**Foundational Element:**

**Critical Thinking in Child Protective Services**

Welcome to “Critical Thinking in Child Protective Services” foundational element. In this element we examine the critical thinking process, apply the critical thinking process to objectively make decisions and formulate recommendations, discuss how to engage with the family in the decision-making process, and practice documenting gathered information.

These workbook pages will support your learning through this element and aid your supervisor and/or coach in understanding the purpose of the element (see the Element Learning Objectives below), its sections (see Element Sections below), and how they can support you in your learning.

Beginning on page 2, you will find space to capture your responses to activities within the online modules – some of your responses will be brought to Community Huddles, while others will be shared with your supervisor, coach, or colleague for on-the-job application activities.

**Element Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this element, child welfare professionals will be able to:

* Understand a step-by-step model for critical thinking and its important role in Child Welfare work.
* Recognize the building blocks of supporting confident child welfare decisions and be able to distinguish items related to safety, permanence, and well-being.
* Apply critical thinking skills to an evolving case study.

**Element Sections**

This element contains the following sections:

* Packet 1: Introductory Concepts of Critical Thinking – online content (25 minutes)
* Packet 2: Overview of the Critical Thinking Model – online content (85 minutes)
* Packet 3: Relevant and Sufficient Information Related to Safety, Permanence, and Well-being – online content (40 minutes)
* Prework for Community Huddle 1: Application of the Critical Thinking Model – online content (75 minutes)
* Community Huddle 1 – virtual session via Zoom (120 minutes)

**Packet 1: Introductory Concepts of Critical Thinking**

In the Introductory Concepts of Critical Thinking packet, you will be introduced critical thinking and the five basic steps of the critical thinking process. You are asked to (1) apply the basic critical thinking 5-step process to an everyday task within the online packet, (2) create a step-by-step process for referring services to a family that will best fit their needs and record it in the workbook, and (3) assess how you did in comparison to a sample response. Use the sections starting below to record your activities as you complete the online packet.

**Service Referral Step-by-Step Process**

**Scenario**: Make a service referral for a family who is new to the area and in need of part-time daycare for their toddler. The family’s preferences for the daycare are that it is bilingual, on the bus line, and available as soon as possible.

Using the basic steps of the critical thinking process, record below the step-by-step process you created for referring services to a family that will best fit their needs.

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|  | **What steps will you take to determine which service referral is the best fit for the family’s needs?**Step 1:Step 2:Step 3:Step 4:Step 5:Step 6:Step 7:Step 8:Step 9:Step 10: |
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**Packet 2: Overview of the Critical Thinking Model**

In the Overview of the Critical Thinking Model packet, you will review each step of the critical thinking model in detail and explore the ways in which you use critical thinking throughout the case process via application to a case scenario.

Take a moment to remind yourself of the Five Steps of Critical Thinking: Gather Information, Assess Information, Analyze Information, Make a Decision and Plan or Act on that Decision.

You are asked to (1) review a Services Report and answer questions that help you focus and plan your assessment in working with the family, (2) review a Case Note and assess if the information is both relevant and sufficient, (3) create a hypothesis that is supported by the information you have and discuss it with your supervisor or coach, (4) develop an overall recommendation and support it with relevant and sufficient information, and (5) list actions you would need to take to facilitate the plan of action.

Use the sections starting below to record your activities as you complete the online packet.

**Critical Thinking Model Application**

* 1. **Review a Services Report and answer questions that help you focus and plan your assessment in working with the family.**
* Review the Thornfield Family Services Report handout.

The online packet refers you to your workbook to find the Thornfield Family Services Report handout. You will find this handout posted as a separate handout on the WCWPDS website in the same area that you downloaded these workbook pages. The handout is entitled: “Foundational Element Workbook - Critical Thinking in Child Protective Services - Appendix A”.

* Record your answers to the questions below.

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|  | * + 1. What is the concern? What is my purpose?
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|  | * + 1. What do I have to start with?
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|  | * + 1. What questions need to be answered?
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|  | * + 1. What might the family need?
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|  | * + 1. Why do we gather information?
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|  | * + 1. Who do we gather information from?
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|  | * + 1. What type of information do we need to gather?
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|  | * + 1. When do we gather information?
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|  | * + 1. Where do we gather information?
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* 1. **Review a Case Note and assess if the information is both relevant and sufficient.**
* Review the Thornfield Family Additional Case Note handout.

The online packet refers you to your workbook to find the Thornfield Family Additional Case Note handout. You will find this handout posted as a separate handout on the WCWPDS website in the same area that you downloaded these workbook pages. The handout is entitled: “Foundational Element Workbook - Critical Thinking in Child Protective Services - Appendix B”.

