



Department of Children & Youth

Ohio Child Welfare Training Program

Competencies, Behavioral Indicators, and Key Practice Areas

Released July 2023

Populations:

[PCSA Caseworkers](#)

[Assessors](#)

[PCSA Supervisors](#)

[Resource Families](#)

PCSA Caseworkers

COMPETENCY: Engages individuals, families, community partners, and other involved parties

DESCRIPTION: Initiates and maintains productive and collaborative relationships with individuals, families, community partners, and other involved parties to promote the achievement of shared goals.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The caseworker recognizes and respects the needs and perspectives of team members, children, and families and engages in a way that is responsive to their diverse cultural values and experiences.
- The caseworker actively involves children and parents/caregivers in all aspects of the case by using activities such as scaling, life circles, genograms, strengths and needs exercises, and pointing out what is going well in the family.
- The caseworker utilizes effective, respectful, and transparent communication and interactional helping skills (e.g., listening, questioning, reflecting) to develop and maintain trusting relationships with team members, children, and families.
- The caseworker uses strength-based, respectful, unbiased, nonjudgmental, and empowering language in all communication and interaction with youth, individuals, family members, and significant stakeholders.
- The caseworker is transparent in providing accurate, understandable, and complete information to help the individual and/or family make informed decisions and recognizes that many factors, such as trauma experience and education level, may affect a person's ability to understand information.
- The caseworker actively listens to each individual and solicits perspectives from all involved – for example, by summarizing what was said, encouraging individuals to tell their stories without interruption, and allowing individuals to speak more than the worker.
- The caseworker employs interviewing strategies (e.g., active listening) to help individuals comfortably express and discuss their feelings, concerns, and opinions.

COMPETENCY: Demonstrates cultural & diversity responsiveness

DESCRIPTION: Demonstrates the capacity to relate to people with diverse characteristics in a sensitive and respectful way that recognizes and values individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of all.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The caseworker understands the dynamics of racial disproportionality and disparity in child welfare and demonstrates the commitment to the safety, well-being, and permanency of every child in their practice.
- The caseworker appreciates and seeks to understand the different views, expertise, and experience of others; understands the perspectives and limitations of other individuals and systems.
- The caseworker engages in ongoing work to become culturally and diversity responsive.
- The caseworker interacts with youth, individuals, families, and others involved in the case in a manner that demonstrates respect and recognition of how their cultures and backgrounds affect their perceptions of and experiences with child protective services.
- The caseworker routinely self-assesses personal values, beliefs, and biases and takes action to minimize viewing others from their own perspective and avoid stereotyping in their practice, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships.
- The caseworker interacts with team members in ways that demonstrate an understanding of and respect for diversity and its multiple dimensions.
- The caseworker speaks with multiple sources (e.g., children, youth, and family members) and locates reliable informants and resources to gather accurate information about a culture or a group.
- The caseworker sees youth as whole individuals, understanding the past and its implications for the developmental process and future plans (e.g., multiple placements, family difficulties).

COMPETENCY: Demonstrates ethical & professional behavior

DESCRIPTION: Comprehends and applies social work and/or other relevant ethical standards in all aspects of their work.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The caseworker models social work ethical standards and abides by relevant laws and regulations that affect all aspects of practice.
- The caseworker respects and maintains the confidentiality of information related to the children and families, except when mandated reporting or legal obligations require disclosure.
- The caseworker identifies, analyzes, and resolves ethical dilemmas and conflicts that arise in their practice by utilizing critical thinking skills, seeking consultation when needed, and prioritizing the best interests of the child.
- The caseworker employs time management and organization skills in all duties and responsibilities.
- The caseworker demonstrates professionalism in all interactions, including establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries, being punctual, distinguishing between personal and professional values, and acting with integrity and honesty in interactions with team members and children and families.
- The caseworker communicates respect for team members and families using appropriate verbal and/or nonverbal language that enhances the credibility of the professional's role.
- The caseworker recognizes the impact of secondary trauma and workload stress and engages in strategies (e.g., seeking mental health or emotional support after critical incidents) to minimize the impact of their personal response on children and families, team members, and personal life.
- The caseworker engages in self-reflection, continuously seeking opportunities for professional growth and staying updated on relevant research, laws, and best practices in child protective services.

COMPETENCY: Demonstrates core values & principles

DESCRIPTION: Performs responsibilities and duties in a manner that is consistent with the values and principles deemed central to the field by governing bodies and industry leaders.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The caseworker implements and promotes evidence-based strategies in the provision of services.
- The caseworker strengthens relationships through a family/child-centered approach to enhance the well-being of individuals.
- The caseworker acknowledges children and families as experts on their families and includes them as part of the decision-making team.
- The caseworker modifies approaches to engagement and service delivery to mitigate the impact of trauma on individuals and family systems.
- The caseworker continuously builds their knowledge and skills to provide the most current, beneficial, and culturally appropriate services to children, youth, and families involved in child welfare.
- The caseworker advocates for resources and system reforms that ensure equity and improve services for children, youths, and families.
- The caseworker seeks and facilitates permanent connections between children, family members, important adults, friends, and other kin in all aspects of case provision.
- The caseworker adapts to changes in practice expectations based on agency direction, system changes, and improved practice approaches.

