

Investigations

Day 5 - Facilitator Guide



From Investigation to Documentation

Documentation Fundamentals

Writing the Investigation Narrative

CHRIS Documentation

From Investigation to Case Story

Day 5:

Investigations Training Agenda

Monday	
9:00 – 9:30	Welcome From Investigation to Documentation
9:30 – 10:30	Documentation Fundamentals
10:30 -10:45	Break
10:45 – 12:00	Writing the Investigation Narrative
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 – 2:00	CHRIS Documentation
2:00 - 2:15	Break
2:15 – 3:15	From Investigation to Case Story
3:15 – 4:00	Wrap Up and Review Post Test

Before You Train

Facilitator Resources – Day 5

Materials and Handouts

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

DCFS Entry Level Competencies

- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| • 100-2 | • 102-1 | • 102-8 |
| • 101-3 | • 102-2 | • 103-2 |
| • 101-4 | • 102-3 | • 103-4 |
| • 101-5 | • 102-4 | • 105-2 |
| • 101-7 | • 102-5 | |
| • 101-8 | • 102-6 | |

DCFS Forms and Publications

- CFS-411 Affidavit
- PUB 357 – Child Maltreatment Investigation Determination Guide

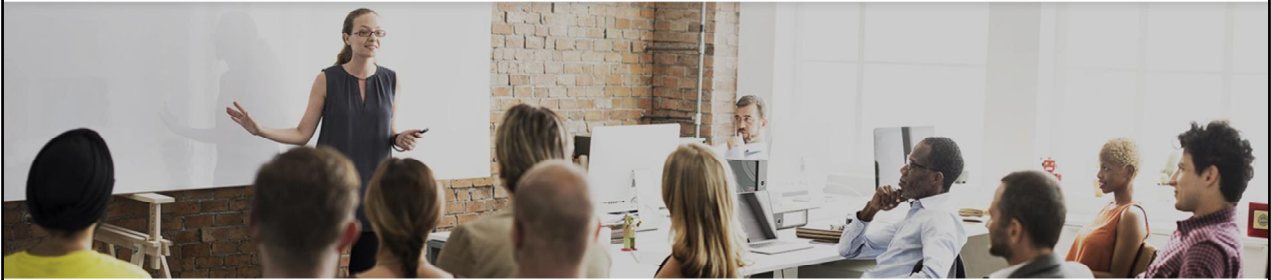
DCFS Policy And Internal Procedures

- n/a

Day 5 Sources

- n/a

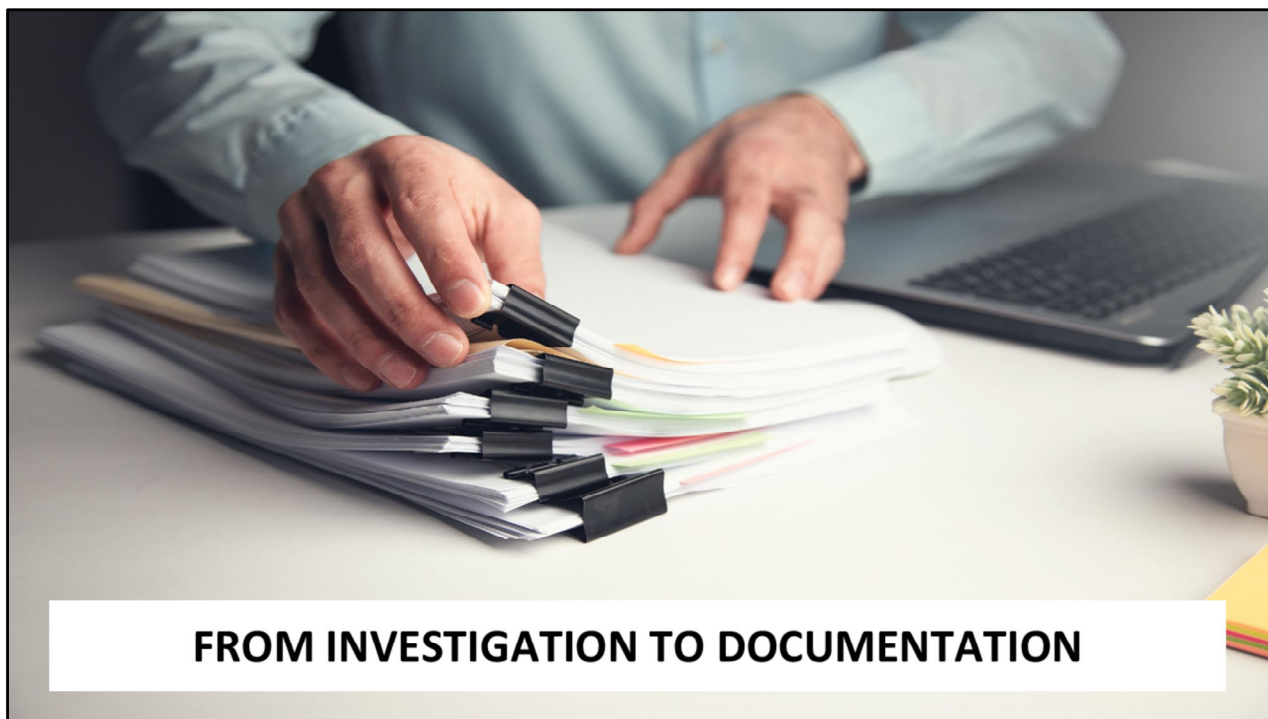
Investigations Specialty Training



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

Day 5

INVESTIGATIONS – DAY 5



FROM INVESTIGATION TO DOCUMENTATION

FROM INVESTIGATION TO DOCUMENTATION

Supporting Investigative Decisions Through Quality Documentation



SUPPORTING INVESTIGATIVE DECISIONS THROUGH QUALITY DOCUMENTATION

Time: 2 minutes

Purpose: To reconnect participants to the Flowers investigation and transition from investigative decision-making into objective documentation and narrative-writing practices

Say:

Over the last several days, you worked through the Flowers' investigation from the initial referral through interviews, safety planning, escalation, and protective custody decisions.

Throughout that process, you gathered information, assessed safety threats, conducted interviews, evaluated caregiver functioning, and made decisions based on evolving circumstances and available information.

Today, we shift from the field-response portion of the investigation to documentation.

As investigators, your decisions, observations, interviews, and actions must be documented clearly, objectively, and accurately. Documentation tells the story of

the investigation and supports the decisions made throughout the case.

Target Outcomes



- Understand how documentation supports investigative decision-making and case continuity.
- Apply information gathered during investigations to objective narrative writing and documentation practices.
- Assess whether documentation clearly reflects observable conditions, behaviors, and safety threats.

TARGET OUTCOMES

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To reconnect participants to the Flowers investigation and transition from investigative decision-making into objective documentation and narrative-writing practices

Say:

Throughout today's training, we will focus on how to organize information, document observable facts, write objective narratives, and ensure documentation clearly supports investigative decision-making. It's critical that quality documentation begins during the investigation, not after it ends.

By the end of this section, you will:

- *Understand how documentation supports investigative decision-making and case continuity.*
- *Apply information gathered during investigations to objective narrative writing and documentation practices.*
- *Assess whether documentation clearly reflects observable conditions, behaviors, and threats to safety.*

Before we begin writing documentation, let's talk about why documentation quality

matters and how documentation impacts investigations.



Documentation Supports the Investigation

DOCUMENTATION SUPPORTS THE INVESTIGATION

Time: 12 minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand how documentation impacts investigative decisions, case continuity, supervision, court involvement, and child safety outcomes.

Participant Manual: Flowers' CFS-411

Facilitator Resources: PUB 357 – Child Maltreatment Investigation Determination Guide, CFS-411 Affidavit Template (Flowers' Example)

Activity Set Up:

- Before participants arrive, post the following chart papers (or signs) around the room:
 - **Station 1 – Who Relies on Documentation?**
 - **Station 2 – How Does Documentation Support Decision-Making?**
 - **Station 3 – What Happens When Documentation Is Poor?**
 - **Station 4 – What Makes Documentation Strong and Objective?**
- Divide participants evenly among the four stations.
- Provide each group with markers.

Activity Instructions

- Each group will begin at one station.
- Working together, participants should:
 - Discuss the prompt.
 - Record their responses on the chart paper.
 - Build upon ideas left by previous groups.
- After approximately **2 minutes**, rotate to the next station until all groups have visited each station.
- Following the rotations, conduct a whole-group debrief using the responses recorded throughout the room.

Say:

Documentation is one of the most important responsibilities investigators have throughout the life of a case.

The information you document becomes the official record of:

- ***What occurred.***
- ***What was observed.***
- ***What actions were taken.***
- ***What threats to safety were identified.***
- ***Why decisions were made.***

Paraphrase:

Throughout the Flowers case, you gathered information from multiple interviews, observations, safety assessments, collateral contacts, and escalating events. If those details are not documented clearly and objectively, other individuals reviewing the case may not fully understand what occurred or why certain decisions were necessary.

Today, you'll move around the room and work together to explore why documentation matters from several different perspectives. As you rotate, discuss each prompt, add your group's ideas, and build upon the responses left by previous groups.

When everyone has visited each station, we'll review the themes together and connect them back to the Flowers case.

Activity Discussion

- During the debrief, review each station and discuss common themes identified by participants.
- Connect responses back to examples from the Flowers case.

Facilitator Questions: (ask the following questions and validate responses)

At each station, participants should consider:

- **Station 1:** Who relies on your documentation?
- **Station 2:** How does documentation support investigative and safety decisions?
- **Station 3:** How could poor documentation impact a case?
- **Station 4:** What makes documentation objective, clear, and supportable?

