

# *Orientation to Alternative Response*

## **Module 1: Program & Pathway**

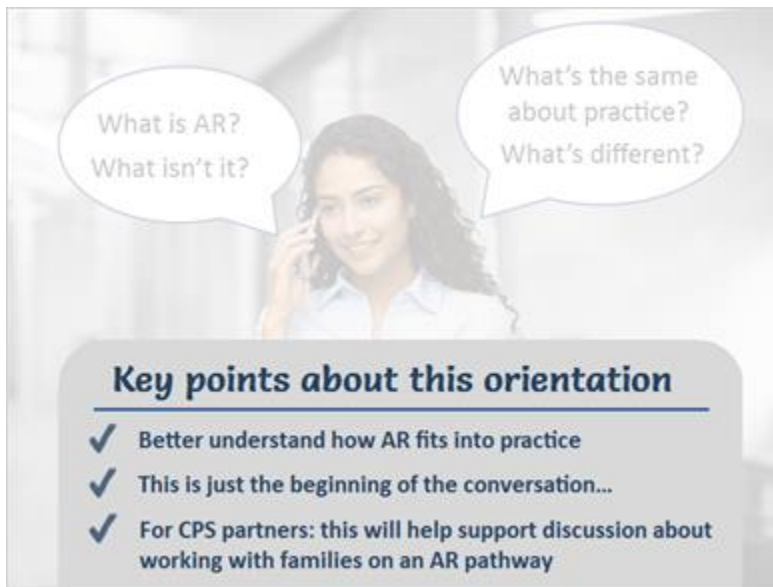
### ***1.1 Introduction***



#### **Narration:**

Welcome to Part 1 of the Alternative Response Orientation. This training will explore the 3 P's of Wisconsin's Alternative Response: Program, Pathway and Practice. This presentation will focus on program and pathway.

## 1.2 Key points about this orientation



### Narration:

There's been a lot of discussion about how Alternative Response, or AR, fits into CPS practice in Wisconsin. What is it? What isn't it? What's the same about practice and what's different?

The purpose of this orientation is to provide CPS workers with a framework to understand where and how AR fits into practice. You'll consider how to incorporate this approach in your work with families. We'll also take a look at how this plays out with a Wisconsin family.

While this orientation is intended to provide new information, it's only the beginning of a conversation as you kick off implementing Alternative Response.

If you're a partner who collaborates with CPS, this training will provide an overview of AR and help support discussion about how your practice and work may look when working with families on an Alternative Response pathway. Counties with CPS Agencies implementing AR will host community meetings where partners will get together to further look at how AR will impact their combined work. This training will help you prepare for those meetings.

### 1.3 Questions



#### Narration:

Throughout this training, you'll recognize approaches you already use in your work with families. Your current practice, coupled with what you'll learn, will support your efforts to be successful.

We also know you'll have questions like:

- What will look different in my work?
- How will I talk with families about this?
- How will families' respond to me?
- Will this take more time for me to do?
- Do I have all the skills I need to be successful?
- Will kids be safe?

If you have questions like these, then great! Your curiosity is a reflection of your commitment to understand and find effective and efficient ways to work with families. Everyone's goal is to partner with families in ways that result in a parents' ability to provide safe care for their children.

We know that change can be confusing and even frustrating at times. Don't worry! You won't have to figure this out on your own. There are opportunities and activities planned to support you as you learn about AR and how to integrate the approach into your daily work. Click on the folder to learn more about AR training in Wisconsin.

### **1.4 How did AR get started in WI?**



#### **Narration:**

AR was introduced in Wisconsin after counties requested DCF consider its promising practice. Together we reviewed the research and learned many states saw success in expanding their approach to working with families.

We referred to the original way of approaching families as a “traditional response” and we called the new, second option an “alternative response.” We now refer to these two pathways as TR and AR.

Once counties and DCF identified changes they would like to see they advocated for changes to state statutes. Ultimately, legislation was passed to allow select Wisconsin counties to participate in a pilot program to implement AR. In 2010 eligible families in select counties were first assigned to the AR pathway in Wisconsin.

Since then we have gradually and methodically expanded AR to additional counties. Each time we implement we learn new information about how to improve the next phase of implementation so families and agencies experience the intended benefits of a “two-track” system.

