Maine Department of Health and Human Services

Child Welfare Caseworker Competency Based Screening & Selection Training Curriculum

Prepared by the Institute for Public Sector Innovation
Recruitment & Retention Grant Funded

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE
Muskie School of Public Service

CHILD WELFARE CASEWORKER COMPETENCY BASED SCREENING CURRICULUM

Child Welfare Training Institute
A Collaborative Agreement Between
Department of Health and Human Services
And
Muskie School of Public Service

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July 2005

An Overview of the Curriculum

Target Audience:

Child Welfare Supervisors and Administrators

Length of Workshop:

8:30 – 4:00 (7.5 hours total, 6 hours of training)

Materials Needed to Present Workshop:

- Name tents
- Index cards entitled "Questions and Issues" for tables
- Candy for tables
- Yellow hi-liter for each participant
- Post It cards for each table to use to tab Background information in Resource Guide
- "Eye candy" cards for walls (statements about good practice in selection of new staff)
- Power point disc
- Resource Guides for each participant
- Handout packet for each participant (includes handouts and power point packet)
- Embedded evaluation materials for participants (score sheets and scripts)
- Satisfaction Evaluation forms for each participant
- Blank flip charts
- Demonstration videotapes 1-4
- Embedded Evaluation videotape
- Colored markers
- Masking tape?
- Laptop/LCD and screen

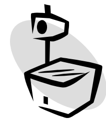
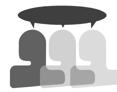
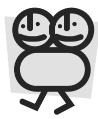
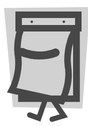
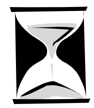
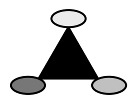
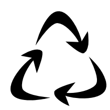
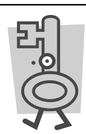
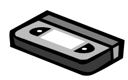
PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

Child Welfare Caseworker Screening Materials – a Resource Guide

Handout Packet

1. Agenda
2. Flow Chart of the Hiring and Selection process
3. Standards for Supervisors on Recruitment, Screening and Selection
4. Power Point Outline
5. Interviewer-Applicant Rapport
6. Andrea's Interview – Your Critique
7. Communication Tips
8. Applying the Scoring Guide to Bobbie
9. Fact-finding Interview with Andrea-Worksheet for Evaluating the Panel
10. Fact-finding Interview with Bobbie-Worksheet for Evaluating the Applicant
11. Case Analysis - Andrea
12. Case Analysis - Bobbie
13. Developing the Summary Score for the Candidate
14. Child Welfare Caseworker Rating Sheet

Icon Key:

			Overhead
	Demo		Plenary
	Dyad Activity		Practice
	Flip Chart		Sensitive Time Frame
	Handout		Small Group Activity
	Individual Activity		Transfer of Learning
	Key Points		Video

Overview of the Training Day

Time	Content and Training Methods	Participant Materials	Page
20 minutes 8:30-8:50	**Welcome and purpose** (presentation and discussion) ➢ Purposes of this training ➢ Agenda ➢ Question and issue cards ➢ Orientation to participant materials ➢ Leadership role for exercises	RG Participant Handout Packet HO	
10 minutes 8:50-9:00	**Overview of Screening and Selection** (presentation and discussion) ➢ Flowchart ➢ What's new in: panel interview, second interview and reference check ➢ Standards ➢ Competencies: for new staff – original and revised ➢ Principles of screening and selection ➢ Structure: defensible, valid and reliable	PP HO RG_	
5 minutes 9:00-9:05	**The Panel Interview** ➢ Purposes ➢ Interviewer-Applicant Rapport ➢ The four components: Preparation for Written Exercise, Standard Interview, Fact-finding interview, and Written exercise	HO	
10 minutes 9:05 – 9:15	**The Standard Interview** – conducting structured interviews (presentation and discussion) ➢ asking questions ➢ use of prompts and clarification ➢ documentation, roles of the panel members ➢ common errors	RG_ HO	
30 minutes 9:15-9:45	**The Standard Interview – Performance of Panel and Practice with Andrea** Observing and critiquing (watch Video #1of a standard interview, critique performance of panel on worksheet, discuss in small group and plenary, and suggest improvements) ➢ appropriate and inappropriate use of prompts and clarification ➢ roles of panel members ➢ practice with Andrea on Question #6 ➢ Communication tips	RG_ HO	

10 minutes 9:45 -9:55	**Applying the Scoring Guide to Candidates – Best Practice** (presentation and discussion) ➢ What is competency-based rating ➢ Principles in scoring ➢ Screening for competencies ➢ Justifying rating	RG__	
15 minutes 9:55 – 10:10	BREAK		
40 minutes 10:10-10:50	**Applying the Scoring Guide to Candidates – Practice with Bobbie** (watch Video #2 of a standard interview, critique candidate on rating sheet, reach consensus on rating in small group, share in plenary ➢ Using the Scoring Guide relevant indicators to the candidate's responses	HO	
20 minutes 10:50-11:20	**Consistency in Interviewing**	RG__	
40 minutes 11:20 – 12:00	**Embedded Evaluation of Rating a Candidate** (review Video 3 and rate candidate on score sheet, turn in score sheet for the evaluation, process answers in plenary)	Evaluation score sheet	
1 hour 12:00 – 1:00	**LUNCH**		
5 minutes 1:00-1:05	**The Case Study as the Basis for the Fact-finding Interview** - overview (presentation and questions) ➢ Purpose of the case review and fact finding interview ➢ Role of the panel in giving instructions to candidates ➢ Outline of case analysis ➢ Case materials	RG__	
25 minutes 1:05-1:30	**The Fact-finding Interview – Observing and Critiquing the Resource Person** (watch Video #3, critique individually on worksheet, discuss in plenary)	HO	
5 minutes 1:40 -1:45	**The Fact-finding Interview – Overview of Rating Competencies** (presentation and questions) ➢ Competencies to look for ➢ How to rate candidate's performance on these competencies		
45 minutes 1:40-2:30	**The Fact-finding Interview – Practice Rating Competencies** (Watch Video #4, individually rate the candidate on the rating sheet, discuss and develop consensus in small group, share in plenary)	HO	

15 minutes 2:30 – 2:45	**BREAK**		
5 minutes 2:45-2:50	**Case Analysis/Summary Overview** (presentation and questions) ➢ Purpose of written case analysis Competencies to look for	RG __	
20 minutes 2:50 - 3:10	**Case Analysis/Summary – Practice Scoring and Critique SCORING GUIDE** (Participants read examples of a case analysis, discuss in plenary and suggest modifications of the existing SCORING GUIDE)	HO 11 & 12	
20 minutes 3:10-3:30	**Summary Score for the Candidate** (Presentation and discussion) ➢ How the final rating is developed ➢ Dealing with discrepancies ➢ Arriving at consensus ➢ Documentation ➢ Providing information to hiring supervisor for second interview	HO	
10 minutes 3:30 – 3:40	**Guidelines for the Second Interview** (presentation and discussion) ➢ Process ➢ Need for structure ➢ Examples of questions from program groups ➢ Documentation ➢ Criteria to support decision	HO	
10 minutes 3:40 – 3:50	**Reference Checks and Clearances** (presentation and questions) ➢ Review of the packet ➢ Waiver for release of job-related information	HO	
10 minutes 3:50 – 4:00	**Wrap up and Evaluation and Next Steps** (Final questions and trainee satisfaction evaluation)		

Step 1:	**Welcome and Purpose**	🕘 **8:30–8:50**

Step 1.1.

Welcome participants and explain the purpose of the training.

The purpose of this training is to bring you up to date on the selection and hiring process for caseworkers. Many of you have been involved in this process for years as members of panels and in hiring caseworkers. We have talked to a lot of you and find that on the whole you area satisfied with the current process, but feel that there is room of improvement and that since many new supervisors did not participate in the original training, it would be good to provide some focused training.

During this training you will be introduced to the updated process and get an opportunity to view and critique some mock interviews, hone your skills on rating applicants, and contribute to our current efforts to develop some additional materials that will continue to improve this process. There will be a variety of exercises, one of which will give us some information that later will help us assess how well this training is working. As always, we appreciate your feedback and suggestions for improvement or additions to training on this topic.

