

Policy Rules for SAMS Implementation

Introduction

The introduction of the Safety Assessment Management System (SAMS) is being conducted according to a phased implementation schedule. This means that a portion of SAMS is being implemented in a limited number of counties known as Pilot Districts. This method of implementation poses certain challenges in providing Child Protective Services. In order to provide guidance during the implementation process the policy rules contained in this release were developed for staff in both pilot and non pilot counties.

In developing policy rules it is not possible to anticipate in advance every possible scenario that may occur. The goal is to identify the most common situations and develop rules accordingly. Cases that fall outside these rules should be addressed through consultation. As a part of the implementation process the Bureau has designated selected staff to serve as consultants. These consultants are known collectively as Special Forces. When a situation that is not covered by these rules arises then it is expected that the Special Forces will be contacted for consultation.

These policy rules ***must be applied*** in concert with all other applicable CPS and child welfare policies. SAMS is a very important part of the CPS process but it does not constitute all the casework actions that are required by policy.

A. Policy Rules for Pilot Counties

1.1 Cases Opened at the Time of the Implementation of the Safety Assessment and Management System (SAMS)

On the implementation date of SAMS there will be existing cases that were opened under the policy rules for Safety First and associated CPS policy rules contained in Chapter 70,000. ***These cases will not be converted to the SAMS process.*** Instead, these cases will continue to be processed according to the policies for Safety First and CPS policy contained in Chapter 70,000.

2.1 Referrals

On the date that SAMS is implemented there will be existing referrals. By this is meant that there will be referrals that were accepted prior to the implementation date of SAMS. Depending on the status of the referral the following processes will be used to address these referrals.

If the referral has been accepted but no contact has been made with the family then the worker assigned to the case will complete the Family Functioning Assessment.

If the referral has been accepted and contact has been made with the family prior to implementation, then the worker will use the Safety First policy and associated policies in chapter 70,000 to address the referral. If a case is subsequently opened then the worker will

process the case according to the Safety First policy and the associated policies in Chapter 70,000.

3.1 Cases Opened for Maltreatment Only

In completing the Family Functioning Assessment the worker is required to make a decision whether or not to open a case for ongoing Child Protective Service in Section C: CONCLUSION (SAFETY DECISION). If the decision is made to open the case because maltreatment only was substantiated the worker will arrange for the completion of a needs assessment and the provision of necessary services. The manner in which the worker will complete these actions depends on the availability of services through the ASO.

3.1 An ASO Provider is Available in the Pilot County

If an ASO provider is available the worker will make a referral requesting a needs assessment and service plan. The receipt of these services is at the discretion of the family and depending on their response the worker will take the following actions.

a) The family Agrees to Accept Services.

In these cases the ASO provider is expected to submit a monthly report to the worker detailing the results of service delivery. The worker will monitor these reports and at the end of ninety days after the beginning of service delivery will close the case unless the provider has indicated that there are safety concerns.

b) The Family Declines Services or Stops Participating in Service Delivery

A family may decline to accept services from an ASO provider or, after initially agreeing to accept services, may discontinue their participation before service delivery has been completed. In either instance upon notification by the provider the worker will close the case.

c) Safety Issues Are Identified

During the provision of services the ASO provider may identify issues which they believe requires a referral to CPS. In these instances the information from the ASO provider will be treated just like any other referral and screened out or accepted according to the policy rules for SAMS.

3.2 An ASO Provider is not Available in the Pilot County

If an ASO provider is not available then a CPS worker must be assigned to complete the needs assessment and service plan. (These forms will be released with this policy.) Upon completion of the service plan the worker will be responsible for arranging for or directly providing the necessary services. At the end of ninety days the worker will document the results of service provision and close the case.

3.3 Family Functioning Assessment is Completed and Case is Opened for Ongoing Services

A case may be opened for ongoing CPS services at the conclusion of the Family Functioning Assessment because the worker has determined that a child is unsafe. All cases opened for this reason require the completion of the Family Assessment and Treatment Plan. To complete the Family Assessment and Treatment plan the worker must select Outcomes and Dimensions. Outcomes and Dimensions are described in Section 4 of Chapter 70,000 which is online.

