SAFETY AND RISK DECISIONS AND TOOLS

This practice idea is a result of the work by teams in the BSC on Safety and Risk Assessments. These are practice ideas that you can start doing today that may improve your work with families in conducting effective safety and risk assessments.

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<th>Overview</th>
<th>Intake workers will ask questions to determine family strengths, resources, and support.</th>
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<td>Why Try This?</td>
<td>By including information on family strengths and protective capacities, the intake specialist is able to gather as much information as possible. Identification of strengths, resources, and support available to the family will help with safety planning and creation of appropriate safety networks.</td>
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<td>How Can I Try This?</td>
<td>Add questions to your intake protocol that elicit information about the family’s strengths and resources, and have one intake worker test them. Do the questions gather useful information? Do you need more or different questions?</td>
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<td>Success in the BSC</td>
<td>“We learned that we shouldn’t just rely on the story that the reporting party gives us. Often times they have information about the child and family that they believe is not relevant and in reality it is and helps to determine the safety of a child. Reporting parties can have general concerns about the well-being of a child but when you look at the whole situation, it may not be as serious as it appears.”</td>
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<td>Things to Think about</td>
<td>Intake workers who are trained social workers may be better able to ask appropriate follow-up questions than hotline staff without casework experience.</td>
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<td>Tools and Links</td>
<td>Larimer County form with questions</td>
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Larimer County, CO

General questions to be asked on all referrals

**What:** Nature of the abuse or neglectful environment.

**Where** is the child now?

**Where** is the alleged perpetrator now?

**When** were the children last seen and by whom?

**How long** has this been occurring?

Have things stayed about the same, become worse, or improved?

**What** school does the child attend and how long is he or she there?

Is the child reporting how **often this occurs**?

Are there any weapons in the home or is there drug use by family members?

**Who else** lives in the home?

Questions specific to referral type

**Neglect**

What specifically did the reporter see?

Description of environment and who saw it?

When did they see it?

Age of children and what they have been exposed to?

Regarding the appearance of the child, what did the reporter see (clothing not appropriate for season, in poor condition, etc.?)

**Emotional Abuse**

What is being said to the child or what did the child witness?

When, where, and how often does this occur?

**Domestic Violence**

Where were the children? Were the police called?

Who called 911 and at what time?

Were any charges filed or was either parent incarcerated?

Did child(ren) make any statements about how they “feel” regarding what occurred?

**Lack of Supervision**

How often and what time of day does it occur?

Do they know where the parent goes at these times?
Physical Abuse
Did the reporter see an injury? What did it look like?
When/where did it occur and by whom?
Have any siblings ever suffered similar abuse?

Drug Allegation
How do you know the parent is using drugs?

Drug-Exposed Child
Is mother still at the hospital? Who else is at the hospital?
Has mecstat been ordered? Types and level of drugs present?
Does mom have a place to go? Do they have a car seat and other supplies?

Sexual Abuse
What, when, who, and how often? Did anyone else witness the incident?
If perpetrator is over age 10, has law enforcement been notified?
Is child reporting that he or she has been inappropriately touched before?
What is the relationship of the perpetrator to the child?

Family Coping and Community Support
How long has the family lived in the community? How long at current address?
Does the family have a telephone, transportation, etc?
Does the family call on others to help solve problems? Whom do they call upon?
How would you describe the child (happy, sad, worried, tired, fun-loving?) Ability to cope: developmental delays or physical handicap?
How does the child do in school and does he or she express any fear/apprehension of going home?
Does the child have friends?
Has he or she had any involvement with the law/courts? Any previous removals?
What does the parent say about the child? how does he or she describe the child?
Are the parents concerned about these problems? How did they react to you expressing concern?
What would you say is good about mom’s/dad’s parenting?
What would the child say about the same?
Are there times when it’s not like this and can you pinpoint anything different about those times?
Are you familiar with any of the extended family?
Who are they and how is their relationship with the family? What do they say?
It sounds like this has happened before. What have you seen the family do to sort this out?
You mentioned that it is not always like this. Can you tell me what is happening when the situation is okay? What is different about those times?
Are there times when the mother is attentive rather than neglectful?
Can you tell me more about those times? What did the parent and child do instead?
What do you think contributed to the parent’s responding differently?
How do family members usually solve this problem? What have you seen them doing?
Are there aspects of your relationship with the family that, in conjunction with our intervention, might help to influence them for the better?
I hear you saying that things are not right with this family. To give me a different view of the situation, can you tell me how you will know when the problem is solved?

**Intervention**

Have you taken any other action in addressing this problem, other than make this call?
Have you talked about these concerns with anyone else who knows the family?
Did you tell the parents you’d be calling? How did they react?
If this has happened before, how has the family addressed the situation?
According to what you know, how did the normal treating parent react to what occurred?
Based on what you know, who is in charge of the family?

**Solutions**

What do you think is the cause of the problem?
What convinced you to make this call?
What would it take to make the child safer?
How will you know when this problem has been solved?
What else happened?
Is there anything else you can think of that you would like to add to this report?