



Department of

Children's Services

Quality Contacts: Focus on Assessment

A Quality Contacts Webinar Series

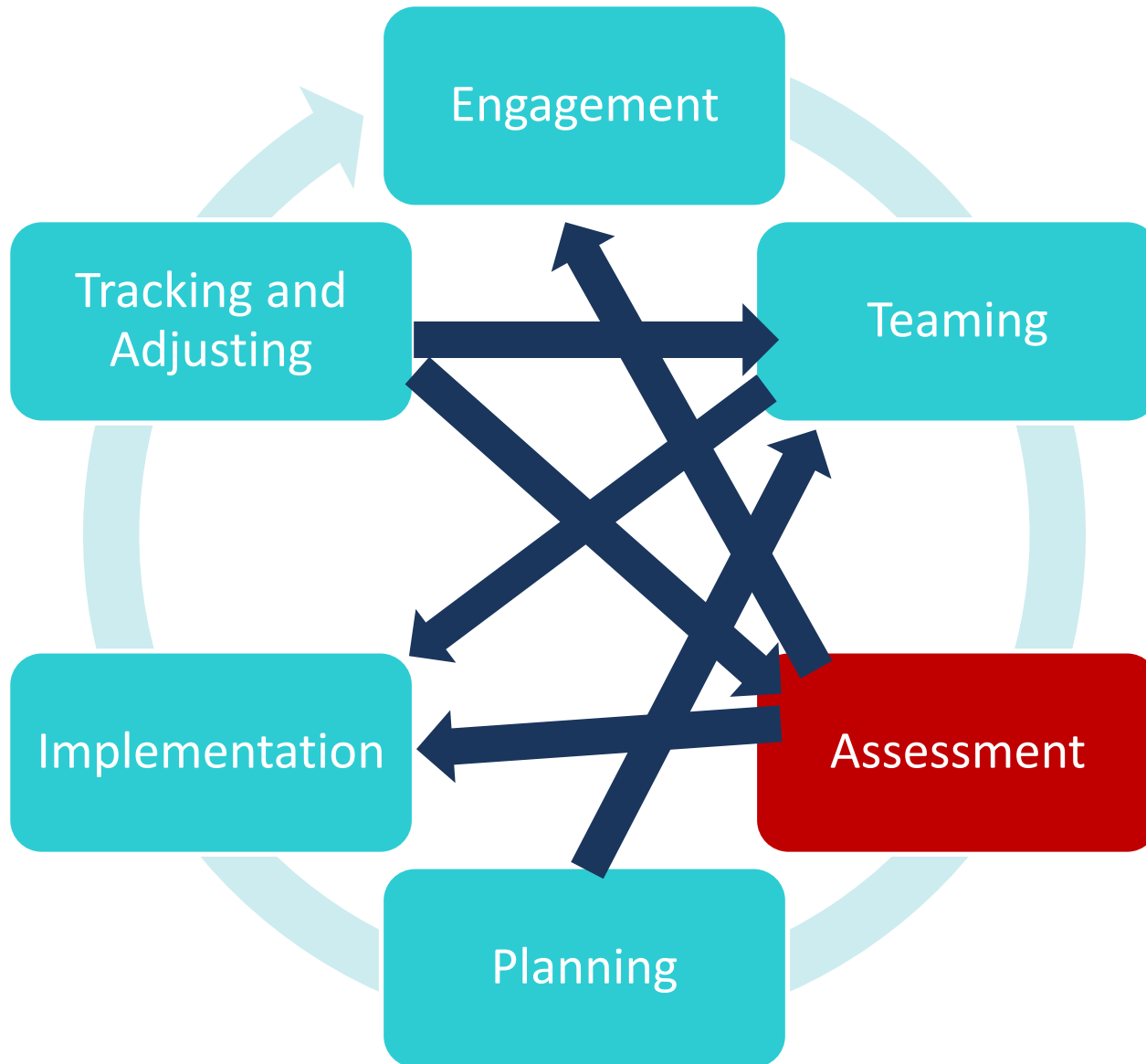
What would you do?



When does assessment occur?

