

Structured Decision Making and Risk Assessment: Assessing Neglect

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Why is this important?

- Child neglect is the most common form of child maltreatment reported to public child protective services agencies.
- Even though its consequences are equally, if not more damaging, we know less about the assessment and treatment of neglect than about other forms of child maltreatment.

AGENDA

- What is neglect?
- What contributes to it?
- What principles should drive our response?
- How should we assess families?
- What outcomes drive our help?
- What strategies are most helpful?
- How can we measure achievement of outcomes?

Standard Definition of Neglect

- Omission in care
- By parent or caregiver
- Causing significant harm
- Or, *risk* of significant harm
- Excluding situations due to poverty

Why do we want to define child neglect?

To protect children
& improve their well-being

NOT

to blame parents

Child neglect: Proposed definition

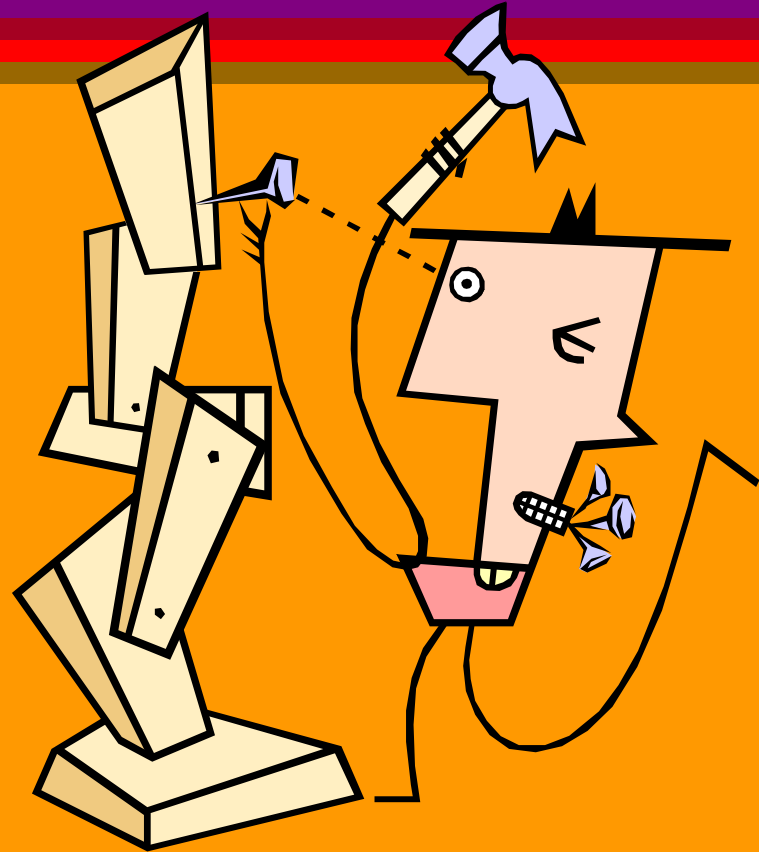
- **Child neglect** occurs when a child's basic needs are not adequately met.
- **Basic needs** are: adequate food, clothing, health care, supervision, protection, education, nurturance, and a home.

Principles for Working with Families to Reduce Risk

- Ecological developmental framework
- Community outreach
- Family assessment & tailored intervention
- Helping alliance with family
- Empowerment/strengths based
- Cultural competence
- Outcome-driven service plans

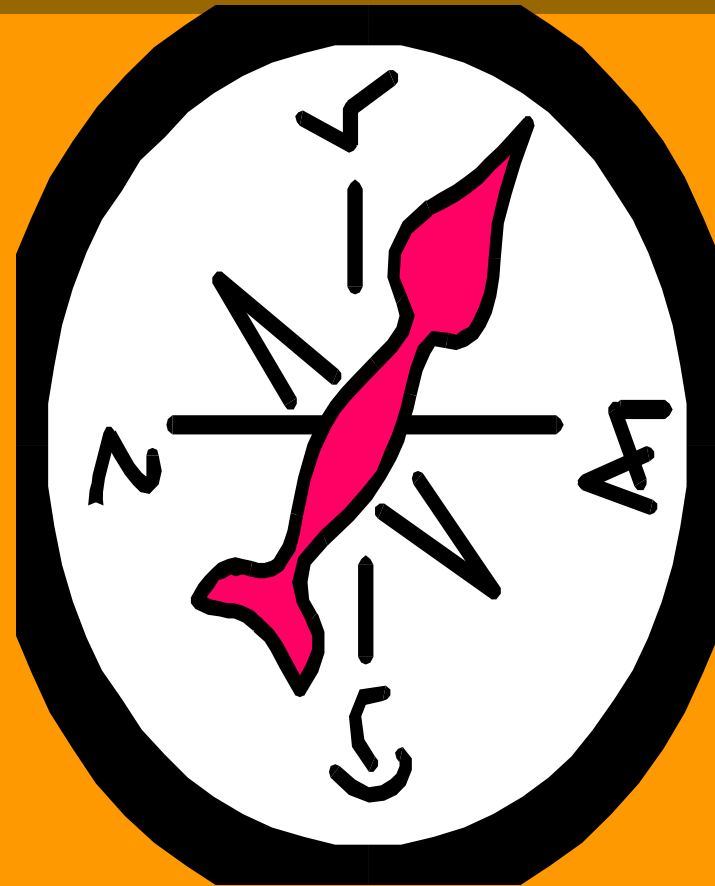
Why is a helping alliance important?

