PRACTICE REVIEW 1: Adequacy of Engagement and Responsiveness

Focus Measure

ADEQUATE EFFORTS OF ENGAGEMENT IN ASSESSMENT PROCESS. To what degree: Is the Child Protective Investigator (CPI) building a working partnership with the family using outreach and rapport building strategies, including special accommodations with any difficult-to-reach family members, in order to increase child and family engagement and participation in the assessment process? Is the CPI using a strengths-based approach with the child and family in order to build trust-based working relationships resulting in a mutually beneficial partnership?

ADEQUATE RESPONSIVENESS. To what degree: Has the CPI followed agency policies and state standards regarding the timeliness, number, frequency, and types of contacts? Has the CPI adequately performed the tasks and responsibilities expected by agency policy and procedure?

Response – Practice Rating:

- 6 Optimal Practice
- 5 Good Practice
- 4 Fair Practice
- 3 Marginal Practice
- 2 Poor Practice
- 1 Adverse Practice

RESPONSE GUIDE

6 - Optimal Performance. The CPI exceeded expectations in efforts to build a trust-based relationship with the family through outreach and rapport building strategies. The CPI used a strength-based, respectful approach and demonstrated an excellent level of cultural competence. The CPI strived to help the family achieve a clear understanding of child safety and how this would be addressed. The family was included as a partner in the information gathering and assessment process. The initial face-to-face contact was made within the assigned timeframe or there was a valid reason why this could not be done. State standards were followed for initial interviews or the reason for the exception was documented and approved by the supervisor. State statutes were followed regarding interviews/observation and a visit to the family's dwelling.

5 - Good Performance. The CPI put forth good effort to build a trust-based relationship with the family through outreach and rapport building strategies. The CPI generally used a strength-based, respectful approach and demonstrated a good level of cultural competence. The CPI made good effort at helping the family achieve a clear understanding of child safety and how this would be addressed. The family was generally included as a partner in the information gathering and assessment process. The initial face-to-face contact was made within the assigned timeframe or there was a valid reason why this could not be done. State standards were followed for initial interviews or the reason for the exception was documented and approved by the supervisor. State statutes were followed regarding interviews/observation and a visit to the family's dwelling.

4 - Fair Performance. The CPI put forth some effort to build a trust-based relationship with the family through outreach and rapport building strategies. The CPI sometimes used a strength-based, respectful approach and demonstrated an adequate level of cultural competence. The CPI made some effort at helping the family achieve a clear understanding of child safety and how this would be addressed. The family was sometimes included as a partner in the information gathering and assessment process. The initial face-to-face contact was made within the assigned timeframe or there was a valid reason why this could not be done. State standards were followed for initial interviews or the reason for the exception was documented and approved by the supervisor. State statutes were followed regarding interviews/observation and a visit to the family's dwelling.
3 - Marginal Performance. The CPI put forth limited effort to build a trust-based relationship with the family through outreach and uses few rapport building strategies. At times, the CPI may not have used a strength-based, respectful approach or demonstrated an inadequate level of cultural competence. The CPI made little effort to help the family achieve a clear understanding of child safety and how this will be addressed. The family was often not included as a partner in the information gathering and assessment process. The initial face-to-face contact was not made within the assigned time-frame and there was not a valid reason why this could not be done. State standards were not followed for initial interviews or the reason for the exception was not documented and approved by the supervisor. State statutes were followed regarding interviews/observation and a visit to the family’s dwelling when applicable.

2 - Poor Performance. The CPI put forth very little effort to build a trust-based relationship with the family through outreach and uses few rapport building strategies. The CPI generally did not use a strength-based, respectful approach and demonstrated a poor level of cultural competence. The CPI made little effort to help the family achieve a clear understanding of child safety and how this would be addressed. The family was generally not included as a partner in the information gathering and assessment process. The initial face-to-face contact was not made within the assigned timeframe and there was not a valid reason why this could not be done. State standards were not followed for initial interviews and the reason for the exception was not documented and approved by the supervisor. State statutes were followed regarding interviews/observation and a visit to the family’s dwelling when applicable.

1 - Adverse Performance. The CPI put forth no effort to build a trust-based relationship with the family through outreach and uses few rapport building strategies. The CPI did not use a strength-based, respectful approach and did not consider the family’s culture during the engagement process. The CPI made no effort to help the family achieve a clear understanding of child safety and how this would be addressed. The family was not included as a partner in the information gathering and assessment process. The initial face-to-face contact was not made within the assigned timeframe and there was not a valid reason why this could not be done. State standards were not followed for initial interviews and the reason for the exception was not documented and approved by the supervisor. State statutes were not followed regarding interviews/observation and a visit to the family’s dwelling when applicable.

GUIDING LANGUAGE

Core Concepts

Efforts toward Engagement: Child welfare professionals, including CPIs, are required to involve the family members in assessment and decision-making process. Effective child welfare services, to include child protective investigations, are based on relationships formed between persons in need of services and others who help them meet those needs. Success in child welfare practice depends on the quality and durability of relationships between those receiving and those providing services. Active and ongoing efforts are undertaken to include children and families in the assessment and decision-making process. This is accomplished through establishing rapport and building a trust-based working relationship. The degree to which children and families are active, ongoing partners in the child welfare process reveals the level of engagement.

Agency Responsiveness: Child welfare professionals perform a series of important inquiry, decision-making, and action steps that are defined by policy and procedure. Many of these steps include timeframes for the accomplishment of certain key events during the course of an investigation/assessment. These may include: performance expectations around timeliness and responsiveness of face-to-face contacts; requirements on persons to be interviewed within specified timeframes; requirements covering contacting other related professionals when initial case presentation meets specified criteria; and allowances for deviations from agency policy of procedure under certain conditions. The degree to which agency expectations are fulfilled during the initial phases of the case is defined as agency responsiveness.
Considerations

Level of Effort toward Engagement:

1. Has the family been approached from a position of respect, empathy, and cooperation?
2. Did the CPI interview and have face-to-face contact with individuals as outlined in state standards?
3. Has the CPI made efforts to work with the family to address concerns for the health and safety of the child(ren)?
4. Is the CPI helping the family achieve a clear understanding of the identified threats to child safety or other family safety issues? Is the CPI helping the family identify ways they can address safety threats and concerns, as well as other areas where additional help is needed?
5. Has the CPI considered the feelings and beliefs of the family at the point of initial and early contact?
6. How does the CPI describe the family’s demeanor, manner, attitude, and culture?
7. What steps have been taken to include the child and family in the early information gathering and assessment process?
8. How has the CPI gone about getting the family to cooperate and participate in the process?