At EVERY single contact, with EVERY member of the team, to globally assess and demonstrate CONCERTED efforts over the course of each **month** on every topic that applies to the family's situation.

Focus on Assessment



Why is
assessment
so difficult?

Why is assessment
so important?

Types of Assessment

Informal

- Observations
- Interviews/conversations
- Review of summary or progress reports, records, etc.
- Shared conclusions

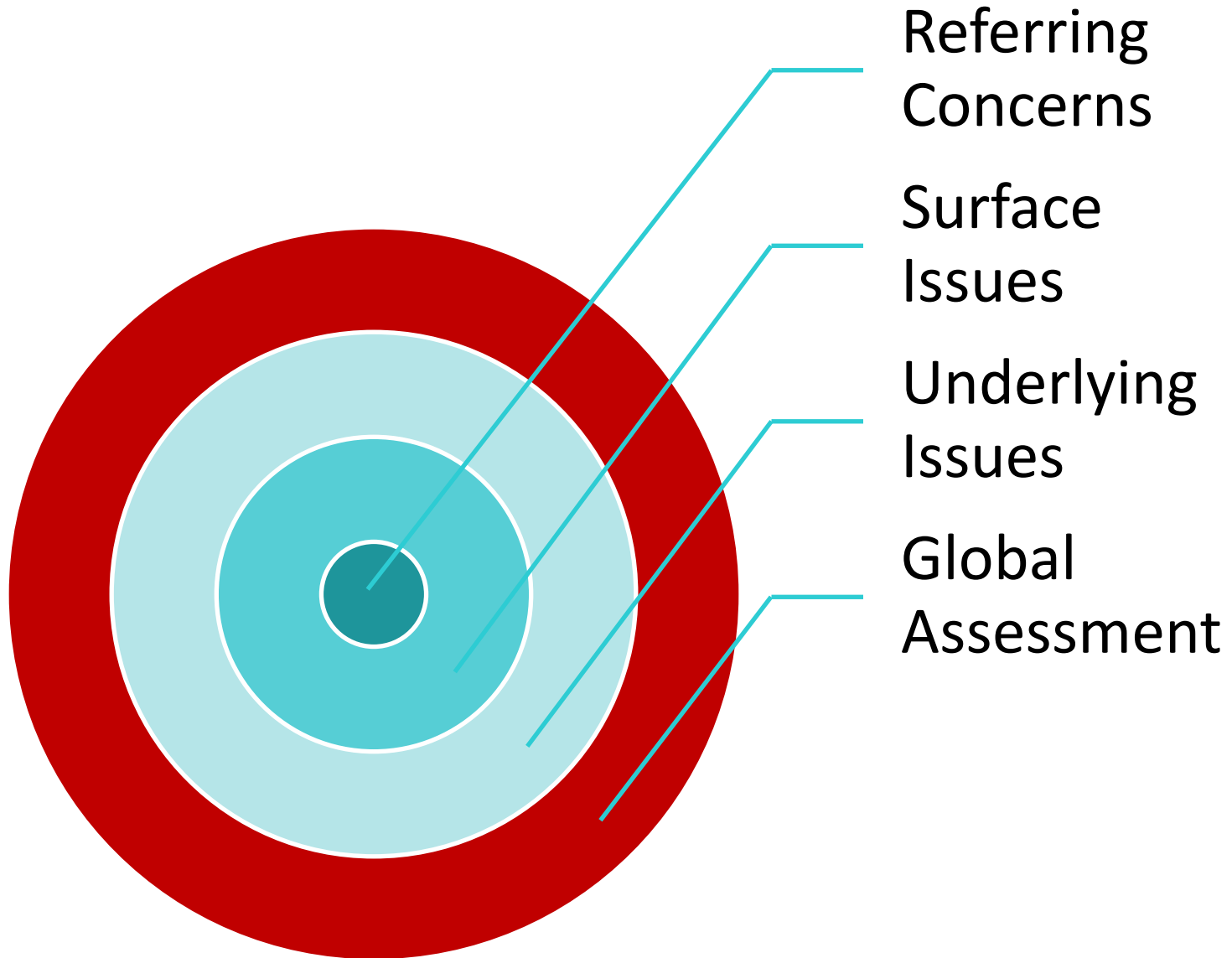
Formal

- CANS
- Psychological and other mental health assessments
- Parenting assessments
- Etc.

