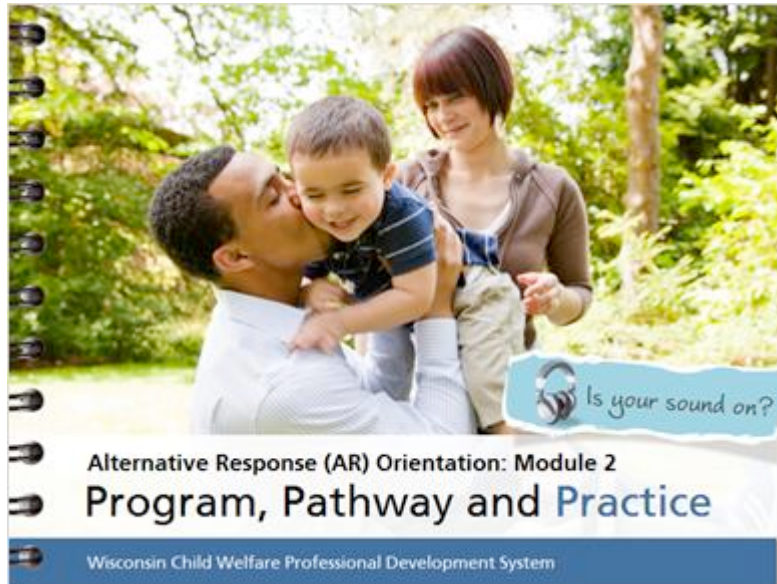


Module 2: Practice

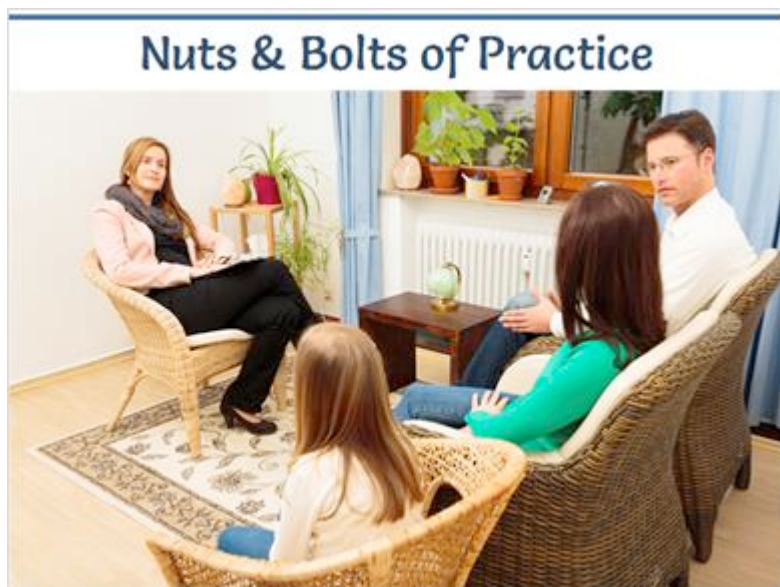
1.1 Introduction



Narration:

Welcome to Part 2 of the Alternative Response Orientation. You've explored Program and Pathway in Part 1. This presentation focuses on the last P; Practice.

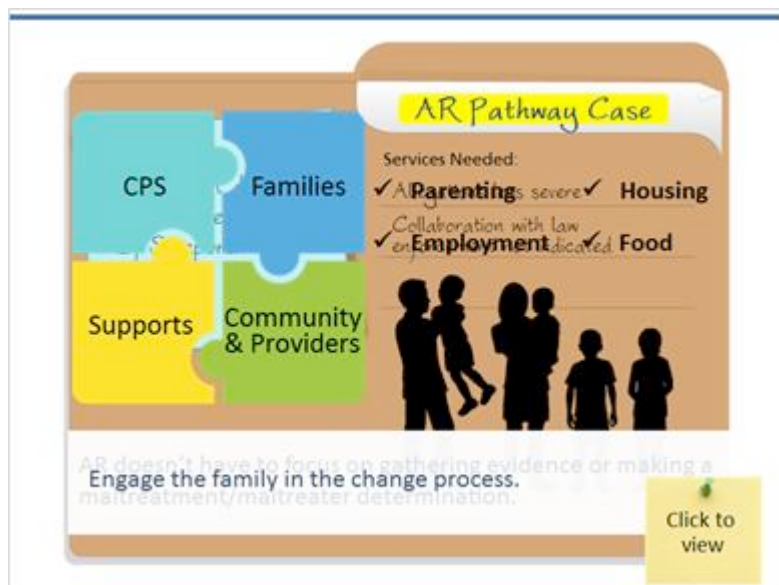
1.2 Nuts & Bolts of Practice



Narration:

Let's talk about the nuts and bolts of practice. We'll relate it to a case example with a Wisconsin family, so you can better see how AR comes together in your daily work.

1.3 AR Practice



Narration:

We've all handled reports of child abuse and neglect where the allegations are less severe and collaboration with law enforcement is not indicated. These are cases where there are no present danger threats identified in the CPS Report. Such cases are likely eligible for assignment to the Alternative Response pathway.

AR practice assumes that when a case is screened in for initial assessment, it doesn't always have to be approached in a way that focuses on gathering evidence or making a maltreatment/maltreater determination. Some families simply need assistance with identifying, accessing, and engaging services to eliminate the safety threat, or reduce the risk of harm.

