

Investigations

Day 10 - Facilitator Guide



What Investigations Look Like

Professional Growth

Investigator Wellness

Training Closure

Day 10:

Investigations Training Agenda

Friday	
9:00 – 9:30	Welcome Pre-Test
9:30 – 10:30	What Investigations Look Like
10:30 -10:45	Break
10:45 – 12:00	Professional Growth
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 – 2:15	Investigator Wellness
2:15 - 2:30	Break
2:30 – 3:30	Training Closure
3:30 – 4:00	Wrap Up and Review

Before You Train

Facilitator Resources – Day 10

Materials and Handouts

- Name Tents
- Markers, Pens, Highlighters
- Sticky Notes
- Giant Sticky Note Pad
- Printed Participant Manuals
- Blank paper

DCFS Entry Level Competencies

- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| • 100-1 | • 101-6 | • 102-4 |
| • 101-1 | • 101-7 | • 103-4 |
| • 101-2 | • 102-2 | • 105-2 |

DCFS Forms and Publications

- n/a

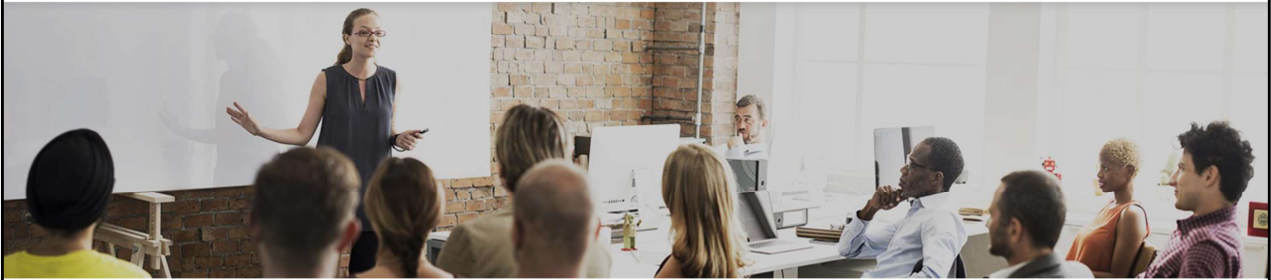
DCFS Policy And Internal Procedures

- n/a

Day 10 Sources

- n/a

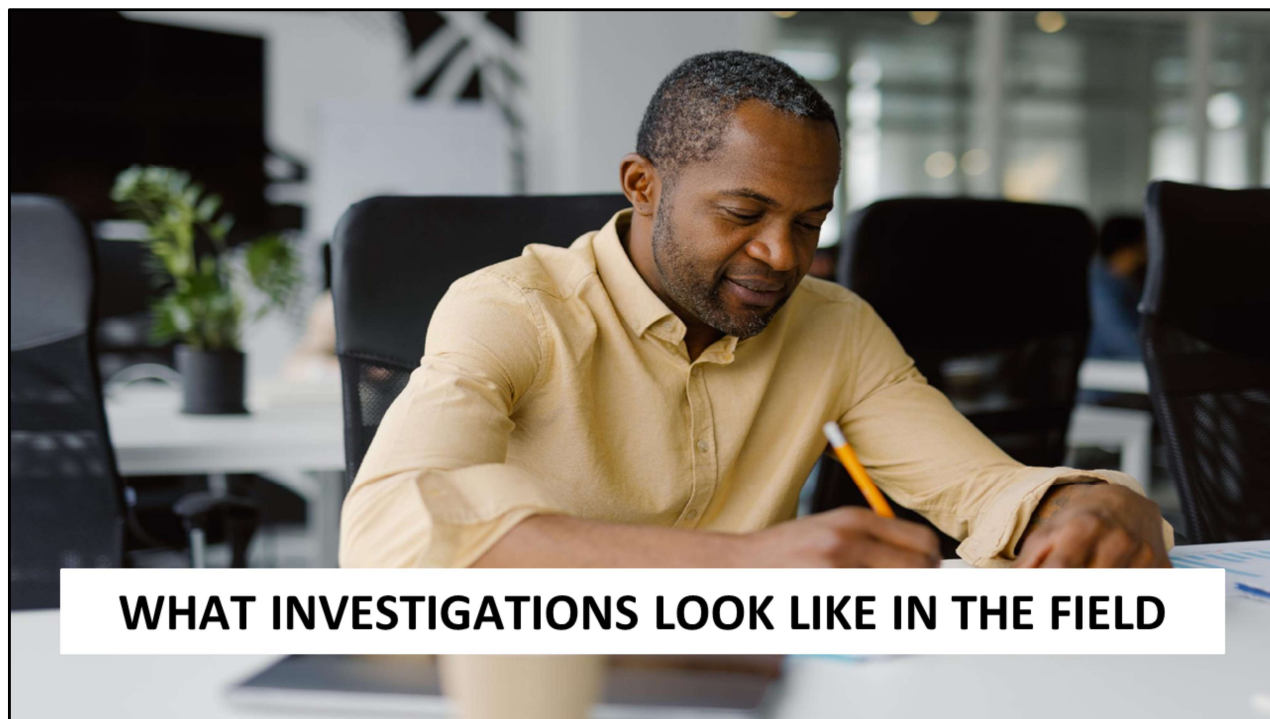
Investigations *Specialty Training*



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

Day 10

WEEK 8, DAY 10 – INVESTIGATIONS SPECIALTY TRAINING



WHAT INVESTIGATIONS LOOK LIKE IN THE FIELD

WHAT INVESTIGATIONS LOOK LIKE IN THE FIELD

TRANSITIONING FROM TRAINING TO FIELD PRACTICE



TRANSITIONING FROM TRAINING TO FIELD PRACTICE

Time: 15 minutes

Purpose: To welcome participants to the final day of training, connect the conclusion of the Flowers investigation to the transition into field practice, and reframe Day 10's focus toward professional growth, real-world application, and long-term career development

Activity Set Up:

Welcome participants to the final day of training, seated at their tables in groups with access to the Day 10 notes page.

1. Discuss the purpose of Day 10.
2. Connect the completion of the Flowers investigation to the transition from training scenarios to field practice.
3. Prepare participants for reflection, discussion, practical application, and professional growth throughout the day.

Say:

Over the last nine days, you have developed knowledge and skills related to the investigation process. You have practiced gathering information, assessing safety, evaluating risk, engaging families, documenting findings, participating in court-related activities, and collaborating with professional partners. You have also carried the Flowers family through nearly every stage of an investigation. You began with a referral,

gathered information as the case developed, responded to changing safety concerns, worked through failed safety planning and protective custody, developed findings and legal documentation, and prepared for the court and collaborative processes that followed.

Before we fully shift from training into field practice, there is one final piece of that case we need to complete. You have spent the last several days looking at what happens after an investigation escalates into removal, court involvement, and continued Division action. Today, we will bring the investigative portion of the Flowers case to a close and look at how the information you gathered transitions into the work that continues after the investigation ends.

That transition matters because it reflects what you will experience in practice. An investigation may close, but the impact of your work does not simply stop. Your documentation, findings, decisions, communication, and professional judgment may continue influencing court involvement, services, safety planning, and ongoing case decisions long after your investigative responsibility ends.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- As you think back over the Flowers investigation, what skill do you feel you developed most as the case progressed?

Facilitator Answer:

Participants may identify:

- Interviewing.
- Safety assessment.
- Documentation.
- Court preparation.
- Communication.
- Decision-making.
- Collaboration.
- Reassessment.
- Investigative planning.

Facilitator Notes:

- Clarify that participants will first complete the investigative journey of the Flowers family before shifting fully into field-practice content.
- Reinforce that closing an investigation does not necessarily mean Division involvement with the family ends.
- Connect the Flowers case to the broader reality that investigative decisions and documentation may continue influencing ongoing casework and court involvement.
- Clarify that questions and uncertainty are normal when transitioning into practice.
- Do not begin reteaching the Flowers case on this slide. The detailed closure discussion will occur after the Target Outcomes.

Say:

Before we close out the Flowers investigation and make that final transition into field practice, let's look at what you should be able to take away from today's work.

Target Outcomes



- Connect the full progression of an investigation, from referral through findings, protective action, court involvement, and transition to continued Division involvement.
- Apply strategies for prioritizing responsibilities during active investigations.
- Assess common challenges experienced when transitioning from training to field work, recognizing that questions, uncertainty, and continued growth are normal and expected throughout a career.

TARGET OUTCOMES

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To establish expectations for the final day of training by connecting the conclusion of the Flowers investigation to the transition from classroom learning into real-world investigative practice

Say:

Over the last nine days, you have developed and practiced the knowledge and skills needed throughout the investigation process. You have gathered information, assessed safety, evaluated risk, engaged families, documented findings, participated in court-related activities, and collaborated with professional partners. You have applied those skills throughout the Flowers case as the investigation developed and changed. Today, we will bring that investigative journey to a close before shifting our focus toward what it looks like to take everything you have learned into the field.

Before we begin looking at the realities of field practice, we have one final step in the Flowers case. You have followed this family from the initial referral through significant changes in safety, protective action, findings, and court involvement. Now, we are going to bring the investigative portion of that case to a close and look at how the work you completed carries forward once the investigation transitions into continued Division involvement.

Paraphrase:

By the end of this section, Social Services Specialists will be able to:

- Connect the full progression of an investigation, from referral through findings, protective action, court involvement, and transition to continued Division involvement.
- Apply strategies for prioritizing responsibilities during active investigations.
- Assess common challenges experienced when transitioning from training to field work, recognizing that questions, uncertainty, and continued growth are normal and expected throughout a career.

Closing The Flowers Case



CLOSING THE FLOWERS INVESTIGATION

Time: 15 minutes

Purpose: To bring the Flowers investigation to a clear conclusion by connecting the progression of the case from safety concerns and failed safety planning through TDM, protective custody, court involvement, investigative findings, and the final responsibilities required before the investigation transitions to ongoing casework

Participant Manual:

- Flowers Investigation File
- Investigative Findings & Determinations materials
- Flowers Affidavit, if needed for reference

Activity Set Up:

- Participants remain in their table groups with access to their Flowers case materials.
- Explain that they have reached the end of the **investigative phase** of the Flowers case. They are not making another safety or removal decision. Those decisions have already occurred. Instead, they will look at how the investigation progressed, what ultimately happened with the family, and what must now be completed before the Investigator's portion of the case can close.

Activity Instructions:

Ask participants to briefly reconstruct the final progression of the Flowers investigation. As a group, discuss:

- What happened when the Immediate Safety Plan failed?
- How did Charlotte's actions change the direction of the case?
- What role did the TDM process play?
- Why were the children ultimately removed?
- What court and legal actions followed removal?
- What investigative findings and documentation support the actions that occurred?
- What must be complete before the investigative phase can close?

Have each group identify one decision or development that most significantly changed the direction of the Flowers investigation and explain why.

Say:

For the last ten days, you have followed the Flowers family from the moment the referral was assigned through information gathering, interviews, observations, collateral contacts, safety assessment, safety planning, findings, documentation, TDM involvement, removal, affidavit development, and court preparation. Now we are at the point where the investigative portion of the Flowers case can come to an end.

Think about how much changed from the beginning of this investigation. Initially, you were trying to understand concerns related to Jasmine's medical condition, supervision, caregiver functioning, and what was happening within the home. As more information was gathered, those concerns became clearer and required action.

An Immediate Safety Plan was developed in an effort to control the identified threats while keeping the children safe. When that plan could no longer control the threats, the case escalated. Charlotte refused to follow the safety actions that had been developed, refused Jasmine's medication, rejected Georgia's assistance, and attempted to leave with the children without disclosing where she intended to go. At that point, the circumstances of the case had changed significantly.

The TDM process supported decision-making around the children's safety and placement. When the identified safety threats could not be controlled through the Immediate Safety Plan, protective custody became necessary and the children were removed. DCFS procedure requires protective custody when an identified safety threat cannot be mitigated through an Immediate Safety Plan and the child's health or physical well-being is in immediate danger.

Removal did not end the investigation. It moved the case into another phase. OCC became involved, the affidavit was developed, court proceedings followed, and the investigative information you gathered became the foundation for the legal actions and recommendations that came next. Throughout Day 6, you saw that the Flowers case progressed beyond removal into continued court involvement, reassessment, and Division coordination

Paraphrase:

Your findings must reflect the information gathered throughout the investigation. Your documentation must clearly explain what occurred, how the safety concerns developed. Why the ISP failed, why protective custody became necessary, and what actions followed.

