

**SDM® SYSTEM FOR CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS)
SDM® CORE TEAM OVERVIEW AND PROPOSED STRUCTURE**

The NCCD Children's Research Center (CRC) has learned from our work in jurisdictions around the world that the formation of a Structured Decision Making® (SDM) Core Team with clear roles and responsibilities is important to a high-fidelity and sustainable integration of the SDM® system into agency practice.

Core Team Formation

Building an effective Core Team means bringing the right voices to the table to help align the SDM system with the practices of your agency by lending local and practice expertise to this process. In addition, the SDM Core Team serves as a communication conduit throughout child protection organizations about important information related to development, technical assistance, revisions to the assessments, and implementation and practice issues.

SDM Core Team membership might include the following.

- Leadership representation from each regional office.
- Representation from key operations branches, including program design, policy, continuous quality improvement (CQI) and quality assurance, federal case review, staff development, and other agency programs.
- Members who represent different classifications, such as line staff, supervisors, administrators, information technology, and if applicable, clerical staff.
- Members who represent different service components, such as screening, investigation/assessment, dependency investigations, and voluntary and ongoing services.
- Members who can serve as SDM® local experts when workers or supervisors have questions.

Purpose and Scope of the SDM® Core Team

The SDM Core Team helps the agency ensure high-quality implementation by providing oversight of the system improvement and sustainability phases of practice change. As part of their role, members of the SDM Core Team would undertake the following tasks and activities.

- Strengthen their own individual knowledge of the SDM system, including assessment completion, definitions and their use, and policy and procedures for implementation.
- Use their knowledge of agency practice and the SDM system to resolve issues raised by workers and supervisors.
- Communicate the value of the SDM system as a decision-support model.
- Reconvene periodically to analyze and make recommendations for change based on feedback from users, revisions of agency policy, and changes in legislation that affect the child protection program.
- Use data and CQI activities to identify areas where quality targets have been met, areas where improvement is needed, and areas where new quality targets are needed.
- Facilitate communication and cooperation among workers, administrators, policymakers, and CRC staff.

Responsibilities of the SDM® Core Team

Collectively, the members of the SDM Core Team help coordinate and guide SDM implementation improvements and practice sustainability activities, including the following.

- Periodically reviewing organization practices related to effective use of the SDM system.
- Making recommendations for aligning local policy and practice with the SDM system.
- Identifying training and coaching needs to support effective use of SDM assessments across service components and regions.
- Overseeing the process and extent of uptake and integration of the SDM system into agency practice through use of aggregate data, CQI/quality assurance activities, and SDM management and special topics reports.

- Overseeing action steps needed to support sustainability of this practice over time.

The SDM Core Team focuses on the quality of SDM implementation by collecting questions, problems, and concerns from staff, and then suggesting solutions. These solutions may take the form of additional guidance, FAQs for staff, or recommended policy changes. SDM Core Team members may be tasked with communication efforts in their offices or regions to assist in implementing key revisions and preparing others for change. Individuals on the SDM Core Team will act as go-to staff during training and implementation of any revisions to the assessments.