to the risk of future harm.
Do this for as many examples as possible.
Do this for at least one example in each category.

Child Functioning

Adult Functioning

Family Functioning

Historical Functioning

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Critical Thinking Step #3: Collecting Information

Caseworkers Must:

- Include all family members.
- Gather detailed information.
- Identify what is relevant.
- Use multiple sources.
- Respect the family's privacy.

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Document in SACWIS

Document information in Activity Logs as it is collected.

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Assessing Family Strengths and Needs

- What questions might you ask Mr. and Mrs. Kelley to gather the information you need to assess adult functioning, family functioning, and historical functioning?
- How might you approach difficult topics in an engaging, honest, and transparent way?

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Be prepared to share with the group.



Handout #15 & #16: Family Strengths and Needs Risk Assessment Checklist & Kelley Family Activity Log

Critical Thinking Step #4: Analyze Information

- What is the quality of information available about Tammy and the Kelley family?
- What of the information is relevant? Reliable?
- What bias do you have that may be interfering with your assessment?
- What is the type, severity, and frequency of harm to Tammy?
- What, if any, historical reports of abuse or neglect are present?
- What is Tammy's age?
- Does Tammy's vulnerability contribute to her risk of harm? If so, how?

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- Does Tammy's physical/cognitive/social development contribute to her risk of harm? If so, how?
- Does Tammy's emotional/behavioral functioning contribute to her risk of harm? If so, how?
- Which of these categories are Risk Contributors and which are Non-Risk Contributors?
 - Self-Protection?
 - Physical/Cognitive/Social Development?
 - Emotional/Behavioral Functioning?

Assessing Adult Functioning

Answer each of these questions about Mr. and Mrs. Kelley:

- Do their cognitive abilities contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?
- Does their physical health contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?
- Does their emotional/mental health functioning contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?

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- Does their domestic relations/violence contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?
- Does their substance use contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?
- Does their response to stressors contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?
- Do their parenting practices contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?
- Which of these categories are Risk Contributors and which are Non-Risk Contributors?
 - Cognitive Abilities?
 - Physical Health?
 - Emotional/Mental Health Functioning?
 - Domestic Relations?
 - Substance Use?
 - Response to Stressors?
 - Parenting Practices?

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Assessing Family Functioning

Answer the following questions about the Kelley Family:

- Do family roles, interactions, and relationships contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?

- Does the resource management and household maintenance contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?

- Do the extended family, social, and community supports contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?

- Which of these categories are Risk Contributors and which are Non-Risk Contributors?
 - Family Roles, Interactions, and Relationships?
 - Resource Management and Household Maintenance?
 - Extended Family, Social, and Community Supports?

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Assessing Historical Functioning

Answer the following questions about Mr. and Mrs. Kelley:

- Does the caregiver's victimization of other children contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?

- Does the caregiver's abuse/neglect as a child contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?

- Does the impact of past services to the caregiver contribute to the risk of harm to Tammy? If so, how?

- Which of these categories are Risk Contributors and which are Non-Risk Contributors?
 - Caregiver's victimization of other children?
 - Caregiver's Abuse/Neglect as a child?
 - Impact of Past Services?

Assessing Family Perception

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Answer the following questions about Mr. and Mrs. Kelley's perception of their situation:

- What does Mr. Kelley's perception of the abuse and neglect of Tammy appear to be?

- What does Mrs. Kelley's perception of the abuse and neglect of Tammy appear to be?
- How do Mr. and Mrs. Kelley appear to perceive their situation?

Critical Thinking Step #5: Generate Hypotheses

What are your hypotheses about the family's service need?

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Critical Thinking Step #6: Synthesis

- Integrate all information about the family
- Necessary for identifying which NRCs are strengths
- Must synthesize within each assessment category to determine the implication of the category

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Practice Synthesis

Answer these questions:

- How do the risk contributors identified on the Kelley family interrelate?

