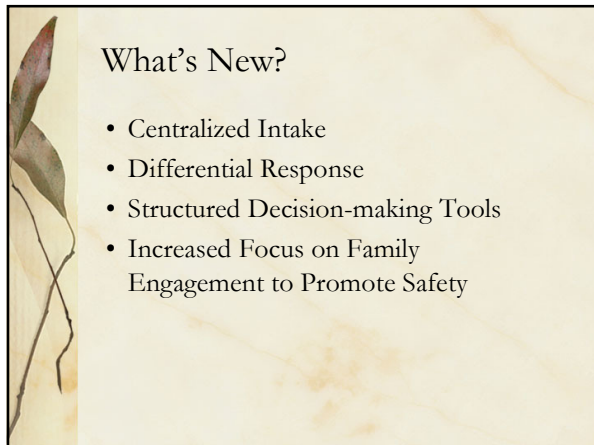


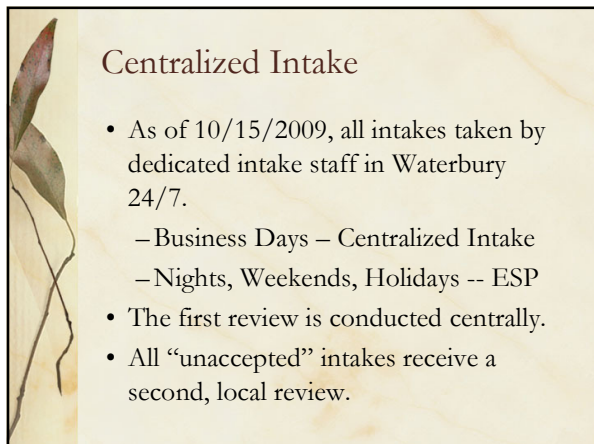
Differential Response to Reports of
Child Abuse and Neglect

It Takes a Vision
October 28, 2009
Karen Shea, MSW



What's New?

- Centralized Intake
- Differential Response
- Structured Decision-making Tools
- Increased Focus on Family Engagement to Promote Safety

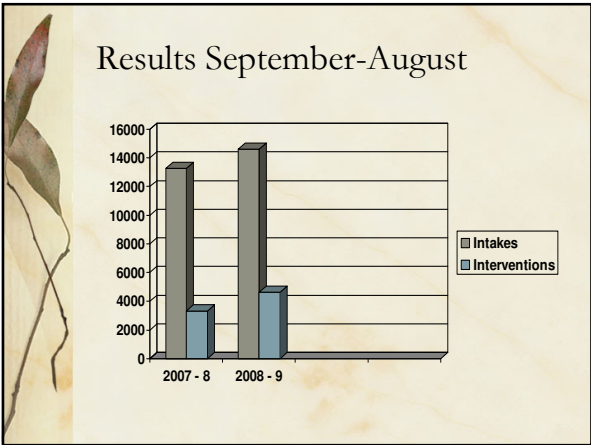


Centralized Intake

- As of 10/15/2009, all intakes taken by dedicated intake staff in Waterbury 24/7.
 - Business Days – Centralized Intake
 - Nights, Weekends, Holidays -- ESP
- The first review is conducted centrally.
- All “unaccepted” intakes receive a second, local review.

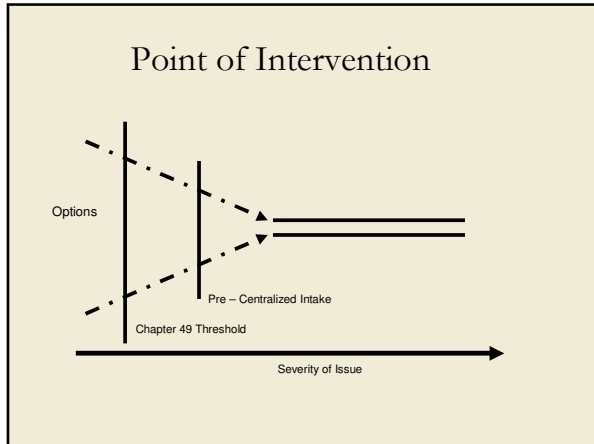
Why Centralized Intake?