* Consider and record your response in the box on the next page: Is the information you have received thus far both relevant and sufficient enough to create a hypothesis on Bobby’s safety, permanence, and well-being? If yes, explain why. If not, list what other information you would need to complete your assessment.

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* 1. **Analyze the Available Information.**
* Take the information you now know about Bobby’s family situation and create one hypothesis that is supported with some of the information that has been presented thus far. Record your hypothesis and supporting information in the box below.

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* Discuss your preferred recommendations, hypothesis, and supporting information with your supervisor or coach. Based on the feedback received, you may need to alter your recommendation or create an entirely new recommendation. Capture in the boxes below the feedback from your supervisor or coach and, if changes were warranted to your recommendation, the changes you made to your recommendation.

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|  | Feedback from your supervisor or coach. |
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|  | Changes you made to your recommendation, if necessary. |
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* 1. **Develop an overall recommendation and support it with relevant and sufficient information.**

Assume that you do have sufficient information to make an overall recommendation about Bobby’s family’s situation. Decide your proposed course of action and record your responses to the questions in the online packet below for discussion at your next Community Huddle.

* State your recommendation.

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* Support your recommendation with relevant and sufficient information.

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* Describe how you engaged with the family in your decision-making process.

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In the online packet, you will review some examples of possible responses. In the space below, capture your reaction to the examples provided as compared to your recommendation. Bring to your next Community Huddle.

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* 1. **List actions you would need to take to facilitate the plan of action.**

List at least 3 actions you would need to take to facilitate the plan of action for Bobby. Record your responses below and bring them to your next Community Huddle.

* Action #1.

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* Action #2.

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* Action #3.

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**Please bring all of your work from this packet to your next Community Huddle where you will use it in an activity.**

Space for any additional notes or questions that you’d like to capture for discussion with your agency supervisor or coach.

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**Packet 3: Relevant and Sufficient Information Related to Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

In the Relevant and Sufficient Information Related to Safety, Permanence, and Well-being packet, you will review what is meant by relevant and sufficient information in child welfare and explore the questions to ask yourself to assure that you are gathering and considering relevant and sufficient information about the family around safety, permanence, and well-being. You are asked to complete an Application Activity and record your answers in your workbook. Use the sections starting below to record your activities as you complete the online packet.

**Application Activity**

To practice documenting your supporting information in an objective way, rewrite each of the following statements to be sufficient, factual, and unbiased. You can add details to demonstrate the observations being made. Record your rewritten statements below.

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|  | **Statement #1: The house is filthy.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #2: The child appears to be developmentally on track.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #3: Mom doesn’t discipline her children.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #4: Dad does not want to parent his children.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #5: Mom doesn’t want to get out of bed in the morning.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #6: The parents drink and party every night.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #7: The relative reports there is family drama.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #8: Chou is unhappy.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #9: The parent is depressed.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #10: The parent is minimally involved.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #11: The family has supports.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #12: There is no food in the home.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #13: The parent uses physical discipline.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #14: Parents leave the children home alone.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #15: The parents never buy Christmas gifts or birthday presents for their children.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #16: The child is provocative.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #17: The parent is protective.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #18: The family has a history of domestic violence.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement #19: The parent is aligned with the child.**Rewritten statement: |
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|  | **Statement#20: The neighborhood is known for drugs and criminal activity.**Rewritten statement: |
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**Application Activity Summary**

Review the Critical Thinking Relevant/Sufficient Statement Activity Summary slide in your online packet and compare your written responses above with those in the online packet. Note places in your rewritten statements where you could make them more objective (sufficient, factual, and unbiased).

**Prework for Community Huddle 1**

In your prework for Community Huddle 1, you consider additional information about the Chen, Chavez, and Thornfield families prior to completing an application activity and hear more from the Point of View panelists about how critical thinking is used in the child welfare system and throughout daily practice.

You are asked to (1) review previous information about the Chen, Chavez, and Thornfield families (found in the Areas of Assessment in Child Protective Services foundational element and earlier in this element), (2) review additional Case Notes for each family, (3) apply critical thinking skills by answering a series of questions related to relevant and sufficient information in your workbook, and (4) watch videos from child welfare professionals in the field as they discuss the use of their critical thinking skills in their daily practice before completing an activity in your workbook. Use the sections starting below to record your activities as you complete the online packet.

**Critical Thinking Skills Application Activity**

1. **Review previous information about the Chen, Chavez, and Thornfield families.**

The online packet asks you to review the previous information you learned about the Chen, Chavez, and Thornfield families. You will find the previous information within the Areas of Assessment in Child Protective Services foundational element and earlier in this element.