Step 1.2. *Briefly cover the* ***Agenda (HO1*** *) and housekeeping. Explain that they can ask questions during the training and that also there are "questions and issues" cards on the table if they want to write a question or issue for the trainer to address. Trainers will look at these cards during breaks.*

Step 1.3. *Orient participants to the materials they have:*

- *Handout packet, including the Powerpoint slides and other handouts*
- *Resource Guide*

Step 1.4 *Identify the table leaders by asking each table to identify the person at the table who has the most experience as a panel member and appoint that person as table leader for the remainder of the day. Give each table leader a leader icon and tell them that there will be various exercises throughout the day that will need leadership at the table and a report out person. The table leader may assume this role or delegate it to whomever she wishes and will give the icon to the person to whom leadership has been temporarily delegated.*
Suggest that the table pick as leader the person who has conducted the most panel interviews. Have tables discuss this, then get feedback from them on how many panel interviews they have conducted. List the numbers on the flipchart to get a total.

Step 2:	**Overview of Screening and Selection**	🕘 **8:50– 9:00**

Step 2.1. **Powerpoint #1** Let's begin with an overview of the whole screening and selection process. *Refer participants to* **HO 2 Flowchart** *in their Participant Handouts.*

As shown in this chart, the overall hiring and screening process has many steps. Some of it is in the hands of other people (e.g. the paper screen is done by the Bureau of Human Resources).

Powerpoint #2 Today, we are going to focus on three of the steps in the overall screening process: the Panel Interview, the Second Interview and the Reference Check. These are all steps that you have direct responsibility for doing.

Powerpoint #3 What's new about this material?

- **Panel Interview:** new questions, scoring guide for all questions, updated case materials
- **Second Interview**: recommendations on standards and questions
- **Reference Checks:** resource materials for conducting checks.

Powerpoint #4
In reviewing the standards for supervisors we realized that there was no standard related to recruitment, screening and selection. That has now been developed (*Refer to* **HO 3 Standards for Supervisors on Recruitment, Screening and Selection**). Today, in this workshop we are going to focus on only four of the expectations in the standards – those that relate directly to the screening process.

Powerpoint #5 Competency-Based Selection The whole purpose of screening people for jobs is to get the right person in the right job. If we do, then we both serve that person and the organization well. Because the better the fit, the better the person will feel and will perform.

Powerpoint #6 Search and Hiring Model This is the paradigm that we need to keep in mind as we are searching for the best person to do the job. We need to think of the best way to match the person, to the job and the organization.

Powerpoint #7 Best Practice in Screening Today we are focusing on the Standard Interview, but the same basic principles apply to all of the steps in the process – ***job related, objectivity and consistency.***

Powerpoint #8 Research Based design principles There's a huge body of literature on best practice in screening but these are the five basic principles: base the process on a current job analysis, use several job related assessments, focus on specific competencies, and standardize the whole process.

Powerpoint #9 Job-descriptions: The basic first step in the screening process is to identify the responsibilities of the job, what is it that we are expecting the applicant to do. Over the years, the job of the caseworker has changed considerably, but the job description has not. Therefore, we have updated the job description to clarify the current performance expectations for all caseworkers in the following program areas: Adolescent Caseworkers, Adoptions, Child protective; Children's Services, and Intake Workers. This information provides the basis for the screening process.

Powerpoint #10 Multiple job related assessments: We use a variety of approaches in the screening process for caseworkers – the standard interview, fact finding interview, written exercise, second interview and reference check. The purpose of all of them is to elicit information that will predict as accurately as possible how the applicant is going to behave on the job

Powerpoint #11 Entry level competencies: When we did the study of the competencies of outstanding caseworkers in 1989, we identified 39 different competencies needed to be effective. Clearly we can't expect applicants for the job to have already developed all of these competencies. Therefore we try to focus on those competencies that

- Are most likely to predict long-term success on the job;
- Make the difference between average and outstanding performance; and
- Are the most difficult to change through training and supervision.

Powerpoint #12 Underlying competencies: In the personnel field there's a saying "you can teach a turkey to climb a tree, but it's easier to hire a squirrel". The point is that it is the underlying competencies that predict success on the job. We're not looking for the most intelligent people, or those with the best interpersonal skills, but those people whose competencies best match those needed in this particular job of child welfare caseworker.

Powerpoint #13 Focus on Underlying competencies: In the screening process we focus on the underlying competencies – the attitudes, values and traits that people bring to the job. You can teach people how to fill out the right form or recognize the dynamics of abuse and neglect; it's very difficult to make someone more flexible or change their values about children and families.

Powerpoint #14 Old screening competencies: In the original version of the screening package in 1995 we identified nine competencies. Since then, the state of Maine has adopted core competencies used in the performance appraisal process; there has been considerable research on the competencies that predict retention of child welfare staff; and the Bureau has adopted concepts related to Emotional Intelligence (In the Resource Guide you will find a matrix showing the competencies side by side – Section I, 4-5).

Powerpoint #15 New screening index: Therefore, we decided that the original listing of competencies needed to be updated to reflect this new information. The new listing of competencies to screen for has been expanded and includes indicators from emotional intelligence, the research on retention and the state core competencies. As you see from the matrix there is a lot of commonality among the three different sources. Later we will look in more detail at the changes that have been made in the screening index.

Powerpoint #16 Structure: Structure serves a number of purposes in the screening process:

Defensible: it is in compliance with merit systems principles and laws related to hiring and selection for providing a fair and objective process. If all candidates are treated equally they are less likely to feel that they have been treated unfairly and much less likely to prevail if they complain or grieve about the process.
Validity: it is more likely to predict success on the job. People who are screened using a structured approach, focusing on job-related competencies are more likely to do well on the job.
Reliability: it ensures that the same process will be used with different interviewers, at different times and in different settings. Using the same approach means that trained interviewers in Biddeford will come to the same conclusion about a candidate as the people in Skowhegan.

Powerpoint #17 Elements of Structure: the approach that the Bureau uses in the panel interview is very structured – you allot the same time to each candidate, ask the same questions in the same order provide all candidates the same opportunity to participate in all of the components of the screening process and use the same rating criteria for all candidates.

Powerpoint #18 Screening Process: In summary the screening process that we will be experiencing today follows the principles of good practice – it is job related, includes a variety of assessments, competency-based, and structured. We hope that this will help in making more informed hiring decisions that benefit both new applicants and the Bureau.

Step 2.2 Review the chart in the Resource Guide (I pp 4-5)

Trainer note:
Explain that the first column is the original listing of competencies developed in 1995. Since that time the State of Maine contracted with Hay Associates to do a competency study of the competencies needed to be effective in Maine state government as a whole, not just in child welfare. Those competencies are shown in the second column and are the competencies that used in the state Performance Appraisal process. In the third column are competencies derived from the research of the characteristics that predict retention as a child welfare caseworker. In the fourth column are the emotional intelligence competencies developed by Daniel Goldman and used by Tony Morrison in his training. As you will see there is a great deal of commonality across the columns. In all of them, we are looking at the underlying personal characteristics that people bring to the job.

Based on this information we developed the new listing of entry level competencies shown on pp 1-6 of Section I in the Resource Manual. Whenever possible we tried to make the language consistent with the that used in the performance appraisal process.

Step 3:	The Panel Interview	⌚ 9:00 – 9:05

Step 3.1

Present the following on the purposes of the Panel Interview:
Interviews can have two purposes: recruitment and screening. In a tight labor market, it may be more important to focus on recruitment – attracting candidates to work for the Bureau. In others, where the qualified labor pool is larger, it may be more important to focus on the screening aspect of the interview. The Panel Interview has a dual purpose: attracting the best qualified applicants to continue in the process and screening out those who are not qualified.

We should remember that applicant reaction to interviews has a major impact on their decision about whether or not to accept the job. The interview is an opportunity not just for you to assess the candidate and to determine whether they will be a good fit for the job, but for them to assess the organization and to decided whether or they would accept a job if offered and/or recommend others to apply. There needs to be a balance between structure, objectivity and rigor in the selection interview and encouraging the applicant that the Department is an attractive place to work.

The handout lists some suggestions for improving rapport with the applicant (**HO 5 Interviewer-Applicant Rapport).**

Components of the Panel Interview
Section I, Page 8 of the Resource guide lists the four components of the Panel Interview:

- Preparation for Written Exercise
- Standard Interview
- Fact-finding Interview and
- Written Exercise.

To increase rapport, we are recommending that the Standard Interview be shortened to 35 minutes and that you take a few minutes (no more than five) at the beginning to greet the candidate, introduce the panel and explain the process. Then allow the candidate five minutes at the end to ask questions about the job.

Step 4	The Standard Interview – Conducting Structured Interviews	⌚ 9:05- 9:15

Step 4.1. *Provide the following information*

Section II of the Resource Guide has information on the revised Standard Interview. In the Standard Interview, we ask three types of questions

Opinion: e.g. *Briefly describe for this panel why you are interested in becoming a Human services worker.*

Past Behavior: e.g. *Describe a time when you have been uncomfortable with a course of action or decision that you have made.*

Situational: e.g. *Assume you are a caseworker. You are making a home visit- you knock repeatedly on the door but no one responds. Inside, you can hear a baby crying. What do you do*?