Facilitator Answers (*GUIDANCE – DO NOT READ*)

Participants may identify:

Who Relies on Documentation

- Supervisors
- OCC and courts
- Future Specialists
- Placement staff
- Service providers

How Documentation Supports Decision-Making

- Supports supervisory review
- Supports court involvement
- Supports case continuity
- Supports safety planning
- Supports ongoing service decisions
- Supports investigative credibility

Potential Consequences of Poor Documentation

- Confusion
- Unsupported decisions
- Missing safety concerns
- Credibility issues
- Delayed services and interventions

Strong Documentation

- Objective
- Accurate
- Complete
- Clear
- Timely
- Based on facts rather than assumptions

Facilitator Note:

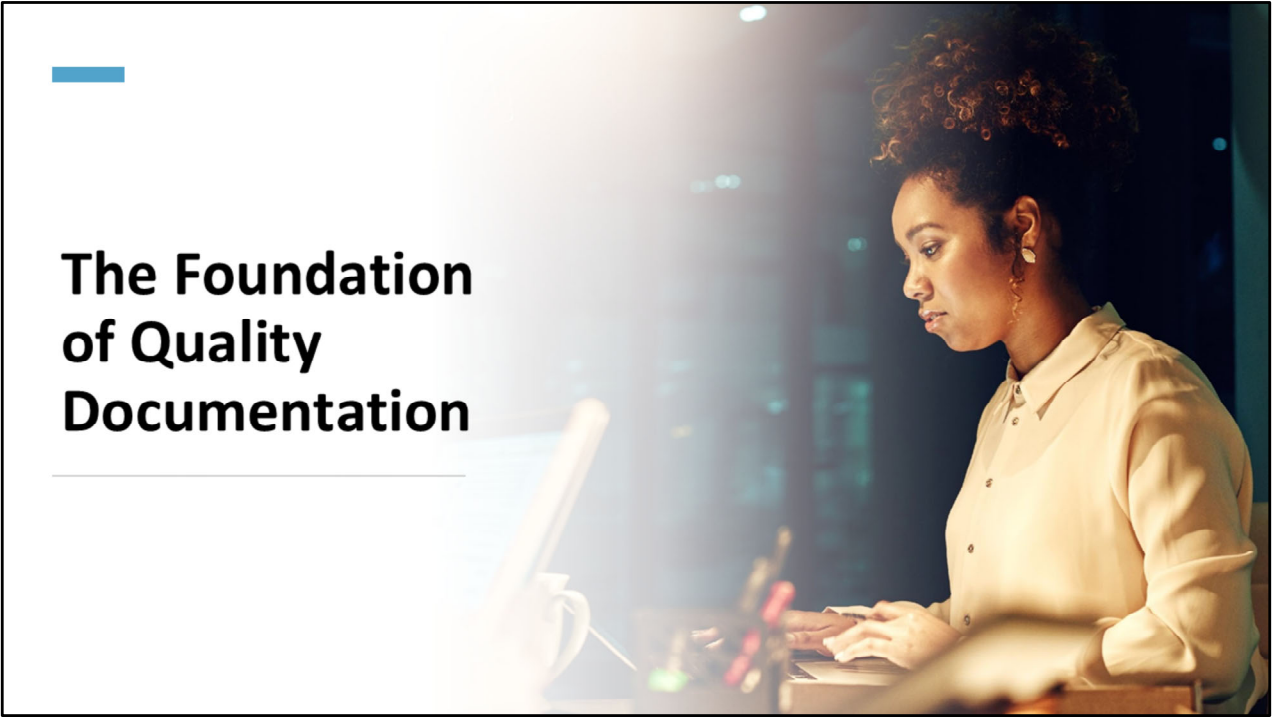
- Encourage participants to build upon previous groups' responses rather than repeating ideas.
- During the debrief, connect participant responses back to examples from the Flowers case.
- Reinforce that quality documentation supports continuity throughout the life of a case.
- Keep discussions moving to maintain the rotation schedule.

Say:

Now that we've explored why documentation matters, let's begin looking at what makes documentation strong, objective, and supportable.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Documentation is the official case record that supports decisions and actions.
- Documentation informs investigative, supervisory, legal, and service decisions.
- Poor documentation can impact safety and case outcomes.
- Objective writing improves clarity and credibility.



The Foundation of Quality Documentation

THE FOUNDATION OF QUALITY DOCUMENTATION

Time: 18 minutes

Purpose: To help participants distinguish between objective and subjective documentation and practice identifying factual, observable, and supportable narrative language

Participant Manual: Objective vs Subjective Documentation Examples

Facilitator Resource: CFS-411 Affidavit Flowers' Example

Activity Instructions

- Review sample documentation statements on the Participant Manual Page.
- Identify:
 - Objective wording.
 - Subjective wording.
 - Assumptions.
 - Observable facts.
- Discuss how wording impacts documentation quality and credibility.

Say:

One of the biggest challenges in documentation is learning how to separate observations from conclusions, assumptions, and opinions.

Objective documentation focuses on:

- ***What was observed.***
- ***What was heard.***
- ***What actions occurred.***
- ***What conditions existed.***

Subjective documentation often includes:

- ***Labels.***
- ***Assumptions.***
- ***Emotional wording.***
- ***Conclusions that are not supported by observable facts.***

For example, instead of writing:

- ***'Charlotte was crazy and unstable.'***

An objective description might state:

- ***'Charlotte was yelling loudly. She was pacing near the vehicle, crying intermittently, and refusing to engage in discussion regarding the Immediate Safety Plan.'***

The goal of documentation is not to exaggerate situations or persuade others emotionally. The goal is to clearly document factual information that supports investigative decisions.

Facilitator Questions: (ask the following questions and validate responses)

- What makes documentation objective?
- What wording becomes subjective or opinion-based?
- Why can labels or assumptions create problems in documentation?
- How can observable descriptions strengthen documentation?
- How might subjective wording impact court credibility?

Facilitator Answers:

Objective documentation includes:

- Observable behaviors.
- Direct quotes.
- Specific conditions.
- Descriptive facts.

Subjective documentation includes:

- Labels.

- Diagnoses.
- Emotional conclusions.
- Unsupported assumptions.

Examples:

- “Home was disgusting” versus
- “Trash and food debris were observed throughout the kitchen floor”

Facilitator Notes

- Encourage participant discussion and correction.
- Reinforce to the participants the importance of observation vs interpretation.
- Connect the discussion back to:
 - Court credibility.
 - Decision support.
 - Case continuity.

Say:

Now that we’ve discussed the foundation of strong documentation, we’re going to move into deeper documentation fundamentals and begin practicing how to improve documentation quality.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Objective documentation focuses on observable information.
- Subjective wording weakens documentation credibility.
- Behavioral descriptions are stronger than labels or conclusions.
- Documentation should clearly support investigative decisions.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, ARKANSAS
JUVENILE DIVISION

AFFIDAVIT

Comes Affiant herein, affirming under oath that the following statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief:

1. Petitioner is an adult employee of the Arkansas Department of Human Services.
2. I believe the appropriate venue for this case is the Juvenile Court of Jefferson County, Arkansas because the juveniles' primary place of residence is in Jefferson County and the facts giving rise to the petition occurred in Jefferson County.

3. The juveniles involved are:

Name: Jasmine Hill

DOB: 01/14/2026

SSN: Training example - not provided

Name: Frankie Flowers

DOB: 12/04/2018

SSN: Training example - not provided

4. The parents of the juveniles are:

Mother: Charlotte Flowers

DOB: 04/02/2002

Address: 284 S. Hwy. 63, Altheimer, AR 72004

Phone: 870-541-7100, ext. 0749

Father of Jasmine: Brad Hill

DOB: 06/21/1992

Address: 284 S. Hwy. 63, Altheimer, AR 72004

Phone: 501-666-1585

Parent status: Brad Hill is identified as Jasmine's father. The training materials do not establish whether legal paternity has been adjudicated.

Frankie Flowers' father is not involved and his identity and whereabouts are unknown in the provided training materials. Brad Hill is not Frankie's father. Brad resides with Charlotte at the family's primary residence and has been involved in circumstances

contributing to the dependency-neglect concerns, including domestic violence in the home, limited participation in caregiving, and minimization of Jasmine's medical needs.

5. The legally responsible party of the juveniles is:

Name: Charlotte Flowers

Address: 284 S. Hwy. 63, Altheimer, AR 72004

Phone: 870-541-7100, ext. 0749

Prior to the current investigation, Jasmine Hill and Frankie Flowers primarily resided with Charlotte Flowers at 284 S. Hwy. 63, Altheimer, Arkansas. The family also stayed frequently with maternal grandmother Georgia Weems. Following Jasmine's hospital discharge, Charlotte, Frankie, and Jasmine stayed at Georgia Weems' residence.

6. The juveniles have no other siblings identified in the provided Flowers training materials. Jasmine Hill and Frankie Flowers are both involved in the current petition.
7. The provided Flowers training materials do not identify tribal membership or Indian heritage for Jasmine Hill, Frankie Flowers, or their family. ICWA applicability must be verified with the family and documented as required.
8. A kin resource identified during the investigation is Georgia Weems, maternal grandmother of Jasmine Hill and Frankie Flowers, 1616 Pennsylvania Ave., Pine Bluff, AR 72004, phone 870-536-2010. Georgia has provided care for both children and took Jasmine for emergency medical treatment after observing her injuries. The training materials do not provide completed background-check results or a final placement approval for Georgia; those requirements must be completed and documented before placement.
9. The Department has the following history with the family: Approximately eight months before the current referral, the Department received an accepted report alleging inadequate supervision after Frankie Flowers, then age seven, was found outside unsupervised. A neighbor made the report. The allegation was unsubstantiated. The provided training materials do not identify an open services case resulting from that report.
10. The basic factual grounds upon which the Department bases its petition are as follows. On 08/14/2026 at approximately 10:00 p.m., seven-month-old Jasmine Hill was

evaluated in the emergency department at Jefferson Regional Hospital after her maternal grandmother, Georgia Weems, observed multiple injuries while bathing her. Jasmine had an infected blister or lesion on her scalp measuring approximately two to three centimeters, an infected blister or lesion on the back of her left index finger, swelling of the finger and hand, and an older bruise on her forehead. The injuries appeared to be approximately five to seven days old. Medical personnel documented fever, an elevated white blood cell count, and concern that the infection had gone untreated. Jasmine was discharged with prescribed antibiotics. The treating physician expressed concern regarding delayed medical care, inadequate supervision, and Charlotte Flowers' inability to explain how Jasmine sustained the injuries.

Georgia reported that Charlotte Flowers and Brad Hill had been involved in a fight at a family gathering before Georgia took Jasmine and Frankie to her residence. During the investigation, additional information raised concerns regarding repeated domestic violence between Charlotte and Brad. Law enforcement was identified as a collateral source regarding approximately seven calls to the family residence over the preceding two years, and Brad had a prior battery conviction involving a former partner. The investigation also identified concerns regarding caregiving responsibilities and supervision. Frankie, Jasmine's older sister, carried significant caretaking responsibility for Jasmine. In her child-centered safety work, Frankie identified worries about fighting and yelling, being left alone, medication being taken as directed, and not being responsible for Jasmine's care.

The Department assessed child safety and implemented an Immediate Safety Plan with Charlotte and the family network. The plan required that the children be supervised by an alert and responsible adult, that Jasmine receive her prescribed medication and necessary medical follow-up, and that the identified support network notify DCFS if the plan could not be maintained or if Charlotte attempted to leave with the children. The Department also used the Team Decision Making process to address child safety and placement concerns. The plan later became ineffective when Charlotte rejected Georgia's assistance, refused to consistently administer Jasmine's prescribed medication, and attempted to leave with the children without providing a safe plan or disclosing where she intended to take them. These developments increased concern that the identified threats could no longer be controlled through the Immediate Safety Plan. The Department reassessed safety, consulted supervision, and took protective custody of Jasmine and Frankie. The circumstances supporting protective custody included Jasmine's unresolved medical needs and vulnerability as a nonverbal infant, ongoing inadequate-supervision concerns affecting both children, domestic-violence-

related instability, and Charlotte's attempt to remove the children from the safety arrangement while refusing necessary medical care.

