

# Standards, Knowledge & Insight Leading to Success (SKILS) Training Annotated Agenda SKILS 161R Online

SKILS (Standards, Knowledge & Insight Leading to Success) is the mandated core training that all new Protective Services Specialists (PSS) receive upon hire with the Office of Children's Services (OCS). SKILS consists of 3 virtual online courses: 161R (2 weeks), 162 (2 weeks) and 163 (1 week). SKILS 161R Online begins with PreSKILS and includes a compilation of activities and online learning modules to prepare the new PSS for the first session of SKILS 161R Online.

As outlined by the OCS Staff Development Plan (SDP), new PSS staff complete PreSKILS asynchronous learning modules on the online Learning Management System CWA STARS followed by virtual training sessions facilitated by CWA Trainers via Zoom. In addition, participants engage in independent study of materials through asynchronous modules to prepare for application to a case study. Trainer's review all submitted work and provide individualized feedback to participants. SKILS 161R guides new PSS staff through a series of learning activities, online training, and on the job training that prepares them for their positions at OCS.

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## SKILS 161R Online WEEK 1

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### WEEK 1, DAY 1:

#### ***Virtual In-Class Topics***

##### *Introduction to SKILS and CWA*

Participants are acquainted with the Child Welfare Academy, the process of virtual training, the agenda, learning objectives and navigation of the online learning management system. Participants are introduced to all CWA Training staff and receive a welcome from the Director of OCS. A learning community is established through the establishment of ground rules and developing a cohesive cohort. Participants explore the tools, resources and supports for their professional development and build connections with Trainers and management teams.

##### *Orientation to OCS Mission & NASW Code of Ethics*

Participants explore the OCS Mission, Vision, Values and Principles and gain knowledge of how this directs daily practice of the PSS to ensure the safety, permanency, and wellbeing of families. Trainers facilitate small and large group discussion to apply to daily practice. Trainers review OCS Essential Services specific to the role of the PSS.

##### *Family Engagement*

Participants are introduced to the six family engagement fundamentals. Participants practice effectively engaging families and children through a series of activities. Participants discuss best practices and explore how understanding a strengths-based, trauma-informed, and culturally relevant approach improves outcomes for families involved in child protection.

##### *Protective Factors*

Participants are introduced to the Strengthening Families Protective Factors framework. Trainers facilitate an activity to practice taking a strengths-based approach to create a positive and proactive environment in which families and children can better engage with services. Participants further explore

how personal bias can impact the perception of strengths and practice self-awareness strategies to address bias.

### Trauma Informed Practice

Participants watch a video introducing adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and discuss the importance of understanding how trauma impacts development and brain functioning. The training further investigates with learners how to engage in a trauma informed practice with families and children by realizing the widespread impact of trauma, recognizing the signs and symptoms of trauma, responding with integration of knowledge of trauma in practice and seeking to actively resist re-traumatization.

### Active Efforts

Trainer's revisit ICWA Modules from PreSKILLS and explore how engaging in Active Efforts supports reduction in disproportionality of Alaska Native families in child welfare. Learners continue their exploration of bias and review cultural humility concepts necessary for engaging diverse populations.

### **Asynchronous Work**

#### I&A Pre-Test

Participants take a pre-test to assess their current knowledge and understanding of concepts related to Investigation and Assessment.

#### ICWA Handbook Overview

Participants explore each section of the ICWA handbook and watch a recording to describe the function of each. Participants engage in a forum discussion regarding the use and benefits of the handbook to support ICWA.

#### PSR Introduction

Participants review each section of a Protective Service Report (PSR) and discuss timeframes, forms of child maltreatment, background information, Tribal identification, and preparation for initiating an Investigation & Assessment (I&A).

#### Information Collection Overview

Participants are introduced to the Purple Guide, a section of the laminated Field Guide, outlining the protocol for information collection and areas of assessment including extent of maltreatment, surrounding circumstances, child functioning, adult functioning, parenting and protective capacities, and discipline.

#### Case Example Introduction

Participants are introduced to a case example to be followed through the duration of training. Participants read a PSR, background check, file review and initial contact with the Tribe in preparation of application of concepts in the virtual classroom the following day.

## **WEEK 1, DAY 2:**

### **Virtual In-Class**

#### OCS Practice Model

Trainers revisit the PreSKILLS modules regarding the OCS Practice Model and explore how this framework supports daily tasks and ensuring best practice. Learners review the Flowchart in the laminated Field Guide to understand key components.

