

ASSESSMENT IN FAMILY-CENTERED CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Kansas Child Welfare Professional
Core Training Program



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INTRODUCTIONS

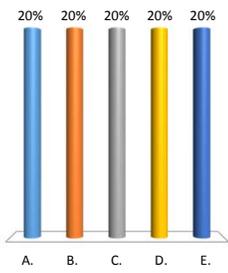
- Name
- Agency
- Position



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The kind of assessment I primarily do (or will do) is:

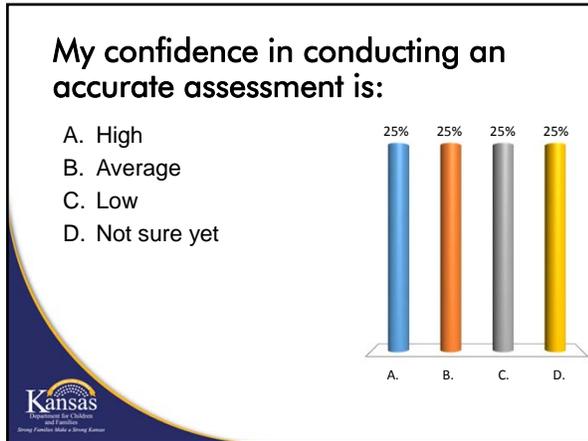
- A. Safety assessments
- B. Risk and family assessments
- C. Others (such as Reunification, Foster/Adopt, etc.)
- D. Combination of the above
- E. Don't know yet



Category	Percentage
A. Safety assessments	20%
B. Risk and family assessments	20%
C. Others (such as Reunification, Foster/Adopt, etc.)	20%
D. Combination of the above	20%
E. Don't know yet	20%



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- AGENDA**
- I. Introductions
 - II. Introduction to the Concept of Assessment
 - III. Fundamentals of Assessment
 - IV. Applying Assessment Skills to Critical Child Protective Services
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- WHAT IS ASSESSMENT?**
- Cornerstone of family-centered child welfare practice
 - Process of gathering information, analyzing it, interpreting it and synthesizing it into conclusions for a predetermined purpose
 - Can be very simple, can be very complex
 - Must be based on thorough, accurate, relevant and current information
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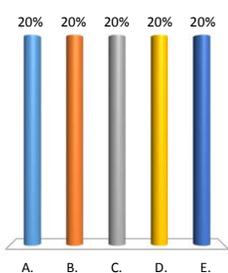
WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE NEED ANSWERED?



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The primary decision to be made at the point of referral (report) is:

- A. Should this case be opened?
- B. Should this case be transferred to an ongoing worker?
- C. Is immediate intervention necessary to assure the child's safety?
- D. Should this referral be accepted as a report and therefore investigated?
- E. Is there likelihood that the child will be harmed in the future?



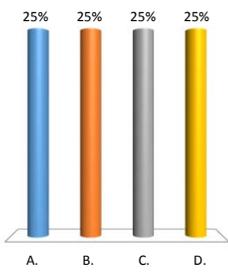
Option	Percentage
A	20%
B	20%
C	20%
D	20%
E	20%



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The primary decision to be made at the assessment level is:

- A. Should the case be referred for further services?
- B. What services can prevent a recurrence of maltreatment?
- C. What are the special needs of the child?
- D. Will the parent agree to a voluntary services plan?



Option	Percentage
A	25%
B	25%
C	25%
D	25%



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The primary decision to be made from a family-based assessment is:

- A. How likely is it for the child to be reunified?
- B. Should the alleged perpetrator be allowed to voluntarily leave the home or should he/she be incarcerated?
- C. Has the child been physically abused, neglected, sexually abused or emotionally maltreated?
- D. What services are needed to prevent a recurrence of maltreatment, enhance the child's development and well-being and assure permanence?

Option	Percentage
A.	25%
B.	25%
C.	25%
D.	25%

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The selection of an out-of-home placement must include consideration of whether it is the least restrictive environment and close to the child's home and neighborhood, preferably with the child's extended family.