COMPETENCY: Plans services & interventions with individuals, families, or other involved parties

DESCRIPTION: Partners with individuals and/or families or other involved parties to coordinate strategies and resources to achieve sustainable and beneficial results.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The caseworker uses information gathered during the assessment process and assessment conclusions to develop plans to assure safety, promote behavior change, and prepare plans for intervention.
- The caseworker gathers family members' ideas about options for ensuring the immediate safety of their child/youth; works jointly with the family to develop written safety plans that are time-limited, specific, easily understood by the family, and control the active safety threats the children are experiencing.
- The caseworker involves the family in developing service plans that promote behavior change to reduce the risk of future maltreatment and increase child safety, build on strengths and other resources to resolve contributing factors and underlying causes of abuse and/or neglect, are easily understood by the family, behaviorally specific, written in the family's words, observable and time-limited; and that include visitation plans and action steps for the caseworker and the family.
- The caseworker ensures that the planning process and plans comply with legal, regulatory, and policy requirements and reviews plans with the supervisor and legal counsel if necessary.
- The caseworker engages youth, family, community partners, and other relevant stakeholders whenever possible in the planning process, including discussions about family capacity and service preferences, service options, and benefits and limitations of each.
- The caseworker incorporates strategies, evidence-based interventions, resources, and formal and informal supports that recognize the child, youth, family, or other caregiver's cultural experiences, values, and evolving situation into plans and the planning process.
- The caseworker engages relevant stakeholders in the development of various types of plans that support child safety, permanency, and well-being and assures that these plans are realistic and incorporate strategies, evidence-based interventions, and resources to support agency policies and procedures.
- The caseworker engages team members, including the family, in a planning process that builds on an accurate understanding of the child, youth, individual, and family's strengths and needs and provides multiple options for support and/or intervention.

- The caseworker develops plans that are likely to result in the desired outcome for the family and child/youth if successfully implemented.

COMPETENCY: Implements plans with individuals, families, or other involved parties

DESCRIPTION: Initiates timely action and performs designated tasks in alignment with plans and the planning process using formal and informal resources to achieve sustainable and beneficial results.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The caseworker develops and implements strategies to facilitate access to services to meet the needs of diverse children, youth, and families.
- The caseworker collaborates and coordinates with team members and families to ensure case-related tasks are completed promptly and sequentially based on assigned roles and responsibilities.
- The caseworker performs the tasks aligned with the plan and the planning process that logically lead to the achievement of beneficial and sustainable results for the child, youth, and family.
- The caseworker collaborates with team members and families to develop and maintain a unified effort and commitment to the planning process and the plan to achieve positive results for children, youth, and families.
- The caseworker guides and understands the services provided by member agencies and organizations and values the roles of those agencies and organizations and their staff in promoting safety, permanency, and well-being for children, youth, and families.
- The caseworker helps families identify and access relevant services from the child welfare agency, service providers, and other entities in the family's neighborhood and community.
- The caseworker collaborates with the family to implement the plan in such a way that the family takes increasing responsibility for ensuring the success of the plan and case closure.

COMPETENCY: Adjusts plans in response to changing circumstances

DESCRIPTION: Monitors progress, recognizes when adjustments are necessary, and modifies actions due to changing circumstances.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The caseworker monitors and evaluates individual progress toward service plan goals at times formally designated by policy and informally at every contact with the individual and service team members.
- The caseworker uses a variety of strategies to gather information about individual progress on service goals, changes in life circumstances, and barriers to case progress. These strategies include observation and frequent contact with the individual, conversations with individuals, team members, and other service providers.
- The caseworker assures that service plan goals and strategies continue to reflect individuals' cultural backgrounds and changing circumstances.
- The caseworker collaborates with individuals and service team members to promptly amend plans and service provision strategies and remove barriers when information has been gathered that indicates that services are not working, circumstances require new strategies, or barriers are present.
- The caseworker recognizes when plans, services, and interventions need to be amended because they are not supporting the desired outcomes and amends plans accordingly.

COMPETENCY: Assesses individuals and/or families

DESCRIPTION: Gathers information, engages in critical thinking, and organizes and examines information about individuals' and/or families' situations, circumstances, strengths, and needs to make sound decisions.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The caseworker collaborates with all team members to gather complete information from a wide range of sources to develop an understanding of a situation (e.g., documentation, interviews, observation, checks of collateral resources, and consultation with experts).
- The caseworker collaborates with necessary team members (e.g., family, agency personnel, and service providers) to sequence and plan assessments, fact-gathering activities, and interviews.
- The caseworker uses a variety of interviewing and data collection methods (i.e., open-ended or closed questions, clarification, effective use of nonverbals, summarization, and/or direct communication, observation) to gather complete and relevant information when assessing and making decisions.
- The caseworker applies a strength-based approach to all aspects of the assessment process and demonstrates an awareness of how their perceptions, behaviors, bias, and exposure to trauma and stress impact the objectivity of their assessments.
- The caseworker analyzes information from various sources to identify bias, relevance, and accuracy; seeks additional information as needed to reduce bias; and ensures accurate and relevant information is used in the assessment and decision-making process.
- The caseworker makes decisions based on the criteria and desired goal in the case process. When available, the caseworker relies on the appropriate resource or tool to promote critical thinking in the decision-making process.
- The caseworker recognizes and critically examines the effects of social, economic, environmental, psychological, and biological factors influencing the functioning of children, youth, individuals, and families in assessment and decision-making.
- The caseworker recognizes when plans, services, and interventions need to be amended because they are not supporting the desired outcomes and amends plans accordingly.

COMPETENCY: Provides written and oral communication

DESCRIPTION: Receives and clearly conveys information and ideas through a variety of methods.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The caseworker adapts communication strategies with individuals based on each situation and the unique characteristics of each individual and family.
- The caseworker ensures recipients of communications understand the communication, summarizes conversations and agreed-upon actions or decisions, asks the recipient to demonstrate their understanding, and provides follow-up clarification if necessary.
- The caseworker communicates case-related information to relevant stakeholders in accordance with all state, local and federal laws in a manner that assures that the recipient understands the message, minimizes conflict, and achieves the desired outcome.
- The caseworker prepares and organizes case documentation in a timely manner and provides a clear, accurate, and detailed rationale for case decisions in both verbal and written format.
- The caseworker prepares written reports and verbal communications that are clear, thorough, concise, accurate, timely, and reflect an appropriate degree of formality for the intended audience.
- The caseworker arranges for deaf and language interpreters for verbal communication, translating documents and written communication as necessary, and helps prepare interpreters and translators for these tasks to ensure they meet the needs of youth and families.
- The caseworker observes and explores nonverbal communications (e.g., tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, and choice of words) and asks questions to assist in interpreting those communications to avoid misunderstandings, mis-assessments, and biases.
- The caseworker responds appropriately to verbal, non-verbal, and written communication, the context of the communication, and factors that may affect communication, such as strong emotions or people in the conversation who may inhibit direct discussion.
- The caseworker uses respectful communication, engages in difficult conversations, refrains from gossiping or complaining, does not use derogatory language in either written or verbal communication, and is honest, timely, and objective.