Required closure documentation, supervisory review, and case-opening actions must also be completed before the investigation can formally close. DCFS procedure requires documentation of the investigative determination and closure information, supervisory review and approval, and completion or approval of the Investigation Case Connect screen when a case is being opened.

Closing the investigation does not mean the Flowers family's involvement with DCFS is finished. The children have been removed, the case has entered the court process, and continued Division involvement is necessary. Your investigative work is ending, but the information you gathered now becomes part of the foundation for what happens next.

Now, as the Investigator, your responsibility is to make sure the investigative portion of that work is complete and that the warm handoff is communicated to the family. At this phase one of two things will happen for a family:

1. The investigation for this case will close with safety threats mitigated.
2. The investigation portion will close but the case will be open with a new Specialist assigned.

Facilitator Note:

- During the warm handoff where the family will still have DCFS involvement through an open case it is important that the Specialist ensures that the family understands that next steps will involve the assignment of a new Specialist as the case remains open. Closure at this time is specific to the investigative stage.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- Looking across the entire Flowers investigation, what development most significantly changed the direction of the case?

Facilitator Answer:

Participants may identify:

- Jasmine's medical condition and delayed treatment.
- Additional supervision concerns.
- Domestic violence information.
- Concerns regarding Charlotte's protective capacity.
- Failure of the Immediate Safety Plan.
- Charlotte refused Jasmine's medication.
- Charlotte rejected Georgia's assistance.
- Charlotte attempted to leave with the children.
- TDM discussion and placement decision.
- Protective custody/removal.

Reinforce that the case did not move directly from referral to removal. Decisions changed as information was gathered and the ability to control identified safety threats changed.

Facilitator Question:

- Once the children were removed, why wasn't the Investigator's work finished?

Facilitator Answer:

Removal triggered additional responsibilities and processes. Participants should recognize:

- Continued documentation.
- Investigative findings and determinations.
- OCC coordination.
- Affidavit preparation.
- Court involvement.
- Continued reassessment and communication.
- Completion of investigation closure requirements.
- Preparation for transition to ongoing casework.

Reinforce that Day 6 established that removal begins additional legal, court-related, and Division processes rather than ending investigative responsibility.

Facilitator Notes:

- Keep the conversation focused on the full progression and conclusion of the Flowers investigation.
- Participants have already completed the TDM, removal decision-making, findings, affidavit work, and court preparation. Do not reteach those processes. Use them to show how the pieces of the investigation connected and ultimately led to closure.
- Reinforce that the children being removed is not the end point of the investigative process. The Investigator still has responsibilities related to findings, documentation, legal coordination, and closure.
- Do not determine a future permanency outcome for Jasmine or Frankie. Continued court involvement, case planning, reassessment, services, placement, and permanency decisions belong to the ongoing phase of the case.

Say:

You've now followed the Flowers investigation through its full investigative progression. What started as a referral developed into a case that required ongoing information gathering, safety assessment, an Immediate Safety Plan, TDM involvement, protective custody, court action, findings, and extensive documentation. Each step was connected to the information available at that point in the investigation.

Your investigative work is now ready to come to an end, but the work with the Flowers family is not. Jasmine and Frankie remain involved with DCFS, court and casework responsibilities continue, and another Specialist will now take responsibility for moving the case forward.

Your final responsibility is making sure that the Specialist does not have to start over.

Next, we'll look at how you take everything you've learned about the Flowers family and transition that information through the case connect and warm handoff into ongoing casework.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- The Flowers investigation developed over time as new information was gathered.
- The Immediate Safety Plan was intended to control identified threats while maintaining child safety.
- Failure of the ISP and escalating caregiver behavior changed the direction of the case.
- When identified threats could not be controlled, protective custody and removal became necessary.
- Removal led to additional legal and court-related responsibilities rather than ending the investigation.
- Investigative findings, documentation, and supervisory approval must support the final investigation closure.
- Closing the investigation does not end continued DCFS involvement with the Flowers family.

From Referral to Case Transition



FROM REFERRAL TO CASE TRANSITION: THE FLOWERS JOURNEY

Time: 20 minutes

Purpose: To help Specialists understand their responsibility for transitioning a completed investigation into ongoing casework through Case Connect and a purposeful warm handoff that provides the Caseworker Specialist with the information, context, and unresolved needs necessary to continue working with the family

Activity Set Up:

- Have participants remain in their table groups.
- Explain that they have reached the point where their investigative work with the Flowers family is transitioning to ongoing casework. The family does not start over simply because a different Specialist becomes responsible for the case.

Activity Instructions:

Ask each group to imagine that they are the Investigator Specialist preparing for a Case Connect and warm handoff with the Specialist who will receive the Flowers case.

- Give groups several minutes to discuss the Flowers investigation from beginning to end. Then have them identify the information they believe the next Specialist **must know** to continue working with this family effectively.
- Ask them to consider:
 - What happened during the investigation?
 - What safety threats and risks were identified?

- What decisions have already been made?
- What does the Specialist need to understand about Charlotte's actions and the family's current circumstances?
- What information about Jasmine and Frankie needs to carry forward?
- What happened during the TDM and court involvement?
- What services, supports, family connections, or other professionals are already involved?
- What concerns remain unresolved as the case transitions?

Have each group identify the **three pieces of information they consider most critical to communicate during the warm handoff** and be prepared to explain why.

Paraphrase:

You've now brought the investigative portion of the Flowers case to a close. You know how the case progressed, why the Immediate Safety Plan failed, why protective custody became necessary, what occurred through the TDM and court processes, and what had to be completed before the investigation could close. But there is one final responsibility we need to address. The Flowers family's involvement with DCFS is continuing, which means the information and understanding you developed as the Investigator now need to move with the case.

When continued services are needed, the case moves forward with a Caseworker Specialist. DCFS procedures refer to this transition as a Case Connect, and it requires coordination between the Investigator and the Caseworker Specialist.

Think about what that means for the Flowers family. The next Specialist should not have to start at the beginning and reconstruct everything that happened over the course of this investigation. The information you gathered, the decisions you made, the safety concerns you identified, and the relationships you developed all matter to the work that happens next.

That is where the warm handoff becomes important. You are not simply handing over a case file. You are helping the next Specialist understand where this family has been, where things stand right now, and what still requires attention. The goal is continuity. The next Specialist needs enough information to step into the case with an understanding of the children, the caregivers, the safety concerns, the decisions that have already been made, and the work that still needs to happen.

DCFS procedure reinforces that this is a collaborative transition. When a Case Connect has occurred, the Investigator and Caseworker Specialist may have overlapping responsibilities and must coordinate around the family's safety needs. The investigation's Risk Assessment also helps determine the level of ongoing Division involvement needed to support the child's continued well-being.

So, for this final part of your work with the Flowers family, put yourself back into the role of

the Investigator. You are about to speak directly with the Caseworker Specialist who will continue working with this family. What does that Specialist absolutely need to know from you before you step away?

Activity Discussion:

As groups share, the discussion should bring participants back across the entire investigation. Participants may identify information related to the original allegations and concerns, such as:

- Jasmine and Frankie's safety and well-being,
- Charlotte and Brad's caregiving,
- medical concerns,
- domestic violence,
- supervision concerns,
- prior history,
- safety and risk assessment results,
- the family's support network,
- the TDM and placement decisions,
- court involvement,
- services or referrals,
- the most recent developments involving Charlotte.

Participants should also recognize that the handoff needs to identify **unresolved concerns and next steps**, not simply summarize what has already occurred.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- If you were the Specialist receiving the Flowers case tomorrow after investigation closure, what information would you need from the Investigator to continue the work without starting over?

Facilitator Answer:

Responses should include information such as:

- The history and progression of the investigation.
- Identified safety threats and risk.
- Current child safety and placement information.
- Caregiver functioning and acts of protection.
- Significant information learned through interviews and collateral contacts.
- Court and TDM outcomes.
- Family and support-network involvement.
- Services or referrals already initiated.
- Concerns or tasks that remain unresolved.

Reinforce that a strong handoff provides both what has happened and what still needs attention.

Facilitator Question:

- Why does a warm handoff matter instead of simply documenting the investigation

and allowing the next Specialist to review the record?

Facilitator Answer:

- A warm handoff supports continuity in the family's involvement with DCFS. It allows the Investigator and Caseworker Specialist to communicate directly about important safety information, decisions, unresolved concerns, and ongoing needs. It also reduces the likelihood that critical context will be lost during the transition.
- DCFS procedure demonstrates that the transition is collaborative rather than an immediate separation of responsibilities. When applicable, the Investigator coordinates with the Caseworker Specialist following Case Connect and continues monitoring an Immediate Safety Plan until a Caseworker Specialist has been assigned.

Facilitator Notes:

- Emphasize that the warm handoff is more than transferring documentation. The Investigator has developed knowledge and context about the family that can help the next Specialist begin their work from an informed position.
- Avoid presenting the warm handoff as though the Investigator simply closes the investigation and immediately walks away. DCFS procedure specifically recognizes coordination between the Investigator and Caseworker Specialist when Case Connect has occurred.
- Keep participants focused on what the next Specialist needs to continue the work, rather than asking them to make additional investigative decisions.

Say:

Think about where you started with this family. On Day 1, the Flowers case was a referral and a collection of information that you were trying to understand. Over the course of this training, you gathered information, made decisions, adjusted as circumstances changed, and ultimately determined what needed to happen to protect the children.

Now someone else has to continue that work.

A strong investigation does not end with simply closing out your portion of the case. When continued DCFS involvement is necessary, part of completing your work is making sure the next Specialist understands the family, the decisions that brought the case to this point, and what still needs attention. That warm handoff helps create continuity for the family and allows the next Specialist to move the work forward rather than starting over.

The Flowers case gave you the opportunity to experience that process in a structured environment. In the field, those transitions will happen while you are managing other investigations, responding to new referrals, meeting timelines, documenting your work, and adjusting to situations that may change quickly. So now that we have brought the Flowers investigation through its transition to ongoing casework, let's talk about what happens when the structure of training meets the reality of the field.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- The investigation ending does not necessarily mean DCFS involvement with the family is ending.
- A Case Connect supports the transition from investigation to ongoing casework when a services case is opened.
- The Investigator and Caseworker Specialist share responsibility for ensuring important information and safety concerns carry forward during that transition.
- A warm handoff should communicate what has happened, what decisions have been made, the family's current circumstances, and what still requires attention.
- The next Specialist should be able to continue the work rather than recreate the investigation.
- DCFS opens prevention, in-home, or permanency cases when continued Division involvement is appropriate based on assessment of the family.

Training VS Reality

TRAINING VS. REALITY: WHAT CHANGES WHEN YOU ENTER THE FIELD?

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand the differences between structured training environments and everyday investigative practice, while preparing them for the realities they may encounter as new Specialists

Participant Manual: Day 10 Notes Page – What Investigations Look Like in the Field

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion using participants' Day 10 notes pages, encouraging them to think about expectations for their first weeks in the field.

1. **Discuss** differences between training and field practice.
2. **Explore** common experiences reported by new Specialists.
3. **Identify** challenges that may arise during the transition to field work.
4. **Examine** how training prepares Specialists to respond to changing circumstances.
5. **Reflect** on realistic expectations for the first months in the field.

Say:

Training is intentionally structured. Cases are introduced in a sequence. Activities are designed to support specific learning objectives. Information is organized to help participants build skills one step at a time. Field practice is rarely that orderly.

On any given day, a Specialist may juggle a new referral, an ongoing investigation, phone calls, documentation, meetings, supervisor consultation, and unexpected developments, often all at once. Unlike training, investigations don't arrive one at a time, and priorities can shift quickly as information changes, new concerns emerge, or families respond unexpectedly.

Many new Specialists initially worry they're supposed to know exactly what to do in every situation. In reality, effective investigators spend significant time gathering information, consulting with others, and evaluating options before determining the best path forward.

One of the biggest adjustments new Specialists experience is learning to operate in situations where certainty is limited.