A. The juveniles, Jasmine Hill and Frankie Flowers, were removed from the physical and legal custody of Charlotte Flowers on 08/18/2026 because the circumstances and conditions presented an immediate danger to their health and physical well-being. The safety threats considered in making the decision to remove the juveniles included:

- Caregiver failure to meet the children's immediate supervision needs.
- Caregiver failure to meet Jasmine's immediate medical needs, including prescribed antibiotics and medical follow-up.
- Domestic violence and instability affecting the children's safety.
- Charlotte's attempt to leave with the children after the Immediate Safety Plan was no longer being followed, creating a flight risk and preventing the Department from relying on the existing safety arrangement.

The reasonable efforts made by the Department to prevent removal included assessment and reassessment of child safety, development and monitoring of an Immediate Safety Plan, involvement of maternal grandmother Georgia Weems as a support person, efforts to ensure Jasmine received prescribed antibiotics and medical follow-up, engagement of the family in safety planning, supervisory consultation, and Team Decision Making regarding child safety and placement. These efforts did not prevent removal because Charlotte stopped cooperating with the safety arrangement, rejected Georgia's assistance, refused to consistently provide Jasmine's prescribed medication, and attempted to leave with the children without an alternative plan that could control the identified safety threats.

11. The juveniles' health and safety are in danger due to the circumstances described above. Given the facts of the current investigation and the family's history, Jasmine Hill and Frankie Flowers should remain in the custody of the Arkansas Department of Human Services pending further hearings in this matter.
12. The Department reserves the right to present additional evidence of dependency/neglect to the Court, which may become known to it through further investigation.

Further Affiant sayeth not.

Affiant,
Assigned DCFS Specialist - Training Example

VERIFICATION

On this day, the above Affiant came before me stating on oath that the facts contained in the foregoing affidavit and petition are true and correct to the best of the petitioner's knowledge, information and belief.

State of Arkansas, County of _____. Subscribed and Sworn to me on
this _____ day of _____, 2026.

NOTARY PUBLIC ARKANSAS

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES:



Building the Foundation for Quality Documentation



BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR QUALITY DOCUMENTATION

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To close this section by reinforcing the importance of objective documentation and preparing participants to move into hands-on documentation practice

Participant Manual: Objective vs Subjective Documentation Examples

Say:

In this section, we focused on why documentation matters and how documentation supports investigative decision-making throughout the life of a case.

We also discussed the difference between objective and subjective documentation and explored how wording, assumptions, and interpretation can impact the quality and credibility of documentation.

As investigators, your documentation should clearly describe:

- *What was observed.*
- *What was said.*
- *What actions occurred.*

- *What safety concerns existed.*

The goal is not to exaggerate situations or to document conclusions without supporting evidence. The goal is to create clear, factual documentation that accurately reflects the investigation and supports the decisions that were made. Now that we've built the foundation for strong documentation, let's begin practicing identifying, analyzing, and improving documentation quality.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Documentation supports investigative decisions.
- Objective language strengthens credibility.
- Observable facts are stronger than labels or assumptions.
- Documentation should clearly reflect safety concerns and investigative actions.



DOCUMENTATION FUNDAMENTALS

DOCUMENTATION FUNDAMENTALS

Target Outcomes



- Understand how quality documentation supports investigations, decision-making, and case continuity.
- Apply objective documentation principles to investigative narratives and observations.
- Assess whether documentation clearly reflects observable conditions, behaviors, and safety threats.

TARGET OUTCOMES

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To introduce the core principles of quality documentation and prepare participants to practice writing clear, objective, factual, and supportable investigative documentation

Say:

In the previous section, we discussed why documentation matters and how documentation supports investigative decisions. Now, in this section, we're going to focus more specifically on the core principles of quality documentation. We will also begin practicing how to write documentation that is objective, factual, clear, and supportable.

Throughout investigations, you are responsible for documenting interviews, observations, safety concerns, caregiver behaviors, actions taken, and decision-making. The quality of that documentation directly impacts safety planning, case continuity, supervisory review, court involvement, and the credibility of the investigation itself.

So, as we move through today's activities, focus on clearly describing what was

observed and what was said, and how those observations connect to investigative decisions.

Let's begin by looking at examples of documentation and by practicing identifying what strengthens or weakens documentation quality.

A photograph of a person's hands writing on a document with a pen. The document is on a clipboard. The background is blurred, showing a window and some office furniture. The text 'What Belongs In Documentation?' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

What Belongs In Documentation?

WHAT BELONGS IN DOCUMENTATION?

Time: 18 minutes

Purpose: To help participants identify what information should be included in investigative documentation and practice organizing information in a clear, chronological, and supportable manner

Participant Manual: Organizing Investigative Information

Facilitator Resources: CFS-411 Affidavit Flowers' Example

Activity Set Up:

- Participants work in groups at their tables.
- Participants should have the Participant Manual Handout available.

Activity Instructions:

- Review the investigative information provided.
- Determine:
 - What information belongs in documentation.
 - What information may be irrelevant, unclear, or unsupported.
- Organize the information:

- Chronologically.
- By investigative significance.
- By connection to threats to safety and decision-making.
- Be prepared to discuss:
 - Why certain information is important to document.
 - How organization impacts documentation clarity.

Say:

Strong documentation is not just about writing objectively. It is also about knowing what information to include, how to organize it, and how documentation supports the overall investigative story. Throughout an investigation, you will gather large amounts of information from interviews, observations, collateral contacts, safety assessments, historical information, and behavioral observations.

Be mindful that not every piece of information carries the same level of importance. Part of quality documentation is learning how to organize and prioritize information clearly. As you work through this activity, focus on identifying what information is relevant, what information supports investigative decisions, and how information should be organized to improve clarity and understanding.

Facilitator Questions: (ask the following questions and validate responses)

- What information is most important to document?
- What information directly supports safety concerns or decisions?
- What information may be irrelevant or unsupported?
- Why does organization matter in documentation?
- How can poor organization impact understanding of the case?

Facilitator Answers:

Participants may identify:

- Observable behaviors.
- Direct quotes.
- Chronological events.
- Safety threats.
- Caregiver actions and refusals.
- Significant collateral information.
- Actions taken by the Specialist.

Participants may also identify:

- Rumors.
- Unsupported assumptions.
- Irrelevant personal opinions.
- Unverified conclusions.

Facilitator Notes

- Reinforce to the participants that documentation tells the investigative story.
- Encourage group discussion regarding relevance and organization.
- Avoid turning this discussion into “perfect writing” instructions.
- Keep focus on:
 - Investigative clarity.
 - Decision support.
 - Relevance of information.

Say:

Now that you’ve practiced organizing investigative information, let’s begin applying those principles to documentation practice scenarios.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Documentation should focus on relevant investigative information.
- Organization improves clarity and understanding.
- Documentation should clearly connect information to investigative decisions.
- Chronological structure helps explain how investigations evolved over time.

Turning Information Into Narrative Documentation

TURNING INFORMATION INTO NARRATIVE DOCUMENTATION

Time: 25 minutes

Purpose: To provide participants with hands-on practice turning investigative information into clear, objective, and supportable narrative documentation

Participant Manual: Organizing Investigative Information

Facilitator Resource: CFS-411 Affidavit Flowers' Example

Activity Set Up:

- Participants work in groups at their tables.
- Each group should use their Organizing Investigative Information Participant Manual page and materials to write their narrative.
- Explain that groups will first develop a narrative at their tables. Once the narratives are complete, each group will move to another table to review a different group's documentation.
- Groups should leave their completed narrative at their original table before rotating.

Activity Instructions:

- Using the information your group organized in the previous activity, develop a short objective documentation narrative summarizing:
 - Significant observations. Safety concerns. Caregiver behaviors. Actions taken.
 - **Use:** Objective wording. Observable behaviors. Clear chronological organization.
 - **Avoid:** Assumptions. Labels. Emotional wording. Unsupported conclusions.
- After approximately 10 minutes, leave your narrative at your table and move as a group to another table.
 - Review the narrative as though you are the next Specialist assigned to the case.
 - As each group reviews the narrative, discuss:
 - Does the narrative clearly explain what occurred?
 - Can you identify the safety concerns?
 - Are the caregiver behaviors and investigative actions clearly documented?
 - What information is missing or unclear?
 - Would another Specialist understand the situation from this documentation?
 - Provide written feedback that identifies:
 - Wording that strengthened the documentation.
 - Information that was clear and supportable.
 - Areas that need additional detail or clarification.
 - Wording that appeared vague, emotional, or assumption-based.
- Return to your original table and review the feedback provided by the other group.
 - Be prepared to discuss:
 - Why did your group structure the narrative the way it did?
 - What wording choices strengthened the documentation.
 - What feedback could improve the narrative.
 - Whether another Specialist could understand the investigation from the documentation alone.

Facilitator Notes:

- Reinforce that narrative writing should remain objective at all times.
- Encourage participants to use specific behavioral descriptions.
- Remind reviewing groups to provide constructive feedback that focuses on the documentation rather than the writer.
- Avoid over-correcting grammar or formatting.
- Keep the focus on: Clarity. Objectivity. Investigative support. Chronological organization. Whether the documentation can stand on its own.

- Keep groups moving according to the activity timeline.
- Allow approximately:
 - 10 minutes to develop the narrative.
 - 5 minutes to move and review another group's narrative.
 - 3 minutes to return and review feedback.
 - 7 minutes for a whole-group discussion.

Say

Once investigators gather and organize information, the next step is turning that information into clear and supportable documentation. Good documentation should allow someone unfamiliar with the case to understand what occurred, what safety concerns existed, what actions were taken, and why decisions were made. As your group develops the narrative, focus on observable behaviors, significant events, safety concerns, and relevant caregiver actions or statements.

Your goal is not to persuade the reader through emotional wording or assumptions. Your goal is to create an objective and factual record that supports investigative decision-making. Once your narrative is complete, your group will move to another table and review a different narrative as though you are the next Specialist assigned to the case.

Consider whether the documentation gives you enough information to understand the investigation. Identify what is clear, what is missing, and what wording could be strengthened. This review will help you see how documentation is understood by someone who was not present during the investigation.

Facilitator Questions: (ask the following questions and validate responses)

- Does the narrative clearly explain what occurred?
- What observable information supports the safety concerns?
- What wording became too vague or assumption-based?
- How did the group organize the narrative chronologically?
- Would another Specialist understand the situation from this documentation?
- What information did the reviewing group identify as missing or unclear?
- What wording choices strengthened the credibility of the narrative?
- How did reviewing another group's narrative affect your understanding of documentation?

Facilitator Answers:

Strong narratives should include:

- Observable behaviors.
- Significant caregiver statements.

- Safety concerns.
- Chronological organization.
- Clear investigative actions.
- Relevant factual information.
- Enough detail for someone unfamiliar with the case to understand what occurred.