- The caseworker uses agency-approved protocol regarding communication (e.g., confidentiality, releases of information, and/or communicating within the agency, with media, or with community partners).
- The caseworker collaborates with service providers regarding the timing, sequencing, and content of communication when more than one person will be communicating with a family.
- The caseworker plans the timing, sequencing, and content of communication when it is necessary to communicate with more than one family member.

COMPETENCY: Advocates for individuals, families, and communities

DESCRIPTION: Promotes ideas, resources, and strategies to benefit individuals, families, and communities.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The caseworker educates and supports children, youth, and families as needed to engage in advocacy on their own behalf to ensure positive change and their well-being.
- The caseworker provides access to relevant, timely information, resources, and services for children, youth, and families.
- The caseworker recognizes the impact of poverty, unemployment, marginalization, and discrimination on the well-being of children and families and acts to reduce barriers to services because of this impact.
- The caseworker acknowledges the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination, including microaggressions that contribute to injustices for children, youth, families, and communities.
- The caseworker requests, encourages, and/or influences service providers, schools, government entities, landlords, and courts to uphold children's and families' rights and to treat families fairly and respectfully.
- The caseworker works on behalf of families to eliminate barriers to services provided by neighborhood and/or community-based providers.
- The caseworker navigates systems to advocate for children's and families' rights in accordance with applicable laws and policies.

KEY PRACTICE AREAS:

- Domestic Violence
- Substance Use
- Mental Health
- Crisis Intervention
- Working with Older Youth Transitioning Out of Care
- Human Trafficking
- Workload Management
- Trauma-Informed Practice
- Criminal Justice System
- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Neglect
- Secondary Trauma
- Father and Paternal Engagement

Assessors

COMPETENCY: Engages individuals, families, community partners, and other involved parties

DESCRIPTION: Initiates and maintains productive and collaborative relationships with individuals, families, community partners, and other involved parties to promote the achievement of shared goals.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The assessor recognizes and respects the needs and perspectives of team members, children, and families and engages in a way that is developmentally appropriate and responsive to their diverse cultural values and experiences.
- The assessor utilizes effective, respectful, and transparent communication and interactional helping skills (e.g., listening, questioning, reflecting) to develop and maintain trusting relationships with team members, children, and families and solicits perspectives from all involved – for example, by summarizing what was said, encouraging individuals to tell their stories without interruption, and allowing individuals to speak more than the worker.
- The assessor adopts a strength-based, respectful, unbiased, nonjudgmental, and empowering attitude toward all communication and interaction with youth, individuals, family members, and significant stakeholders.
- The assessor is transparent in providing accurate, understandable, and complete information to help the individual and/or family make informed decisions and recognizes that many factors, such as trauma experience and education level, may affect a person's ability to understand information.
- The assessor employs interviewing strategies (e.g., active listening) and activities including scaling, life circles, genograms, strengths and needs exercises, etc. to help individuals comfortably express and discuss their feelings, concerns, and opinions.

COMPETENCY: Demonstrates cultural & diversity responsiveness

DESCRIPTION: Demonstrates the capacity to relate to people with diverse characteristics in a sensitive and respectful way that recognizes and values individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of all.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The assessor understands the dynamics of racial disproportionality and disparity in child protection and demonstrates a commitment to dismantling structural racism and engaging in equity and justice work for the safety, well-being, and permanency of every child in their practice.
- The assessor seeks to understand and learn from the different perspectives, expertise, and experience of others.
- The assessor interacts with youth, individuals, families, and others on the child protection team in a manner that demonstrates respect and recognition of how their culture and experiences affect their perceptions of and interactions with child protective services, particularly individuals and families from communities of color who have been subjected to unjust surveillance, investigation, and removal practices.
- The assessor routinely self-assesses personal values, beliefs, and biases and takes action to minimize viewing others from their own perspective and avoid personal biases and stereotyping in their practice, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships.
- The assessor locates reliable informants and resources to gather accurate information about a culture or a group; and, avoiding assumptions, verifies the information gathered directly with the individual or family members.
- The assessor understands the needs of specific populations that are overrepresented in child protection including BIPOC children and families, children and families who identify as LGBTQ+, and children and families with disabilities.
- The assessor strives to assure children and youth feel safe and accepted, which are critical components for appropriate identity development.

COMPETENCY: Demonstrates ethical & professional behavior

DESCRIPTION: Comprehends and applies social work and/or other relevant ethical standards in all aspects of their work.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The assessor adopts and models social work ethical standards and abides by relevant laws and regulations that affect all aspects of practice.
- The assessor respects and maintains the confidentiality of information related to the children and families, except when mandated reporting or legal obligations require disclosure.
- The assessor identifies, analyzes, and resolves ethical dilemmas and conflicts that arise in their practice by utilizing critical thinking skills, seeking consultation when needed, and prioritizing the best interests of the child.
- The assessor employs time management and organization skills in all duties and responsibilities, adhering to required timelines and practice guidelines.
- The assessor demonstrates professionalism in all interactions, including establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries, being punctual, distinguishing between personal and professional values, and acting with integrity and honesty in interactions with team members and children and families.
- The assessor communicates respect for team members and families using appropriate verbal and/or nonverbal language that enhances the credibility of the professional's role.
- The assessor recognizes the impact of secondary trauma and workload stress and engages in strategies (e.g., seeking mental health or emotional support after critical incidents) to minimize the impact of their personal response on children and families, team members, and personal life. The assessor recognizes how their individual responses may differ from others who have experienced similar trauma and stress.
- The assessor engages in honest and accurate self-assessment and seeks opportunities for professional growth, including efforts to stay updated on relevant research, laws, and best practices in child protection.