- ***You may not always have every answer immediately available.***
- ***You may encounter situations that were not covered during training.***
- ***You may face circumstances where several reasonable options exist, and professional judgment is required to determine the most appropriate response.***

That does not mean training has failed to prepare you. It means you are beginning to apply what you have learned in dynamic and unpredictable situations. The purpose of training is not to eliminate uncertainty. The purpose is to provide a foundation that helps you navigate uncertainty professionally and confidently. As you enter the field, success will often depend less on having every answer and more on knowing how to gather information, use resources, seek guidance, and continue learning.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What part of the transition into field work seems most challenging?

Facilitator Answer:

- Multiple competing responsibilities, time management challenges, unexpected situations, and decision-making responsibilities.

Facilitator Question:

- What resources can Specialists use when they encounter unfamiliar situations?

Facilitator Answer:

- Learning through experience and using supervision and consultation.

Say:

One of the most significant adjustments new Specialists make is learning to manage multiple responsibilities simultaneously while continuing to respond to the needs of children and families. Next, we'll explore how investigators prioritize their work when everything feels important.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Field practice is less structured than training, and Specialists often manage multiple responsibilities simultaneously.
- Information may be incomplete or change over time, and uncertainty is a normal part of investigative work.
- Professional judgment develops over time, supported by available resources and support systems.
- Training provides a foundation for continued growth and helps Specialists navigate changing circumstances professionally.

Managing Priorities During Active Investigations



MANAGING PRIORITIES DURING ACTIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand how investigators organize responsibilities, respond to changing demands, and maintain focus on child safety while managing multiple active assignments

Participant Manual: Day 10 Notes Page – What Investigations Look Like in the Field

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion using participants' Day 10 notes pages.

1. Ask participants to consider how they currently manage competing priorities in their personal or professional lives.
2. **Discuss** why prioritization is important in investigations.
3. **Explore** common demands investigators manage simultaneously.
4. **Identify** strategies that help Specialists stay organized.
5. **Examine** how priorities may change throughout the day.
6. **Consider** how investigators remain focused during busy periods.

Paraphrase:

One of the biggest surprises for many new Specialists is not the complexity of individual investigations. It's the reality of managing multiple responsibilities at once. learn how to adjust priorities without losing sight of critical responsibilities.

In training, participants often focus on one activity, case task, or learning objective at a time. In the field, attention may be divided among several active investigations, documentation, meetings, phone calls, follow-up activities, and unexpected developments.

An investigator may plan to complete documentation, only to receive a new referral, learn of a developing safety concern, or encounter information requiring immediate attention. Because circumstances change frequently, successful investigators learn to adjust priorities without losing sight of critical responsibilities. Prioritization is not simply about deciding what to do first. It also involves recognizing:

- What requires immediate attention?
- What can be scheduled later?
- What requires consultation?
- What can be delegated or coordinated?
- What information is needed before moving forward?

Many new Specialists believe experienced investigators always have perfect control over their workload. In reality, effective investigators regularly reassess priorities throughout the day, staying organized, flexible, and willing to adjust as circumstances change.

- Organization systems vary; calendars, task lists, reminders, planning tools, or case-tracking methods. But the specific system matters less than having a consistent approach for keeping responsibilities visible and manageable.
- Over time, Specialists learn that productivity isn't measured by completing everything immediately, but by making informed decisions about where attention is most needed and responding effectively to the needs of children and families.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What challenges might arise when managing multiple investigations?

Facilitator Answer:

- Time management challenges, unexpected developments, competing deadlines, documentation responsibilities, communication demands, and scheduling conflicts.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- Why is flexibility important in investigative work?

Facilitator Answer:

- Unexpected developments and scheduling conflicts as reasons, flexibility matters when priorities shift.

Facilitator Notes:

- Keep the discussion practical and realistic, encouraging participants to share organization strategies they already use.
- Avoid presenting a single "correct" way to manage workload; reinforce that prioritization skills develop through experience.

- Use this discussion to transition into the importance of supervision, consultation, and team support.

Say:

Even the most organized investigator encounters situations that require guidance, collaboration, or a second perspective. Knowing when and how to seek support is an important part of professional practice.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Investigators often manage multiple responsibilities simultaneously, and priorities may shift based on changing circumstances.
- Organization and flexibility support effective workload management in field practice.
- Investigators continually reassess responsibilities, prioritizing based on the needs of children and families.

Using Supervision, Consultation & Team Support Effectively



USING SUPERVISION, CONSULTATION & TEAM SUPPORT EFFECTIVELY

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand how supervision, consultation, and professional support systems contribute to decision-making, skill development, and long-term success in investigative practice

Participant Manual: Day 10 Notes Page – What Investigations Look Like in the Field

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion using participants' Day 10 notes pages. Encourage participants to consider situations where seeking guidance improves the outcome.

1. **Discuss** the role supervision plays in investigative practice.
2. **Explore** situations that may benefit from consultation.
3. **Identify** characteristics of effective professional support systems.
4. **Examine** barriers that sometimes prevent people from seeking assistance.
5. **Discuss** how collaboration supports professional growth.

Say:

One of the most important lessons new Specialists learn is that successful investigators do not work in isolation.

Many people enter the field believing they must independently solve every problem,

answer every question, or navigate every challenge. In reality, child welfare practice is built upon consultation, teamwork, and professional support.

Throughout your career, you will encounter unfamiliar circumstances, competing considerations, difficult decisions, or information that requires additional analysis.

Strong professionals recognize these moments as opportunities to seek guidance rather than attempting to carry the responsibility alone.

Supervisors play an important role in helping Specialists evaluate information, consider options, identify blind spots, and strengthen decision-making. They provide support not only in challenging situations but also in routine case activities, professional development, and skill-building.

Paraphrase:

Consultation can also happen outside formal supervision. Specialists often learn from experienced colleagues, subject matter experts, multidisciplinary partners, peer discussions, case reviews, and professional mentoring relationships.

Seeking consultation does not indicate a lack of knowledge or competence.

- In many cases, it reflects sound professional judgment.
- One challenge some new Specialists experience is waiting too long to ask questions because they believe they should already know the answer.
- However, consultation is often most valuable before a situation becomes more complicated.
- The most effective investigators understand that professional growth occurs through a combination of independent practice and collaborative learning.
- Knowing when to seek support can be just as important as knowing how to complete a task independently.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What situations may benefit from consultation?

Facilitator Answer:

- Experience sharing, case review, and problem-solving as ways of consultation support these situations.

Facilitator Question:

- Why is seeking guidance considered a professional strength rather than a weakness?

Facilitator Answer:

- Feedback, mentorship, and professional development as reasons for guidance-seeking reflect strength.

Facilitator Notes:

- Normalize asking questions and seeking assistance; avoid portraying supervision solely as oversight or accountability.
- Emphasize the developmental role of supervisors and mentors, encouraging participants to view consultation as part of professional practice.
- Use this discussion to prepare participants for the upcoming activity focused on real-world investigative demands.

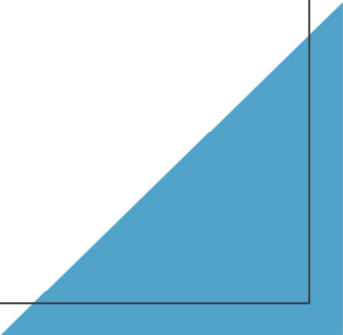
Say:

Throughout this section, we've discussed how field practice differs from training, how investigators manage competing priorities, and how support systems contribute to professional success. Next, you'll apply those concepts through an activity that explores the realities of a typical investigative workday.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Successful investigators don't work alone; supervision provides guidance, support, and professional development.
- Consultation, through multiple sources, strengthens decision-making and problem-solving.
- Seeking support is a professional strength, and learning continues throughout a Specialist's career.

A Day In The Life Of An Investigator



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN INVESTIGATOR

Time: 20 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants apply concepts related to prioritization, flexibility, workload management, and professional support by examining the realities of a typical investigative workday

Participant Manual: Day 10 Notes Page – What Investigations Look Like in the Field

Activity Set-Up:

Participants should remain in table groups; each table receives the activity scenario, one participant serves as the recorder, and the groups prepare to share recommendations during the debrief.

Activity Instructions:

1. Read the scenario as a group:

It's Tuesday morning at 8:15 AM. You arrive at work to find: a new Priority I referral assigned overnight; documentation from two active investigations still needing completion; two voicemails from a caregiver requesting a return call; a supervisor's request for information ahead of an upcoming staffing discussion; a scheduled collateral contact later that afternoon; an email noting new information on an open investigation; and an approaching court-related deadline later in the week. Additional responsibilities may emerge as the day progresses. Your task isn't to

complete everything, it's to determine how you'd organize the day, prioritize responsibilities, and use available support.

2. Review all responsibilities assigned throughout the workday.
3. Determine how you would approach the day.
4. Identify which responsibilities require immediate attention and which may be addressed later.
5. Discuss when supervision, consultation, or team support may be helpful.
6. Prepare to share your reasoning with the larger group.

Say:

One of the biggest adjustments new Specialists experience is recognizing that a successful day does not always mean completing every task on a list. Investigative work often requires professionals to decide where attention is most needed at a given moment. This activity focuses on prioritization rather than perfection. As your group reviews the scenario, think about how you would approach the day if these responsibilities were waiting for you when you arrived at work. Consider how you would:

- ***Organize your workload.***
- ***Evaluate urgency.***
- ***respond to changing circumstances.***
- ***communicate with others.***
- ***utilize supervision and consultation.***
- ***remain flexible as new information emerges.***

There's no single correct answer; different investigators may organize their day differently depending on circumstances, available information, and Division expectations. The goal is to examine the thought process behind prioritization and workload management, so focus on your reasoning rather than identifying a perfect schedule.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What responsibility would receive your attention first and why?

Facilitator Answer:

- Participants may identify safety-related priorities and immediate response requirements.

Facilitator Question:

- When might consultation or supervision be helpful?

Facilitator Answer:

- Participants may identify consultation opportunities tied to time-sensitive responsibilities or communication needs.

Say:

The strategies investigators use to navigate busy days often develop through experience, reflection, and learning from others who have already faced similar challenges. Next, we'll explore some of the lessons commonly shared by experienced investigators.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Investigators regularly balance multiple, often competing, responsibilities that require evaluating urgency and importance.
- Workloads change throughout the day, so flexibility and organization are important professional skills.
- Consultation and supervision can support prioritization and decision-making, and not every responsibility can be completed immediately.

Lessons From The First Year In The Field

LESSONS FROM THE FIRST YEAR IN THE FIELD

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To provide participants with practical insights commonly learned during the first year of investigative practice and help establish realistic expectations for continued growth and development

Participant Manual: Day 10 Notes Page – What Investigations Look Like in the Field

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion with participants seated in table groups, leading a reflective conversation on professional growth during the first year of practice.

1. **Review** common lessons learned by new investigators.
2. **Discuss** realistic expectations for professional development.
3. **Encourage** participants to view growth as an ongoing process.
4. **Prepare** participants for the next section on professional growth and investigative judgment.

Say:

If you ask experienced investigators what they wish they had known during their first year, many of them provide surprisingly similar answers. One lesson frequently shared is that confidence doesn't appear overnight, it develops through repeated practice,

consultation with others, and experience over time, not before difficult decisions begin.

Another common lesson: no investigator remembers everything. Policies, procedures, and guidance documents remain important resources throughout a career, and experienced Specialists continue looking things up, asking questions, and seeking clarification.

Many investigators also find that some of their greatest growth occurs after situations don't go as planned; unexpected outcomes and challenging cases often become valuable learning experiences. A final lesson is that relationships matter; strong working relationships with supervisors, colleagues, and community partners often become the most valuable resource during difficult situations.

The first year isn't about becoming perfect, it's about building experience, developing judgment, and continuing to grow as a professional. The skills you have developed throughout training provide a foundation. Experience will help you build upon that foundation throughout your career.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- Why do you think confidence often develops after experience rather than before it?

Facilitator Answer:

- Confidence develops over time and experience shapes judgment.

Facilitator Question:

- Why are professional relationships important in child welfare practice?

Facilitator Answer:

- Professional relationships provide support and growth comes through practice.

Say:

As you move into field practice, remember that no investigator begins their career with every answer. Growth occurs through experience, reflection, supervision, and a willingness to continue learning.

