

Why Are My Caseworkers Struggling to Complete Quality Visits?

Few things are as critical as seeing the children we serve face to face, and yet as a state we continue to struggle. Many supervisors are challenged to understand why their caseworkers are not meeting expectations for making face to face visits. Robert Mager (1997) provides a valuable lens for this question.

We know that performance deficits are a result of either a **gap in knowledge** or a **gap in execution**. Gaps in execution can be about concrete barriers (e.g., large caseloads), but there can also be a motivation barrier. Supervisors should have a good understanding of how to approach caseworkers who are not making necessary face to face visits with the children on their caseloads.



Gap in Knowledge

Supervisors need to put on their educational supervision cap when caseworkers do not understand the importance or purpose of visits, and work with caseworkers in the following ways:

- Connect the purpose of visits to the agency and unit mission and the safety of the child
- Help caseworkers understand that quality assessments and case plans require quality information that can only be gathered through quality face to face visits
- Shape the performance of your caseworkers by modeling what information is priority and what benchmarks you measure consistently.
- Make visitation and quality assessments and case plans a priority, so that caseworkers will naturally be drawn to learning more about these topics
- Plan to take the new CAPMIS training series together as a unit so that everyone is on the same page about what information is needed to make quality assessment and case plans

Register in [E-Track](#) for the following CAPMIS workshops:

- *CAPMIS Assessing Safety* (114-11-CPM-S)
- *CAPMIS Safety Planning* (114-9-CPM-S)
- *CAPMIS Strengths and Needs Risk Assessment* (114-13-CPM-S)

Gap in Execution/Motivation

Moving a low performing caseworker over a motivation barrier can seem daunting, but try starting with some coaching. A great place to start is with the assessments and case plans your caseworker

is currently working on. Caseworkers will automatically struggle to complete any assessment or case plan without having quality face to face visits with children and families. To ensure quality visits are happening, this may require you to perform some in-field observations and modeling so you can be confident about the visit being done well. Supervisors can then have caseworkers simultaneously work on assessments and/or case plans for a family when the visit was made successfully. They can also do one when the visit was either not made or not done well. A natural teachable moment is created here: the supervisor simply has to point out the natural struggle involved in completing a quality assessment or case plan without having completed a quality visit. The goals here are to have the caseworker realize the importance of successful visits, how quality visits make their job easier, how quality visits make them more effective, and what information they need to gather during visits. Such insights are necessary to see improvement in a caseworker's successful visitation rate. This type of intervention requires a substantial time investment from the supervisor, but the results will be worth the effort.

Mager, R.F. & Pipe, P. (1984). *Analyzing performance problems: Or "you really oughta wanna."* Atlanta: Lake Publishers.