Click on the map to see what the current implementation in Wisconsin looks like. When you’re ready, advance to the next slide to continue.

### **1.5 AR Policy**



#### **Narration:**

The changes that relate to the AR policy focus on initial face to face contact, interviewing children, and maltreatment/maltreater determination.

Click on the folder to see the specifics in the AR addendum policy. When you’re ready, advance to the next slide.

## 1.6 AR is First a CPS Case



### Narration:

An Alternative Response case is first a CPS case. This means a report must first be screened in as a CPS Report in need of an initial assessment. Once the screening decision and response time have been decided, the case is assigned to one of two pathways. The screening decision and response time help to clarify whether the case is eligible for assignment to the AR or TR pathway. Pathway refers to what track the case is on. Knowing the track helps the initial assessment worker know how to approach the family.

For example, let's take case worker, Jill. She receives a case assigned to the AR pathway. Jill calls the family ahead of time to schedule the initial face-to-face contact and interviews the children with their parents. Because this case is on the AR pathway, Jill focuses on determining whether or not the family needs services to address the presenting problem.

This is different than what she would do if the case was classified as a TR case. With certain families, when we eliminate barriers to engagement, like unannounced contact, we are better able to gather information to support safety decisions.

If this case was assigned to the TR pathway, the focus of the approach would be to preserve any evidence of maltreatment and to determine who caused harm to the child. With this focus and approach it is unlikely Jill would call the parents ahead of time to schedule the initial face-to-face contact. It's also unlikely she would interview the children with the parents.

### **1.7 Pathway Assignment**



#### **Narration:**

Cases screened in for an initial assessment do not need to be approached in the same way. That's why you have two pathway assignment options when you determine whether agency intervention is needed.

On some cases a court order is needed to make sure the child's family gets services. In other cases the family needs services and court intervention isn't necessary since the parents recognize the need to make changes.

The difference in approaches is made possible by the pathway assignment. The pathway assignment is determined by the severity of the allegations in the initial CPS Report and the parent's willingness and ability to partner with the agency to address the presenting problem and assure the safety of their children.

## 1.8 A family you've worked with



### Narration:

Many families can benefit when we expand our pathway options to include Alternative Response.

Perhaps there's a family you've worked with that requires an assessment and possibly needs services; services that can be provided without making a maltreatment and maltreater determination.

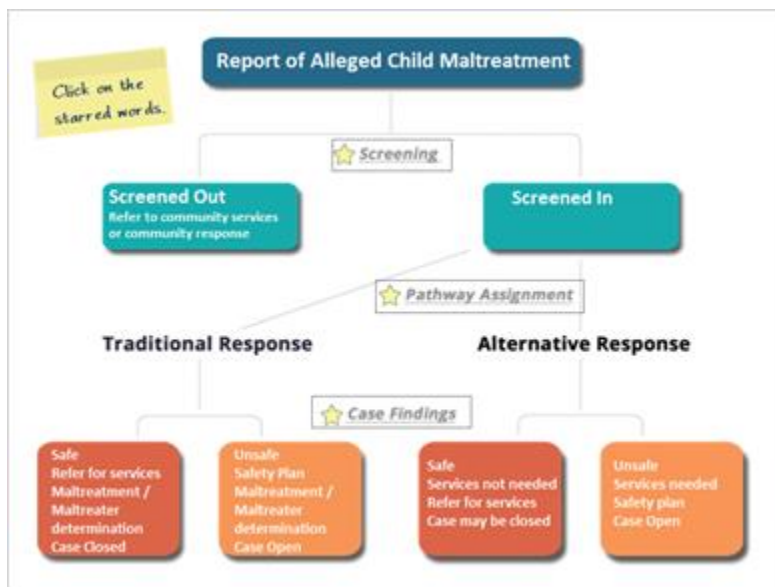
Have you worked with a family where AR would be a good fit?

Yes Response: Great. Remember this family as you continue through this online training and consider how the AR approach could have been used.

No Response: Okay. As you come to understand the purpose and benefit of AR you will likely think of a family where this approach would be appropriate.