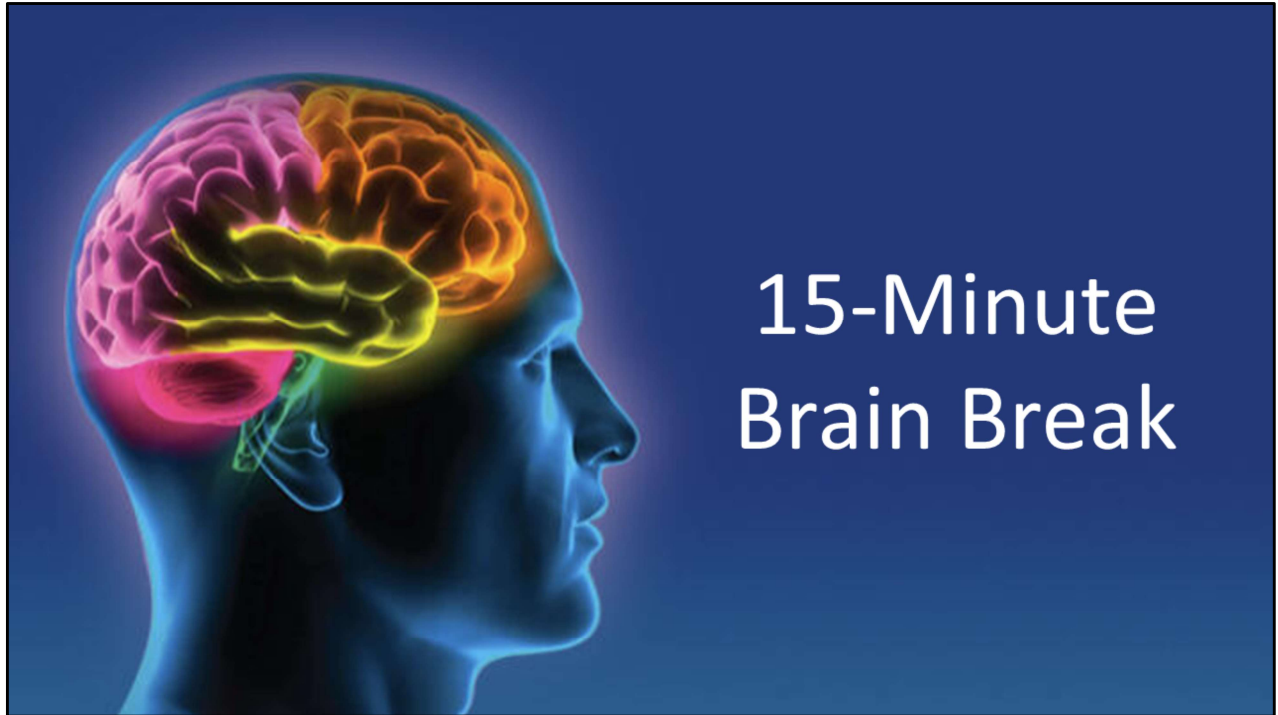
The skills you've developed throughout training provide a strong foundation, and your first year in the field will provide opportunities to continue building upon that foundation. We're going to pause here and take a break.

When we return, we'll shift our focus from field realities to professional growth and explore how investigative judgment develops over the course of a career.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Confidence develops through experience, and questions remain a normal part of practice.

- Resources remain valuable throughout a career, and growth often comes from challenging experiences.
- Professional relationships support development and success, and the first year focuses on learning, growth, and skill development.



15-Minute Brain Break

15-MINUTE BREAK



PROFESSIONAL GROWTH & INVESTIGATIVE JUDGEMENT

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH & INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH & INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT



PROFESSIONAL GROWTH & INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT

Time: 10 minutes

Purpose: Shift focus from investigative tasks to how professionals continue developing judgment, confidence, and decision-making throughout their careers, framing growth as an ongoing, lifelong process

Say:

During the first section today, we explored what investigations often look like in practice and discussed some of the realities Specialists encounter after training concludes.

This section shifts the focus inward, from investigative tasks to how professionals continue developing throughout their careers. Professional growth doesn't end when training ends: skills like judgment, confidence, decision-making, and critical thinking continue developing long after a Specialist begins carrying cases independently. These skills build gradually through practice, reflection, consultation, feedback, and exposure to a variety of situations, not through any single class or case.

Throughout this section, we'll discuss how investigative judgment develops, how professionals make decisions when certainty is limited, and how mistakes, feedback, and reflection become tools for growth. The goal isn't to become perfect; it's to keep growing, recognizing that learning is a lifelong process and every experience is an opportunity to strengthen professional knowledge, skills, and judgment.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What experiences help professionals continue learning after training?

Facilitator Answer:

- Experiences, feedback, supervision, and learning from challenges.

Facilitator Question:

- How can reflection contribute to professional development?

Facilitator Answer:

- Reflection and continued education are ways professionals build on experience over time.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Professional growth continues after training, with experience contributing to judgment.
- Reflection and feedback strengthen practice and support ongoing professional development.

Target Outcomes



- Understand how investigative judgment develops through experience, reflection, supervision, and continued learning.
- Apply strategies for learning from experience and feedback.
- Assess personal strengths and growth opportunities, recognizing that professional growth, confidence, and competence continue throughout a career.

TARGET OUTCOMES

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To introduce this section and establish expectations for discussions related to professional growth, investigative judgment, confidence development, and lifelong learning within child welfare practice

Say:

One of the most important professional skills investigators develop is judgment—the ability to evaluate information, consider options, and make thoughtful decisions in complex situations. Let’s take a look at this section’s target outcome, then we’ll explore how that judgment develops over time.

By the end of this section, you will:

- *Understand how investigative judgment develops through experience, reflection, supervision, and continued learning.*
- *Apply strategies for learning from experience and feedback.*
- *Assess personal strengths and growth opportunities, recognizing that professional growth, confidence, and competence continue throughout a career.*



How Investigative Judgement Develops Over Time

HOW INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT DEVELOPS OVER TIME

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand how investigative judgment develops through experience, reflection, supervision, and exposure to a variety of situations throughout their careers

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion. Ask participants to think about skills they've developed in other jobs, professions, hobbies, or life experiences, considering how expertise builds over time rather than through a single learning experience.

1. **Discuss** what investigative judgment means.
2. **Explore** how judgment differs from knowledge.
3. **Examine** factors that contribute to professional growth.
4. **Identify** experiences that help strengthen decision-making abilities.
5. **Discuss** realistic expectations for professional development.

Say:

When people begin a new profession, they often focus on acquiring knowledge. Knowledge is important. Policies, procedures, laws, practice models, and investigative techniques provide the foundation necessary to perform the work. However, knowledge alone doesn't create professional judgment.

Judgment involves evaluating information, recognizing patterns, weighing competing considerations, anticipating outcomes, and determining the best course of action for a given situation. Unlike knowledge, judgment is difficult to develop through instruction alone; it's built through repeated opportunities to apply information in real-world situations.

Over time, investigators begin noticing things they may not have recognized earlier in their careers, developing a stronger ability to identify significant details, recognize emerging concerns, ask more effective questions, and evaluate information within a broader context. This happens not because they memorize more information, but because experience helps them connect information, observations, and outcomes in meaningful ways.

Paraphrase:

Professional judgment is often strengthened through:

- exposure to different situations.
- thoughtful reflection.
- supervision and consultation.
- reviewing outcomes.
- learning from successes.
- learning from challenges.

Many new Specialists compare themselves to highly experienced professionals and become discouraged when they lack the same level of confidence or insight. What they often forget is that experienced investigators have spent years building those skills through practice.

Judgment is not something you receive at the end of training. It is something you continue developing throughout your professional career. Every investigation, conversation, consultation, staffing discussion, and decision contributes to that growth.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- How would you describe the difference between knowledge and judgment?

Facilitator Answer:

- Judgment develops through experience, practice, and observation, rather than through knowledge alone.

Facilitator Question:

- What experiences help strengthen professional decision-making?

Facilitator Answer:

- Experience, practice, reflection, feedback, and consultation.

Facilitator Notes:

- Keep the discussion focused on professional development rather than investigative procedures and avoid framing judgment as something only experienced investigators possess.
- Validate participants' concerns about entering the field and reinforce that growth happens through many small experiences over time.

Say:

Professional judgment becomes especially important when situations are unclear and complete information is unavailable. Next, we'll explore how investigators make thoughtful decisions when certainty is limited, and several reasonable options may exist.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Investigative judgment is different from knowledge, and it develops through repeated application of skills and information over time.
- Experience helps professionals recognize patterns and evaluate situations more effectively, rather than through memorization alone.
- Growth occurs gradually, and every investigation provides an opportunity to strengthen professional judgment.

Making Decisions When You Don't Have Every Answer

MAKING DECISIONS WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE EVERY ANSWER

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand how investigators make informed decisions when information is incomplete, circumstances are evolving, and certainty is not immediately available

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion with participants seated in table groups. Ask participants to consider situations where they've had to make decisions without all available information.

1. **Discuss** why uncertainty is common in investigative practice.
2. **Explore** the challenges of decision-making when information is incomplete.
3. **Examine** strategies that support thoughtful decision-making.
4. **Identify** factors investigators consider when evaluating options.
5. **Discuss** how professionals avoid becoming stuck while waiting for certainty.

Say:

One of the most challenging aspects of investigative work is that decisions often must be made before all the questions have been answered. Many new Specialists believe good decisions require complete information. In reality, investigators frequently work with information still developing; pending interviews, unanswered collateral contacts, or changing circumstances. Waiting for perfect information is rarely an option, since children, families, courts, and partners often require action before certainty exists.

This doesn't mean decisions are made carelessly; it means professionals learn to evaluate what's currently known, identify what remains unknown, and determine appropriate action based on the information available at the time. One common challenge is the urge to keep gathering information indefinitely; at some point, professionals must evaluate what they've learned and determine a path forward.

Effective decision-making often requires balancing:

- *available information.*
- *identified concerns.*
- *known strengths.*
- *professional judgment.*
- *policy requirements.*
- *time-sensitive responsibilities.*

Investigators also learn that reasonable professionals may sometimes reach different conclusions by evaluating the same situation. That can feel uncomfortable at first, but differing viewpoints don't automatically mean one person is right and another wrong — often they reflect the complexity of the circumstances being evaluated.

A professional's responsibility isn't to eliminate every uncertainty, but to make thoughtful, informed decisions based on the best information available at the time. As experience grows, investigators become more comfortable functioning where complete certainty is unlikely.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- How can professionals avoid becoming stuck while seeking additional information?

Facilitator Answer:

- Time-sensitive decisions and changing circumstances as factors that push professionals toward a decision rather than indefinite information gathering.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- Why might reasonable professionals sometimes reach different conclusions?

Facilitator Answer:

- Conflicting information and multiple reasonable options as reasons professionals may interpret the same situation differently.

Say:

Some of the most valuable professional growth occurs after decisions have been made, when investigators have an opportunity to examine outcomes, receive feedback, and reflect on their experiences. Next, we'll explore how feedback, reflection, and experience contribute to professional development.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Investigators frequently make decisions with incomplete information; uncertainty is a normal part of investigative practice.
- Professionals must balance information gathering with timely decision-making, and different reasonable conclusions may exist in complex situations.
- Thoughtful decisions can occur even when certainty is unavailable, supported by professional judgment.



Learning Through Feedback, Reflection & Experience

LEARNING THROUGH FEEDBACK, REFLECTION & EXPERIENCE

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand how professional growth is strengthened through self-evaluation, feedback from others, and examining experiences to improve future practice

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion with participants seated in table groups. Encourage participants to reflect on a time they improved a skill through coaching, practice, or feedback.

1. **Discuss** how professionals continue improving throughout their careers.
2. **Explore** the role feedback plays in skill development.
3. **Examine** the value of self-reflection after challenging situations.
4. **Identify** ways experience contributes to improved practice.
5. **Discuss** approaches for receiving and using feedback effectively.

Say:

One of the most effective ways professionals continue to improve is by examining what happened after an experience ends. In many professions, growth comes from evaluating performance, considering what worked well, identifying areas for improvement, and applying those lessons moving forward. Child welfare practice is no different—investigators encounter situations that go well, that are challenging, and that produce

unexpected outcomes, and each provides information to strengthen future practice.

