

Staff Expectations- Senior Protective Services Worker

NOTE: Our case management system is moving from Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) to Child Welfare Services-California Automated Response and Engagement System (CWS-CARES). This policy includes language, forms/templates, and resources that will be reviewed and updated as we transition into CWS-CARES.

(Revised 08/21/26)

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Related Policies

Additional Information can be found in the following policies:

- Workforce Development
- Centralized Assignment Team (CAT)
- Employee Schedules
- Staff Expectations- Protective Services Worker

Forms

The following forms are referenced in this policy:

- 22-10 Supervision Template
- 22-09 Annual Field Observation Worksheet

Resources

The following resources are referenced or may assist staff in demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and abilities outlined in the policy:

- Supervision Template Tips Provides tips and suggestions for how supervisors can complete the 22- 10- Supervision Template
 - Solution Focused Inquiry Questions Examples of solution focused questions that can be used based on program
 - Safety Enhanced Together (SET) SharePoint All SET practice behaviors, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) tools, and other SET resources
 - Staff Self-Care Tips 12 ideas to implement for self-care
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**Resources
(cont.)**

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| • Multicultural Guidelines for Communicating Across Differences | Principles to consider and utilize in order to practice cultural humility and have positive communication across cultural differences. Additional information can be found by searching in Learning Management System (LMS). |
| • Desk Guide | Summary guides of CWS/CMS procedures |
| • CFWB Training Calendar | Informs staff of upcoming CFWB training opportunities |
| • Emotional Intelligence for Leaders | An overview of emotional intelligence and how to apply this to support staff. Additional information can also be found by searching in LMS. |
| • Mental Health Tips for Staff | Summarizes a variety of mental health resources for staff including secondary traumatic stress, check ins with clinical supervisors, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and CE-CERT. |
| • Mental Health Tips for Supervisors | Summarizes a variety of mental health resources for supervisors including a review of secondary traumatic stress, check in with clinical supervisors, CE-CERT and EAP. |
| • Gallup Strengths Quick Reference | A reference guide for all 34 strengths |
| • Gallup Strengths Balconies and Basements | A guide and activity worksheet for addressing the balconies and basements of 34 strengths |
| • Gallup Q12 Employee Engagement | Reviews the 12 items that affect employee engagement and satisfaction |
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Introduction

The role and function of a Senior Protective Services Worker (SPSW) can vary across program assignment. SPSWs play an important role as they simultaneously act as a unit leader and manage the most challenging cases.

The following expectations are intended to provide a general framework for SW practice within CFWB. They are guidelines for the use of professional judgement, as well as individual variations in background, style, and personality. While variation is acceptable, a commitment to consistently demonstrating *Live Well San Diego* and Safety Enhanced Together (SET) core values, expectations, and behaviors is expected. This will ensure that every child, youth, family, and community partner can be assured CFWB is continually working towards the vision that every child grows up safe and nurtured.

SPSWs are expected to have met the expectations of the knowledge, skills, and abilities outlined in: [Staff Expectations- Protective Services Worker](#). The additional knowledge, skills, and abilities outlined in this policy are expected to be demonstrated by the Protective Services Supervisor (PSS) and Protective services Program Manager (PSPM) classifications.

Knowledge

SPSWs must have theoretical and applied understanding of the following subject areas, and knowledge acquired through learning or experience, including insight into one's strengths and areas for growth.

Knowledge (cont.)

Internal knowledge includes:

- Leadership Style
- Emotional Intelligence
- Gallup StrengthsFinder Strengths

External knowledge includes:

- SET framework including:
 - Values
 - Priorities
 - Practice behaviors for staff and supervisors
 - Key Expectations
 - CFWB policies and procedures
 - Safety and Risk Assessment
 - Continuous Quality Improvement
 - Healthy Outcomes for Positive Experiences (HOPE)
 - Basic concepts, principles, and practices of supervision, training, coaching, and mentoring
 - Safety Organized Practice (SOP) theories and skills including:
 - Trauma-Informed Practice
 - Solution Focused Inquiry
 - Appreciative Inquiry
 - Behaviorally based language in safety and case plans
 - Cultural Humility and Responsiveness
 - Balanced assessments using the Three Questions
 - The Three Houses and Safety House
 - Circles of Safety and Support and Safety Networks
 - Safety Mappings and other Family Centered Meetings
 - Harm and Danger Statements and Safety Goals (and other statements/goals to align with case status/service component)
 - Structured Decision Making
 - Facilitation Skills and Mapping
 - Effective leadership and supervision styles and methods
 - SafeMeasures system of data tracking and monitoring
 - Agency tools that support decision-making
 - Agency initiatives including Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Be kind, be curious, be bold and do the right thing with HEART
 - Racial disparities and disproportionality in child welfare and how systems perpetuate inequities
 - Gallup Strengths amongst team/unit members
 - Symptoms and behaviors of secondary traumatic stress
 - Community resources
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Skills and Abilities

Through training and experience, SPSWs must demonstrate the ability to implement into their own practice/lead others to do the following (not an exhaustive list):

- Demonstrate SET practice behaviors
- Critically think and ask questions in order to identify, assess, and address any impacts of abuse/neglect on children.
- Promote family understanding the status of the case/referral by reviewing and answering questions about existing laws, policies, and procedures.
- Engage with the child, youth, family, resource parents, community partners, staff, and others using solution focused inquiry.
- Incorporate the voice of the child, youth, and family throughout the life of the case/referral when making decisions and through documentation.
- Recognize and respond to parent and child behaviors, characteristics, and individual needs associated with abuse, neglect, substance use, intimate partner violence/family violence, physical disabilities, and mental health concerns, especially as those relate to the safety of the child.
- Assess and evaluate home and family situations to determine if crisis intervention is needed.
- Analyze situations and exercise authority in a skillful, appropriate manner.
- Maintain and model a professional, respectful demeanor during difficult work situations.
- Surface the needs of the child, youth, and family and provide relevant and culturally responsive resources.
- Support/assist the family in building their Safety Network to establish and maintain enhanced safety for the child/youth.
- Participate in shared decision-making processes
- Inquire, engage in conversation, and show respect for cultural norms, values, and specific cultural aspects of the family and provide opportunities for them to stay connected to their culture.
- Incorporate culturally respectful objectives, actions, and services in safety, visitation, and case plans.
- Be flexible, creative, and willing to adjust decisions and plans in response to changing conditions of the family including new information and observations of behaviors/actions.
- Follow policy and procedures related to individual program assignment and responsibilities, and support the PSS in holding other staff accountable to follow policy and procedures.
- Utilize coping skills to address secondary traumatic stress in a proactive way and support others in doing so.
- Organize, prioritize, and complete a large volume of work in a timely manner
- Balance workload and leadership duties
- Model teamwork and collaboration with families and within the region
- Coach and mentor new staff and unit members
- Ensure contacts and other workload-related documents are up to date prior to vacation or pending time off.

**Skills and Abilities
(cont.)**

- Model effectively balancing being a member of a remote/hybrid workforce.
- Demonstrate leadership through supporting County initiatives including *Live Well San Diego*, Diversity & Inclusion, HEART.
- Supporting the family in enhancing positive childhood experiences.

For a full job description of SPSWs duties, please see [Class Specifications](#).

For a full list of SET practice behaviors, please see the [SET SharePoint page](#).

SPSW Duties

SPSWs have additional duties and responsibilities to support the unit PSS and the PSWs.