## 1.9 Case Flow Process



### Narration:

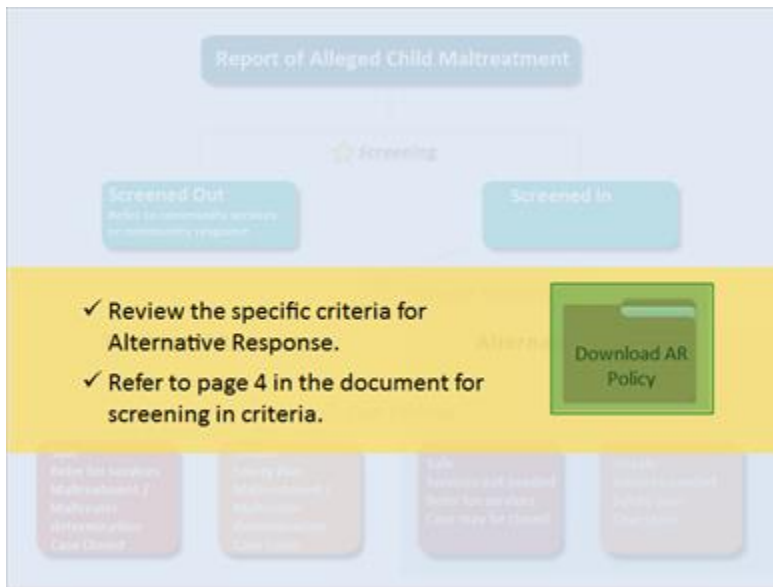
Here is a look at the case flow process with the expanded pathway option. Click on the starred words to learn more. Then advance to the next slide when you're ready to continue.

Screening Response: AR doesn't change how this decision is made.

Pathway Assignment Response: Which pathway to assign is based on a set of criteria that considers severity of maltreatment, child safety, and the potential need for legal intervention.

Case Finding Response: Both responses require a decision to determine whether a child's safe or not. A traditional response includes making a maltreatment and maltreater determination whereas an Alternative Response results in a service determination. Both TR and AR cases can be transferred to ongoing services under a CHIPS petition. It's more likely, however, that an AR case will be opened under a voluntary agreement. This is because the family's more engaged and likely to partner with the agency to address issues related to safety.

### 1.10 Flow Chart



#### Narration:

As you can see from the case flow diagram the screening process does not change. Now let's look at pathway assignment. This is the decision whether a screened in CPS report can be addressed through alternative response, or traditional response if warranted.

Cases assigned to the AR pathway are those cases that include allegations that are less severe than those in the Traditional CPS Response. This is no less a CPS case. This is a case that doesn't benefit from law enforcement involvement or a maltreatment/maltreater determination.

Click on the folder to see specific criteria. Then advance to the next slide to continue.

### 1.11 Pathway Assignment Conversation



**Narration:**

Now that you've seen the criteria, let's listen to a conversation between Jill and her supervisor on pathway assignment.

**Worker:** Hey Sarah I have a question for you. I have a case that's assigned as an AR case and the access report has allegations of maltreatment. It doesn't make any sense to me. I thought AR was about helping people not about investigating allegations.

**Supervisor:** Well you're right Jill, but let's talk a bit more about it. Do you remember when the pathway assignment is made?

**Worker:** Yeah it's after we decide whether it's a CPS case or not.

**Supervisor:** You're right . That's going to mean that the CPS report is still going to have the allegations made by the reporter in it.

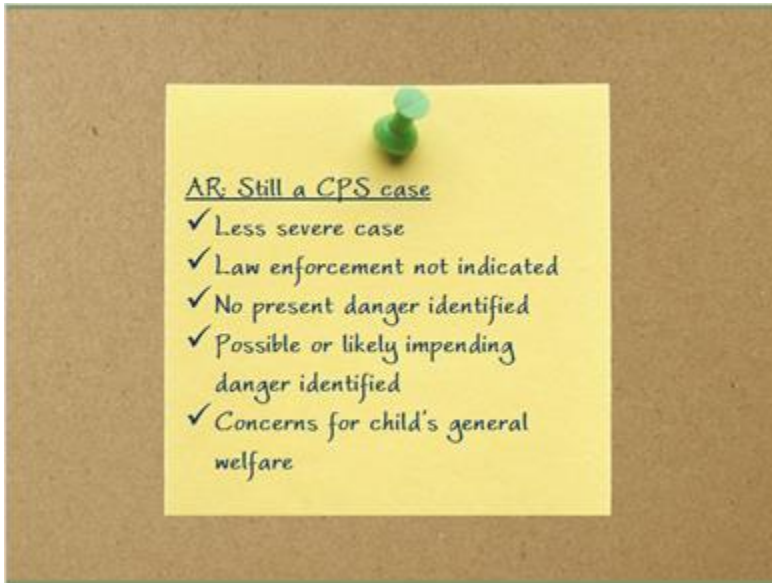
**Worker:** So what am I supposed to do about the allegations?

