

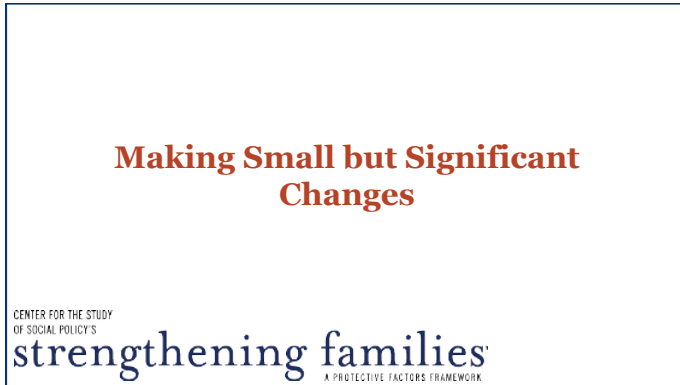
Scripted Curriculum Module:

Making Small but Significant Changes

TIME	120 minutes
PURPOSE	To obtain an understanding of the shifts in child welfare practice that can support families in building protective factors.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	During this module, the participant will learn about: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Protective factors and safety practice2. Applying critical thinking in child welfare3. Building protective factors through core practice areas
INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lecture• Discussion• Small group activities
MATERIALS	Handouts <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.1 Protective Factors and Child Welfare Practice Skills• 5.2 Using the Protective Factors to Identify Relevant Family Strengths (Strengthening Families and Youth Thrive Versions)• 5.3: Using Protective Factors to Develop Tasks and Activities for the Single Case Plan (Strengthening Families and Youth Thrive Versions)• 5.4: Building Protective Factors through Case Work Visits (Strengthening Families and Youth Thrive Versions)• 5.5: Using Protective Factors as a Lens in Monitoring Progress Toward Case Closure• 5.6: What I Can Do Case studies
ACTIVITIES	A series of small group activities structured around case studies

Making Small but Significant Changes

SHOW SLIDE 1

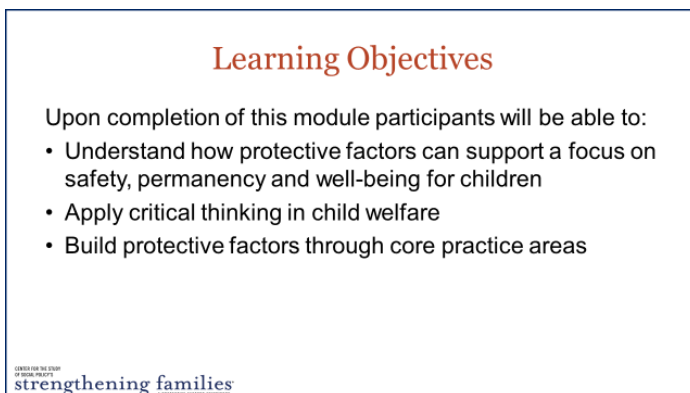


INTRODUCE: The goals for practitioners and agencies serving children, youth and their families are to:

- Meet developmental needs,
- Have developmental supports in place that are informed by an understanding of the impact of trauma on development, and,
- Be intentional about how to support the capacity of families and caregivers to keep children safe while also supporting their early development.

EXPLAIN: In this module we are going to focus on small but significant changes you can make in your daily practice in child welfare to help families build their protective factors.

SHOW SLIDE 2



INTRODUCE: The objectives of this module are for you to learn about how Strengthening Families can support a focus on safety, permanency and well-being for children. You will learn about critical thinking and its importance to child welfare practice. Finally, you will learn more about how

the framework can be applied in the core practice skill areas which make up your larger child welfare practice. You will have opportunities to practice applying Strengthening Families to core practice through interactive exercises.

SHOW SLIDE 3



TRAINER'S NOTE:



For jurisdictions that are not using a safety practice model or the concept of protective capacities, this slide, and potentially slide 5, could be dropped from the training.

STATE: Since many jurisdictions use a safety practice model and workers are familiar with the term "protective capacities," it is important to understand how protective factors relate to protective capacities and the need to ensure safety. First, let's review our basic definitions of safety threats and protective capacities.

