



Improving Consistency of Child Maltreatment Identification **for Drowning**

Learning Together, Protecting Tomorrows



Key Funding Partner

Federal Acknowledgement

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Housekeeping

Before We Get Started



Recorded Webinar

This webinar is being recorded and will be made available on the National Center's website.



Questions and Answers

Participants are muted. Use the question-and-answer box to ask questions.



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Email the National Center at info@ncfrp.org if you experience tech problems.



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Speakers

The Speakers Have No Financial Relationship Or Interests To Disclose.



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Agenda

For This Webinar

1

Background

Discuss how and why these guidelines were developed.

2

The Guidelines

Review each step of the new guidelines.

3

Practice

Practice using the guidelines with mock review scenarios.



Background

Why Were These Guidelines Developed?

Determining Child Maltreatment in the Pediatric NFR-CRS

A Public Health Approach

- Using a public health model within the context of fatality review is the ideal approach for optimal child maltreatment identification and, therefore, prevention.
- For every death reviewed and entered in the Pediatric NFR-CRS, teams consider if child maltreatment played a role in the death, based on available information and professional judgments.
- This is strictly prevention-focused with no legal ramifications.

- a. Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?
- Yes/probable
 - No, go to next section
 - U/K, go to next section
- If yes/probable, choose primary reason:
- Child abuse, go to I5b
 - Child neglect, go to I5f
 - Poor/absent supervision, go to I5h
 - Exposure to hazards, go to I5g



Mock Scenario #1

Bathtime

Five-month-old infant placed in a bathtub with their 3-year-old sibling. Parent ran 5-6 inches of water in the tub, then left the bathroom for “less than 5 minutes” to gather clothes for the children. When returning to the bathroom the parent saw the 3-year-old standing in the hall. The parent rushed into the bathroom and found the infant face down in the bathtub. The parent started CPR and called 911. The infant was pronounced dead at the scene.

Poll

Mock Scenario #1



QUESTION: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards



ANSWER: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) **Yes, neglect**
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards



Mock Scenario #2

Pool Play

Two-year-old playing in back yard, inground pool with 3 older siblings while a parent watched from the patio. The parent instructed all children to return inside while they prepared dinner. All children were last seen in the living room watching TV. After about 30 minutes, when the parent went to gather the children for dinner, they noticed the 2-year-old was missing. The 2-year-old was found at the bottom of the pool.

Poll

Mock Scenario #2



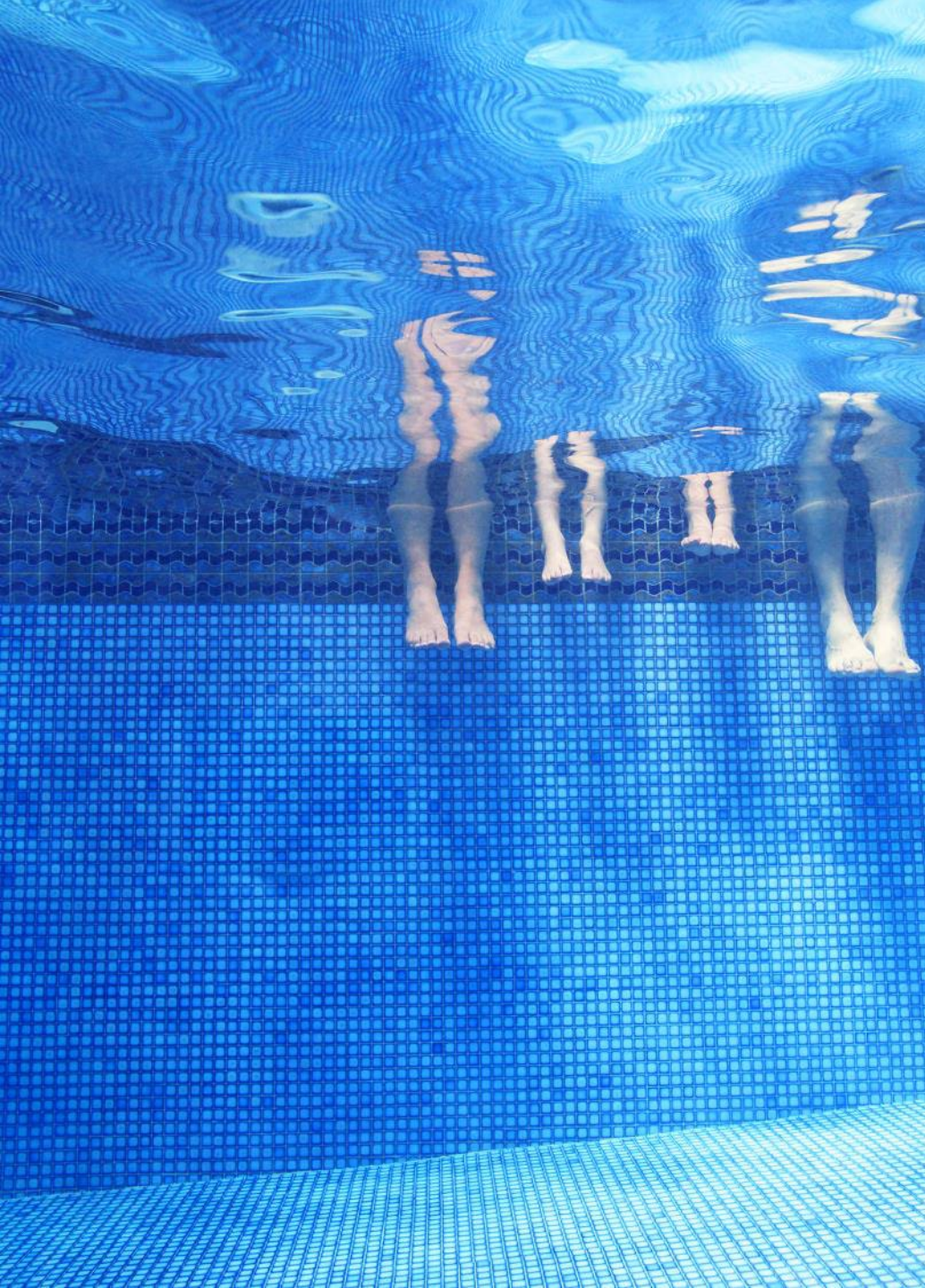
QUESTION: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards



