

Note: This training material is continually being evaluated and updated to reflect current needs and best practices therefore it should be viewed as work in progress.

Any person, organization, or institution making use of these materials must acknowledge that they were developed by the Tanzania Institute of Social Work, Jane Addams College of Social Work, and the Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center with support from the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), USAID/Tanzania, and the American International Health Alliance's HIV/AIDS Twinning Center.

Day Four:

Assessment of Needs and Strengths

Recap — Review of previous day and overview of coming day

Review of Social Work Process for Working with Most Vulnerable Children and their Families and Location of this Day's Activities (Slides 2-3)

1. Identifying Vulnerable Children and their Families
2. Engaging Vulnerable Children and Families
3. Assessing the Strengths and Needs of Vulnerable Children and their Families
4. Developing a Plan of Services for Vulnerable Children and their Families
5. Implementing the Plan of Services
 - Identifying and Referral to Other Resources
 - Providing direct services: problem solving, support and coordination
 - Empowering and supporting caregivers
 - Addressing HIV related prevention and care concerns
6. Evaluating Progress, Revising Service Plan and Following Up Through Ongoing Case Management, Family Support and Advocacy

Objectives for the Day (Slide 4)

At the end of this day, Para Social Workers will be able to:

- Define assessment in the context of working with vulnerable children and their families
- Present the purposes and process of assessment
- Explain the importance of the strengths approach to child and family assessment
- Describe the characteristics of effective assessments
- Use the Child Status Index Form to assess needs vulnerable children and families
- Record the essential elements of assessment

Assessing Needs and Strengths

Equipment Needed:

- Handouts: Blank Child Status Index (CSI) and completed sample form.

Learning Activities:

- Lecture/Discussion
- Small group practice session using video
- Brainstorming, Feedback, Discussion

Instructions for Learning Activities:

- Introduce assessment as essential an step in the Para Social Work process
- Ask participants whether they have participated in assessments and what the process was like for them
- Point out that assessment is important in order to plan and implement actions that are truly helpful to children and their families
- Present and discuss the specific purposes for assessment in work with vulnerable children
- Present and discuss the steps in conducting assessments
- Present and discuss the characteristics of effective assessments, including working in partnership with children and families, focusing on strengths, ecological perspective
- Present the areas of assessment as preparation for using assessment tools facilitate assessments
- Introduce the Child Status Index and distribute both completed and blank forms
- Conduct assessment on sample case
- Discuss the recording of information gathered during the assessment process. Emphasize the importance of preserving information for the children.

Topic Outline

1. Introduction (Slides 5-16)

- a) Who has conducted an Assessment?
- b) What is an Assessment?
 - Definition of Assessment - The process of gathering, analyzing and synthesizing information about a child and/or family situation in order to:
 - understand the situation
 - identify which needs are most important
 - develop a plan to assist the family (interventions)
 - deliver services
- c) Phases of Assessment
 - 1) Plan the Assessment
 - What information do you need?
 - Where can you obtain needed information?
 - What is the best method for obtaining the information?
 - 2) Gather information
 - Interview child, family members, others
 - Records – school, health, others
 - Observations – appearance, behaviors, environment
 - 3) Analyze information:

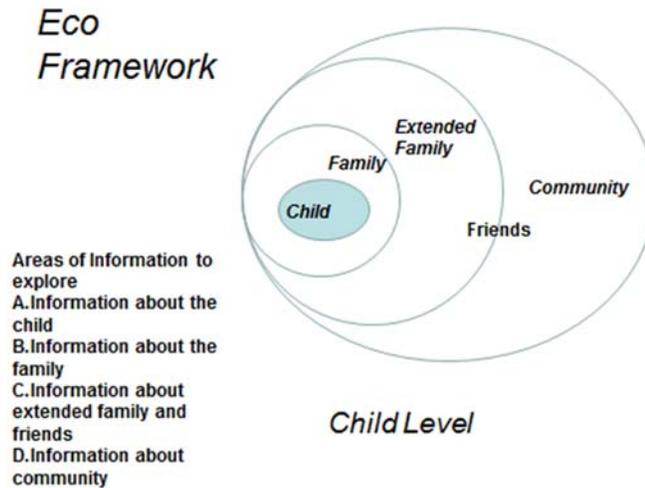
- What are the major needs to be addressed?
 - What are the strengths and resources to build upon in addressing the needs?
- 4) Using information toward making a plan:
- What are the priorities for services?
 - Recommendations: How should we proceed?
- d) Process of Assessment
- Assessment starts at beginning of involvement with child and family after we obtain agreement to work together
 - Assessment continues throughout our work with the child and family
 - Assessment is best conducted in partnership with the child and family
- e) Characteristics of Successful Assessment
- a. Assessment is most effective when conducted from a strengths perspective
 - b. Basic Assumptions of the Strengths Approach
 - All persons possess strengths that can be used to improve the quality of life.
 - Recognize and express the strengths in the situation, even if the child or family member does not see them.
 - Allow the child or family member to define the next steps as positively as they can.
 - Discovering strengths requires a process of cooperative exploration between Para Social Worker and the child and/or family
 - Focusing on strengths helps the Para Social Worker be non- judgmental
 - Acknowledging the strength(s), resilience and resourcefulness required to survive in difficult circumstances
 - c. Assessment is most helpful using an ecological perspective, focusing on the person and their environment
- f) Levels of Assessment
- When thinking about the needs of the child we need to look at the people with whom the child has important connections
 - Starting with those most closely related to the child
 - We then move out into the extended family and friends
 - Then we look at the larger community including organizations