COMPETENCY: Demonstrates core values & principles

DESCRIPTION: Performs responsibilities and duties in a manner that is consistent with the values and principles deemed central to the field by governing bodies and industry leaders.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The assessor implements and promotes evidence-based strategies in the provision of services.
- The assessor strengthens relationships through a family and child-centered approach to enhance the well-being of individuals.
- The assessor acknowledges children and families as experts on their families and includes them as part of the decision-making team.
- The assessor modifies approaches to engagement and service delivery to mitigate the impact of trauma on individuals and family systems.
- The assessor continuously builds their knowledge and skills to provide the most current, beneficial, and culturally appropriate services to children, youth, and families involved in child protection.
- The assessor advocates for resources and system reforms that ensure equity and improve services for children, youths, and families.
- The assessor seeks and facilitates permanent connections between children, family members, important adults, friends, and other kin in all aspects of case provision.
- The assessor adapts to changes in practice expectations based on agency direction, system changes, and improved practice approaches.
- The assessor affirms through their practice that children do best in families and that children should, whenever possible, remain with their primary family or kin.

COMPETENCY: Plans services & interventions with individuals, families, or other involved parties

DESCRIPTION: Partners with individuals and/or families or other involved parties to coordinate strategies and resources to achieve sustainable and beneficial results.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The assessor uses information gathered during the assessment process and assessment conclusions to develop plans to assure safety, well-being, and permanency.
- The assessor involves the family in developing plans that are behaviorally specific and easily understood by the family, written in the family's words, and build on the family's strengths and existing resources.
- The assessor ensures that the planning process and plans comply with legal, regulatory, and policy requirements and reviews plans with the supervisor and legal counsel if necessary.
- The assessor engages youth, family, community partners, and other relevant stakeholders whenever possible in the planning process, including discussions about family capacity and service preferences, service options, and benefits and limitations of each.
- The assessor incorporates assessment strategies, evidence-based interventions, resources, and formal and informal supports that recognize the child, youth, family, or other caregiver's cultural experiences, values, and evolving situation into plans and the planning process.
- The assessor engages relevant stakeholders in the development of various types of plans that support child safety, permanency, and well-being and assures that these plans are realistic and incorporate assessment strategies, evidence-based interventions, and resources to support agency policies and procedures.
- The assessor engages team members, including the family, in a planning process that builds on an accurate understanding of the child, youth, individual, and family's strengths and needs and provides multiple options for support and/or intervention.
- The assessor develops plans that are likely to result in the desired outcome for the family and child/youth if successfully implemented.

COMPETENCY: Implements plans with individuals, families, or other involved parties

DESCRIPTION: Initiates timely action and performs designated tasks in alignment with plans and the planning process using formal and informal resources to achieve sustainable and beneficial results.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The assessor develops and implements strategies to facilitate access and eliminate barriers to services to meet the needs of diverse children, youth, and families.
- The assessor collaborates and coordinates with team members and families to ensure case-related tasks are completed promptly and sequentially based on assigned roles and responsibilities to the achievement of beneficial and sustainable results for the child, youth, and family.
- The assessor collaborates with team members, including children and families, to develop and maintain a unified effort and commitment to the planning process and the plan to achieve positive results for children, youth, and families.
- The assessor guides and understands the services provided by member agencies and organizations and values the roles of those agencies and organizations and their staff in promoting safety, permanency, and well-being for children, youth, and families.
- The assessor empowers families to implement the plan by helping to identify and access relevant services from the child welfare agency, service providers, and other entities in the family's neighborhood and community.

COMPETENCY: Adjusts plans in response to changing circumstances

DESCRIPTION: Monitors progress, recognizes when adjustments are necessary, and modifies actions due to changing circumstances.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The assessor monitors and evaluates individual progress toward service plan goals at times formally designated by policy, law, and agency protocol and informally at every contact with the individual and service team members.
- The assessor uses a variety of strategies to gather information about individual progress on service goals, changes in life circumstances, and barriers to case progress. These strategies include observation and frequent contact with the individual, as well as conversations with individuals, team members, and other service providers.
- The assessor recognizes when plans, services, and interventions need to be amended when information has been gathered that services are not working, circumstances require new strategies, or services are no longer supporting the desired outcomes, and collaborates with individuals and service team members to promptly amend plans.

COMPETENCY: Assesses individuals and/or families

DESCRIPTION: Gathers information, engages in critical thinking, and organizes and examines information about individuals' and/or families' situations, circumstances, strengths, and needs to make sound decisions.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The assessor collaborates with all team members to gather complete information from a wide range of sources to develop an understanding of a situation (e.g., documentation, interviews, observation, checks of collateral resources, and consultation with experts) and verifies this understanding with the children and families.
- The assessor collaborates with necessary team members (e.g., family, agency personnel, and service providers) to sequence and plan assessments, fact-gathering activities, and interviews.

- The assessor uses a variety of interviewing and data collection methods (i.e., open-ended or closed questions, clarification, effective use of nonverbals, summarization, and/or direct communication, observation) to gather complete and relevant information when assessing and making decisions.
- The assessor applies a strength-based approach to all aspects of the assessment process and demonstrates an awareness of how their perceptions, behaviors, bias, and exposure to trauma and stress impact the objectivity of their assessments.
- The assessor analyzes information from various sources to identify bias, relevance, and accuracy; seeks additional information as needed to reduce bias; and ensures accurate and relevant information is used in the assessment and decision-making process.
- The assessor compares and synthesizes information to make decisions based on the criteria and desired goal in the case process. When available, the assessor relies on the appropriate resource or tool to promote critical thinking in the decision-making process.
- The assessor recognizes and critically examines the effects of social, economic, environmental, psychological, and biological factors influencing the functioning of children, youth, individuals, and families in assessment and decision-making.
- The assessor recognizes when plans, services, and interventions need to be amended because they are not supporting the desired outcomes and amends plans accordingly.