Trainer Notes:

According to a review of the research, all three types of questions are valid in terms of predicting behavior on the job.

1. ***Opinion:*** The Opinion questions provide insight into the candidate's thinking and self-awareness.

2. ***Past Behavior:*** Past behavior questions are based on the theory that behavior in actual past situations can predict future behavior on the job. Two elements are important. First that applicants' answers are presumed to be deliberate choices, not mindless, reflex actions performed without regard for their consequences. Second, the more consistent the behaviors are over a number of actions in the past the more likely they are to behave in a similar way in the future. Therefore the answers predict job performance because they describe habitual patterns of intentional behavior that applicants perform in situations that are like situations that happen on the job.

This assumes that people are telling the truth – they may present self in best light, but it's difficult to fabricate, especially if interviewers probe and/or ask questions that screen for the same competency across different situations.

3. ***Situational:*** Questions related to behavior in hypothetical future situations can predict job performance because they measure intentions. The most immediate antecedent of behavior is intention or goal. There is a great deal of empirical support for predictions made by goal-setting theory about effects of goals on performance level (Lock & Latham, 1990) and that interviews that use structured questions about behavior in future situations have validity (McDaniel et al., 1994). Applicants may be reporting what they think is the best way to deal with situations described in interview questions, will try to perform these actions when the situations occur on the job and have the skills necessary to perform them effectively.

Whatever the type of question, we are not looking for right answers, but insight into the competencies – including the thinking processes used, what motivates the candidate to behavior in certain ways and their self-awareness including their ability to reflect on and learn from their experience.

We did focus groups and surveys of supervisors to find out which questions they liked and which they wanted to change. As you will see, people generally like the existing questions and so only a few have been changed. #3 is a new question. #10 replaces the old situational question about working late in the office and getting two calls at the same time.

We also did some research on effective interview questions and asked supervisors to rate some suggested alternatives that we have included in the Resource Manual.

Step 4.2 There are some pitfalls that you need to look out for in employment interviewing. You can find a list of these on page I-11 of the Resource Guide. On page I-13 there's an exercise you can do and score yourself on identifying common interview errors. Later this morning, we will be going over this in more detail.

Step 5:	The Standard Interview – Performance of the Panel	9:15– 9:45

Step 5.1. We're going to use these standards of interviewing to critique a mock interview. You are going to watch an interview of an applicant who is being asked question #6 of the Standard Interview. This question asks the candidate about past behavior: "Describe a time when the course of action you have taken or the decision you have made turned out not to be the right thing to do." *The suggested follow-ups for this question are: a) What caused you to take that action/come to that decision? b) How did you know it was the wrong course of action/decision? c) How have you reconciled that experience in your mind? (See Resource Guide, Section II, page 3.) Generally, the follow up questions listed in the Standard Interview are optional with the exception of question #1 and the last question.*

Refer participants to **HO 6 Andrea's Interview – Your Critique** *and go over the instructions. Review the competencies related to this question with participants, emphasizing the relevant competencies*: self-awareness, adaptability, and analytic thinking. While you will not be rating the applicant in this exercise, you will need to think about the competencies because the panel must keep these in mind as they make decisions about whether to ask any follow-up questions or give any prompts. Next, let's look at the worksheet that you will record notes on about the interview.

Step 5.2. *Show* ***Video #1 Andrea's Interview (Running time #*:3:45 minutes)**

Step 5.3. *Refer participants back to* **Handout 6** *and ask them to take 2 minutes to individually take more notes on how the panel did. Remind them that they are critiquing the panel, not the applicant. After2 minutes, ask the Table Leader to assume leadership or delegate it to take 5 mintues to facilitate a discussion about the answers, to arrive at a consensus for the table and to report out.*

Step 5.4 *Facilitate a plenary discussion using the following trainer notes to ask questions and facilitate discussion of the answers. 10 minutes.*

Trainer Note

1 RE: The Interview Question: Asking and Clarification

a. How do you think Dustin did in asking the question?
He was appropriate in his verbal and non verbal communication.
He was clear and made good eye contact.
"Now moving on to a different kind of question…"

b. Was there a need to clarify the question for the applicant?
She understood the question but appeared to assume that it had to be about work, which is not the case for this question.
Use of silence
Would expect focus to be on work

c. How did Dustin do in clarifying the question?

Fine. He realized she thought they were looking for a work related answer and clarified that it did not need to be about work.

If have lots of (examples) maybe Dustin jumped in too soon?

2 RE: The Prompts/Follow-ups

Let's look at the prompts/follow-ups once the applicant had answered.

a. What was the first of these- what led to it and what do you think of how the panel member handled it?

The applicant gave a relevant example and described the situation that made her feel like she was making a decision and taking a course of action that was the wrong thing to do. However, she did not explain exactly what about the situation made her feel that way. Dustin prompted her – first by clarifying that it was the pending confrontation that was making her feel that way. In doing so, Dustin used nearly the same word ("confront") that she had. This was a good strategy because giving prompts should not suggest new meaning for something that has already happened, but instead should simply help the applicant explain more fully what she is thinking. Dustin followed up with a prompt to encourage her to discuss what the discomfort felt like. This helps the panel assess the applicant's self-awareness and analytic thinking.

b. What was the next prompt/follow-up – what led to it and what do you think of how the panel member handled it?

Andrea wanted to know if she should tell"what actually happened" in the story. Dustin responded by asking her if she thought this would help the Panel to understand her dilemma. This was appropriate because the applicant's answer to this question could shed light on her perceptions about the role of discomfort in her decision making, i.e., an aspect of self-awareness. Her description might also yield information about her adaptability to changes in the course of events.

c. What was the next prompt/follow-up – what led to it and what do you think of how the panel member handled it?

Allison asked "What did you learn about yourself in that situation?" This was appropriate because one of the purposes of this question is to get a sense of the applicant's insight about the event as well as her ability to be adapt her behavior to her insight.

d. What was the next prompt/follow-up – what led to it and what do you think of how the panel member handled it?

Beth asked "So, what <u>was</u> the outcome for your friend?" This was not appropriate since the scope of the Panel question does not include what happened to the roommate. Also, it sounds gossipy. However, Andrea's response produced some important information about how Andrea handled the situation over the months that followed the incident. So, a better way for Beth to have asked this *question would have been as a follow-up to the previous question, e.g., "You say at the time it felt like a big mistake to have confronted her. Did you feel the same over time?"*

e. What other prompts/follow-ups, if any, might have been useful?
"How has this insight about yourself influenced you since then?" This question could help the panel understand how the applicant applies self-awareness to other issues in her life.
Also, a useful follow-up to Andrea's comment "It would have been better to leave it alone" would have been "Tell us more about that."

3. RE: Non verbals

a. Did you see both appropriate and non appropriate non-verbal behaviors on the part of the panel?

Dustin and Allison were essentially neutral but supportive in the way they nodded and smiled. Beth, on the other had, was familiar to the point that it did not feel supportive.

Dustin and Allison make little eye contact with Andrea.

4. Improvements

Beth could have refrained from being so familiar and inquisitive.
The panel could have asked Beth what she would have done differently.

Step 5.5 **Note taking**

This is a good time to talk about note taking. It is recommended that interviewers take notes during interviews, but you should be careful not to overdo this behavior. It can be disconcerting for the applicant if the panel is scribbling all the time as though taking dictation; and it's difficult for the panel to maintain eye contact if they are trying to take down every word. The interviewers should focus his or her note taking on entering "key points" into the interview form either during or immediately after the interview. The interview form with notes then becomes part of the documentation for the interviewer's judgment.

You are all experienced interviewers and know how to distill the key points. Use that analytic capacity in taking notes. Zero in on the few key statements from the applicant and jot down key words and phrases to help jog your memory when you come to do the overall rating and to help document your judgment. One trick that is helpful is to code examples of positive behavior with a plus (+) and of negatives with a (-). This can provide a quick visual overview of the candidate's performance. But keep in mind that sometimes there can be several small positives that get outweighed by one big negative, or vice versa.

Step 5.6 There are some tips on communication that are useful to keep in mind. Let's look at **HO 7 Communication Tips** and review these in relation to the interview we just saw. As with most types of interviewing in social work we need to build rapport up front and then take care to maintain it throughout the interview without our responses or reactions becoming too influential of the candidate. The tips in the handout remind me of the approach we use in Legally sound interviewing where we must keep the interviewee engaged but not let ourselves lead them in answering our questions.