ANSWER: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision**
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards



Problem

For drowning among children ages 0-5 years, determining if child maltreatment contributed to the death is complex and often inconsistent.



Objective

Develop guidelines, informed by data and practice, to help fatality review teams consistently classify the contribution of child maltreatment to drowning.



Goals

- Increase consistency in classification of maltreatment.
- Provide guidance to distinguish between maltreatment categories.
- Encourage objective classification based on incident circumstances rather than the subjective interpretation of social or demographic factors.



Methods

Examining the Data

- Large differences in the drowning location was noted for infants compared to 1-5-year-olds.
- Similar incident circumstances were classified differently for both infants and 1-5-year-olds in 15a.
- Because infants should always be supervised and never be left in a bathtub without a supervisor close enough to touch them, separate guidelines for infants and 1-5-year-olds were created.



Documenting Supervision in the Pediatric National Fatality Review-Case Reporting System

National Center Guidance Report

Published May 2025



The Guidelines

Review New Guidelines

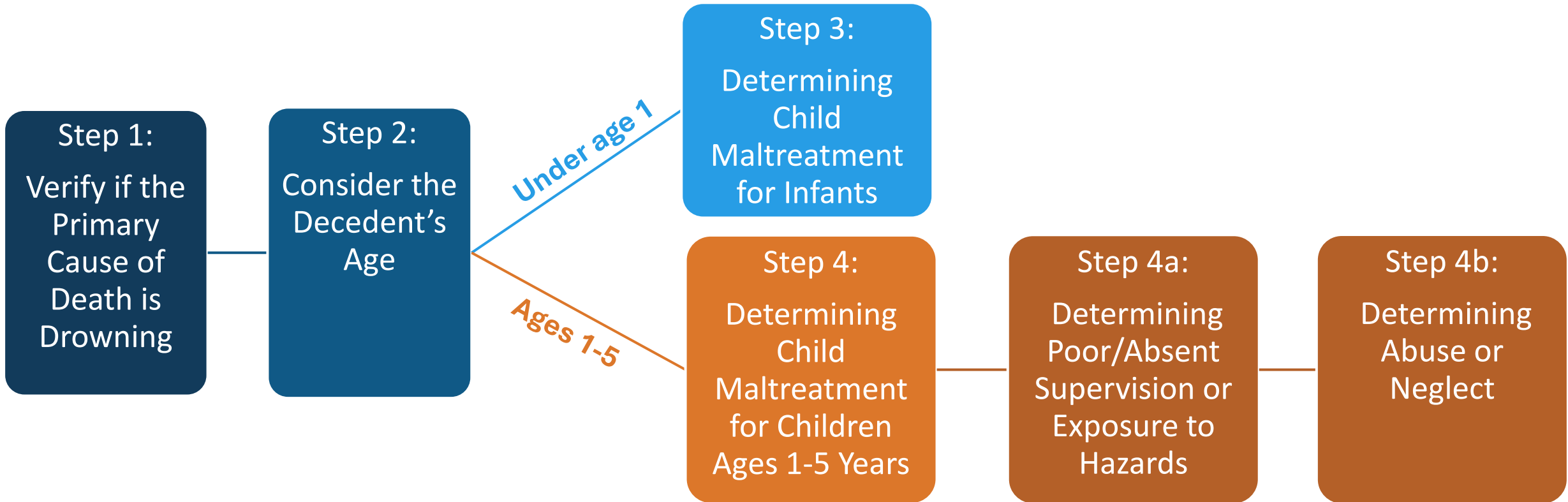


