FLORIDA SAFETY DECISION MAKING METHODOLOGY

Supervisor Consultation Guide:
Directing Practice and Decision Making during for CPI: Family Functioning Assessment

Developed by
ACTION for Child Protection, Inc.

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Consulting with CPI’s related to practice and decision-making is one of the most important activities that you will do as a supervisor. Although the need to provide consultation is a longstanding expectation in child welfare, often supervisor consultation is inconsistent or lacks the focus necessary to support intervention. With respect to the implementation of the Family Functioning Assessment (FFA), supervisor consultation is crucial for helping CPI’s gather information, assess threats to child safety and establish sufficient Impending Danger Safety Plans. In fact, it could be said that well organized, responsive and expert consultation is the most significant influence on changing practice in the field and successfully implementing practice. The discussions and problem solving that occur when you are providing consultation concentrates on helping Child Protective Investigators (CPI) achieve the purpose and objectives for the Family Functioning Assessment (FFA).

The primary purpose of the FFA is to determine which families require Ongoing Case Management due to children being unsafe. The practice objectives of the FFA are to:

⇒ Gather sufficient information about families to assess impending danger and caregiver protective capacities;
⇒ Determine if children are safe or unsafe;
⇒ Apply reasonable efforts for safety management;
⇒ Establish sufficient Impending Danger Safety Plans that are least intrusive and appropriate for controlling impending danger;
⇒ Determine the occurrence or absence of maltreatment;
⇒ Identify problems requiring treatment services associated with impending danger and diminished caregiver protective capacities;
⇒ Inform the family risk assessment to determine families for prevention services.

The effective implementation of the FFA requires that the practice objectives be achieved in adherence with the Florida Practice Guidelines. The Practice Guidelines identify and describe the expectations for practice and decision-making necessary for effectively completing the FFA. As a supervisor you are the person responsible for directing and regulating practice and overseeing FFA decision-making. This means that you are in a crucial position of influence to manage and regulate how practice occurs in the field among CPI staff and oversee the effectiveness of FFA decision-making.

Although CPI’s are responsible for the actual case-by-case tasks and activities associated with completing FFA’s, it is the supervisor who is ultimately accountable for the performance of CPI’s and the achievement of the FFA purpose. Given the weight of this responsibility, it is necessary that supervisors are consistently involved with their CPI’s as an investigation proceeds through the FFA process and fully informed at each decision-making point. It is therefore important that supervisors have a structured approach for providing CPI’s with timely consultation to support best practice and promote accurate FFA decision-making.
Purpose of the FFA Supervisor Consultation Guide

The purpose of the Supervisor Consultation Guide: Directing Practice and Decision Making during the Family Functioning Assessment (Guide) is to provide supervisors with a straightforward structure for consulting with CPI’s related to FFA practice issues and decision-making requirements.

The Guide advances a process-oriented and criteria-based approach for case consultation. The Guide emphasizes specific supervisor consultation expectations at key intervention points in the FFA process beginning with Hotline assignment and ending with investigation completion at the conclusion of the FFA or transfer to case management. The Guide focuses on supervisor-CPI consultation as the fundamental method for directing practice, overseeing FFA decision making and building CPI competency necessary for assessing families and determining child safety.

The objectives for the Guide are to:

⇒ Promote proactive case consultation during the FFA;
⇒ Advance an approach to supervisor consultation based on a humanistic management philosophy and style;
⇒ Delineate the fundamental supervisor responsibilities for facilitating effective practice, overseeing and regulating decision making and building staff competency;
⇒ Establish the purpose(s) and targeted objectives for supervisor consultation at FFA decision-making points;
⇒ Establish criteria-based supervisor consultation related to the FFA;
⇒ Assure that FFA practice guidelines are achieved.
Supervisor Consultation Philosophy and Style

The mentality you have about the importance of consultation, the purpose for consultation and how consultation should occur is as important as your expertise related to Safety Methodology and specifically the FFA. Although you are in a position of authority and accountable for CPI proficiency and effectiveness, your approach to supervisor consultation must take into account both the complexity of the job with respect to working with families as well as the interpersonal factors and internal and external motivations of your staff.

Unlike supervisors who impose rigid directives to workers to increase output or control behavior, an effective CPI supervisor is concerned with the human element and personal meaning associated with how staff perceive, understand and value their job.

Supervisor consultation provides the opportunity and the context for bringing meaning to the job beyond the specific tasks and activities. Consultation encourages mutual respect and ownership within the unit. It reinforces collaboration among staff to build competency that results in independence and proficiency.

As a supervisor you are in a position of authority, but this does not mean that you should be authoritarian. Supervisor consultation must occur in such a way that there is a balance between assuring that your expectations for CPI accountability are met while at the same time respecting and supporting staff and encouraging their input and ideas.

As you think about your approach to supervisor consultation, consider the following:

- A CPI supervisor is most effective at improving CPI performance when he/she brings a “big picture” meaning to the job for CPI’s.

  This involves assuring that CPI’s are keenly aware and respect how their involvement with families can have a significant impact on caregivers and children. It is further important that staff recognize how their efforts in the field contribute to the achievement of the agency’s mission, goals and objectives for intervention. Consultation should move beyond discussions regarding CPI activities and tasks (e.g., contacting a collateral, transporting a child, preparing for court) that occur during the completion of the FFA. Consultation should also involve helping CPI’s understand and appreciate how their work contributes to the work of their colleagues who are responsible for ongoing case management and assists in promoting caregiver change associated with child safety.

- A CPI Supervisor is most effective at improving CPI performance when he/she is able to instill a sense of ownership and commitment between CPI’s for achieving standards for intervention.
CPI is a professional job that requires trained and capable professional staff. It is therefore important to work and interact with staff as professionals. Supervisors should in turn expect and reinforce professionalism among staff that will result in them taking pride in their work, demonstrating individual initiative for professional development and investing a personal stake in the quality of service provided by the agency.

- A CPI supervisor is most effective at improving CPI performance when he/she communicates clear expectations for practice and provides guidance to staff in a collegial way.

Establishing expectations for performance is not as easy as providing staff with a list of do’s and don’ts. Effectively communicating expectations for practice and decision making that are based on standards for intervention takes time, consistency and persistence. Supervisors who hold themselves to a high level of accountability based on standards serve as role models for staff for what constitutes an acceptable level of effort and professionalism. Supervisor consultation provides the essential means for establishing and reinforcing a supervisor’s expectations. On a case-by-case basis, discussions regarding a worker’s approach to intervention, FFA protocol, sufficiency of information collection, criteria-based safety assessment and planning are a logical and efficient way for building CPI competency associated with supervisor expectations.

- A CPI supervisor is most effective at improving CPI performance when he/she is able to build competency, support independence and promote critical thinking among staff.

Individuals are not promoted into supervisor positions in order to become “super-workers.” Many supervisors approach consultation as a way of micro-managing CPI’s, which results in essentially doing casework. This mentality and approach to supervisory consultation limits CPI development and limits supervisory capacity to take direct charge of the case and decisions that occur across all cases in a CPI unit.

It is crucial that a supervisor is highly knowledgeable regarding the status of cases in his or her unit. Being informed about cases as they proceed through the process enables supervisors to assist CPI’s in enhancing their practice and making correct decisions. Dictating to CPI’s what they must do on cases is not consultation. Supervisor consultation is interactive. It involves facilitating discussions, posing questions and seeking clarifications as the means for overseeing practice and providing guidance. Providing direction to CPI’s during consultation is primarily intended to serve as a teaching moment to help CPI’s become more competent and independent.
The Humanistic Supervisor Consultation Model: The Cornerstone for Supervisor Philosophy and Style

The Humanistic\(^1\) Supervisor Consultation Model refers to a particular way that a supervisor views and understands his/her staff. It results in defining supervisor interaction and relationships with staff. The supervisor applying this model appreciates the uniqueness of each of his/her staff members. The supervisor understands that CPI choice and responsibility are fundamental to what it means to be a human being. Further the supervisor sees how choice and responsibility contribute to and are necessary for growth and development. Staff is seen as intentional, goal oriented and creative as they go about their daily work. CPI feeling and knowledge are appreciated as important to effectiveness. The supervisor employing this approach knows that integrity in personal and professional relationships is crucial. Therefore there is a high degree of trust in the value and importance of supervisor – worker relationships, and fundamental to this way of supervising is the sense of equalitarianism that pervades all supervisor-worker interaction.

