

# Investigations Unit 8

## *Participant Manual*



MidSOUTH  
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, HEALTH,  
AND HUMAN SERVICES  
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

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## AGENDA

### Day 1

- I. Section 1 – Investigation Concentration, Welcome & Scope**
  - A. Introduction
  - B. ACTIVITY: Welcome & Introductions
  - C. Housekeeping & Class Guidelines
  - D. ACTIVITY: Shared Agreements
  - E. Alyssa Lies Video
  - F. ACTIVITY: Scope of Maltreatment
- II. Section 2 – Locating a Referral on your Workload**
  - A. Locating a Referral
  - B. Division Information Management System Work
  - C. ACTIVITY: Referral Snapshot
- III. Section 3 – Overview of Child Maltreatment Law & Policy Requirements**
  - A. Welcome
  - B. Investigation Interviews
  - C. Build the Box – Law & Policy Review
  - D. Multi-County Investigations
- IV. Section 4 – Introduction to Investigation: Investigation Plan**
  - A. Welcome
  - B. ACTIVITY: Review Questions
  - C. Investigation Planning
  - D. Suggested Interview Sequence

### Day 2

- I. Section 1 – Elements of Maltreatment**
  - A. Welcome & Ice Breaker
  - B. Elements of Maltreatment
  - C. Preparing for Interview
- II. Section 2 – Investigation Plan: Interviews**
  - A. Review
  - B. Reporting Out - Trainer Guidelines

- C. Reporting Out - The Reporter
- D. Other Reporting Out
- E. Interview Practice
- F. Interview Practice Continued

### III. Section 3 – Documenting Interviews

- A. Getting Logged In
- B. Investigations
- C. Documenting Collateral Interviews
- D. The Victim Interview or Observation
- E. Adding Collaterals

## Day 3

### IV. Section 1 – Interviewing Revisited – Prep & Practice

- A. Welcome
- B. Review Interview Information
- C. Preparing to Interview
- D. Interview Practice
- E. Decision Point

### V. Section 2 – Applying Structured Decision Making

- A. Applying SDM to Flowers
- B. Immediate Safety Planning
- C. Practice

### VI. Section 3 – Team Decision Making

- A. Welcome
- B. TDM Overview
- C. Practice Opportunity

### VII. Section 4 – Division Information Management System Documentation

- A. Review Elements of Maltreatment
- B. Adding a Client
- C. Updating Client Screens
- D. OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: Movement Break
- E. Interviews
- F. Decision Point
- G. Doc Tracking
- H. DCS Safety Assessment & Immediate Safety Planning



**I. Homework Assignment****Day 4**

- I. Section 1 – Review and the Division Information Management System**
  - A. Welcome, Ticket Outs & Review
- II. Section 2 – Ensuring Safety When There is an Uncontrolled Safety Threat**
  - A. When It All Goes South
  - B. Immediate Actions
  - C. Preparation
  - D. Removal - Taking Protective Custody
  - E. Affidavit
  - F. Affidavit Feedback
  - G. Decision Point
- III. Section 3 – Investigation Determination**
  - A. Elements of Maltreatment
  - B. Developing the Text
- IV. Section 4 – Division Information Management System**
  - A. Documenting
  - B. Update Doc Tracking
  - C. A/N Alleg Screen
  - D. Contacts
  - E. Safety Assessment Update
  - F. Findings Screen
  - G. Case Connect
  - H. SDM Risk Assessment
  - I. PA Report
  - J. Family First Eligibility Screen
  - K. Conclusion

**Day 5**

- I. Section 1 – Division Information Management System Wrap Up & Tickets**
  - A. Ticket Out
  - B. Organizers & Timelines
- II. Section 2 – Preparing for Court**
  - A. Tips from an Attorney

- B.** Sharing Experiences
- C.** Alternative Presentation

**III.**    **Section 3 – Division Information Management System Work**

- A.** Documentation
- B.** Investigation Approval

# ALYSSA LIES

In the sections below, address your feelings and observations from the video, and reflect on why you decided to work in child protective services.

