Training Description:

The APS Standards for Consistency in Determining Findings protocol (Guiding Principles and Standards Matrix) is based on the California Welfare and Institutions Code and APS Regulations. This protocol for determining findings has been adopted as a standard of practice by the CWDA Adults Services Committee, the Protective Services Operations Committee, and CDSS Adult Services Bureau.

In the online trainings, participants utilize the California APS Standards for Consistency in Determining Findings Guiding Principles and Standards Matrix to work case scenarios. The trainings provide clarity on what information to gather during an investigation, what is and is not important in evaluating the information, and guidance in interpreting the information. The Guiding Principles and Standards Matrix make the decision-making process in determining findings easier, enhance effectiveness, and reduce the uncertainty often associated with determining findings.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of the eLearning courses, participants are able to demonstrate use of the Guiding Principles and the Standards Matrix by utilizing case scenarios to:

1. Identify what information should and should not be taken into consideration when determining findings.
2. Apply the findings standards when deciding findings.
3. Apply the standards matrix and be able to use it to arrive at findings.

Target Audience:

All levels of APS managers, supervisors, staff and those in the dual APS/IHSS role. It is suggested that counties adopt a planned implementation in which management complete the online trainings first, followed by supervisors, and then front-line staff. It is suggested that supervisors utilize the following transfer of learning protocol to assist with pre/post training preparation and follow-up for their staff.

Transfer of Learning:

Suggestions for supervisors to support the transfer of learning from online training to on the job.
BEFORE the trainings:

Establish

Establish expectations and objectives with trainee. As a supervisor, you have unique knowledge of staff members' on-the-job performance and can provide your staff with case examples of when there have been disagreements about case findings in your unit. Once they understand why they are to use the tools, make it clear that they will be expected to use the matrix and guiding principles in determining findings in the future. Review the learning objectives with your staff and explain precisely what you anticipate they will be able to do with their new knowledge and skills.

Discuss

Discuss the benefits of the trainings to the staff person's job duties within your organization. Explain that increasing consistency in findings will result in better equity of services to victims, increase the validity of findings from a law enforcement perspective, and is a necessary precursor to the possible future development of a perpetrator registry. Ask them if they can think of any other benefits.

Create

Create an action plan. Once staff understands your expectations and the benefits of using these tools, set up an action plan. How soon should they begin using the tools? How will you provide guidance when they have questions?

Align

Align trainings with the current practices in your organization. Discuss how the trainings align with and differ from current practices in your office. Identify current department practices related to findings including: information gathering practices, decision-making and evaluation methodology, and successes and challenges of the current practice. How will these trainings change the way staff determine findings? If the trainings are not in alignment with current practice in your office, it is important that you commit to correcting the discrepancies if you want staff to adopt the matrix and guiding principles. Supervisors may need to meet with their managers to discuss identified issues.

Learn

Learn about the trainings' content by taking the trainings first. You will be expected to be able to apply the matrix and guiding principles to cases. Therefore, it is important that you fully understand the concepts presented in the trainings. Then, you can model use of the tools for your workers.
AFTER the trainings:

Conduct

Conduct post-training debriefing with learners. Schedule time to meet with learners during a unit meeting or one-on-one supervision soon after the trainings to discuss how the matrix and guiding principles will be used. Allow a few days for the learners to prepare their notes and organize their thoughts prior to this meeting. Have learners bring their Guiding Principles and Standards Matrix to the meeting.

Supervisors can select a challenging case (or use the scenarios provided at the end of the document) and walk through it, applying the Guiding Principles and Standards Matrix as an example of how the protocol will work in the field.

Questions to consider:

- How do the information gathering practices differ from or align with past practice?
- How does the decision-making and evaluation methodology using the Standards Matrix differ from or align with past practice?
- How will the Guiding Principles and Standards Matrix assist case work?
- Are there departmental policies and procedures that have to be adjusted to accommodate the new protocol?
- Do you anticipate changes in cross-reporting as a result of using the protocol?

Encourage

Encourage learners to share with co-workers the key concepts learned during the trainings.