\(^1\) Humanistic as used here is specifically applied to the thinking, perception and behavior a supervisor applies in managing, interacting and relating to staff. It is not associated with philosophies of a larger scope. It basically is concerned with viewing CPI’s as worthy, capable and deserving of respect for their uniqueness and dignity. It focuses on the potential that each worker has to become competent and invested in his or her job.
## Humanistic Supervisor Consultation Model

### Supervisor Competence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level</th>
<th>Low Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>-Manager</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Lacks knowledge</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>-Expertise</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Unable to consult</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>-Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Accountability based on unclear expectations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>-Skill</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Emphasizes tasks and activities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>-Established Expectations</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Lacks rationale</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>-Accountability</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Process Oriented</strong></td>
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<td><strong>-Process Oriented</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Structured</strong></td>
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### Competent/Authoritarian:
- CPI’s do what is minimally required to do the job.
- CPI’s feel coerced.
- Directives are rigid.
- Job is perceived as a series of tasks and activities.
- Professional growth is neither encouraged or pursued.

### Competent/Humanistic:
- CPI’s are internally motivated to excel.
- CPI’s seek guidance and communication is valued.
- Promotes critical thinking and independence.
- Seeks to build competency.
- Supports professionalism.

### Incompetent/Authoritarian:
- CPI’s avoid interaction or could be confrontational.
- CPI’s feel insecure about the job.
- Punitive and lacks guidance.
- Use of authority to mask incompetence.
- High rate of staff turnover.

### Incompetent/Non-Authoritative:
- CPI’s manipulate due to lack of respect.
- CPI’s seek other sources for information due to lack of confidence.
- “Folk Practices” are perpetuated.
- Causal and laid-back approach.
- Seeks to please staff.
- Morale varies; General Dissatisfaction.

### Supervisor Qualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Level</th>
<th>High Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>-Dictator</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Collaborator</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>-Disempowering</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Motivator</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>-Detached</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Accessible</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>-Aloof</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Approachable</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>-Rigid</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Flexible</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>-Insensitive</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Empathetic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>-Disrespectful</strong></td>
<td><strong>-Respectful</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Adapted from
Leadership: A Fundamental Perspective
-David Barrett
The humanistic supervisor consultation model illustrates competency variables and personal qualities that personify highly effective supervisors. These supervisor characteristics have a significant bearing on how CPI’s feel about their job and the confidence they have in their supervisors to guide their work. The competence and the personal qualities that a supervisor possesses will inevitably influence the way that a supervisor interacts with CPI’s. This, in turn, results in a reaction from CPI’s with respect to how they respond to their supervisor, which ultimately can have a significant influence on how they perform on the job.

Relationship is paramount for the humanistic supervisor. It is important to emphasize that an effective supervisor-worker relationship and subsequently effective consultation does not imply a lack of structure, a lack of guidance or a lack of oversight. The humanistic supervisor consultation model illustrates the importance of having a balance between competency, expectations and accountability, while assuring that the personnel doing the job feel valued and respected.

Supervisors who are competent but also inflexible, insensitive and autocratic will hinder the professional development of CPI’s, discourage openness regarding decision-making and contribute and/or perpetuate the de-professionalization of the job. Alternatively, supervisors who are approachable and “people oriented” yet incompetent will likewise have difficulty assisting CPI’s in implementing the practice model as intended. A supervisor’s approach has a tremendous influence on CPI perceptions, attitudes and behavior. A supervisor’s approach can result in CPI’s feeling angry to powerless and intimidated. On the other end of the spectrum, the supervisor approach can increase job satisfaction and result in CPI’s feeling empowered and confident.
Characteristics Influencing Supervisor Consultation

Supervisors who are successful at working with CPI’s in implementing FSDMM at CPI are highly competent and possess personal qualities that demonstrate that they value the perspectives, professional motivations and growth of the people that do the practice in the field. The following are competency variables and personal qualities that contribute to effective consultation:

- **Expertise**

  Supervisors are the experts\(^2\) in the agency regarding what must occur related to practice and what constitutes effective decision making. The development of a supervisor’s expertise is fueled by a strong belief that the FFA is the right way to intervene in the lives of families. There is a sense of ownership for successfully implementing the FFA and this sense drives a supervisor to learn the practice model and increasingly become more expert in getting it right.

- **Knowledge and Skill**

  Supervisors understand the rationale for the assessment process and structure. They recognize how the FFA information collection standard relates to safety decision making. They can clearly and precisely communicate to CPI’s the relationship between FFA information and decision-making. Supervisors possess a thorough understanding and have the ability to apply and communicate FFA intervention concepts and criteria (i.e., present danger, impending danger, caregiver protective capacities, temporary Present Danger Impending Danger Safety Plans, safety planning analysis, Impending Danger Safety Plans).

- **Performance Expectations**

  Supervisors have specific expectations for a quality of practice that is consistent with the FFA standards and promotes the fidelity of the FFA approach. Processing FFA’s in a timely fashion occurring within designated policy timeframes is important, yet there is an equal emphasis from the supervisor on the quality of the work that is produced.

- **Accountability**

  Supervisors hold themselves to a high standard for achievement. Accountability for practice and decision-making begins with the supervisor and sets the tone for the CPI’s.

\(^2\) The supervisor as an expert is one who becomes the reliable source to go to based on his or her continuing experience and capacity earned from rigorous efforts to understand FSDMM generally and the FFA specifically. As an expert, the supervisor works daily to become an authority on the FFA. He or she possesses extensive knowledge along with the ability to find correct answers and applications.
The supervisor uses consultation with CPI’s as an opportunity to define expectations for practice, to teach and to build competency, motivate and internalize individual accountability.

• **Process Oriented and Structured**

Supervisors provide consultation in relation to key decision-making points in the FFA process. Consultation is individualized based on specific CPI staff needs and competency. Consultation is responsive to CPI’s needs as issues in a case emerge and is concerned with maintaining consistent regulation of safety decision making as a case proceeds from initial contact with a family through the completion FFA to case transfer or case closure. The supervisor uses safety-related concepts and criteria during consultation to prompt discussions, critical thinking and problem solving.

• **Coach and Mentor**

Consultation has as much to do with teaching CPI’s how to practice and make correct decisions as it does with respect to oversight. Case consultation is the most opportune time for developing CPI staff competency and fostering worker confidence and independence. Supervisors view coaching as their primary role when working with CPI’s. Consultation related to specific case practice issues and justifying decision-making provides the ideal context for instructing and building competency and confidence of CPI’s.

• **Analytical**

Supervisors are able to view complexities in case situations. They are effective at examining and determining the meaning and/or significance of information. They are able to consider the relationship between pieces of information when making decisions. Supervisors use consultation to promote critical thinking and analytic problem solving between CPI’s. They ask questions and seek clarifications regarding case information to assist CPI’s in examining their own practice and decision-making and work toward arriving at their own solutions. Ultimately, the analytical processing that occurs during consultation furthers the development and independence of CPI’s.

• **Collaborator**

Supervisors value a strong team approach between CPI’s in their units. They seek an open exchange of ideas and multiple solutions to practice issues are encouraged. The supervisor uses consultation during individual and team meetings to facilitate purposeful and productive partnerships. An effective supervisor does not approach consultation (individual or during team unit meetings) as the sole “expert” with all the answers. Promoting a collaborative environment among CPI’s is intended to provide
opportunity and a structure for CPI’s to express themselves, share opinions and develop ideas that focus on working toward the achievement of FFA practice objectives.

- **Accessible**

  Supervisors are readily accessible to meet with CPI’s. They value high amounts of contact with CPI’s and they are available to provide timely direction. Supervisors are effective at managing multi workload demands in order to concentrate on CPI’s needs and provide support. In addition to regularly scheduled times for consultation, supervisors are available to meet with CPI’s as unexpected case practice issues or questions arise.