**Supervisor:** Well, with an AR case, we use allegations to explain to the family why they came to our attention. It's really just a starting point to understand what their struggles might be. With AR cases, we're focusing on engaging with a family to assess how the allegations, are impacting them. And we're still assessing safety the same way we always have. Really, the difference is, we're not spending to figure out if something happened and who did it.

**Worker:** Oh ok. So instead of focusing on determinations, I can spend my time with the family identifying supports or services they need.

Supervisor: **Exactly**. Really, you've always done this. Now, you can shift your focus sooner to figure out if services are needed, and then help families identify and remove any barriers so **they're able to provide safe care for their child**.

### **1.12 AR Assignment Notes**



#### **Narration:**

Knowing this was new and different for her, Jill put together a post-it note to remind herself when an AR assignment would be appropriate. Now that she feels more clear about AR pathway assignment, she needs to consider what types of cases are appropriate for TR. Read Jill's post-it note and then advance to the next slide.

### 1.13 TR Policy



The slide is titled "Traditional Response Policy" in a large, light blue font at the top. Below the title, there is a light blue box containing three bullet points: "• Collaboration with law enforcement", "• Result in court action", and "• Substantial abuse / neglect has or is likely to occur". To the right of this box is a faint image of a man in a light blue shirt holding a folder. Below the light blue box is a yellow banner with two checkmarks and text: "✓ Review the specific criteria for Traditional Response." and "✓ Refer to page 3 of the document." To the right of the banner is a green folder icon with the text "Download TR Policy" inside it.

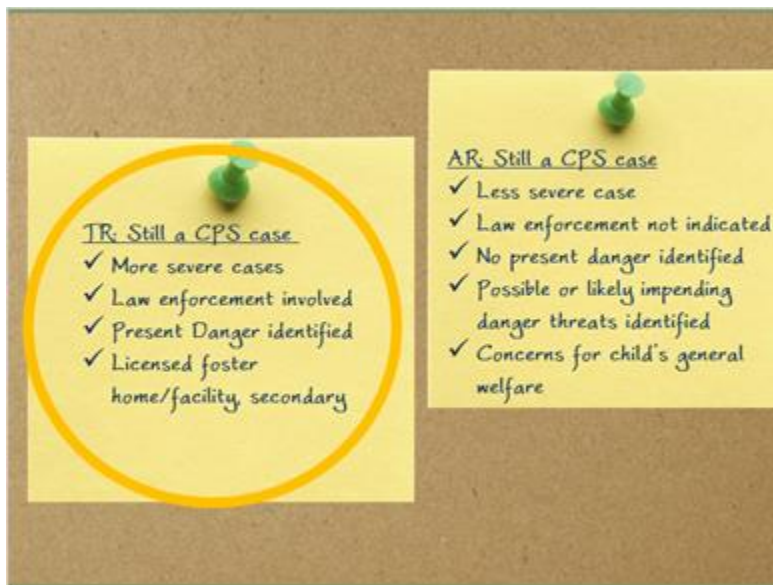
**Narration:**

Let's review the policy for assignment to Traditional Response.

It may be appropriate to consider assignment to a TR pathway when the assessment will likely require collaboration with law enforcement and result in juvenile or criminal court action. This is because substantial abuse or neglect has or is likely to occur.

Click on the folder to see specific criteria. When you are ready, advance to the next slide to continue.

### 1.14 TR Assignment Notes



#### Narration:

After reading the TR policy and solidifying her learning, Jill wrote another post-it note to remind herself when TR assignment is appropriate. When you are ready, advance to the next slide to continue.

### 1.15 Difference Question



**Narration:**

Do you think the difference between Alternative Response and Traditional Response is felt more by CPS workers or by families?

