Ohio Child Welfare Training Program

Supervisor Checklist

Group Case Conferences

June 2015

Written by the Institute for Human Services for the
Ohio Child Welfare Training Program and
The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Group Case Conferences

The benefits of group case conferences are many:

1. Families are benefitted when the collective knowledge of all staff can be utilized to problem-solve difficult child welfare issues.
2. Caseworkers can see a connection between their own cases and ideas cited by their supervisor or colleagues that exemplifies best practice.
3. Members of the group contribute their knowledge, skills and experience to case discussions.
4. The team is strengthened and colleagues provide mutual support.
5. Critical thinking skills are developed.
6. There’s an increased opportunity for diversity in perspectives to be heard.

Establishing a Unit Process for Group Case Conferences

For group case conferences to be of optimal benefit to the unit, supervisors must develop a process for how the conferences will be managed. The following are suggested activities:

- Establish a regular meeting time and location
- Develop criteria for cases to be reviewed
- Select cases to be reviewed, and if needed, assist caseworkers in preparing to present the case
- Determine review protocol and make sure all staff are aware of it
Presenting a Case in a Group Conference – Option 1

Some basic guidelines for preparing and presenting a case include:

- Provide a short case summary to all staff prior to the conference, i.e., the problem, strengths, concerns, etc.

- At the beginning of the meeting, state the central issue that led to the request for the group conference. What problem or decision does the caseworker want the group to address?

- Colleagues are encouraged to ask questions as needed to understand the dynamics of the case, and also to surface additional issues that they feel could have a bearing on the case decisions.

- The caseworker should welcome new approaches and questions that may not have been considered in the case. The purpose of a conference is to use the group’s knowledge and experience to determine the best course to follow.

- At the staffing, describe the core features of the children and family’s difficulties and strengths, with a few illustrative details to help the group picture the client.

- Present a succinct narrative, including the most important events of the case history.

- Explain why the problems may have developed that led to the child being at risk, with consideration of at least one theoretical framework relevant to the case.

- Cite the clinical or practical thinking of the worker and supervisor concerning the intervention options available that seem most likely to succeed in meeting the desired case outcomes for the children and family.

- Restate the reason for the staffing request. Do colleagues support the worker’s plan or have they suggested additional issues or questions?

Clinical Consultation Framework – Option 2

**REASON FOR REFERRAL**
- Report details and impact on Child(ren)
- History of Maltreatment

**PROTECTION**
- Strengths demonstrated as protection over time
- Pattern/History of exceptions
- Parents' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive ability to protect
- Presence of research based protective factors
- Assets, resources, support systems, capacities within the family, individual or community
- Parent's perception of their ability to protect/nurture

**PURPOSE/FOCUS OF CONSULTATION**
- What is the worker/team looking for in this consult

**GENOGRAM/ECOMAP**

**RISK AND OTHER COMPLICATING FACTORS**
- Factors that threaten the child's safety
- Presence of research based risk factors
- Conditions/behaviors that contribute to greater difficulty for the family

**WORRIES/CONCERNS/HOPES**
- What are you worried about, in what context?
- (Childs name) may be (harm/concern) when (behavior/action description and when it might happen)
- What is the family worried about?
- What is the child worried about?
- What are the worker's best hopes for this family?
- What are the family members' best hopes for their family?

**GRAY AREA: Speculation**
- Assumptions, judgements, incomplete information, lacking evidence

Next Steps

Written by IHS for the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program