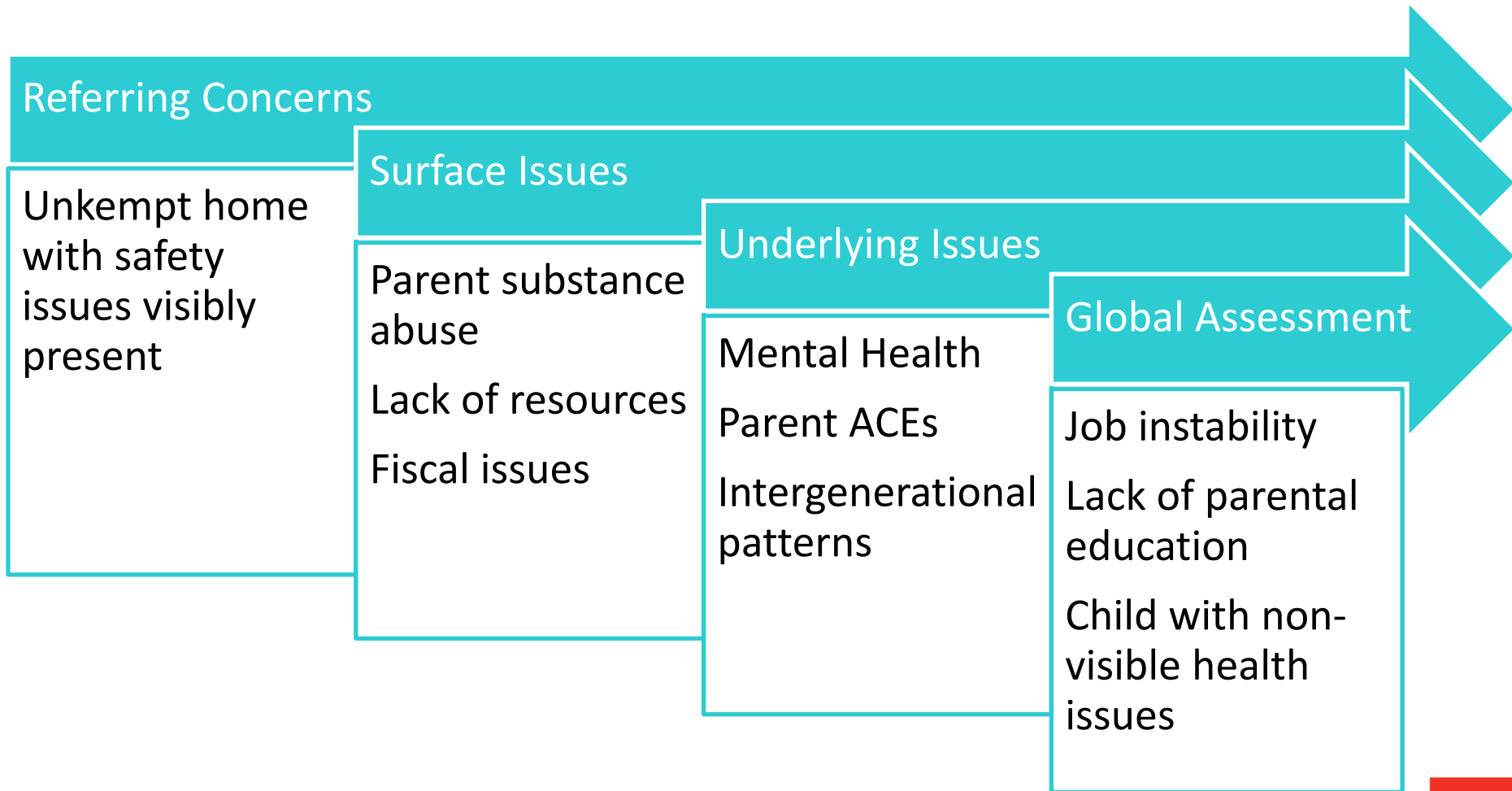
Assessment adds up



Context for Global Assessment



Example



Explaining Assessment

- Share why you will be asking questions.
 - “I am going to ask you a bunch of questions about a lot of topics to learn more about your family. The reason I am doing this is because I want to be able to better understand how I can help you based on what’s happening with your family. It’s important that I get enough details so that I don’t make wrong assumptions about what you might need to help your situation.”