- **Approachable**

  Supervisors have a positive attitude and are well liked by CPI’s. It is important for supervisors that CPI’s feel comfortable coming to them for consultation (e.g., advice, feedback, collaboration).

- **Flexible**

  Supervisors are effective at accommodating different personalities and communication styles between CPI’s. They are able to individualize consultation around CPI’s needs and levels of competency.

- **Empathetic**

  Supervisors are sensitive to the demands of the job and they are able to relate to the challenges that CPI’s encounter in the field. Likewise, they are patient and understanding as they work with CPI’s in becoming competent and proficient in completing the FFA.

- **Respectful**

  Supervisors who conduct themselves in a professional way are respectful of the CPI’s in their units. The supervisor’s expression of respect is intended to demonstrate that CPI’s are valued and to build their self-esteem and confidence in performing on the job.
Supervisor Consultation Framework

Your approach to supervisor consultation is a reflection of who you are, what you know, what you are able to do and how you perceive your role. Supervisors who are highly competent and possess personal qualities that are consistent with the principles of the humanistic supervisor consultation model are most likely to develop competent CPI’s who are internally driven to perform well in completing FFA’s.

The definition for Supervisor FFA Consultation is:

- **Expert guided discussions at specific points/critical junctures in the FFA process that apply safety intervention criteria focused on promoting effective practice and decision making related to safety assessment, safety management and determining the need to serve a family.**

As the supervisor, you are the expert related to the FFA. This does not mean that you have all the answers. This also does not mean that you should be authoritative in dictating how practice occurs. While it is expected that you will not always have immediate answers or solutions, your expertise related to the FFA will help you know the “right” questions to ask of CPI’s. Knowing what questions to ask at specific points in the FFA process will enable you and the CPI to arrive at correct decisions together.

As the expert, you must be highly knowledgeable regarding FFA practice concepts and criteria. You must understand the rationale for the FFA protocol and process and be able to recognize what constitutes a sufficient level of effort for completing the FFA. The development of your knowledge base requires that you immerse yourself in learning the safety methodology. Your knowledge regarding safety methodology, coupled with your skills and personal qualities will result in you being able to effectively facilitate discussions with CPI’s regarding practice and decision making throughout the FFA process.

The supervisor consultation discussions that occur during the FFA will primarily focus on safety intervention issues. It is important to emphasize that safety intervention (i.e., safety assessment and safety planning) in the context of the FFA is a process and not an event. Therefore supervisor consultation must correspond with how safety intervention occurs by targeting key safety decision-making points within the FFA process. Conversations that occur during case consultations are intended to assure that the FFA Standards are met from the point of initial contact with a family through the completion of the FFA. As noted earlier, when providing consultation, you must rely on your expertise regarding what represents good practice and be able to apply conceptually based safety criteria to consider justification for CPI decisions.
The overall goals for supervisor consultation related to the FFA are to achieve the following:

- Provide proficient and consistent safety intervention practice and decision making between CPI’s.
- Build CPI’s competence and independence for achieving the FFA practice objectives.
- Motivate CPI’s to be internally driven to excel in completing FFA’s.
- Assure the practice and decision making adheres to FFA intervention standards.

Supervisor consultation related to the FFA is intended to achieve the following safety intervention objectives:

- To assist CPI’s in preparing to complete the FFA;
- To assist CPI’s in confirming present danger and establishing Present Danger Impending Danger Safety Plans as indicated;
- To assist and encourage CPI’s to collect sufficient information;
- To assist CPI’s in analyzing case information and correctly applying the danger threshold criteria;
- To assist CPI’s in accurately identifying impending danger threats;
- To assist CPI’s in establishing sufficient Impending Danger Safety Plans;
- To assist CPI’s in addressing challenges related to managing child safety (i.e., present danger Impending Danger Safety Plans and impending danger Impending Danger Safety Plans);
- To assist CPI’s in addressing challenges and preparing for the transfer of cases to the Ongoing Case Management.
Safety intervention during the FFA is dynamic and often proceeds quickly. If a supervisor is to be effective at assisting CPI’s in completing the FFA, then consultation must be planned and structured based on how safety intervention occurs.

Supervisors should consider how they will standardize and structure points of consultation to match up with specific points of safety decision making as a case moves through the FFA process. Supervisor consultation should also be flexible and promptly available to account for unexpected practice issues or a “crisis” that comes up at any point during an FFA.

The FFA Supervisor Consultation Process provides uniform steps for providing case consultation to CPI’s related to the completion of the FFA. The process is structured based on when supervisor consultation should occur; the focus of supervisor consultation at key decision-making points; what you need to know to facilitate conversations during consultation; how you access and analyze information to assist CPI’s in completing FFA’s, making correct decisions, and helping them know how to access the information.

The consultation process concentrates on five supervisor consultation reference points:

- Preparation in Completing the FFA
- Initial Family Contact
- FFA Information Collection
- FFA Safety and Risk Determination
- Safety Planning Analysis

The following table provides an overview of how supervisor consultation corresponds to the FFA process. The middle column outlines the FFA process and identifies the fundamental FFA practice standards. The column on the left outlines the key supervisor consultation issues that are associated with the FFA practice standards.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Supervisor Consultation</strong></th>
<th><strong>FFA Process</strong></th>
<th><strong>Time Frames</strong></th>
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</table>
| Preparation in Completing the FFA | Pre-Commencement: Preparing to conduct the FFA  
- Consider screening and response times.  
- If Hotline information indicates present danger, anticipate potential practice issue and begin proactive planning.  
- Review FFA protocol and determine plan for making contact with family members.  
- Consider need for law enforcement, CPT, DV Advocate, etc. involvement. | Immediately following Hotline Assignment |
| Initial Family Contact  
- Discuss indications of present danger.  
- Assist CPI’s in confirming need for Present Danger Safety Plan.  
- Assist in determining options for establishing a Present Danger Safety Plan.  
- Verify sufficiency of Present Danger Safety Plan and discuss next steps for completing the FFA. | Initial Contact with Identified Child/Family:  
- Adhere to Information Collection protocol.  
- Introduction with caregivers (if children are in the home).  
- Interview with identified child.  
- Initiate interview(s) with caregivers.  
- Assess indicators of present danger.  
- Seek caregiver input and cooperation for responding to present danger (if indicated).  
- Consider options for managing present danger and developing a Present Danger Safety Plan (if indicated).  
- Verify appropriateness of individuals responsible for Present Danger Safety Plan (if indicated).  
- Establish Present Danger Safety Plan same day (if indicated). | Designated Response Time |
| FFA Information Collection  
- Assist with issues associated with managing Present Danger Impending Danger Safety Plans (as indicated).  
- Assist CPI’s in collecting sufficient information for decision making (as needed).  
- Assist CPI’s in analyzing the scope and depth of information (as needed).  
- Assure FFA information collection is proceeding in a timely fashion.  
- Consider need for Present Danger Safety Plan prior to the completion of the FFA (as indicated). | FFA Information Collection:  
- Adhere to FFA Information Collection protocol.  
- Collect sufficient information for FFA Decision-making:  
  ✓ Extent of Maltreatment  
  ✓ Surrounding Circumstances  
  ✓ Child Functioning  
  ✓ Parenting Discipline  
  ✓ Parenting General  
  ✓ Adult Functioning  
- Collect and Analyze case information applying danger threshold criteria:  
  Out of Control, Severe, Imminence, Vulnerable Child, Observable  
- Manage present danger safety plan (if applicable) | Expedite information collection for cases requiring Present Danger Impending Danger Safety Plans. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFA Safety and Risk Determination</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Assist with issues associated</td>
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<tr>
<td>with managing Present Danger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impending Danger Safety Plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>(as indicated).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Review documentation in</td>
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<tr>
<td>preparation for consultation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Assure that case information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meets the danger threshold</td>
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<tr>
<td>criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Verify that selected Impending</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danger threats are justified by</td>
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<tr>
<td>the documentation and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consider caregiver protective</td>
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<tr>
<td>capacities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discuss with the CPI the need</td>
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<tr>
<td>for additional meetings with</td>
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<tr>
<td>the caregivers to engage for</td>
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<tr>
<td>prevention services based upon</td>
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<tr>
<td>risk assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Confirm the safety decision.</td>
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<th>FFA Safety Determination:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Complete information collection and documentation of the FFA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identify negative family conditions that are consistent with the danger threshold criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Select standardized Impending Danger threats to justify decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assess existing and diminished caregiver protective capacities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conclude if children are safe or unsafe.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Determine Risk for Family based upon Risk Assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Confirm the need for ongoing case management.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety Planning Analysis</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Discuss with the CPI the need for additional meetings with caregivers to complete safety plan analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Review the justification for the type of safety plan to be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Verify the use of an in-home or out-of-home safety plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assist the CPI with issues associated with the development of a safety plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Confirm the sufficiency of the safety plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participate in the transfer meeting (as needed).</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFA Safety Planning Analysis:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Consider how Impending Danger Threats are manifested in the family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Determine the feasibility of establishing an in-home safety plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Determine the need for an out-of-home safety plan (child placement).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consider if the actions taken in the Present Danger Safety Plan (if applicable) are appropriate for use in the impending danger safety plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Contact and verify the appropriateness of safety service providers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Terminate the Present Danger Safety Plan (as appropriate).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Establish (and document) a sufficient safety plan to control Impending Danger.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Manage the safety plan until the case transfer meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participate in a case transfer meeting with the CM.</td>
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Establishing Expectations and CPI Accountability

