

A Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments



casey family programs.



AMERICAN HUMANE

Protecting Children & Animals Since 1877

Casey Family Programs and American Humane Association Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments

Change Package Measures

OVERVIEW OF DATA AND MEASURES

The measures included below are a companion to the framework. They should be used by public or tribal child welfare agencies to evaluate their own progress on improving the way they use safety and risk assessments in their work with children, youth, and families. There is not a one-to-one relationship between the measures and each of the change package components because the framework breaks down the system into component parts whereas the measures take a global view of the overall system. The change package components describe how each discrete piece of the system will look when improvements have been made; the measures attempt to assess how we will know when the system – as a whole – has improved.

We have chosen both process and outcome-related measures to track the work of this BSC. Although there are many outcome-related measures that agencies can use to define and evaluate safety and risk assessments, child welfare agencies are already responsible for many required data reports such as the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), and state mandated reports. In an attempt to help agencies remain focused on the improvements that must be made to practice rather than on additional data collection, the outcome-related measures for this project have been limited, and are, as much as possible, derived from data already being collected for these mandatory reports. The process measures may require additional data gathering, but we are hopeful of working with site teams to minimize additional workload or effort.

Public or tribal child welfare agencies that expect real and sustainable improvements in the way they conduct safety and risk assessment must track all of these measures. No single outcome or process measure can indicate whether a system is improving. Moreover, sometimes focusing on a single measure will result in an unintended negative effect on another key measure. Thus, the complete body of measures proposed in this document should be used together in a dynamic and holistic way. Additionally, these measures should be tracked on a monthly basis, as this is the only real way to see incremental progress and make adjustments as needed. Even if changes in some measures may not be visible on a monthly basis, it is critical to ensure

that changes being tested and implemented are not having negative impacts on outcomes.

Collecting the data for these measures is only the first step of using data in this BSC. Discussions that include families, youth, staff at all levels, and other stakeholders and partners must be held regularly to evaluate and interpret these data. Data by themselves do not tell a story; they simply help guide what questions need to be asked. Moreover, looking at data outside of their context may sometimes result in misleading conclusions. For instance, while the long-term goal of improved safety and risk assessments is to reduce the rates and recurrence of maltreatment, initial practice improvements may be reflected in increased rates as identification and re-referrals from the community go up, rather than down. This would not be an indication of increased maltreatment, but the rates would make it appear so. The data may help paint a picture; but the discussions around these data are needed to interpret the picture. Finally, it is strongly recommended that all of these measures get tracked by race/ethnicity and age. To identify and address disproportionality and disparities in outcomes for children, youth, and families of color in the child welfare system, all data should be collected and analyzed in this way.

PROPOSED PROCESS AND OUTCOME-RELATED MEASURES

Teams participating in this BSC will track the following key process and outcome-related measures and report them on the Extranet on a monthly basis. These measures are for improvement, not research; thus data will not be compared across teams. Instead, teams will review their own progress on a monthly basis, and seen together with the changes they have tested, will be able to assess whether their changes are resulting in improvements for children, youth, and families.

Teams will be required to track all measures in the first three categories: 1) Family Engagement and Participation; 2) Family Satisfaction; and 3) Child Safety and Risk of Future Harm. In each of the final two categories: 4) Permanency; and 5) Child Well-Being, teams will be expected to select or create one outcome-related measure to track monthly, based on their hypotheses of what will be most impacted by the changes they will be making to the way they conduct their safety and risk assessments. BSC staff will work closely with and support teams in selecting and determining appropriate ways to report these measures.

PROCESS MEASURES

Category 1: Family Engagement and Participation

These measures are intended to track the extent to which families and youth are actively engaged and supported as they participate in safety and risk assessments and associated decision-making. These measures will be further customized by each team based on specific public or tribal agency practices and processes.

- A. #/% of safety and risk assessments/meetings in which family members participated,

B. #/% of safety plans in which family members participated, and

C. #/% of families and youth who report their voices were heard and included in the decisions made about their case.

Category 2: Family Satisfaction

These measures are intended to track the extent to which families and youth are satisfied with the way they are treated and included in the ongoing and continuous assessments of safety and risk. These measures will be further customized by team based on specific public or tribal agency practices and processes.

A. #/% of families and youth who report their contact with agency staff to be respectful, and

B. #/% of families and youth who report their contact with the agency is responsive to their culture.

OUTCOME-RELATED MEASURES

Category 3: Child Safety and Risk of Future Harm

These measures are intended to ensure that children and youth are safe and remain free from future harm based on decisions made by the public or tribal child welfare agency. Each of the first three measures will also be tracked by race/ethnicity based on the specific disproportionality and disparity issues that appear in each team's target site.

A. #/% re-referrals (another report of alleged maltreatment) within six months of initial report

B. #/% of re-referrals of maltreatment (within six months of the initial report) broken down by:

1) Those cases in which the cases was opened and services provided; and

2). Those cases in which the case was opened and closed without service provision (excluding investigation as a service), and

C. Timeliness of decision-making. Teams can choose one of the following based on agency discretion, priorities and/or target population. (All timeframes are those established by the individual agency/jurisdiction.)

1) Screening decision – timeframe allotted following receipt of the referral (whether or not referral is accepted by the agency);

2) Response time – timeframe required to respond to referral that has been accepted by the agency. This may be classified as time allotted for initial face-to-face contact and differ by type and severity of alleged maltreatment;

3) Completion of the Safety Assessment (and, if indicated, the development of Safety Plan); or

- 4) Completion of Investigation – time period allotted for the completion of the agency’s inquiry as to whether maltreatment occurred and the determination of a finding as appropriate.

Category 4: Permanency

This measure is intended to ensure that safety and risk assessments are used to guide decision-making in ways that promote and support permanency for children and youth. Teams can select one of the measures listed below, or, working with BSC staff, create their own measure based on their target site and priorities.

- A. #/% of children/youth achieving permanency within 12 months in one of the following permanency options: remain home, return home, adoption, or guardianship;
- B. #/% of children/youth with two or fewer placements within a 12 month period;
- C. #/% children/youth in out-of-home placement who have regular, consistent contact and visitation with siblings; or
- D. #/% of children/youth in out-of-home placement who have regular, consistent contact and visitation with their parents.

Category 5: Child Well-Being

This measure is intended to ensure that the well being of children and youth is considered when safety and risk assessments and related decision making occurs. Teams will only need to select one well-being measure. Teams can select one of the measures listed below or, working with BSC staff, create their own measure based on their target site and priorities.

- A. #/% of children/youth whose physical health needs, including dental health needs, are assessed as part of the safety and risk assessment;
- B. #/% of school-aged children whose educational needs are assessed as part of the safety and risk assessment;
- C. #/% of children/youth whose mental health needs are assessed as part of the safety and risk assessment; or
- D. #/% of children/youth whose family relationships and connections to their neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, tribe, school, and/or friends are maintained.