Feedback is one source of that information. Supervisors, mentors, colleagues, and professional partners may notice strengths, opportunities, or perspectives not immediately visible to the investigator. Receiving feedback effectively requires openness, curiosity, and a willingness to consider different viewpoints. Reflection is another important source of growth. Reflection involves intentionally examining experiences and asking questions such as:

- *What contributed to the outcome?*
- *What influenced my decisions?*
- *What would I do differently next time?*
- *What strengths should I continue using?*
- *What new approaches should I consider?*

Reflection is not about self-criticism. It is about increasing awareness and improving future performance. Some of the most significant professional development occurs when individuals are willing to examine their experiences honestly and use those insights to guide future decisions. The goal isn't to avoid mistakes, challenges, or difficult situations- it's to continue improving because of them. Professionals who stay open to feedback and reflection often continue growing long after formal training ends.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What makes feedback useful for professional growth?

Facilitator Answer:

- New perspectives, blind spots, strengths, and areas for improvement.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- How is reflection different from self-criticism?

Facilitator Answer:

- Increased awareness and opportunities for growth as outcomes of constructive reflection.

Participants should recognize:

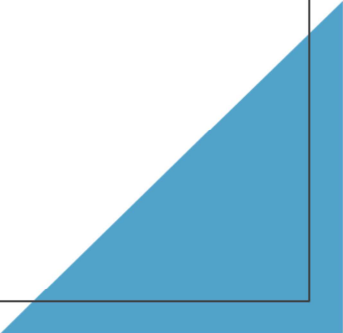
- Feedback provides valuable information.
- Reflection supports professional development.
- Growth often occurs after experiences are examined.
- Challenges can become learning opportunities.
- Professional development continues beyond formal training.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Feedback and reflection strengthen professional practice, helping professionals learn from experience.

- Growth often occurs after evaluating outcomes, and challenges can contribute to future success.
- Continuous improvement is an important part of professional development beyond formal training.

Advice To Your Future Self



ADVICE TO YOUR FUTURE SELF

Time: 30 Minutes

Purpose: To provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on their growth throughout training, identify personal goals for professional development, and establish intentions for their transition into investigative practice

Say:

Professional growth looks different for every investigator. Next, you'll have an opportunity to think about your own development and identify the advice, habits, and perspectives you hope to carry forward into your future practice.

Activity Set Up:

Participants work individually first; the facilitator distributes blank paper or index cards for participants to write a message to their future investigator selves, followed by small group discussion.

Activity Instructions:

1. **Individual Reflection:** Write a message to read mentally as you begin fieldwork. Include a reminder to remember, a professional habit to develop, a strength to build on, a challenge you expect to encounter, and a commitment to yourself.
2. **Small Group Discussion:** Share portions you're comfortable discussing; similar goals, concerns, professional habits, and strategies for continued growth.

3. **Large Group Debrief:** Facilitated discussion on themes that emerged from the activity.

Say:

Throughout training, much of our attention has focused on learning investigative processes, developing skills, and applying information. This activity focuses on something different.

- *Rather than thinking about cases, policies, procedures, or documentation, you'll spend time thinking about yourself as a professional.*

Every investigator enters the field with strengths, goals, concerns, and expectations. Some of those expectations will be met. Others may change as experience grows.

- *The purpose of this activity is to create an opportunity to pause and consider the type of professional you hope to become. Think about what has stood out to you during training. Consider lessons you want to remember when situations become challenging.*

Think about qualities you admire in experienced professionals and characteristics you hope to develop yourself. As you write, focus on practical guidance you'd want available during difficult days, busy weeks, or moments of uncertainty.

Imagine your future self reading this message six months from now — what would you want them to remember, what perspective would you hope they maintain, and what encouragement would you want them to hear? The goal isn't a perfect plan; it's identifying values, commitments, and perspectives to guide your professional development moving forward.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What professional habits do you hope to develop?

Facilitator Answer:

- Organization, communication, continuous learning, and seeking support when needed.

Facilitator Question:

- What advice would you give yourself six months from now?

Facilitator Answer:

- Patience, professional curiosity, confidence, and balance.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Professional growth looks different for every investigator, shaped by personal values.
- Reflection can help identify meaningful goals, involving both strengths and challenges.
- Intentional development supports long-term success.

Growth Is A Process, Not A Destination



GROWTH IS A PROCESS, NOT A DESTINATION

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To reinforce the idea that professional development is a continuous process and encourage participants to view growth, learning, and adaptation as ongoing parts of their careers

Say:

The advice you've written today may evolve as your experience grows, but the willingness to continue learning, adapting, and developing will remain important throughout your career. Before we conclude this section, we'll examine one final perspective about professional growth.

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group closing discussion with participants seated in table groups.

1. **Discuss** the concept of continuous professional growth.
2. **Reflect** on how careers evolve over time.
3. **Connect** the activity to long-term professional development.
4. **Prepare** participants for the next section on wellness, resilience, and sustainability.

Say:

Many people view professional development as a series of milestones; complete training, finish probation, carry a full caseload, gain experience, reach a new position.

While milestones matter, growth rarely follows a straight path; there will be periods of rapid learning, challenge, confidence, and moments that stretch you beyond your comfort zone.

The most effective professionals see growth not as something to complete, but as part of how they approach their work, staying open to new ideas, adapting to change, and continuing to refine their skills at every career stage. As investigators gain experience, the questions they ask and the complexity of situations they face may change, but the willingness to learn remains just as important as it was on day one.

Viewing growth as a process rather than a destination removes the pressure of needing everything figured out immediately, and instead focuses on progress and continued development. The goal isn't to become a finished investigator — it's to keep becoming a better version of yourself throughout your career.

Paraphrase:

As we conclude this section, take a moment to consider the growth that's already occurred over the last ten days — new knowledge, new skills, complex situations worked through, and reflection on the professional you hope to become.

Growth doesn't stop when training ends, and it doesn't happen only through major milestones. Often it comes through small experiences, thoughtful reflection, and a willingness to keep learning over time.

We'll pause here for lunch. As you take a break, consider what you want to carry forward from today's discussion and what professional qualities you hope to keep developing in the field. When we return, we'll shift focus to an equally important part of long-term success: maintaining wellness, building resilience, and sustaining yourself throughout a demanding and meaningful career.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- Why can it be helpful to focus on progress rather than perfection?

Facilitator Answer:

- Openness to learning, self-awareness, and persistence.

Facilitator Question:

- What mindset will help you continue growing throughout your career?

Facilitator Answer:

- Adaptability, professional curiosity, and goal setting.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Professional growth continues throughout a career and rarely occurs in a straight

line.

- Progress matters more than perfection, supported by ongoing learning and adaptation.
- Effective professionals remain committed to continuous growth.



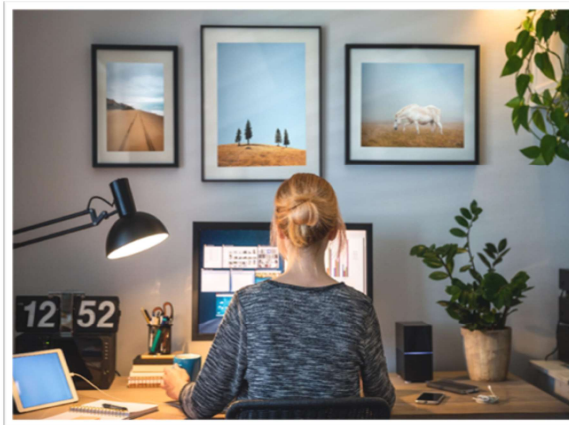
LUNCH BREAK



INVESTIGATOR WELLNESS, RESILIENCE, AND PROFESSIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

INVESTIGATOR WELLNESS, RESILIENCE, AND PROFESSIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

WELLNESS, RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY



WELLNESS, RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY

Time: 15 minutes

Purpose: Shift focus from job responsibilities to long-term self-sustainability, introducing the importance of recognizing stress, maintaining healthy boundaries, and building resilience throughout a demanding career

Say:

Throughout this training, we've spent significant time discussing the responsibilities associated with child welfare investigations.

- *We've explored how to gather information, assess safety, communicate with families, document findings, collaborate with partners, and make informed decisions.*
- *All of those responsibilities are important. However, there is another aspect of professional success that receives less attention but can significantly impact both performance and longevity in the field.*

The work of child welfare can be meaningful, rewarding, and impactful. It can also be demanding. Specialists routinely encounter situations involving crisis, uncertainty, conflict, grief, trauma, and significant family challenges.

- *Over time, those experiences can affect how professionals think, feel, and function if they are not intentional about caring for their own well-being.*

This section is not about eliminating stress. Stress exists in many professions, particularly those centered on helping others. Instead, this section focuses on recognizing stress, maintaining healthy boundaries, building resilience, and developing habits that support long-term success.

- ***The goal is to help you think about how you will sustain yourself throughout your career, not just how you will perform your job responsibilities.***

Target Outcomes



- Understand how the demands of child welfare work can affect personal well-being, professional effectiveness, and long-term career satisfaction.
- Apply strategies for managing workplace stress and maintaining professional balance through healthy habits and boundaries.
- Assess personal wellness habits and areas for improvement, recognizing resilience and sustainability as important professional skills

TARGET OUTCOMES

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To introduce this section and establish expectations for discussions related to wellness, resilience, professional boundaries, and long-term sustainability within child welfare practice

Say:

Effective investigators understand that taking care of themselves is not separate from professional effectiveness. It is one of the factors that help make professional effectiveness possible. As we move through this section, consider the habits, supports, and strategies that help people remain healthy, engaged, and effective while performing challenging work.

Before discussing strategies for maintaining wellness, it's important to understand why this work can have such a significant impact on the people who do it. Next, we'll explore the unique demands of child welfare practice and how they can affect professionals over time.

The Impact of Child Welfare Work

Proactive approaches to maintaining well-being.



THE IMPACT OF CHILD WELFARE WORK

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand the unique demands associated with child welfare practice and recognize how ongoing exposure to challenging situations can affect professionals over time

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion with participants seated in table groups. Introduce the concept of cumulative workplace demands.

1. **Discuss** the unique responsibilities associated with child welfare work.
2. **Explore** the demands investigators regularly encounter.
3. **Examine** how repeated exposure to challenging situations may affect professionals.
4. **Identify** why awareness is important for long-term sustainability.
5. **Prepare** participants to recognize signs of stress and fatigue in the next section.

Say:

Most professions involve challenges. What makes child welfare unique is the combination of responsibilities, expectations, and situations Specialists may encounter on a regular basis.

Investigators often work with families during some of the most difficult moments of their

lives. You may encounter situations involving family conflict, crisis, uncertainty, grief, loss, substance use, domestic violence, mental health concerns, or allegations of abuse and neglect.

In addition to those situations, Specialists also manage deadlines, documentation requirements, court responsibilities, communication with multiple partners, and the expectations associated with protecting children and supporting families. Any one responsibility can be demanding, but it's often the combination over time that creates pressure. The impact isn't always immediate; professionals may gradually notice reduced patience, distraction, emotional drain, fatigue, or lower engagement, motivation, or job satisfaction.

Recognizing these possibilities isn't meant to create concern, but to increase awareness. Professionals respond better to challenges when they catch them early, before they become larger problems. Understanding these demands helps professionals see wellness as something requiring ongoing attention throughout a career, not just when problems occur.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What aspects of child welfare work may be particularly demanding?

Facilitator Answer:

- Exposure to difficult situations, emotional demands, workload expectations, court involvement, documentation responsibilities, time pressures, and family crises.

Facilitator Question:

- Why is awareness important when discussing wellness?

Facilitator Answer:

- Recognizing workload and emotional demands early supports catching challenges before they grow into larger problems.

Say:

Understanding the demands of the work is only the first step. Equally important is recognizing how those demands may begin showing up in daily life and professional practice. Next, we'll discuss common signs of stress, fatigue, and burnout and why early recognition matters.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Child welfare work includes unique demands that can have a cumulative impact over time, with effects often appearing gradually.
- Awareness helps professionals recognize concerns early, and wellness requires ongoing attention rather than crisis response.

Recognizing Stress, Fatigue & Burnout



RECOGNIZING STRESS, FATIGUE & BURNOUT

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants recognize common indicators of stress, fatigue, and burnout and understand the importance of responding to warning signs before they negatively affect personal well-being or professional effectiveness

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion with participants seated in table groups. Introduce the concept of recognizing warning signs before challenges grow more significant.

