

Assessment

Engagement

Talk about what has been working for you as you meet with families. What are your needs? If you are ready to improve your assessment skills, this guide can support you as you assess your needs and plan.

Explore:

When you think about assessment, what are your strengths?
 What improvements would you like to make in the way you do assessments?

Assessment

Scaling:

On a scale of 1 (need to learn) to 10 (can mentor), where would you place yourself? (Record on the functional assessment.)



Scaling Continuum:

<u>Learning</u> Learning the Skills	<u>Working</u> Using the skills with Families	<u>Mentoring</u> Using the Skills to Mentor
1. Caseworker is able to identify personal strengths that contribute to their ability to do casework.	1. Caseworker is able to engage families in identifying their strengths.	1. Mentor is able to engage worker in identifying their strengths.
2. Caseworker is able to identify needs that they have in improving their casework skill level.	2. Caseworker is able to engage family in identifying their needs, especially in regards to keeping their children safe.	2. Mentor is able to engage worker in identifying their needs.
3. Caseworker is able to gather documents and information, conduct interviews, observe individuals, and analyze information to see the big picture.	3. Caseworker engages family to participate in the assessment process by identifying documents and individuals who have pertinent information and in analyzing the information obtained.	3. Mentor supports caseworker through process of gathering and analyzing assessment information and links worker with community partners as needed.

<u>Learning</u> Learning the Skills	<u>Working</u> Using the skills with Families	<u>Mentoring</u> Using the Skills to Mentor
4. Caseworker is able to draw conclusions from the information gathered to support effective decision-making.	4. Caseworker supports family and team through the process of drawing conclusions from the assessment information that has been gathered.	4. Mentor supports and guides worker through the process of using the team to draw conclusions for the assessment information.
5. Caseworker understands the concept of ongoing assessment.	5. Caseworker supports the family through the assessment process throughout the life of the case.	6. Mentor coaches caseworker through an ongoing assessment process, pointing out opportunities for ongoing assessment and integration of information.

Planning

1. What will it look like when you are able to do strengths-based functional assessments in the way that you would wish?
2. What steps can you take that will lead to the desired result?

Practice Opportunities

Mentor with Caseworker	Caseworker with Family	Family with Family
Make a list of potential documents that may be a part of a functional assessment. Review several of these documents and identify information that would be included in an assessment.	Sit down with a family and identify documents that might be helpful in doing a functional assessment. After obtaining the documents, go over them with the family and discuss the pertinent information and how it applies to their assessment.	

Knowledge Base

Concept:

Functional assessment that gives the big-picture

Basic Elements:

Functional assessment
Family assessment

Assessment process
Strengths
Needs
Solution-focused questions

Definitions:

Functional assessment

The definition taken from the Qualitative Case Review Protocol is: Assess current, obvious, and substantial strengths and needs of the child and family that are identified through existing assessments, both formal and informal. This collection of information should form a big picture understanding of the child and family and how to provide effective services for them. A functional assessment also identifies critical underlying issues that must be resolved for the child to live safely with his/her family independent of agency supervision or to obtain an independent and enduring home.

Family assessment

A compilation of assessments made on individual members of a family combined with elements of overall family functioning, individuality and with each other, and in multiple situations. Keys to a family assessment are:

- Family assessments require the ability to assess a complex and dynamic system under stress.
- Family assessments consist of multiple components.
- It is essential that family members be seen together whenever possible. It is impossible to assess family dynamics without seeing the family as a unit.
- All parents are to be interviewed. This includes parents who are incarcerated or absent from the everyday life of a child.
- Extended family members are to be included in the assessment whenever possible. The reason that the child came to the attention of the agency or into care needs to be addressed in the family assessment.

Assessment process

These steps serve as the foundation for planning:

- Gathering information.
- Analyzing information.
- Drawing conclusions.
- Making decisions.
- Implementing the plan and assessing the results.

Strengths

A family's available past and present experiences, assets, interests, resources, and preferences to meet needs.

Needs

A need may be a requirement that is essential to all human beings such as the need for shelter, food, affiliation, or nurturance. In working with families in planning, a need is often a description of the underlying conditions that are the source of the symptoms or the behavioral expressions of problems that a family may be encountering. Sometimes when we positively reframe problems, we get at the need.

Solution-focused questions

Solution-focused questions are questions that are directed at gathering information specifically centered on developing solutions for families and individuals. An important part of solution-focused questions is to identify the strengths and needs that families and individuals have.