Step 6:	**Applying the Scoring Guide to Candidates- Best Practice**	🕘 **9:45 – 9:55**

Step 6.1. *Present a brief lecture about best practice in rating candidates.*
One of the concerns raised by supervisors is that over the years, the way in which candidates have been rated has become inconsistent and that some guidelines would be helpful. With that in mind, we have developed Scoring Guides for each component of the Panel Interview: each of the existing questions now includes a guide showing examples of poor, average and outstanding responses and a similar guide has been developed to rate the Fact Finding Interview and the written Case Study. Because the competency of Communication Skills is shown throughout the process, we have

developed a separate Scoring Guide showing examples of how that competency can be demonstrated.

Let's look at the Scoring Guide for Communication Skills (in Section V - 3 of the Resource Guide) so you can see what we did. The examples we provide are behaviors that you can look for throughout the process. Each candidate will demonstrate the competencies in different ways – these are simply guidelines of poor, average and superior performance.

Scoring Guide:

To develop the Scoring Guide we used the following process:

- Generated questions that are linked to the competencies
- Identified which behaviors in the competencies are most likely to be revealed in the answer to the question
- Brainstormed examples of poor, average and outstanding answers
- Limited the indicators to three for each category

(R*efer to RG II-2 and go over the scoring guide*)

Step 6.2 The scoring guide helps us discriminate among poor, average and outstanding responses, but when we look at the competencies we are using a five point rating scale so that we can come up with an overall score.

What are some considerations when you do numerical rating of competencies and candidates?

Post the following on a flipchart:

Numerical skill ratings

5. An extremely high degree of the skill was shown
4. A high degree of the skill was shown
3. A moderate amount was shown
2. Little of the skill was shown
1. The skill was not shown at all

Explain that we are using an **Ordinal Scale.**
When we use a 1 to 5 rating, it is an ordinal scale of measurement; i.e. A 3 is better than a 2 but the intervals between these steps are not necessarily equal. A 3 rating should mean the performance level of an average entry-level caseworker. Use the 1 to 5 rating to identify the level of skill or competency that was shown in the interview process. Make sure that over time you use all of the points on the scale and that you will get a normal distribution with more in the middle.

Dispersion is desirable.
Over the long run, your ratings of a series of candidates, should be distributed roughly like this:

Percentage of ratings On a skill	10%	25%	30%	25%	10%
Scale Point	1	2	3	4	5

Lead a brief discussion on the dangers of clustering ratings at different points on the scale (include central tendency error).

BREAK		**9:55 – 10:10**

Step 7:	**Applying the Scoring Guide to Candidates – Practice with Bobbie**	**10:10-10:50**

Poster: Grid of 3 Competencies from Standard Interview Question #4

Step 7.1. *Explain that we will now watch another video of the same panel interviewing another candidate, Bobbie.* As you watch this video, you will again take notes on a worksheet. This time the work sheet focuses on how the applicant did rather than how the panel is doing. The panel is asking Bobbie the Question #4 of the Standard Interview. *Go over this with them. Remember, we are always rating the communication skills competency.* Now let's look at the rating sheet you will be using (**Handout 8 Applying the Scoring Guide to Bobbie).** As you watch the video, take notes about how you think Bobbie is doing on the competencies. Then, individually rate Bobbie as poor, average or outstanding. Then write your justification of the rating.
RG Section V, 2-4.

Step 7.2. *Show the video (Running time 5:45 mins).*

Step 7.3. *Remind the participants of the instructions above. They are asked to rate Bobbie on each competency as poor, average or outstanding and then turn to the Scoring Guide for this question and make a numerical rating, 1-5. (Reference the location of the scoring guide for this question.) After they have individually rated Bobbie's performance on this question by competence, ask participants to count off by three to form Panels of three. Instruct each Panel of three to assign the facilitation and reporter roles so the Panel can develop a consensus on a numerical rating by competency and a written justification for it. Consider how the individual ratings before and after the use of the Scoring Guide compare. (5 minutes) Then have each Panel present their numerical rating (10 minutes) and these will be posted on flip chart without the justification. Then we will ask groupings to talk about their justification. (20 minutes large group discussion.) Use the trainer note below to guide your facilitation of this.*

Trainer Note:

Rating Bobbie's response: **Average**

Self Awareness:

- showed awareness of own feelings (was feeling caught off guard; wished her director could have handled the situation but realized that she must confront the father)
- showed learning from an event (knows she doesn't like surprises, knows that firmness without accusation can be affective, and realized later that working to get the father to willingly comply with the rules was a useful goal)

Interpersonal Relations:

- showed awareness/empathy of others' feelings (father would likely be angry) but did not actively acknowledge Father's feelings.
- Positive non-verbals, good eye contact.
- Did not give evidence that at the time she thought it was important to try to engage father's willingness to abide by rules – she seemed to want only compliance.
- Some feel Bobbie has a whiney voice. How do we stay open to the whole interview process if this is our reaction?

Adaptability:

- provided a detailed description of an example that was responsive to the question
- had a plan of action in mind with some reasons behind it (would tell father rule and reason behind the rule)
- acknowledged mistakes and realized why it was wrong; acknowledged that things could have been done differently
- Did not involve anyone in preparation even though other staff were present and the daughter may have been a positive alliance.

Step 8	Consistency in Interviewing	10:50 – 11:20

Step 8.1 We hope that the new scoring guides will help in developing more consistency in interviewing, but it's still a challenge because we all bring our preconceptions to the process and may see things in a different way.

Here are some things that we've heard people say in discussing the rating they would give Bobbi.

Trainer note: listen carefully to the small group discussions in Step 7 and try as much as possible to use the words of the group to illustrate the following.
List the following and other examples on the flip chart.
"I'm used to interviewing duds, so I thought she did well".
I would never hire her, but I'm going to give her a passing score
I just assumed/interpreted that she meant…
I'm in a generous mood…
She had a whiney voice, I couldn't stand that.

Then use the specific examples to talk about the pitfalls connected with them. Refer to the Resource Guide (page I-11) Common Errors in Employment Interviews and ask the group to identify what kind of error the statements illustrate.

Talk about the importance of trying to keep one's own biases out of the process, to acknowledge when that might be happening.

Step 8.2 **Entry Level competencies**

Let's talk about what is reasonable to expect of a candidate in the Panel Interview. Let's look again at the Competencies. These are the competencies that we can reasonably expect at entry. Use the following questions to lead a discussion.

- Is it reasonable to expect them to know the Bureau's mission?
- What about the use of specific language and terminology?
- What about the use of concepts such as safety, permanency and well-being?

Encourage the group to think in terms of what can be taught through

Pre service and supervision and the competencies that are more difficult to change on the job. Use the rating guides to clarify that an outstanding candidate would have a clear understanding of child welfare concepts, but an average candidate might not. The average candidate should not be ruled out because of this.

Step 8.3 **Reviewing and revising your rating.**

Given this information and the previous discussion, we would now like you to back and review how you rated Bobbie. (1) look at your own rating (3 minutes); then (2) discuss in your Panel whether you changed your rating and if so what was your reason for doing so (5 minutes); (3) then come up to the flip chart and change your Panel rating if necessary.

Step 8.4 **Consensus discussion**

We all see things a little differently and sometimes we don't see everything. So it's important to share our views, to be open to new information and to change our rating if we feel that there is a good reason to do so. In this way we can achieve greater consistency on the rating of candidates.

Step 9:	**Embedded Evaluation**	**11:20 – 12:00**

Poster: Grid for Andrea with 3 Competencies related to the Standard Interview Question asked in this video interview

Step 9.1. We are going to do an exercise now that has two purposes: the first is to give you another opportunity to review the panel and the second is to rate a candidate. The purpose of this is to see how well the training is doing in supporting your ability to serve on panels – not to test your learning. Thus your names will not be collected. But we will be asking you to mark your forms with a unique ID. This is a seven digit code that we would like you to use at three points in the evaluation process:

- **Embedded evaluation:** this exercise which is aimed at testing the effectiveness of the training;
- **Reaction form:** the form that you will fill out at the end of the day; and
- **Application.** We are asking that at the end of the first panel interview you conduct after completing the training, you fill out a very brief form on how the training helped you in the panel interview.

Your unique ID is as follows: the first three letters of your mother's maiden name and the last four numbers of your social security number.

Step 9.2. *Pass out the evaluation form and the script that goes with it and then explain the following:* Let's look over the evaluation form now. You are going to watch another video, this one of the panel asking Andrea another question on the Standard Interview. After you watch the video, you can review the script and then answer the questions on the evaluation sheet. After you are finished, we will be collecting the forms.

