



CALIFORNIA'S SDM[®] CORE TEAM: OVERVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Structured Decision Making[®] (SDM) system is a suite of research- and evidence-based assessment tools to help guide decision making at key points in the child welfare system. Implementing these tools effectively and equitably requires bringing a diverse group of voices to the table. California's SDM[®] Core Team serves as a statewide steering committee tasked with supporting the high-fidelity integration of the SDM system into child welfare practice across the state.

PURPOSE

The Core Team will form a partnership between the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), California counties, and relevant child welfare partners to support the rigorous use of the SDM system to achieve consistent and equitable child welfare decision making.

MEMBERSHIP

California's Core Team is composed of representatives who lead and support child welfare decision making and SDM implementation within the 58 counties. Representation should span across regions, leadership levels, and areas of child welfare practice; it should involve relevant child welfare partners, including tribal representatives and training partners.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The statewide Core Team helps review and monitor data trends related to SDM use and decision making across the state; troubleshoots local and statewide concerns with policy, practice, or implementation; and guides ongoing work to strengthen system integration.

Each of the 58 counties in California has identified at least two SDM Core Team members who participate in statewide meetings as representatives from their local agency. The identified Core Team representatives are tasked with leading ongoing communication and dissemination of information between the statewide steering team and county leadership. The Core Team will support fidelity implementation at the county level.

The Core Team serves as the primary group for vetting new SDM policies and practice initiatives at a statewide level. CDSS and Evident Change staff will work with the Core Team to bring critical voices and perspectives from their local systems and communities to statewide decisions about the SDM system.

Key activities related to the Core Team include the following.

- **Annual statewide Core Team meeting:** The annual Core Team meeting provides an opportunity for county leadership and relevant parties to come together with their peers across the state to review statewide and county-level data trends in SDM use and child welfare decision making, published in the annual SDM management reports for California. This review is used to guide a data-informed approach to training, policy, and implementation. Annual Core Team meetings provide the space for targeted discussion and collaborative decision making across the community around ongoing assessment updates, policy and practice supports needed for the field, and implementation decisions.
- **Local implementation leadership:** County Core Team representatives play a leadership role in local SDM implementation efforts to ensure each local agency has the information and tools needed to support aligned local policy and practice guidance, rigorous training, and implementation support. Core Team members may also lead strategies within their local jurisdiction to support the review and monitoring of SDM use and associated outcomes.
- **User feedback and continuous evaluation:** The SDM system is a suite of research-based tools updated periodically to incorporate changes in federal and state statutes and regulations, new research, evaluations, and county feedback. The Core Team plays a critical role in consulting on statewide updates to California's SDM tools and ways that emerging policies, research, or best practices may affect SDM assessments. Core Team members also ensure that local users are aware of methods for providing continuous user feedback toward the goals of increased equity, consistency, accuracy, and utility.
- **Information dissemination:** Core Team members lead ongoing dissemination of new information, training, and resources related to supporting ongoing SDM implementation. Core Team members may facilitate SDM Core Teams or workgroups at the local level or distribute information as needed.

SDM Core Team materials are posted on the California Core Team site:

<https://docs.evidentchange.org/Cacoreteam/>

For more information or questions regarding participation in California's SDM Core Team, please contact Jovan Goodman at jgoodman@evidentchange.org.