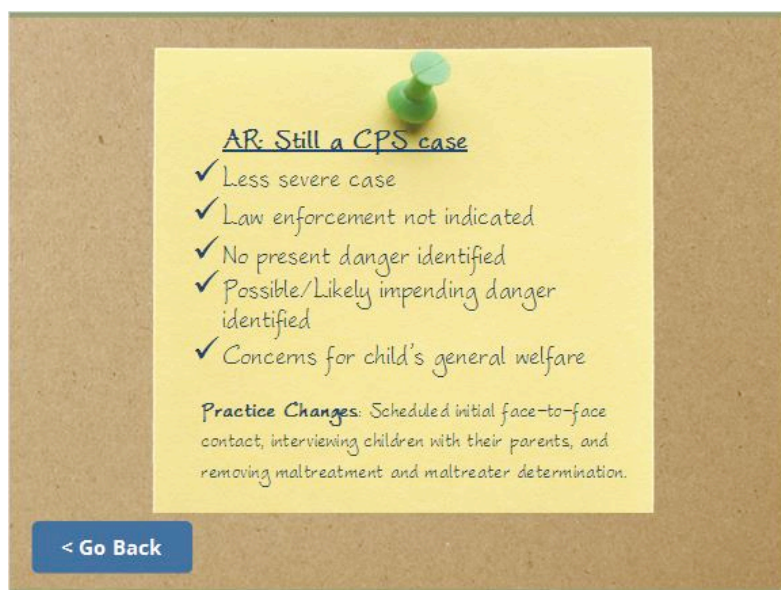
When we focus on assessing safety and partnering with the family to determine what services might be needed, we focus on engaging them in the change process. This includes partnering with families, their supports, community stakeholders and providers for coordination and collaboration. Services are provided to target the specific service needs early on. That way we can begin to focus on solutions and strategies.

Let's look back at Jill's note to remind ourselves when AR assignment would be appropriate.

As you review the note, remember that AR practice changes include scheduled initial face-to-face contact, interviewing children with their parents, and removing maltreatment and maltreater determination. If a CPS case worker learns the family conditions have changed and an investigation is now necessary to ensure the child's safety, a case can always be transferred from AR to TR.

When you're ready, advance to the next slide.

Jill's notes (Slide Layer)



1.4 Worksheet



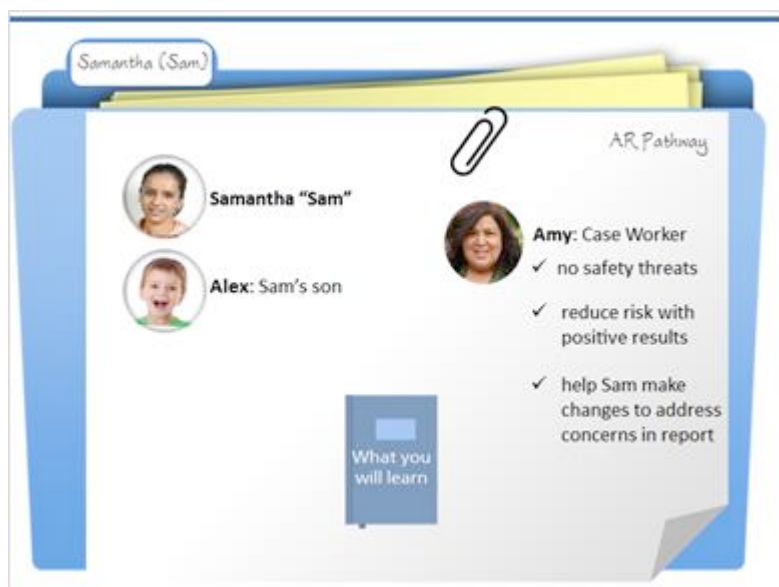
Narration:

Let's look at a true story from Wisconsin to give you an example of how Alternative Response is practiced.

As you listen to the story, you will use a worksheet to track your ideas and questions. It will be important for you to bring those ideas and questions to your agency "kick-off meeting" as well as your practice training. This worksheet is designed specifically for CPS workers however community members may find it helpful to record their own ideas and questions for the community meeting.

Click on the worksheet icon to download and print the document. And then advance to the next slide when you're ready.

1.5 Story of Sam



Narration:

This is the story of Samantha, or Sam, whose case was assigned to the Alternative Response pathway. Amy, the Initial Assessment worker assigned to Sam's case was concerned about the welfare of Sam's son Alex. Amy worked closely with Sam to assess safety and risk.

Through the telling of this story, you will learn that there were no safety threats identified during the assessment. Amy and Sam focused on reducing risk with positive results. Amy helped Sam make specific changes to address the concerns in the CPS report. She did so by helping to increase her confidence, willingness and ability. You will get to know Sam better and you'll hear how she made choices that helped her and her child.

What you will learn:

Details about the case and why it was assigned to the AR pathway.

