Our Mission

American Humane Association’s mission is to create a more humane and compassionate world by ending abuse and neglect of children and animals. To that end, we are a national leader in developing programs, policies, training, research and evaluation, and cutting-edge initiatives to prevent, respond to and intervene in the abuse and neglect of children; to strengthen families and communities; and to improve child welfare systems at the state, county and community levels.

In each area of our work, we strive to enhance the ability of public and private agencies to respond effectively to the diverse needs of vulnerable children and families. We provide training, technical assistance and coaching for a work force that addresses issues of child abuse and neglect — along with complicating factors related to child abuse and neglect such as poverty, substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence — every day. This work force includes public child welfare workers, community stakeholders and allied professionals, including judges, court personnel, attorneys, court-appointed special advocates, guardians ad litem, law enforcement, mental health professionals, public health professionals, medical professionals and others. We also work with child welfare professionals and community stakeholders to improve public and community systems, so that greater emphasis is placed on processes and results that focus on the best interests of and service equity for children and their families.

This catalog lists the areas of training, coaching, consultation and technical assistance that American Humane Association can provide to child welfare agencies, community organizations and stakeholders, and allied professionals. These services can be offered through in-person trainings, community forums or presentations, teleconferences and webinars, online virtual series, on-site technical assistance or on-the-job coaching. We can offer continuing education units (CEUs) for many of our trainings and can tailor each learning opportunity to meet the individual needs of your agency or community. We also regularly contract with communities to develop specific coaching materials and plans, new curricula based on community needs, and train-the-trainer and coach-the-coach models to enhance community capacity and sustainability within multiple program areas.
Areas of Training and Professional Development

Child Welfare Casework Practice

Solution-Focused Casework Practice — Learn about the core principles, values and practices of solution-focused casework and how this type of practice with families aligns with a differential response approach.

Assessing Safety and Risk in Child Welfare Practice — Responding to child maltreatment reports requires caseworkers to have a clear understanding of the safety threats and risk factors for children. Explore how to integrate standard protocols for safety and risk assessment with the core principles and values of family engagement in order to build effective partnerships with families.

Children and Youth Participation in the Child Welfare Process — Ensuring that children are involved in the assessment, investigation and case-planning processes is an important and sometimes challenging endeavor. Understand the philosophy and values for child inclusion in child welfare processes and learn various strategies for creatively and effectively involving children at all stages of the case process.

Community-Based Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

The Front Porch Project® — American Humane Association’s community-based, research-supported, primary prevention initiative is built on the belief that all people who are concerned about the safety and well-being of children in their communities need to be encouraged and taught to make a difference to prevent child abuse and neglect. The major components of the initiative include the two-day community training, a supplementary train-the-trainer course, and ongoing technical assistance and evaluation, including a national cross-site evaluation.
Cultural Competence in Child Welfare

Culture and Community — Become oriented to how child welfare professionals and community members can create and sustain child welfare practice that is inclusive, respectful and supportive of behaviors and attitudes that enable practitioners to work effectively with children and families from diverse cultures.

Culturally Responsive Practice in Family-Centered Casework — “I know you hear me, but are you listening?” We know acknowledging culture is important but what does it look like in practice? Develop skills as a practitioner in using intentional behavior that seeks to understand and engage diverse families in an effort to build knowledge, display sensitivity and demonstrate responsiveness to families’ cultural needs. Such culturally responsive practice will support achieving positive and culturally relevant outcomes for children, youth and families.

Disparities and Disproportionality in Child Welfare — Understand the effects discrimination, policy, practice, system design and community engagement have on the over-representation of children of color and their families in the child welfare system. Embrace a new role, guided by antidiscriminatory practice, data-informed decision making, and organizational and systemic change, to ensure equity for all children and families receiving child welfare services, no matter race or place.

Differential Response (DR)

Overview of Differential Response in Child Protective Services — Learn about the philosophy, history and practice of differential response in the U.S., specifically designed for an audience with little to no knowledge of differential response.

