

Guidelines to consider when making a finding

Before making a finding on the allegation, the APS Specialist shall review all of the information/evidence gathered during the course of the investigation. The social worker may wish to consider the following relevant areas when assessing evidence.

- A. How does the information/evidence fit together or fail to fit together?
 - 1. Does all the information/evidence tell the same story?
 - 2. If not, what are the undisputed facts and what are the points of difference?
 - 3. Is the description of how an injury or incident occurred consistent with the type of injury or incident?

- B. Are differences in the information/evidence explained by witnesses' different opportunities for knowledge?
 - 1. Did some collaterals have a clear view of the incident and did others have their view hampered by distance or obstruction?
 - 2. Is any adult's or collateral's ability to give accurate testimony impaired by cognitive, memory, or communication deficits?
 - 3. Are the documents original and from someone with firsthand knowledge? (if applicable)
 - 4. How much time went by after the incident before it was recorded in documentation or described in testimony?
 - 5. Were the documents created near the time of the incident? Was the document created in a timely manner or was there significant delay? (if applicable)

- C. Are differences in information/evidence explained by any collateral's desire to affect the outcome of the investigation?
 - 1. Does any person in the case have a reason to be deliberately deceptive?
 - 2. What relationship does the person have with the adult or the alleged perpetrator?
 - 3. Might similar testimony be the result of collaboration?
 - 4. Are any collaterals angry at the adult or the alleged perpetrator?

5. Is the adult or any collateral fearful of the consequences of cooperating for the investigation?
 6. Do any of the collaterals identify with the adult or the alleged perpetrator?
 7. Is the adult under undue influence
 8. Are any of the collateral's motivated by conscious or unconscious bias?
- D. Do pieces of information/evidence that differ as to substance also differ as to the degree and quality of detail, the internal consistency, and the general appearance of truthfulness?
1. Which persons gave specific details and which did not?
 2. Are there inconsistencies within a particular person's information?
 3. Were any collaterals uncooperative or unwilling to be interviewed?
 4. Did any collateral display unusual demeanor during the interview?