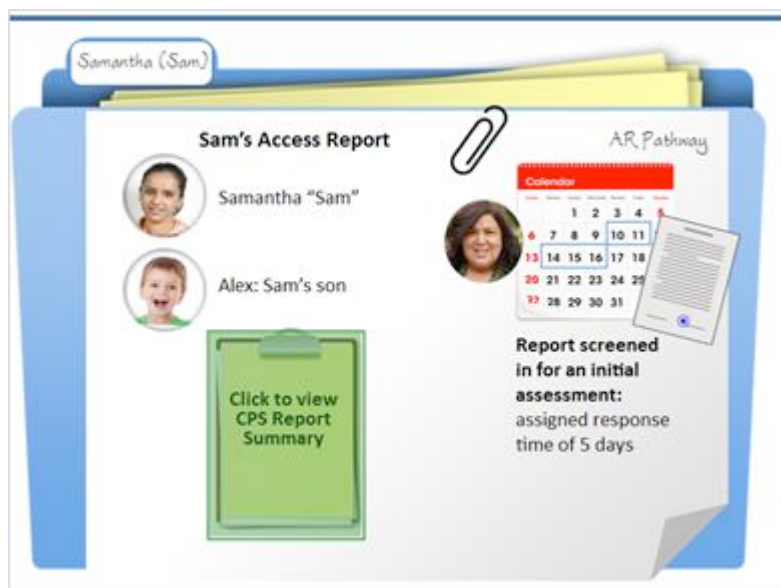
Why it was important to engage Sam directly.

What engagement strategy the Initial Assessment worker used, and

What the outcome was for Sam.

Please note that while most of the details of this story are from an actual case the names and other identifying information have been changed.

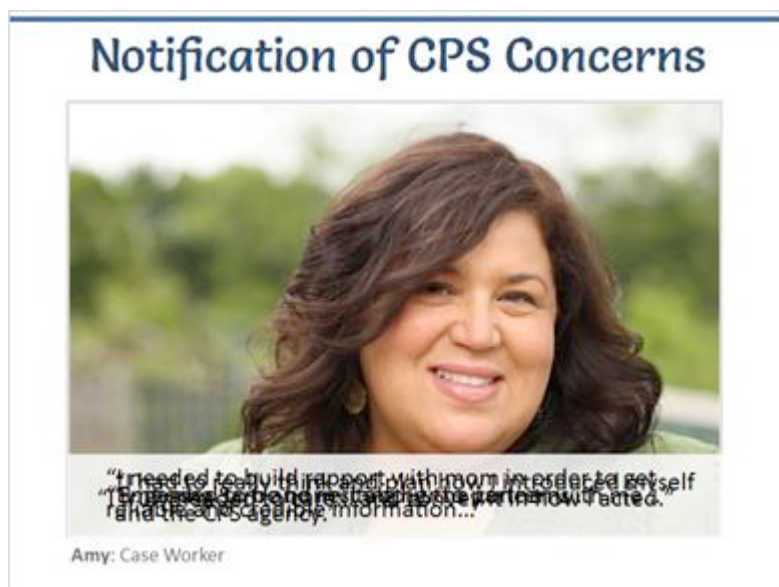
1.6 Sam's Access Report



Narration:

Sam and her son Alex came to the attention of CPS. The report was screened in for an initial assessment and assigned a response time of 5 days.

1.7 Determine Extent of Contact



Narration:

An important difference between AR practice and TR is how we contact a parent to notify them of the CPS concerns.

Let's hear from Amy, the initial assessment worker assigned to this case about her thoughts and approach to Sam's story.

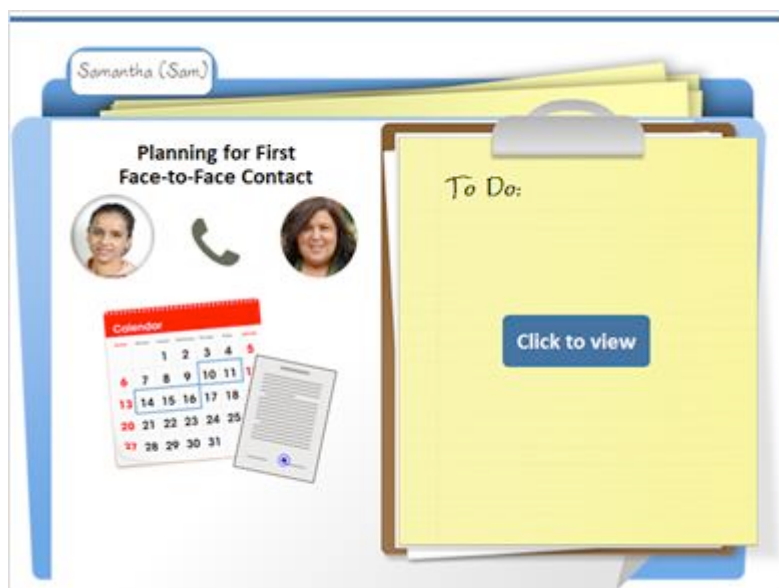
Voice of Amy:

When I received this case my primary concern was to determine the extent of Jake's contact with Alex and Sam's recognition of the issue and protectiveness towards her son. Without that information I couldn't assess Alex's safety. **Engaging Sam and inviting her to partner with me** in the initial assessment process was critical since there was no reported evidence of maltreatment, only suggestions of risk.

I knew Alex was three and I wasn't sure if I would be able to get a lot of information from him about his contact with Jake. I needed to **build rapport with mom in order to get reliable and credible information** to help me understand the actual risk and determine if he was unsafe. I wouldn't be able to do that without first partnering with her. I wanted Sam to know I was concerned with the specifics and the big picture. **I truly needed to care** about each of them and convey it in how I acted, or Sam wouldn't trust me.

I needed to **be honest about the concerns** and didn't dismiss my authority. I was still responsible for assessing safety and didn't minimize it during my initial face-to-face contact. In order to do this, I had to really **think and plan how I introduced myself and the CPS agency**.