2. Assessment Phases

a) Phase I: Planning the Assessment (Slides 17-18)

- a. Preparation
- b. Starting the Visit

b) Phase II: Gathering Information (Slides 19-41)



Information about the Child

- What information and issues do we consider when we assess the child's needs and strengths? Brainstorm
- Areas for assessment (transfer from the participants input)
 - Shelter
 - Psychosocial
 - Education and Vocational Training
 - Health
 - Food and Nutrition
 - Economic Strengthening
 - Protection

Review of each assessment area

- 1) Shelter - Brainstorm how we can we determine if the child has a stable shelter that is adequate, dry, and safe

Possible Observations:

- What is the housing made of?
- Is this house or institution adequate?
- Does the house appear safe?
- Does the house protect from rain or cold?
- Is the house in need of repairs?

- 2) Psychosocial

2a. Psychosocial: Emotions - How do we assess if the child is happy and content with a generally positive mood and hopeful outlook?

Brainstorm

Possible Observations:

- Does the child seem happy and active?
- Do you observe signs of sadness, anxiousness or being withdrawn?

2b. Psychosocial: Social Behavior

Possible Observations:

- How does the child interact with the family?
- How does the child interact with you as a Para Social Worker?

3) Education and Vocational Skills Training - How can we assess how child is progressing in acquiring knowledge and life skills at home, school, job training, or an age-appropriate activity?

Brainstorm

3a. Education and Skills Training: Knowledge and Life Skills - Child is progressing well in acquiring knowledge and life skills at home, school, job training, or an age-appropriate

Possible Observations

- If in school, observe the response when asked about class performance ranking.
- If the child is five years old or younger, observe the child's developmental progress (i.e., in language, movement, learning), and compare this to what you expect for children that age (i.e., talking, walking by year two).

3b. Education & Training: School or Age Related Activity-- Child is enrolled and attends school or age-appropriate play, learning activity, or job.

Possible Observations

- If possible, observe the child's school uniform or supplies and their usage.
- For infants or preschoolers observe if he/she is involved in any play or learning activity with any family member(s).

4) Health --How can we assess whether the child is physically healthy?
How can we obtain needed information about existing health problems?

Brainstorm

4a. Physical Health

Possible Observations

- Does the child appear to be active and generally healthy?
- Does the child say that he or she is feeling ok? Has he/she felt ok in the last week?
- Is there any sign of illness, accidents or health problems?

4b. Healthcare Services - Can the child access health care services, including medical treatment when ill and preventive care?

Possible Observations

- Look at the child's immunization card
- Is a bed net available?

5) Food and Nutrition -How can we assess if child has sufficient food to eat at all times? How can we assess if the child is growing well compared to others of his/her age in the community?

Brainstorm

5a. Sufficient Food - Does the child have sufficient food to eat at all times?

Possible Observations:

- Look around the home including the storage facilities like granary, garden, and farm animals.
- Does the kitchen look like it was used to prepare food recently?

5b. Nutrition and Growth - Is the child is growing well compared to others of his/her age in the community?

Possible Observation:

- Compare how well the child seems to have grown compared to other local children the same age.

6). Economic Support - How can we assess if the family has a reliable and adequate source of income?

Brainstorm

Possible observations:

- Does home have material, food, clothing for child and other family members?
- Is there evidence that small amounts of funds are available for necessary things or emergencies?

7). Protection and Exploitation - How can assess if the child is safe from any abuse, neglect, or exploitation? How can we determine if the child has access to legal protection services as needed?

Brainstorm

7a. Is the child is safe from any abuse, neglect, or exploitation?

Possible Observations:

- Does the child have any marks or bruises that suggest abuse?
- Does the child seem like an abused child, very withdrawn or scared?

7b. Does the child have access to legal protection services as needed?

Possible Observations

- When possible, observe the child's fear of losing his/her family properties.
- Does the caregiver have any concerns or hesitations when asked about the child's legal protection services?

b) Phase II: Family/Household Information Needed (Slides 42-51)

1) Who is involved with the child? (Name, relationship to the child, role and contact information)

- Parents, siblings, other family members.
- Who lives in the household where the child currently resides?
- Who informed you about the child(ren) or referred them for help?
- Other people involved with the child.

2) Why is the child/family in need of help? (What is the presenting problem/issue or reason child/family referred?)