What are your feelings about the video?	What are your observations about the video?
What made you choose to work in child protective services?	

# SCOPE OF MALTREATMENT

## END OF THE YEAR REFLECTIONS


Use the Children's Bureau's 2022 Child Maltreatment Report to answer questions 1 - 4.

- 1 How many **national** referrals were made in **2022**?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 How many referrals did **Arkansas** receive in **2022**?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 What was the estimated total of **national** child deaths due to neglect and abuse in **2022**?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 How many **screened in** referrals did **Arkansas** have in **2022**?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Use Arkansas' 2023 Annual Report Card to answer the questions below.

- 1 How many child maltreatment reports did **Arkansas** receive in **2023**?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 What **percentage** of those reports were assigned to **DCFS**?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 What **percentage** of those reports were assigned to **CACD**?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 How many of the reports assigned to DCFS were **Differential Response Cases**?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 How many of the reports assigned to DCFS were **Investigation**?  
\_\_\_\_\_





## ARKANSAS CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE

PROTECTING CHILDREN SINCE 1992

**Hotline Number: 1-800-482-5964**

<b>WHO CAN CALL:</b> Anyone with reason to suspect child maltreatment may report to the Hotline.	<b>WHO MUST REPORT:</b> People in certain jobs are <b>MANDATED</b> by law to report suspected child maltreatment. As of 8/1/23, ACT 727 adds any adult who witnesses abuse, sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation as a mandated reporter.
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Let's start with the call.  
What happens then?



## Accepted

Assigned to DCFS or CACD Assign Priority  
Response Time  
(I or II)



### ASSESS

Does the report meet the criteria for acceptance?  
If it is true, is it legally child maltreatment?



### SCREEN OUT

It would not meet the legal definition of child maltreatment.



### ACCEPT & ASSIGN

It would be maltreatment or fall into a category of exempt from a true finding.

Designate as:

- Differential Response
- Traditional Child Maltreatment
- Substance Exposed Infant
- Child Death

**NOTE:** As of 8/1/23, ACT 727 prohibits the Child Abuse Hotline from accepting an anonymous report and any faxed reports.

Open 24/7 35 Operators  
5 Supervisors  
1 Administrator  
Over 63,000 Calls



## NOTES ON THE REFERRAL

**CASE NAME:**

**CHRIS ID NUMBER:**

**PRIORITY \_\_\_\_**

**How do I know if I have a new case or investigation?**

### CHRIS SCREEN PATH

Workload (on Main Tool Bar) > Click OK Button when the dialog box comes up > Find Flowers and click on the name to highlight > Show > Referral

What is the referral date?	<b>Screen:</b>
Who is the caller?	<b>Screen:</b>
What is the caller's relationship to the alleged victim(s)?	<b>Screen:</b>
Who is/are the Alleged Victim(s)?	<b>Screen:</b>
Who is/are the Alleged Offender(s)?	<b>Screen:</b>
Who is identified as the PRFC?	<b>Screen:</b>
What types of maltreatment were reported?	<b>Screen:</b>
Does this referral have a person or people outside the family you need to interview? If yes, who?	<b>Screen:</b>
This report is a Priority ____ report.	<b>Screen:</b>
Where is the child right now?	<b>Screen:</b>
When does this report need to be initiated?	<b>Screen:</b>

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS**

Make notes on the questions you may have.

**Notes:**

**Questions:**

**Things I need to follow up on:**

## AUGUST 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 Date of Referral 03:00 am	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



## SEPTEMBER 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	<b>4</b> Labor Day	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

# WHAT I REMEMBER ABOUT INVESTIGATIONS



## INTERVIEWS

## CRITICAL TIMEFRAMES



## CONFERENCE / SUPERVISION



## DOCUMENTATION



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Is it abuse if the parent did not mean to harm the child or mean for the child to get hurt?