1.8 Planning for Contact



Narration:

The first thing Amy did was reach out to Sam over the phone to schedule the Initial Face to Face contact. Since this case was assigned a response time of within five business days, she was able to make more than one attempt by phone.

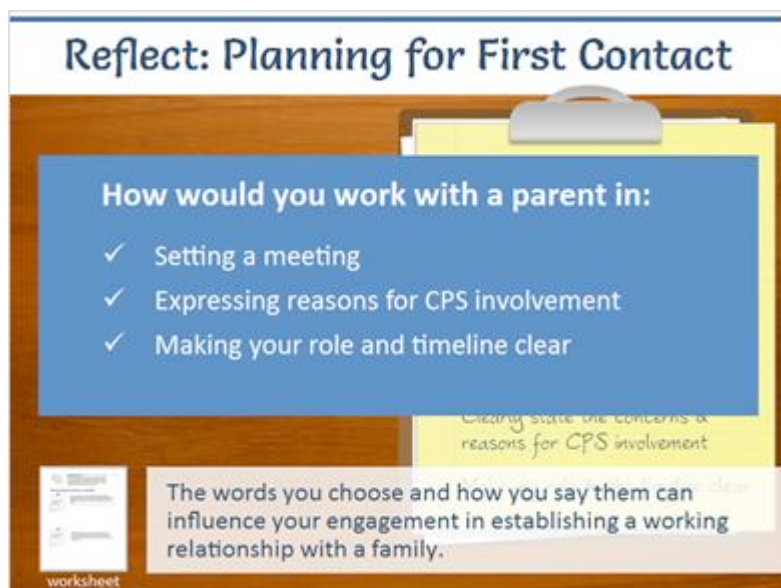
Click on the to-do list to see items to consider and plan for with a first contact in an AR case. Then advance to the next slide to continue.

To Do:

- Contact parent instead of speaking to the child first
- Allow parent to pick a location for first meeting.
- Provide estimate for length of the appointment
- Clearly state the concerns & reasons for CPS involvement

Make my role & the timeline clear.

1.9 Reflect: Planning for First Contact

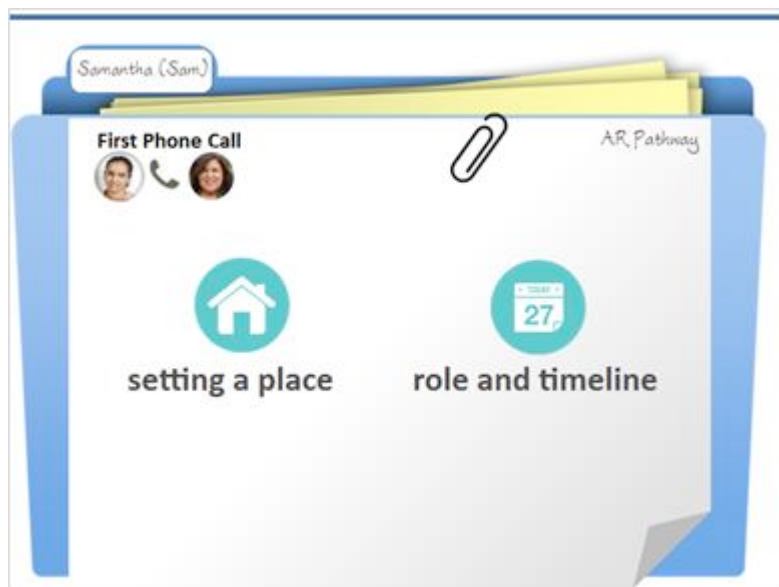


Narration:

Let's take a moment to reflect on what this means for your own practice. During the AR practice training, you will have the opportunity to practice how you will introduce yourself and your agency with an AR approach. The words you choose and how you say them can influence your engagement in establishing a working relationship with a family.

How would you work with a parent in setting a meeting, expressing reasons for CPS involvement, and making your role and timeline clear with an AR case? On your worksheet write down your ideas. Think about how the content and tone may be similar and different from your current practice. When you are ready advance to the next slide to continue.

1.10 First Phone Call



Narration:

Let's listen in on how Amy initiated contact in a way that engaged Sam, made it clear what it meant to be assigned to AR, and didn't minimize her authority as a CPS worker.

Click on each icon to listen in.

Sam: So what does child protective services want from me?

Amy: When parents first hear from me, they're usually hesitant to meet. They tell us to go away, or, like you, they say they want to "get it over with." I'll need to meet with you in person within the next five business days, and if you'd like I can meet as early as this afternoon.

Sam: How about 9:30?

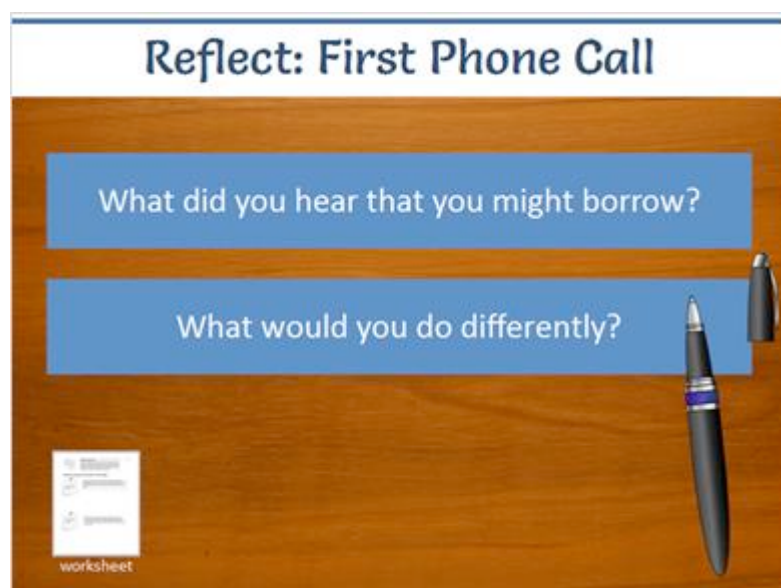
Amy: Tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m. works for me. We can meet at your house, somewhere in the community, or at my office, which would you prefer?