Step 9.3. *Show the video (running time: 3:15 mins.)*

The Script

Dustin In this work we deal with family situations that involve complex issues and where the best courses of action are not always clear. For example, a decision that frequently must be made by the court is whether and when to return children to parents after the children have been removed due to abuse or neglect. What would your thinking be in dealing with these situations? What process would you go through?

Andrea Are you wanting to know about just younger children or all ages?

Dustin All ages.

Andrea (pause) I feel like I could answer this better if I know about the law and the what the courts and the social worker are supposed to take into account. So, I wish I knew more abut that. (looks inquisitively at each panel member) Can you give me some hints?

Beth My lord, there are so many laws and policy around this, I don't know where to begin… But here's an example, we have a policy….

Dustin (Interrupts gently but firmly) You're right that there is law and policy on this. But in this question, Andrea, we want to know your thoughts regardless of how familiar you are with the law.

Andrea OK. Well, as you know I have worked in residential care with adolescents. Some do go home eventually but most of them go to live somewhere else, sometimes with a relative - or a few go live on their own or on a step down to foster care. I know the court sent home some of the kids in our facility and in my opinion it was ridiculous – the kids started disobeying rules right away and the parents were not really ready to take them, you know, still had their own problems. So, in my experience sending them home basically sets them back – but then I am talking about teens and I guess some other things come into play with younger kids.

Dustin What do you think those might be?

Andrea Well, with the older ones that I work with, most are in a lot of conflict with their parents and I guess that probably isn't so with lots of younger kids. So, if they are attached and want to be with the parents – that definitely should be considered. Also, at least in residential care, the costs are really high – so, in the real world I guess you just can't keep paying thousands of dollars every month forever. You have to try to get them someplace cheaper or there won't be any money left for new kids. But, you know, I believe you have to ask "What is really best for this child?" I mean they have all been through so much, it is just heartbreaking – so what is going to help them has to be front and center. And in my experience with teens, it just isn't all that clear cut. Most of them just don't do that great no matter where they go. So, it is very complicated – and if I do get this job I will really be glad to learn the rules or guidelines or whatever… about what IS the best thing to do.

Dustin Ok, thank you.

Step 9.4. *Now ask the participants to complete Section 1 and 2 of the evaluation form. They will be given 7 minutes for this activity, then we will take 10 minutes to discuss the responses*

Trainer Note:

Facilitate a discussion to make the following points. Encourage participants to provide evidence for their views using the script and memory of the video. Following the discussion, participants may want to review the video again to check out perceptions.

1. Panel's Ability

a. Asking the question (Dustin)

__x Acceptable (Stated or read question clearly. Did not convey a point of view.)

__ Needs Improvement (Did not state or read question clearly or conveyed a point of view with verbal or non verbal communication)

b. Clarifying the question ("All ages")(Dustin)

__x Acceptable (Clarified without giving unnecessary information or a point of view)

__ Needs Improvement (Did not clarify sufficiently or gave unnecessary information or a point of view)

c. Follow up and prompts (for these, please explain your response)

(1) Beth"My lord, there's so many I don't know where to begin".

(2) __Acceptable

__x Needs Improvement

Explain *Beth did not maintain neutrality – she was unduly emotional and* *potentially providing a negative image of the agency. She was providing unnecessary information and risked getting the interview off track. The use of the phrase "my lord" could be offensive to some candidates.*

(2) Dustin "You're right that there is law and policy on this. But in this question, Andrea, we want to know your thoughts regardless of how familiar you are with the law."

__x Acceptable

__ Needs Improvement

Explain *Effectively intervenes to get interview back on track. Clarifies what is wanted without giving any additional or unnecessary information about the topic. Some participants may feel that while the words were effectively in getting back on track, he was unduly sharp with Beth who seemed crushed by his response. Need to understand the importance of non-verbal behavior.*

(3) Dustin "What do you think those might be?"

__x Acceptable

__ Needs Improvement

Explain_ *Objective prompt to encourage Andrea to provide more information. Keeps interview on track. Showed active listening skills.*

2. <u>Applicant's Response</u>

a. Identifying relevant indicators

__0 1. reacts definitely one way or the other with no ambivalence described

__0 2. considers no or very few sources of information to use in making decision

__x 3. expresses sense that this would be a difficult and complicated decision

__x 4. provides at least one example of information that would lead to a positive and one that would lead to a negative decision (*she considers the age of the child, whether or not they are attached, parent readiness)*

__x 5. compares child's and parents' needs in some way (*recognizes that parents may have own problems, depending on age of child decision may be different)*

__x 6. realizes that this would be emotionally complicated decision for them as a worker ***She certainly demonstrates this, but does not quite say it, although she does say it is heart-breaking. She demonstrates emotional intelligence in her awareness of others, but not very self-aware.*

__0 7. defines clearly the different points of view – state, parents, children. *Andrea is too disjointed and emotional in her response to qualify for this, although she does*

	indicate the parents may have problems and concern for the costs incurred in residential care, recognizes that the child's perspective may be different dependent on the age of the child.
__0.	8. Raises child safety as the paramount issue: *Does not address safety, but does say "what is really best for this child?".*
__0	9. describes three or more sources of information to assist in making decision, including assessment of strengths
__0	10. voices understanding that own personal emotions would have an impact and need to be monitored
__0	11. describes alternative actions based on family strengths
__0	12. recognizes and articulates that public child welfare requires a constant balancing of protection of children and the rights and need to collaborate with families.

Step 9.5 *Now ask participants to take 3 minutes working individually to rate each of the three competencies. Then take 10 minutes at tables to come to a consensus on the competencies. Ask the tables to report back and list the rating by competency on the flip chart.*

Step 9.6 Facilitate a discussion on the rating of the competencies.

(a) Sense of mission (child welfare knowledge, clear values about protecting children and preserving families) *Some evidence but shows a greater reliance on external standards (looking for clear policy and directions) rather than a well thought out personal value system.*
(b) Analytic thinking (information gathering, looking beyond superficial explanations, decision-making) *Some evidence*
(c) Self-confidence (emotional awareness, self-efficacy) *Some evidence. Would rely on policy and follow that.*

Trainer note:

Andrea's response to this question is designed to be average. Therefore it is important that ratings of 1 or 5 are challenged. Evidence is needed to support such ratings, then discuss what exactly she said, whether assumptions are being made.

Step 9.7 Collect evaluations forms and scripts.

LUNCH		**12:00-1:00**
Step 10:	**The Case Study: Basis for the Fact-finding Interview and Role of the Resource Person**	**1:00 -1:05**

Reference the QUIZZES that have been placed at each table and give instructions. We will be reviewing these at the end of the day. Prizes will be awarded!

Step 10.1. *Explain the following:*

Although the standard interview is a very valid predictor of performance on the job, it has its limitations in terms of the range of competencies that can be demonstrated. In the Standard Interview, regardless of how effective and probing the questions, we are only able to observe how the candidate responds to questions posed by the interview team. For this reason, when we originally designed the screening process in 1995, we decided to include a job sample. This includes the review of written materials (the Case Study), an interview to get more information about the case (the Fact Finding Interview) and a written exercise (the Case Analysis). If you look at the **Rating Sheet on page I - 9 of the Resource Guide**, you will see that the Fact-finding and Written Exercise cover some competencies not covered in the Standard Interview, specifically Observational Skills and Planning and Organizing and that they provide an opportunity for the candidate to display some competencies in a different way – for example their flexibility, self confidence, analytic thinking and written communication skills. Some candidates who do very well in the Standard Interview have a hard time with this part of the screening process; on the other hand, some candidates shine at it. This gives us a more rounded view of the candidate's ability.

You are all familiar with the process for the Case Study which is summarized on page III - 2 of your Resource Guide. The candidate reviews the written materials ahead of time and prepares questions of additional information needed, asks questions of the Resource Person and then writes a summary and recommendations based on the information gathered. We have not altered the basic structure of the Case Study. About six months ago, we did a thorough review of the materials and with the assistance of a workgroup and input from several of you, updated the materials to reflect current practice. Please note that there is now additional and revised information for the Resource Person so don't depend on your memory! Please also note that it's important to keep alternating the Case Study so candidates don't know exactly what to expect.

Please review the information on page **IV-1 in the Resource Guide**. The role of the Resource Person is critical in this process. Please review the tips for the resource person listed in the Guide. One suggestion that we have received is to tab the sections of the Background Information so you can get there more quickly. You have Post-Its on your table that you can use to identify the appropriate sections in the Background Information. Please also note the information included in the Overview of the case which includes the key facts (RG Section IV, page 14) that the candidate can gather by reading the case information already provided and the key facts that can be elicited from the Resource Person through the interviewing process.