- Promotes quality in information gathering and documentation.
- Promotes quality and consistency in decision-making.



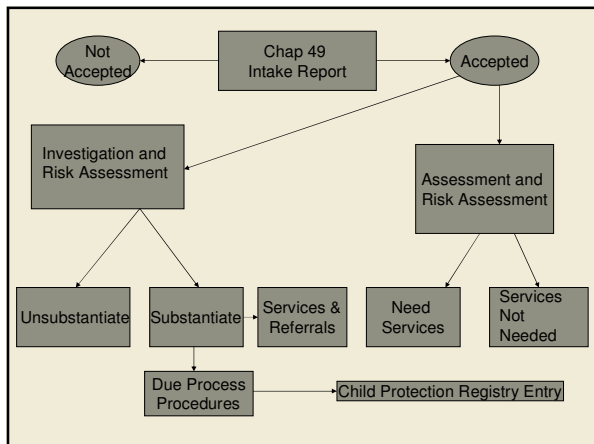
To Say It Another Way

- Intakes ↑ 10%
- Child Safety Interventions ↑ 39%.
– 1300 MORE interventions than previous 12 months.
- Acceptance **rate** increased from 25% to 31.6%.



What is Differential Response?

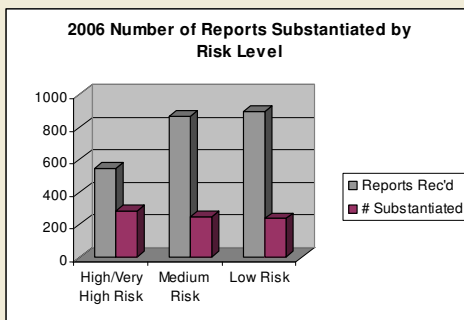
“A formal response of the agency that assesses the needs of the child or family without requiring a determination that maltreatment has occurred or that the child is at risk of maltreatment.” (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2005)



Differential Response...

- Not intended to intervene with **more** families.
- Provides for **different** responses that to different types of reports.
 - Investigation
 - Assessment

Context for Implementation



Key Differences

- Child Interview
 - Investigation – Can interview without caretaker permission
 - Assessment – Must have permission
- Orientation of Focus
 - Investigation -- Historically/Incident Focus
 - Assessment -- Future Oriented w/ Focus On Incident only to inform future risk

Case Determination

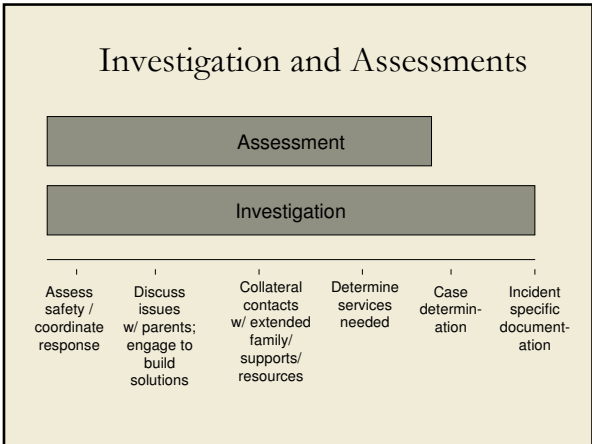
- Investigation
 - Substantiation/Unsubstantiation
- Assessment
 - Need for Service/No Need for Service
- Both
 - Risk Assessment determines whether DCF will provide ongoing services


Investigation Required

- Investigation required for accepted reports of “substantial child maltreatment”
 - Sexual abuse by an adult
 - Abandonment
 - Child fatality
 - Malicious punishment
 - Serious physical injury
- More restrictive than required by law.

