Enhanced Family-Centered Safety-Decision Making
Workshop Objectives

Attendees will understand:

• The EFCSDM initiative CPS has embarked on

• From the perspective of CPS:
  • The Importance of knowing the family
  • The difference between safety & risk and safe child & unsafe child;
  • The concepts of:
    Safety threats - Child Vulnerability - Protective Capacities
What is Enhanced Family-Centered Safety Decision-Making?

- A comprehensive practice model
- Provides a systematic safety intervention approach
- Is the responsibility of all staff at every level within the agency
What is CPS’ Future Desired State?

• Child safety is the focus of CPS intervention.
• Children and families involved in the CPS system will experience better outcomes thus reducing disparities in decision making and reducing the over representation of African American and American Indian children in substitute care.
• Staff exhibit competency in knowledge, skills, abilities and actions that result in safety decisions consistent with agency values and philosophy.
• Staff are supported in their work through adequate preparation, supervision, practice tools, quality assurance, and monitoring.
How did we get here?

Perception that the stages of service assess risk and safety differently

PMC w/out TPR

INV/FBSS Reviews

CFSR

Growth in FBSS cases almost doubled in 3 years

Disproportionality
Will This Be Different From Our Current Practice?

Practice is expected:

- to be more effective,
- to support staff in better engaging & understanding families functioning in making safety decisions; and
- place more focus on the interplay between child vulnerability, safety threats, & parent/caregiver protective capacities.

Better clarity = calmer, clearer decision-making
How do we get there?

2-4 years for full implementation
Collaboration with Outside Entities

- National Resource Center for Child Protective Services
  The Judge’s Guide

- Casey Family Programs
Policy and Procedure

Program Leadership

QA (Measuring Fidelity)

Implementing a SDM Practice Framework

Staff Growth and Development

Supervision

Documentation (Automation)

National Resource Center for Child Protective Services
Safety Versus Risk

Untying the Knot
Why is it important to know the difference?

Vague – loose conceptual thinking leads to:

- Confused decision making
  - Increase in mistakes in *identifying* safety threats
  - Increase in mistakes in *managing* safety threats
- Confusion about safety management and behavior change.
- Miscommunication
Safety

Safe is defined as:

- the absence of threats to a child’s safety in the home; or

- the control of threats by the caregiver’s ability and willingness to adequately manage foreseeable threats of harm to the child in the home.
Risk of Abuse and Neglect

The reasonable likelihood that children in a family will be abused or neglected in the foreseeable future . . .
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>RISK</strong> is concerned with...</th>
<th><strong>SAFETY</strong> is concerned with...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The likelihood of future maltreatment</td>
<td>• Current dangerous family conditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Maltreatment on a continuum from mild to severe</td>
<td>• Severe maltreatment only</td>
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<tr>
<td>• General child well-being</td>
<td>• Specific threats to a child’s safety only</td>
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<td>• Decision making based on an unlimited time frame (any time in the future)</td>
<td>• Decision making based on the present to the immediate near future</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A judgment about any negative effects from future maltreatment</td>
<td>• A judgment about the certainty of severe effects</td>
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<tr>
<td>• All family situations and behaviors</td>
<td>• Family situations and behaviors that are currently out-of-control only</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Evaluating family situations and behaviors that may need to be treated</td>
<td>• Evaluating family situations and behaviors that must be managed and controlled</td>
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All Safety factors are risk factors but not all risk factors are safety factors.
Safety Threats

Safety threats are dynamics, conditions, or situations in a home that, alone or in combination, could indicate or contribute to an existing or developing danger for children.
Some Examples of Safety Threats Related to Present Danger

• Has any child received physical harm that appears to be inflicted (non-accidental), or requires medical care, and where the actual harm is severe?

• Is child sexual abuse or sexual exploitation suspected, and do the circumstances suggest that any child may be in immediate danger of subsequent sexual abuse or exploitation?

• Does any caregiver appear unwilling or unable to meet any child’s immediate needs that might result in immediate danger of serious harm? (Consider physical care, developmental needs, medical care, and mental health needs.)

• Are there indications that any person in the home is a victim or perpetrator of family violence (current or previous) and that the person might place any child in immediate danger?