### Worker Safety

Participants explore concepts of worker safety and ensuring their own personal safety while engaging in the field. Learners discuss how to prepare themselves before going into the field, how to ensure personal safety while in the field, and how to respond if a safety concern arises while in the field.

### Investigation & Assessment

Trainers review the process of I&A with participants and engage in an application activity using a case example. Learners connect concepts from their asynchronous module to demonstrate their understanding of information provided in the PSR and background review. Learners further complete a plan for the I&A protocol and role play inviting the Tribe.

### Three Decisions in I&A

Trainers discuss the three decisions made during an I&A- is the child safe or unsafe; are the allegations of maltreatment substantiated or unsubstantiated; and what is the future risk of abuse and neglect. Trainers emphasize the importance of sufficient information collection to adequately make these three decisions.

### Information Collection: Child Interviews

Participants complete three online modules to prepare themselves for child interviewing. Learners explore child interviewing strategies, discuss child functioning and brainstorm questions to ask the children in the case example. Trainers facilitate a preparation session for participants to build a plan for their mock child interview.

### Child Interview Simulation

Learners are paired individually with an actor and Trainer to practice a simulated child interview based on case examples. The simulation consists of a 20-minute mock child interview and a 10-minute feedback session in which participants receive coaching on their interviewing techniques and information collection strategies.

### **Asynchronous Work**

#### Initial Contact

Participants review core concepts related to making initial contact with a parent/caregiver. Areas of worker safety, engagement, Parents Rights brochure and clarity of role are introduced to participants to prepare them for their case example.

#### Present Danger Criteria & Initial Safety Plan

Participants review the criteria for present danger and how to assess immediacy, severity, and observability of child safety. Learners then explore the process and elements of safety planning in the event that present danger is identified and how to create an Initial Safety Plan until further information can be gathered.

#### Case Example

Learners review information gathered in child interviews for their case example to support the I&A process.

### **WEEK 1, DAY 3:**

#### **Virtual In-Class**

#### Effective Documentation

Participants read an article regarding effective documentation. Trainers facilitate a discussion on strategies to support effective documentation in the field. Participants view an image of a home and practice documenting what they observe. Trainers offer feedback specific to being objective, accurate, clear, relevant, descriptive, and concise in the order to be effective in documenting.

#### *Present Danger Assessment*

Trainers facilitate a “walk through” activity. Participants review images of the case example home and identify if Present Danger exists. Participants practice how to articulate the present danger criteria based on their observations.

#### *Initial Safety Plan Development*

Participants engage in a Safety Plan Analysis to determine what level of a safety plan is needed. Trainers facilitate discussion regarding assessment that a caregiver can and will protect, along with adequate tasks and activities to manage for safety for children. Workers review an example Initial Safety Plan and practice documenting “Why the plan is needed”.

#### *Non-Emergency Petition*

Participants review legal processes relevant to the I&A. Trainers provide a non-emergency petition from the case example, explain each section and how it relates to the information collection and three decision making process.

#### *Diligent Relative Search & ICWA Preferred Placement*

Participants review the process of Diligent Relative Search and its importance throughout the life of a case. Participants brainstorm tools and review processes to identifying relatives in a case. Trainers present ICWA preference placements and participants review possible caregivers in the case example and determine preference placement.

#### *Adult Interviews*

Participants watch an example interview with an alleged maltreating caregiver. Participants are prompted to take notes on information gathered around the six questions and debrief. Participants review effective strategies for adult interviews and compare/contrast to child interviews.

#### ***Asynchronous Work***

##### *Maltreatment Assessment Protocol (MAP)*

Participants watch an overview of how to utilize the Maltreatment Assessment Protocol MAP tool. The overview reviews the process of how to determine whether or not to substantiate child maltreatment. Participants walk through a scenario to demonstrate the steps of identifying the adult action/inaction (Section A) and impact to the child (Section B).

##### *Safety Threats & Threshold Criteria*

Participants read the Safety Threat Guide and watch a video describing the threshold criteria. Participants complete an assignment matching safety threats which best meet a scenario.

##### *Case Example*

Participants review documentation and a timeline of the case example demonstrating information collection from other adult caregivers and collaterals in the case to prepare for I&A decision making.

### **WEEK 1, DAY 4:**

#### ***Virtual In-Class***

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### Six Question Review

Participants utilize all case documentation and interviews conducted in the case example and complete an activity to establish all information collected related to the six questions. Participants practice categorizing information and receive feedback from Trainers.