Investigation and Assessments


The diagram consists of two gray shapes on a light beige background. On the left is a square labeled "Investigation". To its right is a circle labeled "Assessment".





Current & Anticipated Impact

- Workforce -- All social workers need ongoing opportunities to reflect and develop in this new practice.
 - Front End
 - Ongoing
- Workload -- Fewer children in custody & more ongoing child protection cases.
- Greater need for family centered strategies and services at the front-end.

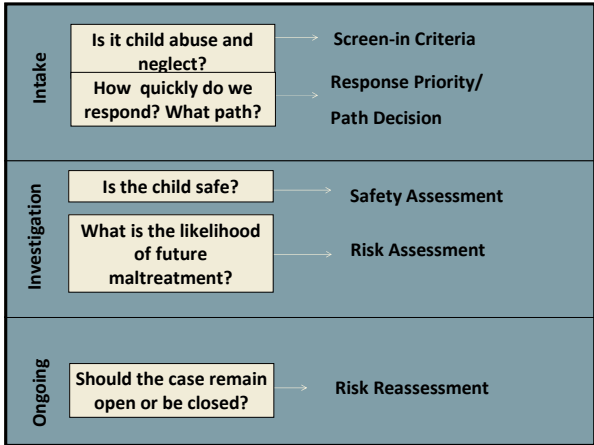


Structured Decision-making (SDM)

- Safety Assessment with Safety Mapping
- Risk Assessment
- Risk Re-Assessment

Why SDM?

- **Improve assessments** of family situations to better know the protection needs of children.
- Increase **consistency** and **accuracy**.
- Increase efficiency by making the best use of **available resources**.
- Provide **management** with data needed for program administration, planning, evaluation, and budgeting.

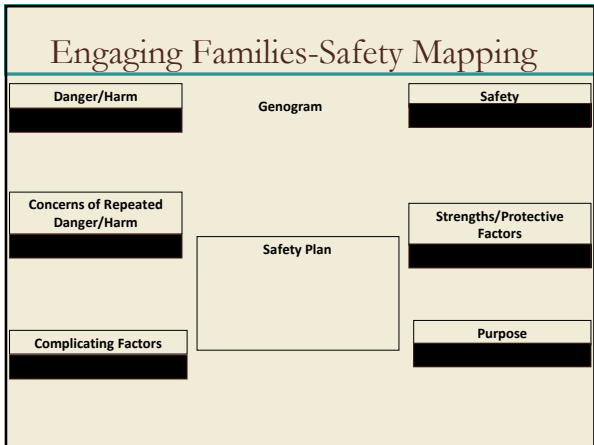


Safety vs. Risk

- The assessment of **safety** focuses on **present danger**, a clearly observable behavior or a threat that is actively occurring, is about to occur or is likely to occur in the present time.
- **Risk** is the **probability** that any form of child maltreatment, regardless of severity, may occur or recur in the future.


Safety Assessment

- Are dangers present that place a child in danger of **immediate harm**?
- If so, are there **protective capacities** that can be used to directly and immediately control the danger?
- Can these protective capacities be used to develop a **safety plan** to be implemented now that would allow the child to remain in the home?
- Or must the child be **placed**?




Risk Assessment

- Looks at the likelihood of future harm.
 - Identifies families who can benefit most from ongoing case management
 - Guides decision to open or close case
- Risk Assessment is an actuarial tool, validated across time and populations.



Common Thread:
Safety and Family Engagement

- Focus on engaging families as strategy to promote safety:
 - Improve outcomes for the children by helping families to achieve true and lasting change;
 - Broaden our thinking about how to achieve those outcomes;
 - Increase family and youth satisfaction;
 - Increase staff morale.



Leveraging Court Authority

- Thoughtful Examination/Weighing
 - Is it really necessary to achieve safety?
 - Have we carefully considered options that do not introduce new trauma to the child?
 - If court is necessary, can we utilize new JJPA options that do not require out of home placement?