Level of Responsiveness:

1. Was the first face-to-face contact made within the assigned timeframe?
2. Did the CPI follow the state standard protocol for conducting a thorough investigation/assessment?
3. Was information shared with law enforcement as required (i.e. state statute, state standards, agency policy, applicable MOD’s)?
Practice Review 2: Diligence of Inquiry

Focus Measure

DILIGENCE OF INQUIRY. To what degree: • Have the relevant paths of inquiry been probed, considered, and reviewed? • Have efforts been made to identity information that is sufficient, relevant, and accurate to support the decisions made in regard to this case? • Have all potential sources of information been identified, exhausted, and used in decision making?

RESPONSE - Practice Rating:

☐ 6 Optimal Practice ☐ 5 Good Practice ☐ 4 Fair Practice ☐ 3 Marginal Practice ☐ 2 Poor Practice ☐ 1 Adverse Practice

RESPONSE GUIDE

6 - Optimal Performance. There was excellent diligence in attempting to obtain information for all areas of the Investigation/assessment, including a description of the maltreatment, detailed information needed to assess safety, and information about the child, parent(s), family, and alleged perpetrator. All known and available sources of information were exhausted in gathering assessment information. In instances where information could not be obtained, the CPI used creative strategies in an attempt to gather the needed information. If the child was identified as Native American during the intake, the CPI verified the child’s Native American heritage through family members or the tribe. If the child was not identified as having Native American heritage during the intake, the CPI made inquiries as to possible Native American heritage.

5 - Good Performance. There was good diligence in attempting to obtain information for most areas of the Investigation/assessment, including a description of the maltreatment, detailed information needed to assess safety, and information about the child, parent(s), family, and alleged perpetrator. Most known and available sources of information were exhausted in gathering assessment information. In instances where information could not be obtained, the CPI used creative strategies in an attempt to gather the needed information. If the child was identified as Native American during the Intake, the CPI verified the child’s Native American heritage through family members or the tribe, if the child was not identified during the Intake as having Native American heritage, the CPI made inquiries as to possible Native American heritage.

4 - Fair Performance. There was minimally adequate to fair effort in attempting to obtain information for some areas of the Investigation/assessment, including a description of the maltreatment, detailed information needed to assess safety, and information about the child, parent(s), family, and alleged perpetrator. Some known and available sources of information were exhausted in gathering assessment information. In instances where information could not be obtained, the CPI used some creative strategies in an attempt to gather the needed information. If the child was identified as Native American during the Intake, the CPI verified the child’s Native American heritage through family members or the tribe. If the child was not identified during the Intake as having Native American heritage, the CPI made inquiries as to possible Native American heritage.

3 - Marginal Performance. There was limited diligence in attempting to obtain information for many areas of the Investigation/assessment, including a description of the maltreatment, detailed information needed to assess safety, and information about the child, parent(s), family, and alleged perpetrator. Some known and available sources of information were not utilized in gathering assessment information. In instances where information could not be obtained, the CPI used some creative strategies in an attempt to gather the needed information. If the child was identified as Native American during the Intake, the CPI made marginal attempts to verify the child’s Native American heritage through family members or the tribe. If the child was not identified as having Native American heritage, the CPI made some inquiries as to the possibilities.
2 - Poor Performance. There was very little diligence in attempting to obtain information for many areas of the investigation, including a description of the maltreatment, detailed information needed to assess safety, and information about the child, parent(s), family, and alleged perpetrator. Few known and available sources of information were exhausted in gathering assessment information. In instances where information could not be obtained, the CPI put forth little effort in using creative strategies in an attempt to gather the needed information. If the child was identified as Native American during the Intake, the CPI made little attempt to verify the child's Native American heritage through family members or the tribe. If the child was not identified during the Intake as having Native American heritage, the CPI made few inquiries as to possible Native American heritage.

1 - Adverse Performance. There was no diligence in attempting to obtain information for most areas of the Investigation/assessment, including a description of the maltreatment, detailed information needed to assess safety, and information about the child, parent(s), family, and alleged perpetrator. Known and available sources of information were not exhausted in gathering assessment information. In instances where information could not be obtained, the CPI put forth no effort in using creative strategies in an attempt to gather the needed information. If the child was identified as Native American during the Intake, the CPI made no attempt to verify the child's Native American heritage through family members or the tribe. If the child was not identified during the Intake as having Native American heritage, the CPI made no inquiries as to possible Native American heritage.

GUIDING LANGUAGE

Core Concepts:

Investigation/assessment. The purpose of diligence of inquiry is to have all the information necessary to make sound decisions regarding child safety and allegations of maltreatment, in order for these decisions to be based on the information assembled during the investigative/assessment process. Child welfare professionals are required to identify, consider, and review all available information when making key determinations and decisions. In instances when information may not be readily available, child welfare professionals make reasonable efforts to obtain the needed information to ensure that decisions are based on credible information. Decisions made without a sound factual basis increase errors in decision making, may endanger child safety, and reduce confidence in the performance of the service system. There are several key decisions made during the investigation/assessment phases of the investigation, such as: if present/impending threats of danger exist; what is necessary to control and manage identified threats; did maltreatment occur or did information describe conditions or behaviors that constitute a threat of abuse or neglect in the future (threatened harm); who was the perpetrator, if named; and what is the disposition of the case.

The process of thoughtful fact-finding through which the information is gathered to make these key strategic decisions is critical to the success of the case. The sources of information for this process include on-site review of the available information, current and historical records, interviews of key persons, and interviews of key collateral contacts, which are assembled into a holistic picture so that both a broad and comprehensive understanding of the past and present situation is acquired. Diligence of inquiry focuses on the degree to which the needed information for key decisions was gained in the investigation/assessment processes.

