

**Module 1:  
Understanding the Multiple Needs of Families Involved with the Child Welfare System**

**Training Plan**

Goal—The goal of Module 1 is to provide child welfare professionals with a contextual knowledge of a range of co-occurring needs that may be experienced by parents involved in the child welfare system. This module discusses the importance of using a family-centered approach to identify and respond to the variety of needs experienced in an entire family. This module will discuss the prevalence of substance use (alcohol and other drugs) and mental disorders, as well as co-occurring disorders, and will address many other issues that may co-exist for families in the child welfare system, including: family violence, trauma, physical health, poverty, crime, etc. The module will reference materials describing the differential impact of these issues on families of color. A discussion of how to determine priorities among families' needs is included.

Methods: PowerPoint presentations (or overhead/transparencies); large group and small group discussions.

Training Aids: Projector and computer, disk with PowerPoint file (or overhead and transparencies); flip chart with markers; participant notebook.

Time: 2 hours, 50 minutes

Module 1 Learning Objectives—After completing Module 1, child welfare professionals will have an understanding of the following topics:

- Principles of both family-centered and culturally competent practice
- How addressing the needs of both parents and children can impact successful family outcomes
- Prevalence of substance use disorders in the general population, in the child welfare population, and in communities of color
- Prevalence of mental disorders in the general population, in the child welfare population, and in communities of color
- Prevalence of co-occurring substance use and mental disorders in the general population, in the child welfare population, and in communities of color
- NASMHPD/NASADAD four-quadrant framework for conceptualizing co-occurring substance use and mental disorders
- Difficulty in differentiating co-occurring substance use and mental disorders
- Other issues that frequently co-occur with child welfare involvement, and/or substance use and mental disorders:
  - Family violence
  - Trauma
  - Physical health issues
  - Poverty
  - Crime
- Prioritizing response and intervention for families with multiple needs
- Exploring personal and agency/system values regarding substance use and mental disorders
  - Personal experience/history
  - Stigma
  - Bias

Prior to start                      *Meet and greet, registration*

Purpose is to give participants access to the space. Conduct registration and distribute materials. Trainers get ready.

0 – 15 minutes                      *Introductions; Purpose; Ground Rules*                      15 min.

Trainer introduces him or herself. Invite participants to briefly introduce themselves (name, unit, office location, years in the system, etc.). If group is smaller than 12-15 people, trainer could invite them also to briefly describe their interest in this training. If group is larger than 40-50 people, individual introductions are likely to take too much time.

Describe the purpose of Module 1. Language for this overview is provided at the beginning of the presentation scripts, right before Presentation 1. Emphasize that child welfare professionals often work with families where one or more adults are experiencing substance use or mental disorders and this training is intended to prepare them to better help such adults recover from the effects of their disorder and function appropriately as parent or caregiver. The bottom line goal is safe care of children. The language provided also describes four simple ground rules for the training session. After presenting them, the trainer may ask the group if there are any other ground rules important to them.

15 – 40 minutes                      *Presentation 1: Parental Disorders: prevalence; categories; characteristics*                      25 min.

Deliver scripted presentation describing parental disorders. **Slides I-1 through I-20.** At the conclusion of the presentation, ask first if there are any brief questions that can be answered before moving on to the following discussion. Keep answers brief. Trainer should only answer questions to which you know the answer.

40 – 60 minutes                      *Facilitated Group Discussion*                      20 min.

Once questions have been addressed, move the whole group into a discussion about their personal experience with persons with substance use or mental disorders. Given that we all know someone, either personally or professionally, who has a substance use or mental disorder, begin by asking the following question:

- What individuals do you know who have experienced a substance abuse problem, a mental illness, or both?

This discussion is not intended to pressure individuals to self-disclose. Most people will have a professional experience to share and, depending on how well the group knows each other, some may feel comfortable sharing personal experiences. If additional questions are needed to stimulate discussion, you might ask any of the following questions:

- How do you know them?
- What do you know about the beginning or the origin of their problem(s)?
- How did your feelings about that person change when you first learned of their problem(s)?
- What do you know about any efforts they made to get help?
- How did their problem or their effort to get help affect your judgment of them?
- How does all of this affect your attitudes about parents with such problems?

The GOAL of this discussion is to help participants personalize the realities of substance use or mental disorders. It is desirable to have participants share their attitudes about persons with disorders because some may begin to question their own negative attitudes, making them better able to work with and support parents in recovery. Try not to let one participant dominate the discussion; draw in others to the discussion.

To bring final closure to this discussion, emphasize that our individual attitudes strongly impact how we choose to work with persons experiencing substance abuse and/or mental disorders. It is important to understand our own individual attitudes about these issues if we are to be helpful to persons experiencing them.

60 – 85 minutes      *Presentation 2: Special areas of consideration; family-centered practice; cultural competence* 25 min.

---

Deliver scripted presentation on special areas of consideration. **Slides I-21 through I-36.** At the conclusion of the presentation, ask first if there are any brief questions that can be answered before moving on. Keep answers brief. Trainer should only answer questions to which you know the answer.

85 – 100 minutes      *Break* 15 min.

---

100 – 120 minutes      *Facilitated Group Discussion* 20 min.

---

Once the group is back together after the break, begin a whole group discussion by asking, “When you are working with families impacted by child abuse and/or neglect, how do you react to learning a family member has a mental or substance abuse disorder?”

If additional questions are needed to stimulate group discussion, you might ask any of the following questions:

- Is your willingness to help them changed? In what ways?
- Have your ideas about how to help them changed? In what ways?
- What implications do you see from ASFA timeline requirements for families with substance abuse and/or mental disorders?

The GOAL of this discussion is to have them give voice to attitudes that may affect their ability to help a parent move towards recovery goals. By listening to each other, some will think about changing attitudes they hold in directions more helpful to parents they are working with. Do not pressure people to express changed views if they do not feel they can. Ask participants to be aware of how these views can affect their work with families. Try not to let one person dominate the discussion.

To bring final closure to this discussion, emphasize that our personal attitudes carry over into our work and that those attitudes impact our work with families impacted by abuse or neglect. Challenge participants to reflect on those attitudes and decide if they want to make any changes. Encourage workers to talk with supervisors and managers about attitudes.

120 – 140 minutes      *Presentation 3: Prioritizing interventions; personal and agency values* 20 min.

---

Deliver scripted presentation on competing “clocks” or timelines facing parents, collaboration, and personal and agency values. **Slides I-37 through I-49.** At the conclusion of the