- Not developing a partnership with a family can lead to defining disjointed outcomes and interventions.



And then what happens?

- Clients can be lead in the wrong direction.



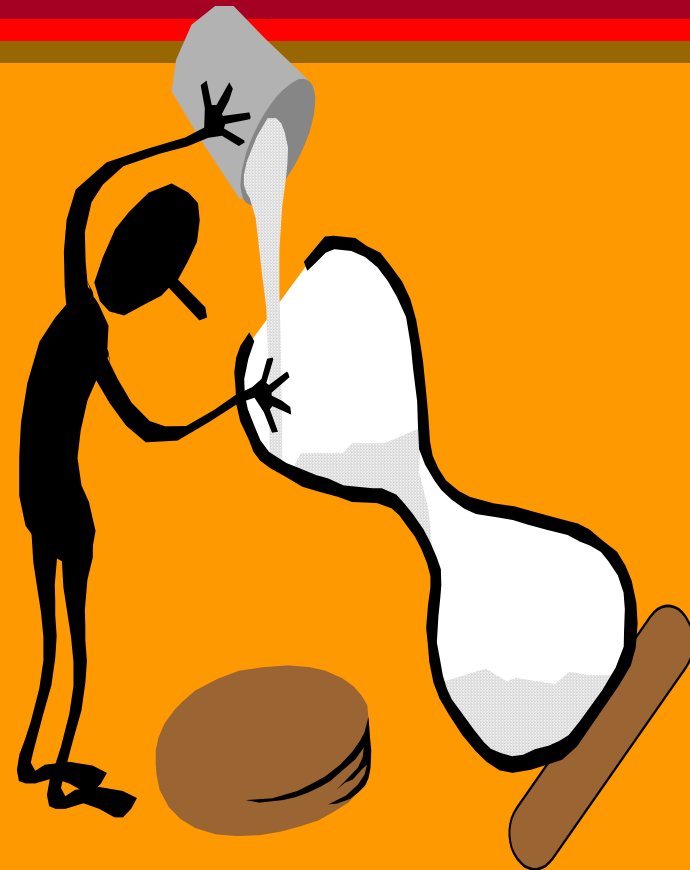
What does this mean?

- All service plans tend to look the same.



What are the consequences?

- Precious time is lost toward achieving the right outcomes and reducing risk.



How do clients feel?

- Clients are very confused and may appear “resistant” to intervention.



How does this affect children?

- Children may be extremely vulnerable and unsafe.



Effective Helping*

- is the "act of enabling individuals or groups (e.g., a family) to become better able to solve problems, meet needs, or achieve aspirations by promoting the acquisition of competencies that support and strengthen functioning in a way that permits a greater sense of individual or group control over its developmental course".

*Dunst & Trivette, 1994, p. 162.

Help is empowering if the help-giver:

- Is both positive and proactive.
- Offers, rather than waits for help to be requested.
- Engages in help-giving acts in which locus of decision making clearly rests with the help-seeker, including decisions about the need or goal, the options for carrying out the intentions, and whether or not to accept or reject help that is offered.

*Dunst & Trivette, 1994, p. 167.

.. empowering if help giver:

- Offers aid and assistance that is normative in terms of the help-seeker's own culture.
- Offers aid and assistance that is congruent with the help-seeker's appraisal of his or her problem or need.
- Offers aid and assistance in which the costs of seeking and acceptance of help do not outweigh the benefits.

*Dunst & Trivette, 1994, p. 168.