Sam: The library is close to my house. How about that?

Amy: Great, I will plan to come to the Public Library tomorrow. Let's you me and Alex meet in the lobby. We'll then find a room where we can have some privacy. The first meeting typically takes an hour to an hour and half. Since I'll be meeting Alex too, it's usually helpful if parents bring books or toys along, whatever you know will keep his attention while you and I talk.

Amy: Since this is our first conversation, it's hard to say how long we'll be working together. Though I can still give you some basics. When we receive a report and it requires follow-up, like what we are doing right now, I have forty days to make some important decisions and sixty days to make final decisions. What is decided in that time determines how long we'll be working with each other and the services I might recommend for you. It's possible we'll work together for less than sixty days, or we may work together for longer. It's hard to say right now. I'll tell you the same thing I've told other parents: each step along the way, I'll be honest with you about what I'm thinking and any concerns I have. I'll work with you to connect you with the resources you need, and I'll answer any questions you have about the process. I don't want anything to come as a surprise to you. Throughout our work together, you should have a good sense of what I'm thinking and what to expect.

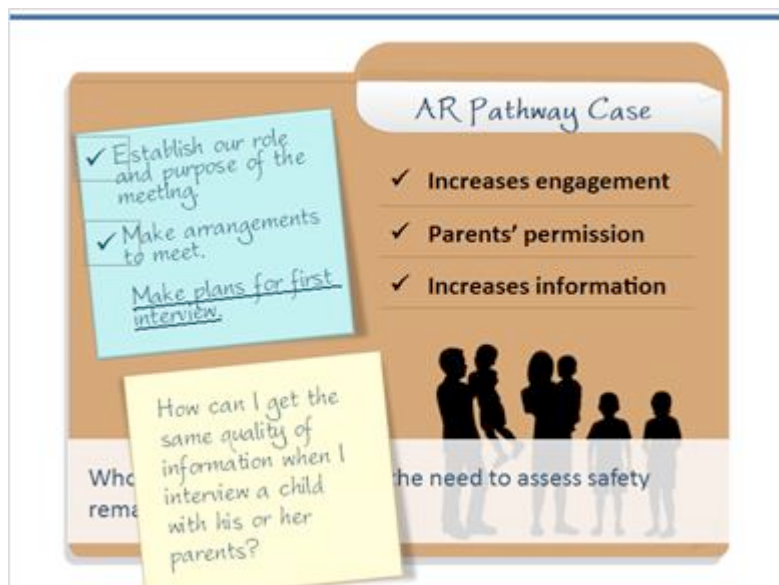
1.11 Reflect: First Phone Call



Narration:

Now that you've had a chance to listen in on Amy's conversation, what did you hear that you might borrow? What would you do differently? Write down your ideas on the worksheet and then advance to the next slide to continue.

1.12 Planning for First Face-to-Face Contact



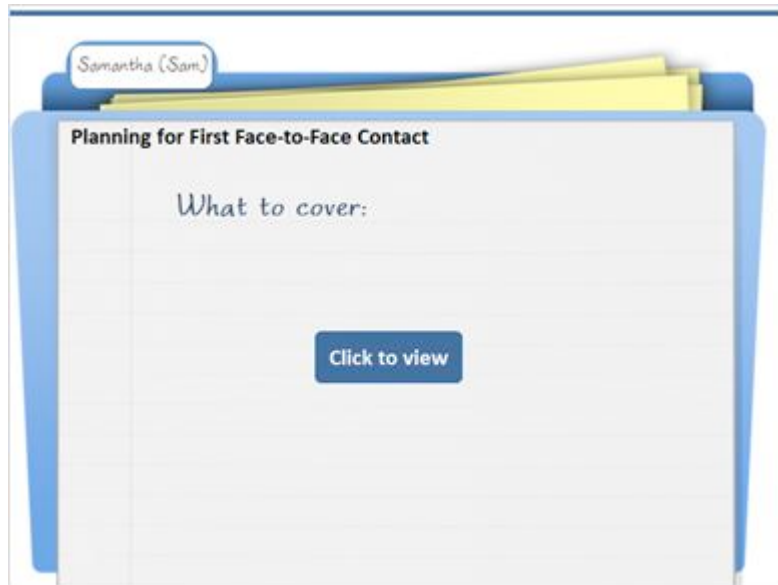
Narration:

After initially establishing our role, the purpose of the meeting and making arrangements to meet, we need to step back and make plans for the first interview. Practice requirements regarding who we have to talk to and the need to assess safety remains the same in AR. The change in practice comes in with meeting first with parents or all family members together.

CPS workers know the importance of interviewing children in order to gather information to assess for safety. A question that often comes up is "How can I make sure I get the same quality of information when I interview in front of a parent?"