1. **Discuss** the differences between stress, fatigue, and burnout.
2. **Explore** common warning signs professionals may experience.
3. **Examine** why early recognition is important.
4. **Identify** barriers that may prevent people from addressing concerns.
5. **Discuss** how awareness supports long-term sustainability.

Say:

Experiencing stress is a normal part of life and work. Not all stress is harmful, and experiencing occasional stress does not mean someone is struggling professionally. However, when stress remains unaddressed for long periods, it can begin to affect how people think, feel, and perform.

One challenge many professionals face is that stress, fatigue, and burnout rarely appear

all at once. Instead, they often develop gradually. Because the changes are gradual, they can be easy to overlook.

For example, someone may begin noticing that they:

- *feel more exhausted at the end of the day.*
- *become frustrated more quickly.*
- *have difficulty concentrating.*
- *struggle to disconnect from work.*
- *lose enthusiasm for tasks they previously enjoyed.*
- *feel less patient with others.*

Paraphrase:

These experiences don't automatically mean burnout is occurring, but they may signal that additional attention to wellness is needed. Burnout often involves more than feeling tired after a hard week; it can include ongoing emotional exhaustion, reduced engagement, decreased motivation, or a sense that work demands consistently exceed available energy and resources.

Early recognition matters because smaller concerns are easier to address than larger ones; paying attention to warning signs allows adjustments before stress becomes overwhelming. Awareness creates opportunities for action, while ignoring warning signs reduces those opportunities. The goal isn't to eliminate every stressful experience; it's to recognize when additional support, adjustment, or attention is needed to maintain well-being and professional effectiveness.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- Why can warning signs sometimes be difficult to recognize?

Facilitator Answers:

- Busy schedules, normalization of stress, and gradual changes as reasons.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What benefits come from recognizing concerns early?

Facilitator Answers:

- Avoiding delayed responses and addressing work demands before they accumulate.

Facilitator Notes:

- Keep the discussion educational rather than diagnostic, avoiding requests for participants to disclose personal struggles.
- Emphasize awareness and prevention, avoiding presenting burnout as inevitable.
- Use the discussion to transition into professional boundaries and sustainable work practices.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Stress, fatigue, and burnout may develop gradually, affecting both personal well-being and professional effectiveness.
- Early recognition supports healthier responses, creating opportunities for prevention and adjustment.
- Wellness involves ongoing attention rather than waiting for a crisis.

Professional Boundaries & Sustainable Practice

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES & SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand how professional boundaries support ethical practice, healthy work habits, and long-term sustainability within child welfare careers

Say:

Recognizing warning signs is important, but awareness alone is not enough. Professionals also need strategies to maintain healthy boundaries, manage responsibilities effectively, and sustain themselves throughout a demanding career. Next, we'll explore the role professional boundaries play in long-term success.

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion with participants seated in table groups. Introduce professional boundaries as a tool for effectiveness rather than a barrier to helping families.

1. **Discuss** the purpose of professional boundaries.
2. **Explore** common misconceptions about boundaries.
3. **Examine** how boundaries support effective practice.
4. **Identify** habits that contribute to sustainable work practices.
5. **Discuss** the relationship between boundaries and long-term career success.

Say:

When people enter helping professions, they often do so because they care deeply about

others and want to make a positive difference. That commitment is valuable. One challenge many professionals face is caring about their work without letting it consume every part of their lives. Professional boundaries help create that balance. Some mistakenly view boundaries as barriers to compassion or commitment, but healthy boundaries actually make those qualities more sustainable.

Boundaries help professionals establish realistic expectations regarding their responsibilities, time, energy, and role. They help answer questions such as:

- *What am I responsible for?*
- *What is outside my control?*
- *When do I need assistance?*
- *How do I separate work responsibilities from personal life?*
- *How do I remain effective over time?*

Without boundaries, professionals may find themselves attempting to solve every problem, carrying responsibilities that belong to others, or remaining mentally engaged with work long after the workday has ended. Over time, those patterns can make it harder to maintain effectiveness and well-being. Sustainable practice doesn't mean caring less- it means recognizing that long-term effectiveness requires intentional habits that protect both the professional and the quality of their work.

Healthy boundaries may look different from person to person. However, they often include:

- *realistic expectations.*
- *effective time management.*
- *appropriate use of support systems.*
- *maintaining personal interests outside of work.*
- *recognizing personal limits.*
- *respecting work-life separation whenever possible.*

Professionals who establish healthy boundaries are often better positioned to remain engaged, effective, and committed throughout their careers.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- How can boundaries support professional effectiveness?

Facilitator Answer:

- Balance, realistic expectations, and time management.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- Why is it important to maintain interests and relationships outside of work?

Facilitator Answer:

- Personal well-being and work-life separation.

Facilitator Notes:

- Emphasize that boundaries are professional tools, not barriers, avoiding framing them as disengagement or lack of commitment.
- Keep the discussion focused on sustainability and effectiveness, encouraging practical examples without requiring personal disclosures.
- Use this discussion to prepare participants for developing their own wellness strategies.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Professional boundaries support effective practice by maintaining realistic expectations.
- Professionals cannot control every outcome, and long-term sustainability requires intentional habits.
- Healthy boundaries contribute to both well-being and effectiveness.

Building Your Professional Wellness Plan

BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL WELLNESS PLAN

Time: 35 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants identify practical strategies, support systems, and habits that promote long-term wellness, resilience, and sustainability within child welfare practice

Say:

Recognizing workplace demands, understanding warning signs, and establishing healthy boundaries all contribute to long-term success. The next step is to identify the specific habits, supports, and strategies that will help you maintain wellness throughout your career.

Activity Set Up:

- Participants work individually for the first portion of the activity.
- Participants may use blank paper or a worksheet provided by the facilitator.
- Small group discussion follows individual planning.
- The facilitator leads a whole-group debrief.

Activity Instructions:

Participants work individually first using blank paper or a provided worksheet, followed by small group discussion and a whole-group debrief led by the facilitator.

1. **Part 1** – Individual Planning: Create a personal wellness plan covering:

- Professional Supports: people, resources, and individuals who help maintain perspective during challenging periods.
- Personal Supports: friends, family, faith communities, hobbies, or routines that help you recharge.
- Early Warning Signs: behaviors, thoughts, or feelings indicating stress or fatigue, and signs it's time to seek support.
- Wellness Strategies: actions and habits that maintain balance and support physical, emotional, and professional well-being.

1. **Part 2- Small Group Discussion:** Discuss common themes, helpful wellness strategies, available workplace support, and habits that contribute to long-term sustainability.

1. **Part 3- Large Group Debrief:** Share insights gained, strategies to prioritize moving forward, and themes that emerged across groups.

Say:

Many professionals wait until they are overwhelmed before they begin thinking about wellness. Unfortunately, wellness plans are often most effective when they are developed before challenges arise. Just as investigators prepare for difficult situations by gathering information and creating plans, professionals can prepare for workplace demands by identifying supports, resources, and strategies in advance.

This activity is designed to help you think proactively about your own sustainability. There's no perfect wellness plan; what works for one person may not work for another. The goal is to identify realistic practices that fit your life, responsibilities, and individual needs.

As you complete this activity, think about what helps you stay focused, balanced, and effective during stressful periods: the people who help you maintain perspective, the activities that help you recharge, and the warning signs that may indicate you need support or adjustment. Most importantly, focus on creating a realistic plan.

Sustainable wellness is usually built through consistent habits rather than occasional large efforts; small actions repeated over time often have a greater impact than dramatic changes that are hard to maintain. This activity is an opportunity to begin identifying the practices that will support you throughout your career.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- Why is it important to identify supports before they are needed?

Facilitator Answer:

- Family support, professional support, and social connections as resources best established proactively.

Facilitator Question:

- What types of habits are easiest to maintain consistently?

Facilitator Answer:

- Exercise, rest, time management, and personal routines.

Facilitator Notes:

- Keep the discussion practical and professional, avoiding requiring participants to share personal information.
- Encourage flexibility and individualization, reinforcing that wellness strategies will differ among participants.
- Focus on sustainability rather than perfection, and allow participants to keep portions of their plan private if desired.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Wellness plans should be realistic and individualized, with support systems playing an important role in resilience.
- Recognizing warning signs early supports prevention.
- Consistent habits and proactive planning contribute to long-term sustainability and professional well-being.



Taking Care Of You While Taking Care Of Others

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF WHILE CARING FOR OTHERS

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To reinforce the connection between personal well-being and professional effectiveness and encourage participants to view wellness as an ongoing responsibility throughout their careers

Say:

The strategies you've identified today may change over time, but the importance of maintaining your well-being will remain constant. Before we conclude this section, we'll take one final look at the relationship between caring for others and caring for yourself.

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group closing discussion with participants seated in table groups.

1. **Reflect** on key takeaways from the wellness section.
2. **Discuss** the relationship between personal well-being and professional effectiveness.
3. **Connect** wellness practices to long-term career sustainability.
4. **Prepare** participants for the final training section.

Say:

Throughout this section, we've discussed the demands of child welfare work, the importance of recognizing warning signs, establishing professional boundaries, and

developing strategies that support long-term wellness.

One important reality remains. The ability to support children and families effectively is influenced by how well we care for ourselves. Professionals sometimes view wellness as something separate from their responsibilities. In reality, wellness influences many aspects of practice.

- *It affects focus.*
- *It affects communication.*
- *It affects decision-making.*
- *It affects patience, professionalism, and the ability to respond effectively during challenging situations.*

Taking care of yourself isn't about avoiding hard work — it's about ensuring you have the capacity to continue doing meaningful work over time. The families we serve deserve professionals who are present, engaged, thoughtful, and effective, and maintaining your own well-being helps make that possible.

As you move forward, there will be busy seasons, difficult cases, and moments requiring resilience. Wellness isn't something you earn after the work is complete — it's something that supports you while the work is being done. The habits, supports, and strategies you develop today can strengthen your ability to do your best work tomorrow.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- Why is wellness an ongoing responsibility rather than a one-time goal?

Facilitator Answer:

- Self-awareness, work-life balance, and healthy routines.

Facilitator Question:

- What support systems do you plan to rely on throughout your career?

Facilitator Answer:

- Support systems, professional supports, and personal interests.

Participants should recognize:

- Wellness supports effectiveness.
- Sustainable practice requires intentional effort.
- Support systems are important.
- Self-awareness contributes to resilience.
- Long-term success depends on maintaining well-being.

Facilitator Notes:

- End the section on a positive and encouraging note, avoiding new wellness concepts.
- Focus on reinforcing practical application and emphasizing sustainability rather than

- perfection.
- Prepare participants for the final section of the training.

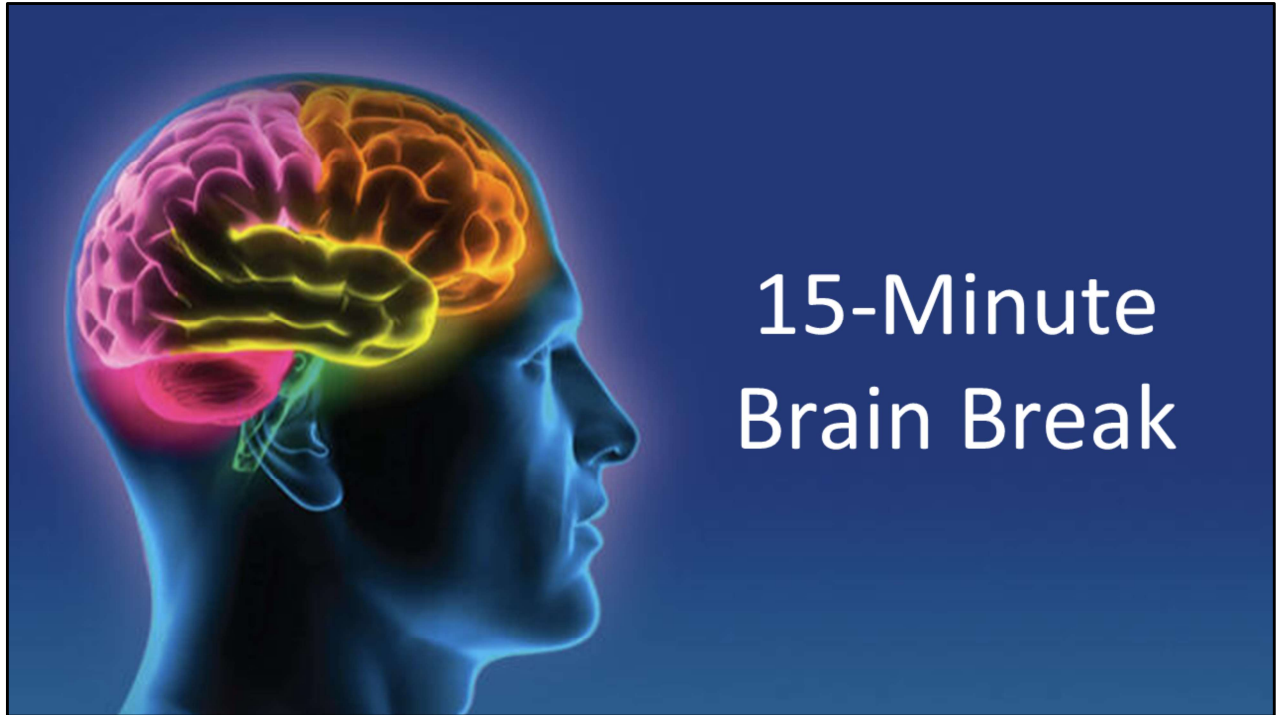
Say:

As we move into the final section of this training, take a moment to reflect on everything you've learned over the past ten days. We have one final opportunity to focus on your transition into practice, the resources available to support your success, and the next steps in your professional journey.