Participants may struggle with:

- Overusing conclusions.
- Omitting important details.
- Writing emotionally.
- Including irrelevant information.
- Using vague or assumption-based language.
- Failing to connect documented information to safety concerns or investigative actions.

Written feedback may identify:

- Missing dates, times, or sequence.
- Unclear caregiver statements.
- Unsupported conclusions.
- Strong behavioral descriptions.
- Effective chronological organization.
- Clear explanations of actions taken.
- Areas where additional context is needed.

Say

Now let's review the narratives your groups developed and the feedback you received. As we discuss them, consider what made the documentation clear and supportable. We will also identify wording or missing details that could weaken another Specialist's understanding of the investigation.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Documentation should clearly explain the investigation.
- Objective wording improves credibility and clarity.
- Chronological organization helps others follow the investigation.
- Documentation should support investigative decisions and safety concerns.
- Documentation must be understandable to someone who was not present during the investigation.
- Reviewing documentation from another perspective can reveal missing or unclear information.



Reviewing Documentation Quality and Decision Support

REVIEWING DOCUMENTATION QUALITY AND DECISION SUPPORT

Time: 12 minutes

Purpose: To help participants evaluate how documentation quality impacts investigative clarity, decision support, and understanding of the case

Participant Manual: Organizing Investigative Information

Facilitator Resource: CFS-411 Affidavit Flowers' Example

Activity Set Up

- Whole group discussion.
- Participants keep narratives available.

Activity Instructions

- Groups share portions of their narrative summaries.
- Discuss:
 - Strengths in documentation.
 - Areas needing clarification.
 - Wording choices.
 - Chronological organization.
- Reflect on how documentation supports investigative decisions.

Say:

Documentation quality affects how others understand the investigation and the decisions made throughout the case.

When documentation is clear, organized, objective, and fact-based, it becomes much easier for supervisors, courts, future specialists, and service providers to understand:

- ***What occurred.***
- ***What concerns existed.***
- ***What actions were taken.***
- ***Why safety decisions were necessary.***

As we review your narratives, pay attention to:

- ***What wording strengthened the documentation.***
- ***What details improved understanding.***
- ***What areas became unclear, vague, or unsupported.***

Remember, documentation should help others follow the investigation from beginning to end.

Facilitator Questions: (ask the following questions and validate responses)

- What narrative wording worked well?
- What details improved clarity?
- What wording became vague or unsupported?
- How did chronological organization improve understanding?
- Would another Specialist clearly understand the investigation from the documentation?

Facilitator Answers:

Strong documentation examples may include:

- Observable behavioral descriptions.
- Direct quotes.
- Chronological organization.
- Clear connection between observations and safety concerns.
- Specific investigative actions.

Participants may identify weaknesses such as:

- Vague wording.
- Missing context.
- Unsupported conclusions.
- Poor organization.
- Lack of connection to safety concerns.

Facilitator Notes:

- Reinforce to the participants that documentation quality over “perfect writing”.
- Encourage peer discussion and feedback.
- Keep focus on: Clarity. Organization. Objective documentation. Decision support.

Say:

As we close this section, think about how documentation quality impacts every stage of the investigation process.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Documentation should clearly tell the story of the investigation.
- Organization improves understanding and clarity.
- Objective wording strengthens credibility.
- Documentation should support investigative decisions and safety concerns.

Building Strong Documentation Practices

BUILDING STRONG DOCUMENTATION PRACTICES

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To close this section by reinforcing the importance of clear, objective documentation and preparing participants for more advanced narrative-writing activities

Say:

In this section, you practiced identifying relevant investigative information, organizing information clearly, and turning investigative details into objective narrative documentation.

Strong documentation supports investigate decision by helping others understand:

- *What occurred.*
- *What safety concerns existed.*
- *What actions were taken.*
- *Why decisions were made.*

Throughout investigations, specialists must constantly evaluate:

- *What information is significant.*
- *How information connects to threats to safety.*

- *How documentation supports investigative actions and decisions.*

As we continue into the next section, you will begin applying these principles to more

advanced narrative writing activities focused on observation, descriptive documentation, and investigative details.

Facilitator Notes:

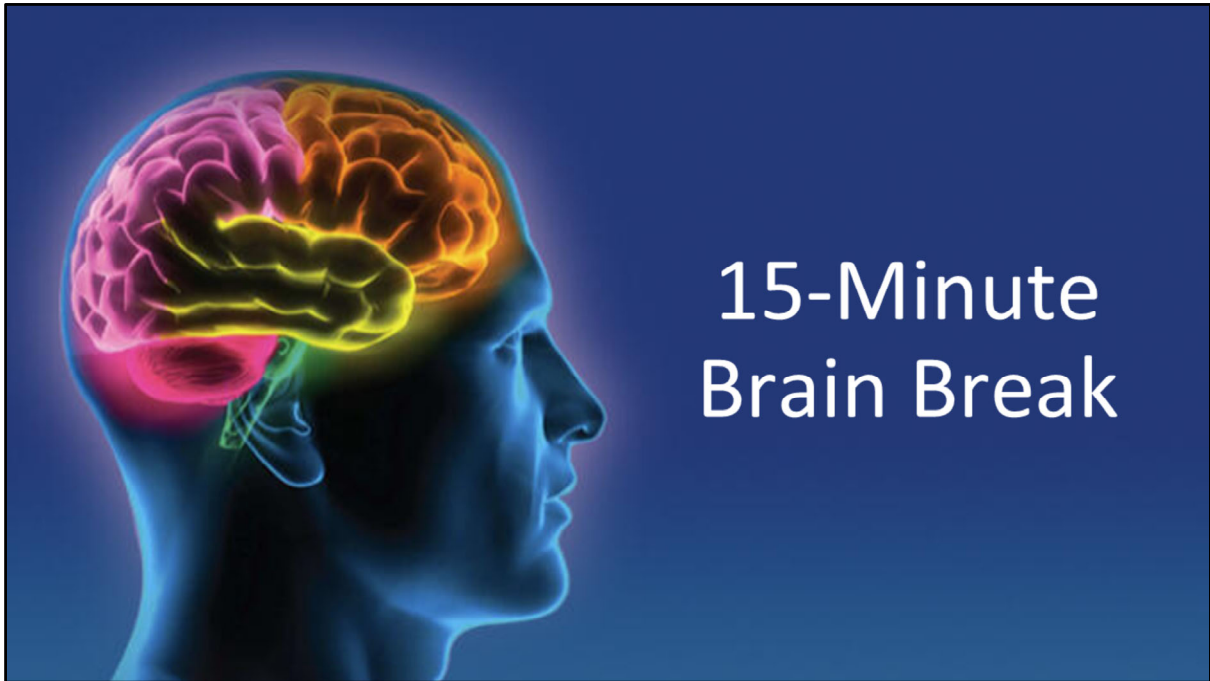
- Reinforce to the participant that narrative writing is an investigative skill.
- Prepare participants for:
 - Observation-based narrative writing.
 - Descriptive documentation practice.
 - Group critique and comparison activities.
- Maintain focus on: Observation. Clarity. Objectivity. Decision support.

Say:

We're going to pause here and take a 15-minute break. When we return, we'll begin applying these documentation principles to observation-based narrative writing activities.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Documentation should clearly support investigative decisions.
- Objective wording strengthens credibility and understanding.
- Chronological organization improves clarity.
- Documentation should connect observations to safety concerns and action taken.



15-Minute Brain Break

BRAIN BREAK



WRITING THE INVESTIGATION NARRATIVE

Writing The Investigation Narrative



Why does documentation matter?

WRITING THE INVESTIGATION NARRATIVE

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To prepare participants to practice observation-based narrative writing using objective descriptions, investigative detail, and clear documentation practices

Say:

As investigators, Specialists are constantly required to observe situations, identify significant details, and document information clearly and objectively. One of the most important documentation skills investigators develop is accurately describing what they observe without adding assumptions, labels, or unsupported conclusions.

Throughout this section, you will practice:

- *Observation-based documentation.*
- *Descriptive narrative writing.*
- *Chronological organization.*
- *Identifying objective vs interpretive wording.*
- *Connecting observations to investigative documentation.*

Before we begin the activity, let's discuss how observation and interpretation can impact investigative documentation and why documentation matters.

Target Outcomes



- Understand how observation-based documentation supports investigative clarity and credibility.
- Apply objective descriptive writing to investigative narratives and observations.
- Assess whether narrative documentation clearly reflects observable conditions, behaviors, and investigative detail.

TARGET OUTCOMES

Time: 2 minutes

Purpose: To prepare participants to practice observation-based narrative writing using objective descriptions, investigative detail, and clear documentation practices.

Say:

In the previous section, we focused on:

- *Why documentation matters.*
- *What information belongs in documentation.*
- *How to organize investigative information.*
- *How to write objective documentation.*

In this section, you will begin applying those skills through observation-based narrative-writing activities.



Describing What You Observe

DESCRIBE WHAT YOU OBSERVE

Time: 10 minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand how assumptions, interpretation, and unsupported conclusions can impact investigative documentation and narrative-writing quality

Participant Manual: Observation Narrative Activity Packet

Facilitator Resource: Facilitator Information Packet

Activity Set Up

- Whole group discussion.
- Participants have activity packets available.

Activity Instructions

1. Discuss observation vs interpretation in documentation.
2. Review:
 - Examples of objective descriptions.
 - Examples of interpretive wording.
3. Prepare participants for an observation-based narrative-writing activity.

Say:

One of the most important skills investigators develop is documenting observations without turning them into assumptions or conclusions.

Investigators regularly encounter situations where:

- ***Information is incomplete.***
- ***Context is unclear.***
- ***Conditions may appear concerning at first glance.***
- ***Additional information is still needed.***

Good documentation focuses on:

- ***What was directly observed.***
- ***What was heard.***
- ***What conditions existed.***
- ***What behaviors occurred.***

Poor documentation often includes:

- ***Diagnoses.***
- ***Labels.***
- ***Emotional wording.***
- ***Unsupported conclusions.***

For example, writing: 'The child was neglected,' does not explain:

- ***What was observed.***
- ***What conditions existed.***
- ***What specific concerns were present.***

A stronger objective description might state: 'The child was observed wearing clothing with visible stains and appeared tired during school contact.'

The goal is to clearly document observations while allowing the investigation process to gather and assess additional information.

Facilitator Questions: (ask the following questions and validate responses)

- What is the difference between observation and interpretation?
- Why can assumptions weaken documentation?
- How can objective descriptions improve investigative clarity?
- Why is it important to avoid unsupported conclusions?
- How can wording impact how others understand the investigation?

Facilitator Answers:

Observation examples:

- Observable behaviors.
- Physical conditions.
- Direct quotes.
- Specific environmental details.

Interpretation examples:

- Diagnoses. Labels. Emotional conclusions. Unsupported assumptions.

