

Supervisor Post-Class TOL

CWS2010W: In-Home Services Skills



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

WDS Workforce Development
and Support

Cognitive Protective Capacities

Cognitive protective capacity refers to knowledge, understanding, and perceptions contributing to protective vigilance.

Although this aspect of protective capacities has some relationship to intellectual or cognitive functioning, parents with low intellectual functioning can still protect their children. This has to do with the parent recognizing she is responsible for her child, and recognizing clues or alerts that danger is pending.

Cognitive protective capacities can be demonstrated when the parent:

- articulates a plan to protect the child
- is aligned with the child
- has adequate knowledge to fulfill care-giving responsibilities and tasks
- is reality oriented; perceives reality accurately
- has accurate perceptions of the child
- understands his/her protective role
- is self-aware as a caregiver

Behavioral Protective Capacities

Behavioral protective capacity refers to actions, activities, and performance that result in protective vigilance.

Behavioral aspects show it is not enough to know what must be done, or recognize what might be dangerous to a child; the parent must act.

Behavioral protective capacities can be demonstrated when the parent:

- is physically able
- has a history of protecting others
- acts to correct problems or challenges
- demonstrates impulse control
- demonstrates adequate skill to fulfill care-giving responsibilities
- possesses adequate energy
- sets aside her/his needs in favor of a child
- is adaptive and assertive
- uses resources necessary to meet the child's basic needs

SOURCE: NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Emotional Protective Capacities

Emotional protective capacity refers to feelings, attitudes and identification with the child and motivation resulting in protective vigilance.

Two issues influence the strength of emotional protective capacity: the attachment between parent and child, and the parent's own emotional strength.

Emotional protective capacities can be demonstrated when the parent:

- is able to meet own emotional needs
 - is emotionally able to intervene to protect the child
 - realizes the child cannot produce gratification and self-esteem for the parent
 - is tolerant as a parent
 - displays concern for the child and the child's experience and is intent on emotionally protecting the child
 - has a strong bond with the child, knows a parent's first priority is well-being of the child
 - expresses love, empathy and sensitivity toward the child; experiences specific empathy with the child's perspective and feelings
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The following questions can guide your informal assessment of protective capacities...

- Has the parent/caregiver demonstrated the ability to protect the child in the past under similar circumstances and family conditions? (**Behavioral Protective Capacity**)
- Has the parent/caregiver arranged for the child to not be left alone with the source of maltreatment/danger? (This could include having another adult present aware of the protective concerns and able to protect the child). (**Cognitive and Behavioral Protective Capacity**)
- Is the parent/caregiver intellectually, emotionally and physically able to protect the child given the threats of danger? (**Cognitive, Behavioral and Emotional Protective Capacity**)
- Is the parent/caregiver free from needs which might affect the ability to protect; such as, severe depression, lack of impulse control, or medical needs? (**Behavioral and Emotional Protective Capacity**)
- Does the parent/caregiver have resources to meet the child's basic needs in light of the other changes or expectations of the family? (**Behavioral Protective Capacity**)
- Is the parent/caregiver cooperating with the LDSS's efforts to provide services and assess the family's strengths and needs? (**Cognitive and Behavioral Protective Capacity**)
- Does the parent/caregiver display concern for the child's experience? Is the parent/caregiver intent on emotionally protecting the child? (**Emotional Protective Capacity**)
- Can the parent/caregiver specifically articulate a feasible, realistic plan to protect the child; such as, the source of maltreatment/danger leaving when a situation escalates, calling the police in the event the source returns if a restraining order is violated, etc.? (**Cognitive Protective Capacity**)
- Does the parent/caregiver believe the child's report of maltreatment and is he/she supportive of the child? (**Emotional Protective Capacity**)

SOURCE: NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

- Is the parent/caregiver capable of understanding the specific threat to the child and the need to protect? **(Cognitive Protective Capacity)**
- Has the parent/caregiver asked the source of maltreatment/danger to leave the household (if applicable)? (Behavioral Protective Capacity)
- Does the parent/caregiver have adequate knowledge and skill to fulfill parenting responsibilities and tasks? (This may involve considering the parent's/caregiver's ability to meet any exceptional needs that the child might have). **(Cognitive and Behavioral Protective Capacity)**
- Is the parent/caregiver emotionally able to carry out a plan and/or to intervene to protect the child (caregiver is not incapacitated by fear of the source of maltreatment/danger)? **(Behavioral and Emotional Protective Capacity)**
- Do the parent/caregiver and child have a strong bond and does the parent/caregiver demonstrate clearly that the number one priority is the safety and well-being of the child? **(Behavioral and Emotional Protective Capacity)**
- Even if the parent/caregiver is having a difficult time believing the source of maltreatment/danger would maltreat the child, does he or she describe the child as believable and trustworthy? **(Emotional Protective Capacity)**
- Does the parent/caregiver believe that the problems of the family (including current child welfare involvement) are not the child's fault or responsibility? **(Cognitive and Emotional Protective Capacity)**

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Transfer of Learning – Day Two

Protective Capacities are caregiver characteristics directly related to child safety. A parents/caregivers with these characteristics ensure the safety of their child and responds to threats in ways that keep the child safe from harm. Building protective capacities contribute to a reduction in risk and increases the sustainability of safety.

Activity A: Complete this activity. Afterwards, review the responses with your supervisor.

1. As a Family Services Specialist, what is one way you can use your knowledge of protective frameworks to enhance your existing case practices?

2. Review the Protective Capacities Guide. How do you plan to utilize this guide when engaging work with families? Be specific.

Activity B: Complete this activity with your supervisor.

1. What services/supports are available to build protective factors?

2. What services/supports are available to build protective capacities?

3. What barriers exist that restrict access to services/supports that build protective factors?

4. What barriers exist that restrict access to services/supports that build protective capacities?