Practice Points to Ponder!

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Department of Children and Families and
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Training Consortium

“Notes Knowledge”

For many years we have documented notes in a way that everything was included. Supervisors and colleagues look to find out what happened, what was going to happen and where we are on the case flow process with the family. This is still the purpose of the notes. It is a record of what we have done.

As we work within our new Practice Model let’s re-think how we document and why….

The notes support the work we do when we “author” within our assessments such as the Present Danger Assessment, Safety Plans, Family Functioning Assessment, Family Functioning Assessment-Ongoing, Case Plans and Progress Updates.

Notes serve as our outline and our chronology, but notes are not, and should not, be the definitive document we rely on to tell us what and how we are making our decisions.

Consider the notes to be an outline for information that you may need to include in your assessments. Avoid requiring the file reviewer to fit all the pieces of the case together with the notes.

Notes should not be dropped into our assessment instead of “authoring” in a more succinct and cohesive manner.

Notes are notes! Notes are the background and “behind the scenes” to the Family Functioning Assessment.

Practice Point to Ponder:

- Decrease the emphasis of details and narrative in the notes and place more focus on "authorship" within your assessments as the primary source of information about your work.

- Cut out excessive fillers of “stated, reported, indicated, and said” whenever possible. An example of providing interview notes is below for your consideration. It is written to give the “voice” to “interviewee” without repetitively reminding the reader.

4/25/XX- Interview with Ms. Landry. Mother of Kiera, age10. She provides the following information:

- Kiera fell out of tree in neighbor’s backyard yesterday.
- Neighbor angry that Kiera was climbing tree in her yard.
- Feuds happen all the time with this neighbor. She is mean and her kids are mean.
- Kiera climbed tree fast to get away from kids and lost her footing.
- Kiera fell hard and broke her arm. Neighbor angry that she had to handle crisis when it happened.
- Kiera’s broken arm caused by fall. Will provide medical record of ER visit. Nobody hurt Kiera.

Stay tuned for next month’s Practice Points to Ponder - - - - Pam Aeppel

Technical Advising Consultation & Training (TACT)
Collaborating to support and sustain our new practice model.