Guidelines for Determining Child Maltreatment in Section 15 for Drowning Deaths

**Follow Along As We Go Through The
Guidelines!**

The Guidelines

Step by Step



The Guidelines

Steps 1 and 2



STEP 1: Verify if the Primary Cause of Death is Drowning

- If the primary cause of death selection in Question G6 is “drowning”, move to **STEP 2: Consider the Decedent’s Age**.
- If the primary cause of death selection is something other than “drowning,” please **stop here** and consult the Data Dictionary for assistance completing Section I5.

- From an external cause of injury
- From a medical condition
- Undetermined if injury or medical cause
- Unknown
 - Motor vehicle and other transport
 - Fire, burn, or electrocution
- Drowning
- Asphyxia
- Bodily Force or Weapon
- Fall or crush
- Poisoning, overdose or acute intoxication
- Undetermined injury
- Other cause
- Unknown



STEP 2: Consider the Decedent’s Age

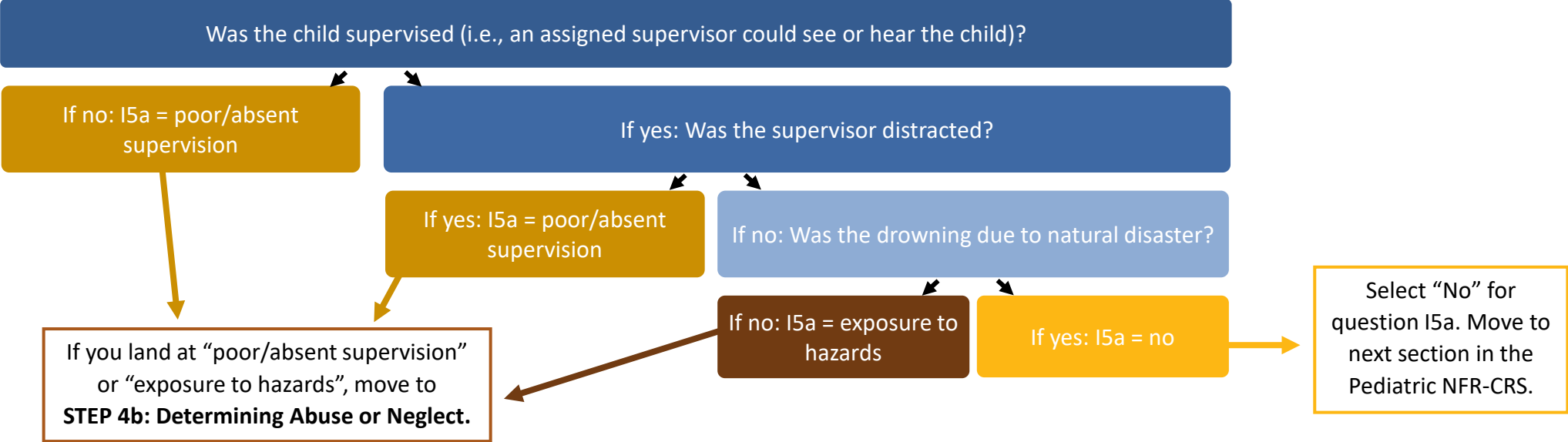
- If the decedent is an infant (less than one year old), move to **STEP 3: Determining Child Maltreatment for Infants**.
- If the decedent is a child aged 1-5 years, move to **STEP 4: Determining Child Maltreatment for Children Ages 1-5**.
- If the decedent is aged 6 years or older, please **stop here** and consult the Data Dictionary for assistance completing Section I5.

