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SUPERVISOR GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE CASE CONFERENCE BEFORE PLACEMENT STABILITY MEETING

REVIEW OF PROMPTS TO CONVENE A PLACEMENT STABILITY MEETING

In general, a Team Decision Making™ (TDM) placement stability meeting is held when the worker for the child or caregiver discovers issues that impact the stability of the child's placement. The child's worker convenes the meeting quickly to explore how additional supports might preserve the current placement or, if applicable, to prepare for a potentially positive move. Supervisors must ensure that the time is right for a placement stability meeting: not too early for serious consideration of placement change, and not too late for the meeting to have an impact.

WHEN TO HOLD A PLACEMENT STABILITY MEETING

- When there is a concern that a placement may be disrupted, and alternative placement needs to be considered. The meeting is held at the earliest sign of tension so there is time to intervene and maintain the current placement.
- When considering moving a child to a new level of care, even for positive reasons (e.g., a move from foster care to a relative home), to ensure appropriate timing and supportive transition leading to stability and timely permanency.
- If the meeting is convened too early or simply to check in, there is no real decision to be made, and it is not a good use of the participants' time.
- If the placement has already been disrupted, notice has been given by the placement provider, and/or a new placement plan has been created, the meeting is often too late to produce the intended benefits.

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CASE CONFERENCE TO PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

A supervisor–worker case conference should be held prior to calling a placement stability meeting to ensure the situation meets TDM™ criteria and to prepare the child's worker to provide a succinct presentation of issues (including needs/worries as well as strengths/protective factors in the current placement) at the meeting. (Use the worker presentation outline as your guide.)

In addition to reviewing the elements in the guide, here are some other topics for the supervisor to explore with the worker in preparation for a placement stability meeting. Be prepared to support to the worker, and actively engage in the meeting discussion.

- Prepare the worker to provide a succinct summary of the situation, including background, current situation, observations, and strengths of the current placement.
- Prepare to use straight talk and share facts respectfully: what has worked in the placement provider family in the past as well as ideas for supports and strategies.
- If the placement history and current concerns are complicated or delicate, support the worker to feel comfortable presenting in front of the youth and/or family by reviewing the most important issues to highlight or by role playing.
- Ensure the worker is willing to hear and consider other options and ideas from TDM team participants.
- Coach the worker to feel confident and ready to make a decision as part of the team, or with supervisor support on behalf of the agency if the team cannot reach a consensus decision.
- Ask the worker what role they would like you to play and how you can be most supportive in the meeting.
- Discuss how the child's parents, placement provider, or caregiver have been informed of and invited to the TDM meeting and how they have been prepared for the meeting, including thoroughly discussing the issues with the placement provider family. Explore whom the family may want to attend the meeting as a support.
- Ensure necessary people are invited, and alert the TDM scheduler of any anticipated logistical challenges or safety concerns.
- Discuss the appropriateness of the child or youth attending the meeting based on the situation and the youth's maturity and development. If the youth will be attending, discuss how the worker prepared the youth for the meeting. If the youth will not attend the meeting, discuss how the youth's voice can be heard (e.g., video, note or letter, picture or photo).
- Consider with the worker what service providers, community representatives, or supports for the youth and/or family should attend the meeting and how they will be invited.
- Ensure the worker has consulted and invited the child's court appointed special advocate (CASA) or guardian ad litem (GAL).

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- Explore with the worker if any of the participants' lawyers have been invited to the meeting and, if so, if the scheduler has been notified. Discuss with the worker if more information is needed to make a sound recommendation at the meeting.
- Be prepared to support the review process if one is requested. Ensure the worker understands that the review cannot be used for supervisor–worker disagreements.

AFTER THE MEETING

Ensure the worker has done the following.

- Confirmed with the placement provider and the child's family, as well as the child/youth, their understanding of the meeting's outcomes.
- Offered support to families and child/youth if the outcome is difficult or unexpected.
- Followed through with all recommendations and action plans.
- Followed the agency's protocols for facilitating the child's move, if necessary.
- Debriefed the meeting with the TDM facilitator and supervisors.

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