Considerations for Implementing a Differential Response System — Explore key research findings from differential response systems, issues to examine in determining readiness for implementing a differential response system in your agency or community, and lessons learned from the communities already engaged in differential response and the experts who helped facilitate its implementation.
Engagement of Community Partners and Stakeholders in Implementation — Engaging community, tribal partners and stakeholders in all aspects of the implementation process of differential response is crucial to successful implementation. Understand what implementation science tells us about the stages of implementation, discuss ways in which community partners and stakeholders can contribute to the process, and learn about examples of strategies used in successful implementation.

Process and Practice of Differential Response for Child Welfare Workers and Supervisors — Build an in-depth understanding of the core principles, values and practices of differential response, including examples of what assessment practice looks like in the field of child welfare and the skills necessary to begin conducting family assessments in child protective services casework.

Group Case Consultation and Group Supervision — Casework practice does not happen in a vacuum. Child protection caseworkers and supervisors often juggle many pieces of information while managing a case and exploring for solutions. Examine the benefits to caseworkers and supervisors of collaborative group supervision and consultation processes and learn how to integrate group consultation and supervision strategies into everyday child welfare practice.

Solution-Focused Casework Practice — Learn about the core principles, values and practices of solution-focused casework and how this type of practice with families aligns with a differential response approach.

Solution-Focused Supervision — Understand the importance of supervisors modeling effective solution-focused techniques in supervision and case consultation sessions and learn the skills necessary to incorporate solution-focused tools and techniques into the supervision process.

Assessing Safety and Risk in Differential Response — Reports that are screened in to a differential response pathway are child maltreatment reports; therefore, the need for caseworkers to gain a clear understanding of the safety threats and risk factors for children is still paramount in the assessment process. Explore how to integrate standard protocols for safety and risk assessment with the core principles and values of family engagement in order to build effective partnerships with families.

Child and Youth Participation in the Differential Response Process — Ensuring that children are involved in the assessment and case-planning process is an important and sometimes challenging endeavor. Understand the philosophy and values for child inclusion in the assessment process and learn various strategies for creatively and effectively involving children at all stages of the case process.

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) and Other Family Engagement Approaches

Family Group Decision Making: At First Glance — Through an orientation to the guiding philosophy and guidelines of FGDM, gain the knowledge to understand what FGDM is and why communities should explore its implementation.

Introductory Overview of Family Group Decision Making — Obtain the perfect foundation for embarking on the implementation of FGDM. Learn the who, what, where, when, why and how of implementing FGDM.

Preparation Is Crucial: The Nuances of Coordinating Family Meetings — Develop and expand a coordinator’s skills and knowledge to appropriately prepare all participants of family meetings, keeping with American Humane Association’s Guidelines for Family Group Decision Making in Child Welfare.

The Referring Worker: A Key Role in the FGDM Process — A caseworker’s role in the FGDM process cannot be minimized. Sharing the agency’s concerns with clarity, respect and understanding is an “art” that workers should explore and develop.

Involving Children and Youth in FGDM Processes — “Nothing about me, without me” is one FGDM motto. Examine and challenge traditional practices that marginalize children and young people from participating in decision making about their lives and build the skills necessary to appropriately and effectively engage children and youth in FGDM processes.

Cultivating Forever Connections for Youth Through FGDM — Too many youth in foster care live without positive, adult connections and leave care without any permanent relationships. FGDM has proven to counter those trends. Ensure permanency for disconnected youth through FGDM.

The Impact of Power: Exploring Issues of Domestic Violence in FGDM — Special considerations should be made when working with families where domestic violence is a presenting concern. Develop the knowledge and skills for facilitating FGDM processes when domestic violence is suspected or present within a family.

Addressing Substance Abuse and Mental Health Challenges in FGDM — In nearly 80 percent of child welfare cases, children are coming to the attention of the child welfare system because of family substance abuse and/or mental health issues. Can FGDM be used
for planning with these families? Learn the nuances of FGDM practice and build the skills necessary to effectively facilitate the FGDM process when families present these challenging issues.

Managing Emotions as an FGDM Coordinator — Emotional exhaustion. Disturbance. Exhilaration. Frustration. FGDM coordinators can regularly feel these emotions and many more. Learn how to manage emotions while coordinating or facilitating the FGDM process.

Transform Conflict Into Partnership in the FGDM Process — Conflict may be everywhere — between the agency and family group, among family group members, or between the maternal and paternal sides of the family. As an FGDM coordinator, explore how to transform conflict into an opportunity for partnership so that it doesn’t derail the FGDM process.