### Acts of Commission

### Acts of Omission

## ELEMENTS OF MALTREATMENT

Overall Maltreatment Category - Neglect

Type – Failure to provide necessary medical treatment

Type – Inadequate Supervision by placing a child in a dangerous situation

PREPARING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



- Name of Person:
- Where/How to Interview (EXPLAIN):
- When to Interview:
- What Do You Need to Learn from this Person (Purpose/nature of this Interview)?

Issues, Feelings, Concerns (Yours & Theirs)	
Ideas for Introduction:	Specific Questions or Statement or Strategy:
Ideas to Engage and Connect:	Specific Questions or Statements or Strategy:
Ideas to Gather Information:	Specific Questions or Statements or Strategy:
Ideas for Closure:	Specific Questions or Statements or Strategy:
Forms or Pubs Needed:	

PREPARING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



Name of Person:

Where/How to Interview (EXPLAIN):

When to Interview:

What Do You Need to Learn from this Person (Purpose/nature of this Interview)?

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Ideas to Gather Information:	Specific Questions or Statements or Strategy:
Ideas for Closure:	Specific Questions or Statements or Strategy:
Forms or Pubs Needed:	

## FLOWERS: SAFETY THREAT, PLANNING CAPACITIES & INTERVENTION

### Safety Threats (Definition):

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### Safety Threats Identified:

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### Factors Influencing Child Vulnerability (Definition):

*These are conditions resulting in child's inability to protect self, such as age, medical or mental condition, physical capacity limited or no accessible support network.*

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### Safety Planning (Definition):

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### Safety Interventions Identified:

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## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF AN IMMEDIATE SAFETY PLAN

<p><b><u>Identifying Safety Threats:</u></b></p> <p>The Structured Decision Making (SDM) safety assessment provides the framework for safety planning. When one or more safety threats are identified in a household, protective interventions should be considered to allow the child to remain safely in the home whenever possible and appropriate.</p>	<p><b><u>Caregiver Actions:</u></b></p> <p>Clear description of caregiver actions or inactions and their impact on the child. An immediate safety plan should link each identified safety threat to a household-specific, behavior-based description of a caregiver's actions or inactions that create a safety threat to the child. Worry statements should be formed to structure the description.</p>
<p><b><u>Immediate Actions:</u></b></p> <p>Immediate actions to control the safety threat. A safety plan should include a specific set of action steps to be taken by sufficient family members, network members, and others, or resources that are immediately available, to temporarily control the safety threat.</p>	<p><b><u>Network Involvement:</u></b></p> <p>At least one family or network member besides the caregiver must support the plan. Each participant must clearly understand the safety threat and be committed to their role in implementing the action steps to control the safety threat. They must also be involved in monitoring the safety plan.</p>
<p><b><u>Monitoring Plan:</u></b></p> <p>An immediate safety plan should clearly describe how the worker and family will monitor how well the plan is working and actions to take if it is not. What is the backup plan.</p>	<p><b><u>Time Limit:</u></b></p> <p>A safety plan must have a specific timeframe - no more than 14 days to remain in effect, or a specific date on which it will be reviewed and renewed, strengthened, or resolved.</p>
<p><b><u>Signatures:</u></b></p> <p>At legal caregiver, the worker and network member.</p>	<p><b><u>NOTES:</u></b></p>



# SEVEN STEPS

## FOR IMMEDIATE SAFETY PLANNING

**1**

ASSESS FOR SAFETY THREATS AND  
PRESENCE OF PROTECTION.

**2**

CONSTRUCT CLEAR WORRY  
STATEMENTS.

**3**

ORIENT THE FAMILY TO THE  
TASKS.

**4**

IDENTIFY AND INVOLVE THE  
NETWORK.

**5**

BUILD RIGOROUS ACTION STEPS  
WITH CONTINGENCIES.

**6**

REACH AGREEMENT.

**7**

MONITOR, ADAPT, AND  
STRENGTHEN.