Supervisor consultation serves as the primary way for communicating your expectations to CPI staff regarding the nature and quality of practice. Supervisor consultation that occurs at key decision-making points during the FFA process is an ideal way for you to normalize and reinforce, in a non-authoritative way, what your specific expectations are for how a CPI should perform. The oversight that occurs during case consultation related to your expectations for CPI’s helps to assure that they are accountable to a consistent and acceptable standard of practice.

By providing structured consultation based upon the supervisor consultation table on the previous two pages, CPI’s will learn on a case-by-case basis what is expected from them with respect to how they should complete the FFA. This in turn results in CPI’s developing their knowledge base and skills and internalizing the expectations they have for themselves when completing FFA’s, all of which results in an increase in CPI independence and confidence.
Process Point #1: Preparation in Completing the FFA

Consultation Focus

- Assist CPI’s in preparing to complete the FFA and anticipate any safety intervention issues at the point of initial contact with family members.

Step 1: Know the case

- When cases are screened in from Hotline, it is crucial that you promptly become fully informed of each case that is assigned to your CPI’s. Being an effective consultant requires that you have knowledge of all available information that a CPI has when beginning the FFA.

- Thoroughly review the information collected during the Hotline Assessment. Make sure that you understand the concern for child maltreatment and safety that is being reported. Consider how reported information justifies the screening decision. Look for gaps in information and areas or sources of information that may require prompts to the CPI from you. The purpose for reviewing the Hotline is to assure that you are adequately prepared so that you can help prepare CPI’s as needed.

Step 2: Know your CPI’s

Determining the need for consultation for preparing to conduct the FFA should not be left exclusively up to the CPI’s. When deciding about whether there is need for consultation related to a particular Hotline assignment, there are several issues to take into account.

- Tenure/Experience

For newly hired CPI’s, it is suggested that all FFA’s begin with supervisor consultation. Even if consultation is brief, it is important to assure that less experienced CPI’s have an opportunity to ask questions and get guidance regarding how to proceed in making contact with family members, conducting interviews and assessing danger to children. Often inexperienced staff does not know enough about doing the job to even know what is important to ask. Having reviewed the Hotline prior to the consultation will prepare you to actively facilitate the conversation with untested CPI’s. This models for them what is important to know and ask when preparing to launch an FFA.

In addition to consulting with new CPI’s, sometimes tenured staff require additional support and guidance for a variety of reasons. Regardless of experience, there are likely to be CPI’s who struggle with performing as expected. For these individuals, you may decide on a case-by-case basis that consultation is necessary for coaching and assuring that practice proceeds as expected. Consultation may be necessary to proactively
prevent decision-making errors for which particular CPI’s are prone. Consultation may be necessary to assist a CPI in thinking through how he/she is going to proceed in completing an FFA on a difficult case assignment. Consultation may be necessary to assist a CPI in preparing for an assignment that may not necessarily be a good fit for him/her.

The extent to which CPI’s understand and accept that participating in supervisor consultation is normal, expected and desirable can give you greater confidence that all your CPI’s (both inexperienced and seasoned) will readily seek out consultation related to assignments as needed.

- **CPI-Case Assignment**

In all probability you often will not have the opportunity to assign Hotline Report reports based on the strengths or limitations of the staff in your unit. Workload and unit management often demand that reports are assigned based on CPI rotation or availability. Given this reality, it is important when you are considering the need for consultation related to FFA preparation that you realistically assess the level of experience that a CPI has and his or her ability to intervene in certain types of cases or with certain families. Such an assessment assures that you are calculated in anticipating the level of effort and diligence required of you to involve yourself as a consultant, coach and guide.

- **Hotline Information**

Information in a Hotline Report may prompt the need for consultation related to FFA preparation. Indications of potential Present or Impending Danger in the Hotline Report should be discussed with CPI’s. Issues associated with CPI safety should have a bearing on the need for consultation. Guidance regarding when and where to interview a child in certain case situations or the possible need for law enforcement, DV Advocate, CPT, or emergency medical care should prompt the importance for consultation.

**Step 3: Analyze the Hotline Report and Plan for Completing the FFA**

- Analysis of the Hotline Report and the use of the CPI Practice Guidelines inform the planning for completing the FFA. The following questions must be reconciled during consultation related to the preparation of the FFA:

**Hotline Report Analysis**

- What significant gaps in information does the CPI identify in the Hotline Report?
  Does the CPI believe that the gaps in information may have implications for child safety?
• What does the Hotline Report reveal to the CPI about child functioning, parenting practices and adult functioning?
• What other information is known about the family and how does the CPI relate that information to the information in the current Hotline Report?
• Is it clear to the CPI what is being reported with respect to child maltreatment?
• Is the screening decision and response time justified based on Hotline Report information?
• If a Hotline Report indicates that a child may be in danger (Present or Impending Danger), does the worker clearly understand the basis for that judgment?
• Does the Hotline Report reveal the immediate, current location(s) of family members?
• Who does the Hotline Report identify as collateral sources of information?
• Does information in the Hotline Report indicate that worker safety may be an issue?

FFA Planning

• When will the CPI initiate contact? Is he or she allowing enough time to make contact within the designated response time?
• Is there any additional information that needs to be considered prior to making contact (e.g., access law enforcement report, previous CPI’s assigned to the case)?
• How does the CPI plan on contacting family members in adherence with the FFA interview protocol? In what order will the CPI conduct the FFA interviews?
• Does the CPI have any questions about collecting information?
• Based on what the Hotline Report reveals about child functioning, parenting and adult functioning, what key pieces of information must be understood by the conclusion of the FFA? How will the CPI access that information?
• If the Hotline Report indicates the potential for Present Danger, what are the CPI’s thoughts regarding the development of a Present Danger Safety Plan?
• In the event that it is necessary to develop a Present Danger Safety Plan, what potential resources might be available to participate in the plan?
• What is the plan for the CPI to contact the supervisor in the event that the child is in Present Danger at the point of initial contact?
• Is there any need for the CPI to be accompanied by another worker?
• Is there a need for contacting law enforcement prior to initiating contact with family members?

Supervisor Consultation and CPI Decision-Making Errors

• During consultation it is important to check out and/or be aware of CPI perceptions regarding the assignment. There will be reports that are accepted for assignment that CPI’s believe that Hotline Report information does not warrant the need for conducting an FFA. Their belief that a Hotline Report should not have been screened in can influence their diligence in how they approach the FFA. CPI’s will be assigned reports
that they have had previous contact with the families and they did not find any maltreatment or determine the child(ren) were unsafe. While previous knowledge about a family can be beneficial to completing FFA’s, it can also be a detriment if a CPI cannot avoid drawing premature conclusions based on past experiences. Consultation for preparing to complete an FFA must address any preconceptions or biases that may result in CPI’s not being as diligent or objective.
Process Point #2: Initial Family Contact

Consultation Focus

- Assist CPI’s in assessing and determining Present Danger and developing Present Danger Impending Danger Safety Plans (as needed).

