

Information Collection for Hotline Decision Making

Session 4

Information Collection for Hotline Decision-Making Objectives

- To learn about the 6 Domains that guide information collection/decision making in the practice model
- To learn new expectations re: contacting additional sources for more information on the report
- To review the stages of taking a call/referral
- To review interviewing skills that support sufficient information collection
- To practice gathering/documenting sufficient information

Structured Information Collection for Hotline Decision Making

- Information Collection/Analysis of the 6 Domains
 - Extent of Maltreatment
 - Circumstances Surrounding the Maltreatment
 - Child Functioning
 - Adult Functioning
 - Parenting
 - Discipline

HOTLINE GUIDED DECISION MAKING

The 6 Domains for Information Collection

What is the extent of the alleged maltreatment? This includes an exploration of all allegations made at the point of Hotline. It further includes the presence of any type of maltreatment in the family.

- What is reported to have occurred?
- To which child/ren?
- When?
- Where?
- By whom, if known?
- Is it happening NOW?
- How often has this happened?
- How severe is it?

What are the circumstances that surround the alleged maltreatment? This includes exploring what events or circumstances were occurring leading up to the maltreatment that occurred. The effort here is looking for precipitating activities or gaining an understanding of the context in which the maltreatment occurred.

- What family conditions/factors exist that allow this to occur or precipitate these events? How long/how often do these conditions occur?
- When is it likely to occur again?
- Are children vulnerable?
- Are these conditions likely to have serious effects on the child/ren's behavior, developmental or physical functioning in the near future?

How do the adults in the family function? The concern here is to understand the general functioning of the adults in the family as adults not as caretakers. Exploration and examination occurs concerning the behavioral, cognitive, physical and emotional function of the adults. Included in this is an understanding of the use of substances, mental health functioning and issues of mood, temperament and domestic violence.

- How does each adult function on a daily basis separate from parental role?
- DV, substance use, mental health issues?
- Employment?
- Relationships with spouse and other adults?
- Emotion/affect?
- Reliability?
- Stability of behavior, etc.?

How do the children in the family function? Here an understanding is gained about the behavioral, emotional, physical, cognitive and social functioning of all the children in the family.

- Describe how each child functions on a daily basis.
- Sibling relationships.

- School performance, day care situation.
- Peer relationships, social outlets.
- Development, physical health, behavioral health.
- Overall mood, any fears.

What are the general parenting practices of the caregivers in the family? This category examines general parenting to include perceptions of children, views of parenting, issues of identification, expectations of children, bonding and attachment of the adult caregivers.

- How does each parent/caretaker view and function in their parental roles and responsibilities in reference to each child?

What are the disciplinary practices of the caregivers? This examines the caregivers' views and understanding of discipline, their methods of discipline, and the effects they believe discipline has on children. This domain explores the breadth of the disciplinary repertoire of the parent(s)/caregiver(s).

- What is known about how each parent/caretaker disciplines the children?
- Broad range of disciplinary skills?
- Uses physical punishment?
- Disciplines when calm/angry, etc.?

Contacting Additional Sources

- A recent decision by DPW and supported by DHS legal staff allows Hotline workers to contact other relevant sources for additional information.
- The expectation is that additional sources will be contacted to gather additional information.
- This applies especially in situations where whether to accept or reject a report is unclear.

Three Stages of the Hotline Contact

- Introductory
- Exploration
- Closing

Select Interviewing Skills for Hotline Calls

- Open Ended Questions
- Closed Ended Questions
- Reflective Listening
- Refocusing and Suppressing
- Probing
- Affirming
- Summarizing

Pertinent Interviewing Techniques for Hotline Staff

The Hotline interview is predominately focused on information gathering and problem identification. The Hotline worker is assisting the reporter to provide information and, at the same time, identifying and interpreting possible maltreatment.

SEVEN Interviewing skills are most appropriate to this type of interview:

➤ Open Ended Questions:

Those questions that allow the caller to expand on a previous question or topic, and do not lend themselves to a "yes" or "no" answer. E.g., "What happened?"

➤ Closed Ended Questions:

Those questions that are used to ask for specific information and that can generally be answered with a "yes" or "no." E.g., "Have you seen Kevin with bruises before?"

➤ Reflective Listening:

This technique essentially involves making a guess as to what the caller means or is trying to communicate. E.g., "So what you are saying is....."

- The first step in reflective listening is to think reflectively. You do not necessarily know what people mean, so you have to reflect on what they must mean and make a reasonable guess.
- Reflective listening statements can be as simple as repeating a word or two in order to keep the reporter talking.