Participants may identify:

- Court credibility concerns.
- Bias concerns.
- Misunderstanding of investigative conditions.
- Weak decision support.

Say:

Now that we've discussed observation versus interpretation, let's begin the observation narrative activity.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Observation-based documentation focuses on observable information.
- Interpretation can weaken documentation quality.
- Objective wording improves clarity and credibility.
- Documentation should support investigative understanding without exaggeration or assumptions.

FACILITATOR INFORMATION PACKET

Observation Narrative Activity

Observation vs Interpretation in Investigative Documentation

ACTIVITY PURPOSE

This activity is designed to help participants practice:

- Observation-based documentation.
- Objective narrative writing.
- Descriptive investigative documentation.
- Observation vs interpretation.
- Identifying assumptions and unsupported conclusions.

Participants will:

- Observe assigned investigative scenarios.
- Write objective narrative descriptions.
- Compare narratives within groups.
- Identify differences in wording, assumptions, and interpretation.
- Discuss how documentation quality impacts investigations.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide participants into table groups.
2. Provide each table:
 - One participant scenario page.
 - One narrative response worksheet.
3. Participants independently write narrative observations.
4. Groups compare narratives and discuss:
 - Similarities.
 - Differences.
 - Assumptions.
 - Missing details.
 - Objective vs interpretive wording.
5. Conduct full group debrief using facilitator notes and teaching points.

IMPORTANT FACILITATOR REMINDERS

This activity is NOT about:

- Guessing what happened.
- Diagnosing injuries.
- Determining findings.
- “Being right”.

This activity IS about:

- Careful observation.
- Objective description.
- Documentation quality.
- Avoiding assumptions.
- Investigative neutrality.

SCENARIO 1 – POSSIBLE INJURY

(Provide Image for Participants)



Actual Context:

- The markings are Mongolian spots documented at birth.
- No abuse concerns associated with markings.

Intended Teaching Point:

Observation ≠ diagnosis.

Common Participant Mistakes:

- “Bruising”
- “Physical abuse”
- “Injury”

Strong Objective Documentation Example:

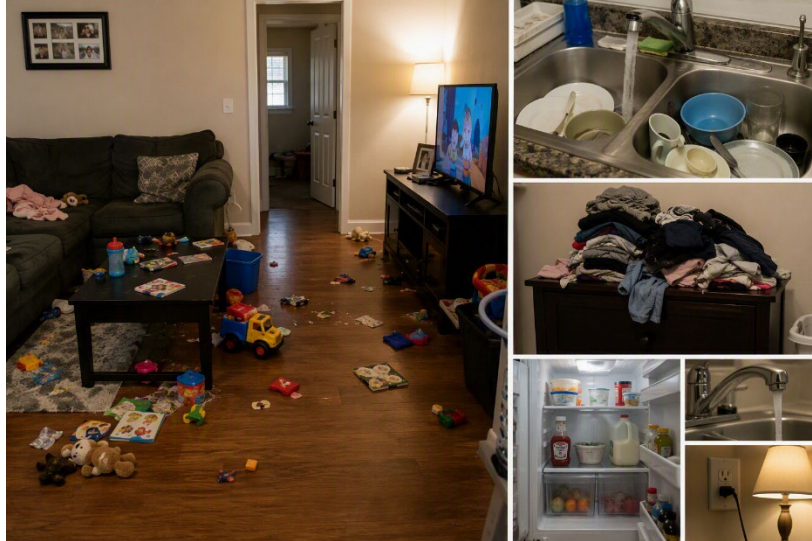
“Blue-gray markings approximately ____ inches in diameter were observed across the lower back and buttocks area.”

Debrief Questions:

- What assumptions appeared most often?
- What wording became diagnostic instead of descriptive?
- Why is it dangerous to document conclusions instead of observations?
- What additional information would investigators need?

SCENARIO 2 – ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

(Provide Image for Participants)



Actual Context:

- Family recently displaced after apartment flooding.
- No immediate environmental safety threats identified.

Intended Teaching Point:

Messy ≠ automatically unsafe.

Common Participant Mistakes:

- “Filthy”
- “Unsafe”
- “Neglectful home”

Strong Objective Documentation Example:

“Laundry, toys, and miscellaneous household items were observed throughout the living room floor area. Running water and electricity were functioning, and food was present in the refrigerator.”

Debrief Questions:

- What wording became emotional or exaggerated?

- What environmental details were important?
- What assumptions weakened the documentation?
- What additional information would investigators need?

SCENARIO 3 – SUPERVISION CONCERN

(Provide Image for Participants)



Actual Context:

- Caregiver was supervising child from doorway.
- Child had briefly stepped outside while caregiver cleaned inside apartment.

Intended Teaching Point:

A single observation may not provide full context.

Common Participant Mistakes:

- “Child left unattended”
- “Lack of supervision”
- “Neglect”

Strong Objective Documentation Example:

“A child estimated to be approximately 6 years old was observed standing outside the apartment building without shoes. An adult caregiver was standing inside the apartment doorway approximately 10 feet away.”

Debrief Questions:

- What assumptions were made from limited information?
- What details changed the interpretation?
- What additional information would be necessary?
- How can investigators avoid over-documenting concerns?

SCENARIO 4 – CHILD PRESENTATION

(Provide Image for Participants)



Actual Context:

- Family recently attended a large overnight family gathering.
- No neglect finding associated with observation alone.

Intended Teaching Point:

Child appearance alone does not establish neglect.

Common Participant Mistakes:

- “Neglected”
- “Poor hygiene”
- “Unsafe living conditions”

Strong Objective Documentation Example:

“The child was observed wearing clothing with visible stains and appeared tired during contact. The child reported going to bed late due to ‘a lot of people at the house.’”

Debrief Questions:

- What conclusions were participants tempted to make?
- What details supported objective documentation?

- What additional information would investigators need?
- How can wording impact credibility?

FINAL FACILITATOR DEBRIEF

Key Debrief Points

Participants should leave understanding:

- Observation ≠ conclusion.
- Documentation should describe, not diagnose.
- Assumptions weaken documentation.
- Objective wording strengthens credibility.
- Context matters.
- Investigators must document observable information clearly and accurately.

Core Reinforcement Statements

- “Document what you observe, not what you assume.”
- “Descriptions are stronger than labels.”
- “Objective documentation supports investigative decisions.”
- “One observation rarely tells the entire story.”
- “Investigators gather additional information before reaching conclusions.”

Writing Objective Narrative Descriptions



WRITING OBJECTIVE NARRATIVE DESCRIPTIONS

Time: 35 minutes

Purpose: To provide participants with hands-on practice writing objective narrative documentation based on investigative observations while identifying how assumptions and interpretations can impact documentation quality

Participant Manual: Observation Narrative Activity Packet

Facilitator Resource: Facilitator Information Packet

Activity Set Up

- Participants remain in groups at their table.
- Each table receives:
 - One investigative scenario and image.
 - The groups use the Observation Narrative Activity Packet response page in their Participant Manual.
 - Group discussion questions.

Activity Instructions

1. Individually review the assigned scenario and image.
2. Independently write:
 - An objective narrative description based only on observable

information.

3. Avoid:
 - Assumptions.
 - Labels.
 - Diagnoses.
 - Unsupported conclusions.
4. After completing narratives:
 - Compare responses within your group.
 - Identify:
 - Similarities.
 - Differences.
 - Assumptions.
 - Missing details.
 - Objective vs interpretive wording.
5. Prepare to discuss how different participants documented the same scenario differently.

Say:

In this activity, each group will receive an investigative scenario designed to simulate the kinds of observations investigators may encounter during real investigations. Your task is to document only what you observe using objective, descriptive narrative writing.

As you complete your narrative:

- ***Focus on observable details.***
- ***Describe behaviors and conditions clearly.***
- ***Avoid assumptions and conclusions.***
- ***Avoid diagnosing situations or labeling individuals.***

Once everyone at your table has completed their narrative, you will compare your responses as a group and discuss:

- ***What details participants focused on.***
- ***What wording differed.***
- ***What assumptions appeared.***
- ***What information may have been missing.***

The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate how different people can interpret and document the same situation in different ways, and why objective documentation is critical to investigative practice.

Facilitator Questions: (ask the following questions and validate responses)

- What details did participants focus on first?
- What wording became interpretive instead of descriptive?
- What assumptions appeared?
- What details were missing from some narratives?
- How did wording choices impact the tone or meaning of the documentation?

Facilitator Answers:

Participants may:

- Interpret observations differently.
- Over-document concerns.
- Minimize concerns.
- Use labels instead of descriptions.
- Omit important observable details.

Strong narratives:

- Remain objective.
- Use descriptive wording.
- Focus on observable information.
- Avoid unsupported conclusions.

Facilitator Notes:

- Allow participants time to independently write before the group discussion.
- Reinforce to participants the importance of observation vs interpretation.
- Avoid correcting narratives too early during activity.
- Save major discussion points for group comparison and facilitator debrief.

Say:

Now, let's compare the narratives your groups developed and discuss how different wording and assumptions impacted the documentation.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Documentation should focus on observable information.
- Different investigators may document situations differently.
- Assumptions can weaken documentation credibility.
- Objective narrative writing improves clarity and investigative support.



How Different Investigators Document the Same Situation

HOW DIFFERENT INVESTIGATORS DOCUMENT THE SAME SITUATION

Time: 18 minutes

Purpose: To help participants analyze how wording, assumptions, interpretation, and focus can impact investigative documentation and narrative quality

Participant Manual: Observation Narrative Activity Packet

Facilitator Resource: Facilitator Information Packet

Activity Set Up:

- Whole group discussion.
- Participants keep narratives available.

Activity Instructions

1. Groups share similarities and differences identified in their narratives.
2. Discuss:
 - Assumptions.
 - Missing details.
 - Objective vs interpretive wording.
 - Tone differences.
 - Differences in focus.
3. Reflect on how word choice affects investigative documentation and

understanding.

Say:

As investigators, two specialists can observe the same situation and document it very differently depending on:

- ***What details they focused on.***
- ***How they interpreted the situation.***
- ***The wording they chose.***
- ***Assumptions they made.***

This activity demonstrates why objective documentation is so important.

Small wording differences can significantly impact:

- ***How others understand the situation.***
- ***How concerns are interpreted.***
- ***How decisions are supported.***
- ***The overall credibility of the documentation.***

As we discuss your narratives, pay attention to:

- ***What details participants included or omitted.***
- ***What wording became interpretive.***
- ***What assumptions appeared.***
- ***What descriptions remained objective and supportable.***

Facilitator Questions: (ask the following questions and validate responses)

- What differences appeared between narratives?
- What assumptions showed up most often?
- What wording strengthened the documentation?
- What wording weakened the documentation?
- What important details were missed or interpreted differently?
- How could wording choices impact investigative decisions or court understanding?

