



Department of

Children's Services

Quality Contacts with Children and Families

Strengthening Engagement and Assessment

Quality Contacts with Children and Families

Unit One

Construction of a Quality Contact

What do we mean by “digging deeper”?



Why is it so important?



- Why is it important to have quality contacts with children, families, and other case members?

Quality Contacts vs. Documentation

“If it isn’t in TFACTS, it didn’t happen.”

**...but if it didn’t happen, it will never make it in
TFACTS**

Policy Relating to Quality Contacts

CPS

14.7 - CPS
Investigation Track

14.16 - CPS Case
File Organization

14.26 - CPS
Assessment Track

JJ & FSS

13.1 - Supervision
of Youth
Adjudicated
Delinquent for
Custodial and
Non-Custodial
Youth

14.29 - Family
Support Services
Worker (FSSW)
Responsibilities

Custodial

16.8 - Responsibilities
of Approved Foster
Homes

16.38 – F2F Visitation
with D & N Unruly
Children in DCS
Custody

Visitation
Protocol
Attachment

Visitation Plan
Work Aid

General

31.14 -
Documentation
of TFACTS Case
Recordings

31.8 - Parent/
Caregiver
Engagement and
Support

Engagement and
Support Work Aid

Policy 31.8

The word "QUALITY" is written in white chalk on a dark, textured chalkboard. The letters are bold and slightly irregular, with visible chalk strokes and some smudging, giving it a hand-drawn, authentic feel.