Considerations

1. Did the CPI obtain, or attempt to obtain, detailed information needed to assess safety and the allegation of maltreatment?

2. Did efforts for soliciting information include:
• A specific description of the alleged maltreatment, including injuries and/or conditions, and information to support the allegation?
• The surrounding circumstances accompanying or leading up to the maltreatment?
• Reports of prior maltreatment?
• Direct observations of the conditions related to allegation?
• Interview of key persons, as indicated in state standards, and all other persons who would have direct knowledge of issues relating to the allegation?

3. Did the CPI obtain, or attempt to obtain, necessary information about the child to support or refute the allegations?

4. Did the CPI consider the child's present and future vulnerability or whether any special needs, such as physical health, emotional or mental health, general behavior, level of functioning, and any other outstanding needs, were present?

5. Did the CPI obtain, or attempt to obtain, the necessary information about the parents:
   • Level of functioning, including physical health, emotional or mental health, or cognitive abilities?
   • Parenting practice and protective capacities?
   • Domestic violence concerns?
   • Substance abuse concerns?
   • Parental involvement, contribution, and/or alleged knowledge of maltreatment (secondary and non-secondary)?
   • The family's receptiveness to agency intervention?
   • Required background and demographic information?

6. Did the CPI obtain, or attempt to obtain, information about the alleged maltreatment and perpetrator, including relationship to the child victim(s) and past and present access to the child victim(s)?

7. Did the CPI verify if the child might be of Native-American heritage through parents or grandparents as well as the tribal affiliation?

8. In instances when the above information could not be obtained, did the CPI exhaust all available sources of information? Did the CPI also use, or attempt to use, unique or creative strategies to acquire the needed information?
Practice Review 3: Depth of Understanding and Safety Intervention

Focus Measure

DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING. To what degree: Is there an understanding of the child's needs and the parent/caregiver's protective capacities; any threats to child safety?

SAFETY ASSESSMENT. To what degree: Has a comprehensive assessment been conducted to identify and describe how behaviors, emotions, perceptions, attitudes, or situations present in the family impact child safety?
- Does the analysis accurately explain how present and/or impending threats of danger are occurring in the family?
- Does the analysis accurately reflect the level of intervention needed to control and manage impending danger?

SAFETY PLANNING. To what degree: Are the identified safety threats controlled by the implemented safety plan? Is the plan sufficient to control for the identified impending threats of danger? (To be rated only if a safety plan has been implemented because the child has been determined unsafe).

RESPONSE - Practice Rating:

☐ 6 Optimal Practice ☐ 5 Good Practice ☐ 4 Fair Practice ☐ 3 Marginal Practice ☐ 2 Poor Practice ☐ 1 Adverse Practice

RESPONSE GUIDE

6 - Optimal Performance. There was excellent depth of understanding of information in the Investigation/assessment. There is an exceptional understanding of present and impending threats of danger and what protective steps were needed to control for safety of the child(ren). There is also an excellent understanding of child and parent functioning, parental care giving capacities and challenges, and underlying issues that contribute to safety threats. Consideration has been given to cultural factors relevant to safety and the Investigation/assessment process. The CPI and supervisor have an excellent understanding of the family's situation. The protective plan or safety plan controls for all present and/or impending threats of danger.

5 - Good Performance. There was a good depth of understanding of information in the Investigation/assessment. There is a good understanding of present and impending threats of danger and what protective steps were needed to control for safety of the child(ren). There is also a good understanding of child and parent functioning, parental care giving capacities and challenges, and underlying issues that contribute to safety threats. Consideration has been given to cultural factors relevant to safety and the Investigation/assessment process. The CPI and supervisor have a good understanding of the family's situation. The protective plan or safety plan controls for all present and/or impending threats of danger.

4 - Fair Performance. There was a minimally adequate to fair depth of understanding of information in the Investigation/assessment. There is some understanding of present and/or impending threats of danger and what protective steps were needed to control for safety of the child(ren). Child and parent functioning, parental care giving capacities and challenges, and underlying issues that contribute to safety threats are minimally understood. Some consideration has been given to cultural factors relevant to safety and the Investigation/assessment process. The CPI and supervisor have a minimally adequate understanding of the family's situation. The protective plan or safety plan controls for all present and/or impending threats of danger.
3 - Marginal Performance. There was a marginal depth of understanding of information in the investigation/assessment. There is some lack of understanding of present and/or impending threats of danger and what protective steps were needed to control for safety of the child(ren). Child and parent functioning, parental care giving capacities and challenges, and underlying issues that contribute to safety threats are marginally understood. Some consideration has been given to cultural factors relevant to safety and the investigative/assessment process. The CPI and supervisor have a marginal understanding of the family’s situation. The protective plan or safety plan may not control for all present and/or impending threats of danger.

2 – Poor Performance. There was a poor depth of understanding of information in the investigative/assessment. Present and/or impending threats of danger and what protective steps were needed to control for safety of the child(ren) are poorly understood. Child and parent functioning, parental care giving capacities and challenges, and underlying issues that contribute to safety threats are also poorly understood. The CPI and supervisor have a poor understanding of the family’s situation and the child(ren) may be unsafe. The protective plan or safety plan may not control for all present and/or impending threats of danger.

1 - Adverse Performance. There was an adverse depth of understanding of information in the investigation/assessment. Present and/or impending threats of danger and what protective steps were needed to control for safety of the child are misunderstood. Child and parent functioning, parental care giving capacities and challenges, and underlying issues that contribute to safety threats are also misunderstood. No consideration has been given to cultural factors relevant to safety and the investigation/assessment process. The CPI and supervisor have an adverse understanding of the family’s situation and the child may be unsafe. There is no protective or safety plan despite the finding that the child is unsafe OR the protective plan or safety plan does not control for all present and/or impending threats of danger and the child may be unsafe.

GUIDING LANGUAGE

Core Concepts

Assessment requires consideration of the child and family's immediate safety situation (e.g., present and/or impending threats of danger, the child's vulnerability, parent/caregiver protective capacities) as well as other factors related to the adequacy and dependability of child protection and care giving to children in the home.