COMPETENCY: Provides written and oral communication

DESCRIPTION: Receives and clearly conveys information and ideas through a variety of methods.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The assessor adapts communication strategies (phone, text, email, face to face) with individuals based on the content of the communication, the family's preferred style of communication, and the unique characteristics of each individual and family.
- The assessor ensures recipients of communications understand the communication by summarizing conversations and agreed-upon actions or decisions, asking the recipient to demonstrate their understanding, and providing follow-up clarification if necessary.

- The assessor communicates case-related information to relevant stakeholders in accordance with all state, local and federal laws.
- The assessor prepares and organizes written reports, case documentation, and verbal communications that are clear, accurate, timely, thorough, concise, and appropriate for the intended audience, and which provide a detailed rationale for case decisions.
- The assessor arranges for all necessary accommodations to facilitate communication, including deaf and language interpreters, written translations into languages including Braille, and other accommodations as indicated by the individual's language, cultural requirements, or disability status.
- The assessor observes and responds appropriately to verbal, nonverbal (e.g., tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, and choice of words), and written communication, and asks questions to assist in interpreting those communications to avoid misunderstandings, mis-assessments, and biases.
- The assessor uses respectful communication and objective, strengths-oriented language in both written and verbal communication, including difficult conversations, and refrains from gossiping or complaining.
- The assessor uses agency-approved protocol regarding communication (e.g., confidentiality, releases of information, and/or communicating within the agency, with media, or with community partners).
- The assessor plans the timing, sequencing, type, and content of communication when it is necessary to communicate with more than one family member.

COMPETENCY: Advocates for Individuals, Families, and Communities

DESCRIPTION: Promotes ideas, resources, and strategies to benefit individuals, families, and communities.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The assessor educates and supports children, youth, and families as needed to engage in advocacy on their own behalf to ensure positive change and their well-being.
- The assessor provides access to relevant, timely information and resources, and works to remove barriers to services for children, youth, and families.

- The assessor acknowledges how marginalization, racism, oppression, and discrimination, including microaggressions, contribute to injustices for children, youth, families, and communities, and acknowledges that certain populations are at greater risk for injustice.
- The assessor requests, encourages, and/or influences service providers, schools, government entities, landlords, and courts to uphold children's and families' rights and to treat families fairly and respectfully.
- The assessor navigates systems to advocate for children's and families' rights in accordance with applicable laws and policies.

KEY PRACTICE AREAS:

- Domestic Violence
- Substance Use
- Mental Health
- Crisis Intervention
- Working with Older Youth Transitioning Out of Care
- Human Trafficking
- Workload Management
- Trauma-Informed Practice
- Criminal Justice System
- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Neglect
- Secondary Trauma

PCSA Supervisors

COMPETENCY: Engages individuals, families, community partners, and other involved parties

DESCRIPTION: Initiates and maintains productive and collaborative relationships with individuals, families, community partners, and other involved parties to promote the achievement of shared goals.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The supervisor recognizes and respects the needs and perspectives of team members, children, families, and staff and engages in a way that is responsive to their diverse cultural values and experiences; the supervisor models this behavior for staff.
- The supervisor actively involves staff and colleagues in decision-making, work organization, and planning whenever appropriate.
- The supervisor utilizes effective, respectful, and transparent communication and interactional helping skills (e.g., listening, questioning, reflecting) to develop and maintain trusting relationships with team members, staff, and children and families.
- The supervisor demonstrates the use of a strength-based, solution-focused approach to work with team members, staff, and children and families.
- The supervisor demonstrates respect for the needs, experiences, and perspectives of culturally diverse team members.
- The supervisor actively listens to staff and team members and solicits perspectives from all involved – for example, by summarizing what was said, encouraging individuals to tell their stories without interruption.

COMPETENCY: Demonstrates cultural & diversity responsiveness

DESCRIPTION: Demonstrates the capacity to relate to people with diverse characteristics in a sensitive and respectful way that recognizes and values individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of all.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The supervisor understands the dynamics of racial disproportionality and disparity in child welfare and demonstrates the commitment to the safety, well-being, and permanency of every child in their practice.
- The supervisor appreciates and seeks to understand the different views, expertise, and experience of others; understands the perspectives and limitations of other individuals and systems.
- The supervisor engages in ongoing work to become culturally and diversity responsive.
- The supervisor interacts with team members in ways that demonstrate an understanding of and respect for diversity and its multiple dimensions and seeks feedback to ensure that interactions remain consistent with demonstrating respect.
- The supervisor routinely self-assesses and seeks feedback from others to take action to ensure that they minimize the tendency to view other cultures from their own perspective and avoid stereotyping in their practice, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships.
- The supervisor interacts with team members in ways that demonstrate an understanding of and respect for diverse team members and addresses areas of conflict between their own personal and professional values and those of other cultures.
- The supervisor supports caseworkers' development of knowledge of the ways in which culture influences help-seeking behaviors and the receiving of services.
- The supervisor helps caseworkers recognize the ways in which their experiences, values, and attitudes about people from various backgrounds and cultures can influence and shape their practice with diverse team members.
- The supervisor fosters in caseworkers an awareness and acceptance of individual, family, and community differences, an acknowledgment of cultural strengths, and a focus on the nature and dynamics of diversity and its multiple dimensions.