- Explain our process for assessment.
 - “After we talk through all of my questions , I’m going to use that information to complete an assessment called (CANS– tell them what it stands for). This will tell me the areas that we should consider focusing on. “
 - “It will also give me a rating for level of services for you (to the youth) /your child(ren) (when talking to parents). This will give me an indication of what types of services and supports your child and family needs to maximize safety for your children and what you will need in order for your family to come back together successfully.”

How to get to good global assessment...

- Take time to build a professional (trusting) helping relationship.
- Show genuineness, empathy, and respect.
- Be curious – ask lots of questions
- Don't shy away from hard to ask questions/topics.
- Ask open questions or on similar topics in a variety of ways.
- “Tell me more...” 5 times! (Get past the buzzwords*)
- Ask multiple family/team members the same questions.
- Use it as a collaborative process to gain buy-in and bring the team together.
- Offer the client autonomy in decision making where possible and when it's safe to do so.
- Use the CANS items as a guide...



Global
Assessment

Core Items

Caregiver Resources & Needs

Adjustment to Trauma
Experiences
Medical/Physical

Developmental
Mental Health
Substance Use

Parental Criminal Activity
Supervision
Discipline
Involvement in Caregiving
Functions
Knowledge
Safety
Organization
Social Resources
Residential Stability

Youth Strengths

Family Strengths/Support

Interpersonal/Social
Connectedness
Educational Setting
Vocational
Optimism

Talents and Interests
Spiritual/Religious
Cultural Identity
Community Life

Relationship Permanence
Resiliency
Natural Supports

Cultural Factors

Language

Traditions and Rituals

Cultural Stress

Youth Behavioral/Emotional Needs

Psychosis (Thought Disorder)
Attention/Concentration
Impulsivity/Hyperactivity
Depression

Anxiety
Oppositional Behavior
Conduct
Substance Use
Attachment Difficulties
Eating Disturbances
Anger Control

Youth Traumatic Experiences

Sexual Abuse
Physical Abuse
Emotional Abuse
Neglect
Medical Trauma

Witness to Family/School/
Community Violence
Natural or Manmade Disaster
War/Terrorism Affected
Victim/Witness to Criminal
Activity
Disruptions in Caregiving/
Attachment Losses

Youth Life Functioning

Family Functioning
Living Situation
Social Functioning
Developmental/Intellectual
Recreational
Legal

Medical/Physical
Sleep
Sexual Development
School Attendance
School Behavior

School Achievement

Youth Risk Behaviors

Suicide Risk
Non-Suicidal Self-Injurious
Behavior
Other Self-Harm
Danger to Others
Runaway
Fire Setting
Sexually Reactive Behavior

Sexual Aggression
Delinquent Behavior
Decision-Making
Intentional Misbehavior
Bullying Others
Victimization/Exploitation