Case workers have found that working with families in this way can actually increase engagement and trust. It provides parents with the opportunity to give permission for their child to share information. This strategy can increase the amount of information you can gather, as well as provide confidence in the reliability of what you learn about a family.

1.13 Planning for First Face-to-Face Contact



Narration:

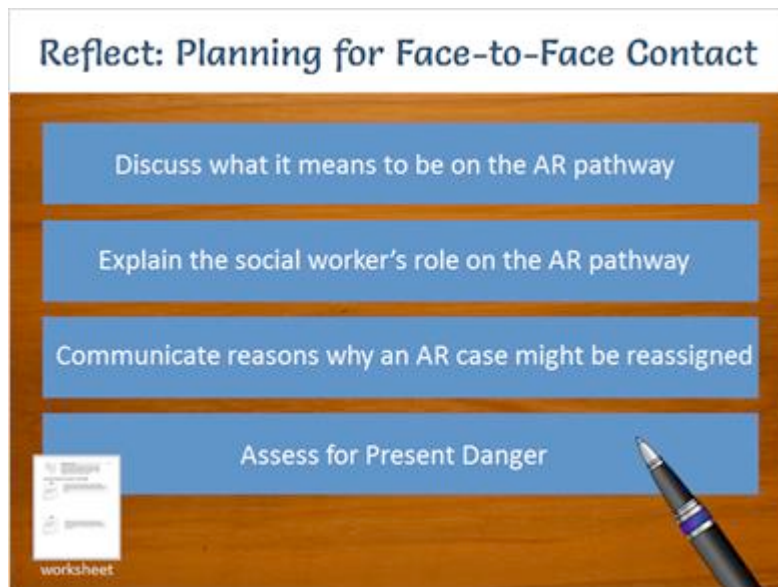
In preparation for the first face-to-face contact with Sam, Amy thought about what the meeting would look like.

Click on the notepad to see a list of what she wanted to cover. When you are ready, advance to the next slide to continue.

What to cover:

- Discuss what it means to be on the AR pathway
- Explain the role of the social worker on the AR pathway
- Communicate reasons why an AR case might be reassigned
- Assess for Present Danger

1.14 Reflect: Planning for Face-to-Face Contact



Narration:

Take a minute to think about what this means for your own practice. How is it different from your current work with families? On the worksheet, write down a few ideas on how you would cover these items during your first meeting with a family and then click ahead to continue.

- Discuss what it means to be on the AR pathway
- Explain the role of the social worker on the AR pathway
- Communicate reasons why an AR case might be reassigned
- Assess for Present Danger

1.15 First Face-to-Face Contact



Narration:

Now that you have given the first face-to-face contact some thought, click on each example to hear how Amy talked about the AR pathway, the social worker role, and reassignment to Sam. When you are ready to continue, advance to the next slide.

Discuss what it means to be on the AR pathway:

Thanks for meeting with me Sam. I'll begin by telling you a bit more about Alternative Response. I mentioned your report was assigned to the Alternative Response pathway. There are a couple things for you to know about it. In order for a report to be assigned to Alternative Response it cannot allege substantial abuse or neglect to a child. Since substantial abuse or neglect was not alleged in your family, it was assigned to a different pathway that we call Alternative Response.

Once it is on that pathway, we can approach our first contact with parents differently. Remember when we talked on the phone, I was able to call you to schedule our appointment today because your family is eligible for AR. That means, instead of talking with you separately I'm able to meet with you and Alex together to gather more information that will help me understand you and your family. I'm also able to focus on whether or not you and Alex would benefit from services that can support you in your parenting and ensure Alex's safety. We can talk about what those services are and how they might be helpful to you and Alex. In the end, when we wrap things up, I'll be deciding if services are needed.

Explain the role of the social worker on the AR pathway:

One more thing I want to be upfront about is this: even though a family is assigned to the AR pathway, I am still responsible for assessing and ensuring that Alex is safe. That means I need to meet with you, see your home and meet with anyone who is living in your home. We will also be talking about other people who know you and Alex. I will be able to complete these tasks in partnership with you so long as you're willing to join in the assessment process.

Communicate reasons why an AR case might be reassigned:

An important thing to know is that just like everyone else, I have a job to do. My job is to make sure children are safe. Sometimes, when I get to know a family, I learn that even though there isn't substantial abuse or neglect, children are unsafe. If that is the case, I'm usually able to work with parents to make a plan to assure children are safe. However, it may also mean the family must be reassigned to the Traditional Response pathway where I then complete an investigation. A similar thing might happen if I'm working with a parent and the parent decides that they don't want to partner with me. If that happens and I still need more information to know if the child is safe or not, then the pathway is reassigned and an investigation occurs. If reassignment is necessary, I tell parents about it right away so they understand why it suddenly feels different.