Step 4: Confirming Present Danger

- When Present Danger is identified during the initial contact, the CPI consults with his/her supervisor to review the observed family situation and discuss what has been observed and how it constitutes Present Danger.

- Although the frequency of the existence of Present Danger at initial contact varies, it is important to plan for the possibility that it will occur. It is imperative that CPI’s contact their supervisor if they believe they are encountering a child in Present Danger. As noted earlier, when preparing to complete the FFA indications of Present Danger in the Hotline Report, this prompts the supervisor and CPI to anticipate how to respond if what has been reported is occurring. This includes making sure there is planned supervisor-CPI communication following contact with the family based on what exists as observed by the CPI.

- Consultation related to child safety at initial contact involves supervisors obtaining information from CPI’s to confirm that they are observing negative conditions consistent with Present Danger.

- The definition for Present Danger is: An immediate, significant and clearly observable negative family condition occurring in the present tense, already endangering a child or threatening to endanger a child.

- The discussions with CPI staff should center on whether what they are experiencing and seeing meets the definition for Present Danger. The following questions are considered during consultation occurring as part of the initial contact and specifically related to Present Danger:

  ✓ What is the status of information collection at the time of the consultation?
  ✓ Who has the CPI interviewed or contacted?
  ✓ Can the CPI clearly describe the negative condition(s) that he/she believes currently endangers the child?
  ✓ What is the condition of the child and how does the child’s condition fit with the definition for Present Danger?
  ✓ What is the condition of the caregiver(s) and how does the caregiver(s) condition fit with the definition for Present Danger?
Based on what the CPI is describing, does the danger seem currently active, reasonable and vivid?
Is the CPI describing a family circumstance and/or an aspect of caregiver functioning that is currently and/or actively threatening child safety?
Does the CPI feel compelled to take action immediately to assure the protection of the child?
If the CPI were to take no action based on what is being considered during the consultation, what can be anticipated to occur with respect to the concerning family conditions and potential effects on the child?

Supervisor Consultation and CPI Decision-Making Errors

- Not all negative conditions in a household pose a danger to a child. When CPI’s make contact with families, they must immediately begin to make sense of what they are seeing and hearing. Some CPI’s will be cautious in the judgments regarding Present Danger, while other CPI’s can be hasty in making interpretations. The implications for identifying Present Danger are serious. If there is Present Danger, then, CPS must take action to assure child safety. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to make sure that CPI judgments are correct. Supervisor consultation must be approached with the same degree of seriousness to assure that there are not decision-making errors.

- Upon making contact with a family, a CPI may immediately observe negative conditions that he/she believes to be Present Danger. Conversations that occur during consultation are intended to help the CPI vividly describe what they are observing based on the definition (criteria) for Present Danger. Consider the example of a dirty home. The judgment of whether that dirty home poses a Present Danger to a child may vary from CPI to CPI depending on their personal values, sensibilities, moral judgments, experience or bias. The supervisor must control for CPI’s imposing their personal standards by assuring that CPI’s justify what they are observing and concluding against the definition for Present Danger.

- CPI’s are likely to encounter caregivers at initial contact who are highly resistant and may even be openly argumentative with workers. For some CPI’s, an attack on their authority could influence their decision making resulting in hasty judgment that the caregiver is dangerous and actively threatening a child’s safety. The supervisor uses consultation as a way of helping CPI’s control their personal reactions and defensiveness that might affect their decision making by having them relate what they are experiencing to the definition for Present Danger.

- It is more common for there to be situations where CPI’s (particularly the inexperienced) believe that there may be Present Danger, but they are not completely confident in their decision-making. In situations involving inexperience, uncertain CPI’s or those lacking confidence, it is paramount that supervisor-CPI consultation occur as
part of the initial contact, immediately afterwards, or minimally the same day in order to discuss what has been encountered and to rule in or rule out Present Danger.

- Coaching opportunities exist during these initial contact consultations related to assuring respect for civil rights. Supervisors ought to routinely reinforce the significance of involuntary intervention and the emotions and disempowerment experienced by caregivers as a result of such scrutiny. While these considerations do not minimize or replace the importance of diligence in assessment of Present Danger, they provide for balance and emphasize the high degree of accountability CPI’s must accept in their behavior and decision-making at such times.

**Step 5: Developing and Implementing Present Danger Impending Danger Safety Plans**

- Once Present Danger is confirmed, the supervisor continues to consult with the CPI to discuss the development of a Present Danger Safety Plan and determine the best approach for controlling danger.

- The definition for a Present Danger Safety Plan is: *An instantaneous (same day), short-term, sufficient strategy that provides a child responsible adult supervision and care to allow for the completion of the FFA process.*

- The purpose for a Present Danger Safety Plan is: *The Present Danger Safety Plan is intended to suspend or control what is going on that is endangering a child long enough to support the completion of the FFA process.*

- The supervisor discussion with the CPI shifts to considering what can be done to control the danger employing the least intrusive means possible. It involves helping the CPI create a strategy based upon possible, available options that can provide immediate and the least intrusive way for protecting a child. The strategy must be sufficient to provide enough time and opportunity for completion of the FFA. Consultation with the CPI assures that the requirement for reasonable efforts to prevent placement are met.

- It is important to apply criteria when consulting and strategizing with CPI’s regarding the development of Present Danger Impending Danger Safety Plans. The criteria for Present Danger Impending Danger Safety Plans are:

  - **Immediate:** Must be put into place and confirmed the same day
  - **Short-Term:** Must involve a simple response that can be accomplished quickly and, yet, sufficient enough to control danger while the FFA is being completed
  - **Sufficient:** Assures child is cared for and protected while FFA proceeds
  - **Suitable:** Must determine that those who participate are verifiably trustworthy.
To determine the sufficiency of a Present Danger Safety Plan, the supervisor consults with the CPI regarding the following questions:

- Has Present Danger been identified and can the danger be clearly described and justified?
- What are the least intrusive options for controlling danger?
  - Can a responsible adult come into the home?
  - What are the options for the child going to stay with a responsible adult until the FFA can be completed?
  - Can the non-maltreating caregiver and child go and stay with a responsible adult until the FFA can be completed?
  - Is it feasible to have the maltreating caregiver leave the home until the FFA can be completed? Is the CPI confident that the maltreating caregiver would remain out of the home? What’s that confidence based upon?
- Are caregivers willing to accept and support the use of a Present Danger Safety Plan?
- To what extent are caregivers participating in the development of a Present Danger Safety Plan?
  - Can caregivers identify individuals who may be available to assist with the Present Danger Safety Plan?
- What do the caregivers say about whom these individuals are and their abilities to meet the criteria for the Present Danger Safety Plan?
- Where do these individuals reside and how soon can the CPI contact them?
- Can the suitability and veracity of these individuals be confirmed?
- What is the CPI’s point of view about how the Present Danger Safety Plan will work?
- What is the CPI’s plan for contacting the person(s) responsible for the Present Danger Safety Plan to evaluate their alignment with CPS and the child, their availability, trustworthiness, protective capacities and commitment to the plan?

Consultation and Decision-Making Errors

- Supervisor consultation is important to assure that the CPI is diligent in developing a sufficient Present Danger Safety Plan. The need to develop a Present Danger Safety Plan quickly and often during a period of crisis may result in CPI's establishing Present Danger Impending Danger Safety Plans that rely too heavily on caregivers having responsibility for setting up the plan, “promising” to abide by agreements, or having ownership for the management of the plan. It is important to emphasize that while the development of a Present Danger Safety Plan will involve caregivers, the Present Danger Safety Plan is the responsibility of the CPI and requires the approval of the supervisor. It is therefore up to the supervisor to assure that consultation results in the development of Present Danger Impending Danger Safety Plans that will sufficiently control danger until the FFA can be completed.
• In the event that a sufficient Present Danger Safety Plan cannot be established due to either the lack of availability of a responsible adult who can assure protection or caregivers who reject the use of an informal Present Danger Safety Plan, the CPI must pursue emergency placement.