Global
Assessment

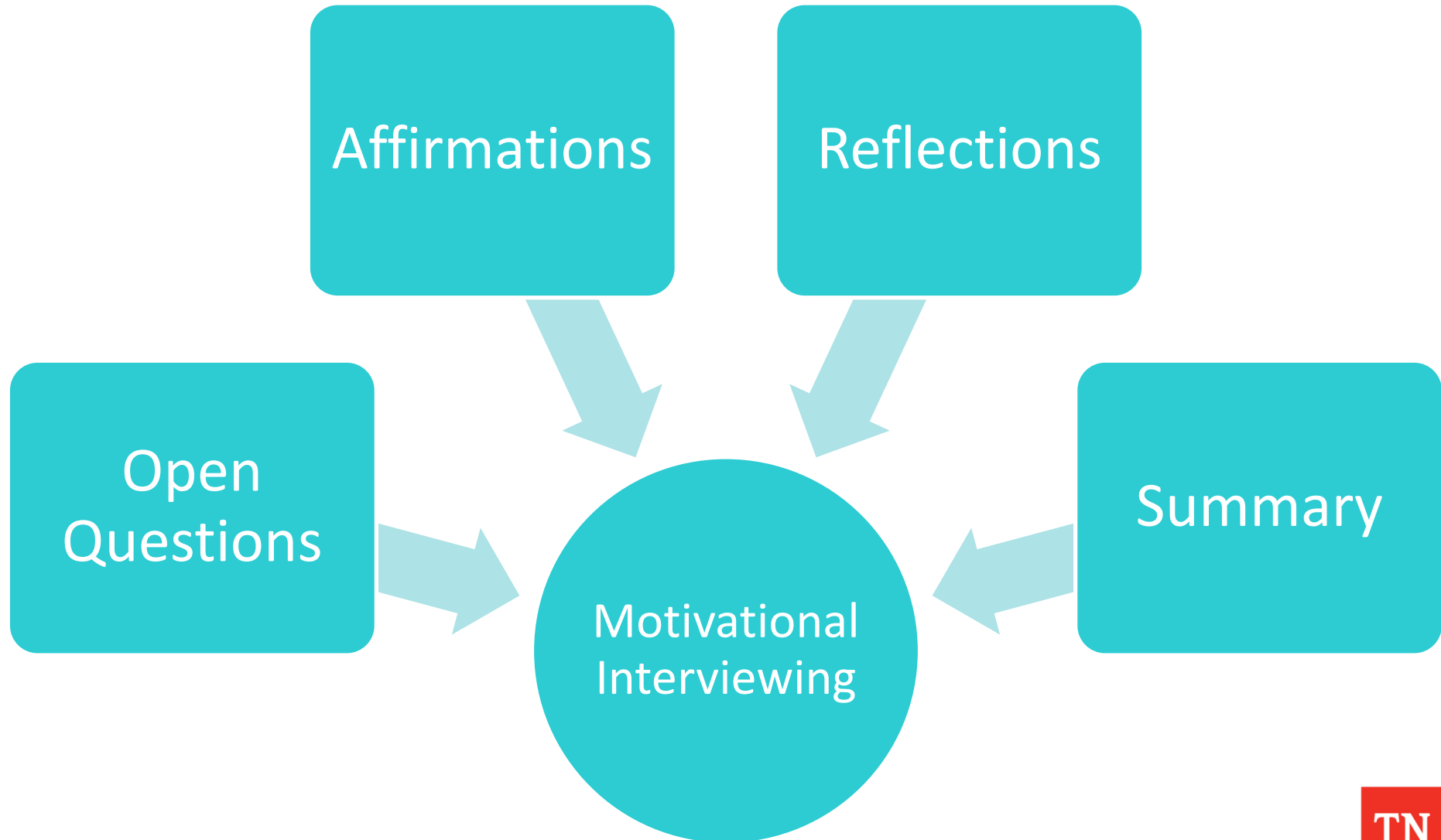
What about other formal assessments

- Potential source of new information
- Use recommendations
- Circle back to check for progress

Concepts of Motivational Interviewing

1. Express empathy through reflective listening;
2. Develop discrepancy between clients' goals or values and their current behavior;
3. Avoid argument and judgement when confronting unacceptable behaviors;
4. Roll with client resistance (understand that change is difficult and won't be instantaneous even when necessary); and
5. Support self-efficacy and optimism even when faced with having to make difficult non-negotiable safety decisions.
6. Use OARS skills.

Help them open up... OARS



Assessment Partnership

- Explain how the assessment will be used to target services and develop a plan:
 - “Now that I have completed your assessment, here are some things that came up for your family. Based on what you shared, mental health and supervising your children came up as areas that if we provide you with the right supports, we could help improve things for your family. I’d like to talk to you about mental health services and parenting services available to you so that we can identify the specific services that are a good fit for you.”