### Child Maltreatment Substantiation

Utilizing the MAP tool, learners assess child maltreatment for the case example. Participants identify whether maltreatment is substantiated or not for each caregiver for each child involved in the case. Trainers facilitate critical thinking via small and large group discussion until consensus is met.

### Identifying Safety Threats & Impending Danger Assessment

Participants review the 10 safety threats and threshold criteria. Trainers facilitate an activity for participants in small groups to assess which safety threats cross the threshold for each caregiver in the case example and must articulate their decision for each of the five threshold criteria. Trainers provide feedback until a consensus is met.

### **Asynchronous Work**

#### Future Risk of Abuse or Neglect (FRAN)

Participants watch a video describing the FRAN tool and FRAN form assessing for future risk in cases where there is no present or impending danger.

#### Updated Safety Plan

Participants review the process of updating safety plans once the impending danger assessment has been completed. Participants review an updated safety plan for the case example and walk through how the impending danger assessment informs the safety plan analysis.

#### ORCA Documentation of I&A: Case Example

Participants learn how each of the I&A three decisions are documented in ORCA. Participants then review ORCA tabs for the case example of the characteristics, maltreatment and safety-risk tab.

## **WEEK 1, DAY 5:**

### **Virtual In-Class**

#### FRAN: Case Example

Participants conduct a FRAN assessment for a case example in small groups and review their responses with the Trainers. A discussion is facilitated about the function and purpose of the FRAN and how each level of risk connects to possible interventions within a family.

#### Voice of a Child & 6 Principles of Trauma Informed Practice

Participants watch the video Voice of a Child which illustrates a young girl's experience during a removal from her caregivers. Trainers facilitate a debrief discussion regarding participants' reactions. Learners then review the 6 Principles of Trauma Informed Practice and formulate recommendations for the worker and resource parent in the video on how to improve their practice.

#### Assessing Enhanced and Diminished Protective Factors

Participants review the 5 Protective Factors and work in small groups to assess both the enhanced and diminished protective factors for the caregivers in their case example. Trainers discuss how this process supports I&A decision making, as well as preparing cases for Family Services if appropriate.

#### Reasonable and Active Efforts

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Participants discuss the difference between reasonable and active efforts. Participants build a list of all the Active Efforts provided in their example ICWA case and discuss any missed opportunities.

#### Case Closure and Initial Referral to Services

Workers explore the process of closing an I&A and the function of the Initial Referral to Services. Trainers provide an example of ORCA documentation and closing letters to families are reviewed.

#### Absent Caregivers

Trainers discuss OCS policy and practice when there is an absent caregiver. Participants discover that the absent caregiver in the case example is found and is presently incarcerated. Trainers lead a discussion about the next steps and discuss challenges of working with parents who are incarcerated and explore potential strategies.

#### The Initial Assessment Wrap Up

Trainers facilitate a closing discussion of Investigation & Assessment reviewing concepts covered throughout the week. Participants discuss case transfer and review topics during this meeting and policy timelines. The Caseworker Visit Guide is introduced along with the expectation that for a case open longer than 30 days, the PSS is responsible for providing ongoing case worker visits and case planning with children and families. Trainers facilitate a closing activity and prepare workers for topics covered in the next week.

#### ***Asynchronous Work***

##### I&A Reflection

Workers reflect on their learning for the week and complete a form to explore the supports and strategies they will use to strengthen their learning and application of I&A concepts in the field.

##### I&A Post Test

Learners complete the I&A posttest to assess their knowledge and learning over the course of the week.

#### Family Services Assessment Overview

Participants watch a video with an overview of the Family Services Assessment and core concepts to prepare them for the next week of training.

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### SKILS 161R Online Week 2

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#### **WEEK 2, DAY 1:**

##### ***Virtual In-Class***

##### Welcome to Week 2

Participants are welcomed back to Week 2. The role of a Family Services PSS is presented and discussed. Learners review Essential Services and reflect on the three pillars of child welfare: safety, permanency and wellbeing.

##### Family Services Assessment

Trainers debrief the module regarding the Family Services Assessment. Trainers facilitate small group discussions exploring how partnering with caregivers, supporting the needs of families and children, facilitating awareness for the need to change, involving family and the Tribe and ensuring permanency needs are met to align with the daily tasks conducted by a Family Services PSS. Workers also explore how to introduce their role to a family as they transition out of I&A or have a case transferred to them.

