

Ohio Child Welfare Training Program

Supervisor Checklist

Group Case Conferences

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Written by the Institute for Human Services for the
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Group Case Conferences

The benefits of group case conferences are many:

1. Families are benefitted when the collective knowledge of all staff can be utilized to problem-solve difficult child welfare issues.
2. Caseworkers can see a connection between their own cases and ideas cited by their supervisor or colleagues that exemplifies best practice.
3. Members of the group contribute their knowledge, skills and experience to case discussions.
4. The team is strengthened and colleagues provide mutual support.
5. Critical thinking skills are developed.
6. There's an increased opportunity for diversity in perspectives to be heard.

Establishing a Unit Process for Group Case Conferences

For group case conferences to be of optimal benefit to the unit, supervisors must develop a process for how the conferences will be managed. The following are suggested activities:

- Establish a regular meeting time and location
- Develop criteria for cases to be reviewed
- Select cases to be reviewed, and if needed, assist caseworkers in preparing to present the case
- Determine review protocol and make sure all staff are aware of it

Presenting a Case in a Group Conference – Option 1

Some basic guidelines for preparing and presenting a case include:

- Provide a short case summary to all staff prior to the conference, i.e., the problem, strengths, concerns, etc.
- At the beginning of the meeting, state the central issue that led to the request for the group conference. What problem or decision does the caseworker want the group to address?
- Colleagues are encouraged to ask questions as needed to understand the dynamics of the case, and also to surface additional issues that they feel could have a bearing on the case decisions.
- The caseworker should welcome new approaches and questions that may not have been considered in the case. The purpose of a conference is to use the group's knowledge and experience to determine the best course to follow
- At the staffing, describe the core features of the children and family's difficulties and strengths, with a few illustrative details to help the group picture the client
- Present a succinct narrative, including the most important events of the case history
- Explain why the problems may have developed that led to the child being at risk, with consideration of at least one theoretical framework relevant to the case
- Cite the clinical or practical thinking of the worker and supervisor concerning the intervention options available that seem most likely to succeed in meeting the desired case outcomes for the children and family
- Restate the reason for the staffing request. Do colleagues support the worker's plan or have they suggested additional issues or questions?

Content adapted from Kadushin (2002). *Supervision in Social Work*. Columbia University Press; and Dorman and Shapiro (2004). *Preventing Burnout in Your Staff and Yourself*. Child Welfare League of America.

Clinical Consultation Framework – Option 2