We're going to pause here for our final 15-minute break. When we return, we'll begin the final section of training and focus on transitioning from the classroom to the field.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Personal well-being supports professional effectiveness and requires ongoing attention.
- Support systems and self-awareness contribute to resilience.
- Sustainable practice, through healthy habits and boundaries, benefits both professionals and families.



15-Minute Brain Break

15-MINUTE BREAK



TRAINING CLOSURE & NEXT STEPS

TRAINING CLOSURE & NEXT STEPS

BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATION



BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATION

Time: 10 minutes

Purpose: Close the training by shifting focus from learning to action, helping participants identify the professional qualities, habits, and standards that will shape their foundation as they begin field practice

Say:

Over the last ten days, you have invested significant time and effort in developing the knowledge, skills, and perspectives needed to begin investigative practice. The final section of training is not about learning another process or completing another activity. Instead, it is an opportunity to focus on what you will do with everything you have learned.

Every professional enters the field with a unique combination of strengths, experiences, and goals — no two investigators start their careers exactly the same way. What matters isn't where everyone starts, but how each person approaches the responsibility ahead. As you prepare to leave training, consider the foundation you want to build for yourself professionally: the habits you want to establish, the standards you want to maintain, and the reputation you want to earn.

The choices professionals make early in their careers often influence how they approach challenges, relationships, responsibilities, and opportunities in the years ahead. This

final section focuses on preparing for that journey. We'll spend time discussing practical ways to move from learning into action, identify the professional qualities that support success, and conclude the training by reflecting on the foundation you are building for your future work. Today is not simply the end of training. It is the beginning of putting training into practice.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What professional qualities do you want to be known for?

Facilitator Answer:

- Responses may vary.
- Participants may identify professionalism, reliability, integrity, accountability, and compassion.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Professional identity develops over time, and every Specialist brings unique strengths into practice.
- Habits and strong foundations support long-term readiness and effectiveness.

Target Outcomes



- Understand how available supports and resources assist during the transition from training to field practice.
- Apply strategies for utilizing available supports and resources.
- Assess personal readiness for entering the field, recognizing that professional identity develops through daily choices and habits, and that training provides the foundation for action.

TARGET OUTCOMES

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To introduce the final section of training and prepare participants to focus on applying what they have learned, establishing a strong professional foundation, and entering practice with intention and purpose

Say:

The shift from learning to doing is one of the most significant transitions in any profession. Let's take a look at the Target Outcome, then we'll discuss practical ways to navigate that shift and begin applying training within real-world practice.

By the end of this section Specialists will:

- *Understand how available supports and resources assist during the transition from training to field practice.*
- *Apply strategies for utilizing available supports and resources.*
- *Assess personal readiness for entering the field, recognizing that professional identity develops through daily choices and habits, and that training provides the foundation for action.*

Transitioning From Training To Practice

TRANSITIONING FROM TRAINING TO PRACTICE

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants prepare for the shift from a structured learning environment to independent professional practice by exploring common adjustments that occur when applying training in real-world situations

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion with participants seated in table groups. Ask participants to reflect on previous experiences of transitioning from learning a skill to independently performing it.

1. **Discuss** the differences between learning and application.
2. **Explore** common adjustments professionals experience when beginning a new role.
3. **Examine** how training knowledge becomes everyday practice.
4. **Identify** realistic expectations for the transition into investigative work.
5. **Discuss** approaches for adapting to new responsibilities.

Say:

There is an important difference between understanding how something works and being responsible for carrying it out. Training provides opportunities to learn concepts, practice skills, ask questions, and work through situations in a supportive environment. Practice introduces a different experience.

- *In the field, responsibilities become real.*
- *Conversations involve real families.*
- *Decisions affect real situations.*
- *Schedules change unexpectedly.*
- *New information emerges without warning.*

Each day presents opportunities to apply what you have learned in situations that may not look exactly like the examples discussed during training. For many professionals, one of the biggest adjustments is becoming comfortable with learning and application happening at the same time; you don't stop learning before you begin practicing, you continue learning while you practice. That's true in nearly every profession: teachers learn while teaching, attorneys learn while practicing law, medical professionals learn while treating patients, and investigators learn while conducting investigations.

As you enter practice, some situations will feel familiar and others entirely new; some moments will go exactly as planned, and others won't. Success isn't about avoiding every challenge; it's about how effectively you adapt, respond, and keep moving forward.

The transition into practice is not about proving that the training taught you everything. It is about demonstrating your ability to apply what you know, seek information when needed, and respond professionally as new experiences arise. Every investigator begins somewhere. The important thing is not where you begin but your willingness to engage fully in the work ahead.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What do you think will feel most different once you begin practicing independently?

Facilitator Answer:

- Increased responsibility, real-world consequences, and independent problem-solving.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

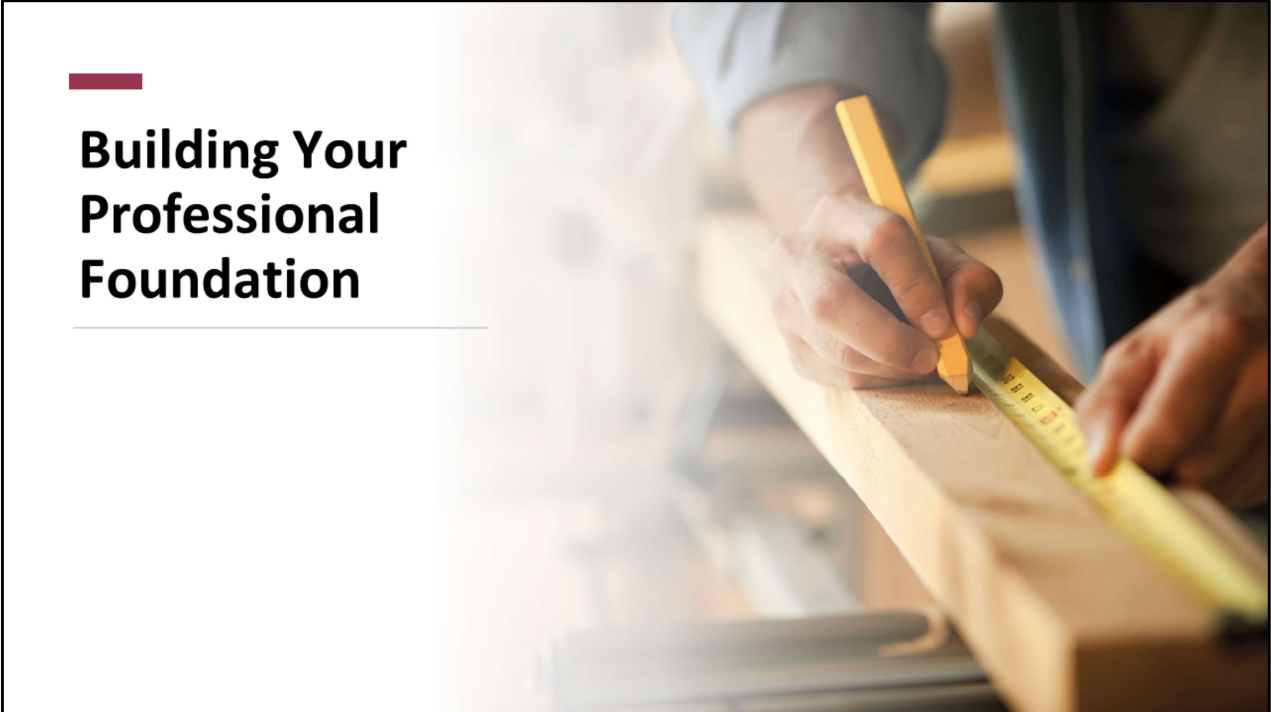
- How can adaptability support success during transition periods?

Facilitator Answer:

- Unexpected situations and adjusting to workplace expectations as areas where adaptability matters most.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Practice differs from training, with learning and application occurring simultaneously.
- Adaptability and flexibility support successful transitions when real-world situations differ from training examples.
- Success involves applying knowledge while continuing to learn.



Building Your Professional Foundation

BUILDING YOUR PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATION

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To help participants identify the habits, behaviors, and professional standards that contribute to credibility, effectiveness, and long-term success in child welfare practice

Say:

As professionals move from training into practice, the habits and standards they establish early often influence how they approach their work moving forward. Next, we'll explore the professional foundation that supports long-term effectiveness and success.

Activity Set Up:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion with participants seated in table groups. Ask participants to think about professionals they respect and the qualities that earned that respect.

Activity Instructions:

1. **Discuss** what contributes to a strong professional reputation.
2. **Explore** habits that support effectiveness and credibility.
3. **Examine** the importance of consistency and professionalism.
4. **Identify** behaviors that contribute to trust and reliability.
5. **Reflect** on the type of professional each participant hopes to become.

Say:

Every professional develops a reputation. Not through a single action or a single decision, but through the collection of choices they make each day. People form impressions based on reliability. Consistency. Preparedness. Professional conduct. Communication. Follow-through. Over time, those everyday actions become the foundation others associate with your work. When colleagues think about professionals they trust, they often describe characteristics rather than accomplishments.

- ***They talk about people who are dependable.***
- ***People who are prepared.***
- ***People who follow through on commitments.***
- ***People who communicate honestly.***
- ***People who remain professional during difficult situations.***

Those qualities are rarely developed through formal instruction. They are built through repeated behaviors over time. A strong professional foundation is not about being the smartest person in the room. It is not about having all the answers. It is about establishing habits that support trust, credibility, and effectiveness.

As you begin your career, consider the reputation you want to build. Consider the qualities you want others to associate with your work. Think about the standards you want to maintain when circumstances are easy and when circumstances are challenging.

The foundation you build during the early stages of your career can influence opportunities, relationships, and professional success for years to come. Professional excellence is often the result of consistent habits practiced over time rather than extraordinary actions performed occasionally.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What qualities make someone professionally credible?

Facilitator Answer:

- Reliability, accountability, professionalism, integrity, and honesty.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- How is trust built within professional relationships?

Facilitator Answer:

- Consistency, preparation, and respect.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Professional foundations are built through daily actions and habits, with trust and credibility developing over time.
- Consistency and professional standards influence long-term reputation and

effectiveness.

Commitment To The Journey Ahead

COMMITMENT TO THE JOURNEY AHEAD

Time: 25 Minutes

Purpose: To provide participants an opportunity to identify the professional commitments, values, and standards they intend to carry into practice as they begin their careers in child welfare

Say:

The habits and standards we choose matter most when they are put into action. Next, you'll have an opportunity to identify the commitments you want to carry forward as you begin your professional journey.

Activity Set Up:

Participants work individually first using blank paper or index cards, completing a personal commitment exercise, followed by small group and whole-group discussion.