- Engagement
- Support
- Collaboration

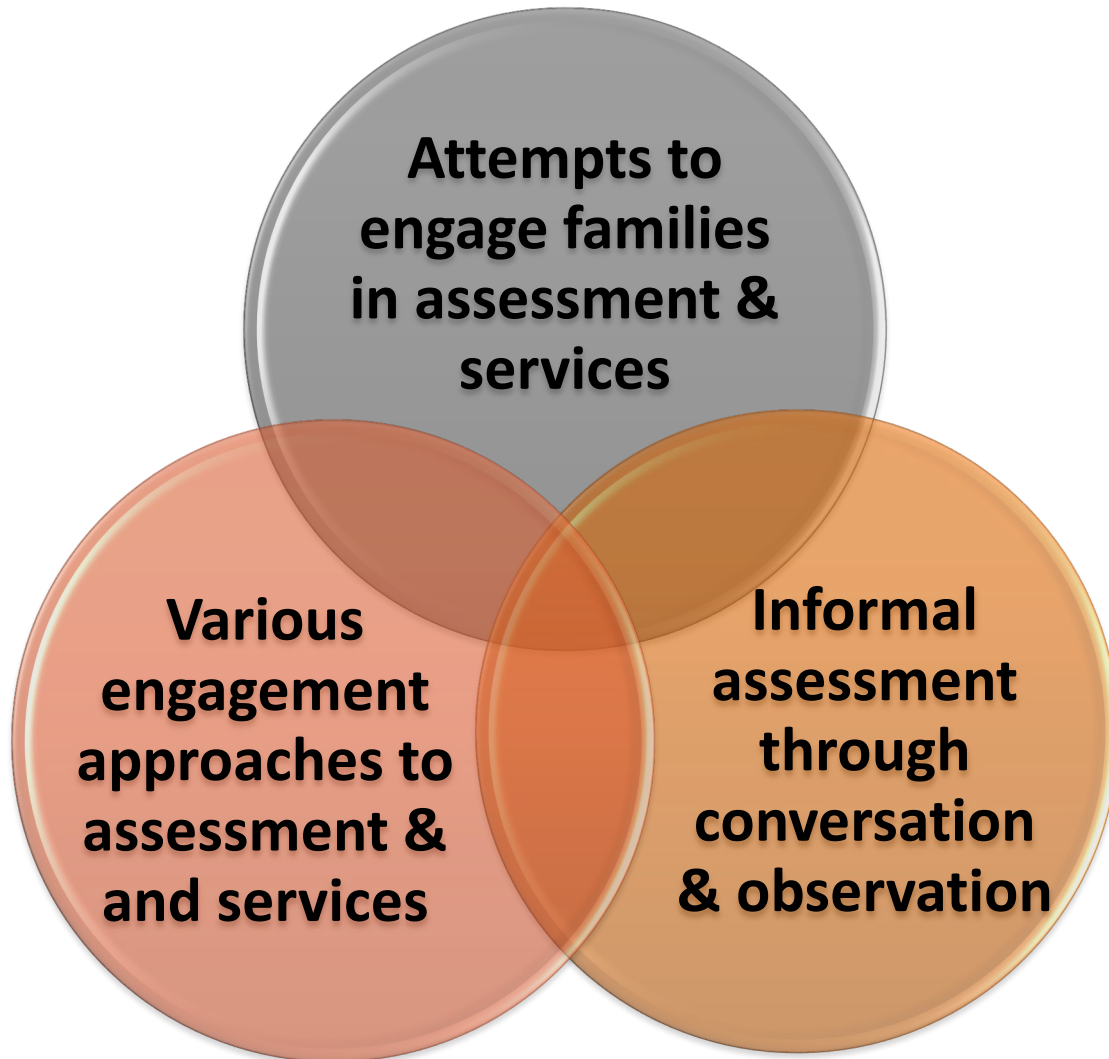
Reasonable Efforts

Reasonable Efforts are more than just families a resource guide, each family has individual needs.

Three Goals:

- Ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements
- Determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services.
- Assists states in helping children and families achieve positive outcomes.

How do we demonstrate Concerted Efforts?



Other examples of documenting Concerted Efforts are outlined in Policy 31.8. This is also known as Good Faith Efforts outlined in Policy 14.5

Concerted Efforts Happen Each Month

Interviews and documentation show the worker demonstrated:

- Engagement of ALL case participants
- Prepared ALL team members
- Engaged ALL parties in planning
- Followed-up with families on services and barriers
- Reinforcement of the family's strengths, accomplishments, and lasting change

What measure is used to determine how well we are doing this?

CFSR

Quality Contacts with Children and Families

Unit
Two

Quality Contacts

Quality Contact are...

Purposeful
Interactions

Reflect
Engagement

Face to face
contacts
referred to as:

“Home Visits”
“Caseworker
Visits”

Quality Components

Reflect a focused exchange of ideas and information

Go beyond a “friendly visits”

Represent a professional consultation

First Contact

Assessment process begins at the very first contact and is continued throughout the life of the case



CFSR: Increased Frequency + Quality =

Improved Outcomes

Safety

Permanency

Well-Being

How?

Characteristics of Quality Contacts

Intentional and Purposeful

Goal Directed

Culturally Responsive

Respectful

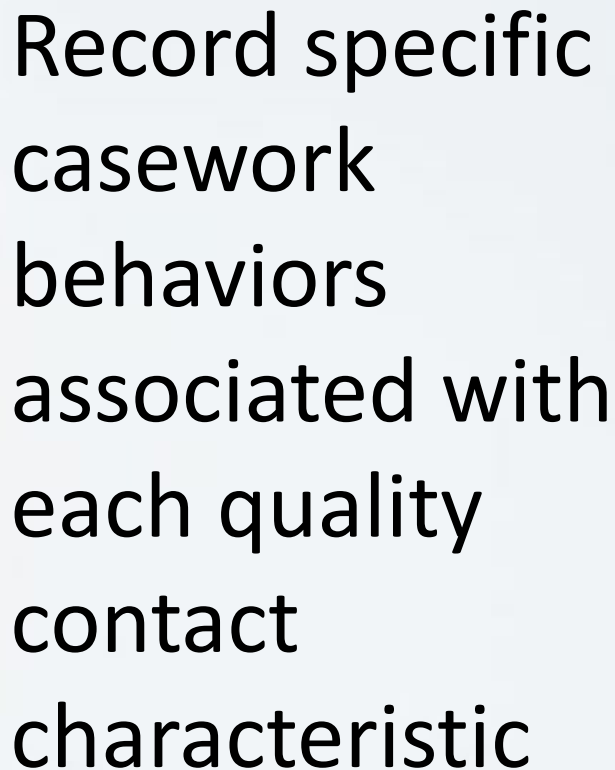
Unbiased

Tailored

Developmentally Appropriate

Reflective of Critical Thinking

Activity



Record specific
casework
behaviors
associated with
each quality
contact
characteristic