Using FGDM to Reduce Disproportionality in Child Welfare — Legislated in New Zealand as a response to institutional racism in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, FGDM was initiated to address disparities, disproportionality and issues of equity. Gain the knowledge, information and strategies needed to use FGDM as a viable strategy in improving outcomes for children and families of color in the child welfare system.

Using FGDM to Engage With and Assess Immigrant Children and Families — All children, including those whose extended families reside outside the U.S. or have a parent or caregiver who cannot freely move across borders, can benefit from having their family members come together to create plans ensuring their safety, permanency (including placement), and well-being. Learn strategies to engage with immigrant children and families from assessment to case closure.

Father Engagement in the Child Welfare System

Bringing Back the Dads — All too often, dads are absent, isolated and marginalized by child welfare systems’ policies, procedures and practices. It is time for them to be included, engaged and visible. Begin the values- and knowledge-building process to transform your child welfare system to one that honors and engages both moms and dads.

Engaging Non-Resident (or Non-Custodial) Fathers in the Child Welfare Process — For decades, the child welfare system has been criticized for focusing involvement and interventions on mothers and not on fathers and their relatives. Explore effective strategies for engaging dads and their families with both their children and the child welfare system.

Coaching Supervisors to Support the Engagement of Non-Resident Fathers in the Child Welfare Process — Supervisors play a critical role in implementing practice changes within a child welfare agency. Provide supervisors with the tools they need to encourage and inspire caseworkers to actively engage fathers in the lives of their children and with the child welfare system.
Migration and Child Welfare

The Intersection of Immigration and Child Welfare: Helping Meet the Complex Needs of Children and Families — Through an orientation to the facts about immigration and child welfare, gain the knowledge to understand the complexity of immigrant families who come to the attention of the child welfare system and best practices for effectively working with these families.

Family Assessments With Immigrant and Refugee Families Entering the Child Welfare System — Initial engagement and assessment is a crucial component of working effectively with any family that comes to the attention of the child welfare system. Learn about how to best approach family assessments with immigrant children and families so as to create a culturally responsive assessment process.

Using Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) With Immigrant Children and Families — Special considerations should be made when working with immigrant children and families. Develop the knowledge and skills for facilitating FGDM processes with immigrant families, including having a comprehensive understanding of specific best practices, policies and resources.

The Role of CASA Volunteers in Cases Involving Immigrant Children and Families — Court-appointed special advocate (CASA) agencies and volunteers have the potential to be important advocates for children from immigrant families. Learn how to apply the information within immigrant-specific tool kits, which include an overview of relevant U.S. immigration law, potential relief options, and assessment and engagement tools, into your advocacy as a CASA agency or volunteer for children from immigrant families.

An Overview of Immigration Issues and Child Welfare from a Legal Perspective — It is important for professionals in the field of child welfare to understand the complexities of immigration law as it relates to their practice with families. Explore in detail current laws and timelines that impact your work and the experience of immigrant families.

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) and Other Citizenship Pathways for Children, Youth and Families — Learn about legal citizenship options available to immigrant families in child welfare and how to best engage with and assist families in exploring these options. Understand the components of law, practice and partnership that best support the needs of immigrant youths and facilitate positive outcomes for youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Effective Collaboration Between Immigration Enforcement, Child Welfare and Consulates — Explore how to build collaborative relationships between professional parties involved in the lives of immigrant families in order to serve the best interests of immigrant children and families.
National Initiative on Chronic Neglect

Overview of Chronic Child Neglect — While there have been numerous discrete efforts within the field of child welfare to address chronicity and cumulative harm over the past several decades, there have been few attempts to enumerate these efforts as part of an integrated whole and to use the learnings to guide future endeavors. Learn about the federal, state and local ventures in research, policy and practice that shape an informed, evidence-based response to this particular child welfare challenge.

Family Asset Builder: Applying Lessons of the Past to Create a Responsive Future — Apply an evidence-informed response to address the challenges of chronic neglect and families impacted by chronic neglect in your child welfare system. Learn how to specialize assessments and intervention practices to be most effective in working with this population of families and examine how to provide effective, responsive supervision to caseworkers who serve families impacted by chronic neglect.