EXPLAIN: When we talk about a safety threat, we mean a time when there is an immediate threat of harm to the child and caregiver cannot or will not take action to mediate that threat. When families enter child welfare the first priority is to ensure safety through:

- Timely investigation,
- Safety analysis,
- Safety planning, and
- Removal if needed.

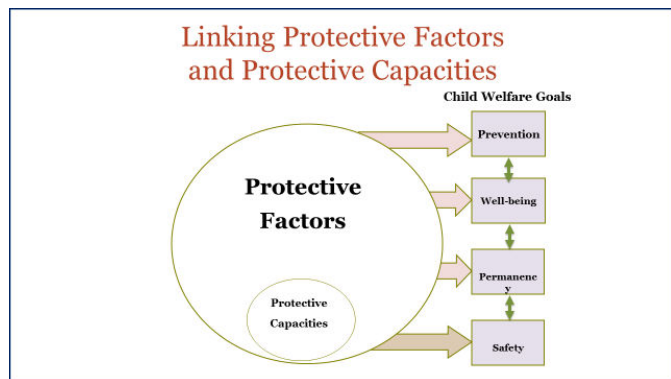
EXPLAIN: When we talk about protective capacities, we mean personal qualities or characteristics that contribute to vigilant child protection. Protective Capacities help to protect children from safety threats by building caregiver capacity to respond in a way that will ensure safety in the face of threatening situations. For example, will a caregiver ask a partner who has threatened their child to leave the home? Once safety is assured, our goal is to build the caregiver's

protective capacities. Protective capacities need to be enhanced before families exit the system because unless protective capacities are in place we cannot be assured that the caregiver will respond appropriately in stressful, threatening or dangerous circumstances.

TRANSITION: When we think about our long-term agenda for families, however, we should also think about protective factors. Protective factors help to buffer and support families when faced with stressful conditions, events or circumstances. Having protective factors in place helps to build the underlying family stability and decrease stress on the parent. Our goal in building protective factors is to ensure that families are connected to what they need in order to thrive.

EXPAND: If we look at the graphic from the opposite direction we see that protective capacities bolster safety. While we need to address immediate safety threats first, we cannot assure long-term safety without having protective capacities in place. Similarly, protective factors bolster protective capacities. If we can buffer and support families in times of stress, that stress will not result in a threat to safety.

SHOW SLIDE 4



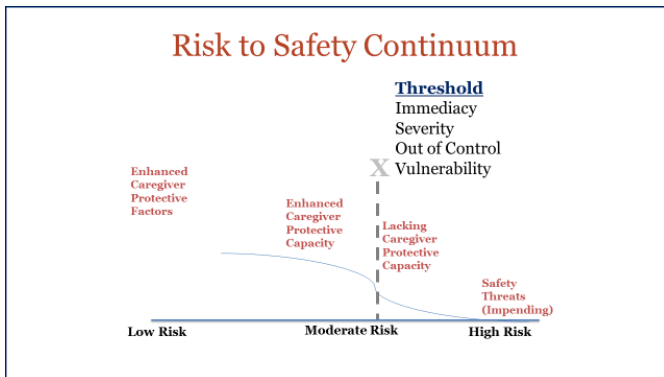
EXPLAIN: Child welfare systems have a complex set of goals. First they have been created to ensure the safety of children that are in danger of abuse and neglect. This means removing children from abusive homes if needed—or *doing whatever they can to ensure the children can be maintained safely in homes—even if abuse and neglect has occurred*. Secondly they are charged with ensuring that children have a safe and permanent set of relationships with nurturing caregivers. As we learned in the previous module these type of relationships are central to a child's ability to heal from trauma. Third child welfare systems need to be concerned about the well-being of children in their care—are they getting the developmental supports they need to ensure that they cannot only heal, but thrive? Finally, child welfare systems should be concerned with the prevention of abuse and neglect.

Both protective factors and protective capacities are necessary for child welfare systems to meet their goals, as illustrated here.

- Both protective factors and protective capacities help to support safety as well as permanency, well-being and prevention goals.
- The Strengthening Families Protective Factors bolster and enhance protective capacities.

EXPAND: Protective factors encompass protective parental capacities and provide a broader frame to support a well-being agenda that goes beyond response to safety threats and includes prevention and the building of strengths that can support long-term well-being.

