

# Executive Summary

**Course Title:** Structured Decision Making  
Supervisors and lead staff

**Course Description:** Structured Decision Making is a case management tool designed to help counties and workers assess families at critical decision-making points. It is also designed to facilitate service delivery and give counties information about the case type and severity as well as and factors that influence decisions in placement, risk level and case plans. The SDM system has different assessment tools for different decision making points in a case. There is a tool to decide: how quickly to investigate a referral, whether a child is safe in their home, whether to open a case, level of service to give to a family and factors to focus on in developing a case plan. There are also reassessment tools for family maintenance and reunification cases that help workers decide whether to continue services, close a case, or reunify a family. In this class supervisors and lead workers will learn the philosophy and goals of the SDM. They will also have an opportunity to use and practice each tool. This class is the basic SDM introduction class with emphasis on implementation. The class will cover how the model works and how to use the assessment tools with a focus on supervising SDM

**Target Audience:** This class is designed for Supervisors and Lead Workers

**Outcome Objectives for Participants:** As a result of this training, participants will:

1. Understand the philosophy and goals of the SDM model.
2. Understand that different tools make different decisions.
3. Know the policy and procedures for each tool and where to find this information.
4. Understand and practice each decision making tool.
5. Understand the importance of using the definition and documenting their decisions.
6. Begin the process of assessing the needs of the staff for successful implementation.

**Ways Managers and Supervisors Can Support the Transfer of Learning from the Classroom to the Job:**

**Before the training:**

1. Examine decision making points in the unit and think about what issues are inconsistent.
2. Talk about issues that have influenced decisions in the county and how a structured approach would help workers make more objective decisions. Give them examples from past experiences.

3. Using one of the workers cases, discuss points in the case where SDM would be used. Ask the worker what factors might influence the workers decision. Share examples of factors that have influences cases in the past that could influence this case

**After the training:**

1. Ask the Supervisor what they learned about decision-making. What emotional issues affected their decisions?
2. Discuss how a consistent tool would impact practice. What would be the advantage for staff? In what areas of practice would it help workers.
3. Brainstorm what issues would be barriers for staff and discuss the possible solutions.
4. Discuss how the assessment tools would be used, what unit, and what decision points.
5. Use the SDM assessment tools on an existing case.
6. Pull an old case where there was a change in decision-making based on new workers and see how the assessment tool might have impacted that decision.
7. When a conflict over decision-making comes up have the workers and supervisor use the tool to see if they can reach agreement.
5. Discuss a recent removal of a child and review the safety assessment. Review a recent case where the child remained in their home. How did the safety intervention work?
7. Review a recent case and look to see what objectives are on the case plan. Examine how Strengths and Needs assessment would have impacted this case.

**Brief outline of the Training:**

**Day One**

Lecture: What is SDM

Overview of the rational for decision making tools.

History of SDM

Philosophy and goals of the SDM system

Priority response

Using case material participants will complete the tool

Policy and procedures

Safety Assessment

Using case material participants will complete the tool

Policy and procedures

Risk Assessment

Using case material participants will complete the tool

Policy and procedures

Needs and Strengths Assessment

Using case material participants will complete the tool

Policy and procedures

## **Day Two**

### **Morning**

Strengths and needs assessment continued

Risk Reassessment – inhome cases

Using case material participants will complete the tool

Policy and procedures

Practice and review

Participants will be given a higher risk case and complete all the decision making tools covered in day one.

### **Afternoon**

Continue the review

Reunification Reassessment

Using case material participants will complete the tool

Policy and procedures

Thought on implementation and planning for supervisor implementation training