##### Family Services: Best Practice

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The idea that work with families is rooted in a professional relationship between worker and client is presented and discussed. Cultural differences are explored, and the concept of individual bias is examined through activity-based learning. Family engagement is presented as a technique for building relationships with families and thereby gathering information, developing trust and partnering with families to achieve successful outcomes. Learners explore how understanding caregiver protective factors, active safety threats, the behavior change process, being an effective case manager and establishing permanency goals support positive outcomes for families and children. Participants are provided the Protective Factors brochure and practice asking a caregiver about their enhanced and diminished protective factors.

#### Permanency Planning & Timelines

Trainers facilitate a review of permanency planning with workers. An activity is facilitated in which workers test their knowledge of the fundamentals of permanency planning. Participants demonstrate their understanding of concepts related to permanency goals, timelines, family contact/visitation, case plans and involvement of the Tribe.

#### Maintaining Connections

Workers explore the importance of maintaining connections for children while they are in care. Trainers facilitate discussions on how to maintain relationships with extended family, friends, community and culture/personal identity.

#### **Asynchronous Work**

##### Family Services Pre-Test

Participants complete a pre-test to assess their current knowledge regarding Family Service concepts.

##### Stages of Change & Motivational Interviewing

Participants review videos exploring the Stages of Change and Motivational Interviewing to prepare them for effective case planning with care givers. Participants complete an assignment regarding a behavior change process and reflect on what helped or hindered that process.

##### Case Planning Introduction & Basics of Goal Writing

Participants are introduced to the Case Plan form and the process of a case planning interview with caregivers. Participants learn and practice the concepts and strategies associated with case planning. The three types of interviews (initial contact, initial assessment interview and the family services interview) are reviewed. The differences between a safety plan and a case plan are detailed. Each step in the case planning process is identified and discussed. Participants watch another video discussing the formula for writing effective behavior-based goals for caregivers.

##### Case Plan Interview Example

Participants watch a mock case planning interview and complete a reflection assignment on their observation of OARS, Protective Factors, and interviewing strategies used in the video.

#### **WEEK 2, DAY 2:**

##### **Virtual In-Class**

##### OARS Application

Learners participate in a role-playing activity called Reflection River in which they practice OARS, a tool in motivational interviewing. Trainers act in the role of a parent or caregiver and the participant practices affirming, reflecting or asking more open-ended questions to address their concern or complaint. Trainers and peers offer feedback.

### Case Planning: Articulating Safety Threats and Behavior Based Goals

Participants debrief their modules regarding the case plan and writing case plan goals. They review the difference between goals, activities, and “To Do” lists to understand their purpose and function. Trainers facilitate an activity in which learners practice articulating the unsafe behavior related to their safety (how it impacts child safety), and then practice building behavior-based goals following the presented formula (parent/caregiver + desired behavior change + outcome). Trainers provide ongoing opportunities for critical thinking, application, and reflection for goal writing. Participants review best practice interviewing strategies with adults and are placed in small groups to prepare for a mock case planning interview with a parent in their case example.

### Simulated Case Planning Interview

Participants are paired with an actor (either the father or mother in the case example) and a trainer to conduct a 25-minute mock case plan. Participants practice interviewing strategies, exploring Protective Factors, and developing goals with parents for the desired behavior change. They are provided individualized feedback by both the actor and trainer in a ten minute debrief.

### **Asynchronous Work**

#### Case Plan Documentation

Participants practice documentation of a case planning interview by completing the Case Plan form following their mock interview. Participants are instructed to develop at least two behavior-based goals to review in class.

#### Absent Parent Case Plans

Participants watch a video which describes the case planning process for absent caregivers, including that they must include behavior-based goals and continue efforts at making contact with any absent caregiver.

## **WEEK 2, DAY 3:**

### **Virtual In-Class**

#### Case Planning Debrief and Goal Writing Feedback

Trainers facilitate a large group discussion regarding case planning interviews and participants experience. Participants breakout in small groups to share the behavior-based goals they developed and provide peer feedback. Trainers facilitate a white board activity for participants to share goals to the large group and work to improve them to meet the formula.