SHOW SLIDE 5



STATE: This chart demonstrates the intersection of safety, risk, protective capacities and protective factors and shows how a protective factors approach impacts safety over time.

EXPLAIN: When we come into contact with families, our first concern is ensuring we are addressing anything that would place the child on the other side of the safety threshold. This concern requires us to immediately respond to safety threats and to promote caregiver protective capacity. As we work with the caregiver on protective capacity we help to move them up the curved line so when challenging situations happen they are less likely to respond in ways that will put the child in danger. In this way, we are moving the family from high risk to moderate risk.

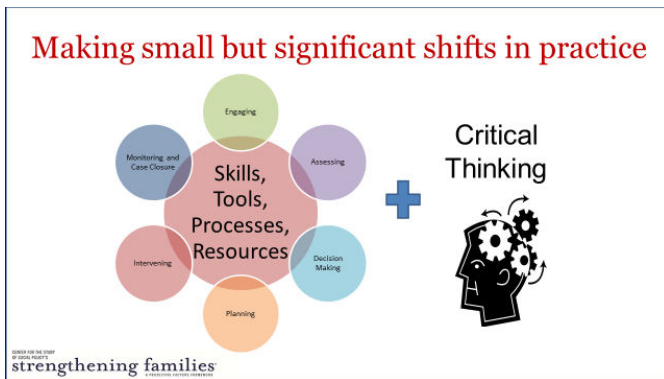
EXPAND: When we build protective factors we are helping to build the underlying strengths in the family so that they will be less likely to be in situations where they need to protect the child. In this way we start to move the whole line over so that safety threats are less likely to occur.

TRAINER'S NOTE:



This slide includes animation to show the curve moving to the left. Click to advance the animation during the final "Expand" section of the script.

SHOW SLIDE 6



TRAINER'S NOTE:



This slide and the larger presentation may also need to be adapted to reflect the practice model of the jurisdiction.

STATE: If we want to apply a protective factors approach consistently, we need to think critically about our everyday practice and how we make the protective factors part of the core practices that make up our child welfare work. The graphic in this slide shows the child welfare practice wheel.

EXPLAIN: As you can see, the core practice skills are:

- **Engagement**, developing and maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship with children, youth and families that is built on respect, trust, trustworthiness and genuineness.
- **Assessment**, gathering, analyzing and organizing information to support understanding and decision-making. This process continues throughout the life of a case.
- **Decision-Making**, a process of engaging parents, caregivers and youth in the core decisions about how to achieve safety, permanency and well-being. This practice skill includes engaging families' existing networks of support, both formal and informal, and brings in new partners to support their goals. Also important is working closely with other resource staff who assist families, such as health and education liaisons or visitation and transportation specialists.
- **Planning**, the process of engaging parents, caregivers and youth in identifying services and supports that can assist them in achieving jointly developed goals. This process can also serve as an opportunity to assist the parent, caregiver and youth in recognizing and understanding developmental needs.
- **Intervening**, the use of self as an active change agent with the family. Intervening means engaging in purposeful interactions, capturing just-in-time moments to transfer information and adjusting actions that were planned. This also includes the delivery of services in a

timely and competent manner consistent with identified needs and goals. Observation and active listening skills are necessary.

- Lastly, the practice skill of **Monitoring and Case Closure** encapsulates two ideas.
 - First, this skill entails the ongoing process of evaluating interventions, services and supports and making modifications when strategies are determined to be ineffective, new preferences are identified by the family, new needs or circumstances arise and/or goals are met and transitions to case closure are made.
 - It also includes creating clarity with families about the conditions for case closure, and preparing families to transition from system involvement in a way that consolidates and continues to build strengths.

RECAP: These are the six core elements of your child welfare practice. So when we refer to a shift in child welfare practice, we are talking about these six skills that social workers and others have been trained to carry out. You can carry out all of this work in ways that reflect a protective factors approach, depending on what you do, how you do it and who you do it with.

STATE: Applying a protective factors lens across these practice areas also requires us to bring critical thinking skills to the table. Critical thinking supports our ability to make decisions in real time—to make decisions based on facts and not assumptions, to suspend our judgments.