Facilitator Answers:

Participants may identify:

- Different focus on environmental details.
- Assumptions regarding injuries or neglect.
- Emotional wording.
- Interpretive conclusions.
- Missing contextual details.
- Strong descriptive wording.

Strong documentation examples:

- Use observable descriptions.
- Avoid labels and diagnoses.
- Clearly describe behaviors and conditions.
- Remain objective and factual.

Facilitator Notes

- Encourage discussion and comparison between groups.
- Avoid turning discussion into criticism of participants.
- Keep focus on: Learning. Reflection. Documentation. Growth.

Say:

Now, let's discuss the context behind the scenarios and explore how additional information can completely change the way observations are understood.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Documentation can vary significantly between investigators.
- Wording impacts clarity and understanding.
- Assumptions can weaken the quality and credibility of documentation.
- Objective descriptions improve investigative support and defensibility.

How Context Changes Documentation



HOW CONTEXT CHANGES DOCUMENTATION

Time: 18 minutes

Purpose: To help participants understand how additional context and information can significantly impact the interpretation of observations and reinforce the importance of objective documentation practices

Participant Manual: Observation Narrative Activity Packet

Facilitator Resource: Facilitator Information Packet

Activity Set Up

- Whole group discussion.
- Facilitator leads debrief using Facilitator Information Packet.

Activity Instructions

1. The facilitator reviews the scenario context for each investigative scenario.
2. Participants discuss:
 - How additional information changed the interpretation.
 - What assumptions appeared.
 - How documentation wording may have changed after learning the context.

3. Reflect on why investigators should avoid unsupported conclusions and assumptions in documentation.

Say:

One of the most important lessons investigators learn over time is that initial observations do not always tell the full story. Throughout investigations, Specialists often gather information gradually. What may initially appear concerning can sometimes have additional context that significantly changes how the situation is understood. This is why objective documentation is so important.

If investigators document assumptions or unsupported conclusions too early:

- ***Documentation can become misleading.***
- ***Concerns may be overstated.***
- ***Credibility may be weakened.***
- ***Important context may be overlooked.***

As we review the actual context behind these scenarios, think about:

- ***How your wording may have changed.***
- ***What assumptions appeared.***
- ***What information you still would have needed to gather.***
- ***How objective documentation protects the integrity of the investigation process.***

Facilitator Questions: (ask the following questions and validate responses)

- How did the additional context change your interpretation?
- What assumptions appeared most often?
- How might assumptions impact investigative decisions?
- What wording became problematic after learning the full context?
- Why is it important to document observations before conclusions?
- What additional information would investigators still need to gather?

Facilitator Answers:

Participants may identify:

- Assumptions regarding injuries.
- Overstating environmental concerns.
- Jumping to neglect conclusions.
- Missing contextual information.
- Emotional wording or labeling.

Participants should recognize:

- Context matters.
- Documentation should remain objective while information is still developing.

- Investigations require information gathering before reaching conclusions.

Facilitator Notes

- Reinforce to the participants that observation ≠ conclusion.
- Connect discussion to: Court credibility. Decision support. Investigative neutrality.
- Encourage reflection and self-awareness regarding assumptions.
- Keep focus on: Documentation quality. Investigative thinking. Information gathering.

Say:

As we close this section, think about how observation, wording, and documentation choices impact every stage of the investigation process.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Initial observations may not tell the full story.
- Assumptions can weaken documentation quality and credibility.
- Objective documentation protects investigative integrity.
- Investigators gather information before reaching conclusions.



Observation, Documentation and Investigative Thinking

OBSERVATION, DOCUMENTATION, AND INVESTIGATIVE THINKING

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To close this section by reinforcing the importance of objective observation and descriptive narrative writing in investigative documentation

Participant Manual: Observation Narrative Activity Packet

Facilitator Resource: Facilitator Information Packet

Activity Instructions

- The facilitator delivers closing remarks.
- Transition participants into CHRIS documentation application activities following lunch.

Say:

In this section, you practiced observation-based narrative writing and explored how assumptions, interpretations, and word choices can affect investigative documentation.

You also saw how different investigators may document the same situation differently depending on:

- *What details are they focused on.*

- *What assumptions they made.*
- *How they interpreted observations.*
- *How they organized information.*

Strong investigative documentation requires Specialists to:

- *Observe carefully.*
- *Describe objectively.*
- *Avoid unsupported conclusions.*
- *Gather additional information before making determinations.*

Throughout investigations, documentation should clearly explain:

- *What was observed.*
- *What actions occurred.*
- *What information was gathered.*
- *What safety concerns existed.*

These skills are critical because documentation impacts:

- *Safety decisions.*
- *Supervisory review.*
- *Court involvement.*
- *Case continuity.*
- *Investigative credibility.*

Say:

After lunch, we'll begin applying these same documentation principles directly to CHRIS-style documentation and investigative documentation review activities.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Observation should be documented objectively.
- Assumptions can weaken documentation quality.
- Narrative writing should clearly describe observations and investigative actions.
- Documentation supports investigative understanding and decision-making.



Lunch Break

LUNCH BREAK



CHRIS DOCUMENTION

CHRIS DOCUMENTATION



What documentation
are Specialists
responsible for during
an investigation?

CHRIS DOCUMENTATION

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To prepare participants to apply documentation principles directly within CHRIS-style investigative documentation and practice reviewing documentation quality, clarity, and decision support

Say:

As investigators, Specialists are responsible for documenting: Contacts. Interviews. Observations. Safety concerns. Investigative actions. Decision-making.

They do all of this within CHRIS in a way that is: Clear. Organized. Objective. Supportable.

The quality of CHRIS documentation impacts:

- ***Supervisory review.***
- ***Court involvement.***
- ***Case continuity.***
- ***Safety planning.***
- ***Ongoing decision-making.***

You will review and evaluate examples of documentation, identify weaknesses in documentation quality, and practice improving investigative documentation.

Before we begin reviewing documentation examples, let's discuss what strong CHRIS documentation should include.

Target Outcomes



- Understand how CHRIS documentation supports investigative decisions, case continuity, and court involvement.
- Apply objective documentation principles to CHRIS-style investigative documentation and contact narratives.
- Assess whether CHRIS documentation clearly reflects investigative actions, observations, safety concerns, and decision-making.

TARGET OUTCOMES

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To prepare participants to apply documentation principles directly within CHRIS-style investigative documentation and practice reviewing documentation quality, clarity, and decision support

Say:

Throughout today's training, we have focused on:

- *Objective documentation*
- *Observation-based narrative writing*
- *Organizing investigative information*
- *Supporting investigative decisions through documentation*

In this section, we will begin applying those same principles directly to CHRIS-style

documentation.

Building Clear, Organized, and Supportable Documentation

BUILDING CLEAR, ORGANIZED, AND SUPPORTABLE DOCUMENTATION

Time: 12 minutes

Purpose: To help participants identify the core elements of strong CHRIS documentation and understand how documentation quality impacts investigative clarity and decision support

Participant Manual: CHRIS Documentation Review Packet

Activity Instructions

1. Discuss what strong CHRIS documentation should include.
2. Review examples of strong and weak documentation practices.
3. Identify documentation elements that improve clarity and decision support.

Say:

Strong CHRIS documentation should clearly explain:

- ***What occurred.***
- ***What actions were taken.***
- ***What observations were made.***
- ***What safety concerns existed.***
- ***What decisions were made and why.***

Documentation should allow someone unfamiliar with the case to understand the investigation without needing additional explanation. Strong documentation is objective, organized, chronological, specific, and fact-based. Strong documentation includes observable behaviors. Significant statements. Investigative actions. Relevant safety concerns. Clear descriptions of conditions and responses.

Weak documentation often omits important details. Uses vague wording. Includes assumptions or conclusions. Lacks organization. Fails to connect information to investigative decisions.

As we move into the CHRIS documentation lab activities, focus on how documentation quality impacts: Clarity. Credibility. Case continuity. Investigative understanding. Decision support.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following question and validate responses)

- What information should always appear in CHRIS documentation?

Facilitator Answers:

Strong documentation may include:

- Chronological organization.
- Observable descriptions.
- Direct quotes when appropriate.
- Clear investigative actions.
- Specific safety concerns.
- Documentation of decision-making.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following question and validate responses)

- What wording weakens CHRIS documentation?

Facilitator Answers:

Weak documentation may include:

- Vague wording.
- Missing context.
- Unsupported assumptions.
- Poor organization.
- Missing investigative actions.

Say:

Now let's begin reviewing examples of documentation and identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- CHRIS documentation should clearly explain the investigation.
- Organization improves clarity and understanding.
- Documentation should support investigative decisions.
- Objective wording improves credibility and defensibility.



Analyzing Documentation Quality

ANALYZING DOCUMENTATION QUALITY

Time: 30 minutes

Purpose: To provide participants with hands-on practice reviewing CHRIS-style documentation and identifying strengths, weaknesses, assumptions, and missing investigative information

Participant Manual: CHRIS Documentation Review Packet

Activity Set Up

- Participants work in table groups.
- CHRIS Documentation Review Packet available.

Activity Instructions

1. Review the CHRIS documentation entries in the packet
2. Identify:
 - Objective wording.
 - Problematic wording.
 - Missing information.
 - Unsupported assumptions.
 - Missing investigative actions.

- Weak organization or chronology.
- 1. Compare:
 - Weak documentation examples.
 - Stronger documentation examples.
- 2. Discuss:
 - How documentation quality impacts investigative understanding and decision-making.

Say:

In this activity, you will review several CHRIS-style documentation entries related to the Flowers' investigation.

As investigators, Specialists must constantly evaluate whether documentation:

- ***Clearly explains the investigation.***
- ***Supports safety concerns and decisions.***
- ***Accurately describes observations and actions.***
- ***Provides enough information for others to understand the case.***

As you review the documentation examples, focus on identifying:

- ***What strengthened the documentation.***
- ***What weakened the documentation.***
- ***What assumptions appeared.***
- ***What important information was missing.***
- ***How wording impacted clarity and credibility.***

You will also compare weaker documentation examples with stronger documentation examples to identify how objective wording, organization, and investigative detail improve documentation quality.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following question and validate responses)

- What wording weakened the documentation?

Facilitator Answers:

Participants may identify:

- Emotional wording.
- Unsupported conclusions.

Facilitator Question:

- What investigative details were missing?

Facilitator Answers:

Participants may identify:

- Missing chronology.
- Missing observations.
- Lack of direct quotes.
- Missing investigative actions.

Facilitator Question:

- How did stronger documentation improve understanding?

Facilitator Answers:

Strong documentation examples:

- Use observable descriptions.
- Include significant statements.
- Explain investigative actions.
- Organize information clearly.
- Support investigative understanding and decision-making.

Say:

Now, let's begin improving and correcting weak documentation examples using stronger objective documentation practices.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Documentation should clearly explain investigative actions and concerns.
- Objective wording improves credibility and understanding.
- Missing details can weaken investigative support.
- Documentation should support future review and decision-making.