Intentional and Purposeful

Goal Directed

Culturally Responsive

Respectful

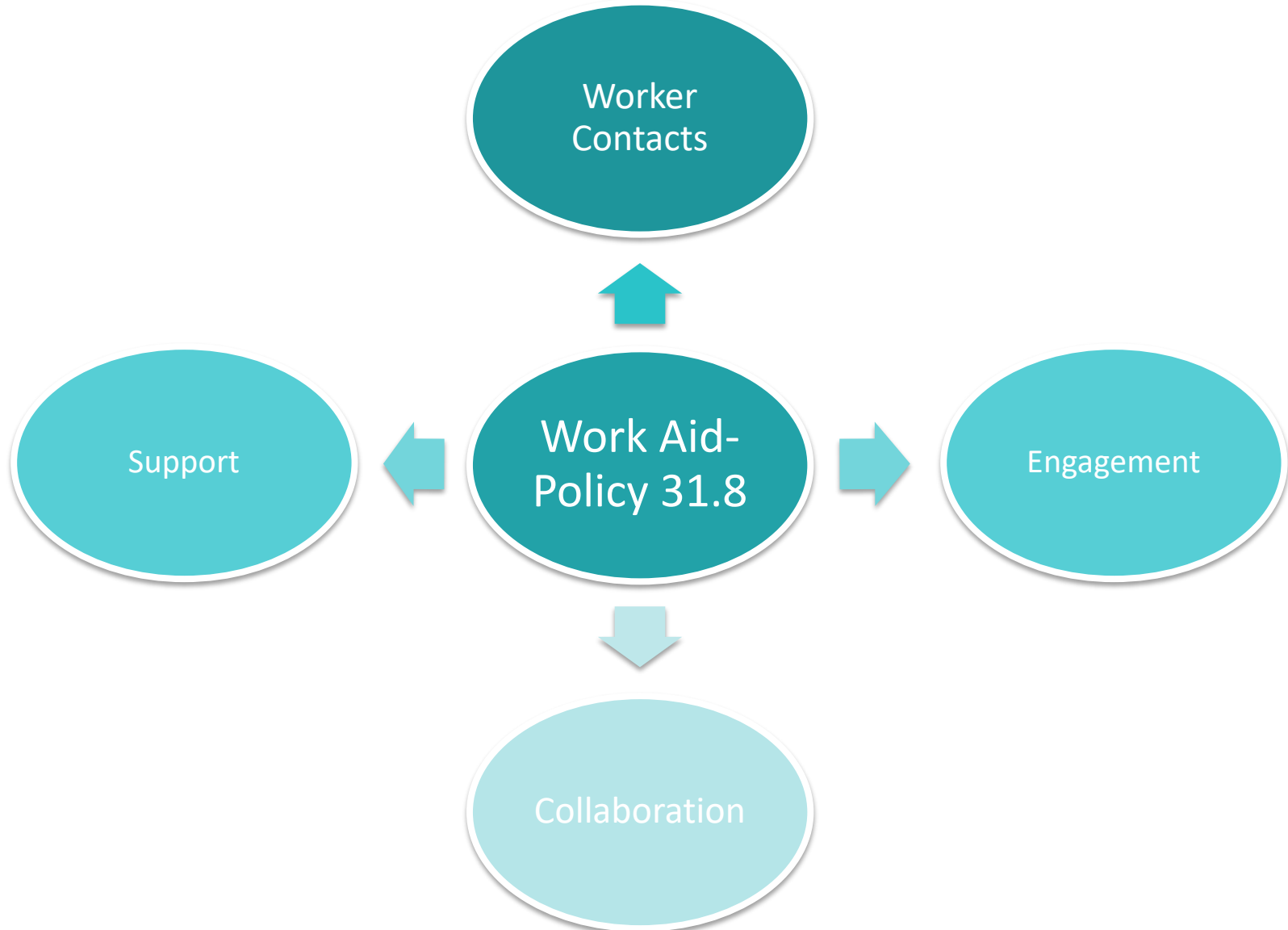
Unbiased

Tailored

Developmentally Appropriate

Reflective of Critical Thinking

Parent Engagement and Support Work Aid



Video

BUZZWORDS:
MOVING TO
BEHAVIORAL
DESCRIPTORS

PRESENTED TO YOU BY



Capacity Building
CENTER FOR STATES



Children's
Bureau

Pause (k)

Documentation

“My four year old son, Johnny, is acting up.”



