Present Danger Assessment

What is present danger?

Present danger is an immediate, significant and clearly observable family condition occurring in the present tense, an occurrence that has just happened or one that will likely threaten to endanger a child.

When present danger exists, it is usually identified at initial contact by investigators, however can occur during the course of an investigation or while the family is receiving case management services. Serious harm will result without prompt investigation and/or case management response.

Your present danger assessment must capture the family condition and how it meets the criteria of immediate, significant, clearly observable or more commonly, how the described family condition does not meet the criteria for present danger.

Examples:

**Present Danger Identified**

Danger Threat: Child has a serious illness or injury (indicative of child abuse) that is unexplained, or the Parent/Guardian/Caregiver explanations are inconsistent with the illness or injury.

Maltreatment: Physical Injury

Brief Assessment Summary: Joseph, 6 months, was seen today at County General Hospital where he was examined and found to have a skull fracture and subdural hematomas. The mother and her boyfriend were not able to provide a reasonable explanation for Joseph’s injuries. The mother, Kelly Jones, reported Joseph fell off the couch (about 6 inches) onto the carpeted floor, but she was not in the room when it happened. The boyfriend, Mark Smith, said he saw Joseph roll off the couch onto the floor. Dr. Johnson from CPT informed CPI that the mechanism of injury is not consistent with the explanation provided by the caregivers.

**No Present Danger Identified**

Danger Threat: Parent/caregiver is violent, impulsive or acting dangerously in ways that seriously harmed the child or will likely seriously harm the child.

Maltreatment: Family Violence Threatens Child

Brief Assessment Summary: The parents, Tim and Amy Adams, were overheard arguing loudly about the mother missing a counseling appointment. There were no reports, observations, or confirmations that a physical altercation occurred. No violent, impulsive, or out of control behaviors were witnessed or confirmed that could pose a threat to the children. The mother does have substance abuse history and is currently in a substance abuse outpatient program. The children, Sierra (10) and Connor (8), did not disclose awareness of drug involvement or physical altercations by either parent and expressed no fear of their parents.

Stay tuned for next month’s Practice Points to Ponder - - Pam Neppel & Shawna Thomas  Collaborating to support and sustain our new practice model.