

## Mentor Activity Supplement

This Appendix will assist you as you work with your mentor through the Activity Checklist for Mentors - Post CW 3300 / Pre CW 3444.

A mentor is someone who coaches, supports, advises, and teaches a less experienced Child Welfare Specialist to help them develop the skills necessary to perform their job competently. Mentoring should primarily be done in a “coaching mode” to continually elicit critical thinking from the Specialist to help them gain insight into themselves and their practice to foster their confidence and development as a practitioner.

“Giving feedback” vs. “Coaching”: Feedback entails the mentor’s impressions and critique of the specialist’s interview. Coaching entails using reflective listening and questions to elicit critical thinking from the specialist. It may also include giving feedback as well giving suggestions and advice if the specialist is struggling to identify a more effective approach.

“Teaching vs. Coaching”: Teaching involves the mentor explaining a method of practice to the specialist. Coaching entails using reflective listening and questions to elicit critical thinking from the specialist. Coaching may also include doing some teaching if the specialist is struggling to identify a more effective approach themselves. However, coaching focuses on helping people learn rather than teaching them.

Benefits of a “coaching style” in mentoring:

- Done well, coaching aligns with our values of strengths based, family centered practice. We are modeling what we expect our CW Specialists to do with families.
- It is an investment in developing people.
- Specialists will improve practical skills and critical thinking skills.
- Consistent use of coaching skills can create a collaborative culture of problem solving in the program.

Examples of Mentoring/Coaching Skills

- Being Present / Listening / Reflecting Back – Clarifying
- Asking Questions to elicit critical thinking
- Support / Offering suggestions and advice

Examples of Coaching Questions vs. Non-Coaching Questions:

- 1) “What options do you see in this situation?” vs. “Why did you choose to do that?”
- 2) “How could you have made the family feel more comfortable?” vs. “Don’t you think you should have... to make the family feel more comfortable?”
- 3) “As you hear yourself describe the situation, what is coming up for you?” vs. “Do you see why that was not so good?”
- 4) “What strategies have you tried in situations like this before?” vs. “Why don’t you consider ....?”
- 5) “How did the family respond when you did ....?” vs. “Wouldn’t it be better if you didn’t do ....?”