.. empowering if help giver:

- Offers help that can be reciprocated and sanctions the possibility of “repaying” the help-giver.
- Bolsters the self-esteem of the recipient, and helps the individual experience immediate success in solving a problem or meeting a need.
- Promotes the help-seeker’s use of natural support networks and neither replaces nor supplants them with professional services.

*Dunst & Trivette, 1994, p. 168.

.. empowering if help-giver:

- Conveys a sense of cooperation and joint responsibility (partnership) for meeting needs and solving problems.
- Promotes the acquisition of effective behavior that decreases the need for help, thus making the person more capable and competent.
- Helps the recipient to view self as an active, responsible agent who played a significant role in solving problems, meeting needs, and improving his or her own life.

*Dunst & Trivette, 1994, p. 168.

Important Assumptions

- Helping is strongly influenced by cultural biases.
- Helping relationships are multicultural since our identity is complicated by differences in socio-economic status, age, ethnicity, gender, life-style, etc. of the helper or client.
- The culturally competent helper will mediate effectively between different cultural perspectives and communicate meaning effectively.

Family Assessment

- A time when we join with the family to understand their strengths and needs.
- This process helps us arrive at specific intervention outcomes and service plans that will empower families to strengthen their capacity to meet the basic needs of their children.

Family Assessment Outline

- Demographics
- Family's view of needs & problems
- Risks & strengths - children
- Risks & strengths - caregiver(s)
- Risks & strengths - family
- Risks & strengths - community

Self report measures

- Family Functioning Style Scale
 - Measures 3 aspects of family functioning style: family identity, information sharing, and coping resource mobilization.
 - The 12 qualities of strong families comprising the content of these categories are based on an extensive review and integration of the family strengths literature.

Self report measures

- Family Needs Scale
 - identifies the family's view of their needs or problems.
- Family Resource Scale
 - measures the adequacy of different resources in households with children.

Self report measures

- Support Functions Scale
 - Identifies the degree to which families have people in their lives to meet five social support functions: (1) emotional support; (2) child support items (e.g., cares for child regularly or in emergencies); (3) financial support; (4) instrumental support (e.g., someone to fix things around the house); and (5) agency support (e.g., obtains services for child).

Self report measures

- Family Support Scale
 - Measures the helpfulness of sources of support to families with children.
- Personal Network Matrix
 - Determines the types of help and assistance that are provided to a respondent by different individuals and agencies that make up a person's personal social network.

Observational Measures

- Child Well Being Scales
 - specific sub-scales
- Family Risk Scales
 - specific sub-scales

Intervention Outcomes

- Family Maintenance and Safety
- Family Member Functioning
- Family Functioning
- Problem Solving
- Social Support
- Care of Children

Family Maintenance and Safety

- The family demonstrates the ability to meet the basic needs of the family for food, clothing, housing, and health care.

Family Member Functioning- Caregiver

- The caregiver demonstrates abilities to achieve self sufficiency, cope with daily stresses, manage emotions, and control impulses.

Family Member Functioning-Children

- The children demonstrate developmental appropriateness in all areas of functioning.

Family Functioning

- The family demonstrates strength in multiple areas such as family-identity, information sharing, coping and resources and uses non-violent methods to resolve family conflict.

Problem Solving

- Family members demonstrate abilities and motivation to accurately identify and solve problems.

Social Support

- The family has access to and effectively uses extended family, friends, and other systems to meet social support functions, i.e., emotional, child related, financial, instrumental, and formal.

Care of Children

- Caregivers demonstrate appropriate attitudes and skill to meet the unique needs of their children.

Treatment Planning - Principles:

- Maximum involvement of family members in development
- Short term, measurable, achievable goals (linked to outcomes) with positive feedback
- Selection of interventions that help families achieve outcomes

Selecting Interventions

- Concrete resources
- Social support
- Developmental focus
- Cognitive/behavioral
- Individual focus
- Family system focus

Concrete Resources

- Housing assistance
- Emergency financial, food, clothing, household items, etc..
- Hands on assistance to increase safety and sanitation of home
- Transportation
- Quality child and health care

Social Support

- Individual (parent aide, volunteer)
- Social support groups
- Social networking
- Recreation programs
- Mentoring programs
- Cultural festivals/activities
- Connections to religious groups

Developmental

- Therapeutic day care
- Individual assistance with role achievement, e.g., parenting
- Home visiting, public health nurse
- Peer groups geared to developmental tasks
- Mentors for nurturing, recreation

Cognitive/Behavioral

- Social skills training
- Communication skill building
- Home management, meal preparation, parent-child interaction training
- Teaching new thought processes regarding childhood history
- Financial management counseling, problem solving training