Beyond Buzzwords

What techniques or strategies can be used to avoid buzzwords and dig deeper with families?

Three Phases of a Quality Contact

BEFORE

Preparation and planning tailored to the specific circumstances of the child or youth and family

DURING

Assessment of: Safety, risk, permanency, and well-being
Progress toward individual case goals

Engagement of children, youth, parents, and resource parents by the caseworker through use of empathy, genuineness, and respect both individually and as a **team**.

Dialogue that values the youth and parent voice and promotes reflection on strengths, needs, and concerns

AFTER

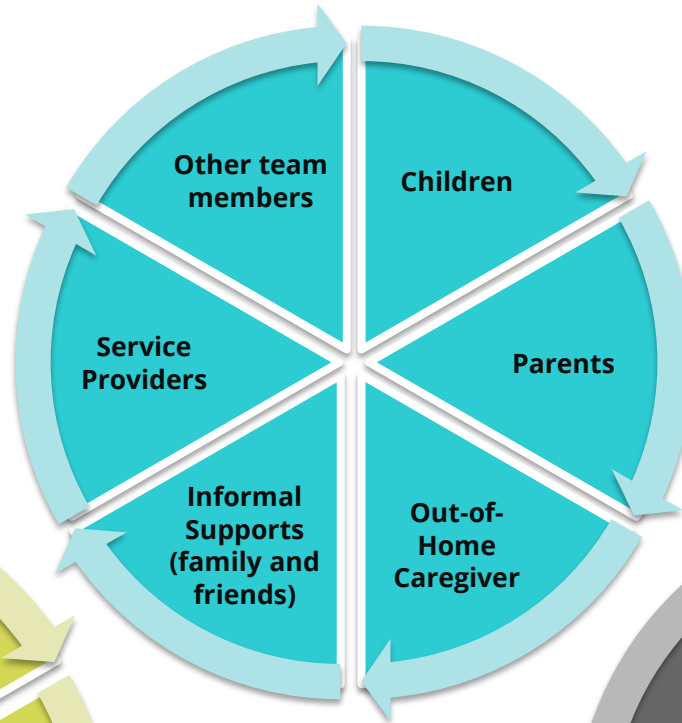
Follow-up on tasks or concerns discussed previously (this may include difficult conversations about why certain things did not happen as planned)

Decision-making and problem solving to address needs and move the case plan forward

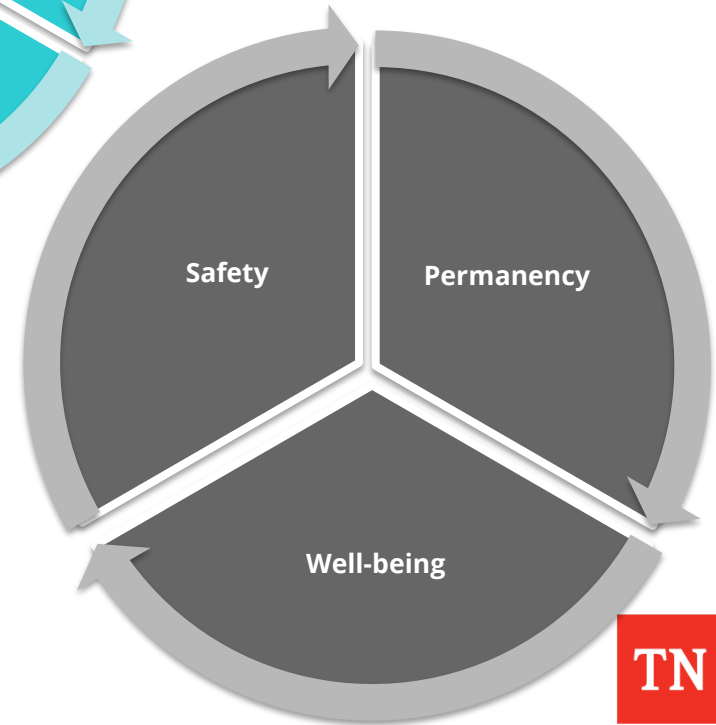
Documentation to support monitoring and follow-up

The WHO, HOW and WHAT of Monthly Quality Contacts...

