

# Type of Maltreatment

This is a straightforward information element concerned with *facts* and *evidence*, which support the presence of maltreatment, which comes from worker observation, interviews, and corroboration. This includes making a conclusion (substantiation) about the *type of maltreatment* (sexual abuse, lack of supervision, etc.) and the specific symptoms and facts (injuries/constant hitting) which is consistent with the maltreatment.

# Nature of Maltreatment

This qualifies the maltreatment by placing it in a context or situation that: 1) precedes or leads up to the maltreatment, or 2) exists while the maltreatment is occurring. By selectively "assessing" this element separately from the actual maltreatment, we achieve greater understanding of how serious the maltreatment is. In other words, the circumstances that accompany the maltreatment are important and are significant in them and qualify how serious the maltreatment is.

# Adult Functioning

This information element has strictly to do with how adults (the caregivers) in a family are functioning personally and presently in their everyday lives. It is concerned with life management, social relationships, meeting needs, problem solving.

Among the things you would be concerned about in gathering information and assessing are behavior, communication, ability to relate to others, cognitive functioning, intellect, self-control, problem solving, coping, impulsiveness and stress management. It also includes adult mental health and substance use.

## Adult Functioning (Cont'd)

It is concerned with whether role performance is influenced by mental health or substance abuse. It includes perception, rationality, self-control, reality testing, stability, self-awareness, self-esteem, self-acceptance and coherence.

Remember it is important that recent (adult related) history is captured here such as employment experiences, criminal history, previous relationships and so on.

# Child Functioning

This information element is qualified by the age of the child. Functioning is considered with respect to age appropriateness. Age appropriateness is applied against the “normalcy” standard. So, it is critical that you have a working understanding of child development given that you will be considering how a child is functioning in respect to what is expected given the child's age.

## Child Functioning (Cont'd)

Among the areas you will consider in information collecting and "assessing" are trust, sociability, self-awareness and acceptance, verbal skills/communication, independence, assertiveness, motor skills, intellect and mental performance, self-control, emotion, play and work, behavior patterns, mood changes, eating and sleeping habits and sexual behavior. Additionally, you consider the child's physical capabilities including vulnerability and ability to make needs known.

# General Parenting

When considering this information element, it is important to keep distinctively centered on the overall parenting that is occurring and not allow any maltreatment incident or discipline to shade your study.

Among the issues for consideration within this element are: parenting styles and the origin of the style, basic care, affection, communication, expectations for children, sensitivity to an individual child, knowledge and expectations related to child development and parenting, reasons for having children, viewpoint toward children, examples of parenting behavior and parenting experiences.

# Parenting Discipline

This is another information element that focuses information collection into one area—discipline of children. Study here would include the parent's methods, the source of those methods, purpose or reasons for, attitudes about, context of, expectations of discipline, understanding, relationship to child and child behavior, meaning of discipline.