

South Dakota
Department of Social Services
Child Protective Services Division

**Protective Capacity Assessment
Practicum Preparation**



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Practicum Overview

This practicum will provide CPS ongoing staff and supervisors with an opportunity for structured professional development. The practicum is a continuation of the PCA foundational training that staff and supervisors received in October and November of 2005. Given the importance of ongoing CPS social workers having the necessary competency to effectively complete a PCA, this practicum is intended to advance worker learning and proficiency in conducting PCA interviews with caregivers.

It should be clear that the most important aspect of the PCA process is the “conversations” and interactions that occur between the ongoing social worker and caregivers. The PCA is a formal intervention that occurs with and in collaboration with caregivers. Ongoing CPS social workers must possess the proper professional mentality and knowledge about the purpose and objectives of the PCA intervention stages (interviews) as well as the practice skill(s) necessary to effectively and efficiently engage caregivers in the case plan assessment process. The PCA is highly dependent on the capability of an ongoing social worker to guide caregivers through the various PCA intervention stages. The PCA practicum involves building an ongoing social worker’s confidence and ability to successfully execute and complete the PCA intervention stages with caregivers.

Practicum Structure and Schedule

The PCA practicum is a two-day professional development experience. The practicum will concentrate on two intervention stages of the PCA: *Introduction Stage and Discovery Stage*. The PCA practicum is designed to provide ongoing CPS social workers with a “real world” practice scenario for conducting simulated PCA interviews. Each participant in the practicum will be assigned an actual Initial Family Assessment from his or her agency that will be used as the basis for their simulated practice. Participants will complete two simulated interviews with an actor who is portraying a caregiver in their assigned IFA. The two simulated PCA interviews will occur over the two days of the practicum. The first day will involve staff completing interviews related to the Introduction Stage. The second day will involve interviews related to the Discovery Stage. In both the Introduction and Discovery stage simulations, the ongoing social worker will be using the same assigned IFA as the basis for the content of the interviews. Participants in the practicum will therefore be conducting interviews with the same caregiver (actor) on the first and second day.

A key component of this practicum is the individualized learning, consultation and feedback. Although “units” of ongoing social work staff will share and interact in the learning experience, this practicum is primarily designed for individual professional competency development. Participants will receive consultation, direction and feedback before, during (as needed) and following the completion of each of their simulated PCA interviews.

The practicum is highly structured to assure that staff and supervisors are able to conduct interviews, receive feedback and consultation, observe the interviews of their colleagues and provide peer consultation. The practicum is designed and ordered around the use of “practice teams.” Practice teams are comprised of three or four ongoing CPS social workers, a CPS unit supervisor and a facilitator from the PCA Advisory Group.

The schedule for the practicum is broken out into four 90 minute segments for both the first and second day. During each of the 90 minute segments, individual ongoing CPS staff will complete a PCA interview and receive feedback and consultation. To guarantee that there is adequate time for completing all simulated interviews and provide feedback to staff, the agenda for the two days of the practicum is as follows:

Practicum Agenda

Day 1: Complete Introduction Stage Interviews

Day 2: Complete Discovery Stage Interviews

8:00 - 8:30	Practice Team Set-Up
8:30 - 10:00	1st Interview and Debrief
10:00 - 10:30	Break
10:30 - 12:00	2nd Interview and Debrief
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 2:30	3rd Interview and Debrief
2:30 - 3:00	Break
3:00 - 4:30	4th Interview and Debrief Adjourned

Each of the 90 minute blocks of time will proceed along the following schedule:

Practicum Schedule Introduction Stage Interviews

<p>General preparation for conducting the interview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Warm-up ○ Review interview facilitative objectives for intervention stage ○ Consultation and clarification 	<p>10 minutes</p>
<p>Conduct Intervention Stage interview with caregiver</p>	<p>30 minutes</p>
<p>Interview Debrief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Observe interview ○ Provide feedback and consultation 	<p>50 minutes</p>
<p>Practice Group Break</p>	<p>30 minutes</p>

PCA Practicum Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations

Individual participation and commitment to the PCA practicum is key to this learning experience and fundamental to professional development at large. While it is difficult to absolutely replicate the experience of conducting interviews with actual clients, it is possible to create challenging practice situations that will enable staff to examine and develop their professional competencies related to intervention knowledge and skill. As previously mentioned, this practicum represents an attempt to assist staff in mastering the most essential aspect of the PCA: *the ability to conduct the intervention stage interviews.*

The success of the PCA practicum requires all participants to understand and take their role(s) seriously. To the extent that the various roles and responsibilities are clear, and individuals are prepared and demonstrate the

initiative for their own professional development, this practicum will provide an opportunity for practice that can then be applied to work with families in the field.