COMPETENCY: Demonstrates ethical & professional behavior

DESCRIPTION: Comprehends and applies social work and/or other relevant ethical standards in all aspects of their work.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The supervisor models social work ethical standards and abides by relevant laws and regulations that affect all aspects of practice.
- The supervisor respects and maintains the confidentiality of information related to the child and family, staff, and human resources-related information, except when mandated reporting or legal obligations require disclosure.
- The supervisor identifies, analyzes, and resolves ethical dilemmas and conflicts that arise in their practice by utilizing critical thinking skills, seeking consultation when needed, and prioritizing the best interests of the clients, staff, and the agency.
- The supervisor employs time management and organization skills in all duties and responsibilities.
- The supervisor demonstrates professionalism in all interactions, including establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries, being punctual, distinguishing between personal and professional values, and acting with integrity and honesty in interactions with team members, staff, and children and families.
- The supervisor communicates respect for team members and families using appropriate verbal and/or nonverbal language that enhances the credibility of the professional's role.
- The supervisor recognizes the impact of secondary trauma and workload stress and engages in strategies (e.g., seeking mental health or emotional support after critical incidents) to minimize the impact of their personal response on children and families, team members, staff, and personal life.
- The supervisor engages in self-reflection, continuously seeking opportunities for professional growth and staying updated on relevant research, laws, and best practices in child protective services, leadership, and management.

COMPETENCY: Demonstrates core values & principles

DESCRIPTION: Performs responsibilities and duties in a manner that is consistent with the values and principles deemed central to the field by governing bodies and industry leaders.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The supervisor implements and promotes evidence-based strategies in the completion of leadership and management responsibilities.
- The supervisor creates strong relationships with staff and colleagues through the application of a strengths-based approach to leadership and management.
- The supervisor continuously builds their knowledge and skills to promote an environment that enables staff and colleagues to provide the most current, beneficial, and culturally appropriate services to children, youth, and families involved in child welfare.
- The supervisor approaches tasks and responsibilities from a leadership perspective that emphasizes the growth and development of staff and supports the agency's mission and vision.
- The supervisor employs an approach to supervision that balances the use of educational, supportive, and administrative supervision strategies in achieving desired agency and practice outcomes.
- The supervisor adapts to changes in practice expectations based upon agency direction, system changes, and improved practice approaches; assists staff in adapting to these changes as well.
- The supervisor demonstrates a commitment to child welfare guiding values and best practices in all interactions with staff, colleagues, and the community.

COMPETENCY: Plans services & interventions with individuals, families, or other involved parties

DESCRIPTION: Partners with individuals and/or families or other involved parties to coordinate strategies and resources to achieve sustainable and beneficial results.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The supervisor incorporates strategies, evidence-based interventions, and resources to support agency policies and procedures into plans and the planning process.
- The supervisor engages staff in developing plans to address staff burnout, secondary trauma, and performance gaps.
- The supervisor partners with agency leadership and human resources departments to develop plans to address staff burnout, secondary trauma, and performance gaps in accordance with current legal, regulatory, and policy requirements.
- The supervisor incorporates strategies in plans related to staff development or staff performance that are likely to achieve desired goals, meet staff needs, and address barriers to staff performance.
- The supervisor collaborates with staff to develop plans that prioritize attainable and measurable objectives and identify specific steps needed to improve staff performance.

COMPETENCY: Implements plans with individuals, families, or other involved parties

DESCRIPTION: Initiates timely action and performs designated tasks in alignment with plans and the planning process using formal and informal resources to achieve sustainable and beneficial results.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The supervisor collaborates with peers and stakeholders to operationalize policies, procedures, and plans.

- The supervisor takes steps necessary to ensure a healthy, productive workforce when caseworker burnout or secondary trauma is impacting staff performance.
- The supervisor coaches, models, and provides other opportunities to caseworkers to develop skills in all areas of child protective services practice.
- The supervisor provides opportunities for caseworkers to practice skills needed to implement all aspects of child protective services best practice.
- The supervisor holds caseworkers accountable for their roles and responsibilities in implementing all aspects of child protective services best practice.

COMPETENCY: Adjusts plans in response to changing circumstances

DESCRIPTION: Monitors progress, recognizes when adjustments are necessary, and modifies actions due to changing circumstances.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The supervisor monitors and evaluates caseworkers' progress toward goals to address performance gaps and collaborates with caseworkers to adjust these plans when necessary.
- The supervisor assures agency services are being provided to diverse individuals effectively and that deadlines and/or regulations are being met and, if not, identifies the underlying cause and adjusts plans accordingly.
- The supervisor collaborates with staff to adjust plans due to changing circumstances, ineffective strategies, and agency and community factors.

COMPETENCY: Assesses individuals and/or families

DESCRIPTION: Gathers information, engages in critical thinking, and organizes and examines information about individuals' and/or families' situations, circumstances, strengths, and needs to make sound decisions.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The supervisor gathers relevant and reliable information from various sources to understand staff performance, barriers to staff success, areas for staff professional development, and agency and system barriers to client success.
- The supervisor thoughtfully sequences and plans data collection to understand staff performance, staff strengths, barriers to staff success, areas for staff professional development, and agency and system barriers to client success.
- The supervisor analyzes information from various sources to identify bias, relevance, and accuracy; seeks additional information as needed to reduce bias; and ensures accurate and relevant information is used in the assessment and decision-making process regarding staff performance, staff development, and workload assignment.
- The supervisor recognizes and critically examines factors related to staff burnout and secondary trauma and differentiates staff performance gaps based on staff knowledge and skill gaps, staff motivation, and agency barriers in the assessment and decision-making process.