- It can be helpful to reflect how the caller seems to be feeling as he or she speaks. (E.g., “You are angry. You are frustrated because.....”)

➔ Suppressing and Refocusing:

Techniques used to stop non productive content or feeling in an interview and to redirect the caller to more appropriate topics. This technique should be used very selectively and only when the interviewer is certain that the content is not relevant to the report. To use this technique, acknowledge what the caller has said and then say, for example, “I would like to talk with you now about what you actually saw happen to Susan. Tell me when you observed this.”

This skill is also helpful when a caller is off topic, rambling, or repeating the same content. It is applied by redirecting the conversation to the topic that the interviewer wants to gather information on while acknowledging what the caller has said. Example: “I recall you saying that Mr. Simpson...Now I would like you to tell me about the older child in the home.. what was his name...oh David... Tell me about him.”

➔ Probing:

This skill is essential to collecting sufficient information. This is applied by starting with open ended questions, (e.g. “Tell me about what happened.”). As the caller provides information, continue to move toward more detail with more closed ended questions, when, how often, when was the last time, etc. E.g., “Tell me what you know about the family. What about Mom? Tell me about Dad. Does he seem to get angry often? How often have you noticed these angry outbursts? When was the first time? When did you most recently notice him being angry with the little boy? etc., etc.

➤ Affirming:

- Affirming is done in the form of selective statements of appreciation and understanding.
- Affirming helps to demonstrate empathy. Affirming can send the message that you recognize that the caller has a perspective and you understand what their perspective is. Affirming is also used to send a message that you acknowledge a caller's right to feel a certain way.

➤ Summarizing:

- This skill can be used to change topics with a caller or to wrap up the call at the closing phase.
- Connect and draw conclusions regarding material and information that has been discussed.
- Reinforce what has been said, that you were listening and prepare to move along to another topic or to close the call.
- Offer an overall summary at the end of the call, including any steps the caller agreed to take (e.g., contact collaterals, advise family of a service, etc.).
- Example: "So, MS. X, you have called today to express concern about Jimmy not receiving enough food due to Mom having insufficient income. Jimmy is in generally good health. We agreed that you will take Mom to Little Sisters Food Center to show her how to access food there. You also offered to take her there whenever she may need to go."

Information Collection

Exercise: Practice

Documenting the 6 Domains/Information Collection

- In Facts and Facts 2, staff will need to document this information by including headings for each domain in the narrative box.
- Use outline handout as reference for the call.

Handout

Facts Narrative Outline: The 6
Domains

HOTLINE GUIDED DECISION MAKING TOOL

(FOR HAND WRITTEN USE)

THIS IS AN INTERIM TOOL TO BE USED FOR NEW HOTLINE DECISION MAKING PROCESSES PENDING IMPLEMENTATION OF FACTS 2. IT REQUIRES USE OF THE CURRENT FACTS SYSTEM AND THIS TOOL.

- 1. ENTER DEMOGRAPHIC DATA IN FACTS. CHECK FOR PRIOR REPORTS AND ACTIVE CASE STATUS.**
- 2. ENTER REPORT INFORMATION IN THE NARRATIVE FIELD IN FACTS USING THE HGDM DESK REFERENCE FOR THE 6 DOMAINS AND INFORMATION FROM OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES.**
- 3. PROCEED TO USE THIS INTERIM TOOL AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS FOR EACH SECTION.**

FAMILY NAME(S)_____

SW NAME_____

DATE AND TIME OF REPORT:

DATE_____ **TIME**_____ **AM** **PM**

DATE AND TIME OF REPORT ASSIGNMENT FOR INVESTIGATION/ASSESSMENT:

DATE_____ **TIME**_____ **AM** **PM**

INFORMATION COLLECTION: 6 DOMAINS AND OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES

WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF ALLEGED MALTREATMENT?

WHAT ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE MALTREATMENT?

WHAT IS THE CHILD'S FUNCTIONING? (ALL CHILDREN IN HOME)

WHAT IS THE ADULT FUNCTIONING? (ALL CAREGIVERS IN HOME)

WHAT ARE THE GENERAL PARENTING PRACTICES? (ALL CAREGIVERS IN HOME)

WHAT ARE THE DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES? (ALL CAREGIVERS IN HOME)

INFORMATION FROM OTHER SOURCES: (INFORMATION OBTAINED THROUGH CALLING OTHER SOURCES OR SUPPLEMENTALS)