Assessment
Integration

- Integrated Assessment means that there is a connection between the assessment and the rest of the activities occurring in the case:
 - Conversations with families that gather information to draw conclusions about functioning.
 - Intentional discussion in CFTMs and connection to case plan (permanency plan or IPA) action steps, services selected, and decision making.
 - Re-assessment that demonstrates comparison to past assessments and reflect the changes in family functioning observed.
 - When things aren't going well, assessment information is considered to determine different next steps in case planning.
 - Used in case conferencing supervision meeting to guide discussion to ensure global assessment and integrated assessment throughout the case
 - Used in testimony in court to demonstrate objective assessment and structured case decision making.

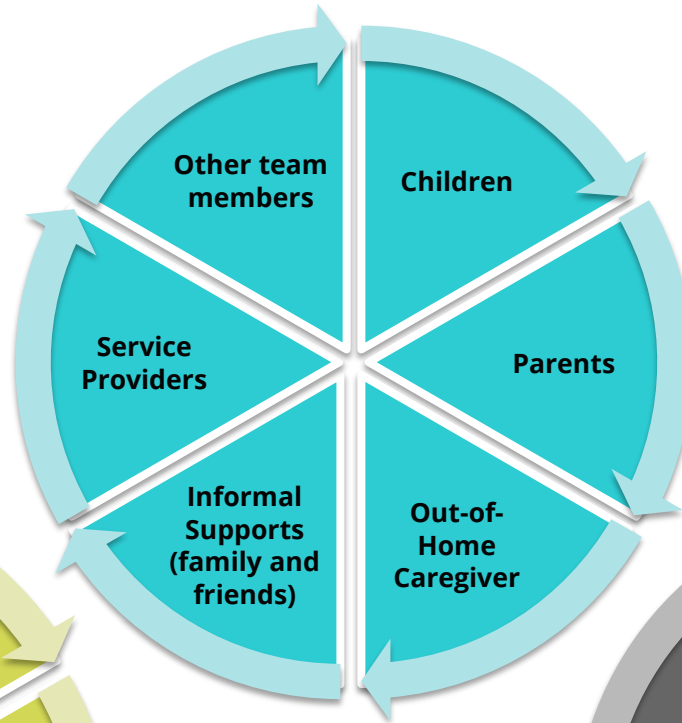
Global assessment that reviews progress

- Focus in on primary areas (2s and 3s on CANS) and touch on secondary areas (0s and 1s). Has there been improvement, decline or are they stuck?
- Highlight areas of strength and celebrate wins/offer praise.
- Talk about effectiveness of services
 - ...in addition to what was completed. (get past compliance focused)
- Talk about ongoing areas of concern

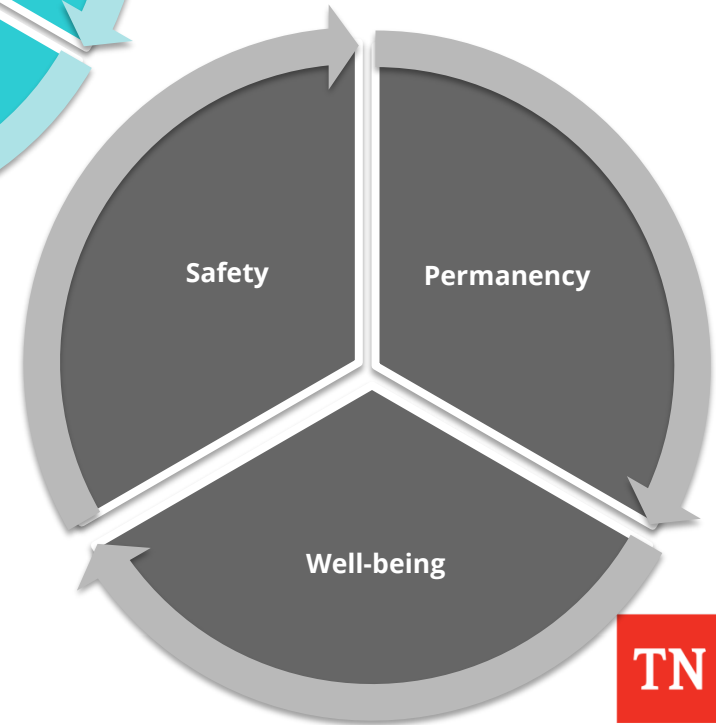


The How, Who and What of Monthly Contacts...