• Are there indications that any person in the home is abusing drugs or alcohol and that the person’s actions might place any child in immediate danger?
Assessing Child Safety

The CPS worker assesses safety by determining if:

- there is a present danger of serious harm to the child in the home

- the protective capacities of the parents or other primary caregivers in the home are sufficient to protect the child from serious harm, if a dangerous situation exists in the home; and

- any child in the home is especially vulnerable to serious harm, when there is a danger in the home and the protective capacities of the parents or other primary caretakers are insufficient to keep the children safe
Present Danger

Present Danger is characterized by the following:

- Time
- Demonstration
- Seriousness
Impending Danger

- Refers to a family circumstance where a child is living in a state of danger, a position or continual danger.
- Danger may not exist at a particular moment or be an immediate concern (like present danger), but a state of danger exists and may “go live” at any moment.
- Impending danger to child safety or this state of danger is not always obvious or occurring at the onset of CPS intervention or in a present context.
- Can be identified and understood upon more fully evaluating individual and family conditions and functioning.
- Impending danger refers to threats that reasonably will result in severe harm if safety intervention does not occur and is not sustained.
Parent/Caregiver Protective Capacity

- refers to personal **cognitive, behavioral, and emotional characteristics** that are specifically and directly associated with a person being protective of his or her child
- can be observed, understood and demonstrated as a part of the way a parent/caregiver thinks, feels, and acts that makes her or him protective
- “strengths” specifically related to keeping a child safe
Cognitive Protective Capacities

Refers to knowledge, understanding and perception contributing to protectiveness. These can be demonstrated when the parent:

- Articulates a plan to protect the child
- Is aligned with the child
- Has adequate knowledge to care for the child
- Is reality oriented; perceives reality accurately
- Understands protective role
- Is self-aware as a caregiver

National Resource Center for Child Protective Services
Behavioral Protective Capacities

Refers to actions, activities, and performance that results in protection. It is demonstrated when the parent:

- Is physically able
- Has a history of protecting others
- Demonstrates impulse control
- Sets aside her/his needs in favor of a child
- Uses resources necessary to meet the child’s basic needs
Emotional Protective Capacities

Refers to feelings, attitudes, and identification with the child and motivation resulting in protective vigilance.

Two issues influencing emotional protective capacity: the attachment between the parent and child AND the parent’s own emotional strength.
Emotional Protective Capacities can be demonstrated when a parent:

- Is able to meet his own needs
- Is emotionally able to protect the child
- Has a strong bond with the child, knows her first priority is well being of the child
- Is tolerant as a parent
Child Vulnerability

Refers to any child who is unable to protect him/herself

Some things to consider:

• Is any child 5 years old or younger or otherwise unable to protect him or herself?

• Is any child physically impaired, mentally impaired, or otherwise in need of special care?

• Is the behavior of any child hostile, aggressive, or unusually disturbed; fussy, or irritable; or seen as provoking?

• Does any child appear to fear retribution?
Unsafe Child

Children are considered unsafe when:

- Safety Threats exist within the family and
- Children are vulnerable to such threats and
- Parents have insufficient protective capacities to manage or control threats
Safe Child

Vulnerable children are safe when there are no safety threats within the family or when the parent possesses sufficient protective capacity to manage any threats.
Guiding Principles

The goal of Enhanced Family-Centered Safety Decision-Making is supporting staff in making safety decisions for children in all stages of service and is the responsibility of all staff at every level. This is done through getting to know the families we work with well enough to make safety decisions that effect their lives.
Safety is controlled, not Risk
Risk does not equal maltreatment
Focus specifically on protective capacities rather than more general strengths
Families deserve to have us know who they are as parents/children/caregivers if we are working with them.
Each individual family should be assessed separately.
Families deserve for us to clearly explain our expectations while they are involved with CPS.
The 6 Questions

• What is the nature and extent of the maltreatment?
• What circumstances accompany the maltreatment?
• How does the child function day to day?
• How does the parent discipline the child?
• What are the overall parenting practices?
• How does the parent manage his own life?

National Resource Center for Child Protective Services
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SAFETY IS
WHAT WE DO
FAMILY-CENTERED PRACTICE
IS HOW WE DO IT
Questions?