Interviewer

- Each ongoing CPS social worker conducting interviews will be assigned an actual IFA from his/her agency. Prior to beginning the practicum interviews, the interviewer should have completed all the preparation necessary for adequately conducting the Introduction and Discovery stage interviews. Preparation for the practicum includes (at a minimum) thoroughly reviewing the assigned IFA, safety assessment and safety plan (if applicable). If there is information in either the IFA, safety assessment and analysis or the safety plan that is unclear, it may be necessary for the interviewer to consult with his/her supervisor and/or the previous IFA worker.
- The interviewer must also thoroughly review the PCA Model Summary and PCA Instructional Guidelines, with specific attention paid to the content related to the Introduction and Discovery Intervention Stages. Participants should plan on having both PCA documents available throughout the practicum.
- The interviewer is responsible for conducting two 30 minute interviews. It is important to emphasize that during the interviews the ongoing social worker should feel at liberty to stop the simulation, ask questions and points of clarification from the facilitator, get some immediate consultation or simply decide to start over on “a line of questioning or discussion.” This is NOT a skills test in the sense that there is an expectation that the interviews are flawless! Rarely is there ever such a thing as a flawless interview. This is all about individual practice and fine tuning intervention skills. Making sure that an individual’s professional development needs are being met is what is most important about the practicum.

Interviewee (actor)

- The role of the actor is absolutely crucial to this learning experience. The potential benefit of the practicum relies on the extent to which an actor is believable in the caregiver role. As a practice simulation, the actor has the primary responsibility for portraying a caregiver in such a way that the interview experience seems real. This responsibility can be challenging, but the challenge of it can also be what makes it fun.

- The person who is playing the caregiver must adequately prepare his/her self by studying up on the caregiver role or “character” he or she is playing. The actor should consider how best to portray a caregiver with respect to behavior, communication styles, mannerism and non-verbal cues, emotional dispositions and points of view. To the extent possible, the actor should attempt to “adopt” the persona of the caregiver described in a particular assigned IFA.

Supervisor and Practice Team

- A hallmark of this practicum is the opportunity for individual practitioners to learn from their peers and colleagues. The supervisor and the ongoing CPS social workers assigned to a particular practice team have the essential role of assisting one another in developing professional competencies related to the PCA. This occurs by being prepared to carefully observe interview simulations and offering specific technical feedback. It is important that each interviewer is afforded the chance to receive organized and focused feedback regarding his or her approach to conducting the PCA interviews.
- The supervisor is responsible for stimulating critical thinking among individuals in the practice team. The critical thinking among individuals in the practice team should result in the ability to provide interviewers with useful and practical observations and feedback.
- The observer does not have a passive role in the practicum. Individuals who are not immediately involved in conducting a PCA interview are responsible for observing their colleague’s interview in order to be prepared to provide feedback and peer consultation. The supervisor and peer consultants in the practice teams will be provided with a structured framework for what to look for when observing interviews.

Facilitator

- Facilitators will include individuals from the PCA Advisory Group. There will be one facilitator assigned to each of the practice teams. The role of facilitator is three fold: 1) providing guidance in completing the practicum, 2) facilitating critical thinking and discussion, and 3) providing consultation.
- The facilitator is responsible for working closely with the interviewers. The facilitator will assist in preparing interviewers to begin the PCA simulations. The facilitator will be available to the interviewer during the simulation in order to provide prompt direction and consultation.

- During the interview debrief, the facilitator is responsible for facilitating the discussion and prompting observations and feedback from the practice team. The facilitator should also be prepared to provide his or her observations as indicated and appropriate.

Practice Team PCA Interview Observation Guide

An ongoing CPS social worker’s approach to conducting the PCA interviews will be considered from two perspectives: 1) the achievement of the facilitative objectives for the PCA intervention stages and 2) intervention style and techniques that support the key PCA concepts of self-determination, empowerment, mutuality, motivational readiness.

PCA Introduction Stage: *Analyzing the Achievement of the Facilitative Objectives*

1. Note attempts to engage the caregiver in the PCA process.

- What are some specific examples of what seemed to work well?
- Were there any missed opportunities for attempting to build a “partnership” with the caregiver? Observations? Comments?
- Were caregivers allowed opportunities to express his/her point of view or vent how he or she is feeling about CPS intervention? Observations? Comments?