The Guidelines

STEP 4: Determining Child Maltreatment for Children Ages 1-5

STEP 4a: Determining Poor/Absent Supervision or Exposure to Hazards

Start with the first question below and follow the arrows until you land in an orange or yellow box.

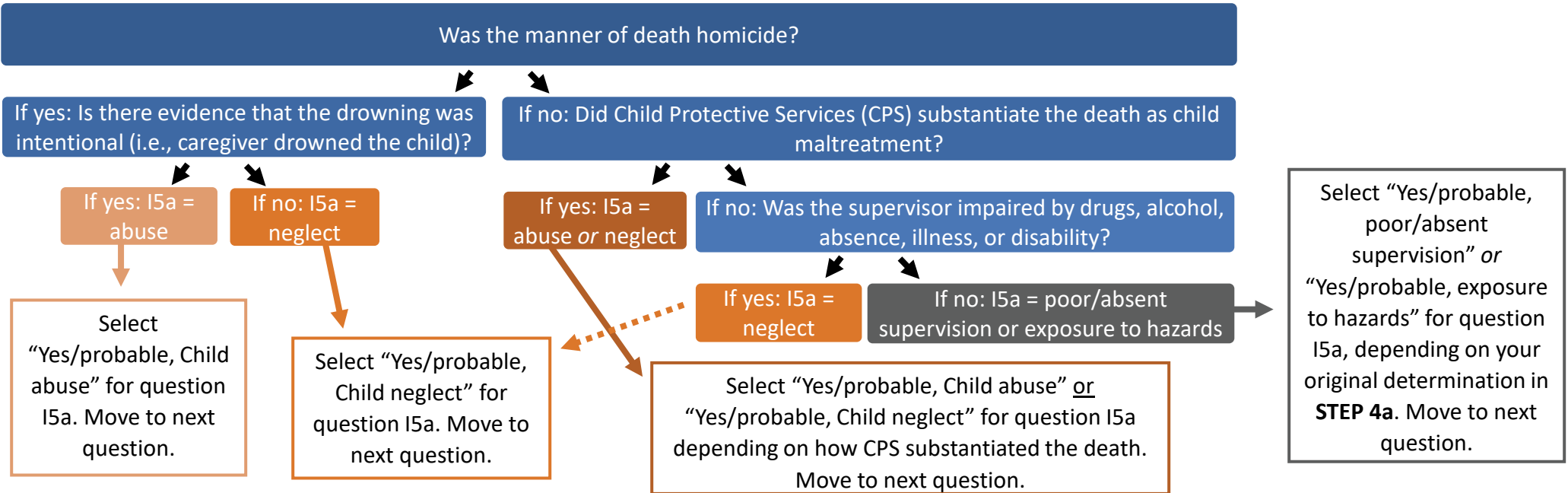


The Guidelines

STEP 4: Determining Child Maltreatment for Children Ages 1-5

STEP 4b: Determining Abuse or Neglect

Start with the first question below and follow the arrows until you land in an orange or gray box.





Practice

With Mock Scenarios



Mock Scenario #3

Infants

A 10-month-old was playing on the floor in the living room. The parent fell asleep on the couch. During this time, the infant crawled out of a sliding glass door that the family often left open “a crack” so the cat could exit. The infant was later found at the bottom of the family’s backyard pool.

Poll

Mock Scenario #3



QUESTION: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards

Details

Manner of death?

Accident

Supervised?

No

Supervisor impairment?

