Key Issues in Child Welfare Practice:
Social Worker as Practitioner
Day 1

California Common Core
December 31, 2108

Overview of the Day

• Introduction
• Role of the Practitioner
• Intersection of Key Issues
• Key Issues Facing Youth
• Motivation and Stages of Change
Group Agreements

- Be collaborative
- Ask lots of questions – let us know what you think
- Be open to trying new things
- Be willing to make mistakes
- Maintain confidentiality
- Be responsible for your own learning

Recall Activity

- Think about some of the key concepts from the e-Learning modules
- In your group, read the card prompt and discuss the answers

Pendulum Activity
Activity

- Reflect on what assumptions, feelings, and possible biases may be present based on your response to each statement.
- What are some ways that this could impact your work with families?

Common Errors in Child Welfare

- Making a decision with insufficient information
- Remembering either the very first information or the most recent
- Selectively remembering information
- Being reluctant to change one's own mind
- Focusing in on one explanation

How do we avoid these errors?

WE can...
- Gather information
- Consider alternative explanations
- Utilize family team meetings
- Utilize assessment tools
- Use trauma-informed practices
- Examine own feelings and biases
- Consult with your supervisors
Strength-based Practice

• Identify family strengths and resources that can be used in providing services and supporting a family.
• Use family strengths as benchmarks to assess the status of a family over the course of time.
• Use community-wide strengths to develop resources in the community.
• “The goal of strength-based practice is to activate an individual’s sense of responsibility for his or her actions...through a focus on potential rather than pathology.” (Clark, 2001).

Building on Strengths

• All families have strengths.
• When families and their resources are involved in decision-making, outcomes can improve.
• The family’s culture is a source of strength.
• Building on functional strengths already present in families results in more lasting changes in the family after the child welfare intervention is over.

Benefits of Focusing on Strengths

A strengths-based approach helps families:
• Feel the social worker is interested in their success
• Think the relationship they are developing with the social worker is important
• Feel more optimistic
• Feel more able to make positive changes in their lives

(from Redko et al., 2007)
Casework Components: Practice Behaviors Activity

- Using your assigned Casework Component review the practice behaviors associated with the component:
  - Identify the CPM practice behaviors associated with assessment and support for families where substance use disorders, intimate partner violence, and/or behavioral health issues are present.

Task for Activity: Design a Poster

There are 4 rules:
1. The group can only use the page of chart paper.
2. Only pictures can be used (graphics, symbols, icons, or diagrams are okay; no letters, words, or numbers).
3. All team members must participate.
4. The group will have 10 minutes to make their poster.
Intersection of Key Issues: What to Consider...

- Substance Use Disorder
- Intimate Partner Violence
- Behavioral Health

Substance Use Disorders
Key Concepts
- Substance abuse is an issue that affects all of us.
- There is always an underlying reason.
- Most individuals with serious substance use issues begin using in adolescence. Chronic use can cause fundamental and permanent changes in the brain.
- Primary classifications: Uppers, Downers, and All Arounders
- There is a continuum: Mild – Moderate – Severe
- Impact on children
- Formal and informal treatment options

Intimate Partner Violence
Key Concepts
- Safety first for adult survivors and children
- Hold the person who batters accountable
- Child being a witness is a traumatic and serious event
- IPV is a learned behavior
- Family violence is an equal opportunity
- It’s about power and control
- Acknowledge survivor’s right to choice
- Advocate
- Safety Planning
Effects of Dating Violence

- Symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Engagement in unhealthy behaviors, such as tobacco and drug use, and alcohol
- Involvement in antisocial behaviors
- Thoughts about suicide

Teen Dating Violence Key Concepts

Behavioral Health Key Concepts

Behavioral Health impacts everyone!

- Co-occurring: 4% of those with behavioral health diagnoses also have addictive disorders (9.2 million adults)
- Children, teens, and adults are affected
- Use of psychotropic medication
- Parenting with a disorder
Role of Psychotropic Medication

**PROS**
- Psychotropic medications are drugs that target the brain and affect a person’s mind, emotions, moods, and behaviors. Studies have found them to be effective for specific conditions.

**CONS**
- There are potential serious side effects to many psychotropic medications
- Monitoring of medications is not always well coordinated across all individuals involved in youth’s treatment.