- A. True
- B. False

Option	Percentage
A.	50%
B.	50%

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The decision to reunify a child with his/her family should be based on:

- A. The active participation and recommendation of the Guardian ad Litem.
- B. Whether the contributors to maltreatment have been reduced or eliminated.
- C. The dismissal of a supplemental case plan from Juvenile Court.
- D. The expiration of the ASFA time frames.
- E. The wishes of the parent and the child, including extended family.

Option	Percentage
A.	20%
B.	20%
C.	20%
D.	20%
E.	20%

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DECISION-MAKING POINTS

- Point of Intake – Initial Assessment
- Investigation, Safety and Risk Assessment
- Family Based Assessment
- Plan for Placement
- Reunification
- Others



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SEVEN STEPS OF CRITICAL THINKING

1. Knowing why we're doing the assessment -
What are the critical questions to be answered
and decisions to be made?



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SEVEN STEPS OF CRITICAL THINKING

2. Determining the most pertinent and relevant
criteria to be assessed



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SEVEN STEPS OF CRITICAL THINKING

3. Implementing a variety of information-gathering strategies



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SEVEN STEPS OF CRITICAL THINKING

4. Analyzing the information and formulating hypotheses



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SEVEN STEPS OF CRITICAL THINKING

5. Testing hypotheses to assure accuracy and consistency



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SEVEN STEPS OF CRITICAL THINKING

6. Synthesizing information so it is congruent and allows for accurate conclusions



SEVEN STEPS OF CRITICAL THINKING

7. Using conclusions to make well-informed decisions that achieve the desired outcome

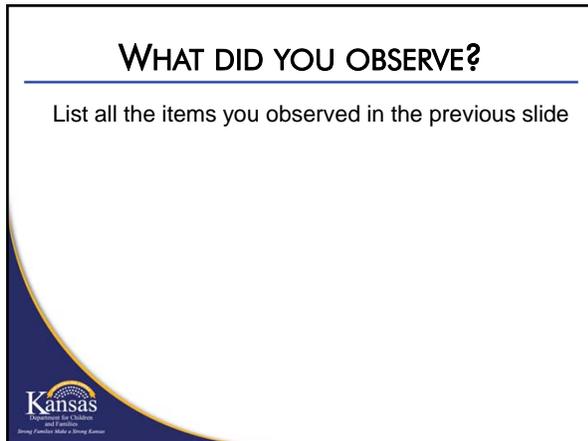


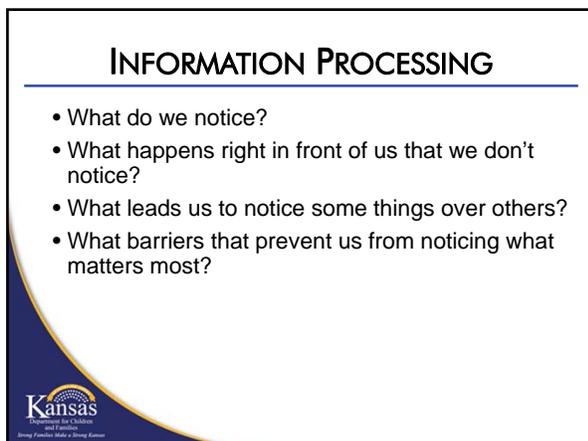
TWISTER OBSERVATIONS

- What struck you most in this clip? Why?
- What type of music or sound played?
- What were the two main characters wearing?
- Why did Jo (Helen Hunt) stare at he coming storm?
- Identify one emotional response to the clip.









When conducting an assessment, salient information:

- A. Is noticeable, conspicuous and prominent
- B. Must be carefully documented as evidence for filing of temporary or permanent custody of the child
- C. Removes the inherent danger of bias or stereotypes when working with culturally diverse families
- D. Is that information that determines the accuracy and validity of the assessment

Option	Percentage
A.	25%
B.	25%
C.	25%
D.	25%

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SALIENCE DEPENDS ON:

- Strength
- Repetition
- Strangeness
- Movement and change
- Emotional reaction

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Relevant information refers to:

- A. Universal truths in the field of child maltreatment regardless of cultural consideration
- B. Information gathered during the safety assessment
- C. The importance of an event, action or stimuli within a particular context
- D. Factors that are reported, noticed or attended to from multiple, collateral sources

Option	Percentage
A.	25%
B.	25%
C.	25%
D.	25%

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RELEVANCE

Guided by formal assessment protocols



IMPORTANT REMINDER

Information input is two-stage process: stimuli attended to and meaning attributed



SO WHAT'S THE POINT?