Supervisors can ask workers to bring a case to the unit meeting to present how they applied the guiding principles and standards matrix. Workers could then discuss any questions they have about applying the tools. This is a good time for you to identify your expectations regarding implementation of action plans and for learners to share what they have learned with their co-workers.

Brainstorm

Brainstorm on how to integrate newly acquired knowledge and skills into present services. In supervision and unit meetings, brainstorm how the tools change the way findings are decided. How does this change their interactions with their clients?

Review

Review action plan. Meet with the learners to review together the current action plan and make sure that they are consistently applying the standards matrix and the guiding principles.
Coach and Model

Encourage and, when possible, coach learners as they incorporate these new tools and skills into their work. Encouragement and coaching are very important to the transfer of learning.

Coach learners as they try new skills. When learners begin practicing skills that are difficult or involve many steps, their skill levels will likely vary — some learners may still be novices while others may be closer to mastery. Offer to assist individual learners in a manner that is appropriate to the degree of progress they have made toward mastering the particular skill. When providing guidance, remember to always point out something that the learner is doing well before you offer suggestions for improvements or ask what the learner perceives he or she is doing well. Very often learners can make appropriate suggestions for self-improvement when given the opportunity to reflect on their performance.

Model new skills or behaviors in your work. To show that you support the changes that learners are implementing, adopt new behaviors along with the learners and their co-workers. Don't expect your staff to make changes if you don't model changes as well.

Follow up

Follow up with trainee about progress on the goals and action plans developed during the training. Routine supervisory meetings are a great time to provide constructive feedback and check learners' progress toward mastering and using their new skills, as well as to ask what more you can do as their supervisor to support the transfer of learning.

Case Scenarios

Utilize these sample case scenarios in one-on-one supervision or unit meetings to practice applying the guiding principles and matrix. Allegations, Findings and Rationale/Questions to Consider are provided.

Mr. Lawrence

Mr. Lawrence is a 75 year old, married white male who has been reported to APS by local law enforcement on two occasions in the last month. Both reports were made after Mr. Lawrence was found disoriented, lost, and with very poor hygiene several miles from his home. On this last incident of wandering he was gone for almost 48 hours. Mr. Lawrence’s wife Christina is a Japanese speaking 60 year old female who calls the police to report her husband missing if he does not return within 12 hours. She states that Mr. Lawrence has always been a heavy drinker and recently was diagnosed with dementia.
APS investigated and found that Christina appears to be concerned about her spouse’s welfare but she states that she cannot prevent him from leaving the house especially when the weather is mild and sunny. She reports that he becomes combative and violent when she has tried to lock him in the house and when she has tried to restrict his alcohol intake.

The APS worker has recommended that Christina consider measures that will help to reduce the risk to his health and safety including attendance at an Adult Day Health Program, placement in an Assisted Living facility, or hiring a private pay caregiver. Between Mr. Lawrence’s pension and his Social Security, he earns approximately $2500 a month. Although Christina acknowledges that these services would benefit Mr. Lawrence, she adamantly refuses to use any of his money to pay for his care, claiming that she would not have sufficient resources to pay for her own needs.

Allegations: Neglect and Financial Abuse

Findings:

**Neglect – Confirmed**

Rationale: Though Christina appeared concerned and stated she attempted to “lock” Mr. Lawrence in the house and “restrict his alcohol intake” there is ample evidence that she can’t manage her husband’s care including his very poor hygiene, wandering several miles from home, prior calls to police, and prior police reports. It is also not clear how Mr. Lawrence accesses alcohol.

**Financial abuse – Inconclusive**

Rationale: More evidence is needed to confirm or unfound an allegation of financial abuse.

Questions to consider:

Is Christina acting in the best interest of Mr. Lawrence in refusing to use his funds for services?

Is there physical evidence to prove Christina is using Mr. Lawrence’s funds for things other than regular household expenses?

Does Christina have any other means of support aside from Mr. Lawrence’s pension and social security?
Mrs. Rose

Mrs. Rose is a 67 year old, married African American female who was taken to the hospital via ambulance, secondary to reports of chest pains. When she arrived at the hospital she was found to have a large bedsore across her back. She presented with very poor hygiene including long, untrimmed fingernails and feces caked around her colostomy bag. Mrs. Rose was primarily bedbound as the result of a stroke three years earlier. She also suffered from COPD, diabetes, and obesity.