2. Note how the interviewer introduced his/her role as an ongoing CPS social worker.

- How did the interviewer describe how his/her role fits with the IFA worker and how it is different? Observations? Comments?

3. Note the approach taken to introduce the reason for CPS involvement.

- Was it clear from the interview that the child(ren) being unsafe was the reason for CPS involvement? Observations? Comments?

- What seemed to work well with respect to how the safety influences were discussed with the caregiver? Observations? Comments?
- Are there things that you as the observer would have done differently or suggestions that you could make about how to approach the discussion related to safety influences?

4. Note how the interviewer considered issues associated with safety management (if applicable, implemented in-home safety plan).

- Is it clear to both the interviewer and caregiver how the safety plan is intended to work?
- Were the expectations for the safety plan discussed?
- Did the interviewer assess the caregiver's current perspective regarding the use of an in-home safety plan?

5. Note how the interviewer described the PCA process.

- To what extent was the PCA process described in ways or terms that the caregiver can understand? Observations? Comments?
- Was the purpose for completing the PCA clearly communicated?
- How were the PCA stages of intervention (process) described and discussed? Observations? Comments?

6. Note how the interviewer reinforced caregiver self-determination.

- How was caregiver resistance addressed?

- Were specific attempts made to empower the caregiver and reinforce the right of self-determination? What worked well? Were there additional opportunities to reinforce caregiver self-determination?
- Were there indications that caregiver choice, personal involvement/ investment and collaboration in the PCA process were important? Observations? Comments?

PCA Discovery Stage:
Analyzing the Achievement of the Facilitative Objectives

1. Note continued attempts to engage the caregiver in the PCA process.

- What are some specific examples of what seemed to work well?
- Were there any missed opportunities for attempting to build a “partnership” with the caregiver? Observations? Comments?

2. Note how the interviewer reinforced caregiver self-determination.

- How was caregiver resistance addressed?
- Were specific attempts made to empower the caregiver and reinforce the right of self-determination? What worked well? Were there additional opportunities to reinforce caregiver self-determination?
- In what ways did the interviewer reinforce caregiver choice with respect to whether there was a need to make changes? Observations? Comments?
- Does the interviewer reinforce the caregiver’s right to his/her opinion?

3. Note how caregiver enhanced protective capacities (strengths) were discussed.

- Did discussion(s) relate to specific areas of effectiveness in the caregiver role?
- Were there opportunities to relate enhanced protective capacities with safety influences, what must change or how change might be supported?

4. Note the approach to relate safety influences to diminished caregiver protective capacities.

- What attempts were made to seek mutuality with the caregiver? What worked well? Were there other opportunities for gaining mutuality?
- In what ways did the interviewer help raise self-awareness regarding the relationship between safety influences and diminished caregiver protective capacities? What worked well? Observations? Comments?
- Are there approaches that could have been done differently or suggestions that you could make about how to approach the discussion related to safety influences and caregiver protective capacities?

5. Note how the interviewer seeks to consider a caregiver's willingness to address what must change.

- Does the interviewer clearly summarize where things stand in the PCA specifically with respect to what has been discussed, what

needs to be addressed, perceived areas of agreement and disagreement and caregiver motivational readiness?

- How did the interviewer address areas of disagreement? Observations? Comments?
- Was the purpose for completing the PCA clearly communicated?

- How were the PCA stages of intervention (process) described and discussed? Observations? Comments?

PCA Interview Debrief and Consultation

The process for debriefing the simulated interviews should be consistent and organized around the critical analysis questions. A suggested structure for facilitating debriefs is as follows:

1. General Discussion

- Begin debrief by asking the interviewer to share his/her impressions regarding how the interview went. What seemed easy? What was more challenging?

- What was the “caregiver’s” general perspective, feelings, and/or reactions to the interview?

- Elicit the practice team’s general feedback—avoid getting into too many specific comments at this point.

2. Review Video Demonstration

- The observations and feedback that the practice team has related to the analysis questions can be referenced at various points during the review of the tape.

- Depending on what the facilitator and the interviewer feel is the best way to proceed, the video demonstration may be watched in its entirety with specific observations and comments to follow (based on the review analysis questions), or it may be preferential to stop the tape periodically in order to provide specific consultation or emphasize a particular approach that either worked well or may have been done differently.

3. Debrief Conclusion

- After having watched the video demonstration, have the interviewer share his or her perspective regarding specifically what he or she felt they did well and what they would have preferred to have done differently.
- Consider how the interviewer's perspective matches up with the observations of the practice team. Ask individuals in the practice team to share any additional comments that have not been discussed up to this point in the debriefing.