Developing a Community Response to Chronic Neglect — Guided by experts in chronic neglect, engage in the opportunity to collaborate with child welfare administrators, staff and community stakeholders to identify and advance strategies to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, chronic neglect. In addition, discover strategies and activities that can help mobilize a community response to chronic neglect.

Chronic Neglect Virtual Series — Form a team and engage in this unique web-based learning and networking opportunity to explore in detail how to strengthen your child welfare system’s response to families impacted by chronic neglect. The series’ themes are guided by participant feedback.

Safety and Risk Assessments and Decision Making

Small Changes Lead to Systemwide Improvement: Results From the National Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments — Discover the exciting practice improvements that emerged from the national Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Safety and Risk Assessments and learn how your agency can make small changes to improve your safety and risk assessment processes.

Involving Children and Parents in Assessments and Decision Making — Explore family-friendly methods for engaging all members of a family in safety and risk assessments and child welfare decision making, including specific strategies for involving and engaging children and youth.
Decision-Making Ecology — Examine your agency’s screening, removal, reunification and permanency decision-making processes through consultation on effective assessment and analysis of decision making at the critical stages of a child welfare case. Effective assessments and informed decisions in child welfare casework will increase confidence, consistency and transparency when working with families to promote children’s safety, permanence and well-being.

Supervisor as Practice Expert — Supervisors often bring a wealth of experience to their role. Expand your skills in facilitating caseworker understanding and use of statutes, rules and policies that guide child welfare practice in exploring caseworker practices in assessing and achieving child safety while addressing permanency and well-being issues and in providing individual and group supervision to achieve desired outcomes.

Secondary Trauma and Worker Safety — Responding to secondary trauma and the safety of caseworkers is one of the most important aspects of a supervisor’s job. Learn how to recognize and respond to secondary trauma and burnout in staff and in yourself, acquire strategies for preventing burnout and supporting self-care in your workers, explore ways to help workers assess for potential safety risks and develop personal safety strategies, and examine how to best develop and maintain collaborative relationships, both internal and external.

Supervision in Child Welfare

Leading the Way in Child Protection — Supervisors are integral to providing leadership and vision to the members of their team. Explore how to articulate and supervise to your agency’s mission and vision; integrate the values of family-centered and culturally responsive practices; effectively utilize supervisory power and influence; and develop an awareness of your own values, attitudes, behaviors and cultural beliefs and how they impact your supervisory practice.

Clinical Practice and Case Consultation — Supervisors are the backbone of good case practice and the development of the clinical capacity within their team. Understand the key elements of clinical practice and case consultation, develop solution-focused supervision skills and discover how to effectively communicate performance expectations, assess staff performance and facilitate the acquisition of new skills.
**Group Case Consultation and Group Supervision** — Casework practice does not happen in a vacuum. Child protection caseworkers and supervisors often juggle many pieces of information while managing a case and exploring for solutions. Examine the benefits to caseworkers and supervisors of collaborative group supervision and consultation processes and learn how to integrate group consultation and supervision strategies into everyday child welfare practice.

**Solution-Focused Supervision** — Understand the importance of supervisors modeling effective solution-focused techniques in supervision and case consultation sessions and learn the skills necessary to incorporate solution-focused tools and techniques into the supervision process.

**Working With Youth in Child Welfare**

**Growing out of Foster Care** — Every day, youth are aging out of the foster care system in the U.S. Explore how family group decision making and other family engagement processes can be used to help older youth solidify permanent connections and support during and after their transition out of foster care.

**Supporting the Unique Needs of GLBT Youth** — Learn how caseworkers and agencies can best support gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth in their casework practice. Develop skills as a practitioner in using intentional language and behavior to engage GLBT youth in an effort to display sensitivity and responsiveness to the youth’s individual needs.

**Supporting Teen Parents in Foster Care** — Teen parents in the foster care system have a unique set of needs, both as youths seeking permanency for themselves and as parents seeking permanency for their children. Discover how your agency can best support young moms and dads in foster care in reaching these goals.
Contact Us

Please contact us if you are interested in working with American Humane Association to facilitate any of these professional development opportunities for your child welfare agency or organization. In addition, American Humane Association is continually expanding our areas of consultation and expertise and would welcome the opportunity to explore with you the development of other training or professional development activities that best support the needs of your agency or community.

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