Step 10.2. *Answer questions as needed.*

Step 11:	**The Fact-finding Interview – Observing and Critiquing the Resource Person**	🕘 **1:05-1:30**

Step 11.1 The role of the Resource Person is critical to the effectiveness of this part of the process and can be very challenging. You will recall that the other two panel members have roles as well. One or both will be taking notes and one will be keeping time. In this video you will watch the same panel in a fact finding interview with Andrea. Andrea has read the Wallace case and is asking questions in preparation for writing the Case Analysis Summary. As you watch this video, pay close attention to the panel member who is acting as the resource person. You will be assessing his skill. As you watch and after you watch, you will take notes on **Handout 9 Fact-finding Interview with Andrea – Worksheet for Evaluating the Panel.** *Review this now with participants.*

Step 11.2 *Show the video (Running time: 8 mins)*

Step 11.3 *After participants see the video, ask them to individually answer the questions on the worksheet. Then facilitate a large group discussion of the evaluation of the resource person using the training notes below.*

1. How did Dustin do as the Resource Person in describing how this part of the interview would be conducted?
   Dustin was thorough, giving her information about the purpose, structure, and time. He set a somewhat formal tone to let the applicant know that the remainder of the interview would be serious, specific.
   Dustin sounded bored.
   Dustin could have asked if Andrea had any questions.

2. Was there a need to clarify anything for this applicant? How did Dustin handle that?
   Dustin answered her question briefly, saying, "yes, we check carefully."
   Could/should he have done anything else?
   Dustin could have said, "You are very perceptive. The information is disorganized on purpose."
   He could have also said that the material is intentionally given to

applicants in a disorganized way. This may have reassured her that she was not confused.
Was there anything else Dustin had to clarify for Andrea?
Dustin had to explain she should only ask one question at a time, then he had to remind her again almost immediately after that, and then he had to ask her again later in the interview. Each time he was calm and neutral, even smiling the first time, as though to take the bite out of being told, essentially, that she was doing something wrong. After that he simply restates.

3. How did Beth handle the timekeeping role?
She made a show of the role by waving at the applicant and showing her the watch which made the act of time keeping very obvious and would increase the anxiety of the applicant.
She might have said, "I'll let you know when 5 minutes is left"

What could she have done that would be more appropriate?
She could have simply nodded and smiled at Andrea when Dustin said she would be the timekeeper, to acknowledge the role.

Did Beth do anything else in her role of timekeeper?
She was obvious about checking the time Andrea was using to review her notes by looking at her watch for a longer time than was necessary. This would contribute to an applicant's nervousness, making her or him feel under time pressure or watched, as though they were doing something inappropriate.

4. How did Dustin respond to Andrea when he had the information she requested?
Dustin as the Resource Person simply responded with "This is what I have" and the information exactly as it is printed in the Resource Guide. After that he merely stated what the information was. This is somewhat formal, and it sets the tone for being precise and not allowing extra comments or clues being given to the applicant.
Several times the RP did not have the information requested: how did he handle this? What do you think of his response?
Dustin simply said, "I do not have that information," as he had told Andrea he would do at the beginning. Any more response could lead to clues for the applicant, or possibly being distracting

5. Let's look at some instances when hints and prompts are appropriate in the Fact Finding Interview. When were hints given in Andrea's interview?

- Andrea asked two questions at once. How did Dustin handle this?

What do you think of his response?

Dustin simply stated that she needed to ask questions one at a time.
What else might he have done?
Dustin could have asked Andrea, "Can you be more specific?"

- Andrea asked a question about the caseworker's work and the case process involving making an appointment for Angie. How did Dustin handle this?

  Dustin explained to Andrea that this Fact Finding part of the interview was not about case process or agency policies. He was calm and even-toned and did not try to explain why or what the worker would have done.

- What else might he have done?
- What happens next?

  Andrea does the same thing again, asking questions that are beyond the scope of the interview and Dustin repeats himself calmly.

- What happens when Andrea states she is done?

  Dustin prompts her that she has more time, asked the timekeeper how much time, and gave her a suggestion for how to use the time to her advantage.
  Good use of silence

- Are there other ways to handle this?
- What happens when Andrea asks a question she has already received information about?

  Dustin says calmly that he has already provided what information he has, and will read it again if Andrea would like.

- How else might he have handled this?
- When Andrea later felt again that she had no more to ask,

  Beth as timekeeper reminds her that she had five more minutes.
  Dustin again prompts her to consider continuing by using techniques such as reviewing material, and this time he also gives her a hint that there is more information available ("I have more information.")

- Are there any other examples of prompts or hints in this interview?

Step 11.4 Wrap Up—The Panel's Impact on the Candidate

We've seen the panel members perform well at times and at other times they have needed some improvement. Considering our earlier discussions on the topics of rapport building and communication tips, how is the candidate experiencing this panel so far? Putting yourself in her shoes, what are you likely to be thinking/feeling at this stage in the interview process? How desirable does this job appear at this point? Could/Should the panel do anything differently? What?

Step 12:	**The Fact-finding Interview – Overview of Rating Competencies**	◷ **1:40-1:45**

Step 12.1 *Explain the following:*

As noted earlier, the Fact Finding Interview provides an opportunity to see the candidate in a different light, to see how they have prepared for the interview, how they are able to take charge and ask questions rather than simply responding.

While the Fact Finding Interview is going on, the other two members of the panel need to observe the candidate and make notes on the competencies observed, not necessarily on the questions asked but how the candidate goes about the process of gathering the information, how they behave when they get stuck, whether or not they are able to shift gears when a line of questioning is unproductive, are they able to pick up on clues and follow up with questions to get more information, are they satisfied with superficial explanations or do they dig deeper to get more facts. These are all critical skills in child welfare work.

Step 13:	**The Fact-finding Interview – Practice Rating Competencies**	◷ **1:45 – 2:30**

Poster: Grid of 8 Competencies related to the Fact Finding Interview

Step 13.1 We're now going to watch another video to practice rating of competencies. In this video the same panel is conducting the fact-finding interview with our other applicant, Bobbie. As you watch this time, be sure to focus on how Bobbie does, rather than on how the resource person on the panel does. Again, you will take notes on a worksheet as you watch the video (**Handout 10 Fact-finding Interview with Bobbie - Scoring Guide V - 5)**

Step 13.2 *Show the video (Running time: 15 minutes).*

Step 13.3 *After participants see the video, break them into triads and ask them to individually finish taking notes on the worksheet, considering each competency. Ask the triad to identify a reporter so they can develop a consensus on a rating (1-5 by competency) and written justification for it. Then have each triad present their rating and these will be posted on flip chart without the justification at first. We will see what groupings emerge among the scale 1-5. Then we will ask groupings to talk about their justification, using the trainer notes below.*

> **Trainer Note:** How does Bobbie handle the Fact Finding section of the interview process? This section is organized by competency area as found on the Screening Index. All areas except Teamwork and Technology Skills are assessed in this part of the screening process.

Interpersonal Relations

Bobbie is more oriented to the interview task than to the people (panel members) in front of her. She does not try to influence the Panel Members by means of *relating* directly to them and thus win them over or encourage them to reveal information. She focused on-- looked at-- Alison because she was identified as the person who would answer her questions.

Bobbie does smile briefly at Dustin when he jokes about her keeping time and checking on him. When Alison asks if she would like her to slow down or repeat a particularly long response, Bobbie thanks her.

By following up on each person mentioned in this case, she shows *respect* for each and a lack of preconceived judgments.

Self-Awareness/Confidence

Bobbie showed self-confidence by continuing with her task regardless of the lack of information in some areas. She used all the time allotted her, thus indicating she believed in her ability to get this task done.

Adaptability

Bobbie demonstrates *confidence, ability to shift gears, and coping skills* by continuing to attempt to get certain information by asking questions from several different angles. For example, when told “Nancy is a heavy drinker”, Bobbie asks three different questions about her behavior and treatment for substance abuse. She also was able to respond to *new areas* of information by asking follow-up questions that she would have had to develop on the spot. For example, when told the “Neal … is willing to terminate his parental responsibilities”, she asks for more information about what that means for Angie.

Bobbie also demonstrates her adaptability by being *persistent* and not becoming frustrated or confused when she does not get any new information after asking two or three questions on a topic.

