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DEPARTMENT OF  
CHILD  
SERVICES

# Hotline Tools

Presentation to the Department of Child  
Services Interim Study Committee  
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# DCS Hotline

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- Purpose:
  - Provide a central-point of contact for all child-abuse and neglect reports throughout Indiana.
  - More consistent and effective management of reports.
- Challenge:
  - Consistent application of law.
  - Consistent method of gathering information.



# DCS Hotline Tools

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- Hotline tools:
  - Intake Guidance Tool.
  - Structured Decision Making Tool.
- Purpose of tools:
  - Apply Indiana law consistently to each report.
  - Ensure accurate gathering of information.



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# Intake Guidance Tool



# Intake Guidance Tool

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- Purpose:
  - Solicit key facts on a child abuse and neglect report.
    - Who? What? Where? When? Why?
  - Gathers as much information as possible from report source.
    - May only get one chance to talk to report source.
  - Identify safety concerns for child, family and DCS Family Case Manager's.



# Intake Guidance Tool

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- Before the Hotline:
  - Implemented in 2006.
  - But before the Hotline tool was inconsistently utilized at county level.
- After the Hotline:
  - Consistently utilized for all reports of child abuse or neglect.



# Intake Guidance Tool

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- Gathers information on:
  - Child information.
  - Parent/guardian/custodian information.
  - Alleged perpetrator information.
  - Physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect allegations.
  - Additional questions.
  - Safety issues.



# Intake Guidance Tool

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- Shortened set of questions used when gathering information from:
  - Law enforcement
  - Hospitals
  - Prosecutors





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# Structured Decision Making Tool



# Decision Making

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- Before the Hotline:
  - Indiana law applied 92 different ways.
- After the Hotline:
  - Consistent approach statewide.
  - April 2012 Structured Decision Making tool implemented.



# Structured Decision Making Tool

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- Purpose: Organizes answers from Intake Guidance Tool.
- Collaborated with Child Research Center to create tool:
  - Utilizing evidence based practices.
  - In-line with Indiana law, policies and practices.
- Accredited tool.
- Utilized in 3 different countries and 30 different states.



# Structured Decision Making

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- An approach that uses clearly defined and consistently applied decision-making criteria.
- Structured Decision Making Tools:
  - Evaluate risk and determine whether assessment is needed.
  - Used to guide recommendations.
  - Used in 30 states and 3 countries.



# Structured Decision Making Tool

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- Override of recommendation in the following instances:
  - Court requests assessment.
  - Prosecutor requests assessment.
  - Law enforcement requests assistance.
  - DCS regional administrator or other administrator requests referral to be screened in.
  - Other.



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# Tools in Hotline Process



# Hotline Process

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- Report source calls Hotline.

- Intake Specialist answers phone.

- Intake Specialist uses Intake Guidance Tool to gather information.

# Hotline Process

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- Information is documented in case management system.
- Intake Specialist uses Structured Decision Making tool to assess.
- Intake Specialist makes a recommendation.





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# Hotline Process

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- Supervisory review of report.

- Report sent to Local Office.

- Local Office has final decision to assess or not assess report.