

Enhancing Critical Thinking: A Supervisor's Guide

“Quick Tool”

The following are critical thinking, thought provoking, and follow up questions for supervisors to use to build good information gathering and decision making practices beyond “case report outs”. While the flow of the questions is intentional, it is most important for supervisors to develop the skills to ask relevant follow up questions to answers provided by workers and not simply use the tool below as a script. Each of the sections following Section 1 contains follow up questions. There are times when it is most appropriate to ask the follow up questions immediately, and then return to Section 1 for further information gathering.

1. Description of Family/Current Status

- a. Describe what you have learned so far in regard to: the family history; the current living situation; the six assessment domains; strengths, threats, and risks; and the effects on the child/youth's safety and development.
- b. Tell me about the quality of the relationship between the child/youth and the caregivers...what tells you that?
- c. How are caregivers taking care of the child/youth's needs?
- d. How has the family identified team members? Who are the members of the team? (A list of team members should include family, family supports, and other professionals.) Describe your family finding efforts. How have those efforts positively impacted case planning?
- e. How have you involved the team members in case planning and services?
- f. Do you feel that assessments for the critical issues have been adequate to meet the needs of the family? How do you know this? What would it take to make the assessment better (more accurate and useful)?
- g. How are services meeting the family's needs?
- h. What are the current efforts being made to achieve the primary and concurrent goals for the family and how is progress being measured and monitored?
- i. Tell me about the planning and support being provided to the child/youth/family to assure successful transitions and life adjustments.

2. Perspective of the Team

- a. How do the family members feel about their current situation and living arrangement?
- b. What does the child/youth, caregiver, provider and family say about the current goals including the concurrent permanency goal for the child/youth?
- c. How does the team feel about the child/youth's educational program and progress?
- d. How does the family describe their traditions, customs, and community? How has that impacted planning?
- e. If we asked the family what needs to happen for them to be successful, what would they say?



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- f. How does the child/youth/family view the level and frequency of services in regard to adequacy and what is your level of agreement with the family? How do they feel about the level of progress?
- g. Tell me about the family's feelings and opinions about transitions and life adjustments that are occurring.

3. Worker Analysis

- a. How have you assessed, planned and/or intervened regarding the child/youth's “risk taking” behaviors? How was the team engaged in the assessment?
- b. What is preventing or enhancing the achievement of the child/youth's optimal physical or mental health status? If obstacles exist, what are you planning to do to help the child/youth/family overcome those obstacles?
- c. How are stressors impacting the child/youth and the family and what efforts are being made to alleviate the stressors?
- d. How do we know independent living services are adequate for this youth? What obstacles do you see as barriers to independence? What will it take to assure that the appropriate supports are in place?
- e. What barriers can you identify that are preventing timely permanence (including reunification, if applicable)? How can we and the team overcome them and what can we do proactively to achieve timely permanence?
- f. How would you describe the team's unity of effort? Are roles and responsibilities of team members clear to all? How do you know?
- g. What is working well towards the success of this family and what is not working well?
- h. How does your assessment (the worker's assessment) of the situation compare with the team's perspective? How is that impacting progress?

4. Evaluation

- a. What needs to happen within the family to allow the threats/risks to be mitigated? What can we do to assure safe case closure?
- b. What needs to happen to have the child/youth/family achieve their “optimal” status?
- c. Where do you see the child/youth/family in six months? Where does the child/youth/family see themselves in six months?
- d. What tells you that the family is taking ownership of the plan and will continue to improve?
- e. How will you monitor the effectiveness of the plan and make adjustments in the future?

5. Decisions and Next Steps

- a. What additional information do you need to be more confident in your decision making?
- b. What are your next steps? How are you engaging the team in those steps?

