

## Protective Capacities Family Assessment Stages of Intervention Guide

There is a critical need for forming collaborative partnerships with families, which includes involving children and parent/caregivers in the mutual development of change strategies that will enhance the capacity of parent/caregivers to provide for their children's safety. To promote family involvement in the case planning process that will result in the development of individualized change strategies, the Protective Capacities Family Assessment (PCFA) provides four stages of intervention<sup>1</sup>: *Preparation, Introduction, Discovery, and Change Strategy and Case Planning*. The four intervention stages identify the actions and level of effort of the case manager, the facilitation objectives for assessment interviews, specific assessment content and questions to be considered during each intervention stage.

The four sequential stages of the PCFA enable case managers to guide families through a structured process that encourages collaboration; is strength seeking; focuses on the use of key concepts; and directs the assessment toward the problem identification, solution thinking and planning. **It is important to note that family engagement in a working partnership is emphasized throughout the assessment process.** Family engagement is crucial with respect to the development of individualized Case Plans as well as the belief that change in parent/caregiver functioning will not occur unless the parent/caregiver recognizes and accepts the need to change. Increasing information about one's self and areas of want and need, and raising self-awareness and expression of feelings regarding what needs to change and how change might occur begins for the case manager at the point that the PCFA begins.

A progression through the four stages of the PCFA encourages families to share their perspective regarding identified safety threats, strengths and protective capacities that exist, protective capacities needing to be developed and/or enhanced, and possible strategies that will address what must change. While the four stages of intervention delineate specific assessment content questions and facilitative objectives, the assessment approach is flexible in terms of the interaction with families. The transition from one stage to the next should be cohesive in the sense that discussions with families evolve smoothly between thinking about needs and solutions.

Of the four PCFA stages, three will require face-to-face contact with family members. This does not necessarily mean that every family will require three separate interviews/meetings. Depending on the family, the PCFA may be completed in less than three series of interviews. Guidance on the four intervention stages of the PCFA are included in the following tables (pp. 2-5).

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from ACTION for Child Protection, Inc.

## Intervention Stage 1 PREPARATION

*Adequate preparation is key to achieving the facilitative objectives of the PCFA process and involves several key activities.*

| LEVEL OF EFFORT  | ASSESSMENT CONTENT   | FACILITATIVE OBJECTIVES  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Prepare for the assessment.</p> <p>Become fully informed regarding CPS Assessment information and decisions.</p> <p>Complete prior to the first series of interviews with the family.</p> | <p>What is impending danger in the family?</p> <p>What parent/caregiver protective capacities appear to exist?</p> <p>Does the CPS Assessment documentation sufficiently support decision-making?</p> <p>Are there apparent gaps in information related to parent/caregiver protective capacities, impending danger, child vulnerability?</p> <p>What further information gathering seems indicated?</p> <p>Is it clearly understood how impending danger manifests in the family?</p> <p>Does the Safety Plan appear to be sufficient to manage impending danger?</p> <p>Appropriate level of intrusion? Adequate level of effort based on how impending dangers care manifested?</p> <p>Is it clear how the Safety Plan is intended to work with respect to controlling safety threats?</p> <p>What has been the family's reaction to agency involvement thus far?</p> <p>What are the information and assessment logistics that must be considered in order to conduct the PCFA?</p> <p>Prior to beginning interviews with the family, is there anything that you need to be prepared to respond to promptly? Are there any immediate Safety Planning issues (such as visitation arrangements) that need to be responded to prior to or at first contact with the family?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review Initial Assessment.</li> <li>2. Review Safety Assessment and Analysis.</li> <li>3. Review Safety Plan.</li> <li>4. Staff case with previous worker and/or consult with supervisor as needed.</li> <li>5. Contact collaterals, including safety service providers as appropriate.</li> <li>6. Respond to immediate safety management issues as indicated.</li> </ol> |

## Intervention Stage 2 INTRODUCTION

*Warm Handoff 3 initiates the 1st series of visits for the PCFA process. The time required to complete the Introduction Stage is dependent on family composition, case issues, dynamics, and family participation.*

| LEVEL OF EFFORT  | ASSESSMENT CONTENT   | FACILITATIVE OBJECTIVES   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Initiate PCFA.</p> <p>Begin engagement.</p> <p>Emphasize rapport building techniques.</p> | <p>Is it clear to the family how your role as a case manager is different from the CPS worker?</p> <p>What is the parent(s)/caregiver(s)' understanding regarding why their family has been opened for case management?</p> <p>What have parent(s)/caregiver(s) been told regarding the identification of impending danger? What is their understanding regarding identification of impending danger? What is their perception regarding the responsibility for protection and their belief regarding how that is achieved?</p> <p>What feelings prevail amount family members regarding agency involvement?</p> <p>What perceptions does the family have about itself, about its condition, and/or problem areas?</p> <p>Is/are parent(s)/caregiver(s) clear about the purpose of the Safety Plan? What is/are the parent(s)/caregiver(s)' perspective and attitude regarding ongoing safety intervention?</p> <p>Does the Safety Plan continue to provide the appropriate level of effort and degree of intrusiveness to assure child safety?</p> <p>What are skillful ways to promote parent/caregiver self-determination and autonomy?</p> <p>What is the status of the parent(s)/caregiver(s)' commitment to participate in the PCFA process?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce self, role, responsibility in working with the family and expectations for involvement.</li> <li>2. Begin attempting to form a working partnership with the family.</li> <li>3. Debrief the family's experience with agency intervention.</li> <li>4. Review and clarify the impending danger(s) that was/were identified as a result of the CPS Assessment.</li> <li>5. Seek parent(s)/caregiver(s)' perception regarding the identified impending danger and their responsibility to provide protection.</li> <li>6. Confirm sufficiency of the Safety Plan.</li> <li>7. Reinforce the parent(s)/caregiver(s)' right to self-determination and emphasize personal choice.</li> <li>8. Explain PCFA process and seek a commitment to participate and collaborate.</li> </ol> |