DISTRIBUTE Handout 5.1: "Protective Factors and Child Welfare Practice Skills"

STATE: This handout describes how the protective factors can inform the way in which we approach each of our core practice areas.

SHOW SLIDE 7

Critical thinking starts with an attitude of:

- Open-mindedness
- Healthy skepticism
- Intellectual humility
- High motivation

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STATE: In child welfare we are asked to make decisions all the time—decisions that will have tremendous impacts of the lives of the families we serve. The situations we face are often complex, challenging and filled with emotion. To do our job well we need to pay attention to our critical thinking skills and be sure that we are making the best decisions possible.

EXPLAIN: Becoming a proficient critical thinker in the child welfare field requires you to develop the proper attitude—an attitude that embodies the following key attributes:

- Open-mindedness,
- Healthy skepticism,
- Intellectual humility, and,
- High motivation.

ASK: What do these words mean to you?

PROMPT: [If you are not getting the answers you need you can wrap up by providing these ideas:

- Open-mindedness—not coming in with set ideas, but truly being open to understanding other's perspectives and solutions.
- Healthy skepticism—not taking things at face value but testing what you see and hear to make sure you are understanding the real situation.
- Intellectual humility—recognizing that you don't have all the answers—listening to other's perspectives and getting help when you need it.
- High motivation—keeping grounded in why you do the work you do and remembering that you are here to help, not judge.]

SHOW SLIDE 8

Critical Thinking Skills in Child Welfare

- Separate facts from judgments/assumptions,
- Recognize the likelihood of bias in his or her personal opinions,
- Temporarily suspend judgement,
- Develop and evaluate multiple reasonable explanations,
- Follow up on insufficient information,
- Recognize personal limitations in knowledge and experience,
- Effectively seek out and draw upon available resources,
- Look for patterns rather than simply examining singular facts in isolation, and
- Question both assessments made by others *and* personal assessments.

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EXPAND: To be open minded and apply critical thinking skills, it's important, first, to be aware of your own values and how they influence your perceptions and decisions, as well as your interactions with the children, families and communities you serve. Remember from our discussion of “cultural filters” in the first module of this course – if you are having a hard time engaging with a family or find yourself feeling uncomfortable or judgmental about a situation, it is a good time to talk with your supervisor about how to move forward with a family.

SHOW SLIDE 9

Applying Critical Thinking in Child Welfare

- Step One:
 - Beginning: examine and organize known facts, self awareness
- Step Two:
 - Gaining perspective: gather, analyze and evaluate information
- Step Three:
 - Moving on: reflect and begin again

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FOR CHILD WELFARE

TRANSITION: With that attitude in mind, we can consistently apply these steps of critical thinking:

1. Examining and organizing the available information, including awareness of our own perspective and potential biases in the situation,
2. Gathering, evaluating and analyzing further information to gain perspective on the situation, and,
3. Reflecting and moving on, continuing the critical assessment of the situation.

SHOW SLIDE 10

Building protective factors as you engage families

- It is about how you are
 - It's about what you encourage families to do
 - It's about how you structure your relationship with families

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Engaging

STATE: It can be challenging to build positive relationships with parents in the child welfare system—not only because most parents feel threatened and defensive when they first encounter the system, but also because many of the parents we see in our work have had negative experiences with systems in the past. We need to put in extra effort to make sure families feel welcomed and accepted. Although a meaningful relationship is difficult to forge when individuals are not involved voluntarily in the child welfare agency, the way we begin our relationship with families will inevitably impact the course our work takes.

ASK: For families to fully engage with you they need to feel:

- That you're listening to them
- That you respect them
- That they can trust you
- That you can help them with issues that they are worried about

TRAINER'S NOTE:



At this point you might want to write (on paper or a whiteboard): Listening – Respect – Trust – Help.

Ask participants to name a few simple things that they do, or could do, to demonstrate these things to families.

EXPLAIN: Protective factors can provide an effective framework for building the type of strengths-based relationships that are at the heart of effective family engagement. Most fundamentally, this is a question of your attitude toward the parents and caregivers you are trying to engage. We must always remember that our interactions should be focused on developing a partnership with the parent in order to reach the goals of safety, permanency and well-being for the child or children in the home.