Mrs. Rose was alert and oriented, and she informed the APS Worker who responded to the report from the hospital that she had been receiving care from her spouse. She stated that the bedsore was the result of the fact that she was always itching and she used a back scratcher to alleviate this. Mrs. Rose was very cooperative with the hospital staff and even assisted the staff to provide her with grooming and cleaning.

The APS Worker called local law enforcement to cross report the case of suspected neglect. The police officer that responded then went to the client’s home to interview the client’s spouse. The police officer found that the client’s spouse had very poor hygiene and smelled of urine. The house was dilapidated and run down. The client’s spouse stated that his wife “would not let me” provide for care for her. He reported that his adult son also lived in the home but he was not present for the officer to interview him.

The officer told the APS Worker that he felt that APS should open a case on the client’s spouse, and he further stated that he was just going to file an incident report and close the case.

**Allegation:** Neglect

**Findings:**

**Neglect – Confirmed**

**Rationale:** It is clear from the physical evidence upon arrival to the hospital that Mrs. Rose’s spouse is not providing adequate care for her though he is the identified caregiver. Mrs. Rose behaved in a cooperative and helpful manner in the hospital which raises questions about the spouse’s statement that Mrs. Rose would not let him provide for her care.

Open case for client’s spouse:

**Allegations:** Self-Neglect and Neglect

**Rationale:** There is also question about the spouse’s ability to care adequately for his own needs as per the police visit to the home and subsequent recommendation. The role of the son is unclear; he may be a caregiver for his father (possibly even both parents). The case that is being opened for the client’s spouse with the allegation of self-neglect should also be investigated for possible neglect by the son.
Mr. Mario

Mr. Mario is a 90 year old widower who had been living alone in his own home for 10 years until he suffered a massive stroke. Upon discharge from the nursing home where he had been receiving rehabilitation therapies for several months, Mr. Mario hired a home care agency to provide him with 24 hour care. Mr. Mario required help with all ADLs. Although Mr. Mario had several caregivers from this agency, he developed a strong connection with Betty, the primary caregiver that the agency sent out.

Mr. Mario’s son Steven called APS to report that he believed Betty had been financially abusing his father. Steven reported that he did not have access to his father’s accounts and his father refused to let him see any bank statements, but he believed that Betty had taken him to the bank and that she was taking money from him. The home care agency called APS after they received a call from Steven about the same issue. They told APS that Betty had recently resigned from the agency.

Mr. Mario informed the APS Worker that responded to the case that he and Betty were very good friends and that he was not paying her anything for her help with transportation or personal care. He showed the APS worker his bank statements for the past 6 months. The APS Worker found that Mr. Mario had written out four checks for $200 each to different caregivers from the home care agency, although none were written to Betty. Mr. Mario stated that he had given these funds as gifts over the holidays.

Betty cooperated with the APS investigation and she also denied that Mr. Mario had ever given her money directly for her services. She stated that she quit the agency and was now working for him for free about 20 hours a week, while Mr. Mario continued to have other caregivers from the agency come in to provide him with care. Mr. Mario informed the APS worker that Betty was now his POA for health and finance, and she additionally had become the beneficiary of his estate.

The APS worker contacted the bank directly and searched public records to evaluate any possible financial abuse related to Mario’s home. No evidence was found that Betty had taken any funds from Mr. Mario.

Allegation: Financial Abuse/Undue Influence

Findings:

Financial Abuse/Undue Influence – Unfounded

Rationale: This is a difficult case with many grey areas and even though your gut may be telling you something is not right, there is no evidence that the client is a victim of financial abuse/undue influence by Betty, the alleged perpetrator.

What if Mr. Mario had mild dementia? How would that change your finding? Answer: The finding would be inconclusive. As per the guiding principles – “When capacity is in question, and the worker has no professional psychological testing results, a worker should not make an unfounded finding.”

What if the alleged perpetrator was Mr. Mario’s only caregiver? Would that change your finding?
Case Scenarios - Handout

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