The following chart outlines what duties SPSWs are authorized to complete after training and at the direction of the PSS and which are not.:

Authorized	Not Authorized
• Access caseload for unit • Provide consultation on cases/referrals (including IRS) • Sign court reports in the absence of PSS (except for 366.26 reports and 366.26 addendums where there is a change to previous court recommendations) • Sign Safety Plans, however a consult with a PSS must occur to approve the safety plan. This consult will be documented in CWS/CMS • Close cases and referrals • Assign referrals in the absence or request of the PSS • Assign cases in the absence or request of the PSS • Sign drug test and bus pass authorizations • Access the S drive for the program/office • Provide supervision in absence of the PSS	• Access caseload outside unit/cluster except when assigning or otherwise acting as a PSS • Approve a Safety Plan on a referral without involvement of a PSS and/or CFWB Manager • Approve a removal of a child in a referral or case without involvement of a PSS and/or CFWB Manager • Sign or approve self-generated court reports, bus pass authorizations, or other documents • Sign any forms that authorize a payment, with the exception of bus pass and drug test authorizations • Sign new or renewed therapy authorizations • Close cases or referrals assigned to SPSW's own caseload • Sign or approve Adoptive Tellings or any addendum to a Telling.

When providing primary coverage for a supervisor for an extended period of time, SPSWs may also assume PSS responsibilities including:

- Providing supervision using the [22-10 Supervision Template](#), see [Supervision Template Tips](#) for assistance in completing
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**SPSW Duties
(cont.)**

- Case assignments, transfers, and closures
- PSS role at CFTMs and MDTs
- Addressing performance issues that require immediate attention related to child safety or provision of positive customer service with the worker and elevate concerns to PSS and management

NOTE: All SPSWs may not have an opportunity to demonstrate these skills or perform these duties. They are not required to be completed in order to successfully pass probation, however if the SPSW is in a function where these duties are regularly performed, they must be demonstrated at an accomplished level.

**Supervision and
Consultation**

SPSWs both receive and provide regular supervision and other opportunities for consultation and professional development regarding referrals, cases, and other duties. SPSW responsibilities related to this area include:

- Utilize supervision and consultation with supervisor(s), county counsel, etc. to gain clear understanding of the safety concerns, strengths, and goals.
- Use supervision for assistance in decision-making and addressing issues that may surface, including personal bias or other concerns that may impact balanced decision-making.
- Consult with supervisor regarding personal safety concerns and case alerts .
- Regularly update supervisor of casework issues, problems, and concerns.
- Advocate for changes to better serve clients and coworkers and address systemic inequities, including new or enhanced community resources, and policy improvements.
- Prioritize caseload updates.
- Be prepared to update supervisor on previous action items from supervision.
- Review SafeMeasures and upcoming deadlines and note discussion areas.
- Discuss needs and opportunities for development, training, or resources.
- Keep PSS aware of planned (and unplanned, to the extent possible) leaves to ensure workload coverage.
- Utilize the designated chain of command for case/referral decisions that cannot be resolved between the SPSW and PSS.
- Participate in unit meetings, program integrity meetings, and multi-disciplinary team meetings.
- If comfortable, elevate and troubleshoot concerns related to secondary traumatic stress and how it may be impacting job performance and satisfaction
- Lead unit meetings, program integrity meetings, multi-disciplinary team meetings, and group supervision as directed.

SPSWs will also have an annual field observation occur by their supervisor. The expectations for this can be prepared for by reviewing the 22-09 annual field observation worksheet.

**Ongoing
Workforce
Development
Requirements**

SPSWs are on probation for the first year post-promotion. SPSWs must demonstrate they are accomplished in the above areas, as demonstrated by the consistent and accurate application of knowledge, skills, and abilities, in order to pass probation.

It is important to understand that practice changes and develops over time, so learning must continue beyond the first year of hire. Therefore, each fiscal year SPSWs are required:

- To complete 20 hours of ongoing training and development, six of which must be instructor-led
- To complete six hours of training in the state-selected Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM) category

SPSWs are encouraged to access coaching to assist with the transfer of learning and hands-on skill building. Please see [Workforce Development](#) for further information.

**Alignment with
SET**

This policy supports SET [Value 6](#) and the guiding principles of having a proactive workplace culture of reflection, responsiveness, and shared responsibility that is guided by the practice framework values. It also supports the agency practices to be knowledgeable of and utilize SET practice behaviors to guide practice with families and partners, and to appreciate teamwork and a multi-disciplinary approach to practice.
