

Tips for Applying Critical Thinking Skills

- **Prepare Ahead of Time**
 - Why is an assessment needed?
 - What critical questions need answered?
 - What decisions will be made using this information?
- **Plan for the Assessment Interviews**
 - What type(s) of information are most pertinent and relevant to the criteria being assessed?
 - What is the scope for gathering this information? Who or what collateral sources can help?
 - How in depth do the assessment interviews need to be to complete a thorough assessment?
 - **Tip:** Become familiar with the Safety Assessment and Family Assessment categories (CAPMIS Tools).
- **Determine Possible Information-Gathering Strategies**
 - What strategies may work best based on the child(ren)'s age and developmental level?
 - What approaches have worked well in similar cases?
 - **Tip:** There are additional assessment tools and strategies included in the CW Self-Assessment and Field Tools (Pages 32-42).
- **Analyze the Information (Examine in Detail)**
 - What does this information mean?
 - What hypotheses can I draw about the family's functioning? Child Functioning? Parental Functioning?
 - **Tip:** Clinical Consultation Framework (Coaching and Supervision Tools Page 34) and Group Supervision can help in this process.
- **Evaluate the Information**
 - Is the information consistent or are their conflicting pieces of information that need reconciled?
 - What can I do to test the accuracy of my hypothesis?
- **Synthesize/Integrate the Information**
 - How can I document this information in a congruent manner that allows accurate conclusions to be drawn?
 - **Tip:** Reflect on how the information comes together as you complete the CAPMIS Tools in SACWIS and review with your supervisor to help guide your next steps.
- **Use the Conclusions to Make Well-Informed Decisions**
 - How was the information gathered used to make a decision that achieved the desired outcome?
 - Have we used a structured decision-making process to assure safety, well-being and permanency for the family?