Our assessments are ineffective if we:

- Draw conclusions with insufficient or erroneous information
- Do not have relevant information
- Speed up the process
- Don't know the area being assessed
- Draw conclusions from only part of the information and allow



PERSONAL FACTORS THAT CLOUD ASSESSMENTS:

- Cultural aspects of the worker or family
- Bias of previous information
- Confirmation bias
- Limited available information



PERSONAL FACTORS THAT CLOUD ASSESSMENTS

- Emotional condition of the assessor
- Personal involvement in the situation
- Environmental conditions



RECORD YOUR "AHAS" FROM TODAY



WELCOME BACK



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TODAY'S FOCUS

- Safety Assessment
- Risk Assessment
- Family Assessment



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SAFETY ASSESSMENT

- Purpose
- Factors



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Safety assessments:

- A. Provide the assessed needs for the family assessment.
- B. Are designed to identify children who are in immediate danger of serious harm.
- C. Are designed to predict the likelihood of future harm.
- D. Determine if the child has been maltreated.
- E. Can identify mild abuse and mild neglect if properly conducted.

Category	Percentage
A.	20%
B.	20%
C.	20%
D.	20%
E.	20%

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PURPOSES OF SAFETY ASSESSMENT

- To identify children who have been or are likely to be seriously harmed in the very near future
- To address immediate and serious harm
- To develop intervention plans to stabilize or make alternate placement
- To provide data for case disposition

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Which of the following are not considered during safety assessments?

- A. Protective capacities of extended family and community supports
- B. Historical information
- C. Factors that threaten the child's safety in the immediate future
- D. Vulnerability of the child
- E. Case plan services that mitigate or eliminate contributors to maltreatment

Category	Percentage
A.	20%
B.	20%
C.	20%
D.	20%
E.	20%

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FACTORS THAT THREATEN CHILD SAFETY

1. Child has serious, inflicted, physical harm
2. Caretaker has not, cannot or will not protect child from potential serious harm
3. Caretaker or other has made credible threat which would result in serious harm
4. Behavior of household member is violent or out of control



FACTORS THAT THREATEN CHILD SAFETY

5. Acts of family violence pose an immediate and serious physical or emotional danger to the child
6. Drug or alcohol use puts child in immediate danger of serious harm
7. Behavior of household member symptomatic of mental or physical illness puts child in immediate danger of serious harm



FACTORS THAT THREATEN CHILD SAFETY

8. Caretaker unable or unwilling to meet child's immediate needs for supervision, food, clothing or shelter to protect from immediate serious harm
9. Environmental hazards put child in danger of immediate serious harm
10. Household member predominantly negative or unrealistic about child



FACTORS THAT THREATEN CHILD SAFETY

- 11. Family refuses access to child or reason to believe the family will flee
- 12. Caretaker has unconvincing or insufficient explanation of child's serious injury or condition
- 13. Caretaker is unwilling or unable to meet the child's immediate and serious physical or mental health needs
- 14. Child sexual abuse or exploitation is suspected and child may be in danger of immediate harm



CONSIDER

- Historical Information
- Child Vulnerability
- Protective Capacities



MAYDAY, MAYDAY

- Engine fire
- 40 MPH winds
- Low fuel
- Co-pilot passed out
- Radio failure
- Missing luggage



A SAFETY PLAN SHOULD

- Address immediate danger of serious harm
- Have explicit time limits
- Be realistic
- Be specific to the family and child
- Include method for monitoring implementation
- Consider involvement of others to ensure protection of the child



A SAFETY PLAN FOR ANDY THOMPSON

- Video



A SAFETY PLAN FOR DERRICK JOHNSON

- Record safety assessment data
- Complete safety assessment, noting safety factors, protective capacities, historical information and child vulnerabilities
- Identify questions for which there is still insufficient information



