

Advanced SDM Interviewing for the Safety Assessment

The focus of this class is how to use the SDM Safety Assessment to make in-depth safety decisions in the field. The main concept is the question of how deeply to dig for each safety threat before deciding whether it is a concern. The class will cover various ways to use interviewing and observation to rule in or rule out each safety threat. This is done by teaching a conceptual approach that will help the worker critically think through each safety threat using the definitions and interviewing strategies.

Workers Who Would Attend:

ER and FM workers who have previously completed SDM basic training.

Learning Objectives

- Quick examination of what helps workers successfully use the safety assessment policies, procedures, and definitions
- Gain understanding of prioritizing safety threats in terms of how extensively to pursue during investigation/assessment
- Learn different ways to explore each safety threat, including interview and observation
- Learn how to manage conflicting information
- Learn to distinguish between resolved vs. controlled safety threats

Walk through of the three-hour class:

The class will start with a very brief overview of the fundamental elements of a safety assessment with an emphasis on common errors. Policy will be discussed for both referrals and open cases.

Next, the class looks at how to make thorough assessments in a limited amount of time and still assess for all safety threats. A theoretical model will be taught where workers can assess what threats they need to focus on. Workers will be given case vignettes to practice the model.

The class then focuses on what questions to ask in each step of the assessment. Participants will be given an interviewing matrix that has possible questions for each threat at each stage of the process. Again workers will be given vignettes to practice using the interviewing matrix.

Participants will be given a case where they assess for safety using real time. The case is broken up into segments of time as in the field, and workers will assess for safety threats at each stage of the investigation ending by completing the safety threats section in the SDM safety assessment.

The final part of the class is a model for knowing when a safety threat has been resolved. Workers will be taught a framework with terms to describe four possible outcomes of a safety threat. They will be given vignettes to practice the model.

Before the training:

1. Ask the worker about their experience developing safety assessments, what has worked well, what has been challenging?
2. Review the safety threats. Ask which ones are the most common? What definitions are the most difficult?
3. Review with the worker how they do a safety assessment? Do they assess all the safety threats? How do they prioritize?
4. Discuss the types of questions they can use to successfully get the information they need in that first interview. Share your favorite ways to help families open up and share their concerns.
5. Review how the worker knows when a safety threat has been resolved.

After the training:

1. Ask the worker what they found most interesting about the class. What were they already doing? What is different than their practice?
2. On a scale of one to ten, ten being very skilled, ask the worker how skilled they feel at engaging a family in the initial discussion. Discuss the skill and success of asking open-ended questions to begin the process of engagement and assessment.
3. Ask the worker which safety threat is the hardest for them to assess. Ask them to use the matrix and develop a string of questions they can ask beginning with an open-ended question and then asking more directed questions.
4. If the worker has developed the initial safety plan, ask the worker how they can make sure the ongoing worker understands the safety plan and the importance of certain elements. If the worker is ongoing, discuss how the worker ensures that the safety plan is followed and how they assess it at every contact.
5. Ask the worker to give you examples of when a safety threat is hot and when it is a yes. Discuss how the worker can make sure to pass the hot issues to you and the next worker.
6. Review examples of when a possible safety threat is hot but not a yes, explore the need to have facts and how hard it is not to use assumptions.