- From the perspective of the person referring the child/family for services?
- From the child(ren)'s perspective?
- From the parent(s)' perspective?
- If the child's caregiver is someone other than the parent, from the caregiver's perspective?
- From the perspective of other persons involved with the child(ren)?

3) Community Information Needed for Assessment

- Connections to faith community?
- Non-Governmental Social Service Agencies?
- Governmental Agencies?
- Other sources of support/resources?

4) Other Information: Background to the Problem

- Health needs?
- Mental health needs?
- Educational needs?
- Substance abuse?
- Financial needs?
- Recent transitions/changes?
- Previous losses/separations?
- Child physical abuse?
- Child sexual abuse?
- Spousal abuse?
- Other stressors/needs?

5) What efforts have been made to resolve the problem/issue?

- What strategies have been used to solve/address the problem?
- What resources services have been provided?
- What have been the results of each effort to resolve problem?
- What successes were achieved? What challenges/barriers were encountered?

c). Phase III: Analyze Information (Slides 52-67)

Discussion Question: How do we put together the information we have gathered to determine what issues need attention and what resources may address those needs?

- 1) Analyzing Assessment Information
 - a) What are the identified needs? How problematic are these needs?
 - b) What are the strengths?
 - c) What are other things (underlying conditions) going on with the family?
- 2) The Child Status Index - a Tool to:
 - a) Analyze assessment information
 - b) Record what we've found
 - c) Begin to think about how these lead to a plan to address the issues
- 3) The Child Status Index as our Assessment Tool
 - a) Developed and tested in Ethiopia and Tanzania
 - b) Child-oriented tool
 - c) Identifies key areas of need based on child's situation
 - d) Used to gather information about (assess) a child's needs
 - e) Can be used over time to measure changes in child's status or needs
- 4) What is the CSI? An assessment tool used by Para Social Workers to determine the:
 - a) information on his/her home situation
 - b) immediate needs of the child
 - c) resources (food, housing, clothing) needed to help the child immediately
 - d) services and service providers required to help the child (educational support, healthcare) now and in the future
- 5) Areas for assessment (CSI Dimensions)
 - a) Shelter
 - b) Psychosocial
 - c) Education and Skills Training
 - d) Health
 - e) Food and Nutrition
 - f) Economic Strengthening
 - g) Protection
- 6) The CSI Form
- 7) How to Rate the CSI
 - Score each domain or area on a scale from 1 to 4, with 4 being the best score
 - Example: CSI Score – Food and Nutrition as an Example (See handout for all domains)
 - GOOD = 4 Child is well grown, with good height, weight, and energy level for his/her age.
 - FAIR = 3 Child seems to be growing well but is less active compared to others of same age in community.

- BAD = 2 Child has lower weight, looks shorter, and/or is less energetic compared to others of same age in community.
- VERY BAD = 1 Child has very low weight (wasted) or is too short (stunted) for his/her age (malnourished).

8) Important Events

- a) The CSI Record Form includes a section for describing any important events that have happened in the child's life
- b) Check any events that have happened since the last CSI assessment (or during the past year for children who have not previously been rated).

9) Identifying Needs and Resources:

- a) Family Caregiver
- b) Extended Family and Friends
- c) Community

10) Services or Resources: Another section on the CSI Record Form is used to record all services and resources being received by the child, household, or institution at the time of the assessment.

d) Phase IV: Using information toward making a plan (Slides 68-71)

- 1) What are the priorities for services?
Recommendations: How should we proceed?
- 2) What are the most important needs that need to be addressed? (List on the form)
- 3) What are the resources that are used or should be considered? (List on the form)
- 4) What are your recommendations for where to begin as we develop a service plan?
- 5) Your recommendations form the basis for developing a plan of services with the child and family. (Service Planning will be covered in Day 5)
- 6) Important things to consider
 - i. Confidentiality
 - ii. Completing CSI form immediately following the visit
 - iii. This is the family's information. Ensuring it is correct and family agrees.
 - iv. uidelines for Follow-up

Group Exercise: Using the CSI (Slides 72-73)

- 1) Remember the video, *Dancing for Mwakaila*, and think about how we would assess this family using the CSI to identify the needs and strengths
- 2) Divide into 7 groups; each to take one of the CSI areas
Each group to rate Mwakaila and his family on their specific CSI area of need and strengths

- 3) Brief report backs on what we learned including any issues or questions that came up

**Skills Building Workshop Assessment Case Seminar Using Group Case:
Assessing Children and Families (Slide 74-75)**

- a. Get into the four small groups
- b. Using your case as an example from one group member's experience, role play a Para Social Worker interviewing a family in order to assess a child's needs.
- c. Complete the assessment based on your assessment
- d. Record your findings on the Assessment Form (CSI)
- e. Discuss with the group what we learned and prepare to present to large group at Recap tomorrow

Summary of Day 4 & Preview of Day 5