SHOW SLIDE 11

Engaging Families: Actions that Can Take Place in Every Interaction

- ✓ Project a positive and strengths-based approach to the family
- ✓ Deepen your understanding of family and child strengths
- ✓ Monitor children's developmental progress, needs, environment and social emotional well-being and share information with parents
- ✓ Provide "just in time" parenting education
- ✓ Connect the family to resources
- ✓ Help caregivers identify trusted friends, family members and professionals who they can turn to for support;
- ✓ Emphasize the importance of self-care

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PROVIDING SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

STATE: One of the most important aspects of the Strengthening Families approach is the idea that the way we engage and interact with families is important and can be tremendously impactful. In our day-to-day interactions with families, there are opportunities to engage with them in a way that helps to build protective factors. The goal of this course is to build your skills to be intentional in using these opportunities. Listed here are just some of the everyday actions we can take to support family protective factors.

STATE: In any interaction with a family, you can project a positive and strengths-based approach and deepen your understanding of the strengths of a particular child and family. Your approach must be grounded in the belief that all families have strengths, including families who face serious challenges and/or are involved in the child welfare system. Identifying and building upon a family's strengths are essential to implementing the Strengthening Families approach.

EXPAND: Child Trends has defined family strengths as:

- "The set of relationships and processes that support and protect families and family members, especially during times of adversity and change. Family strengths help to

maintain family cohesion while also supporting the development and well-being of individual family members."

EXPLAIN: Your work with families provides you with many opportunities every day to acknowledge that parents are experts on their families and want to do right by their children. Your role is to actively help parents build their knowledge while also providing ideas on how to integrate new parenting skills and strategies into their daily life. A strengths-based, family-focused approach also encourages shared decision-making.

STATE: Of course, it is important to remember that focusing on strengths does not mean ignoring the challenges that families face. Nor does it mean that we don't hold people accountable for their actions. It does not eliminate the need to address barriers such as poverty, abuse, neglect and other hardships that are very real and devastating for too many children and youth. Personal issues such as substance abuse or mental illness that families will need to address or plan around in order to keep their children safe also cannot be ignored. It will be harder to identify the strengths of some families you encounter because of their current circumstances. In those cases, taking a strengths-based approach will help you to see the potential for growth and, even more important, will help the families see that potential – recognizing the strengths they have and working through how they can use those strengths to overcome the challenges they face.

ACTIVITY 1: Using Protective Factors to Identify Relevant Family Strengths

ASK: Why is identifying family strengths an important step in engaging families? [take a few answers]. Summarize by saying—when we can mirror family strengths back to them it helps them feel that they are heard and respected and that they can trust us to be their ally.

SHOW SLIDE 12

Including protective factors in assessment



- Include protective factors in formal assessments
- Regularly ask questions and observe
- Share information with families

ASSESS & UNDERSTAND

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STATE: If we want to make protective factors part of our work with families, we need to gather and include information on families' protective factors—both the protective factors that they have in place that we can build on, and their own goals for building their protective factors. In our work in the United States we have done a few things:

- Formally adapted existing assessment tools to include questions about the protective factors
- Developed a series of questions to ask and observational guides that child welfare workers can use in their day-to-day interactions with families

EXPAND: It is important to remember that assessment isn't just something that we do to families. It is also an important part way to engage families. We use information on family protective factors as an important way to open the door to conversations about family strengths and areas where families would like to build their capacities.

ACTIVITY 2: Assessing Families from a Protective Factors Perspective

SHOW SLIDE 13

Including parents in decision making	
Protective Factor	How including parents in decision making builds it
Parental Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat parent as a respected decision-maker Build problem solving skills
Knowledge of parenting and child development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an opportunity to reinforce parents knowledge by making child development issues a central goal Explicitly address parenting issues that have brought the family to CPS Provide coaching to parent
Social Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage trusted members of the family's network Model and reinforce relational skills
Concrete supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate supports across multiple partners Put parent in a leadership role in deciding what supports will be helpful Address barriers to accessing supports
Social emotional competence of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage child in teaming whenever possible