## INVITING THE CAREGIVER TO A TDM MEETING

Using the behaviorally descriptive language model at the bottom of the page, list some questions/statements you would make to Ms. Flowers to invite her to the TDM.

*Remember to keep statements and questions strengths-based.*

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Behaviorally descriptive language identifies the following things:

1. Identifying **who** is concerned (DCFS).
2. Identifying **why** DCFS is concerned (caregiver's action).
3. Identifying the **impact** the caregiver's action may have on the child, both long and short term.

How do you let her know that she can invite others and who would those others be?

1. Who could help keep your children safe?
2. Who helps you when things get tough?



## INTERSECTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD MALTREATMENT

**There are several potential intersections of TDM and domestic violence.**

- 1** Domestic violence is the presenting issue and the primary reason for the meeting referral
- 2** Domestic violence is not the presenting issue, but is known and is a complicating factor.
- 3** Domestic violence is not the presenting issue, is suspected, but requires further assessment.
- 4** Domestic Violence is not identified, but presents itself in the course of the meeting.

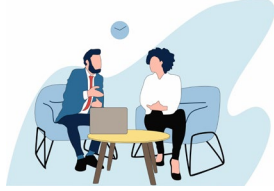





**When planning for safety and at the safety check in some suggestions questions to ask include:**

- 1** Are there any court orders in place that prohibit contact between you and anyone else at the meeting?
- 2** Is there anything we need to be aware of related to your personal safety in the meeting?
- 3** If yes, how can we proceed safely? Separate meetings? Avoid certain topics? Exclude children or other family members from meeting? (Remember, you cannot completely exclude a parent from the meeting so how will that impact your treatment of Scot?)
- 4** Do we need to have a signal when you need a break if you are worried about your/your children's safety?
- 5** Another thing to consider in DV situations is whether the meeting needs to be moved to a more secure place such as the DCFS office and/or whether there needs to be a separate meeting with a family member who is known to be violent.

## PROTECTIVE CUSTODY

To take protective custody, you must have circumstances or conditions of the child such that continuing in their place of residence or the care and custody of their parent, guardian, or caregiver presents an **immediate danger** to the health or physical well-being of the child.

When you must take protective custody, follow the following steps:

Notify Supervisor	
Notify OCC	
Assist with placement by (at a minimum): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on fathers.</li> <li>• Provide information about possible placement resources (relatives or fictive kin).</li> </ul>	
Ensure a physical exam (72 ours as this is not a severe maltreatment situation) – this could fall on the caseworker instead of the investigator depending on your county.	
Parental notification to Charlotte ( <b>CFS-323</b> )	
Parental notification to Brad ( <b>CFS-323</b> )	
Notice to Grandmother ( <b>CFS-323-A</b> )	
Prepare an affidavit for OCC for the ex-parte hearing.	

## AFFIDAVITS - THE KEY TO THE CASE



### **Definitions:**

- A voluntary declaration of facts written down and sworn to by the declarant (DCFS worker) before an officer authorized to administer oaths (notary).
- Must be signed by person with knowledge.

### **Types:**

- Medical
- CACD investigator
- DCFS employee

### **Items that must be contained in an Affidavit:**

- All facts regarding the maltreatment.
- Full names, dates of birth, and addresses of all children, mother, father (putative and /or legal).
- Removal reason and from whom.
- If the parent's addresses were not available, include reasonable efforts made to obtain the addresses.
- Efforts provided to family to prevent removal;
- Time and date the 72- hour hold was taken;
- Date DHS first contacted the family;
- The facts that support the concerns (allegation) of severe maltreatment or substantial risk of serious harm (immediate danger);
- Prior services and cases with the family.
- Provide all CHRIS numbers, including unsubstantiated reports.

### **Elements of an Affidavit:**

Three essential elements must be satisfied to constitute a complete affidavit. They are:

1. A written oath representing the facts as sworn by the affiant (DCFS or CACD worker).
2. The signature of the affiant; and
3. The attestation (verification) by an officer authorized to administer the oath that the Affidavit was actually sworn by the affiant in the presence of that officer; aka it needs to be notarized.

