

# BEHAVIORALLY-BASED CASE PLANS

## SUMMARY

Behaviorally-based case plans focus on specific, concrete strategies and actions to effectively and permanently change a parent's behavior with regard to its impact on the child, rather than mere completion of or compliance with services.

## ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

- Supervisors are the key to helping staff transition from service-driven case plans to behaviorally-based case plans. The role of the supervisor includes:
  - Promoting the expectation that staff will create behaviorally-based case plans with families.
  - Helping staff understand the importance of skilled engagement in creating a case plan that has the full buy-in of the parents and their network.
  - Ensuring staff have developed Harm and Danger Statements and Safety Goals with families before developing the behaviorally-based case plan.
  - Ensuring staff hold Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings with families and their networks to develop the behaviorally-based case plan.
  - Ensuring the CANS is integrated as part of the CFT and priority needs/strengths inform the case plan.
  - Modeling creation of behaviorally-based case plan objectives and action steps.
  - Ensuring staff conduct family finding and build safety networks with the family and their natural supports.
  - Making sure the voice of the child/youth is included in the case planning process.

## COMMON BARRIERS FOR STAFF

- Common barriers for social workers to creating behaviorally-based case plans include:
  - Lack of knowledge or confidence in how to develop behaviorally-specific objectives and action steps.
  - Lack of skill in developing Harm and Danger Statements and Safety Goals with families that inform development of behaviorally-based plans.
  - Worry about using creative or individualized solutions to families' challenges rather than formal, cookie-cutter services.
  - Concerns that developing a behaviorally-based case plan with the family and their network in a CFT meeting will be too time-consuming.
  - Lack of skill or experience in helping families develop Safety Networks or engaging the network.
- For these reasons, it is critical that the supervisor set the expectation for, model, and practice developing behaviorally-based case plans with social workers who are new to this practice.

## GETTING STARTED

- In your next supervision meeting after a social worker attends training on behaviorally-based case plans, discuss with them:
  - What do they like about these kinds of case plans?
  - What worries and questions do they have?
  - How will they work with the family to develop their network and engage them in case planning?
  - On a scale of 1-10, how willing are they to try using a CFT process to create a behaviorally-based case plan? On a scale of 1-10, how confident are they in their ability to create a behaviorally-based case plan? What are the barriers, and what strategies are needed to overcome them?
- With the worker, look over a current case plan for a family and discuss how it could be made behaviorally-based rather than service-driven.
- Discuss expectations for when services are indicated as part of a case plan and how they will link to behavior change.
- Discuss use of family-friendly language in case plans and how the worker will ensure the family and network participate in creating the objectives and action steps.

## GOAL SETTING & COACHING

- Have the worker identify one family with whom they will conduct a CFT meeting to develop the case plan within the next few weeks. Attend the meeting with the worker, if at all possible. Discuss in supervision:
  - How was the process for the worker?
  - How did they feel about their ability to engage the family and network in developing case plan objectives and action steps?
  - What did they do in the case plan process that they are proud of and would do again next time?
  - What is something they wish they had done differently? What are their ideas to try next time?
  - On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable is the worker now with creating their next behaviorally-based case plan with a family?
- Have the worker take the case plan information from the CFT meeting, put it in the CWS/CMS case plan section and customize the Word document to reflect the case plan objectives and action steps developed with the family. Review with them in supervision.
- Develop a plan with the worker to move toward behaviorally-based case plans with all families on their caseload; i.e., they could start with all new families assigned to them from now on, then work to develop behaviorally-based plans with all families on their caseload for their next case plan update.