Improving Clarity, Objectivity, and Investigative Support

IMPROVING CLARITY, OBJECTIVITY, AND INVESTIGATIVE SUPPORT

Time: 25 minutes

Purpose: To provide participants with hands-on practice correcting weak CHRIS documentation using objective wording, investigative detail, and supportable narrative-writing practices

Participant Manual: CHRIS Documentation Review Packet

Activity Set Up

- Participants remain in table groups.
- CHRIS Documentation Review Packet available.

Activity Instructions

1. Select one weak CHRIS documentation example from the packet.
2. Rewrite the documentation entry using:
 - Objective wording.
 - Observable behaviors.
 - Investigative detail.
 - Chronological organization.
 - Clear investigative actions.
3. Remove:

- Assumptions.
 - Labels.
 - Emotional wording.
 - Unsupported conclusions.
1. Be prepared to discuss:
 - What changes improved the documentation.
 - How the revised documentation better supports investigative understanding and decision-making.

Say:

One of the most effective ways to improve documentation skills is learning how to identify weaknesses in documentation and practice correcting them.

- ***Weak documentation can:***
 - ***Create confusion. Weaken credibility. Make investigative decisions difficult to understand. Leave important safety concerns unclear.***
- ***Strong documentation will:***
 - ***Clearly describe observations. Explain investigative actions. Include significant statements. Organize information logically. Support investigative decisions through factual and objective documentation.***
- ***As your group rewrites the documentation examples, focus on how wording, organization, and investigative detail impact:***
 - ***Clarity. Understanding. Credibility. Decision support.***

Remember: Your goal is not to make the documentation sound more dramatic. Your goal is to make the documentation clearer, more objective, and more supportable.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following question and validate responses)

- What investigative details improved clarity?

Facilitator Answers:

Participants may improve documentation by:

- Replacing labels with observable descriptions.
- Adding direct quotes.
- Including investigative actions.
- Organizing information chronologically.
- Clarifying safety concerns.
- Removing emotional wording.

Facilitator Question:

- How did organization improve understanding?

Facilitator Answers:

Strong revised documentation will:

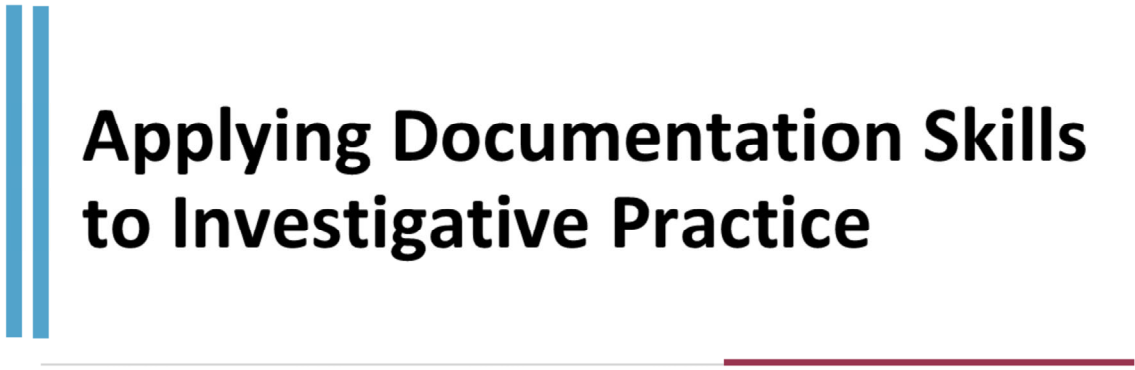
- Clearly explain what occurred.
- Use objective wording.
- Support investigative understanding.
- Connect observations to safety concerns and decisions.

Say:

Let's review the revised documentation examples and discuss how stronger documentation supports investigative understanding and decision-making.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Documentation should be objective and supportable.
- Observable descriptions strengthen investigative clarity.
- Chronological organization improves understanding.
- Strong documentation supports investigative decisions and future review.



Applying Documentation Skills to Investigative Practice

APPLYING DOCUMENTATION SKILLS TO INVESTIGATIVE PRACTICE

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To close this section by reinforcing the importance of strong CHRIS documentation and preparing participants for the final documentation and decision-support activities of the day

Participant Manual: CHRIS Documentation Review Packet

Activity Instructions

- The facilitator delivers closing remarks.
- Transition participants into the final Day 5 activities.

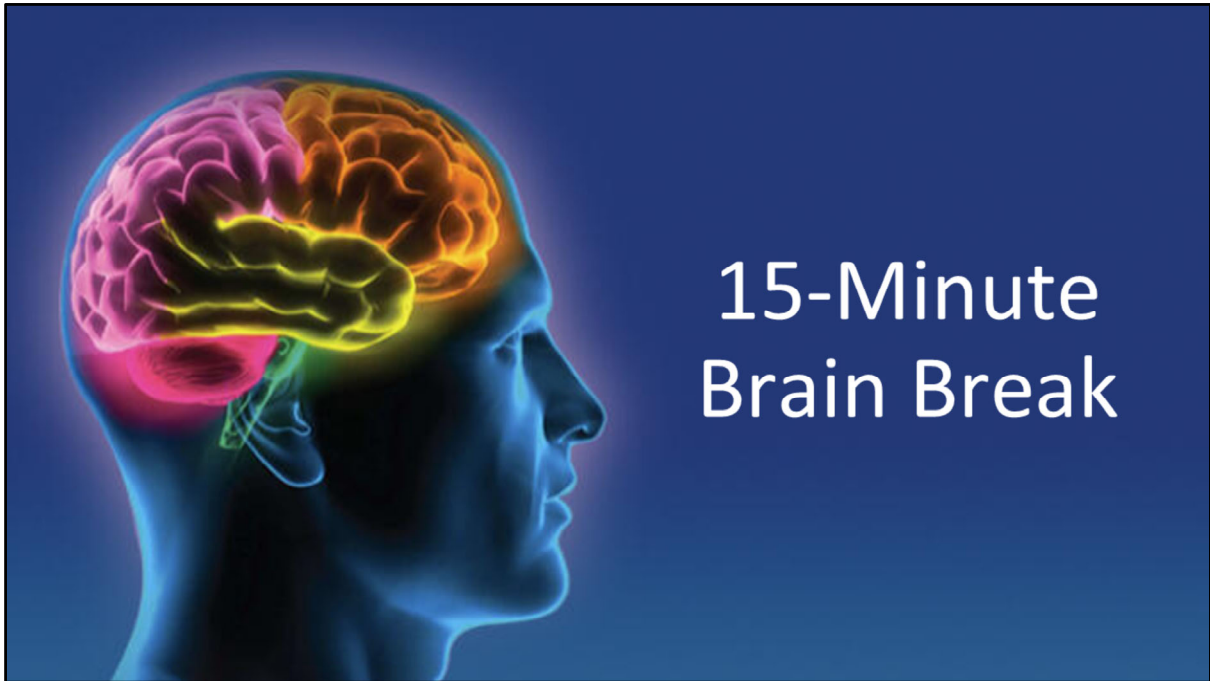
Say:

In this section, you practiced reviewing, analyzing, and improving CHRIS-style investigative documentation. The documentation skills you practiced today are not separate from the investigation process; they are part of the investigation itself.

We're going to pause here for a 15-minute break. When we return, we'll focus on how documentation supports investigative decisions and how specialists clearly document the reasoning behind those decisions.

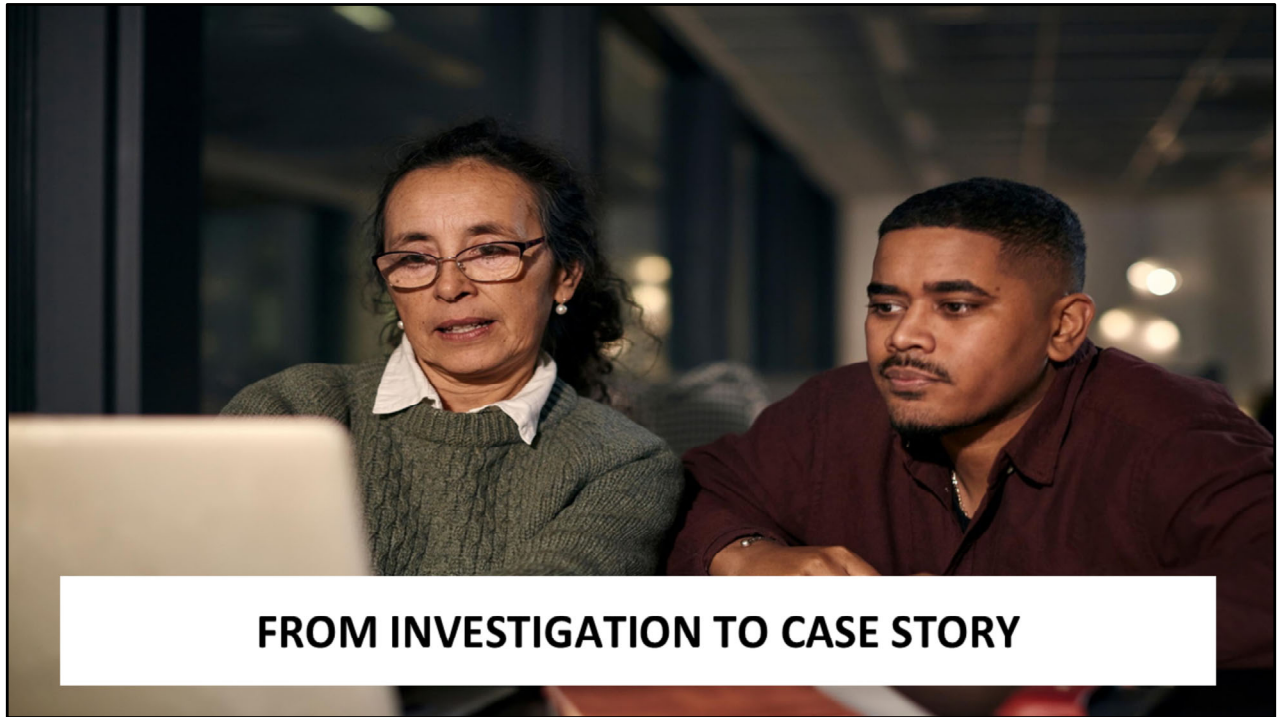
Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- CHRIS documentation supports investigative understanding and decision-making.
- Documentation should clearly explain investigative actions and safety concerns.
- Objective wording improves clarity and credibility.
- Documentation is part of the investigative process itself.



15-Minute Brain Break

BRAIN BREAK



FROM INVESTIGATION TO CASE STORY

FROM INVESTIGATION TO CASE STORY



How are investigative decisions influenced by interviews, observations, assessments, and collateral information?