Individual focus

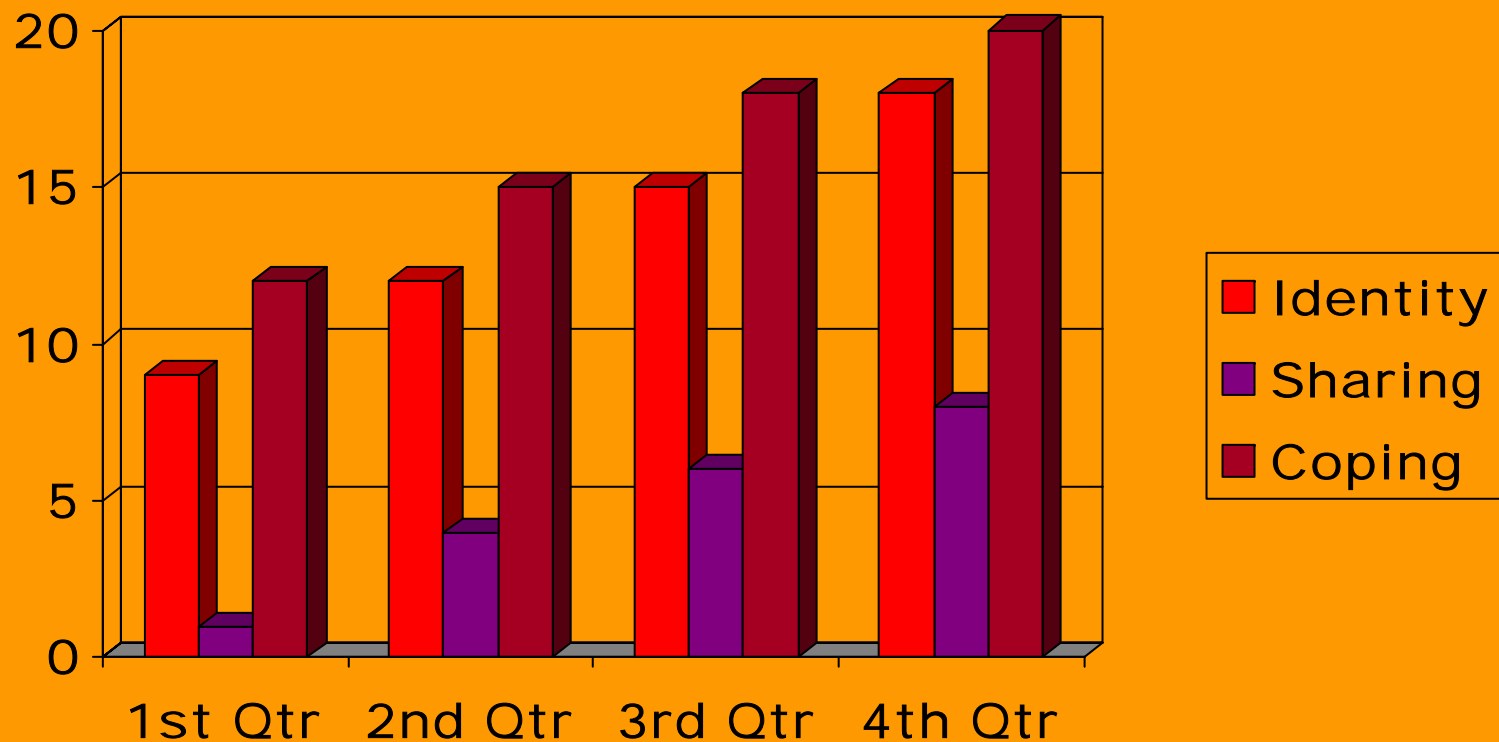
- AOD in-patient and out-patient counseling
- 12 Step programs
- Mental health counseling
- Crisis intervention
- Stress management
- Play therapy

Family System

- Home based family centered counseling regarding family functioning, communication skills, home management, roles & responsibilities
- Center based family therapy
- Nurturing family camps
- Modeling positive caregiving behaviors