Who?



What?



How?



Casework activities

Schedule

Gather information and review

Plan and prepare

Engaging Fathers



Engaging Mothers



"Quality Matters: Improving Caseworker Contacts – Biological Mother Visit"

TN

Department of
Children's Services

After the visit

- WHO in their visit should be highlighted in the supervisor debrief?
- WHAT critical assessment information needs to be emphasized in the assessment?
- HOW do we use this assessment information to inform our global assessment and drive our case planning?

Recap

- Avoid buzzwords-use behavioral descriptors
- Balance our own assessments and our biases
- Go beyond presenting issues and ensure global assessment
- Connect information gathered
- Describe how you support families
- Be visible and active in your case recordings.
 - Share how you support, engage, guide, team, coach, plan, redirect, and track and adjust with families
 - Share how you implement the Practice Wheel

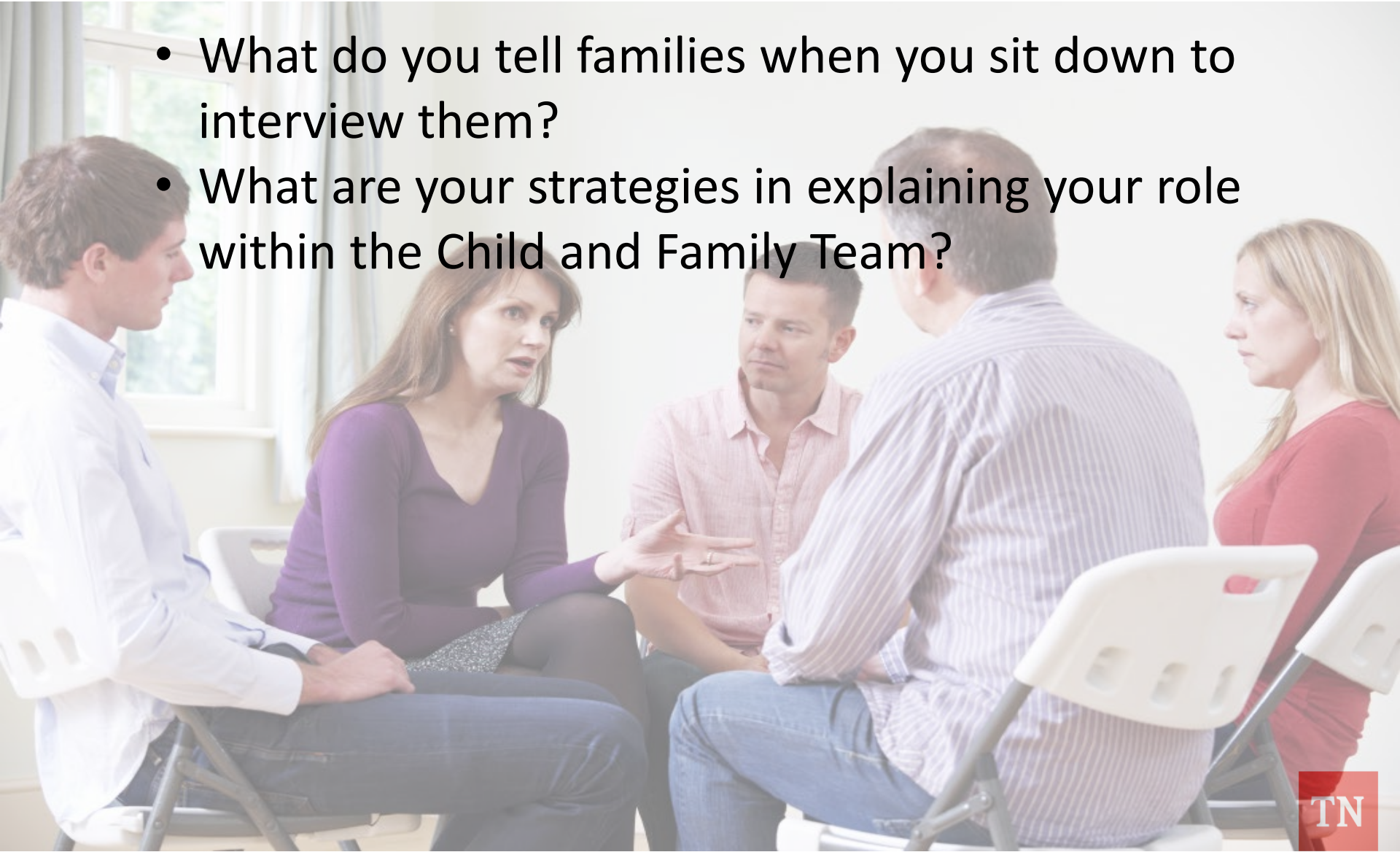
Quality Contacts with Children and Families