## COURT HEARING QUESTIONS – PROBABLE CAUSE HEARING

This hearing is conducted 5 working days after the emergency removal.

This hearing is conducted to determine if:

- there were reasonable grounds to remove the child, and
- whether those grounds still exist and the child should remain away from home.

### Likely Questions:

1. Would you state your name?
2. Where are you employed?
3. What is your position with DHS?
4. How long have you been in that position?
5. What is your affiliation with this case?
6. When was the juvenile removed?

Emergency removal was warranted on a report with **no prior agency involvement**.

1. Explain the emergency that made the removal necessary?
2. Were there any services that were offered or could have been offered and provided that would have prevented the removal?

Emergency removal was warranted on a report with **prior agency involvement**.

- Has DCFS previously provided services to this family?
- How long was or has DCFS been involved with this family (provide the specific dates, stating with the date the services began)?
- What services have been provided since the agency became involved with the family? (be specific; explain every service or effort/attempt to provide services to the family, starting with the first attempt).
- Did these services prevent removals in the past?
- Why didn't these services prevent this removal?
- What concerns do you currently have that lead you to believe that the emergency

condition (immediate danger) that existed continues so that it is necessary for the child to remain in DCFS custody?

- Do you have any recommendations regarding visitation and /or custody of the child and the family members?
- Do you have the parent's permanent mailing address for future notifications and contacts?
- Have the parents provided the names, addresses, and phone numbers for relatives or friends that could serve a relative or fictive kin placement? What efforts have you made to obtain this information?
- Do you have any information regarding the putative fathers (this question will be asked if the affidavit identifies a putative father)?
- Is the child or any of the family members affiliated or a descent of an Indian tribe?

## COURT HEARING QUESTIONS – ADJUDICATION HEARING

This hearing is conducted 30 days after the probable cause hearing.

**Purpose:** This hearing is designed to determine whether the allegation of dependency, abuse or neglect contained in the petition are true and supported by the evidence.

### Likely Questions:

1. Would you state your name?
2. Where are you employed?
3. What is your position with DCFS/DHS?
4. How long have you been in that position?
5. What is your affiliation with this case?
6. Will you explain the situation that led to the removal of the child?
  - Was it an emergency situation?
  - Have you been providing services to the family? If so state them. (Be specific).
7. How did you respond to the emergency? (Removed the child from the mom, dad, both, placed the child in foster care or relative care or fictive kin, and continued to conduct the investigation.
8. As the FSW, have you been trained to perform child maltreatment investigations? (Explain your training).
9. Did you investigate in this case?
10. Who did you question?
11. What testimony did the mother/father/ /juvenile provide/collaterals?
12. Did you document the evidence (pictures, reports)? Follow up questions will be asked based upon the answers to this question to authenticate the documents).
  - Do you recognize the pictures? Are these the pictures you took on \_\_\_\_?
  - Do these pictures accurately represent or demonstrate what you observed on \_\_\_\_?
13. Have you had an opportunity to meet with the family and develop a case plan?



14. If yes, explain (provide the specific details of the visit, met with the family on \_\_\_\_ date, who signed, what are some of the contents, do you feel it is appropriate for this case). If not, has a goal been determined in this situation (plan A)? What is the concurrent plan?
15. Do you have any recommendations regarding custody and placement of the child, services for the family and visitations?
16. Have the parents provided the names, addresses, and phone numbers for relatives or friends that could serve a relative or fictive kin placement? What efforts have you made to obtain this information?
17. Do you have any information regarding the putative fathers (this question will be asked if the affidavit identify a putative father)?