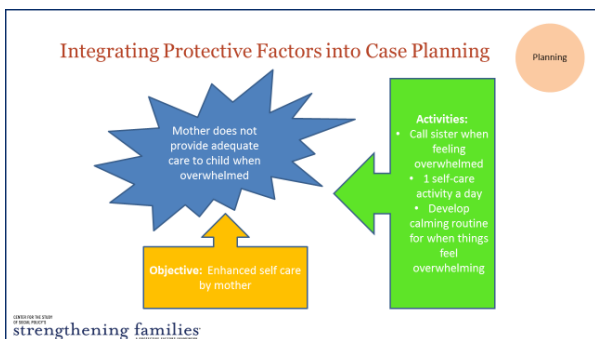
STATE: The next core practice element is decision-making—or the process of making key decisions about what needs to happen to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the child. Every decision-making opportunity in child welfare is also an opportunity to support and enhance parental protective factors if we engage parents as partners in the decision-making process.

EXPLAIN: In the US we often use a process of teaming for child welfare decision-making. This is a deliberate and structured approach for involving youth and families in decision-making through facilitated meetings of the family, their identified supports and professionals working with the family. It requires creating an environment of willingness to plan and act together. Elements of the teaming process that we think are crucially important to the child welfare decision-making process are as follows:

- Families are at the heart of the decision-making process, their voices are heard, and their perspectives taken into account.
- Families are encouraged to invite others who can play a part in ensuring the child's safety, well-being and permanency.
- Teaming provides an opportunity to bring together all those involved in the family's life for joint decision-making.
- A trained facilitator manages the process
- Families receive support before, after and during the meeting to ensure they can participate fully.
- If working with families who have older children, ensure that youth's voices are included in the decision making process and their opinions and concerns are also considered and addressed. (Reference Youth Thrive materials and tools on CSSP website for staff working with adolescents)

STATE: There is a natural connection between the strengths-based approach taken in teaming and Strengthening Families. Each of our team conferences provides an important opportunity to build protective factors. For teaming to truly support the building of protective factors, there needs to be an intentionality about bringing Strengthening Families into the teaming conversations.

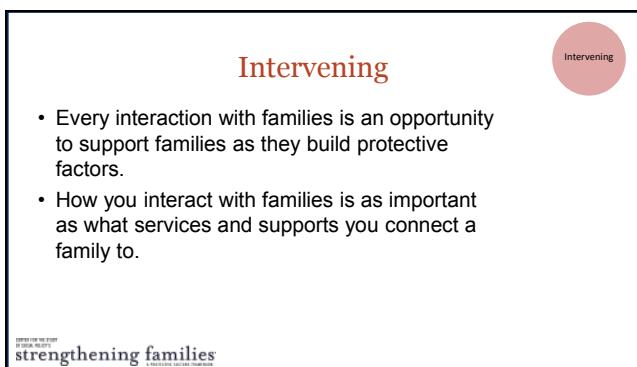
SHOW SLIDE 14



STATE: The next area of the practice wheel is planning. Case planning is the process of going from decisions about the direction of a case to an action plan that will support these decisions. Protective factors can help to shape and inform the objectives and actions that are part of a case plan. In this slide, the blue burst represents an issue that contributed to the family's child welfare involvement. The yellow box represents a protective factor related objective—this one being related to the mother's strengthening her resilience in the face of stressful situations. The green box represents the specific, concrete and observable actions the mother will take to reach that objective.

ACTIVITY 3: Using Protective Factors to Develop Case Plan Objectives and Activities

SHOW SLIDE 15



STATE: Intervening includes the ongoing case work with families. This is our next stop on the practice wheel. We tend to think of interventions as being primarily focused around the services we are connecting families to. These services are certainly important, but every interaction we

have with families is an opportunity to build protective factors—even, and perhaps especially, our day-to-day interactions with families.

ACTIVITY 4: Building Protective Factors through Case Work Visits

SHOW SLIDE 16

Monitoring and Case Closure

- Has the family made progress on their own protective factors goals?
- Can the family use their protective factors & new skills to prevent repeating the problems that brought them to the attention of child protection system?
- Does the family have a plan in place to continue to use/support protective factors once they are no longer involved with the child welfare system?