Assessments identify the child and family's strengths, interests, assets, and future goals. Assessments include identifying community and familial needs, supports, wants, and issues. Once gathered, the information should be analyzed and synthesized to form a functional understanding of the threats to child safety and what factors must be controlled in order to determine that the child is safe. The relationships between the presenting safety situation (e.g., identification of present threats of danger) and underlying issues (e.g. identification of impending threats of danger) should be considered. This involves understanding the "core story’ of the family and how the family reached its current situation. Assessment should be appropriate for the child/parent’s age, capacity, culture, language or system of communication, support system, and social ecology. Assessment is dynamic and ongoing, with new facts and information altering and shifting the CPI’s understanding of the child and family.

Safety Assessment: Specific to child safety, child welfare professionals examine and consider the child's immediate safety based on whether there are present or impending threats of danger that could harm a vulnerable child in the absence of adequate protection available in the home care giving situation. The purpose of a safety assessment is to identify conditions of the home and care giving situation that would expose the child to danger. This may include behaviors, actions, omissions, or attitudes of parents or caregivers that pose serious threats to child safety.

Safety assessing considers both present danger and impending danger. Present danger refers to immediate, significant, and observable actions or conditions that are actively occurring, or are in the process of occurring, that will likely result in severe harm to the child. Impending danger is a foreseeable state of danger in which family
behaviors, attitudes, motives, emotions, or situations pose a pending or likely threat that although may not be currently active, will likely lead to an impact to the child. *Impending threats of danger* can be considered as factors that will likely harm the child in the near future and requires some form of safety intervention. Impending danger is not likely to be known at the time of initial report.

**Considerations**

1. How well does the CPI understand this child and family?

2. What is the CPI’s understanding of present threats of danger to the child before, at, and after the first face-to-face contact? What protective actions were taken for the child during this time frame?
   - What, if any, present threats of danger are identified and noted in the record?
   - What actions were taken to ensure child safety? (i.e., in-home or out-of-home protective plan)
   - Were the actions taken sufficient to ensure child safety?
   - What additional sources of information might have been helpful to enhance understanding of the child and family?

3. What is the CPI’s understanding of impending threats of danger identified related to the presenting maltreatment incident and the related circumstances?
   - What impending threats are identified and what key pieces of information support them?
   - Does the information regarding the maltreatment and related circumstances appear relevant and sufficient?
   - What additional sources of information might have been helpful to enhance understanding around the presenting maltreatment and related circumstances?

4. What is the CPI’s understanding of the child’s level of functioning and any relationship with the child’s safety?
   - What key pieces of information about the child’s functioning are known and unknown?
   - What threats, if any, are present that are related to, or are a result of, the child’s functioning?
   - Have emotional, behavioral, psychiatric, developmental, physical, and medical factors been considered in this assessment?
   - What additional sources of information might have been helpful to enhance understanding of the child’s functioning?

5. What is the CPI’s understanding of impending threats of danger identified related to the parent/caregiver, parenting/caregiving functioning, and disciplinary approaches?
   - What key pieces about the parent and parenting practices are known and noted in the record?
   - What threats, if any, are present that are related to, or are a result of, the parent’s functioning, caregiving capacity, and disciplinary approaches?
   - Have the parent/caregiver’s emotional, behavioral, psychiatric, developmental, physical, medical factors, domestic violence, substance abuse, and history of trauma exposure been considered in this assessment?
   - What additional sources of information might have been helpful to enhance understanding of the parental functioning and capacity?

6. How well are child and family stressors recognized? How are identified stressors understood within the context and culture of this child and family? Is the reported incident of alleged maltreatment to the child(ren) understood in the context of the family’s situation and history? Are patterns emerging with regard to the parent/caregiver’s diminished parental capacities?

7. Have issues, such as trauma, life transitions, life disruptions or loss, community issues, extraordinary burdens, and access to employment, housing, health care, and formal or informal supports been considered?
8. Is the CPI considering culture when assessing safety and implementing a safety/protective plan?

9. Is the safety assessment appropriate and conducted in natural settings and everyday activities?
   • Are family tendencies and preferences identified and considered during the safety assessment and while implementing the safety/protective plan?
   • In cases involving Indian children and families, have the laws, customs, and philosophy of the tribe been considered (e.g., placement with a provider who is Indian)?
Practice Review 4: Recognition and Avoidance of Undue Influences

Focus Measure

RECOGNITION AND AVOIDANCE OF UNDUE INFLUENCE. To what degree: Has the CPI and supervisor recognized potential influences from either inter/intra-personal or organizational sources that could introduce bias or error into the decision-making process in this case?

- Have the CPI and supervisor taken steps to consider how undue influences may be impacting his/her thought processes and decision making in this case?
- Has the CPI and supervisor taken action, where necessary, to avoid any extraneous influences that could inappropriately shape processes of decision making?
- Has any undue influence led to errors in decision making as revealed by any inconsistencies or flaws found in the decision made?

RESPONSE - Practice Rating:

- 6 Optimal Practice
- 5 Good Practice
- 4 Fair Practice
- 3 Marginal Practice
- 2 Poor Practice
- 1 Adverse Practice

RESPONSE GUIDE

6 - Optimal Performance. There was excellent recognition of personal, organizational, or other extraneous influences that could introduce bias or error into the decision-making process. The CPI and supervisor were able to identify and prevent these influences from having an effect on decisions made regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition. The Investigation/assessment is written in a strength-based, objective manner that is free from the CPI's personal opinion. The CPI engaged in the Investigation/assessment process in a culturally sensitive and competent manner.

5 - Good Performance. There was good recognition of personal, organizational, or other extraneous influences that could introduce bias or error into the decision-making process. The CPI and supervisor were, for the most part, able to identify and prevent these influences from having an effect on decisions made regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition. The Investigation/assessment is generally written in a strength-based, objective manner that is free from the CPI's personal opinion. The CPI engaged in the Investigation/assessment process in a culturally sensitive and competent manner.

4 - Fair Performance. There was minimally adequate to fair recognition of personal, organizational, or other extraneous influences that could introduce bias or error into the decision-making process. The CPI and supervisor were able to identify some influences and minimally able to prevent these influences from having an effect on decisions made regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition. The Investigation/assessment is minimally strength-based and objective and is free from the CPI's personal opinion. The CPI generally engaged in the Investigation/assessment process in a culturally sensitive and competent manner.