Worker Response: Actually for the CPS worker AR and TR are similar in many ways. As we'll see the changes in AR have the biggest impact on how families experience the process.

Family Response: Correct, for the CPS worker AR and TR are similar in many ways. Let's take a further look at how the changes in AR are felt by families.

## 1.16 Similar and Different



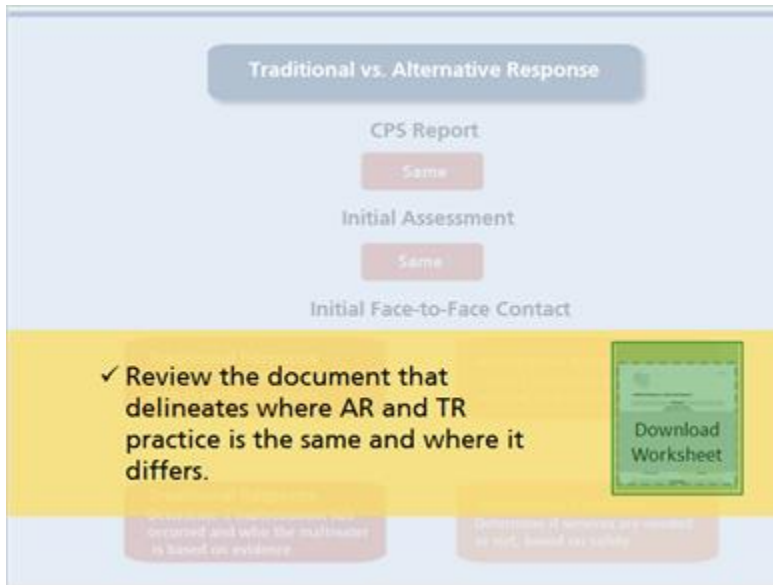
### Narration:

It's important to note the actual nuts and bolts requirements aren't that different between AR and TR. The biggest differences come through our approach and intervention; and how families experience us.

When we don't have to make a maltreatment/maltreater determination, we have an opportunity to establish and strengthen partnership with families. Engaging families at the onset and collaborating with them on how the Initial Assessment process will go supports our focus and efforts on identifying services and assuring safe care for the child.



### 1.17 AR and TR Table

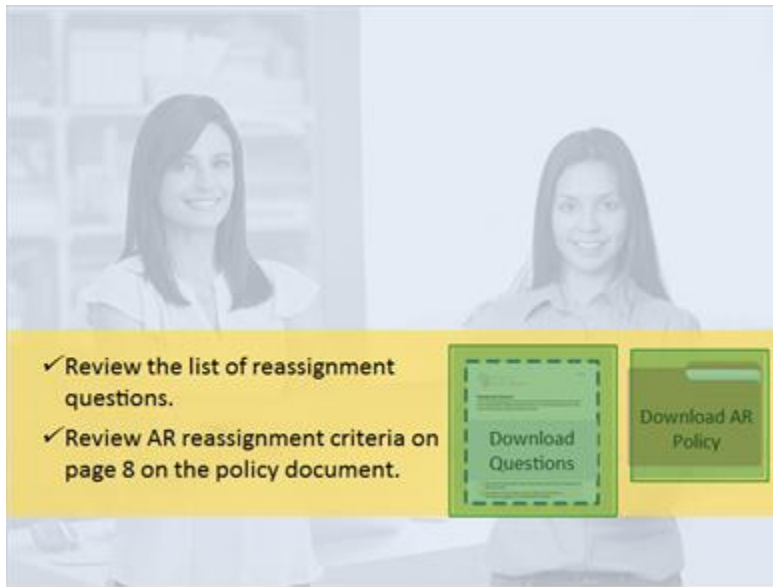


#### Narration:

All CPS cases, regardless of pathway assignment, gather and analyze the same information-information that supports an understanding and assessment of child safety.

Click on the worksheet to take a look at where AR and TR are the same and where practice differs.

## 1.18 Reassignment Discussion



### Narration:

Jill's working on a case that has her confused. It was assigned as AR. After meeting with the family and gathering further information she believes the situation should be on the TR pathway instead. She meets with her supervisor to talk about it. Let's listen in on the meeting.