## INVESTIGATION DETERMINATION

TEXT SHOWING THAT THE ELEMENTS TO MAKE A TRUE FINDING HAVE BEEN  
MET FOR:

1. Report to the PA (Prosecuting Attorney) – **The text justifying the emergency**
2. Report to the PA – text the **referral synopsis**
3. Report to the PA – the text for the **Summary and Recommendations**
4. Findings/Recommendation – text to **show preponderance of evidence for all elements of neglect**
5. Closure Screens – **text to show preponderance of evidence** and summarization of where the investigation is at the time of closure (actions to keep the children safe)

## Being the Best Witness Tip Sheet



### 1. When the judge enters the courtroom, Everyone must rise

- This is a legal tradition that has been in existence for centuries.
- It is done to show respect not only for the judge, but for the legal system as a whole and the proceedings which are about to take place.
- Less formal courts may not observe this tradition, but it is best practice to stand when the judge enters until you know local custom. This is especially true if you are visiting a new court as a secondary worker, etc.



### 2. When the judge speaks, remain silent

- No one, not even the attorneys, should speak when the judge is speaking.
- This rule applies even if the judge cuts you off in the middle of testimony.
- Never argue with the judge. It is OCC's job to advocate for the Agency's position.
- The judge is the trier of fact in your cases. You do not want to fall out of his or her favor.
- If you fall out of the judge's favor, you can expect: your cases to be scrutinized more closely; the judge himself will question you more often; your mistakes may stand out more.
- This does not necessarily mean the judge is biased against you. It does mean you have called attention to yourself in some negative manner which causes the judge to scrutinize you more closely.

## Being the Best Witness Tip Sheet



### 3. Direct examination by attorney who calls you as a witness

- On direct examination, answer the question posed to you by the OCC attorney. He or she will give you the freedom to explain your answers in some detail.
- Answer questions in your own words. This is your opportunity to tell your story about this child and family.
- If the attorney cuts you off, do not pick up where you left off. Answer the next question posed to you in a concise manner.
- Answer only the question posed. Do not volunteer information that was not asked.
- Know DCFS policy, if it applies to the case. If you use policy, use it correctly.
- Testimony should flow smoothly in a question and answer format.



### 4. What if I know something that is not favorable to the department?

- Prior to Court, you must share any bad facts with the OCC attorney.
- Then, the attorney can draw this information out in the most favorable light for everyone involved. The OCC attorney is not “selling you out” by doing this, but rather is trying to make the best case he or she can for the Agency.
- That way, opposing counsel cannot get as much “shock value” out of a negative answer or bad facts.
- Also, on direct examination, you can explain the WHY behind the negative information.



## Effective Testimony

- Remain Calm and don't appear argumentative with the attorneys.
- Adjust the microphone as needed and speak up
- Verbalize your responses in a confident voice instead of nodding so the court reporter can record your response accurately.
- Take a moment to ensure you understand the question and do not rush into answering a question.
- If you don't understand the question, ask the attorney to repeat or rephrase the question differently, if necessary.
- After you have fully answered a question, if any attorney continues to press you for more information, answer in the following manner:
  - "That is all that I recall," or "That's all I remember happening."
- Turn your cell phone OFF or on SILENT in the courtroom and do NOT answer your cell phone while inside the courtroom.
- Step into the conference room or hallway to make and receive calls when absolutely necessary.
- Every MATERIAL TRUTH (true facts which are pertinent to the case) should be readily admitted, even if the fact is detrimental to the Department.
- DO NOT EXAGGERATE! Just answer the questions to the best of your ability.



## Credible Testimony

- Do not look at others for help. This could be considered witness tampering
- Answer the question in the same calm, reserved, straightforward manner
- Use your professional voice and proper grammar when testifying. Your voice tone and grammar, like your posture and dress, are indicators of your credibility.
- Your tone should be conversational, but loud enough to include everyone in the courtroom in your conversation.
- Use phrases such as, "As the Family Service Worker assigned to the case, I observed..." or "The Department's recommendation is..."
- Stick to the facts and avoid using the following phrases: "I think," "I believe," or "In my opinion."
- When asked your opinion, your professional opinion should always be based on DHS policy & procedures and recommendations from staffings or supervisory conferences