

## Solution Based Casework Quick Tips & Reminders

- Identify the family developmental stages.
- Gain partnership with the family through the assessment process by assuming their good intent in parenting, treating the family as experts in their own situation, and finding out when the family functioning was better and what was different.
- Identify the everyday life situations which the family is having trouble with.
- Track the situation of concern (what led up to the incident/issue; what was different from times when the family handled the situation better).
- Distinguish the difference between the family needs and the individuals personal issues.
- Determine how the family would look if the family was functioning "good enough" to meet the children's needs (behaviorally specific).
- Identify the families network of support.
- Normalize the families and individuals situations.
- Explore exceptions to the problem behavior.

### Family Needs:

- What are their developmental needs?
- What specific tasks are they having problems with?

### Individual Needs:

- Who loses control when the problem happens?
- What specific prevention skills do they need?

Develop a prevention plan with the family and the individuals based on specific prevention skills by:  
**Step 1:** Recognizing Patterns in High Risk Situations  
**Step 2:** Learning the Details of High Risk Patterns.  
**Step 3:** Practice Small Steps toward Change  
**Step 4:** Creating a Plan that Stays Focused on Solutions

Plans are:  
**S**pecific  
**M**easurable  
**A**sessment-based  
**R**ealistic  
**R**esponsibility assigned  
**T**ime framed



## Solution Based Casework Tips for Intake Workers

Intake workers are often the first and sometimes the only contact many people in the community have with our agency, so their ability to engage and give a positive impression to people who call in is of the utmost importance. Intake staff are social workers who need to understand the services we provide and the method of providing those services. Intake staff often provide consultation to callers about our agency.

### Questions that may be used by intake:

- ① What made you decide to call today?
- ① What is the family already doing to try to deal with this challenge?
- ① What's working for the family?
- ① What are the strengths of this family?
- ① What supports do they have in their family? Community?
- ① What services is the family currently involved in?
- ① What do you think the family needs?
- ① What might work for this family?
- ① What do you think would be helpful?
- ① What would you like to see happen with the family?
- ① Was there a time you can recall when things were better for this family?  
If yes, what do you think has changed?
- ① Have you seen some focused patterns that have worked well for family members in solving previous challenges? How might those be built upon or used for this challenge?
- ① On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the challenges this family is facing?
- ① Are you willing to be part of the solution for this family?

Always keep in mind that these are only suggestions for your toolbox. These questions are not appropriate to ask of every caller nor would you probably ever ask all these questions of any one caller. This is where the art of social work comes in, knowing when it is the right time to ask one or more of these questions.

## Solution Based Casework Questions Supervisors Can Ask Workers

These questions are for supervisors to help workers think in Solution Based concepts before going out on a referral.

Remember you would not always ask all or any of these questions. Which questions you ask will depend on the referral, the developmental and skill level, and experience of the worker.



- ❖ What are the safety and risk issues indicated on the referral?
- ❖ From what you already know, who is the family?
- ❖ From what you already know, what is the developmental stage of this family?
- ❖ Given that, what developmental issues and everyday life events might they be facing?
- ❖ How will you find out more about the families everyday life struggles?
- ❖ What was the incident reported in the referral?
- ❖ How will you find out about the sequence of events that led up to this incident?
- ❖ How will you find out about other times that things did not escalate to this level?
- ❖ How will you find out when things were better for this family in the past?
- ❖ From what you already know, who might have a high risk pattern of behavior?
- ❖ How will you find out more about the high risk pattern of behavior?
- ❖ How will you find out how the person with the high-risk behavior will avoid, cope and escape that behavior in the future?
- ❖ What do you think the family will need to do to keep the children safe?
- ❖ Who in the family or within the families cultural resources can be used to increase safety or decrease risk?

## Solution Based Casework Reminders for CPS Supervisors

The following are suggestions of questions that might be addressed in case consultations. They could be during a unit meeting or in a one on one meeting between supervisor and a worker. No one meeting would necessarily incorporate all of these questions.



- Where is the family developmentally?
- What everyday life events do they find challenging or are problematic?
- Describe the family and what brought them to the attention of DCFS.
- Draw a genogram if you wish.
- What is the families view of the event which led to DCFS involvement?
- What sequence of events brought the family to the attention of DCFS?
- What specific task is the family having problems with?
- What was the families intention in this situation? What was the family up to?
- What does the Department want?
- What would be a common goal for both the family and DCFS?
- What does the family hope to achieve during their involvement with DCFS?
- What resources are available to the family to help them toward the goal?
- What resources does DCFS have available that would help them toward the goal?
- What would the family say is the most helpful thing the worker has done for the family?
- What are exceptions to the problem that brought the family to the attention of DCFS?
- Track a sequence of events or an example of an exception to the problem.
- What are the past successes of the family?
- Does the family seem discourages? On a scale of 1-10?
- What would help to raise them one point on that scale?
- How could you help externalize the problem with the family?
- What is the SDM level of risk?
- What is the level of risk the worker put the family at on a scale of 1-10?
- What are some ways the family can lower the risk?
- How will things look when the safety of the child(ren) is good enough?
- How close is the family to being safe on a scale of 1-10?
- Who will do what, where, when and how to get to the next level of safety?
- What exactly is the safety plan? Please read it.
- What are the specific tasks that need to be accomplished.
- How will you know when they are accomplished?
- How will the family celebrate small steps toward those accomplishments?
- How will you celebrate small steps toward those accomplishments?
- How will those accomplishments be documented?
- How will you know when it is time to close the case?
- What is the next thing you are going to do to move this case toward completion? When will you do that?