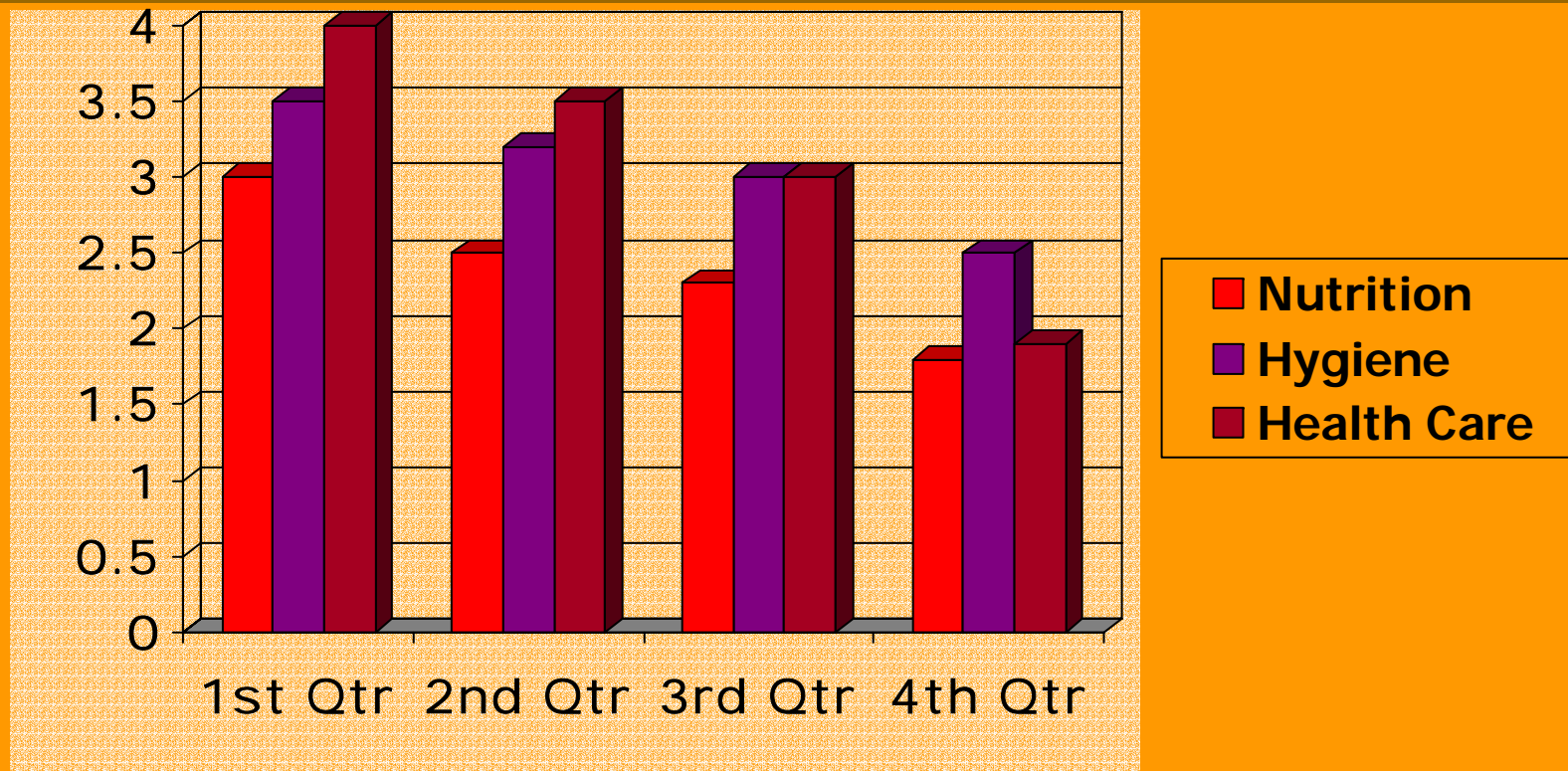
Achievement of Outcomes

Family Functioning



Achievement of Outcomes

Family Maintenance & Safety



Evaluation and Closure

- Risk reduction
- Increased evidence of strengths
- Achievement of outcomes



APSSAC

American Professional
Society on the Abuse of
Children

APPSAC MISSION

The Mission of APPSAC is to ensure that everyone affected by child abuse and neglect receives the best possible professional response.

APSSAC FACTS

APSSAC is the nation's only interdisciplinary professional society for those working in the field of child abuse and neglect.

- Incorporated in 1987
- Now over 5,000 Members
- Chapters in most states
- Members in all 50 states and in many U.S. territories and other countries.

APSSAC committed to:

- Providing interdisciplinary professional education.
- Promoting research and guidelines to inform professional practice
- Educating the public about child abuse and neglect
- Ensuring that America's public policy regarding child maltreatment is well-informed and constructive.

APSAC

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- Participation in
Chapters, task forces,
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- Expert guidance on
educating
legislators and the
media about child
abuse
- The support of a
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