FROM INVESTIGATION TO CASE STORY

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To help participants connect the full investigative process together by examining how information, decisions, actions, and documentation collectively shape the story of the investigation

Say:

Over the last five days, you have worked through the Flowers investigation from the initial referral through interviews, safety planning, escalation, protective custody decisions, documentation, and CHRIS application.

Throughout the investigation, each new piece of information impacted:

- *Safety concerns.*
- *Investigative actions.*
- *Decision-making.*
- *Documentation.*
- *Case direction.*

Investigations are not made up of isolated tasks. Each interview, observation,

contact, assessment, and decision contributes to the overall story of the case.

In this section, we are going to step back and look at the investigation as a whole:

- *How the investigation evolved.*
- *What information changed the direction of the case.*
- *What major safety and decision points occurred.*
- *How documentation followed the life of the investigation.*

This section is designed to help connect the full investigative process together and reinforce how all parts of the investigation work together to support child safety and investigative decision-making.

Before we begin mapping the investigation, let's discuss how investigations evolve over time and how major decision points shape a case's direction.

Target Outcomes



- Understand how investigations evolve as additional information is gathered throughout the case process.
- Apply investigative information, documentation, and decision-making concepts to the overall progression of a case.
- Assess how investigative actions, safety concerns, documentation, and decisions collectively shape the story of an investigation.

TARGET OUTCOMES

Time: 5 minutes

Purpose: To help participants connect the full investigative process together by examining how information, decisions, actions, and documentation collectively shape the story of the investigation

Paraphrase:

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

- Understand how investigations evolve as additional information is gathered throughout the case process.
- Apply investigative information, documentation, and decision-making concepts to the overall progression of a case.
- Assess how investigative actions, safety concerns, documentation, and decisions collectively shape the story of an investigation.



How Investigations Evolve Over Time

HOW INVESTIGATIONS EVOLVE OVER TIME

Time: 12 minutes

Purpose: To help participants examine how investigations evolve as additional information is gathered and identify how interviews, safety concerns, investigative actions, and decisions collectively shape the direction of a case

Participant Manual: Flowers Investigation Timeline Activity

Activity Set Up:

- Whole group discussion.
- Participants have a timeline activity available.

Activity Instructions

1. Review the Flowers Investigation Timeline.
2. Discuss:
 - Major investigative events.
 - Escalation points.
 - Significant interviews and collateral contacts.
 - Safety planning and decision points.
3. Identify:

- How the direction of the investigation changed over time.
- What information appeared most significant to investigative decisions.

Say:

Investigations rarely stay static. As you gather additional information, the direction of the investigation may change based on what you learn through interviews, what you observe, what collaterals share, what is identified through safety assessments, and any behavioral changes or escalating concerns that emerge.

When you look at the Flowers timeline, you can see that the investigation developed over several days. It began with information from the reporter and continued through child interviews, caregiver interviews, collateral contacts, safety planning, TDM involvement, escalation and crisis response, protective actions, and ongoing documentation and assessment. Each part of that process added another piece of information and helped shape what needed to happen next.

One of the most important investigative skills you will continue developing is the ability to recognize escalation patterns and significant decision points. You also have to be able to recognize when something learned early in the investigation becomes critically important later as new information is gathered and the circumstances change.

As we review the timeline together, pay attention to what information changed the direction of the case, which actions appear most significant, how the safety concerns evolved over time, and how the investigative actions connected to one another throughout the life of the investigation.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following question and validate responses)

- What investigative events appear most significant?

Facilitator Answers:

Participants may identify:

- Escalation surrounding safety plan failure.
- Significant information from Frankie and collateral contacts.
- Ongoing concerns regarding caregiver functioning.
- Increasing need for supervisory involvement and TDM.
- Crisis contact and removal as major escalation points.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following question and validate responses)

- How did investigative actions build upon one another?

Facilitator Answers:

Participants should recognize:

- Investigations evolve as information develops.
- Early information may gain significance later.
- Documentation and investigative actions build continuity throughout the case.

Facilitator Notes:

- Reinforce the “big picture” of investigations to the participants.
- Encourage reflective discussion and pattern recognition.
- Avoid re-teaching earlier documentation concepts.
- Keep focus on: Investigative progression. Escalation. Decision-making. Continuity of the case.

Say:

Now let's work together to analyze the progression of the Flowers investigation and identify the major safety, investigative, and decision-making moments throughout the case.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Investigations evolve over time as information develops.
- Safety concerns may escalate as additional information is gathered.
- Investigative actions build upon one another throughout the case.
- Documentation follows the progression of the investigation and supports continuity.



Connecting Information, Decisions, and Actions

CONNECTING INFORMATION, DECISIONS, AND ACTIONS

Time: 35 minutes

Purpose: To provide participants with hands-on practice analyzing the progression of an investigation by identifying major safety concerns, escalation points, investigative actions, and decision-making moments throughout the Flowers case

Participant Manual: Flowers Investigation Timeline Activity

Activity Set Up:

- Participants work in table groups.
- Flowers Investigation Timeline Activity available.
- Flip chart paper optional.

Activity Instructions:

1. Review the Flowers Investigation Timeline as a group.
2. Identify:
 - Major escalation points.
 - Significant investigative decisions.
 - Important interviews and collateral information.
 - Key safety concerns.

- Major documentation moments.
- 1. Discuss:
 - How the investigation evolved over time.
 - What information significantly changed the direction of the case.
 - What actions appear most critical to investigative progression.
- 2. Complete:
 - Reflection and analysis sections within the handout.
- 3. Be prepared to discuss how the case progressed from referral through removal and ongoing assessment.

Say:

In this activity, your group will analyze the Flowers' investigation as a complete investigative process rather than as separate interviews, contacts, or documentation tasks.

As investigators, Specialists constantly gather information, reassess safety concerns, and adjust investigative actions in response to new information and changing circumstances.

As you work through the timeline together, focus on:

- ***What information changed the direction of the case.***
- ***What safety concerns appeared to escalate over time.***
- ***What decisions became necessary and why.***
- ***What investigative actions appear most significant.***
- ***How interviews, collateral information, observations, and documentation are all connected together throughout the life of the investigation.***

Remember: Investigations are not a series of isolated tasks. Each contact, interview, observation, and decision builds upon the information gathered previously and contributes to the overall story of the case.

Facilitator Question: (ask the following question and validate responses)

- What information changed the direction of the investigation?

Facilitator Answers:

Participants may identify:

- Frankie's disclosures.
- Escalation surrounding caregiver functioning.
- Failure of the Immediate Safety Plan.
- Need for TDM and supervisory involvement.
- Crisis contact and removal as major escalation points.

- Ongoing assessments and collateral follow-up after removal.

Facilitator Notes:

- Encourage group collaboration and discussion.
- Reinforce the “big picture” of investigations.
- Avoid returning to repetitive documentation instructions.
- Keep focus on: Investigative progression. Decision-making. Escalation. Continuity of the case.

Say:

Let’s come back together to reflect on what this investigation demonstrates about how cases evolve over time and how investigative actions, decisions, and documentation are connected.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Investigations evolve over time as information develops.
- Safety concerns may escalate throughout the life of the investigation.
- Interviews, observations, and collateral contacts influence investigative actions and decisions.
- Documentation supports continuity and understanding throughout the investigation.



Connecting the Full Investigation Process

CONNECTING THE FULL INVESTIGATION PROCESS

Time: 12 minutes

Purpose: To close Day 5 by reinforcing how investigations evolve over time and how interviews, observations, assessments, documentation, and decisions collectively shape the progression of a case

Participant Manual: Flowers Investigation Timeline Activity

Facilitator Notes:

- Reinforce big-picture investigative thinking.
- Connect days 1–5 together.
- Maintain focus on: Investigative continuity. Escalation. Decision-making. Reflection and synthesis.

Activity Set Up

- Whole group discussion.
- Participants keep the timeline activity available.

Activity Instructions

- Groups share:
 - Major escalation points.

- Significant investigative decisions.
- Key safety concerns.
- Important investigative moments identified during the activity.
- Discuss:
 - How the investigation evolved over time.
 - How information influenced investigative actions and decisions.
 - How documentation supported continuity throughout the case.
- Reflect on how investigations function as connected processes rather than isolated tasks.

Say:

Throughout the Flowers' investigation, each interview, observation, collateral contact, safety assessment, and investigative action contributed to the case's progression.

As investigators gather additional information, the direction of a case may:

- ***Escalate***
- ***Shift***
- ***Stabilize***
- ***Require new decisions and actions***

One of the most important lessons investigators develop over time is understanding that investigations are connected processes. Information gathered early in the investigation may become critically important later, and investigative decisions are often influenced by the cumulative information gathered throughout the life of the case.

Paraphrase:

Throughout Days 1–5, you have worked through:

- Referral review
- Initiation
- Child interviews
- Caregiver interviews
- Collateral contacts
- Safety assessments
- Safety planning
- TDM involvement
- Escalation and crisis response
- Protective custody decisions
- Documentation and CHRIS application

Together, those investigative actions created the overall story of the Flowers investigation.

Say:

Reflect on how investigations evolve over time and how interviews, observations, assessments, documentation, and decision-making all work together throughout the life of a case.

The work you completed throughout the Flowers investigation reflects the reality of child welfare investigations:

- ***Information develops over time.***
- ***Safety concerns may escalate.***
- ***Decisions must be continually reassessed.***
- ***Documentation supports continuity and understanding throughout the case process.***

The skills practiced throughout these sections are designed to help you approach investigations with:

- ***Strong observational skills.***
- ***Critical thinking.***
- ***Objective documentation.***
- ***Organized decision-making.***
- ***A focus on child safety throughout the life of the investigation.***

Facilitator Question: (ask the following question and validate responses)

- Why is it important to view investigations as connected processes rather than isolated tasks?

As we close out Day 5 and your first week of Investigations training, remember that everything you practiced this week builds on what came before it. You have taken the Flowers investigation from referral through increasingly complex decisions and actions, while continuing to keep child safety at the center of your work.

Next week, you will continue building on that foundation as the investigation moves forward. For now, take what you have learned this week and recognize how much of the investigative process you have already begun putting into practice.

Key Points: (ensure the following are covered)

- Investigations evolve over time as information develops.
- Investigative decisions are influenced by cumulative information gathered throughout the case.

- Documentation supports continuity and understanding throughout the life of the investigation.
- Investigations should be viewed as connected processes rather than isolated tasks.



Target Outcomes Evaluation

TARGET OUTCOMES EVALUATION

Time: 2 minutes

Purpose: To assess the learning outcomes for this training module

Facilitator Note: Before ending the day, 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 7 POST TEST KAHOOT REVIEW AND RECAP

Time: 15 Minutes

Purpose: To connect all of the Week 7 concepts and target outcomes

NST INV WEEK 7 REVIEW LINK

249836

<https://create.kahoot.it/organization/join/ulk/ca79c5dc-2298-47f4-8d92-3974fcd5aa13/77ffa540-9796-47de-9d03-900b0c9a690a>

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