Monitoring /Case Closure

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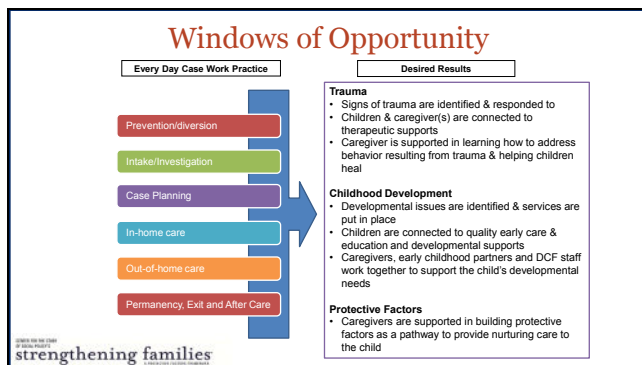
STATE: Just as we monitor other aspects of case progress, we also want to stay attuned to changes in the family's protective factors. This slide articulates some of the key questions that we should be asking at these moments in the life of a case. As we think about the ways in which we track and monitor progress in a case (for example, progress notes, case records and court reports), we want to examine whether we are including information that helps to answer these questions.

DISTRIBUTE Handout 5.5 "Questions to Consider around Case Closure"

STATE: This handout is one that you might find useful to fill out as you consider whether a family in your caseload is ready for case closure or another transition. Typical areas of progress are listed, with ample room for you to fill in other notes on indicators of progress related to these questions that can give you insight into how a family is making progress toward being able to ensure their children's safety and well-being. For today, we are going to apply the ideas in the worksheet to the fictional family in your case study.

ACTIVITY 5: Family Progress toward Case Closure

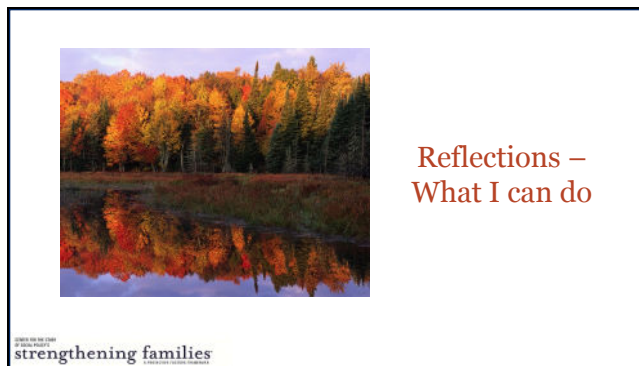
SHOW SLIDE 17



STATE: The Protective Factors framework applies not only across the practice wheel, but also to all phases of child welfare work—ranging from prevention efforts to the methods we use to support families after they exit our system. By applying a Strengthening Families approach across the full continuum of child welfare services, we create opportunities to build protective factors over time.

STATE: The image on this slide shows how all of these phases of child welfare work contribute to desired results related to a better response to trauma; greater responsiveness to the needs of infants, toddlers, and young children; and greater support for families to build protective factors through their involvement with child welfare. All in all, the Strengthening Families approach provides tools and guidance to help us ensure that families leave the child welfare system in better shape than they entered it – more able to keep their children safe, and more able to thrive.

SHOW SLIDE 18



CONCLUDE: Are there any final thoughts or questions?

STATE: As we wrap up this module, please take some time to reflect on how you can apply this information in your current practice.

Making Small but Significant Changes Activities

ACTIVITY 1: Using Protective Factors to Identify Relevant Family Strengths

TIME	15 minutes
PURPOSE	To practice identifying strengths in a family from a protective factors perspective.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	<p>Upon completion of this activity, participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize that all families have strengths • Apply the protective factors framework in their approach to families
INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD	Small group discussions
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies (each participant should have their own copy of the case study, and each small group should have a case study to focus on) • Handout 5.2: Using the Protective Factors to Identify Relevant Family Strengths
DIRECTIONS	<p>Participants should begin by reading through the case study they have been assigned. Explain that they will work with this case study throughout this module. As a group they may choose to add details to the case study and increase their shared understanding of this family's situation. Ask participants to work together to answer any questions they might have after reading the provided case study.</p> <p>Groups should then turn their attention to the handout about using the protective factors to identify strengths. These strengths can be harnessed to help the address the issues that brought the family to the child welfare system.</p> <p>Participants should use the worksheet to identify strengths they see in the family in the case study. Explain that in their actual practice, they could set aside a time to talk with the family about the strengths they see, the strengths the family sees for themselves and how they can build on these strengths to resolve the issues that are impacting their child.</p>