3 - Marginal Performance. There was limited recognition of personal, organizational, or other extraneous influences that could introduce bias or error into the decision-making process. The CPI and supervisor were marginally able to identify and prevent these influences from having an effect on decisions made regarding safe child placement, substantiation, and case disposition. The Investigation/assessment is not written in a strength-based, objective manner that is free from the CPI's personal opinion. The CPI did not always engage in the Investigation/assessment process in a culturally sensitive and competent manner.

2 - Poor Performance. There was very little recognition of personal, organizational, or other extraneous influences that could introduce bias or error into the decision-making process. The CPI and supervisor were unable to identify
these influences and there may have been some affect on decisions made regarding safe child placement, the substantiation decision, and case disposition. The Investigation/assessment is not written in a strength-based, objective manner and includes the CPIs personal opinion. The CPI did not always engage in the Investigation/assessment process in a culturally sensitive and competent manner.

1 - Adverse Performance. There was no recognition of personal, organizational, or other extraneous influences that could introduce bias or error into the decision-making process. The CPI and supervisor were unable to identify these influences, which affected decisions made regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition. The Initial supervisor Assessment is not written in a strength-based, objective manner and includes the CPIs personal opinion. The CPI did not engage in the Investigation/assessment process in a culturally sensitive and competent manner.

GUIDING LANGUAGE

Core Concepts

The purpose of agency policies and state standards is to provide a support framework for the consistent and effective delivery of agency services. The organizational or agency culture also provides a foundation that allows for consistent and fair application of agency policy and procedure for clients. Decisions and actions should be factually based and well-reasoned within the context and issue(s) of the individual child and family about whom the Investigation/assessment is being conducted. Due to the nature of human behavior and the inability of a policy framework to sufficiently plan for the wide degree of variability in human behavior given contextual influences, prescriptive application of agency policy and state standards may not be able to always provide guidance in a presenting situation.

Other factors, such as geography, availability of resources, or the CPI's skill, ability and experiences may have an effect upon decision making as key determinations may be made based on these factors, rather than information gained up to this point in the case. Policy and state standards may occasionally have the unintended effect of prompting actions or decisions that are not consistent or reasonable with the information available within an individual case. Personal opinion, bias, or preconceptions about a person, condition, or setting may have an impact on the reasoning, interpretation, and decision making of a CPI. These factors may be operating both consciously and unconsciously in the reasoning processes used by CPIs and supervisors.

CPIs and supervisors should recognize and discern when policy, state standards, personal opinion, existing organizational beliefs (e.g., "when in doubt, pull 'em out), cultural bias, or preconception may influence their thinking and action in an individual case situation. CPIs and supervisors, through the processes of thoughtful inquiry and introspection, should recognize the presence and potential undue influence that extraneous factors may have on their reasoning and decision making. CPIs should make efforts to avoid, counter, or plan to overcome these influences when undue influences are at play. These efforts should be encouraged and supported by the CPI's supervisor.

Considerations

1. Do agency policies appear to have an influence on the case's disposition decisions?

2. Does the finding of verified on non substantiated maltreatment (or the nature of the incident or type of maltreatment) drive the disposition decision more than the overall assessment?

3. Do certain agency factors, rules, norms, values, or cultural influences appear to have had an impact on the major decisions (finding, removal, placement, petition, closure) in the life of this case?
4. Do the CPI and supervisor appear to have a balanced and strengths-based view of the child and family?

5. Does the CPI feel that he/she is supported by his/her supervisor, peers, and other managers in the agency?

6. Does the CPI feel that he/she works or makes decisions "in a vacuum" or does he/she feel that they have the support of supervisors or agency management? Does the CPI receive regular supervision?

7. Did policy infrastructural issues, such as caseload sizes, CPI Supervisor availability, availability of resources, geography, costs, and availability of training, have an impact on actions taken in this case? Does the CPI have a reasonable and manageable workload within agency standards?

8. Is there a sufficient array of culturally competent and multi-lingual providers within the community?

9. Is the CPI sensitive to familial culture, background, or values? Are there any language barriers?

10. Does the CPI have a background or previous experience working with this family, neighborhood, tribe, and culture?

11. What is the CPI's experience, background, length of time with the agency, and is it impacting actions and decisions made in this case?

12. Have there been any recent high-profile cases, incidents (e.g., child death, egregious abuse), media, or community issues that maybe impacting actions or decisions in this case?

13. What is the community’s perception of child welfare services? Are key community stakeholders, include the court system, engaged and supportive of local child welfare services?

14. Have there been any recent policy changes, directives, or legal or court issues that maybe impacting actions or decisions in this case?
Practice Review 5: Critical Discernment

Focus Measure

CRITICAL DISCERNMENT: To what degree: Has the information gathered in the Investigation/assessment process been sufficiently and accurately analyzed, synthesized, and interpreted to render a well-founded determination in this case?

- Were extraneous influences, if any, recognized and prevented from influencing the determination made?
- Have the possible alternative conclusions been eliminated due to lack of support during the critical discernment process?
- Have well-reasoned Investigation/assessment decisions been rendered in this case?

RESPONSE – Practice Rating:

☐ 6 Optimal Practice ☐ 5 Good Practice ☐ 4 Fair Practice ☐ 3 Marginal Practice ☐ 2 Poor Practice ☐ 1 Adverse Practice

RESPONSE GUIDE

6 - Optimal Performance. There was excellent analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of information in the Investigation/assessment, which resulted in well-founded decisions regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition. The process used to make these decisions was thoughtful and deliberate. Possible sources of error were identified and avoided during the reasoning process. There did not appear to be other information that should have been included in the reasoning process.

5 - Good Performance. There was good analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of information in the Investigation/assessment, which resulted in well-founded decisions regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition. The process used to make these decisions was thoughtful and deliberate. Most possible sources of error were identified and avoided during the reasoning process. There did not appear to be other information that should have been included in the reasoning process.