Motivation

Although Bobbie is low key in terms of her presentation, she clearly *strives to achieve results* and is *persistent* in her attempts to reach *goals*. When she does not get information on one topic, she is ready to move to another, and she remains focused on Angie and those involved in her life. She does not become side-tracked by negative feelings (such as frustration or lack of self-confidence) or by lack of immediate results. She continues to ask questions until there is no time left.

Planning and Organizing Work

She gets her information by questioning in an *organized*, *methodical and detailed* way and by thinking about the information and what it means as she hears it.

Bobbie takes out a sheet of paper filled with written questions when the Fact Finding interview begins and she takes notes throughout the interview. She is thorough and has the *“tools”* to keep on task and organized.

She is organized and analytic in that she had groups of related questions that follow one another logically and she does not skip around from topic to topic. For example, she asks questions about one person’s history, behavior, role with Angie, etc.; then about another’s. This is an effective way to organize gathering information about a case.

When asked to be more specific in asking a question (about Nancy’s family), Bobbie asks about the parents, then goes on to ask about siblings, then “any other extended family?”

Communication Skills

Bobbie is a good *listener* as demonstrated by her ability to respond to new information and add questions she has not planned (Nancy’s substance abuse and terminating Neal’s rights, for example). She asks questions that are *clear* in content and her tone is steady and appropriate to the situation.

Analytic thinking

Bobbie is able to take hints and cues from the Resource Person and put them to use. She appears comfortable with her *information gathering* skills. Several times when she received new information, such as Nancy's heavy drinking, Bobbie immediately responds with questions designed to get more information about the topic. She *systematically* gets information about each person in critical areas. She uses a *range of sources*-- for example, asking for facts, behaviors, the observations of others, and so on.

When told there was no information about Nancy taking the medication recommended by the psychologist, Bobbie asks what the medication was, in an attempt to gather whatever bit of information there may be about that issue. She delves beneath the surface, not accepting the first or *superficial explanations*.

Observation Skills
Bobbie asks about all the adults mentioned in the record and makes no opinion statements about the information. She appears to be very *factual* about this portion of the process and does not develop judgments or make assumptions before getting information about *key elements*.
A question that remains unanswered is whether Bobbie is actually observing the person she is talking to/interviewing. She rarely looks directly at the panel members. Will she be able to identify and interpret non-verbal cues, for example?

BREAK		**2:30 - 2:45**

Step 14:	**Case Analysis Overview**	**2:45 – 2:50**

Step 14.1 *Explain*
The Written exercise is the only opportunity to observe the candidate's ability to write. But this is also an opportunity to see how they have synthesized the key elements of the case, how they fit pieces of information into a coherent summary and how they can make judgments based on the information gathered in the Fact Finding Interview. Again, we have developed a Scoring guide to help you in assessing this part of the process. RG V, page 7.
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Step 15:	**Case Analysis – Practice Scoring and Critique Scoring Guide**	**2:50-3:10**

Poster: 2 Grids, one for Bobbie and one for Andrea listing the 6 competencies related to the writing sample.

Step 15.1 We will now apply these principles to analyzing a couple of case analyses summaries (see **Handout 11 and 12 Case Analyses**). We have two examples of case analyses, one written by Andrea and the other by Bobbie. (These are based on actual summaries collected from the field). Take notes on your assessment of the case analysis. Use the extra space on the case analysis itself, or use additional paper.

Half of the participants will use Bobbie's case analysis and the other half will take Andrea's. First, divide the room into two equal groups. One to focus on Bobbie's analysis and the other to focus on Andrea's. After dividing into two equal groups, ask each group to count off by 3's and get into triads. Assign each triad a grouping of 3 (of the 6) competencies. Half of the group using Bobbie's analysis will work with the first 3 competencies and the other half will work with the last 3 competencies. (Apply this to Andrea's groups as well.)

For this exercise, the 6 competencies are grouped as follows:

Group 1: Analytic Skills, Observation Skills, Planning and Organizing
Group 2: Communication Skills, Mission, Teamwork

Ask participants to individually take 5 minutes to read the analyses, then take 10 minutes in their triads to discuss and numerically rate their candidate on their 3 assigned competencies. We will record their ratings and post up front.

Step 15.2 *Facilitate a discussion on this using the training note below.*
Debrief for 10 minutes in the large group. To keep the whole room engaged, discuss each competency across Bobbie and Andrea at the same time. Look for significant differences in the rating of the same candidate and challenge those with outlying scores to come closer to the middle. This models the discussion that takes place between panel members following actual panel interviews.

Trainer Note: Use the following to facilitate a discussion relative to the strengths and weaknesses of Andrea's and Bobbie's case analyses. The format below follows the competencies associated with the writing sample, **RG, page V-6.**

Andrea's Analysis:

Analytic Thinking:

-Andrea missed some key facts which led to an incomplete, superficial analysis.
-No mention of neglect as being the issue of CA/N in this family
-No mention of substance abuse issue other than a hint by mentioning the OUI.
-No mention of paternity issue
-No mention of acknowledgement of the Wallace's important role with Angie or mention of the need for exploring the Wallace's as possible future permanent family for Angie.
-No mention of bond between Edna Smith and Angie, and Angie's need to continue this relationship.
-No mention of wanting to explore the Smith's further as a placement in case there is any possibility support could be sufficiently built around them to make it possible for them to care for Angie long term. They have had a long standing commitment to this child.
-No real statement about impact of all of this on Angie or what Angie might need to catch up developmentally beyond stability.

Observation Skills:

-Andrea's summary is a restating of the facts received in the case paperwork
-Andrea doesn't specifically identify neglect/abandonment or emotional maltreatment as issues in the case.
-It is correct that Nancy is not able to care for Angie, presently due to her mental health issues, alcohol usage and lack of stability and consistency.
-It is true that Nancy would need to demonstrate a period of consistency and stability prior to parenting Angie alone.
-It is true that Angie is likely to need contact with Nancy while she is not in Nancy's care.
-Angie was in/out of Smith's care all her life, not just "past 6 months" Leaving this detail out may indicate a lack of understanding of the longstanding problem Nancy has demonstrated.
-The Smiths are brother and sister-in-law to Nancy, not "siblings"

Planning and Organization:

-A goal was set in the recommendations, although only one.
-There was no step-by-step delineation of tasks. No indication of priorities or if this, then that statements, again, only superficial.

Communication Skills:
-Andrea's writing is fairly clear, easy to follow but could have used some paragraph breaks
-In terms of writing ability there are a few misplaced/add-on thoughts.

Sense of Mission:
While Andrea does demonstrate a need to protect Angie from Nancy's erratic behaviors, Andrea is not inclusive in her approach to working with this family. She has isolated Nancy and separated Angie from the Smiths and does not include Mr. Wallace in her recommendations. She is not considering building on strengths of Nancy or the other family members. She is also not addressing any aspect of what Angie's needs are.

Teamwork: Andrea's plan doesn't involve the family.
-No specifics about family strengths/supports. (The recommendations really characterize
--Nancy as being on her own to work on her issues. No one is invited in to support her.)

Bobbie's Case Analysis:

Analytic Thinking:

-Bobbie took the view most helpful to conceptualize Angie's circumstances. She saw the bigger picture and did not get mired in any set of details. This led to strong decisions and specific recommendations.
-The conclusions Bobbie makes are accurate for the most part. There are some minor inaccuracies that the general candidate population would probably not have the knowledge/skill yet to be able to sort out.
-Bobbie does miss the issue of substance abuse on Nancy's part so this piece is missing from her conclusions, but does not seem to have a significant impact on the outcomes she recommends pursuing.
-Bobbie correctly states that Nancy can't care for Angie due to lack of stability and psychological issues.
-Steve Wallace's strengths, paternal role and current wishes were noted, as well as the need to further explore him and his family as a resource for Angie.
-It was good to note that a starting place with Neal Jones (as well as all those who currently have a relationship with Angie) is to confirm what his wishes are.
-There are some hints at the impact of Nancy's behavior on Angie, although not entirely spelled out.
-It is implied that Bobbie sees that the Smith's have had an important relationship with Angie by including them in a collaborative planning process.
-Bobbie demonstrates that she sees the value in carefully planning the next steps for Angie possibly allowing for some transition.

Observational Skills:
-Bobbie identified most of the key elements but left out Nancy's substance abuse/OUI, loss of license.
-Bobbie observed that Angie was in need of a stable environment that would promote her development. She recognized that Angie was having emotional difficulties related to her circumstances. She also notes that she is having physical difficulties and this could have been further explained. (The pediatrician said she is normal, physically but has a developmental delay)
-Bobbie was able to see that Neal Jones has a legal role in relation to Angie which technically may be the most important element. She is a little confused about his role as the legal father, versus the legal guardian. He also was never in a role of "step parent" to Angie.

