

## Safety, Risk And Protective Capacity

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## Competencies

- Assessing safety, risk and protective capacity
- Gathers and evaluates relevant information about children and families
- Assessment and service planning informed by child welfare research and best practice, and that consider issues of personal values, fairness and equity

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## Learning Objectives

- As found in your participant manual
  - Knowledge
  - Skills
  - Values

3

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## Agenda

- Challenges in assessing risk safety and protective capacity
- Overarching principles
- Decision Making Model
- Definitions
- Statewide Assessment System
- Application

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## Rank Order Your Cases



- Here are ten cases
- Rank order them
  - 1-highest risk
  - 10 lowest risk

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## Challenges for Workers in Assessing Safety and Risk

- The Family's Feelings
- The Worker's Feelings
- Time Constraints
- Disagreements about assessment
- Use of Tools
- Objectivity
- Shared Decision Making
- Refresh your skills

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## Rationale for Risk And Safety Assessments

- The law requires it
- Professional values and standards support the practice
- It defines agency parameters
- Consistency in decision making
- Focuses interventions
- Accountability

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## Overarching Principles

- Evidenced Based Practice
- Fairness and Equity
- Strength Based Practice
- Engaging Community Partners

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## Decision Making in Child Welfare

- Steps in Decision Making
  - Information Gathering (more information on next slide)
  - Application of Rules or Criteria that is applied
  - Discussion Feedback
  - Decision/Professional Judgment
  - Reassessment

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## Gathering, Documenting and Evaluation Information

- Who, What, When Where, Why, How
- Considerations in Documentation
- Evaluating the source of information

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## Definitions

- Safety
- Risk
- Protective Capacity
- Minimum Sufficient Level of Care

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## Safety Assessment



- Questions to ask yourself:
  - What is the immediate threat?
  - What is the nature of the harm to a child?
  - How severe are or could the consequences be
  - What is the vulnerability to the child?
  - Who imminent is the possibility of harm?

12

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## Risk Assessment is...



- Future orientated
- Likelihood of maltreatment in the future
- Lower threshold

Page 8

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## Protective Capacity is...



- Ability or wiliness to use internal and external resources to mitigate the safety or risk concerns.
- Looking for the strengths RELATED to the risk.

Page 10

**ACTION SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS**

14

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## What you are looking for



- Behavioral Characteristics
- Cognitive Characteristics
- Emotional Characteristics
- Environmental Protective Capacities

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## Minimum Sufficient Level of Care



**Standard should remain the same throughout the life of the case!**

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## Activity: Scenarios for Safety, Risk and Protective Factors

- Look at the scenarios and develop additional information that raises the safety risk, demonstrates risk, and how the protective capacity mitigates risk.

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## California Approach (Statewide Safety Assessment System)

- Uniform series of factors to be considered at uniform decision making points
- Throughout the life of the case
- Actual tools county choice
- Definitions and Main Concepts

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## Assessment Factors for Safety Determination

- Current and prior maltreatment
- Child vulnerability
- Cultural and language considerations
- Perpetrator access to child
- Violence Propensity
- Social Environment
- Caregiver Protective Capacity
- Home environment
- Ability to meet child's needs
- Caregiver/child interaction
- Safety Intervention
- Pre-placement preventative services

19

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## Referral Disposition

### ■ All Safety Determination Factors

- Plus
- Current and prior CWS History
- Caregiver willingness to change
- Ability to Locate

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## Safety Determination Factors

- The following slides are focused safety determination factors.

21

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## Current and prior maltreatment

- History of abuse, neglect
- Severity of abuse
- Type of abuse
- Frequency of abuse

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## Child vulnerability

- Age
- Health, mental health, developmental delays
- Behaviors
- Use of drugs or alcohol
- Engages in delinquent behavior

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## Cultural and language considerations

- Connections to cultural identity
- Tribal connections
- Primary language not English

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## Perpetrator access to child

- No legal impediments
- Non- protective caregiver does not engage in safety planning
- Caregiver takes steps to protect child

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## Violence Propensity

- Criminal record
- Domestic Violence
- Previous history of violent behavior
- Weapons
- Aggressive, threatening behavior

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## Social Environment

- Connections with:
  - Family
  - Community
  - Church
  - Neighborhood
- Availability of supports

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## Caregiver Protective Capacity

- Engagement with Agency
- Health, mental health history
- Drug, alcohol use
- Parenting, Disciplining
- Ability to Protect
- Family of origin- abuse, neglect
- Communication skills
- Problems with adult relationships
- Socioeconomic status

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## Home environment

- Inadequate, dangerous housing
- Special concerns regarding homelessness

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## Ability to meet child's needs

- Basic needs
- Stable vs transient life style

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**Caregiver/child interaction**

- Evidence of bonding, attachment
- Role Reversal

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**Safety Interventions**

- Safety plan

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**Pre-placement preventative services**

- History of services utilization
- Does situation warrant not offering PPS?

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## Referral Disposition

### ■ **All Safety Determination Factors**

Plus

- Caregiver's willingness to change
- Ability to locate
- Current and prior CWS History

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## Current and Prior CWS History

- Previous Referrals, Investigations
- Founded, inconclusive, unfounded
- Previous responses to interventions

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## Ability to locate

- Availability of caregivers
- Caregivers make child available

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## Caregiver willingness to change

- Actions are congruent with statements
- States there are problems
- Invests in and cooperates with case plan

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## Case Application

- Smith Family
- Carley calls her grandmother because she is afraid when she is left alone
- The mother, Crystal is addicted to drugs
- The mother's boyfriend has been involved with the mother for two years

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## ■ Post test...



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## Case Application

- Dutton McAdams Family
- Three year old Lindsey has been injured while the father was fighting with the mother
- Lindsey has injuries to her face and neck

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## Safety Planning

- Rationale
- Safety threshold definition
  - Four facts
    - Specific observable condition
    - Family condition is out of control
    - Condition reasonably could have a SEVERE effect on the child
    - Effect is imminent

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