**Worker:** I don't know what to do with this new information. It's not adding up and I get the feeling there's more going on in the family than they're willing to tell me.

**Supervisor:** Thanks for sharing this with me Jill. I can understand why you're concerned. We need to remember pathway assignment is initially determined based on the information we have at the time. We can learn different information during the initial assessment that would indicate possible reassignment of pathway.

**Worker:** Do you think we should reassign this case to TR?

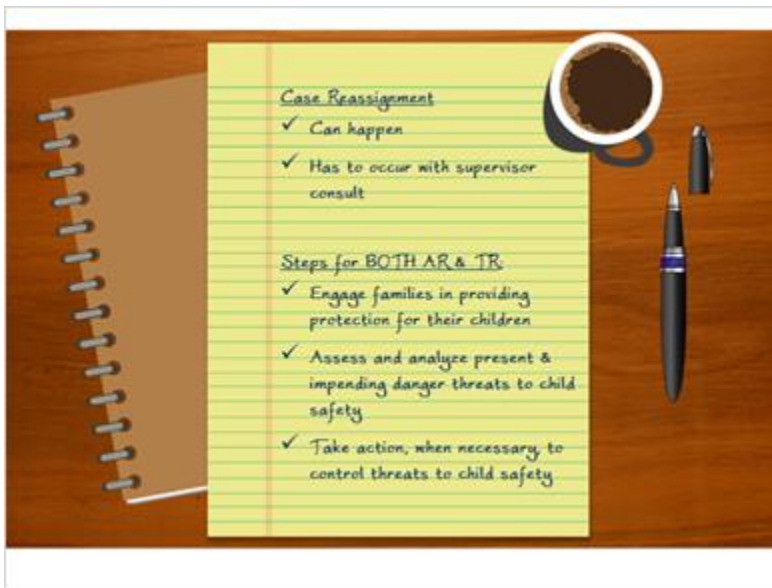
**Supervisor:** You're right to consult with me about your concerns as I can work with you on reassignment if that's the direction to go. This process requires supervisory approval so it'll be important for you to document what we decide in the case record. Let me ask you a few questions about what you've recently learned.

Click on worksheet to see a list of questions that can help guide a worker's and

supervisor's thinking when considering reassignment.

Click on binder to learn about reassignment.

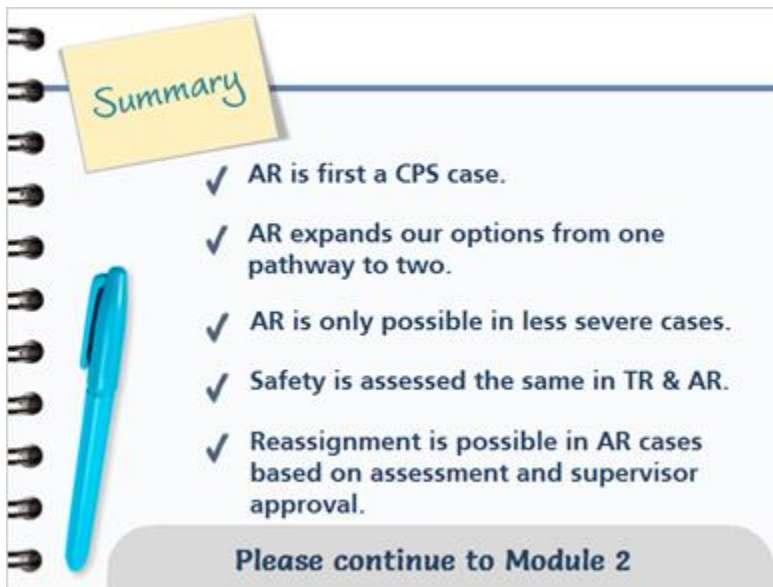
### 1.19 Reassignment Notes



**Narration:**

Now that Jill knows about reassignment, she made herself a couple more reminders to post on her bulletin board. When you're ready, advance to the next slide.

## 1.20 Summary



### Narration:

Before we turn to the next module on practice, let's consider what we've learned about program and pathway.

AR is first a CPS case.

AR expands our options from one pathway to two.

AR is for families where the initial concerns are less severe at Access.

Safety is assessed the same in TR and AR.

And Reassignment is possible in AR cases based on assessment and supervisor approval.