**Step 6: Approving the Present Danger Safety Plan**

• Unofficially the supervisor approves the Present Danger Safety Plan based on consultation that has occurred the same day as the initial contact. At the conclusion of the consultation, the supervisor directs the CPI to proceed with agreements that have been reached during the consultation. Officially approval of the Present Danger Safety Plan occurs when the supervisor reviews and approves the Present Danger Assessment and Present Danger Safety Plan within 24 hours of the implementation of the Present Danger Safety Plan. This approval is indicated in writing.

• When reviewing the documentation of the Present Danger Safety Plan, consider the following:
  ✓ Is the Present Danger Safety Plan substantially the same as discussed during consultation on the day of the initial contact (i.e., at the time the Present Danger was identified)?
  ✓ Does the documentation of the Present Danger Safety Plan reflect what was discussed during consultation?
  ✓ Is Present Danger clearly described in the documentation?
  ✓ Is the Present Danger Safety Plan sufficient based on criteria?
  ✓ Is it clear how the Present Danger Safety Plan is intended to work?
  ✓ Does the Present Danger Safety Plan confirm that the individuals responsible for the plan are appropriate?
  ✓ Does the Present Danger Safety Plan indicate how oversight of the plan will occur?

• If the supervisor has any questions about the plan or cannot confidently answer yes to the questions above, consultation with the CPI should occur promptly to clarify any issues or gaps in documentation, consider revising the documentation or discuss the need to modify the Present Danger Safety Plan.
Process Point #3: FFA Information Collection

Consultation Focus

- The supervisor consults with the CPI throughout the FFA to remain informed regarding the status of the FFA and to provide guidance related to effective information collection.

Step 7: Conducting FFA Interviews and Assessing the Significance of Information

- Supervisor consultation is crucial for supporting sufficient information collection. It is important for assuring standardized practice between all CPI’s that supervisor consultation continues to occur with some regularity following initial contact throughout the interview process.

- The objectives for consultation associated with FFA information collection are to:
  ✓ Oversee that the FFA interview protocol is being following and that all key family members and collaterals are being contacted;
  ✓ Assist CPI’s in conducting interviews by discussing interpersonal techniques and providing suggestions for collecting information;
  ✓ Discuss the sufficiency of information associated with the six (6) assessment areas of the FFA;
  ✓ Assure that the FFA is proceeding in a timely manner;
  ✓ Oversee safety management during the FFA (as indicated); and
  ✓ Assure that CPI’s are conducting FFA information collection with due diligence.
  ✓ Depending on the experience of CPI’s, supervisor consultation related to information collection may occur as needed based on individual worker competency and/or may be planned and scheduled on a weekly basis or every other week depending on the availability of the supervisor.

Reinforcing the Use of the FFA Information Collection Protocol

- The ability to effectively assess safety (Impending Danger) requires that CPI’s gather sufficient information related to the six (6) assessment areas. The FFA interviewer protocol is intended to assure that all key interviews occur and that CPI’s are assessing all information necessary to inform the safety determination is assessed. Timely consultation that coincides with the FFA interview process enables a supervisor to periodically track who has been interviewed, when the interviews occurred and consider how information collection is progressing.
Coaching and Supporting Effective Interviewing

- Consultation should consider how CPI’s are doing at conducting interviews to determine if they need coaching on technique and protocol or to offer suggestions on how to approach an interview with a particular child or caregiver.

Coaching and Establishing Expectations for Sufficient Information Collection

- Consultation related to information collection is intended to help CPI’s review and analyze what information they have about families and consider what further information is necessary to collect in order to inform decision making. When consulting with CPI’s that are having difficulty knowing what information to collect related to the FFA assessment areas, refer them to the FFA training handouts *Family Functioning Assessment Information* and *What Do You Need to Know and Understand about a family during the FFA?*

Overseeing Timely Completion of FFA’s

- Supervisor consultation is best when it balances the sufficiency of information collection and regulates practice to assure that FFA’s are being processed within designated timeframes. When a Present Danger Safety Plan has been put into place, the supervisor should consult with CPI’s regarding their timetable and plan for expediting the completion of the FFA. Supervisors who keep themselves informed about how FFA’s are progressing will be better able to prevent FFA’s from going over designated timeframes.

Safety Management during the FFA

- If a Present Danger Safety Plan has been developed on a case, some discussion during consultation needs to be concerned with the continued effectiveness of the Present Danger Safety Plan. Consultation related to safety management considers how the child is doing, any arrangements or observations regarding contact between the child and caregiver and the continued appropriateness of the person responsible for providing protection. It is reasonable and logical that personal contact between CPI’s and participants in the Present Danger Safety Plan occur frequently and the FFA completed within seven days of the Present Danger Safety Plan being implemented. There are legitimate and appropriate reasons to extend a Present Danger Safety Plan. If a Present Danger Safety Plan needs to be extended seek approval from your Regional Administrator.

- The contact may occur as a result of continuing interaction and information collection occurring as part of the FFA. Personal contact might also occur through telephone, office visits, or emailing in accordance with established understanding that has been spelled out as part of the Present Danger Safety Plan. Consultation occurring while the FFA process continues considers safety management with respect to the oversight
methods and maintenance of reasonable and logical personal contact between the CPI, the child, caregivers and Present Danger Safety Plan participants.

- In addition to overseeing existing Present Danger Impending Danger Safety Plans, there may be case situations where during the course of conducting interviews, prior to the completion of the FFA, it becomes apparent that a child is in danger. When this occurs, a supervisor will need to assist the CPI in taking the steps necessary to make sure the child is protected (refer to steps 4-6).

Reinforcing Expectations for Due Diligence

- Supervisor consultation that corresponds to when FFA interviews are occurring will increase the likelihood that CPI’s will demonstrate due diligence when collecting information. As a result of focused consultation, CPI’s will gain an understanding regarding what is expected related to thoroughness of information collection, depth of information, attention to detail, astuteness, objectivity and expedience.

- The following are some facilitative questions\(^3\) to pose during consultation related to FFA information collection:
  - Were you able to make contact with the child within the designated response time?
  - When were you able to see the caregivers?
  - Where did you conduct the interviews (i.e., school, home, office)?
  - Have you been to the home?
  - Who have you interviewed thus far?
  - Are you having any difficulty making contact with any family members?
  - Have there been any difficulties in following the interview protocol?
  - What is your plan for contacting family members or collaterals?
  - What has been the response from caregivers up to this point?
  - Are you having any difficulties in collecting information? Are you meeting with any resistance from caregivers? Are there any family members that you are having trouble getting to speak with you?
  - Do you believe that you are getting good information from family members?
  - Do you believe that caregivers are being open, guarded, and honest?
  - What attempts have you made to try and build rapport?
  - What do you see as the primary issue that is preventing you from getting information?

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\(^3\) These facilitative questions are not meant to be all-inclusive or to be answered solely as they are presented here. For instance, notice that many of the questions are closed questions which easily lead to yes or no responses. It is expected that such inquiry and response will result in a supervisor asking for clarification, further explanation, amplification, and justification. The questions are offered as resources for generating discussion that is based on critical thinking. The questions also frame the boundaries of information collection.
Would it be helpful to discuss some different ways of trying to access information?

What are your impressions regarding the maltreatment? Do you know what the circumstances are that surrounded the maltreatment?

What do you know about the child? Do you feel like you have a pretty good idea about who this child is and how they function on a day-to-day basis? Who have you talked to about the child? What additional information do you need to get to better understand this child? Who else can you talk to about the child, what other sources of information? Is there a need for any professional evaluations to gain a better understanding of the child’s functioning?

What do you know about the caregiver(s)? Do you feel like you have a pretty good idea about who this caregiver is and how they function on a day-to-day basis? Who have you talked to about the caregiver? What additional information do you need to get to better understand this caregiver? Who else can you talk to about the caregiver; what other sources of information exist? Is there a need for any professional evaluations to gain a better understanding of the caregiver’s functioning?