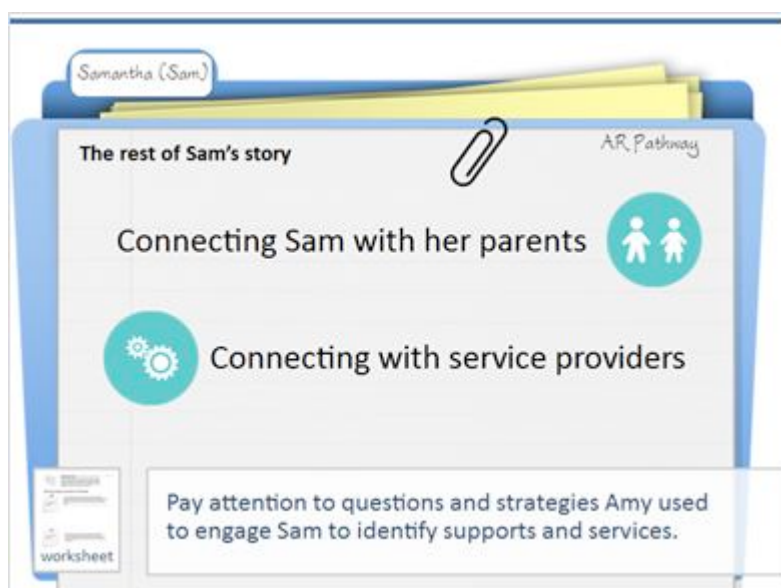
At this point in time, your case is assigned to the Alternative Response pathway, and it will stay on that pathway unless I learn it should be different. So, I just gave you a lot of information. I am thinking that what I said may have brought up some questions...

1.16 Reflect: First Face-to-Face Contact



Narration:

Now that you've listened to Amy explain the AR pathway, her role and reassignment to Sam, what might you borrow? What would you do differently? Jot down your ideas on the worksheet and then advance to the next slide to continue on.

1.17 The Rest of Sam's Story**Narration:**

Over the course of the initial assessment, Amy worked with Sam as she took some major steps. As you hear the rest of Sam's story, pay attention to questions and strategies Amy used to engage Sam to identify supports and services. Write them down on your worksheet.

Click on each example, to hear how Amy connected Sam with her parents and to service providers. Then advance to the next slide to continue.

Connecting Sam with her parents:

I didn't necessarily set out to engage Sam's parents. Instead I began by asking broad questions to determine if she had anyone in her support network. During the Initial face-to-face contact I asked "who would you call if you had an emergency and needed help with Alex?" Sam suggested her parents but also said their relationship was strained. I asked "Now that CPS is

involved I wonder if you would call that an emergency?” She said yes. I followed up by asking if she would be willing to consider how we could ask her parents for help.”

At this point I had assessed for safety and I knew that Sam was willing to cooperate with me. I offered to make the call to her parents together. Before we made the call I coached her by helping her make a list of the important points she wanted to make.

During the call Sam and her parents openly discussed their strained relationship. Sam explained CPS’ involvement, and asked if Alex could stay with his grandparents for a week. Sam, her parents and I talked about how she would use the week of grandparent care or “informal respite” to concentrate on an employment search. A benefit to this arrangement or agreement between caregivers was that it created natural separation between Jake and Alex. This was helpful since there was no Present Danger; so I wasn’t able to require separation through a protective plan.

Connecting with service providers:

While Alex was at his grandparents, I scheduled several office visits where Sam and I focused on her need for services. During each visit we spent time talking about service needs related to housing and parenting. I would spend time discussing concerns regarding Jake and his relationship with Alex and Alex’s potential vulnerability due to Jake’s status.

I asked questions like “Tell me about a time when you felt the most positive about your parenting...” and “Where were you living then, what were you doing that made it so positive...”. This led to a conversation about housing and how important it was if she was to be an effective parent. I learned Sam had qualified for public housing a few months prior but she had declined the offer as Jake couldn't live with her. At the time of our conversation, Sam was ambivalent about moving out of Jake’s home. But by the next contact I had with her, she had moved back to Salvation Army to “do what is best for Alex.” This meant providing Alex with more structure and routine.

We also re-connected Sam with a community member whom she had identified as helpful to her in her parenting. We did this through a local agency, the Parenting Place. We discussed why she hadn’t followed through with seeking similar services in the recent past and together we called her coach and re-engaged this service.

During these conversations, it was only natural the original reason for CPS’ involvement was discussed. I would spend time discussing concerns regarding Jake and his relationship with Alex

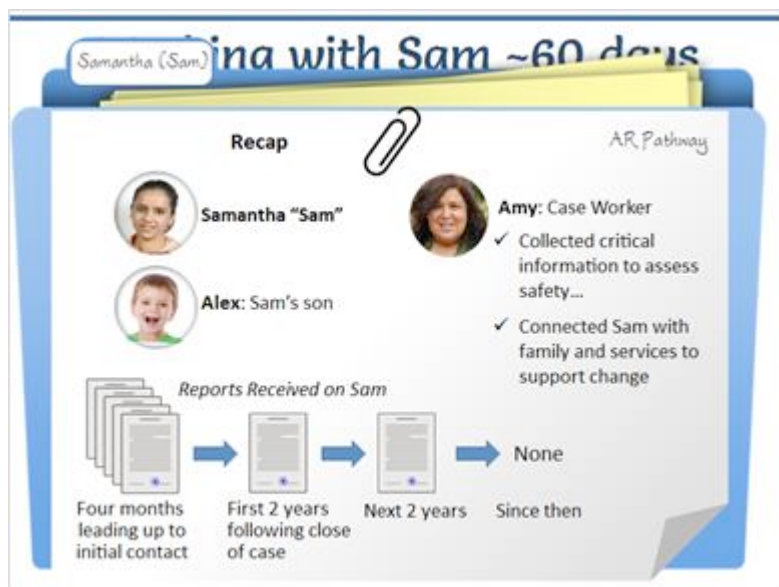
and Alex's potential vulnerability due to Jake's status. Sam was engaged and curious to ask further questions, even seeking my opinion at times. I also provided education regarding predatory type behaviors, grooming behavior and child vulnerability. Because there were no safety threats identified, I couldn't just tell Sam she had to stop seeing Jake or prohibit him from seeing Alex. Instead, I had to partner with Sam so that she could see where I was coming from with my concern. In order to do this I had to first understand Sam's reasons for being with Jake.