Who?



What?



How?



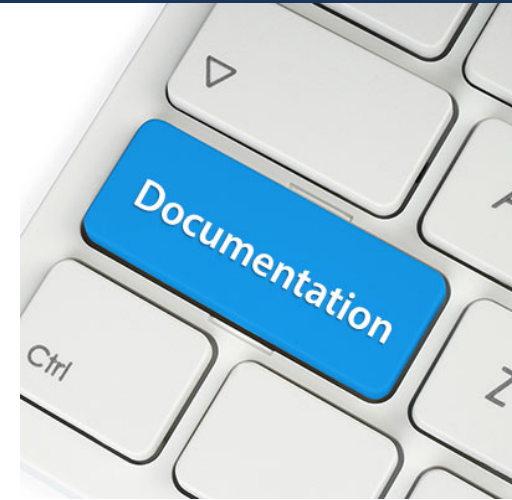
Assessment adds up



Documenting Formal Assessment

Documentation reflects :

- ✓ Highlight 2s and 3s from the CANS.
 - ✓ Summarize and describe circumstances that resulted in the score.
 - ✓ Explain how you plan to address the area through services or supports. If you're not going to, explain why.
- ✓ Include 0s and 1s that are functional strengths to be leveraged in case planning.
- ✓ Describe the high points and recommendations from other professional assessments and next steps planned.
- ✓ When subsequent CANS are scored, highlight the areas of improvement, stability or decline and explain how important areas will be addressed
- ✓ Between formal assessment document progress made in detailed notes



Documenting Informal Assessment

- Describe the depth and detail of conversations
- Avoid buzzwords* –use Behavioral Descriptors
- Draw conclusions about underlying causes.
- Go beyond the presenting issues and ensure all areas are covered (Global Assessment)
- Connect information gathered to decisions made
- Describe how you, the caseworker, engage the family

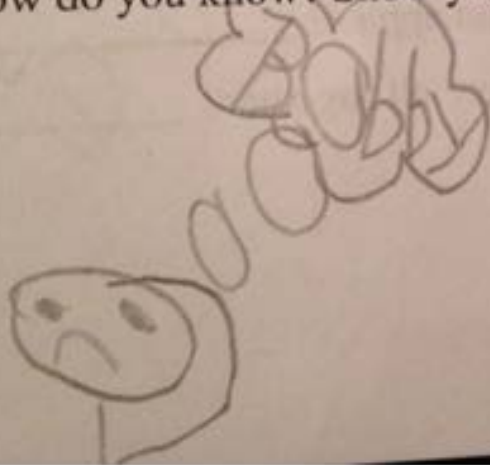
Show your work!

MGSE1.NBT.7

11. Bobby has four dimes. Amy has 30 pennies. Which child has more money?

Bobby ✓

How do you know? Show your thinking.



Ok, that was funny, but what do you mean?


- Describe:

- How you interact with the family.
- Suggestions you provide to the family.
- How you coach them to work their plan.
- Support you give them in overcoming barriers.
- How you address ongoing concerns.
- How you make connections to other team members.
- Praise you share for accomplishments.
- How you followed up on all of the services in place and the progress being made.
- The decisions you made and why you made them.

You learned....

So you plan to do....

Because you think it will help accomplish...



Goal: Improve quality of informal assessment

Plan/Action Steps:

1. Ask questions I'm curious about
2. Don't shy away from difficult topics
3. Refocus efforts on better descriptions in case notes.
4. Show my work!

Update your Small Test of Change

Evaluation

Course Title:

Quality Contacts: Focus on Assessment

Trainers: Check the Chat box

<https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/training/tpd/atl/dcstrainingevaluation.html>

The logo consists of a red square with the letters 'TN' in white, serif font. Below the red square is a thin white horizontal line, and below that is a dark blue horizontal bar. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is located at the bottom right corner of the red square.

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Thank you