* Chen Family: narrated information within packets 1 and 2 in the Areas of Assessment in Child Protective Services foundational element.
* Chavez Family: written information (Chavez Family Access Report and Chavez Family Initial Assessment Report) found within the “Foundational Element Workbook - Areas of Assessment in Child Protective Services - Appendix A” and “Foundational Element Workbook - Areas of Assessment in Child Protective Services - Appendix B” handouts.
* Thornfield Family: written information (Thornfield Family Services Report and Thornfield Family Additional Case Note) found within the “Foundational Element Workbook - Critical Thinking in Child Protective Services - Appendix A” and “Foundational Element Workbook - Critical Thinking in Child Protective Services - Appendix B” handouts.
1. **Review additional Case Notes for each family.**

The online packet refers you to your workbook to find the Chen, Chavez, and Thornfield Family Case Notes handout. You will find this handout posted as a separate handout on the WCWPDS website in the same area that you downloaded these workbook pages. The handout is entitled: “Foundational Element Workbook - Critical Thinking in Child Protective Services - Appendix C”.

1. **Apply critical thinking skills by answering a series of questions related to relevant and sufficient information in your workbook.**

After reviewing the reports and other information in the packets, answer the series of questions for each family related to sufficiency, relevancy, and application of critical thinking. **Record your responses below and bring them to your next Community Huddle.**

* Chen Family

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|  | * + 1. **Is the information provided in the notes relevant to child safety? Was information included in the reports that wasn’t relevant and sufficient? What else would you want to know? How would you get that information?**
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|  | * + 1. **Does the plan promote permanency in the approach taken? What else would you include in that plan?**
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|  | * + 1. **How does the plan promote the well-being of children and families? Be specific in your observations. What was included?**
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* Chavez Family

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|  | 1. **Is the information provided in the notes relevant to child safety? Was information included in the reports that wasn’t relevant and sufficient? What else would you want to know? How would you get that information?**
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|  | 1. **Does the plan promote permanency in the approach taken? What else would you include in that plan?**
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|  | 1. **How does the plan promote the well-being of children and families? Be specific in your observations. What was included?**
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* Thornfield Family

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| --- | --- |
|  | 1. **Is the information provided in the notes relevant to child safety? Was information included in the reports that wasn’t relevant and sufficient? What else would you want to know? How would you get that information?**
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|  | 1. **Does the plan promote permanency in the approach taken? What else would you include in that plan?**
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|  | 1. **How does the plan promote the well-being of children and families? Be specific in your observations. What was included?**
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1. **Watch videos from child welfare professionals.**

Watch the POV Panel videos in the online packet to hear from child welfare professionals in the field as they discuss how critical thinking is used in the child welfare system and throughout daily practice with families.

1. **Complete the POV Panel Video Activity.**

Record below three statements that were shared in the POV Panel Videos that both give you hope and cause you worry about using critical thinking in your practice as a child welfare professional.

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|  | Statement #1:Statement #2: |
|  | Statement #3: |

Space for any additional notes or questions that you’d like to capture for discussion with your agency supervisor or coach.

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**Community Huddle 1**

In the workbook introduction, you learned that the Foundational Elements include Community Huddles as a way to discuss learning and build connections and community with your cohort colleagues.

Community Huddles are held virtually via Zoom. You will find the date, time, and Zoom link for this Community Huddle within the *Welcome to the WiLearn Program* enrollment email that you received from WCWPDS.

Please see that email for details about logging in to the Community Huddle and contact information should you have any questions about the Community Huddle.

During this Community Huddle, we will:

* Review the key learning points from the packets and prework
* Examine the importance of relevancy, sufficiency, and critical thinking in child welfare practice
* Create final reflections and commitments

In this Community Huddle, we spend time:

* examining, through a small group activity, the importance of critical thinking in child welfare practice.
* exploring the perspectives that each learner brought to the decision-making process in the Critical Thinking Skills Prework Activity.
* discussing the importance of collaboration when making decisions.

Use the space below to jot down any personal take-aways from this Community Huddle.

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**Action Plan**

**Critical Thinking in Child Protective Services**

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| Please list three important concepts, ideas, or skills which you plan to take from the training and implement in your work. |
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| 3. |  |
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| Identify a plan to implement these concepts upon return to your agency. |
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| Identify resources that will help you to implement this plan. |
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| Identify any barriers to the implementation of this plan. |
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***Please share and discuss your Action Plan with your supervisor and/or coach.***