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- What NRCs are strengths? How do these mitigate the risk of future harm to Tammy?
- Using the Safety Assessment and the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment, what is your understanding of the Kelley family?
- What is your understanding of the Kelley family's service needs?
- What additional information do you need?

Critical Thinking Step #7: Decide

**Assessment of Strengths and Needs
guides these decisions:**

- How to use a family's strengths to build their capacity?
- What services are necessary to help the family?
- What additional information is necessary to increase our understanding?

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Family Risk Assessment

Critical Thinking Step #1: Purpose

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- Promotes accurate and consistent conclusions about risk
- Estimates the likelihood of harm in the future
- Supports case decision-making

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Actuarial Model

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- Items in the assessment are statistically related to abuse and neglect
- Pre-tested statistical formulas support the determination about risk
- Not predictive, but provides guidelines to classify the level of risk

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Factors that are associated with abuse or neglect

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Child Characteristics

Parent/Caregiver Characteristics

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Critical Thinking Step #2: Factors

2 sets of criteria

- One for neglect
- One for abuse

For Case Review/SAR, only one set of criteria is used

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Neglect

- Whether the current report is for neglect
- Number of prior reports (abuse or neglect)
- Number of children in the home
- Number of adults in home at the time of the report
- Age of primary caregiver
- Characteristics of either caregiver (parenting skills, mental health)
- If either caregiver is involved in harmful relationships
- If either caregiver has a current substance abuse problem
- If household is experiencing severe financial difficulty
- Primary caregiver's motivation to improve parenting skills
- Caregiver(s) response to investigation and seriousness of complaint

Abuse

- Whether the current report is for physical or emotional abuse
- Prior abuse reports
- Prior CPS service history
- Number of children in the home
- If either caregiver was abused as a child
- If secondary caregiver has a current substance abuse problem
- If either caregiver has a history of domestic violence
- If either caregiver has a major parenting skills problem
- If child in the home has special needs or history of delinquency

Articulating the “why”

For your assigned scale, list the reasons you think the items on the scale might contribute to the risk of future harm of any child.

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127****Critical Thinking Step #4, 5, & 6**

- SACWIS system automatically analyzes and synthesizes the information entered in the CAPMIS Family Risk Assessment (Actuarial) Tool.
- Results in a risk score of low, moderate, high, or intensive.

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128****Policy Override Permitted when:**

- An in-home or out-of-home safety plan is still active.
- Non-accidental physical injury to any age child requiring medical treatment.
- Death (previous or current) of a caregiver's child or any other child in their care as a result of abuse or neglect.
- Sexual abuse cases where the alleged perpetrator is likely to have immediate access to the child victim.
- Cases with non-accidental physical injury to an infant.
- Positive toxicology screen of child at birth.

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Critical Thinking Step #7: Decide

What level of agency involvement is necessary to reduce the risk of maltreatment?

Putting it all together: Synthesizing the assessment of strengths, needs, and risk of future harm

Use the following prompts to develop a final case synthesis for the Kelley Family:

1) Summarize the assessment findings in the corresponding areas below:

Safety (including Safety Factors that are present, Child Vulnerability, Protective Capacities)

- Safety Factors:

- Child Vulnerability:

- Protective Capacity Considerations:
 - Cognitive:

 - Behavioral:

 - Emotional:

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Active Safety Threat?

Strengths and Needs (including Risk Contributors, Strengths):

Child Functioning

Adult Functioning

Family Functioning

Historical Functioning**Family Perception:****Final Risk Level:****Child Harm:****Family History:****2) Write a paragraph that address the following:**

To support the basis for the case decision, evaluate the following assessment variables and their relevance and importance to the case decision: safety factors that are present, protective capabilities, child vulnerability, child harm, active safety threats, risk contributors and the final level of risk, child and family strengths and needs, family history, and family perceptions.

Handouts # 17: Learner Post-Assessment



Areas of further development:

Thank You

Please Complete your E-Track Evaluation!



The OCWTP can meet all your learning needs!

Please visit E-track to check out our catalog of learning opportunities or contact your RTC for more information.