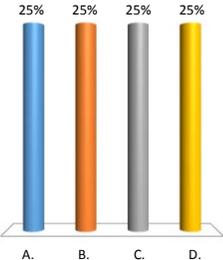
RISK ASSESSMENT

- Principles
- Factors



Formal risk assessment is a highly specialized form of assessment designed to:

- A. Determine the likelihood or probability of future occurrence of serious child maltreatment
- B. Predict which children will be maltreated so preventive services can be implemented
- C. Provide a "triage" assessment to prioritize the most immediate concerns for a family
- D. Complete a family assessment by applying individualized, family-specific criteria that addresses the unique circumstances of that family



Category	Percentage
A.	25%
B.	25%
C.	25%
D.	25%



PRINCIPLES OF RISK ASSESSMENT

- A technology to determine as accurately and consistently as possible, the probability of future child maltreatment
- Designed to estimate the likelihood of serious harm in the distant future
- Provides information to support case decision-making



PRINCIPLES OF RISK ASSESSMENT

- Clinical judgment alone is not enough
- Assessment protocols and instruments are needed to promote accurate and consistent conclusions
- Actuarial models use research data to estimate the likelihood of future outcomes
- Elements of information most critical to estimating future risk are used in a statistical formula to produce reliable and valid ratings of risk



FACTORS ALMOST UNIVERSALLY RELATED TO INCREASED RISK OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

- Presence of substance abuse in a family
- Presence of domestic violence in a family
- Presence of serious mental illness or other mental health concerns in a family
- Very young age of parents, single parent status, increasing numbers of children



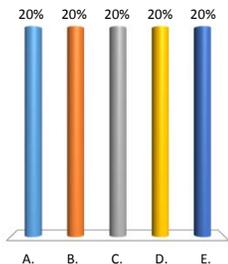
FAMILY ASSESSMENT

- Purpose
- Criteria
- Factors



The main purpose of the family strengths and needs assessment is to:

- A. Engage the family in the casework relationship
- B. Monitor the family and assure they will implement the safety plan on an ongoing basis
- C. Guide agency services and interventions
- D. Document family participation and cooperation if court activity is necessary
- E. Substantiate or unsubstantiate the allegation of abuse or neglect



PURPOSES OF THE FAMILY ASSESSMENT

- To identify and explore conditions in the family and environment that contribute to or support maltreatment
- To identify and explore conditions in the family and environment that constitute strengths



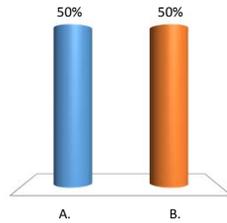
PURPOSES OF THE FAMILY ASSESSMENT

- To delineate specific objectives of service intervention
- To identify the most appropriate activities and services to meet family needs
- To formalize the information into a case plan to guide services and interventions



The family strengths and needs assessment includes criteria about the functioning of the child, the adult and the family, as well as historical information that can both contribute to or mitigate maltreatment.

- A. True
- B. False



FAMILY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- Multiple causes of child maltreatment
- Complicated interaction of personal, interpersonal, environmental and situational factors
- Continuum of serious and problematic conditions at one end and reciprocal and constructive conditions or strengths at the other end



FACTOR 1: CHILD FUNCTIONING AND CAPACITIES

- Self-protection
- Physical, cognitive and social development
- Emotional and behavioral functioning



FACTOR 2: ADULT FUNCTIONING AND CAPACITIES

- Cognitive abilities
- Physical health
- Emotional and mental health functioning
- Domestic relations
- Substance use
- Response to stressors
- Parenting practices



FACTOR 3: FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND CAPACITIES

- Family roles, interactions and relationships
- Resource management and household maintenance
- Extended family, social and community connectedness



FACTOR 4: HISTORICAL

- Caretaker's victimization of other children
- Caretaker's abuse or neglect as a child
- Impact of past services



THE REST OF THE STORY

Derrick Johnson Family Assessment



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**Caseworker Core Module IV:
Assessment in Family-Centered
Child Protective Services**

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SEE YOU AT THE LEARNING LAB!



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