No

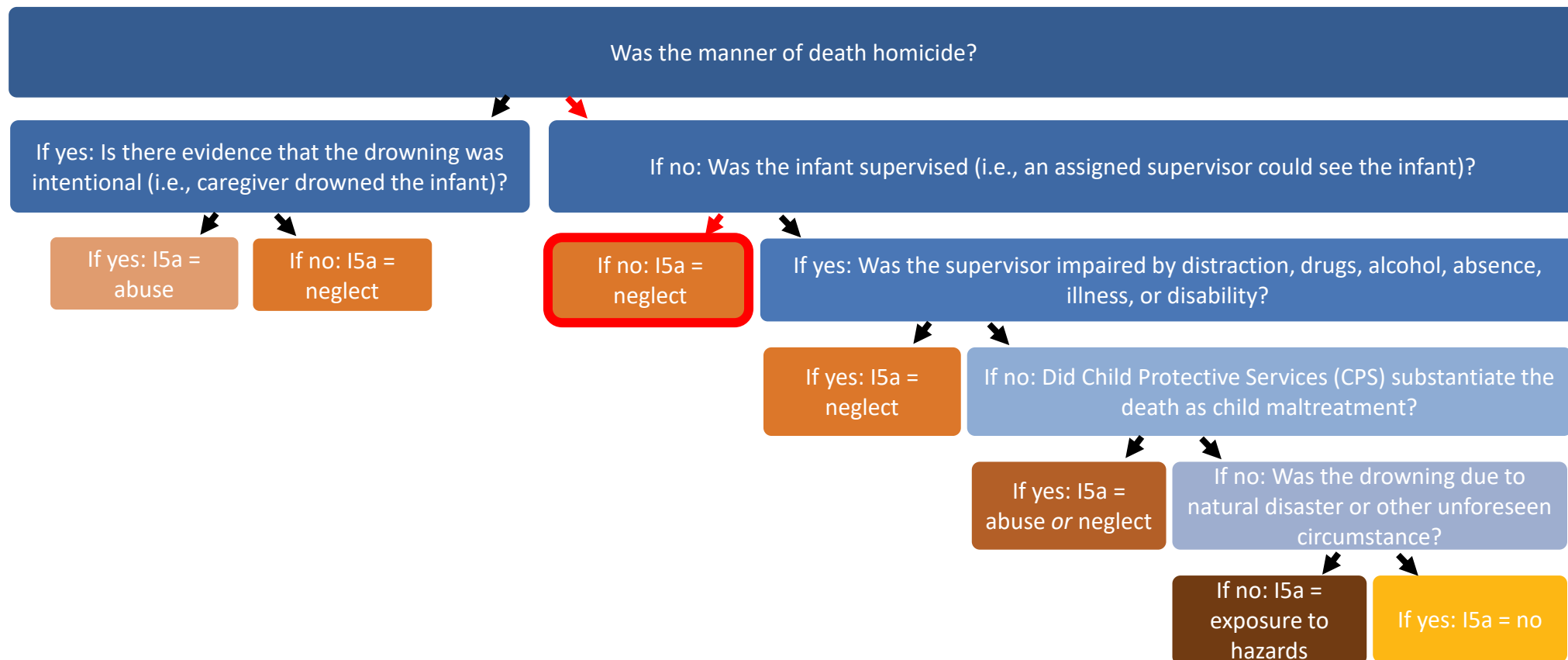
Natural disaster?

No

Other unforeseen circumstances?

No

STEP 3: Determining Child Maltreatment for Infants



Poll

Mock Scenario #3



QUESTION: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards



ANSWER: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) **Yes, neglect**
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards



Mock Scenario #4

Toddlers

The parents of a 3-year-old child and newborn infant put the children down for a nap – the toddler in a bed and the newborn in a crib. Some friends stopped by and the parents sat with them on the front porch drinking beer and listening to music. After 2 hours, the parents remembered to check on the children. The infant was in the crib, but the 3-year-old was missing. The adults searched for the toddler who was eventually found at the bottom of a neighbor's pond. CPS investigated and substantiated the death.

Poll

Mock Scenario #4



QUESTION: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards

Details

Supervised?

No

Supervisor distraction?

N/A

Natural disaster?

No

Manner of death?

Accident

CPS substantiation?