Planning and Organization:
-Bobbie's recommendations show some prioritization, some if/then consideration and are presented in a logical manner

Communication Skills:
-Bobbie's writing is straightforward and clear.
-Numbering the summary of facts is useful. She shows evidence of synthesizing the information in her outline.
-Her bullets under conclusions are also helpful and show some analysis.

Sense of Mission:
-Bobbie understands the need to protect this child and preserve her welfare.
-She also values the need to embark on a careful planning process that does not disrupt Angie's current placement situation.
-She shows that she feels that family preservation is important by planning to work inclusively with the family.

Teamwork:
-Bobbie indicates a need to involve all those who have relationships with Angie in a planning process, including both parents and legal father.
-Bobbie also indicated that it would be important to hear each of their wishes in regard to Angie.

Step 15.3 Rating each aspect individually *(No double-dinging!)*

When rating the candidate in the fact-finding interview on how many key facts they were able to elicit, keep in mind later on, when rating the writing sample that you already may have added points or taken points away. For example, using the Wallace case, the candidate does not elicit the fact that Nancy has a substance abuse issue through the fact finding interview. The panel member marks her down a point as a result. Later, while reviewing the written case analysis, the panel member notices that the key fact, relative to the substance abuse is missing from the analysis and as a result there is no recommended plan to address this. Since the candidate has already lost a point for this in the fact-finding section, they should not lose another point in the case analysis section.
This would be double-dinging!!

Step 16:	Summary Score for the Candidate	◷ 3:10-3:30

Posters: Summary Score grids, one for Bobbie and one for Andrea. A third poster to tally voting on whether participants would like to see Bobbie and/or Andrea appear on their registers.

Step 16.1 *Explain*

Refer participants to **Handout 13 Developing the Summary Score for the Candidate.** To develop a summary score, the panel needs to agree on a rating. The first step is for each interviewer to individually review all of their notes. With the scoring guide, you can now look at whether you checked unacceptable, average or outstanding for the various components. It's not necessary to add these, just to give you an overall idea. Look again at the Behaviors to look for when rating Competencies in the Resource Guide and think about how the candidate performed. Then convert your judgment about the candidate into a numerical rating.

Think of the five point scale as a range from Very Poor – Poor – Average – Above Average – Outstanding. Refer back to flip chart step 8.2. Then focus on each competency separately. Think about how the candidate performed, the ways in which they demonstrated the competency and assign a number. It's probably a good idea to review the section in the Resource Guide on Common Interviewer Errors. Note that the Standard Interview is more heavily weighted and you need to multiply your score in that column by two before adding up your final score.

A passing score is 90. This number was arrived at by assuming that the candidate would have to be rated as average or above on all of the competencies. Keep in mind the pitfalls of being too generous in your rating (this candidate will go on to a second interview) or of too stringent (the person will not be considered further).

After you have conducted several interviews, you have a "gut" feeling about candidates. You can use the same standard about gut feelings as you do in casework. Pay attention to what your instinct is telling you because that instinct is based on information and experience. Think about what you have seen and heard to support the gut feeling, then note that evidence on your summary rating sheet.

Step 16.2 **Recommendations on Final Discussion Procedures** are included in the Resource Manual. It's important that to achieve consistency, we strive for consensus scoring rather than average scoring.

- Panel Coordinator finds a time as soon as possible after the panel interview to bring the whole panel back together to discuss the candidate's performance
- Review ratings on each of the exercises (Standard Interview, Fact finding, Written Exercise)
- Discuss performance in each exercise until all questions are answered.
- Individually review numerical rating for each exercise
- The coordinator seeks consensus for ratings of each competency/exercise.
- The coordinator collects all the materials in order to develop the final rating on candidate.

Repeat the above for each candidate.

Step 16.3 **On or Off the Register?**

Review the flipcharts and have the group vote on whether they would want these candidates to be on or off the register. Would they like the opportunity to see them again for a second interview? If not, why not? Refer back as appropriate to the pitfalls in interviewing to remind the group of the importance of being consistent, objective and job related. If the Personnel Office calls to say that one of these candidates has appealed the rating you have given, how would you respond to support your decision?

Step 17:	**Guidelines for the Second Interview**	◷ **3:30-3:40**

Step 17.1 *Refer participants to* **Resource Guide - Section VI Guidelines for the Second Interview.**

Over the last year we have asked lots of questions about the second interview and have concluded that every office and every supervisor has their own approach. The purpose of the second interview is to make sure that the candidate is a good fit for the specific program area and supervisory unit. Our suggestions are not to eliminate supervisory discretion around the second interview, but to introduce a little more rigor and efficiency into the process. Since it is part of the screening process, the same standards of being job related, objective and consistent still apply. While it is not essential that it be as structured as the panel interview, you need to make sure that you can still defend the choice that you make.

These are the basic recommendations that we hope will improve the process:

Information from the panel interview: Each hiring supervisor needs to have access to the panel information so that they can build on that rather than starting from scratch. This means that districts need to share the information from their panel.

Program specific questions: We have collected questions that supervisors currently use in the Second Interview and included some of the best questions in your Resource Guide. You can pick and choose questions.

Good practice in screening and selection: We suggest that you use the same principles covered in this morning's session in conducting the Panel interview – make sure it is job related, use the competencies as a guide and make it consistent across all applicants.

Step 17.2 *Ask for questions.*

Step 18:	**Reference Checks and Clearances**	◷ **3:40-3:50**

Step 18.1 *Refer participants to* **Resource Guide - Section VII Reference Checks and Clearances.**

The reference check is the final step in the screening process and needs to adhere to the same standards as the rest of the process: job-related, competency based and consistent. Reference checking is a critical tool in collecting information about the candidate's past behavior on the job that can predict how they will perform as a caseworker; it gives a unique opportunity to get information about how the candidate performs within a real work setting – their work habits, reliability, attendance record and relationship to their supervisor. Unfortunately, because of the fact that many employers are afraid of defamation suits, they are unwilling to give a negative reference and often will only verify basic information about the employment record (yes, the person is or was employed here). Fortunately, we have located a resource that can assist in collecting this information. We can inform applicants in advance that we will be conducting reference and background checks and that we will be asking them to sign a waiver granting permission for former employers to release job-related information about them securing their written consent to initiate the verification process. A copy of the consent and authorization form is included in your Resource Guide VII-2.

To maintain consistency in the Reference Checking process we have also provided a format for conducting a reference check.   Written references are generally unreliable and yield little useful information since employers are unwilling to commit any negative information to paper. We therefore recommend that you conduct a telephone reference check using the interview guide we have provided in the Resource Guide VII - 4.   We have also included some tips for effective reference checking interviews.

The most reliable sources are people who have had the best opportunity recently to observe the candidate in the types of duties and responsibilities they would face on the job. Ask the candidate to come to the second interview prepared with the name, title, organization and current telephone number of references. Supervisors are typically the best people to ask for references. If the candidate is unwilling to have you contact the current supervisor because they don’t know that they are looking for another job, explain that any job offer will be contingent upon a reference check with the current supervisor. Try to avoid personal references (clergy, friends, teachers) they are less reliable in providing job-related information.

Failure to conduct a thorough reference check or background investigation can lead to charges of “negligent hiring ‘if an applicant who is hired later commits an act that results in personal injury and it is shown that the employer did not exercise care or duty to know of the employee’s past history.

Step 18.2 *Ask for questions.*

Step 19:	**Wrap up and Evaluation**	🕘 **3:50 – 4:00**

Step 19.1 *Ask participants for their final questions.*

Step 19.2 *Pass out satisfaction evaluations and collect. Post the following information on a flip chart to explain the evaluation plan. Summarize by saying that the goal of the training and the revised screening process is to get the best qualified caseworkers in the most consistent manner. We will evaluate how effective we are at doing this and review on a continual basis to make sure that we are doing the best job possible.*

EVALUATION PLAN

WHAT	WHEN	WHY
Embedded evaluation – participant questionnaire	During training	How effective is the training? What skills have participants acquired?
Reaction – participant questionnaire	Immediately post training	How did participants like the training? How well did they think the goals were achieved?
Application – participant self assessment	Following the first panel interview post training	How effective was the training in improving skills in practice?
Reliability – review of panel scores of candidates	All panel interviews for one year after training	How consistent are panel members in rating competencies of candidates?
Validity – questionnaire assessment by supervisors of caseworker competencies on the job	All new caseworkers one year after being hired	How effective is the screening process in predicting on the job performance? Do candidates who rated highly in the panel interview rate highly on the job?