Unit Three

Global Assessment

Explaining Assessment

- What do you tell families when you sit down to interview them?
- What are your strategies in explaining your role within the Child and Family Team?



Why is assessment so difficult?

- It is intrusive and can be uncomfortable
- It requires attention to subtle verbal and non-verbal cues
- Trust must be established to elicit needed information
- It requires intuition and insight on the part of the assessor
- Staff experiencing lack of time, burnout, or even just a long, stressful day may miss details or unconsciously not dig deep enough
- Sometimes we get caught up in the next question we want to ask and don't listen to the details that are being provided
- We accept **buzzwords*** and don't ask for more details
- How we ask questions can impact the answers we receive

Why is assessment so important?

- Engages the individual in the process
- Brings both primary and underlying issues to the surface
- Helps the family think through what has happened and how they got here
- Helps give context to what is happening
- Informs what strategies might work best
- Establishes a professional helping relationship



Types of Assessment

Informal

- Observations
- Interviews/conversations
- Review of summary or progress reports, records, etc.
- Shared conclusions

Formal

- CANS/FAST
- EPSDT
- Psychological (ex: MMPI)
- Behavioral
- Parenting
- Educational

Assessment adds up



Global
Assessment

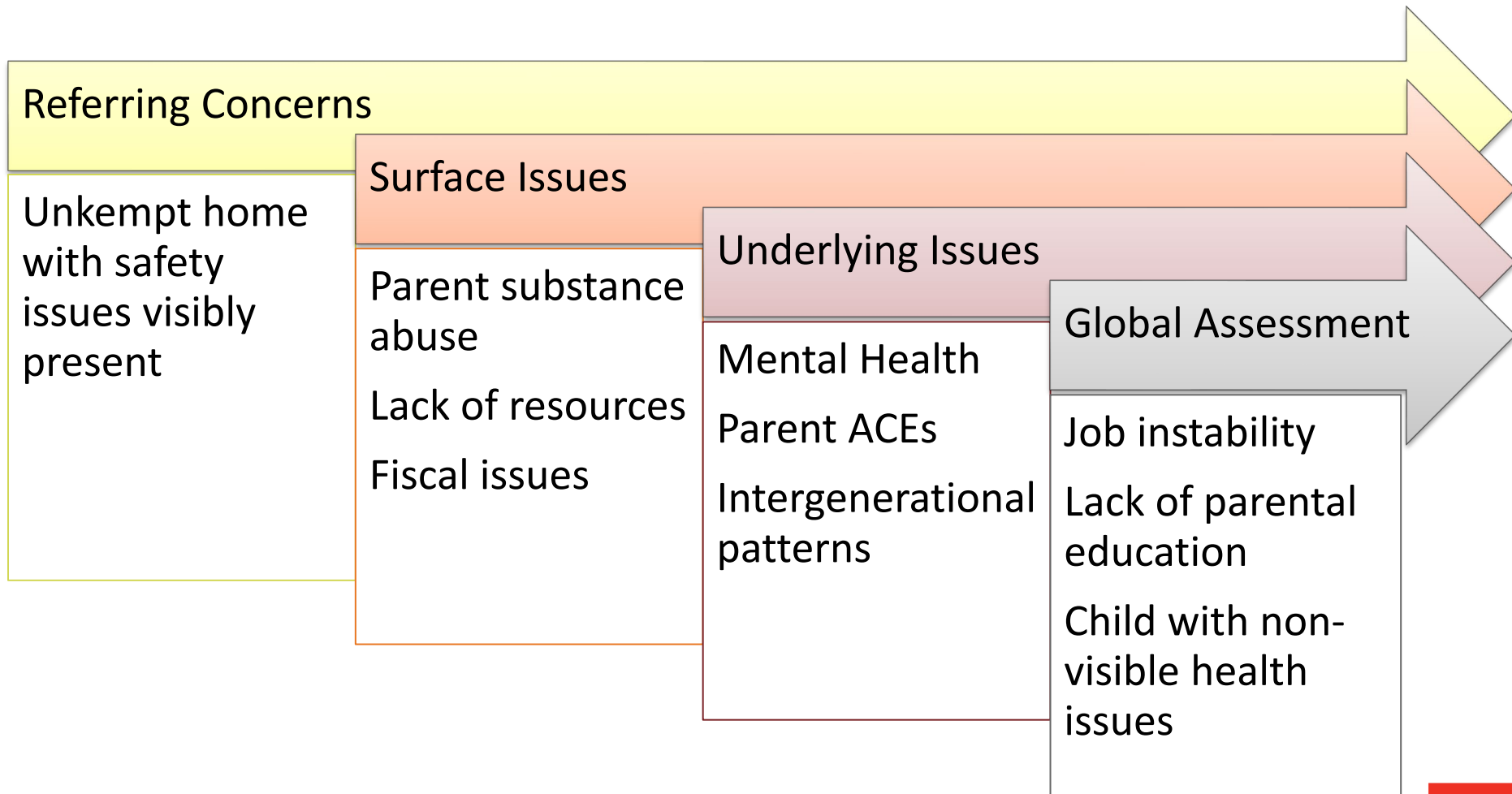


Assessment
Integration



Quality
Outcomes
for Children
and Families

Example



How to get to good global assessment...

- Take time to build a professional (trusting) helping relationship.
- Show Genuineness, Empathy, and Respect.
- Be curious – ask lots of questions
- Don't shy away from hard to ask questions/topics.
- Ask open questions or on similar topics in a variety of ways.
- “Tell me more...” 5 times! (Get past the buzzwords*)
- Ask multiple family/team members the same questions.
- Use it as a collaborative process to gain buy-in and bring the team together.
- Offer the client autonomy in decision making where possible and when it's safe to do so.
- Use the CANS/FAST items as a guide...

Desk Reference Guide



Non-Custodial Quality Contacts Desk Reference Guide