## Intervention Stage 3 DISCOVERY

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> series of visits may require more than one meeting with individual family members. The time needed for completing the PCFA Discovery Stage depends on case dynamics and parent/caregiver cooperation.*

| LEVEL OF EFFORT  | ASSESSMENT CONTENT   | FACILITATIVE OBJECTIVES  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Continue PCFA.</p> <p>Continue to engage and seek partnership with family.</p> <p>Explore with the parent(s)/caregiver(s) (and children as appropriate) what must change to enhance protective capacities and address impending danger.</p> | <p>What is the family's current level of commitment to engage in the assessment process?</p> <p>What is perceived as positive or as strengths within the family that could contribute to achieving case goals?</p> <p>What does/do the parent(s)/caregiver(s) identify as strengths about themselves as individuals and in the parent/caregiver role?</p> <p>In what ways might existing strengths be used to increase diminished protective capacities and decrease impending danger?</p> <p>Does/do the parent(s)/caregiver(s) recognize or acknowledge impending danger? What do family members want to keep the same? What might they want to or be willing to consider changing related to their protective capacities?</p> <p>Does/do the parent(s)/caregiver(s) perceive any negative aspects in their ability to assure child protection and safety?</p> <p>What is the family's perception regarding diminished protective capacities that may be resulting in impending danger?</p> <p>What is the level of agreement between parent(s)/caregiver(s) and the CPS Assessment regarding diminished protective capacities and impending danger?</p> <p>Is/are parent(s)/caregiver(s) ready, willing, and able to consider necessary change related to diminished protective capacities?</p> <p>Are there specific protective capacities that parent(s)/caregiver(s) are more receptive to working on?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review purposes, objective, and decisions associated with the PCFA Process.</li> <li>2. Reconfirm the mutual commitment (agency and family) to work collaboratively toward developing solutions.</li> <li>3. Identify and/or discuss family strengths and parent/caregiver protective capacities.</li> <li>4. Consider how existing parent/caregiver protective capacities can be utilized to create a safe environment in the family.</li> <li>5. Determine the relationship between impending danger and diminished parent/caregiver protective capacities.</li> <li>6. Identify the stage(s) of change the family members are in with respect to impending danger and diminished protective capacities.</li> <li>7. Consider areas of agreement between the CPS Assessment and the parent(s)/caregiver(s) regarding what needs to change to create a safe environment.</li> </ol> |

## Intervention Stage 4 CHANGE STRATEGY AND CASE PLANNING

*The 3<sup>rd</sup> and final series of visits conclude the PCFA process whereby the conversations from the earlier series of interviews result in drafting a specific Case Plan.*

**NOTE:** *The collaborative development of a Case Plan may have already begun during the previous intervention stages.*

| LEVEL OF EFFORT  | ASSESSMENT CONTENT   | FACILITATIVE OJECTIVES  |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Reinforce partnership.</p> <p>Collaboratively develop a Case Plan with the family.</p> <p>Seek commitment to the working partnership and the Case Plan.</p> | <p>What diminished protective capacities associated with the impending danger must be addressed in the Case Plan which will enable parent(s)/caregiver(s) to assure child safety?</p> <p>To what extent does/do the parent(s)/caregiver(s) acknowledge what must change?</p> <p>Are there areas of concern (impending danger and diminished protective capacities) that family members are more ready, willing, and able to proceed with changing?</p> <p>What is the most logical place to begin focusing on change, setting goals, and identifying potential service options?</p> <p>Are Case Plan goals/outcomes (enhanced protective capacities) precisely phrased (preferable using the family's own terminology) to establish a sufficient behavioral benchmark for evaluating change?</p> <p>How much flexibility does the case manager have to negotiate the focus of intervention and the provision of Case Plan services?</p> <p>Are identified Case Plan services and activities acceptable, accessible, and appropriately matched with what must change (protective capacities)?</p> <p>Is there an understanding regarding next steps and what is intended to occur in the Case Plan?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acknowledge areas of agreement and disagreement.</li> <li>2. Reaffirm family member self-determination, autonomy, personal choice, and implications for consequences.</li> <li>3. Focus on what behavior must change (enhancing protective capacities).</li> <li>4. Consider common areas of perception and definition of what must change.</li> <li>5. Develop a change strategy by prioritizing specific areas of change and considering a rational progression for change.</li> <li>6. Establish realistic goals, outcomes, and objectives for change.</li> <li>7. Direct case planning toward enhancing diminished parent/caregiver protective capacities.</li> <li>8. Consider specific needs of the child(ren) that must be addressed in the Case Plan.</li> <li>9. Be prepared to offer and discuss possible change strategies and/or Case Plan service options.</li> <li>10. Negotiate and seek agreement regarding Case Plan service options.</li> </ol> |