4 - Fair Performance. There was minimally adequate to fair analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of information in the Investigation/assessment, which resulted in fairly well-founded decisions regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition. The process used to make these decisions was somewhat thoughtful and deliberate. Some possible sources of error were identified and avoided during the reasoning process. There was some information available that was not included in the reasoning process.

3 - Marginal Performance. There was limited analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of information in the Investigation/assessment, which resulted in possibly questionable decisions regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and/or case disposition. The process used to make these decisions was marginally thoughtful and deliberate. Some possible sources of error were not identified and avoided during the reasoning process. There was some information available that was not included in the reasoning process.

2 - Poor Performance. There were errors in analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of information in the Investigation/assessment, which resulted in questionable decisions regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and/or case disposition. The process used to make these decisions was not thoughtful and deliberate. Possible sources of error were not identified and considered during the reasoning process. There was some information available that was not included in the reasoning process.

1 - Adverse Performance. There was no analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of information in the Investigation/assessment, which resulted in problematic decisions regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and/or case disposition. The process used to make these decisions was not thoughtful and deliberate. Possible sources of error were not identified and considered during the reasoning process.
deliberate or there was a lack of process. Possible sources of error were not identified and considered during the reasoning process. There was a great deal of information available that was not included in the Focus Measure.

GUIDING LANGUAGE

Core Concepts

Critical discernment is the degree to which the CPI (either individually or in the context of a team) has used a thoughtful and deliberate process in understanding, and applying available information in the strategic decisions (e.g., safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition) during the Investigation/assessment process. This process includes: gathering information or evidence in order to assemble an information base and interpreting information accurately to guide the decision making process with regard to child safety. The purpose of this indicator is to examine and rate the degree to which critical decisions are carefully reasoned by the Investigation/assessment CPI at strategic decision points. Strategic decision points are those that fundamentally alter the path of potential outcomes for the child and family involved, such as substantiation, diversion to community resources, child removal and placement.

Key questions to consider when determining the level of critical discernment applied in this case:

1. Was the level of accuracy, relevancy, and sufficiency of the information relied upon by the CPI at the moment the decision was made?
2. Was there a logic and quality of reasoning process used by the CPI to interpret the meaning and significance of the information?
3. What were the decisive criteria applied (primary factor(s)) in the decision-making process that most influenced the decision in this case?
4. Were there efforts in the decision-making process by the CPI to identify and avoid sources of undue influence, bias, or other errors?

Considerations:

1. Were diligent efforts made in assembling the information?
2. Was there a thoughtful reasoning process in the decision-making process?
3. What other factors were included in the decision-making process?
4. What are the results of the decisions made and are they the anticipated results?
5. Of the information applied by the CPI, which factor or combination of factors proved decisive and why?
6. What concerns, if any, did the CPI have at the time of the decision?
7. What reflective processes, if any, did the CPI apply to detect and avoid decision errors during or following the decision-making process?
8. What regrets, if any, did the CPI have after the decision was made and the course of action taken?
9. What additional information should have been included in the reasoning process that may have resulted in a
different decision being made?
Status Review 6: Confidence in Decisions Made

Focus Measure

CONFIDENCE IN DECISIONS MADE: CPI and Supervisor: To what degree: Are the CPI and supervisor confident that the key strategic decisions that were made up to this point are the best and most appropriate courses of action? Do the CPI and Supervisor believe that the assembly of evidence, the logic and critical thinking applied in decisions, and the actions taken are the most appropriate and correct in this case at this time?

- To what degree: Does the reviewer believe that the strategic decisions made by the CPI and Supervisor up to this point are the most appropriate and correct for the child and family? Does the reviewer have confidence that the safety and well-being of the child will be maintained based on the decisions made by the CPI and supervisor?

RESPONSE - Practice Rating:

- 6 Optimal Practice
- 5 Good Practice
- 4 Fair Practice
- 3 Marginal Practice
- 2 Poor Practice
- 1 Adverse Practice

RESPONSE GUIDE

6 - Optimal Performance. There was an excellent level of confidence by the CPI or Supervisor in decisions made regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition and reviewers share this level of confidence. The CPI/supervisor and reviewers believe that the logic and critical thinking applied during the decision-making process were appropriate and accurate. The CPI/supervisor and reviewers believe that decisions made were the most appropriate course of action given information known at the time of the decision. Reviewers are confident that the safety and well-being of the child(ren) will be maintained based on decisions made. Decisions made were highly consistent with agency policy, state standards, and statutes.

5 - Good Performance. There was a good level of confidence by the CPI or Supervisor in decisions made regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition and reviewers share this level of confidence. The CPI/supervisor and reviewers believe that the logic and critical thinking applied during the decision-making process were appropriate and accurate. The CPI/supervisor and reviewers believe that decisions made were the appropriate course of action given information known at the time of the decision. Reviewers are confident that the safety and well-being of the child(ren) will be maintained based on decisions made. Decisions made were consistent with agency policy, state standards, and statutes.

4 - Fair Performance. There was a minimally adequate to fair level of confidence by the CPI or Supervisor in decisions made regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition and reviewers share this level of confidence. The CPI/supervisor and reviewers believe that the logic and critical thinking applied during the decision-making process were fairly appropriate and accurate. The CPI/supervisor and reviewers believe that decisions made were fairly appropriate given information known at the time of the decision. Reviewers are fairly confident that the safety and well-being of the child(ren) will be maintained based on decisions made. Decisions made were fairly consistent with agency policy, state standards, and statutes.

3 - Marginal Performance. There was a limited level of confidence by the CPI or Supervisor in decisions made regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition OR reviewers do not share the level of confidence of the CPI/supervisor. There may be disagreement between the CPI/supervisor and reviewers as to whether the logic and critical thinking applied during the decision-making process were appropriate and accurate. The CPI/supervisor and/or reviewers believe that decisions made may not have been the most appropriate course of action given information known at the time of the decision. Reviewers may not be confident that the safety and well-being of the child(ren) will be maintained based on decisions made. Decisions made were marginally...
consistent with agency policy, state standards, and/or statutes.

