

## MODULE 3 - FACILITATOR DISCUSSION POINTS

### Information Reconciliation and Validation

*The discussion points for the Reconciliation and Validation worksheet referenced in Question 4 are provided below. The worksheet is titled Reference 3 in Module 3.*

#### **Discussion Question #4.**

If the group has difficulty identifying information that needed to be reconciled in step 3 above you may proceed to **use the worksheet/examples provided in Reference 3** to discuss both reconciliation and the need for validation.

*Reconciliation of information needs to take place when incongruent or inconsistent information is presented to the reader without sufficient information to explain or address the different accounts. Reconciliation adequately informs the reader as to why the information is inconsistent or if one account is more credible and why.*

*Validation of information needs take place when information is not confirmed by a reliable secondary source or the investigator's personal observation.*

**Indicate if information needs to be reconciled or validated and how either may be achieved.**

1. Xena reports her "ribs hurt" because her mother threw her down on the kitchen floor yesterday morning because she did not want to wear the school clothes her mom picked out for her. Her younger sister states Xena was spanked by her mom yesterday afternoon for watching TV after she was told not to. The mother states the small bruise on Xena's lower back probably occurred "accidentally when I was pulling her into her bedroom."

#### **RECONCILIATION IS NEEDED CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:**

- Two injuries (i.e., "ribs hurt" and "small bruise" on victim's lower back) and three possible explanations for the injuries (i.e., "thrown down" in a.m., "spanking" in afternoon, and the mother pulling the child into the bedroom (time of incident not supplied) are provided with incomplete integration of the information. Is the bruising more consistent with Xena getting thrown down, spanked or her back hitting the door jamb? Which subject is most credible and why? [Your point should be that not enough information is provided to answer either question at this point, hence the need for reconciliation].
- Xena did not mention the spanking incident while her younger sister did not mention the kitchen floor incident. CPI should address the apparent discrepancy. [Teachable moment: children remember what is important to them so both of these events could have occurred as stated by sisters but Xena reported the kitchen incident because she was more upset about not getting to wear what she wanted to wear to school while her sister reported the spanking incident because she did not get to watch her favorite TV program that afternoon].

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2. Child's mother states her six month old infant is incapable of rolling over or sitting up by herself but she is not worried because all her children were "slow starters" but by ten months were all walking on their own.

### VALIDATION IS NEEDED CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- The mother's lack of concern over her child's apparent developmental delay can only be addressed after the investigator or case manager either (1) personally observes the infant to get a much clearer picture (i.e., validate) what the child's developmental status is (i.e., lifts head, pushes upper body off ground with arms, can actually roll over, etc.) and/or (2) seeks more information (i.e., validation) from additional sources who spends considerable time with the infant and are likely to have firsthand knowledge about the infant's developmental status (e.g. child care worker, visiting home nurse, etc.).

3. Report alleges parents lock child in room at night. Parents deny allegations. Investigator notes, "door knob cannot be locked (no locking mechanism)." CPI also describes a rope hanging on a doorknob directly across from the child's bedroom.

### RECONCILIATION IS NEEDED CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- The fact that the door does not have an internal locking mechanism does not explain away the fact that the mention of the rope begs the question – is it somehow being used to "jury rig" a homemade locking system? The investigator, at a minimum, needs to provide an explanation for why the rope is present. Yes, it could be entirely circumstantial in nature but without providing a reasonable explanation for the purpose of the rope we are left wondering why it was there and for what purpose. (Note: depending upon what the child stated about being locked in, in light of the parents' denial may certainly have required reconciliation as well, although even if the child had denied being locked in we want the investigator to follow through with understanding and explaining why the rope was there).

4. The children's father reports his ex-wife "doubles up on her pain medication." Mother reports her physician advised her she could do so occasionally if needed.

### RECONCILIATION AND VALIDATION ARE NEEDED CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- Reconciliation – since both parties agree about the mother's "extra" dosing, the question isn't really about reconciling any discrepancy between what the mother is doing or not doing per se but the need to reconcile the *implied outcome* . . . which from the mother's perspective is that there is no problem compared to the father's viewpoint that the "doubling up" is problematic. Having a clear understanding of the mother's overall functioning BEFORE and after being prescribed the medication is typically the only way to assess whether a prescription painkiller is being used appropriately and having the desired effects, that is, taking the "edge" off chronic pain so a person can perform at a higher level of functioning than prior to the medication being prescribed.
- Validation - this is a "quick fix" in the sense that the investigator can first provide detailed information from the prescription label specifying dosage (i.e., q.i.d. or "p.r.n. - "as needed"). A "p.r.n." instruction would support the mother's *occasional* doubling up, but the most essential validation source would be getting a direct statement from the attending physician regarding any verbal directions he or she may have provided during the exam/office regarding proper use of that specific medication.

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5. Mr. Jones states he only drinks socially and occasionally “might have a couple of beers on the weekend.” His criminal record reflects to DWI’s over the past five years with BAL’s of .19 and .26, respectively.

#### **VALIDATION IS NEEDED CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:**

- Validating information in this instance would come from interviewing other members of the household who may or may not corroborate Mr. Jones keeping to his self-imposed “couple of beers” on the weekend limit AND just as importantly if not more so, whether any abusive drinking on his part is out-of-control to the point which it creates a danger threat to any children in the home. (Additional discussion points: Having two recorded incidents of driving under the influence within a timeframe of five years is problematic in itself, not to mention that blood alcohol level readings were two and three times above the legal limit, respectively. This is not to say that those were not isolated incidents, however statistics from the Centers for Disease Control show that the average “drunk driver” has driven impaired over 80 times prior to his or her first arrest alone, and even more frequently if there are additional, subsequent arrests).

6. A mother reports her two year-old son is terrified of his father. The child cries hysterically and soils his pants when forced to visit with his father every other weekend. The child’s father reports his son loves to come and stay at his house because he gets to play with his step siblings. He has recently started taking work off early so he can pick his son up from the daycare for his weekend visits instead and having to deal with “drama and [his] ex-wife.”

#### **RECONCILIATION AND VALIDATON ARE NEEDED CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:**

- Reconciliation – since the parents present highly contradictory statements on their son’s reaction to visiting with his father (terrified vs. loves to come stay) and no additional information is provided regarding which account might be more credible reconciliation involves obtaining more information to explain away the apparent discrepancies (i.e., father: “Yes, he cries for two minutes but as soon as we turn the corner away from his mom’s place he is happy as can be”, etc.).
- Validation - this is a good example to show that sufficient collection and validation of information by the investigator throughout the investigation almost always provides sufficient rationale for either lending credibility or discounting one person’s viewpoint or “fact reporting” over another’s. In this instance, had the investigator already interviewed and documented the child care director’s account of the custody “exchanges” or the fact that the child still regularly soils his pants even during the week (while with his mom) this upfront validation would pre-empt the need to reconcile the parent’s differing accounts because the additional information already accomplishes that.