#### Active Efforts & Activities

Participants explore the function of activities and discuss how these achieve behavior change. Participants explore Active Efforts and are provided the opportunity to discuss how incorporating traditional activities supports Alaska Native families. Workers utilize the Cultural Resource Guide and explore Culturally Relevant Services. Workers watch a video to promote brain storming ideas and are then paired with other workers in their region to discuss what cultural and/or traditional activities they have in their areas. Trainers present a final video “Fiddle Festival” and discuss the connection between traditional activities and enhancing a caregivers Protective Factors.

#### Family Contact

Participants discuss the importance of family contact and its connection to permanency. Participants review a Family Contact Plan for their case example and trainers lead a discussion of how supervision levels are determined for family contact.

## ***Asynchronous Work***

### ***Child Case Plans***

Workers watch a video regarding the development of a child case plan, and how this is different from a caregiver case plan. Trainees review each section of a child case plan and discuss the importance of being trauma informed and culturally relevant.

### ***Caseworker Visits***

Participants read the Caseworker Visit Guide and review sections of the Child Functioning Guide. They then complete an assignment on how to prepare themselves for a caseworker visit for the two children in their case example specific to their age and needs.

### ***Supporting Resource Families***

Participants watch a video series presented by the Alaska Center for Resource Families exploring topics related to supporting resource families regarding licensing, resources, Special Needs, relative care, ICWA and paperwork.

## **WEEK 2, DAY 4:**

### ***Virtual In-Class***

#### ***Case Planning with Children***

Participants discuss strategies for case planning with children and their caregivers. Each required goal for children is reviewed and examples are discussed. An emphasis is placed on cultural continuity for children and how this can be accomplished. Participants learn about “The Trauma Screening Tool” and practice using the tool in the training case. Because everyone involved with OCS is impacted by trauma, participants learn how to help parents become trauma informed for themselves and when parenting their children. Trainee’s practice identifying and documenting in ORCA trauma informed service providers in a children’s case plan. They also practice developing an “Other Goal” which supports individualized child needs.

#### ***Quality Case Worker Visits***

Participants discuss the stages of a quality caseworker visit, before, during and after. Participants learn strategies to continue to support and evaluate progress of the family through the life of the case. Interview strategies that to support PSS staff to assess safety, permanency, and well-being during monthly home visits are discussed using the Caseworker Visit Guide. Participants brainstorm questions they would ask the children, caregivers, and resource parents in small groups and then present their responses to the large group. Issues of incarceration, absent caregivers, relative caregivers, and rural versus urban areas are explored.

### ***Asynchronous Work***

#### ***Permanency Options***

Participants watch a video which describing each permanency goal in detail and explore the considerations and timelines associated with each. An emphasis on reunification as the primary and most preferred goal is provided.

#### ***Case Plan Evaluation***

Participants review the Case Plan Evaluation form, along with the Case Plan Goal Progress tool in their laminated guides. Participants was a video which describing the function of each part of the form and how safety is assessed.

### Trial Home Visits & Safety Planning

The policy and process of moving to a trial home visit are reviewed. Participants review the safety analysis and discuss how impending danger is assessed at this stage in the case. Best practices in supporting families and children through a trial home visit are explored, along with ensuring an adequate safety plan throughout the process.

## **WEEK 2, DAY 5:**

### ***Virtual In-Class***

#### Case Example: Goal Progress and Case Plan Evaluation

Participants debrief their learning modules on how to assess goal progress and case plan evaluations. Trainers provide updated information from providers and facilitate a small group activity in which participants practice assessing goal progress for a caregiver in the case example. A further discussion takes place regarding safety assessments. Participants apply their knowledge to completing the Safety Plan Analysis for their case example and determine if a trial home visit is appropriate.

#### Trial Home Visits, Safety Planning & Reunification

Participants work together to build a proposed plan to support the family in their case example for a Trial Home Visit (THV)—including assessment of current family needs. A THV Safety Plan is provided for review and is debriefed by trainers. Participants engage in a reflection activity regarding reunification and the unique needs of families in Alaska and how to best support Active Efforts with Alaska Native families.

### ***Asynchronous Work***

#### Family Service Reflection

Participants complete a written reflection regarding their learning and goals related to Family Service concepts and identify areas for future growth.

#### Family Service Post-Test

Participants complete a post-test to assess knowledge gained in Family Service concepts through the week.

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## **SKILS 161R Online Week 3**

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## **WEEK 3, DAY 1**

### CINA Legal Basics

The Assistant Attorney General's (AAG) Office reviews the legal basics of Child in Need of Aid (CINA) cases.