What is the relationship like between the caregiver and child? What do you know so far about the discipline/parenting practices? What more do you need to know about parenting? How are you going to get this information?

How many interviews have you conducted at this point? How many more interviews do you anticipate having with family members?

What collateral information sources have you contacted or do you still need to contact others?

What is your timetable for completing interviews/contacts?

What is your timeline and approach to documenting the FFA? Have you begun documenting the FFA? When do you anticipate completing documenting the FFA?

Consultation and Decision-Making Errors

- A common decision-making error that occurs during FFA information collection involves CPI’s drawing premature conclusions about caregivers and families based on limited surface level information. This results in influence by impressions rather than understanding and can contribute to less objectivity and increased bias. When CPI’s draw premature conclusions, often their approach to information collection becomes more narrowly focused on justifying the impression that forms the decision that they have already made.

- Consultation is intended to help CPI’s remain objective and become analytical thinkers when they are collecting information. This involves working with CPI’s to move beyond what appears to be immediately apparent to assure that they are gathering a greater depth of information. Consultation will help CPI’s consider the relationship between different things that have been learned about a family, what is important and stands out.
as more defining about a family, what is occurring pervasively within a family, what is consistent and inconsistent about what is known about a family, longstanding characteristics and dynamics of a family compared to new and that which is at the onset. Consultation helps CPI’s sort out the meaning of what is being learned about a family and what information is significant for decision making. Consultation should prompt CPI’s to further examine information that is contradictory and push them to do their best to try and make meaning from what they are seeing and hearing.

“It is the responsibility of the supervisor as a case consultant to the worker to prevent the premature commitment to a position, point of view, or judgment and prevent staff from becoming unwilling to consider alternative interpretations based on further information.”

Gambrill, 1990
Critical Thinking in Clinical Practice
Process Point #4: FFA Safety Determination

Consultation Focus

- The supervisor reviews a CPI’s documentation of the FFA and consults with him or her to confirm FFA decision-making.

The CPI completes and submits the FFA documentation including his/her decision regarding child safety and the safety management response as indicated. The supervisor reviews the FFA and consults with CPI (as necessary) to approve the safety decision.

To approve the FFA, the supervisor must verify the following:
- The FFA process followed the protocol or there is a reasonable explanation why the protocol could not be followed;
- The CPI’s level of effort in completing the FFA was sufficient to inform decision making;
- Caregivers and children were involved in the FFA information collection process in so far as they were willing and able;
- Information collection was thorough and there is sufficient information to justify decision making; and
- It is clear how decisions are justified based on the information that the CPI documented.

The supervisory approval of the FFA establishes that the documentation is acceptable and the decision-making is correct.

Step 8: Supervisory Review of FFA Documentation

- The supervisory review of the FFA documentation involves determining that case information justifies the maltreatment and safety decision. The basis for opening a case for services is child safety (i.e., a child is in Impending Danger). It is therefore necessary that when reviewing FFA’s a supervisor is knowledgeable about the definition for child safety and can apply criteria for judging impending danger.

- The FFA safety determination is based on the definitions for safe and unsafe. As the supervisor reviews the FFA, he/she must carefully consider whether documentation justifies the absence of impending danger or the presence of impending danger.

- The definition for Impending Danger is: A state of danger in which family behaviors, attitudes, motives, emotions and/or situations pose a threat which may not be currently active but can be anticipated to have severe effects on a child at any time.

- The absence or presence of Impending Danger must be justified in the FFA documentation related to the six (6) assessment areas. The supervisor verifies the justification for the presence or absence of impending by determining if documentation
related to family circumstances and/or caregiver behaviors, attitudes, motives or emotions either fit or do not fit with the Danger Threshold Criteria.

- As the supervisor reads the FFA documentation, he/she applies the Danger Threshold Criteria to rule in or rule out whether the CPI sufficiently justifies Impending Danger.

- The Danger Threshold Criteria is as follows:
  - **Observable:** The documentation is explicit in justifying how negative conditions are dangerous. The supervisor is able to understand how negative conditions endanger a child.
  - **Out of Control:** The documentation clearly and specifically describes negative family conditions (situations, caregiver behaviors, emotions, etc.) that are unrestrained; unmanaged; without limits or monitoring; not subject to influence, manipulation or internal power; are out of the family’s control.
  - **Vulnerable:** The documentation describes children who are dependent on others for protection; they are unable to self-protect.
  - **Severity:** The documentation regarding what is out of control coupled with the description of the vulnerable child supports a reasonable conclusion that the effects of the danger to the child could result in pain, serious injury, disablement, grave or debilitating physical health conditions, acute or grievous suffering, terror, impairment, death.
  - **Imminence:** The documentation supports a conclusion that threats to child safety are likely to become active without delay; there is a certainty about occurrence within the immediate to near future.

**Supervisory Review of Standardized Impending Danger Threats**

- There are 11 Impending Danger threats that correspond to the six (6) assessment areas of the FFA. Documentation must clearly support the selection of any of the 11 Impending Danger threats. For example, if a CPI identifies that one or both caregivers lack knowledge, skill and/or motivation which affects child safety the supervisor should read documentation associated with Parenting Discipline and/or Parenting General that clearly justifies the selection of that threat.

- To appropriately select an Impending Danger threat, FFA documentation must be consistent with the specific definition for that threat. When reviewing documentation and considering the appropriateness of a CPI’s selection of an Impending Danger threat, supervisors should refer to the *Impending Danger Definition handout* as needed. If the selection of Impending Danger based on documentation is not consistent with the definitional standards, then, consultation with the CPI is necessary to clarify the discrepancy.
Common Discrepancies in FFA Documentation

- Often when supervisors are reviewing FFA’s they will see documentation that does not support decision-making. Discrepancies that supervisors are likely to see include:
  - A standardized Impending Danger threat is identified but the threat is not justified in the documentation;
  - Documentation indicates that the Danger Threshold Criteria has been met but no Impending Danger threats were identified; or
  - Documentation indicates that the Danger Threshold Criteria has been met but the Impending Danger threat selected is incorrect.

- When a supervisor encounters any of the above-mentioned discrepancies, there needs to be prompt consultation with the CPI to reconcile gaps in information or decision-making.

Step 9: Supervisor Consultation Related to the Approval of the FFA

- If questions emerge during the review of the FFA regarding the sufficiency of documentation and the justification for decision-making, the supervisor consults with the CPI to clarify discrepancies and verify the safety decision.

- During consultation, the supervisor:
  - Formulates clarifying questions for the CPI to consider case data, practice, decision-making and CPI competence variables associated with performance.
  - Seeks information that is not contained in the documentation but in the CPI’s head or information that is unclear.
  - Considers whether significant information about the caregivers, children or family is limited or absent thus requiring consideration of additional information collection.
  - Discusses the rationale and/or justification for CPI judgments. Supervisor understanding includes how CPI competence contributes or detracts from information collection and applying criteria for decision making.

- Discussions during consultation may relate to the following:
  1. *Documentation is insufficient to inform decision-making.*
     - Does the CPI have more information than is documented?
     - What more can the CPI reveal about the functioning of family members?
     - Does the CPI believe that he/she was able to get sufficient information from family members?
     - Can the CPI fill in the gaps in information?
     - Does the CPI have enough information in his/her head to be able to further document the FFA?
     - Does the worker possess a “descriptive knowledge” of the family yet has not assessed for meaning and significance?
1. Is there enough information based on what the CPI knows to be able to precede with approving the FFA or is further information collection indicated?

2. Impending Danger threat is identified but not justified in the FFA documentation.
   ✓ Why did the CPI select the Impending Danger threat? What is his/her rationale?
   ✓ Can the CPI describe how the information in the FFA meets the Danger Threshold Criteria and the definition for the Impending Danger Threat?
   ✓ Does the CPI have more information that would justify the selection of the Impending Danger threat?
   ✓ Does the CPI believe or “feel” that the Impending Danger threat is correct but they cannot clearly state why? What further information is necessary? Is additional contact with family members or collaterals necessary to definitively rule in or rule out the selection of the Impending Danger threat?