ACTIVITY 2: Assessing Families from a Protective Factors Perspective

TIME	15 minutes
PURPOSE	To consider assessment of a family from a case study with a focus on one protective factor.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Upon completion of this activity, participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have an understanding of the questions to ask and things to look for related to one protective factor• Apply the same process to other protective factors and other families.
INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD	Small group discussions, large group processing.
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case study handouts• Protective Factor Research Briefs – handouts from module 2
DIRECTIONS	<p>Each small group should continue to work with the case study they used in activity 1. All participants should have copies of the research briefs for all five protective factors from module 2, but each small group should focus on one protective factor for this exercise.</p> <p>In small groups, participants look at “Questions to ask” and “What to Look For” about one protective factor in particular. Group discussion should be used to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify specific questions they would ask of the family in the case study to assess them on this protective factor.2. Identify some of the strengths and needs of the family in the case study. <p>Report back to the large group about what was discussed; at least one group should report on each protective factor so that all are addressed.</p>

ACTIVITY 3: Using Protective Factors to Develop Case Plan Objectives and Activities

TIME	15 minutes
PURPOSE	To develop objectives and activities related to protective factors.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Upon completion of this activity, participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider objectives and activities for the case plan in relation to protective factors
INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD	Small group discussions
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handout 5.3: Using Protective Factors to Develop Tasks and Activities for the Single Case Plan
DIRECTIONS	The handout shows sample objectives and activities for each protective factor. Participants should read through the examples and then work together to identify objectives for the family in their case study, for at least two of the protective factors.

ACTIVITY 4: Building Protective Factors through Case Work Visits

TIME	20 minutes
PURPOSE	To think through how to apply a protective factors approach through case work visits.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Upon completion of this activity, participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support families in building their protective factors through case work visits.
INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD	Individual reading; small group discussion.
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handout 5.4: Building Protective Factors through Case Work Visits
DIRECTIONS	<p>Distribute the handout and worksheet entitled "Building Protective Factors through Case Work Visits." Give participants time to read through the handout and ask them to think about steps they would take in a case work visit with the family in their case study and which protective factor that action would most support.</p> <p>Once everyone has finished reading, each small group should discuss the steps they would take in their next visit with the family from the case study. Encourage groups to build on their growing understanding of the family in the case study, even if they have to supplement the provided information.</p> <p>Remind participants to consider which protective factor would be most strengthened by each of the action steps they identified.</p> <p>After 5-10 minutes of small group discussion, ask for some participants to share action steps they identified. Ask for action steps related to each protective factor to be sure you get a variety of examples.</p>

ACTIVITY 5: Family Progress Toward Case Closure

TIME	15 minutes
PURPOSE	To brainstorm ways that a case study family might show progress toward readiness for case closure.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	Upon completion of this activity, participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand a protective factors approach to monitoring family progress and assessing readiness for case closure• Apply these ideas with families in their own caseload
INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD	Small group discussions
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handout 5.5: Questions to Consider Around Case Closure
DIRECTIONS	<p>In small groups, participants should review the worksheet and discuss the questions presented, related to the family in the case study they have been working with. Participants will need to consider characteristics of the family, the challenges they were facing in the case study description, and the strengths identified in an earlier activity – as well as any embellishments they have added as a group throughout this module. Based on all of this information, participants should brainstorm ways that the family might make progress toward case closure related to each of the questions on the worksheet. What progress would the participants like to see this family make that would indicate readiness for case closure? What developments might take place that would put the family in a better position to ensure child safety and well-being once their case is closed?</p> <p>Ask participants to focus on the positive and the ways they would like to see this family progress – not indicators that the family is not ready or that the situation is getting worse. Our goal with this exercise is to envision positive progress for the family and identify indicators we might see of that progress.</p>