2 - Poor Performance. There was very little confidence by the CPI or Supervisor in decisions made regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition OR reviewers do not share the level of confidence of the CPI/supervisor. There is disagreement between the CPI/supervisor and reviewers as to whether the logic and critical thinking applied during the decision-making process were appropriate and accurate. The CPI/supervisor and/or reviewers believe that decisions made were not the most appropriate course of action given information known at the time of the decision. Reviewers are not confident that the safety and well-being of the child(ren) will be maintained based on decisions made. Decisions made were not consistent with agency policy, state standards, and/or statutes.

1 - Adverse Performance. There was no confidence by the CPI or Supervisor in decisions made regarding safety, child placement, substantiation, and case disposition and reviewers share this level of confidence. The CPI/supervisor and/or reviewers do not believe that the logic and critical thinking applied during the decision-making process were appropriate and accurate. The CPI/supervisor and reviewers believe that decisions made were not the most appropriate course of action given information known at the time of the decision. Reviewers are not confident that the safety and well-being of the child(ren) will be maintained based on decisions made and the child(ren) may be unsafe. Decisions made were highly inconsistent with agency policy, state standards, and/or statutes.

GUIDING LANGUAGE

Core Concepts

CPI and Supervisor: The core practice functions of engagement, assessment, and safety planning lay the foundation for the key strategic decisions of whether a child can be safely maintained in his/her own home, and if so, what actions must be immediately be taken to ensure their safety. The analysis and critical thinking process of applying the information obtained during the investigation/assessment in order to lead to decision making is critical discernment. Whether or not additional factors beyond the information assembled during casework activities affect the decisions made is the recognition of undue influence. Ultimately, CPIs move through these conscious and unconscious thought processes in order to make the critical and strategic case decisions, such as removal, safety planning, and reunification.

The degree to which CPIs and supervisors are certain that they have,

- acted adequately based on policy and state standards,
- with sufficient diligence in actions taken,
- while drawing the most appropriate conclusions and making the correct decisions,

influences the level of confidence CPIs and supervisors have regarding the status of the case.

Ultimately, the child welfare system is expected to ensure the safety of the child. This indicator measures the degree to which the CPI, supervisor and CQI Investigation/assessment reviewer have confidence that the decisions made up to this point are the correct and most appropriate ones given the dynamic circumstances present in the case situation.

Reviewer. During the QSR process, reviewers interview key participants in the case, while also reviewing related documentation and other case history information. Reviewers are tasked with assessing the adequacy and diligence of actions taken by the CPI and Supervisor in the case as well as whether, based on the information on hand, CPIs and Supervisors have taken the most appropriate actions to ensure the safety and well-being of the
child and family. This indicator measures the degree of confidence the reviewer has that the CPI and supervisor have drawn appropriate conclusions, made well-reasoned decisions, and have confidence that these decisions will ensure the safety and well-being of the child.

Considerations

CPI or Supervisor:

1. Have the CPI and Supervisor followed agency policy and state standards regarding tasks to be completed during the investigation/assessment period of the case?

2. Have the steps taken by the CPI and Supervisor in following policy and state standards been of sufficient quality to:
   - Engage the family and begin building a partnership and working relationship with the child and family?
   - Assess all sources of information with adequate diligence and depth to lead to a sufficient understanding of the facts of the case and status of the family and lead to good decisions?
   - Thoughtfully review, consider, synthesize, analyze, and process available information in the key strategic decisions?
   - Recognize factors other than the information learned during the investigation/assessment that may be impacting the decisions made?

3. On a scale ranging from 1 to 6, with 1 having no confidence, and 6 having a high degree of confidence, how do the CPI and Supervisor rate their levels of confidence that their decisions and actions will keep the child safe?

4. On a scale ranging from 1 to 6, with 1 having no confidence, and 6 having a high degree of confidence, how do the CPI and Supervisor rate their levels of confidence that their decisions and actions were the most appropriate and in the best interest of the child and family?

5. How confident is the CPI that their supervisor and/or agency administrators or managers will support their decisions or actions taken?

6. Based on the information learned during the review, does the reviewer believe that the CPI and Supervisor have drawn the most appropriate conclusions regarding the status of this child and family?

7. Based on the information learned during the review, does the reviewer believe that the decisions made were correct and in accordance with agency policy and state standards?

8. What degree of confidence does the reviewer have that the actions taken will ensure the child's safety and well-being needs will be met and are in the best interest of the family?
Practice Review 7: Decision Documentation

Focus Measure

DEcision Documentation: Degree to which: The facts gathered, patterns discerned, reasoning process used, and determinations made by the CPI are retained and documented in a useful form that is consistent with applicable standards of good practice.

RESPONSE - Practice Rating:

○ 6 Optimal Practice ○ 5 Good Practice ○ 4 Fair Practice ○ 3 Marginal Practice ○ 2 Poor Practice ○ 1 Adverse Practice

RESPONSE GUIDE

6 - Optimal Performance. An excellent description of the evidence relied upon, use of evaluative criteria for the CPI’s outcome determination(s), and justification for the determination(s) are retained in an excellent written form in this case for subsequent use by other system agents. The electronic recording of the investigative process and determinations were complete and fully consistent with all applicable performance standards.

5 - Good Performance. A substantially good and useful description of the evidence relied upon, use of evaluative criteria for the CPI’s outcome determination(s), and justification for the determination(s) are retained in a fully useful written form in this case for subsequent use by other system agents. The electronic recording of the investigative process and determinations were complete and generally consistent with all applicable performance standards.

4 - Fair Performance. A minimally adequate to fair description of the evidence relied upon, use of evaluative criteria for the CPI’s outcome determination(s), and justification for the determination(s) are retained in a somewhat useful written form in this case for subsequent use by other system agents. The electronic recording of the investigative process and determinations were partially complete and somewhat consistent with most applicable performance standards.

3 - Marginal Performance. A somewhat limited or inconsistent description of the evidence relied upon, use of evaluative criteria for the CPI’s outcome determination(s), and justification for the determination(s) are retained in a marginally inadequate written form in this case, somewhat limiting future use by other system agents. The electronic recording of the investigative process and determinations were somewhat incomplete and/or somewhat inconsistent with some applicable performance standards.

