OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES PRACTICE MODEL

Child Welfare Academy
October 10, 2012

Why a Practice Model?

- OCS had none
- Needed a comprehensive assessment process
- Federal requirements
- Consistency and standardization in decision making
- Transparency
- Defined who they serve

It starts with Intake

- Calls and faxes come into OCS through 5 regional intake hotline #'s
- Screen in for initial assessment or screen out when it doesn't meet the criteria
- Community contact information is given if requested
- Protective Services Report is then electronically assigned to local office for initial assessment
- Regional intake – ongoing improvements

Initial Assessment

- Collection of information regarding maltreatment and family functioning
- Determine if children are in danger
- Take action if so

Overview of Initial Assessment

- Present Danger
- Protective Action Plan
- Information Collection
- Safety Threats → Impending Danger ?
- Safety Threshold
- Caregiver Behavior/Protective Capacities
- Safety Analysis
- Safety Plan
- Risk Assessment
- Case Transfer

Safe

- Children are considered safe when there are no present or impending danger threats and/or the caregiver's protective capacities control existing threats

Unsafe

- Children are considered unsafe when they are vulnerable to present or impending danger threats and caregivers are unable or unwilling to provide protection

Present Danger

- An immediate, significant and clearly observable family condition occurring in the present tense, endangering or threatening to endanger a child, and therefore, requiring prompt CPS response.
- Protective Action Plan – immediate plan to keep the children safe
- In place to last a week (5-7) days during which you can gather more information about the family (6 questions)

Information Collection

- What is the extent of the maltreatment?
- What surrounding circumstances accompany the maltreatment?
- How do the children function on a daily basis?
- How do the adults function on a daily basis?
- What are the typical parenting approaches?
- What are the disciplinary practices used by the parent?

Safety Threats

- No adult in the home is performing parenting duties/responsibilities
- One or both caregivers are violent and/or acting dangerously
- One or both caregivers are not/will not control their behavior
- Child is perceived in extremely negative terms by caregiver
- Family does not have or use resources necessary to assure safety
- Caregivers threatening to severely harm child, request placement
- One or both caregivers intended to seriously hurt the child
- Lack parenting knowledge, skills and motivation to assure safety
- Child has exceptional needs that affect safety which parents cannot/will not meet
- Living arrangements seriously endanger the child's physical health

Safety Threshold Criteria

- Imminence
- Vulnerability
- Out of Control
- Observable
- Severity

Protective Capacities

Definition – Personal and parenting behavioral, cognitive and emotional characteristics that specifically and directly be associated with being protective of one's child

11

Child Safety

Children are considered safe when there are no present danger or impending danger OR there is a caretaker in the home (WHO IS NOT THE SOURCE OF THOSE THREATS) whose protective capacities control existing threats

12

What is a Safety Plan?

- The safety plan is a written arrangement between a family and the agency that establishes how the impending danger threats to child safety will be managed
- The safety plan must be implemented and active as long as threats to child safety exist and caregiver protective capacities are insufficient to assure a child is protected

Safety Analysis

- How do the safety threats manifest themselves within the family?
- Are the parents/caregivers residing in the home?
- Is the home calm/consistent enough to allow and/or participate with an in-home plan?

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- Are services/resources available to participate with an in-home safety plan?

Definition of Safety Actions

- *Taking control of an out of control family condition*

Active and intentional efforts made by OCS, the family, informal and formal resources that will assure the responsibility for assuring that a child's basic needs and safety needs are met.

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- How

Case Transfer to Family Services

- Preparation by the new Family Services Worker

- Everyone on the same page about the safety threats to the children
- Determine if safety plan still working
- Assure tribe has been noticed
- Be fully informed about family's case

Introduction

- Start slow
- Show respect
- Earn credibility
- Family engagement – develop rapport
- Review identified safety threats
- See parent's perception of OCS involvement
- Reinforce parent's right to self determination
- Explain the family services intervention
- Do not go in with a case plan already established

Exploration

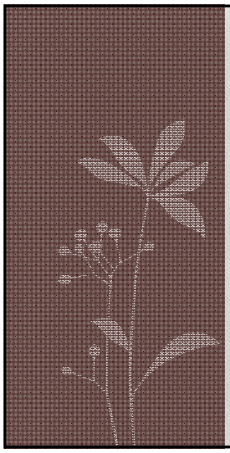
- Safety threats are the manifestation of diminished protective capacities, what is the relationship between the two?
- Explore with the parents and children, if appropriate, what must change in order to enhance protective capacities and address the safety threats
- Motivational interviewing – stages of change
- Consider areas of agreement between OCS and parents regarding what needs to change to create a safe environment
- Usually requires more than one visit

Case Planning and Change Strategies

- Case plan within 60 days of removal
- Collaboratively develop a case plan with the family and tribe
- Seek commitment to the working relationship and case plan
- Focus on the behavior that much change (diminished protective capacities)
- Development of change strategies
- Direct case planning goals toward enhancing protective capacities
- Consider specific needs of the children
- If no engagement by the parent, OCS will determine case plan goals without parents
- Determine best strategies (activities) for parent to achieve case plan goals

Case Evaluation

- While always evaluating the progress of the family on their case plan
- Officially 6 months after the case plan has been developed, the parent's progress shall be evaluated
- Standardized approach for measuring progress
- Identify indicators of behavioral change related to protective capacities
- Analyze the sufficiency of the safety plan – do children still need to be in out of home placement or can safety now be managed with the children in the home?
- Revise family contact plan as needed
- Revise case plan with the parents as needed



It is the truth we ourselves speak rather than the treatment we receive that heals us.

- O. Hobart Mowrer (1966)

Questions and Answers

Thank you for your participation!