Currently, the components of SAMS that are being implemented in the Pilot Counties do not correspond directly with the Outcomes and Dimensions described in Chapter 70,000. In order to assist staff in selecting appropriate Outcomes and Dimensions the following information was developed. This information is illustrative not exhaustive. Selecting Outcomes and Dimensions is a collaborative process and may involve the worker, the worker's supervisor and a member of Special Forces as necessary.

a) Sources of Information

In determining which Outcomes and Dimensions to select the worker should pay particular attention to these sections of the Family Functioning Assessment: Section 3, Parenting –Discipline; Section 4, Parenting –General; and, Section 5, Adult functioning. In order to make the best use of the information in these Sections the worker must thoroughly explore these areas with the family during the completion of the Family Functioning Assessment.

b) Examples

In selecting the Outcomes and Dimensions the following examples are provided to illustrate the choices that may be made.

Family Functioning Assessment: Sections 3 and 4

In gathering the information to complete these Sections of the Family Functioning Assessment the worker may decide that the parent(s) do not possess either the knowledge or skill necessary for effective parenting. In this instance the worker may choose the Outcome, parenting knowledge and skill and the corresponding Dimension or Dimensions.

It is also possible that there are other Outcomes that influence the parent's ability to parent effectively. It is possible that the parents do not communicate effectively with each other about the care of their children and may have very different ideas about disciplinary practices or other aspects of child rearing. In these instances it may be appropriate to select the Outcome, communication skills as well.

Family Functioning Assessment: Section 5

In gathering the information to complete this Section the worker may conclude that the parent(s) adult functioning is impaired by their lack of problem solving skills. In this instance the worker would choose the Outcome, problem solving skills and the corresponding Dimension or Dimensions

It is possible that the parent(s) ability to problem solve is not just the result of a lack of problem solving skills. The parent may also have self esteem issues which affect their problem solving abilities. In this instance the worker would also choose the Outcome, self-sufficiency and the appropriate Dimension.

Case Transfers

If a case is transferred from a non pilot county into a pilot county then the worker assigned to the case will continue to provide services according to the policy rules for Safety First and CPS contained in Chapter 70,000.

Case Closure

For every case in which a Family Functioning Assessment has been completed the worker will use the SAMS safety evaluation tool. The worker will use this form and the SAMS process associated with it to determine if the children continue to be unsafe or if the children are safe. Once it has been determined that the children are safe then the worker can close the case if the case is not involved in court proceedings. If the case is involved in court proceedings then the worker must make the recommendation to close the case to the MDT and the court and cannot close the case until the court agrees with the worker's recommendation.

c) Policy Rules for Non Pilot Counties

Case Transfers

When a case that was opened in a pilot county is transferred to a non pilot county there are two options for completing the casework process.

- 1) The worker assigned to the case in the pilot county can continue to carry the case even though the family has moved to a non pilot county. This case assignment should be negotiated with the assistance of the Regional Program Managers.
- 2) If it is not possible for the worker from the pilot county to continue to carry the case then the worker assigned to the case in the non pilot county should transition the case to the Safety First casework process. The worker will use the information from the SAMS Family Functioning Assessment and Safety Plan to complete the Safety First assessment and safety plan. Once the transition has been completed then the worker will continue to with the casework processes contained in the current CPS policy.

d) Policy Rules for Pilot/Non Pilot Counties

It is possible that a referral involving a non pilot county will be received in a pilot county. (Reports Involving another Jurisdiction are addressed in Section 2.8, chapter 70,000.) It may be necessary for Districts to work together to conduct the assessment. In order to facilitate this collaboration the assessments and casework processes will be completed according to the Safety First policies by both the pilot and non pilot districts.

It is possible that a report of suspected child abuse or neglect involving a DHHR employee or others who may present a conflict of interest will be received in a pilot or non pilot county. When this occurs the following actions should be taken:

- 1) If the referral is received in a pilot county then the CSM of that county should arrange for the staff in another pilot county to complete the SAMS Family Functioning Assessment.
- 2) If the referral is received in a non pilot county then the CSM of that county should arrange for a worker from another non pilot county to complete the initial assessment.