Documentation Directions

Each month the Caseworker will document case recording in TFACTS:

- Face to Face Visits with Child/Youth
- Worker/Parent contacts
- Parent Child Visitations
- Home/Placement Visit (may be included in "family home");
- Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM)

Caseworkers will also provide additional documentation required along with other documentation requirements to capture all other notes in one place that do not require a compliance count like those listed above. Topics covered here include:



Custodial Quality

Documentation Directions

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Caseworkers will also provide additional documentation required along with other documentation requirements to capture all other notes in one place that do not require a compliance count like those listed above. Topics covered here include:

- Contacts with "other" case participants



Juvenile Justice Quality Contacts Desk Reference Guide

Documentation Directions

Each month the Caseworker will document the following case activity and contacts must be a separate case recording in TFACTS:

- Face to Face Visits with Child/Youth
- Worker/Parent contacts
- Parent Child Visitations
- Home/Placement Visit (may be included in another type of case recording, but location must be "family home");
- Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM);

Caseworkers will also provide additional documentation within the *Monthly Case Summary* contact type due along with other documentation requirements each month. This note is a "catchall" location for to capture all other notes in one place that do not require a compliance count like those listed above. Topics covered here include:

- Contacts with "other" case participants and service providers

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue and white striped sleeveless shirt, stands in front of a whiteboard. She is smiling and pointing her right index finger towards the camera. In her left hand, she holds a blue marker. The whiteboard behind her has the words 'Plan', 'Do', 'Study', and 'Act' written in blue cursive. The background is a plain white wall with some office equipment visible in the distance.

Plan

Do

Study

Act

Small Test of Change