Activity Instructions:

1. **Part 1- Individual Commitment Development:** Complete the statement "As I begin my work as a Child Maltreatment Investigator, I commit to..." by identifying three professional standards to uphold, one personal strength to rely on, one behavior to practice consistently, and one quality you want others to associate with your work.
2. **Part 2- Table Discussion:** Share commitments you're comfortable discussing; groups discuss common themes, frequent professional values, characteristics of

effective child welfare professionals, and commitments believed to be most important in practice.

3. **Part 3- Whole Group Debrief:** Facilitated discussion on themes identified throughout the room.

Say:

Over the last ten days, you've learned about investigative responsibilities, professional expectations, communication, decision-making, collaboration, documentation, court involvement, and many other aspects of child welfare practice. As important as those topics are, they don't fully define who you'll be as a professional. Every investigator brings something unique to the role - your values, character, work ethic, and commitment to serving children and families. This activity focuses on those things.

Rather than thinking about tasks or procedures, think about the standards you want to hold yourself to and the principles that will guide your decisions. Think about the qualities you want others to experience working with you; imagine a supervisor, coworker, or family member describing you professionally years from now. What would you hope they'd say? What characteristics would make you proud? The commitments you identify today aren't promises to be perfect; they're reminders of the standards you want to strive toward, standards that can guide your actions long after specific training content has faded from memory. Take a few moments to identify the commitments that matter most to you as you begin this next chapter.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What qualities do you believe families value in helping professionals?

Facilitator Answer:

- Respect, compassion, honesty, and reliability.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- How can commitments help guide decisions during difficult situations?

Facilitator Answer:

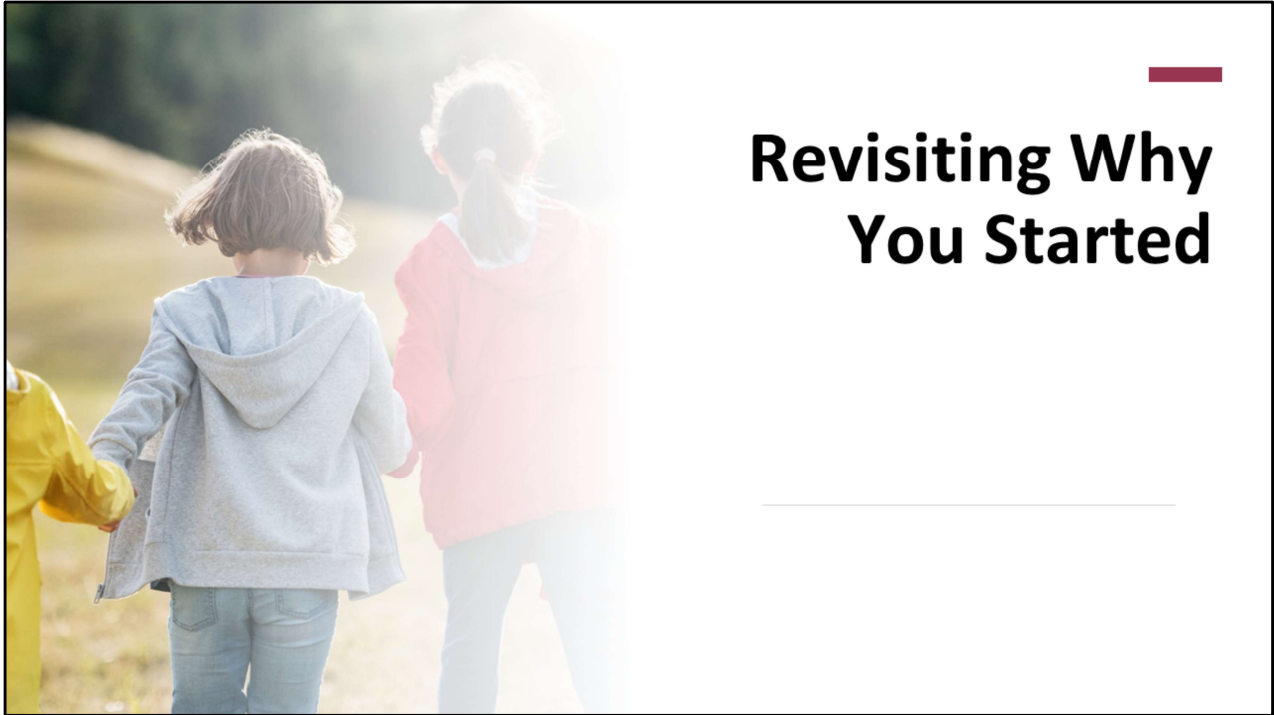
- Integrity, accountability, professionalism, and consistency as anchors during challenging moments.

Facilitator Notes:

- Keep the activity future-focused and positive, allowing participants to keep commitments private if desired.
- Avoid evaluating participant responses, encouraging authenticity and thoughtful reflection.
- Use the activity as a bridge into the final reflection portion of the training.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Professional commitments and values help guide daily practice and behavior.
- Character and conduct contribute to effectiveness, providing direction during difficult situations.
- Every participant can shape the type of professional they become.



Revisiting Why You Started

REVISITING WHY YOU STARTED

Time: 10 minutes

Purpose: To bring participants back to the index card completed on Day 1, allowing them to reflect on their original reason for entering this work in light of everything they have now experienced through the Flowers investigation and this training

Say:

On Day 1, before we talked about referrals, systems, or timelines, you wrote something down privately. You answered one question: why did you take this job? You put that card away, and I told you we'd come back to it on the last day of this training. That day is today.

Activity Instructions:

1. Have participants locate the index card they completed on Day 1 and kept in their Participant Manual.
2. Give participants a few quiet minutes to reread what they wrote.
3. Ask participants to consider whether their answer still feels true, has changed, or feels different now that they have completed the Flowers investigation and this training.
4. Invite two or three volunteers to share only if they want to. Do not go around the room.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- Does what you wrote on Day 1 still feel true to you now?
- Has anything about your answer changed after working through the Flowers case?

Facilitator Answers:

- Responses will vary.
- Participants may recognize their reason feels stronger, more specific, or more personal now that they've experienced the weight of investigative decision-making.

Facilitator Notes:

- Do not rush this activity; allow silence.
- Do not require anyone to share.
- Reconnect this moment to the Division's vision introduced on Day 1: that every child has a safe and stable family every day.
- Keep the tone reflective, not performative, this is a personal moment, not a public exercise.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Participants' original reason for entering this work remains a resource they carry into the field.
- Completing the Flowers investigation and this training may deepen or clarify that original motivation.
- The Division's vision from Day 1 connects directly to the work participants are now prepared to carry out.



Final Reflections & Training Takeaways



FINAL REFLECTIONS & TRAINING TAKEAWAYS

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To provide participants with an opportunity to reflect on their training experience, recognize accomplishments, and identify the knowledge, skills, and perspectives they intend to carry into practice

Say:

The commitments you've identified represent more than goals. They represent the professional standards you hope will shape your work moving forward. Before we conclude the training, we'll take one final opportunity to reflect on the journey you've completed and the lessons you want to carry with you.

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group discussion with participants seated in table groups, leading a final reflective conversation on the overall training experience.

1. **Reflect** on the ten-day training experience.
2. **Identify** meaningful lessons learned throughout training.
3. **Discuss** moments that influenced participant thinking or perspective.
4. **Consider** how training has prepared participants for practice.
5. **Prepare** for the formal closing of the training.

Say:

Over the last ten days, you have spent time building a foundation for an important responsibility. You've examined policies, practiced skills, worked through scenarios, participated in discussions, collaborated with peers, and challenged yourself to think critically about the work ahead. Each person will likely leave this training with different memories, different lessons, and different moments that stand out.

- ***For some, it may be a skill they practiced.***
- ***For others, it may be a discussion that changed their perspective.***
- ***For others, it may simply be a greater understanding of the responsibility and impact associated with this role.***

Training is often measured by the information presented, but some of the most valuable outcomes are what participants carry with them afterward: the confidence to begin, the willingness to ask questions, the ability to approach challenges thoughtfully, the understanding that no one does this work alone, and the recognition that children and families deserve professionals who are prepared, committed, and intentional.

As we prepare to conclude, take a moment to consider what's been most meaningful to you- the lessons you want to remember, the perspectives you want to carry forward, and most importantly, the effort you've invested in reaching this point. Completing training is a meaningful accomplishment. The next step is applying what you've learned in service to children and families.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What knowledge or skill do you feel most prepared to apply?

Facilitator Answer:

- Interviewing skills, safety assessment concepts, documentation, and court preparation.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following and validate responses)

- What perspective do you want to carry into your work moving forward?

Facilitator Answer:

- Professional communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and professional responsibility.

Facilitator Notes:

- Keep the discussion celebratory but professional, encouraging participation without requiring everyone to speak.
- Validate the effort participants invested throughout training, focusing on accomplishments rather than future challenges.
- Use this slide to prepare participants for the formal closing of the training.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Training provided foundational knowledge and skills, with different lessons meaningful to different individuals.
- Participants gained valuable experience through activities and discussions, and completing training is an important accomplishment.
- The focus now shifts to applying learning in practice.



CONGRATULATIONS & CLOSING REMARKS

Time: 5 Minutes

Purpose: To formally conclude the training experience, recognize participant accomplishments, and encourage participants as they begin their work serving children and families

Say:

As we conclude our final discussion, there is one last opportunity to recognize what you've accomplished and officially close this training experience. Next, we'll conclude the program and celebrate the beginning of your journey as child welfare professionals.

Activity Instructions:

Facilitate a whole-group closing with participants remaining seated as the facilitator delivers closing remarks.

1. **Recognize** participant accomplishments.
2. **Reflect** on the significance of the role.
3. **Encourage** participants as they move into practice.
4. **Officially conclude** the training.

Say:

Ten days ago, you entered this training as participants preparing to learn about child maltreatment investigations. Today, you leave with a foundation of knowledge, skills,

experiences, and perspectives designed to help prepare you for the responsibilities ahead.

Throughout this training, you have invested time, energy, effort, and attention into developing your understanding of this work.

- *You have practiced new skills.*
- *Worked through unfamiliar situations.*
- *Participated in discussions.*
- *Learned from one another.*

And challenged yourselves to think critically about the role you are preparing to assume. The work ahead will be meaningful. It will be challenging. It will require professionalism, sound judgment, effective communication, persistence, and dedication. Most importantly, it will provide opportunities to make a difference in the lives of children and families.

As you move forward, remember that you do not carry the responsibility of this work alone.

You are joining a profession built on teamwork, shared responsibility, and a collective commitment to child safety and family well-being.

Each interaction, conversation, and decision contributes to that larger mission. While this training is ending, your professional journey is just beginning; approach it with curiosity, integrity, and purpose, and remember that the knowledge and skills you continue building will strengthen your ability to serve children, families, and communities.

On behalf of everyone involved in this training, congratulations on completing the Child Maltreatment Investigations Training Program. Thank you for your participation, engagement, and commitment to this important work, we wish you success as you begin the next chapter of your professional journey.

Facilitator Notes:

- End the training on a positive and professional note.
- Allow time for recognition, certificates, or closing announcements if applicable.
- Keep the focus on participant accomplishments.
- Avoid introducing new content.
- Conclude with encouragement, gratitude, and recognition of the important work ahead.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Completion of training is a significant achievement.
- Participants have developed foundational knowledge and skills.
- Child welfare work has a meaningful impact on children and families.
- Professional learning continues throughout a career.
- Participants are prepared to begin the next phase of their professional journey.



Target Outcomes Evaluation

TARGET OUTCOMES EVALUATION

Time: 2 minutes

Purpose: To assess the learning outcomes for this training section

Facilitator Note: Before moving to the next section direct participants to the QR code on the slide. Participants will need to use their phones to scan the code to complete the section target outcomes evaluation in Qualtrics.



INVESTIGATIONS WEEK 8 POST TEST KAHOOT REVIEW AND RECAP

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To connect all of the Week 8 concepts and target outcomes

NST INV WEEK 7 REVIEW LINK

Facilitator Note: Before moving to the post test, use the Kahoot link on the MidSOUTH Staff Page to open the Kahoot Review activity

Investigations Week 7 Post Test Assessment

POST TEST ASSESSMENT

Time: 10 Minutes

Purpose: To assess the learning outcomes for this training module

Say:

Before we end our learning week lets take a final look at our learning outcomes for the week by completing our post-test assessment. Please open the assessment using the QR code on the screen