COMPETENCY: Provides written and oral communication

DESCRIPTION: Receives and clearly conveys information and ideas through a variety of methods.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The supervisor provides timely and effective feedback to staff in a manner that is strengths-based and includes collaboration on an action plan for change.
- The supervisor engages in ethical communication and engages in critical conversations in the workplace.
- The supervisor adapts communication strategies with staff and colleagues based on each situation and the unique characteristics of those individuals.
- The supervisor ensures recipients of communications understand the communication, summarizes conversations and agreed-upon actions or decisions, asks the recipient to demonstrate their understanding, and provides follow-up clarification if necessary.
- The supervisor prepares written reports and verbal communications that are clear, thorough, concise, accurate, timely, and reflect an appropriate degree of formality for the intended audience.
- The supervisor utilizes communication strategies that align with the goals of the communication and the needs of the recipients.
- The supervisor responds appropriately to verbal, non-verbal, and written communication, the context of the communication, and factors that may affect communication, such as strong emotions or people in the conversation who may inhibit direct discussion.
- The supervisor uses respectful communication, engages in difficult conversations, refrains from gossiping or complaining, does not use derogatory language in either written or verbal communication, and is honest, timely, and objective.
- The supervisor uses agency-approved protocol regarding communication (e.g., confidentiality, releases of information, and/or communicating within the agency, with media, or with community partners).

COMPETENCY: Advocates for individuals, families, and communities

DESCRIPTION: Promotes ideas, resources, and strategies to benefit individuals, families, and communities.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The supervisor identifies agency barriers to service delivery and access, identifies solutions, and presents solutions to leadership.
- The supervisor promotes the needs of staff to ensure that they have the tools, resources, and supports to implement and meet the agency's goals.
- The supervisor promotes agency and system-level changes to ensure older adults and families have access to resources and services.
- The supervisor recognizes unit, agency, and community trends and promotes strategies to address areas of concern.
- The supervisor works collaboratively to mitigate the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination that contribute to injustices for caseworkers, children, families, and communities.
- The supervisor works with leadership, community partners, and stakeholders in finding solutions to identified gaps in services to individuals in the community.

KEY PRACTICE AREAS:

- Leadership
- Conflict Management
- Staff Performance
- Staff Development
- Team Development
- Change Management
- Father and Paternal Engagement
- Casework Priority Areas (We will give supervisors the opportunity to ID needs in caseworker practice areas)

Resource Families

COMPETENCY: Engages individuals, families, community partners, and other involved parties

DESCRIPTION: Initiates and maintains productive and collaborative relationships with individuals, families, community partners, and other involved parties to promote the achievement of shared goals.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The resource family continuously seeks to effectively build relationships with primary parents and other applicable primary family members to support the well-being of the youth in their care.
- The resource family develops productive relationships with the agency, the GAL, service providers, and other relevant parties to promote safety, permanency, and well-being for the youth.
- The resource family effectively builds emotionally and physically safe and healthy relationships with children and youth in their care.
- Develops and maintains a wide variety of formal and informal contacts to build a youth support network in the community.

COMPETENCY: Demonstrates cultural & diversity responsiveness

DESCRIPTION: Demonstrates the capacity to relate to people with diverse characteristics in a sensitive and respectful way that recognizes and values individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of all.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The resource family understands the dynamics of racial disproportionality and disparity in child welfare and demonstrates the commitment to the safety, well-being, and permanency of every child placed in their home.
- The resource family appreciates and seeks to understand the different views, expertise, and experience of others; understands the perspectives and limitations of other individuals and systems.
- The resource family engages in ongoing work to become culturally and diversity responsive.
- The resource family recognizes and respects the impact that culture has on a child's behavior.
- The resource family routinely self-assesses their personal values, beliefs, and biases and takes action to minimize viewing others from their own perspective and avoid stereotyping in decision-making and interpersonal relationships.
- The resource family interacts with individuals in a way that respects their culture and their diversity.
- The resource family speaks with multiple sources (e.g., children, youth, and family members) and locates reliable informants and resources to gather accurate information about a culture or a group.
- The resource family sees youth as whole individuals, understanding how their past influences developmental processes and how protective factors can shape future outcomes (e.g., multiple placements, family difficulties).

COMPETENCY: Demonstrates ethical & professional behavior

DESCRIPTION: Comprehends and applies social work and/or other relevant ethical standards in all aspects of their work.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The resource family models the values that promote the best outcomes for children in their care and abides by relevant laws and regulations pertaining to their licensing and certification.
- The resource family respects and maintains the confidentiality of information related to children in their care and abides by confidentiality laws, rules, and policies in all communications.
- The resource family works collaboratively with care team members and demonstrates objective professionalism at provider meetings, agency meetings, and court hearings.
- The resource family communicates respect for team members using appropriate verbal and/or nonverbal language that enhances the credibility of the child welfare or adult protective services professional's role.
- The resource family recognizes the impact of secondary trauma and workload stress and engages in strategies (e.g., seeking mental health or emotional support after critical incidents) to minimize the impact of their personal response on the children in their care, team members, and personal life.
- The resource family engages in self-reflection, continuously seeking opportunities for professional growth, and staying updated on relevant research, laws and best practices in parenting and caregiving.

COMPETENCY: Demonstrates core values & principles

DESCRIPTION: Performs responsibilities and duties in a manner that is consistent with the values and principles deemed central to the field by governing bodies and industry leaders.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The resource family uses effective parenting strategies that nurture and promote skill development.
- The resource family provides opportunities for children and youth in care to participate in normal childhood activities.
- The resource family uses a strengths-based approach to caregiving and interacting with the child's family so they feel seen, heard, and valued.
- The resource family modifies approaches to engagement and parenting to mitigate the impact of trauma on children and family systems.
- The resource family continuously builds their knowledge and skills to provide the most current, beneficial, and culturally appropriate services to children and youth in their care.
- The resource family provides an equitable and inclusive home so all children feel accepted and have a sense of belonging.
- The resource family seeks and facilitates permanent connections between children, family members, important adults, friends, and other kin.
- The resource family adapts to changing expectations and approaches to caregiving based upon agency direction, system changes, and improved practice approaches.

