


INVESTIGATIONS

Identify biased language, increase awareness.

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Words Have Power

LANGUAGE

-Emotion evoking words: investigations (CPS)

-CPS investigation:

-call to the hotline

-allegations determined to meet criteria for an investigation as defined by welfare and institution code 300 and reporting party is able to provide contact and demographical information for the family

-referral assigned to ER SW for an investigation

-investigation may be closed, sent to family maintenance on a voluntary basis or court intervention.

-Referral language

-“RP reported the home is disgusting and unlivable” vs “Home appeared unsafe for the minors as there is no plumbing, dog feces throughout the home and exposed electrical wiring”

-Watch for vague language—documentation should be specific with a neutral tone.

-Each investigation will contain various types of evidence that will inform overall disposition:

-police reports

-medical records

-physical evidence observed by the investigator such as conditions of the home or injuries to the minor

-Some investigations rely solely on the verbal statements provided by family members, children and other collateral contacts.

-Language on referral, language on relevant reports, language used by family, etc.



THOUGHTS?

- LANGUAGE CAN TRIGGER EMOTIONAL RESPONSES IN THE READER

- assumptions
- biases
- predetermined disposition
- typically exaggerate circumstances

ACTIVITY: Identify emotive language and rewrite each example statement with a neutral tone.

- "The father was hostile and aggressive"

- "Minor is always filthy"

- "I have known this family for years, they're selfish junkies"

- "I buy the kids everything! The parents are total criminals and couldn't care less about their children."

- "DAD FAILED TO REUNIFY"

EMOTION EVOKING LANGUAGE

FAMILY'S PERSPECTIVE

“IT FEELS LIKE IM A GUEST IN SOMEONES HOME”

- **DISCUSSION: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR HOME AND SOMEONE ELSE'S.**
- **EATING, BATHING, SLEEPING, ETC**

- **PARENTS-- DEFENSIVE, ANGER, FEAR ETC.**
- **HOW DO YOU ENGAGE FAMILIES THAT ARE IN THIS STATE?**
- **OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS!!!**



DOCUMENTATION

CLOSURE SUMMARY:

MRP REPORTED A HANGER LIKE MARK ON MINOR DUE TO PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE BY STEPDAD. MINOR ACKNOWLEDGED THESE ALLEGATIONS AND WAS OBSERVED TO HAVE TWO INJURIES, CONSISTENT WITH BEING HIT WITH A HANGER.

MINOR REPORTED STEPDAD GOT MAD AT HIM BECAUSE HE THOUGHT MINOR HURT SIBLING AND PROCEEDED TO HIT MINOR WITH THE HANGER FOR DISCIPLINE. MINOR REPORTED THIS HAPPENED 2 TO 3 DAYS PRIOR WITH INJURIES STILL VISIBLE. MINOR REPORTED PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE IS FREQUENT IN THE MOTHERS HOME BY STEPDAD AND DENIED FEELING SAFE AROUND STEPDAD. MOTHER ACKNOWLEDGED STEPDAD BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INJURIES ON MINOR AND WAS NOT PROTECTIVE AS SHE DID NOT NOTIFY LE OR SEEK MEDICAL CARE. DAD AGREED THAT THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION WOULD BE FOR MINOR TO MOVE WITH HIMSELF WITH NO FURTHER CONTACT BETWEEN MINOR AND STEPDAD.

PLAN WAS DOCUMENTED ON OUR FAMILY AGREEMENT. SW PONCE SPOKE WITH STEPDAD OVER THE PHONE WHO ACKNOWLEDGED HITTING MINOR WITH A PLASTIC HANGER AND BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INJURIES. STEPDAD REPORTED HE IS SORRY ABOUT HIS ACTIONS. DENIED FREQUENT PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE AND REPORTED HE DOESN'T KNOW WHY MINOR WOULD SAY THAT. I SHOULD BE NOTED. MOTHER DID NOT DENY ALLEGATIONS OF FREQUENT PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE IN THE HOME AND ACKNOWLEDGED STEPDAD BEING PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR DISCIPLINE OF THE CHILDREN. ALL PARENTS WERE EDUCATED ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE AND PHYSICAL ABUSE, AND THE EXPECTATION THAT THEY ARE PROTECTIVE MOVING FORWARD. ALL PARENTS AGREED. FATHER WAS GRANTED EMERGENCY CUSTODY OF MINOR. SITUATION STABILIZED.

ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE ARE SUBSTANTIATED AGAINST THE STEPFATHER.

ALLEGATIONS OF GENERAL NEGLECT ARE SUBSTANTIATED AGAINST THE MOTHER.

CONSEQUENCES

-CHILDREN/FAMILY TRAUMA

-INACCURATE DISPO

LOSS OF CREDIBILITY-- REPUTATION

-OVERTURNED PETITIONS

-WRITE UPS, JOB LOSS

-MENTAL HEALTH

A Habit of Mind

Pause and Ask

When language feels emotionally charged, ask yourself:

- What assumptions are built into these words?
- How might someone else describe this differently?
- What evidence supports the claim?
- Who benefits from this framing?

Pay intentional attention.

THE
UTAH CIVICS
PROJECT

NOW WHAT.....

-FOCUS ON EVIDENCE!

WHAT CAN YOU PROVE -OR- WHO WILL CONFIRM UNDER OATH?

-NOTICE PHYSICAL REACTIONS

NOTICE HOW YOU SPEAK ABOUT THE FAMILY.
GOSSIP/JUDGING?
STRENGTH BASED?

-PROCESS IN SUPERVISION TO INCREASE AWARENESS

AVOID:

ABSOLUTE LANGUAGE (ALWAYS,
NEVER, ETC)

OPINIONS...YOUR OPINION IS
IRRELEVANT..

RISK/SAFETY

MINIMUM SUFFICIENT LEVEL OF
CARE

SAFETY ASSESSMENT

1. Yes No Caregiver caused serious physical harm to the child or made a plausible threat to cause serious physical harm in the current investigation, as indicated by:
- Serious injury or abuse to child other than accidental.
 - Caregiver fears they will maltreat the child.
 - Threat to cause harm or retaliate against the child.
 - Excessive discipline or physical force.
 - Substance-affected infant.
2. Yes No Child sexual abuse or sexual exploitation is suspected, and circumstances suggest that the child's safety may be of immediate concern.
- Sexual abuse
 - Commercial sexual exploitation
3. Yes No Caregiver does not meet the child's immediate needs, resulting in serious harm or imminent danger of serious harm. *Select all that apply*
- Supervision
 - Food, clothing, or hygiene
 - Medical or dental care
 - Mental health care
4. Yes No The physical living conditions are hazardous and immediately threatening to the health and/or safety of the child.
5. Yes No Caregiver describes or speaks to the child in predominantly negative terms or acts toward or in the presence of the child in negative ways AND these actions result in severe psychological/emotional harm, resulting in imminent danger.
6. Yes No Caregiver does not protect the child from serious harm or threatened harm by others. This may include physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect.
7. Yes No Caregiver's explanation for the injury to the child is questionable or inconsistent with the type of injury, AND the nature of the injury suggests that the child's safety may be of immediate concern.
8. Yes No The family refuses access to the child, or there is reason to believe that the family is about to flee.
9. Yes No Domestic violence exists in the household and poses an imminent danger of serious harm to the child. *Select all that apply*
- Physical Harm
 - Emotional Harm
10. Yes No Other: Current circumstances meet the threshold of imminent and severe danger, but are not described within safety threats 1-9 (specify):
-

SAME GOES FOR US

- ENGAGEMENT SHOULD BE:
 - RESPECTFUL
 - DIGNITY
 - THEY ARE THE EXPERT
 - TONE
 - BODY LANGUAGE
 - ACCURATE!!!!!!!!!!!!
 - TRANSPARENT
 - THOROUGH



THANK YOU

GIRLS JUST
WANNA
HAVE FUN