

Developing Protocols and a Mission Statement for the Child Protection Team

Objectives:

1. Participants will learn the importance of having protocols and a mission statement to guide the child protection team.
2. Participants will better understand the functions of a child protection team and how to develop protocols that will be addressed by the child protection team.

Activities:

1. Break participants into groups of 4-6. Ask them to develop a mission statement for their child protection team. If they currently have one, ask them to review it and make any changes that they feel is needed to strengthen and enhance.
2. When the mission statement is completed (after approximately 20 minutes) ask each group to read their statement to the large group. Ask the large group to assist them in enhancing their statement, if needed.
3. Ask each group to develop protocols for their child protection team, according to what their child protection team will do and how they will be structured.

This will take some work (protocols) and teams will probably not be able to complete this during the training. However, if they can get started and feel comfortable with the process of how to do it, they will be able to complete it once they return home.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do protocols assist a child protection team in their activities and why are they necessary?
2. How can teams achieve consensus on activities? What can be done when consensus cannot be reached?
3. What items are important to include in protocols?

Writing a Mission Statement

A mission statement is a general declaration of the purpose, scope of activities and the guiding principles of the CPT. It should be short and clearly describe the reason the team was formed and the purpose the team will serve. Some items the team should consider in writing a mission statement would include:

- Why was the team formed?
- Who is on the team?
- What jurisdiction will the team serve?
- What types of cases will the team address?
- What other functions will the team perform?
- What challenges will the team face?
- How will the team meet those challenges?
- What type of commitment must each agency make?

A mission statement should...

- Express the team's purpose in a way that inspires support and ongoing commitment.
- Motivate those who are connected to the team.
- Be articulated in a way that is convincing and easy to grasp.
- Use proactive verbs to describe what the team does.
- Be free of jargon.
- Be short enough so it can be easily repeated by anyone connected to the team.

Developing a Protocol

A protocol is a written document detailing the specific role and responsibility of each agency involved with the CPT. It is a practical, working document and serves as a reference when questions or disputes arise within the team. Comprehensive protocols typically reduce conflict within teams because there is a shared understanding of the responsibilities of team members and their agencies. The agencies and individuals signing the document signify their mutual commitment to the team and the team's mission statement.

With the creation of a CPT, written protocols must be developed to detail the involvement and activities of each agency member. It is important that during the development of the protocol it is assured that each agency is willing to assume the responsibility to commit to being involved. Everyone on the team must be committed to the concept that a coordinated and collaborative process is required for successful investigation and delivery of services for victims of child abuse and/or neglect and their families. The CPT must have the support of the leadership of its' member agencies, organizations, and jurisdictional authority.

The Indian Health Service identifies six potential functions for a CPT:

1. development of policies and procedures for handling situations involving child abuse and/or neglect

2. identification, coordination, and management of these situations
3. developing and implementing protocols and screening instruments in clinics where high risk families can be identified
4. development of necessary protocols and procedures for gathering and recording information for reporting, legal, clinical, and monitoring purposes
5. developing and coordinating child abuse/neglect training for the CPT members and the general community
6. identification and prevention activities in the schools with staff and children.