2 - Poor Performance. A substantially limited or incomplete description of the evidence relied upon, use of evaluative criteria for the CPI’s outcome determination(s), and justification for the determination(s) are retained in an inadequate written form in this case, substantially limiting effective use by other system agents. The electronic recording of the investigative process and determinations were substantially incomplete and/or substantially inconsistent with many applicable performance standards.

1 - Adverse Performance. The description of the evidence relied upon, use of evaluative criteria for the CPI’s outcome determination(s), and justification for the determination(s) are not retained. The retained record contains serious errors of fact or reasoning resulting in findings that cannot be used with confidence by other system agents. The electronic recording of the investigative process and determinations were substantially incomplete, and/or are substantially inconsistent with many applicable performance standards.
GUIDING LANGUAGE

Core Concepts

The Investigation/assessment process operates the “front door” of the child protection system. Outcomes of the investigation/assessment process for a focus child may result in the verification of maltreatment by the child's caregiver with possible removal of that child for reasons of child protection and dependency. Such an event could fundamentally and sometimes permanently alter the course of a child's life. For these reasons, due care should be used in the processes of assessment and decision-making as well as in the careful documentation and retention of key information about these events.

In this indicator, reviewers evaluate the adequacy and completeness of documentation in the case under review. Reviewers applying this indicator must have a good working knowledge of standards of good practice and FSFN.

Information to Consider In Scoring

1. What key information should be gathered, used, and documented by the CPI in a case of this nature? Was this information present in the written investigation case?

2. What key information was actually documented in this case (the file and in FSFN) by the CPI?

3. How well does the narrative contained in the electronic record for this case explain how the CPI discovered and interpreted the factors that were decisive in determining the outcome?

4. How useful will the content of the electronic record likely be to other system agents who will rely upon the accuracy and completeness of the details provided?

5. What matters, if any, in the electronic record appear to be incomplete, confusing, or ambiguous to other users?

6. How well does the content of the record meet the intentions and requirements defined in performance standards for this work?

Note: This indicator is rated in the following dimensions: adequacy of the record for later use by system agents and completeness of the record in a manner consistent with performance standards.
Debriefing and Reporting Outline

Once the investigation case has been reviewed, a debriefing is scheduled with the Supervisor and the CPI as available to share findings and to discuss and mitigate any concerns or disagreements. The Operations Manager should be invited to this meeting as well as other front line or management staff that are deemed pertinent to improving the quality of investigative activities. The written debriefing report will serve as the final report or “story” for this QSR of CPI pilot.

1. Brief History, Cultural Background, Reason for Current Involvement
   - Overview of family structure
   - Summary of the prior reports of abuse/neglect and prior service provision and/or current services in place
   - Describe any significant cultural issues

2. Investigation Case Review Findings
   - Engaging and Assessing
     - efforts to build a trust-based relationship with the family
     - child and family perspectives considered
     - attempts to obtain information for all components within the assessment process
     - depth of understanding of information obtained from the assessment process
   - Observing and Interviewing
     - recognizing potential influences from inter/intra personal relationships
     - analyzing, synthesizing and appropriately interpreting observations and verbal feedback
   - Findings
     - supporting rationale for identifying maltreatment
     - supervisory involvement in determining findings
   - Needs and Services
     - strengths based approach
     - service needs identified in partnership with the family
     - services provided
   - Safe Case Closure
     - safety and well being assured
     - effective communication with participants and providers
     - well-reasoned decision-making
     - supervisory concurrence with safe case closure rationale

3. Reflection
   - noted concerns or follow-up indicated
   - mitigation of challenges to findings
   - final rating of practice in this case
4. Discussion of Next Steps

- If CPI and supervisor could make any system changes that would help to get better results for this child and family, what would they be?
- Feedback on suggestions gathered from family and others interviewed
- Some reviewer ideas that may be an option
Overall Practice Performance Pattern

The Overall Practice Performance Rating is an overall rating based on the reviewer's holistic impression and summary conclusions drawn from all available information learned during the case. The overall rating is not intended to be an average nor is intended to be reflective of only one indicator. Rather, reviewers are to give appropriate weight and importance to all information obtained during the review and subsequent ratings assigned to each indicator.

The overall rating is a summary conclusion and final determination on the system and practice performance across all aspects included in the review for this case.

Reviewers are encouraged to seek assistance from other trained reviewers or their team leader when determining the Overall System and Practice Review Indicator. The overall rating must be consistent with both the written summary and oral case presentation.

There are seven indicators in the area of Core Practice Functions. Each applicable indicator produces a finding reported on a 6-point rating scale. Then an “overall rating” of practice performance is determined based on the reviewer’s holistic impression of all of the information put together; using critical, reflective thinking, and professional judgment.

Bottom line – Was the child kept safe from threats of harm and are protective capacities in place within the care giving situation?

(1) Begin by marking the rating value for each practice indicator on the “roll-up sheet.” These data elements are illustrated below.

(2) Disregard indicators deemed not applicable.

(3) Give weight (figuratively) to those indicator ratings judged to be most important at this time for this child, caregiver, and family.

(4) Focusing on applicable indicators and giving the greatest importance to the child’s safety and the availability of protective capacities to keep the child safe from harm and family at this time, determine an “overall rating” based on your general impression of the adequacy of current practices used in this case.

(5) Mark the boxes indicating your overall ratings in the spaces provided on the “roll-up sheet.”
### System & Practice Performance

Performance Indicator Zones: Improve Refine Maintain NA

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<tr>
<th>SYSTEM &amp; PRACTICE PERFORMANCE</th>
<th>IMPROVE</th>
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<td>PRACTICE FUNCTIONS</td>
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<td>1. Engagement &amp; Responsiveness</td>
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<td>3. Depth of Understanding &amp; Safety</td>
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<td>a. Depth of understanding</td>
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<td>b. Safety assessment</td>
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<td>c. Safety planning</td>
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<td>4. Avoidance of Undue Influences</td>
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<td>5. Critical Discernment</td>
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<td>6. Confidence in Decisions Made</td>
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<td>7. Decision Documentation</td>
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<td>Overall PRACTICE Rating</td>
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Additional Comments/Notes:

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