COMPETENCY: Plans services & interventions with individuals, families, or other involved parties

DESCRIPTION: Partners with individuals and/or families or other involved parties to coordinate strategies and resources to achieve sustainable and beneficial results.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The resource family organizes the household to create an environment that promotes physical and emotional safety, well-being, and permanency (e.g., reunification, adoption, legal custody to kin).
- The resource family participates as a team member in the planning process to promote physical and emotional safety, well-being, and permanency (e.g., reunification, adoption, legal custody to kin) for youth in their care.
- The resource family develops plans with youth to ensure they are achieving developmental milestones and building skills for independent living.
- The resource family collaborates with service providers (e.g., therapists, counselors, probation officers, teachers, etc.) to get the child needed services.
- The resource family collaborates with caseworkers and service providers to develop plans to respond to high-risk behaviors of youth.
- The resource family collaborates with the caseworker and service providers to develop plans to respond to indicators of placement disruption.
- The resource family responds to indicators of trauma in youth and collaborates with the caseworker and service team to develop plans to address these.
- The resource family responds to indicators of developmental delays, disabilities, and/or emotional problems of youth and collaborates with the caseworker and service team to develop plans to address these.
- The resource family collaborates with the agency to develop plans to build skills in areas in which they need further development to support the children in their care.

COMPETENCY: Implements plans with individuals, families, or other involved parties

DESCRIPTION: Initiates timely action and performs designated tasks in alignment with plans and the planning process using formal and informal resources to achieve sustainable and beneficial results.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The resource family creates an environment in their home that promotes emotional and physical safety, well-being, and permanence (e.g., reunification, adoption, legal custody to kin) for children in their care.
- The resource family cares for, interacts with, and nurtures children in a way that promotes emotional safety, healing, and healthy development.
- The resource family supports youth through transitions that occur while in their care.
- The resource family supports relationships between children in their care and their primary family, friends, kin, siblings, and other important adults.
- The resource family actively seeks to coach and model parenting behavior and life skills for primary parents to assist in preparing them to parent their children safely.
- The resource family assures children in their care receive the services they need to achieve emotional and physical safety, well-being, and permanency (e.g., reunification, adoption, legal custody to kin).
- The resource family teaches and models behaviors to children that encourage healthy social functioning in society.
- The resource family assures youth in their care receive the services and support needed to promote the development of independent living skills.
- The resource family implements strategies to reduce the likelihood of placement disruption.
- The resource family performs the tasks outlined in plans to address the unique needs of youth in their care.
- The resource family completes activities necessary to develop skills in areas in which they need further development to support the children in their care.

COMPETENCY: Adjusts plans in response to changing circumstances

DESCRIPTION: Monitors progress, recognizes when adjustments are necessary, and modifies actions due to changing circumstances.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The resource family responds to changes in youth and family service plan goals or activities in a manner that minimizes chaos and promotes stability for children/youth in their care.
- The resource family adjusts their parenting style to provide and care for each unique and individual child.
- The resource family adjusts schedules, activities, family roles, and rules to accommodate the needs of children in their home.
- The resource family recognizes when plans, services, and interventions do not seem to be helping the youth achieve desired outcomes and collaborates with the caseworker and service team to adjust.
- The resource family recognizes when activities necessary to develop skills in areas in which they need further development to support the children in their care need adjusted and collaborate with agency to modify plans to address those needs.

COMPETENCY: Assesses individuals and/or families

DESCRIPTION: Gathers information, engages in critical thinking, and organizes and examines information about individuals' and/or families' situations, circumstances, strengths, and needs to make sound decisions.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The resource family recognizes when children are engaged in behaviors that are high-risk or require additional support/intervention.

- The resource family recognizes early signs of placement disruption as well as the root cause(s) for the disruption.
- The resource family seeks to understand the meaning of a child's behaviors and the reasons underlying the behaviors.
- The resource family seeks guidance when they identify indicators of trauma that may impact healthy development in children.
- The resource family seeks help and guidance when they identify early signs of developmental delays, disabilities, and emotional problems in children.
- The resource family considers a variety of relevant information and factors to recognize areas in which they need further development to support the children in their care.

COMPETENCY: Provides written and oral communication

DESCRIPTION: Receives and clearly conveys information and ideas through a variety of methods.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The resource family uses communication strategies with children and youth that promote psychological safety.
- The resource family effectively communicates and listens to children's primary parents, agency staff, service providers and applicable community members.
- The resource family provides organized, written documentation (as needed) to communicate information about children in their care to the agency, the GAL, and the court.
- The resource family uses respectful communication, engages in difficult conversations, refrains from gossiping or complaining, does not use derogatory language in either written or verbal communication, and is honest, timely, and objective in said communication.
- The resource family observes, explores, and interprets nonverbal communication cues, including tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, and choice of words.

COMPETENCY: Advocates for individuals, families, and communities

DESCRIPTION: Promotes ideas, resources, and strategies to benefit individuals, families, and communities.

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS:

- The resource family advocates for services and resources from the agency (and follows up on those requests when needed) to enhance their own ability to provide for the children in their care.
- The resource family requests and encourages the agency, the court, and service providers to meet the needs of the children in their care.
- The resource family supports children and youth by modeling and teaching advocacy skills, as developmentally appropriate, to promote their well-being.
- The resource family navigates systems to advocate for rights of youth in accordance with applicable laws and policies.
- The resource family seeks opportunities that build social equity and permanency for children in their care.
- The resource family works to help maintain the children's relationships with primary family members and other supportive adults in their life.

KEY PRACTICE AREAS:

- Mental Health
- Behavioral Health
- Educational Needs
- Youth Transitioning Out of Care
- Placement (Transitions and Stability)
- Trauma
- Connections/Attachments/Relationships
- Maltreatment
- Care and Supervision
- Child/Adolescent Development
- Physical Health
- Permanency