3. Information meets the Danger Threshold but no Impending Danger threats are identified.
   ✓ Why did the CPI not identify an Impending Danger threat?
   ✓ Is the information accurate and what are the sources of the information?
   ✓ Does the CPI understand the Danger Threshold Criteria and does he/she know how to apply the criteria when making decisions?
   ✓ Did the CPI refer to the Definitions for Impending Danger Threats when analyzing the information?

4. Danger Threshold Criteria has been met but the selection of an Impending Danger threat is incorrect.
   ✓ What is the CPI’s rationale for choosing the Impending Danger threat that he/she did?
   ✓ Did the CPI refer to the Definitions for Impending Danger when selecting threats?
   ✓ Based on the Definitions for Impending Danger, does the CPI believe that there are any other Impending Danger threats that are better justified by the documentation?
   ✓ Does the CPI have more information than is documented that would justify the Impending Danger threat that he/she selected?
Process Point #5: FFA Safety Planning Analysis

Consultation Focus:

- The supervisor reviews a CPI’s documentation of the Safety Planning Analysis and consults with him or her to confirm the sufficiency of the safety plan.

Developing sufficient Impending Danger Safety Plans is perhaps the most important activity that CPI’s will do. Too often Impending Danger Safety Plans are developed without the necessary level of effort to assure that they will sufficiently control danger. Supervisor oversight and guidance is crucial to assist CPI staff in completing the Safety Planning Analysis and/or generating Impending Danger Safety Plans.

In most cases, the review and CPI consultation related to the Safety Planning Analysis and Safety Plan will occur, at least initially, at the same time that the supervisor approves the FFA Safety Determination. When Safety Planning Analysis indicates the use of an in-home Safety Plan, it is likely that a supervisor will need to further consult with a CPI to finalize the development of the plan.

To approve the Safety Planning Analysis and the determination of a Safety Plan, the supervisor must verify the following:

- The CPI is clearly able to describe in documentation how Impending Danger is manifested in the home;
- The CPI’s level of effort in completing the Safety Planning Analysis was sufficient to determine the least intrusive and most appropriate Safety Plan;
- Caregivers were involved in the Safety Planning Analysis and the development of a Safety Plan in so far as they were willing and able;
- It is clear how the Safety Plan will control and manage Impending Danger; and
- The Safety Plan is logical and justifiably effective at assuring that a child is protected while change-oriented services are implemented.

The supervisory approval of the FFA Safety Planning Analysis establishes that the Safety Plan is acceptable and appropriate.

Step 10: Supervisory Review of the Safety Planning Analysis

- When reviewing the FFA Safety Planning Analysis, refer as needed to the Safety Planning Analysis: Determining the Level of Sufficiency.

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4 With inexperienced staff it is an effective supervisor practice to expect that Safety Plan Analysis will always occur within consultation together or during consultation following a CPI’s own attempts.
• The supervisory review and consultation associated with the Safety Planning Analysis results in verification that a Safety Plan is sufficient.

• Definition for a sufficient safety plan is: A safety plan is sufficient when it is a well thought-out approach containing the most suitable people taking the necessary action frequently enough to control safety threats and/or substitute for diminished caregiver protective capacities.

• The supervisor is responsible for verifying that the Safety Plan developed by CPI’s meets the definition above: well thought-out, action oriented, suitable safety service provider and able to control danger.

**Supervisor Confirms the Type of Safety Plan Selected**

• Impending Danger Safety Plans selected by CPI’s operate on a continuum from least intrusive (in-home Safety Plan with minimal safety services) to most intrusive (out-of-home Safety Plan with children in placement). The Safety Planning Analysis is intended to justify the type of Safety Plan to be implemented and the level of intrusiveness.

• When a supervisor is reviewing the Safety Planning Analysis, the CPI’s documentation must clearly justify what type of Safety Plan is most appropriate and least intrusive to control Impending Danger.

• If a CPI determined that an in-home Safety Plan is to be used, the supervisor must be able to verify the following:
  ✓ CPI documentation justifies that caregivers are residing in the home;
  ✓ CPI documentation clearly describes how the home environment is calm and consistent enough to support the use of an in-home safety plan; and
  ✓ CPI documentation thoroughly conveys that caregivers are willing to accept and cooperate with the use of an in-home Safety Plan.

• If the Safety Planning Analysis documentation does not justify, describe and convey all three, then the supervisor cannot approve the use of an in-home safety plan.

• Conversely, if a CPI determined that an out-of-home Safety Plan (placement) is to be used, the documentation should reflect that caregivers are not willing, the home is not calm, or caregivers are not residing in the home.

**Supervisor Confirms the Use of Safety Services and Safety Service Providers**

• The supervisor must thoroughly review the actions identified in the Safety Plan and considers (1) the actions planned are sufficient to effectively match up with and control how impending danger is occurring and (2) that the individuals responsible for carrying
out the Safety Plan are appropriate and accessible at the level of effort required to assure child protection and are committed to collaborating with the CPI.

- If a CPI developed an in-home Safety Plan, the supervisor must be able to verify the following:
  - CPI documentation justifies how in-home safety actions (services) are intended to control impending danger;
  - CPI documentation of the in-home safety actions reasonably match up with how impending danger is occurring in the home; and
  - CPI documentation qualifies safety service providers as being suitable to participate in the in-home Safety Plan.

- If a CPI selected an out-of-home Safety Plan, the supervisor must be able to verify the following:
  - CPI documentation confirms that the placement setting is a safe environment for the placed child.

**Step 11: Supervisor Consultation related to the Approval of the FFA Safety Planning Analysis**

- If questions emerge during the review of the Safety Planning Analysis, the supervisor consults with the CPI to clarify the justification for the type of Safety Plan used and/or level of effort associated with the safety actions in the plan.

- During consultation, the supervisor formulates clarifying questions for the CPI to consider the level of effort that went into completing the Safety Planning Analysis, to seek further information regarding the justification of decision-making, and to understand how the CPI’s competency contributes or detracts from the development of sufficient Impending Danger Safety Plans.

- Discussions during consultation may relate to the following:
  - What was the Level of Effort for Completing the Safety Planning Analysis?
    - What was the process that the CPI went through to determine what type of Safety Plan to use?
    - Did the CPI conduct additional interviews with caregivers to complete the Safety Planning Analysis?
    - Did the caregiver participate in the Safety Planning Analysis?
    - Are there further contacts that need to be made to complete the Safety Planning Analysis?
  - The justification for the type of Safety Plan to be used is not clear.
    - How did the CPI determine that an in-home safety plan would be sufficient?
    - What is the CPI’s rationale for why an in-home Safety Plan cannot be used?
    - How is the Safety Plan different than the Protective Plan?
✓ What further information does the CPI have in his/her head regarding the decision to use a certain type of Safety Plan?
✓ Was placement the only appropriate type of Safety Plan to be used? What is the CPI’s rationale?
✓ How does the CPI know that the home environment is stable and calm and/or that caregivers are willing to accept and cooperate with the use of an in-home Safety Plan?
✓ Does documentation of the Safety Planning Analysis need to be more thorough? Is there a need for the CPI to gather further information to complete the Safety Planning Analysis?

✓ It is not clear how the In-home Safety Plan will sufficiently control Impending Danger.
  ✓ Why did the CPI select these safety services (actions)?
  ✓ How are the safety services (actions) intended to control Impending Danger? What is his/her rationale?
  ✓ Can the CPI describe how the safety services (actions) match with the way that Impending Danger is occurring?
  ✓ Are the individuals responsible for the safety services (actions) the most suitable to participate in the Safety Plan?
  ✓ How did the CPI confirm that the safety service providers were suitable?
  ✓ Does the documentation accurately reflect the scope and detail of the Safety Plan that is being implemented?
  ✓ Does the Safety Plan need to be revised?

✓ It is not clear that the CPI confirmed that a placement was a safe environment.
  ✓ How did the CPI confirm that the placement setting was most appropriate and a safe environment for a child? What more may need to be done?