Meet Julie, Charles, Kathy, and Joey

Now what?
- How do these issues intersect with each other?
- How will you be able to identify the core issue(s) for each parent?
- What is the impact on the child(ren)?
- How is the caregiver’s action impacting the child’s safety?
Characteristics of a Case Plan

- Collaborative
- Developmentally appropriate
- Includes youth and family voice
- Incorporate formal and informal supports and services
- Least restrictive setting and modalities
- Strength based, child centered, family focused, culturally relevant and trauma informed

Closing

- Share 3 specific new ideas, tools, or strategies that I might use in my work.
- Share 2 specific things I learned or was reminded about my own challenges with bias.
- Share 1 lingering question about the concepts or content from today.

See you tomorrow at 9:00am!

Preview of Day 2

- Stages of Change
- Role of the Social Worker
- “If there’s breath, there’s hope.”
Overview of Day 2

- Welcome back activity
- Stages of Change
- Role of the Social Worker
- Where there is breath, there is hope

Activity

Commonality

definition

Simple Definition of COMMONALITY

: the fact of sharing features or qualities

: a shared feature or quality

Source: Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary
“If there is a fundamental challenge within these stories, it is simply to change our lurking suspicion that some lives matter less than other lives.”

— Gregory J. Boyle, *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*

### Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Adverse Neurodevelopment
- Social, Emotional, and Cognitive impairment
- Substance Abuse
- Poverty & Disadvantage
- Adverse Health Outcomes

Mechanisms by which Adverse Childhood Experiences influence Health and Well-being Throughout the lifespan.

### Healing Neen
“Where there is breath, there is hope.”
—Tonier Cain

Assume Good Intentions!

• Most parents want to be good parents and, when adequately supported, they have the strength and capacity to care for their children and keep them safe.
• Parents want what is best for their children.

Building the Relationship

“Here is what we seek: a compassion that can stand in awe at what the [families we work with] have to carry rather than stand in judgment at how they carry it.”

—Gregory J. Boyle,
Tattoos on the Heart:
The Power of Boundless Compassion

• What can you do to demonstrate:
  – Empathy?
  – Respect?
  – Genuineness?

Think about how this may be different for parents, youth, and children.

Child Protective Services:
Ways to Build Rapport

• Be open-minded
• Find out what is important to the family
• Use mirroring
• Listen to the family’s explanation of the situation without correcting or arguing
• Ask questions

Ways to Build Rapport (cont’d)

• Clarify expectations and purposes
• Clarify commitment and obligations to the working relationship
• Acknowledge difficult feelings, and encourage open and honest discussion of feelings
• Be consistent, persistent, and follow through
• Promote participatory decision-making (team meetings)

Stages of Change

Precontemplation

Contemplation

Decision to Change/Preparation

Action

Maintenance

Walk-about Activity

• Think of one way that YOU can support a parent or youth in each stage of change.
• Be Specific!
• Visit each chart and write your idea.

What about relapse?
Lapse vs. relapse
• Relapse can be an opportunity to enhance recovery
• Try a trauma-informed response vs. punitive response
  – What happened?
  – What were you thinking of at the time?
  – What have you thought about since?
  – Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
  – What do you think you need to do to make things right?


The Role of the Social Worker

Key take-aways:
• You are not expected to be an expert – consult with your supervisor or other agency/community partner who has expertise in substance use disorder, intimate partner violence, and/or behavioral health disorders.
• You can’t create a plan with just the people you are worried about.
• Safety is paramount.
What are some resources available to you in your county?

In-Home Safety Assessment
Indicators of possible substance use:
- A report of substance use is included in the CPS call or report
- Drug paraphernalia (e.g., a syringe kit, charred spoons, a large number of liquor or beer bottles)
- The scent of alcohol or drugs
- A child or other family member reports alcohol or drug use by a parent
- A parent appears to be under the influence of a substance, admits to having a substance use disorder, or shows other signs of addiction or abuse (e.g., needle marks)

Social Worker Safety
- Review General Home Visit Safety Tips
How do Intimate Partner Violence, Substance Use Disorders, and Behavioral Health intersect?

• When IPV is experienced, it is related with depression, suicidality, generalized anxiety disorder, and PTSD.
• IPV is associated with increased substance use, and increased substance use is associated with an increased risk of IPV.
• It is recommended that interventions for IPV, substance use disorder, and behavioral health be integrated and trauma informed.
• Development of strong social networks have been reported to be helpful.

Let’s Practice

Transfer of Learning

HOPE
Wrap Up

Thank you for attending the training!