While Alex was away at his grandparents, Jake's requests to see Alex increased. Jake's persistence caused Sam to reconsider the education I had provided her. One day during initial assessment, I received a call from her stating that she made the decision to end the relationship because she didn't want to put Alex at risk of sexual abuse.

After that, we explored what Sam could do to prevent her from being vulnerable to a similar man or situation in the future. Sam explained her low-self-esteem was a problem and we discussed addressing that issue with a therapist.

I started the discussion and sometimes pointed the way but Sam made the decision to change. She took the steps to keep Alex safe and reduce risk to his safety.

1.18 Working with Sam Recap



Narration:

As you heard by engaging with Sam, Amy was able to collect critical information in order to assess safety and understand whether CPS services were needed. She was able to determine that Alex was safe and connect Sam with family as well as service providers who continued to support her efforts towards change. This enabled Sam to maintain safe care for Alex.

In the four months leading up to this recent contact, CPS had received 5 reports on Sam. Following the close of this case, the agency received 1 CPS report in each of the next 2 years, and none after that.

This timeline highlights the major points of safety decision making in every CPS case. Let's see how the story unfolded and the successes that occurred for Sam and Alex.

1.19 Timeline and Successes



Narration:

Amy continued to meet with Sam and Alex to understand their strengths and needs. Over the course of the initial assessment, Amy and Sam saw the following successes.

Sam reconnected with her parents and requested their help in providing care for Alex while she worked with CPS.

Sam moved out of Jake's house and returned to Salvation Army.

Sam engaged with a community member who provided her with parent education to address her feelings of being overwhelmed by parenting responsibilities.

Sam ended her relationship with Jake.

Sam gained employment and signed Alex up for both Head Start and daycare.

Sam identified co-dependency and low self-esteem as issues she wanted to address.

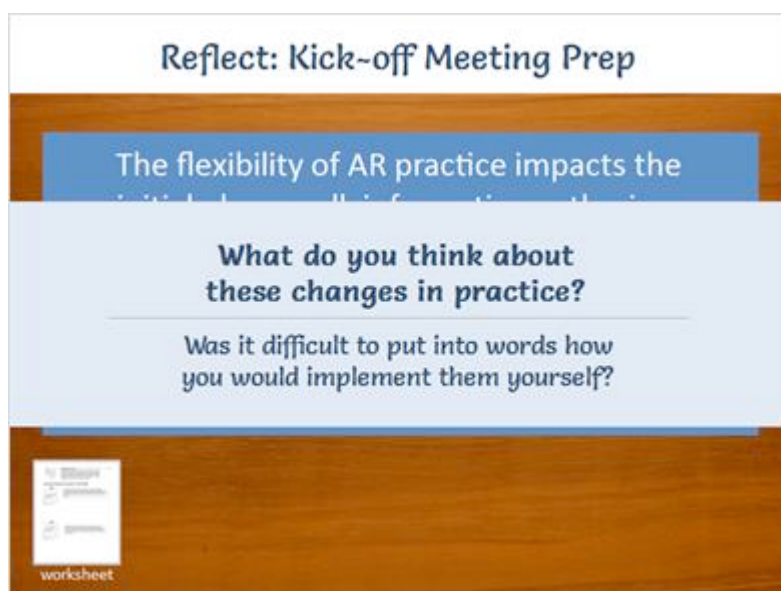
And finally, let's hear from Amy on using an AR approach to this case.

If I had approached Sam's case using a traditional response approach I'd use the same engagement techniques I would to approach a case of maltreatment. But without clear evidence of maltreatment I would likely spend my efforts trying to convince *or otherwise threaten* Sam about the consequences of not leaving her partner. That would have been the limit of my authority.

In the end a **positive outcome would have been less likely**. When put on the defensive, moms in Sam's situation can align with the alleged maltreater even stronger. This support can provide more opportunity for the alleged maltreater to devise a successful defense and believe they can essentially get away with their behavior.

Alternative Response gave me the opportunity to engage with Sam in a different way and support her to make better choices that kept Alex safe.

1.20 Reflect: Kick-off Meeting Prep



Narration:

Now that you have listened to Sam's story, what do you think about these changes in practice? Was it difficult to put into words how you would implement them yourself? If yes, that's ok. You will be given many opportunities to find new ways to communicate with families

Before we wrap up this training, Let's summarize what we've learned. We've seen how the flexibility of AR practice changes can impact the initial phone call, information gathering, and interviewing. You've probably further recognized both similarities and differences in practice.

This may have brought up more questions or wonderings for you. Make sure you write them down on your worksheet and bring them to your agency "kick-off meeting."

1.21 Summary



Narration:

It's important to remember you can do this, it can work in your county, and you are not in this alone. AR not only empowers families but increases opportunities to provide services to families.

What's up next? Every county implementing AR can expect skills training and support. Click on the links to see the training plan and AR FAQs.

And as we conclude this training, we wanted to remind you this is only the beginning of a conversation for counties implementing AR. Thank you for your participation.