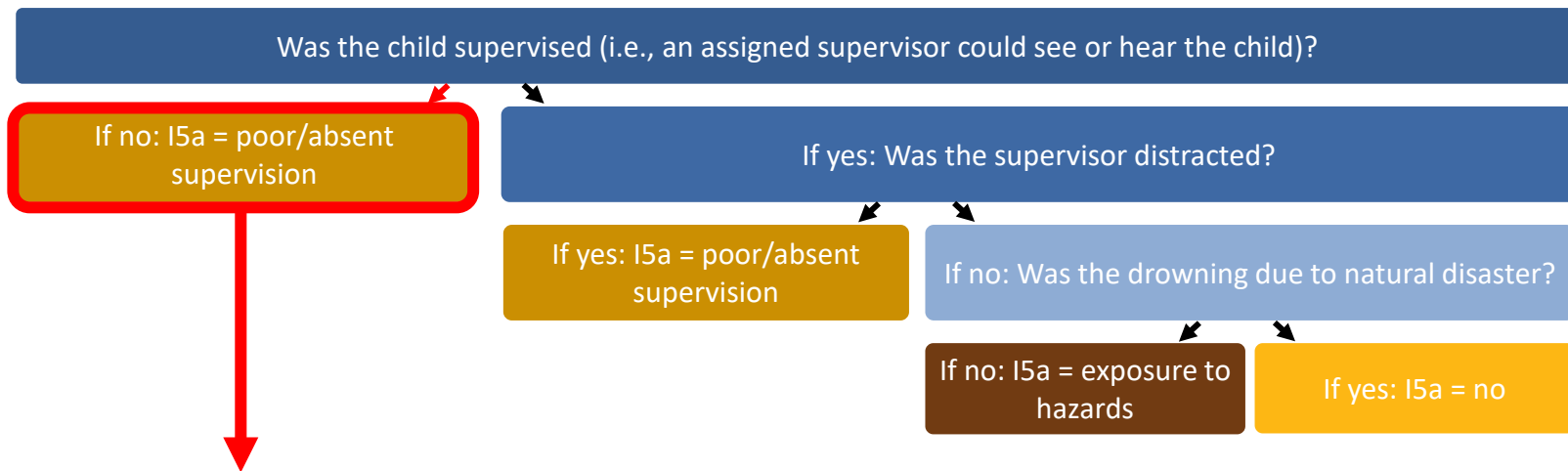
Yes, neglect

Other supervisor impairment?

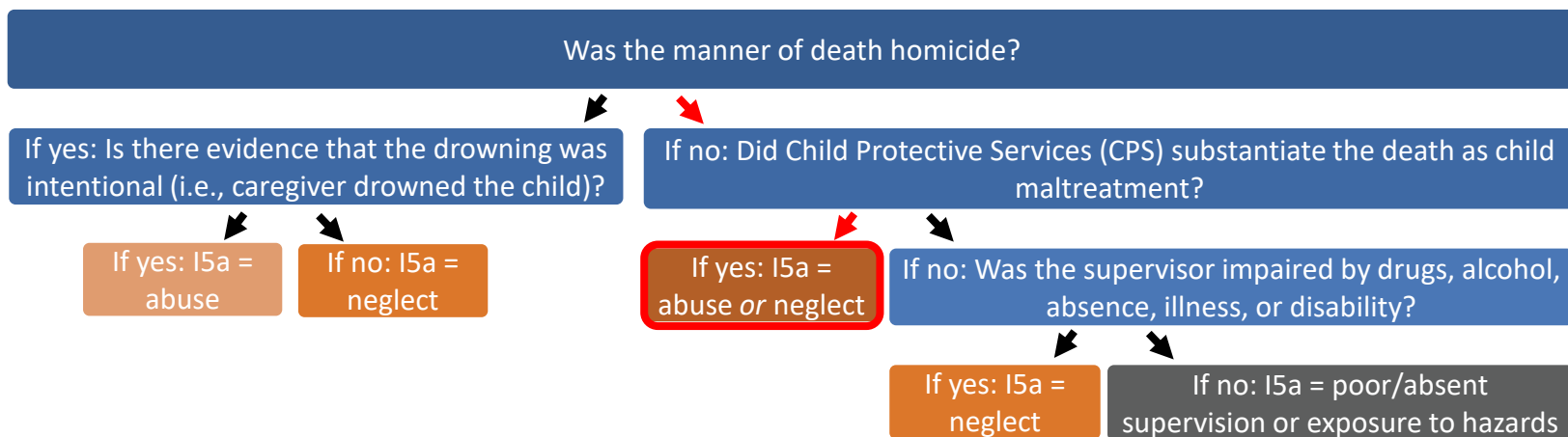
Yes

STEP 4: Determining Child Maltreatment for Children Ages 1-5

STEP 4a: Determining Poor/Absent Supervision or Exposure to Hazards



STEP 4b: Determining Abuse or Neglect



Poll

Mock Scenario #4



QUESTION: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards



ANSWER: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) **Yes, neglect**
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards



Mock Scenario #5

Away from Home

Three families were vacationing together at a short-term rental house. The house had a hot tub the families used earlier in the day. There were 6 adults and 3 children (ages 4, 6, 7) in the large family room after dinner. Adults were playing cards, children watching TV. Parents of the 4-year-old paused the card game to put their child to bed but realized he was no longer in the room. The child was found floating face down in the hot tub, located 10 feet away through a sliding glass door that was left open to enjoy the breeze.

Poll

Mock Scenario #5



QUESTION: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards

Details

Supervised?

Yes

Supervisor distraction?

Yes

Natural disaster?

No

Manner of death?

Accident

CPS substantiation?

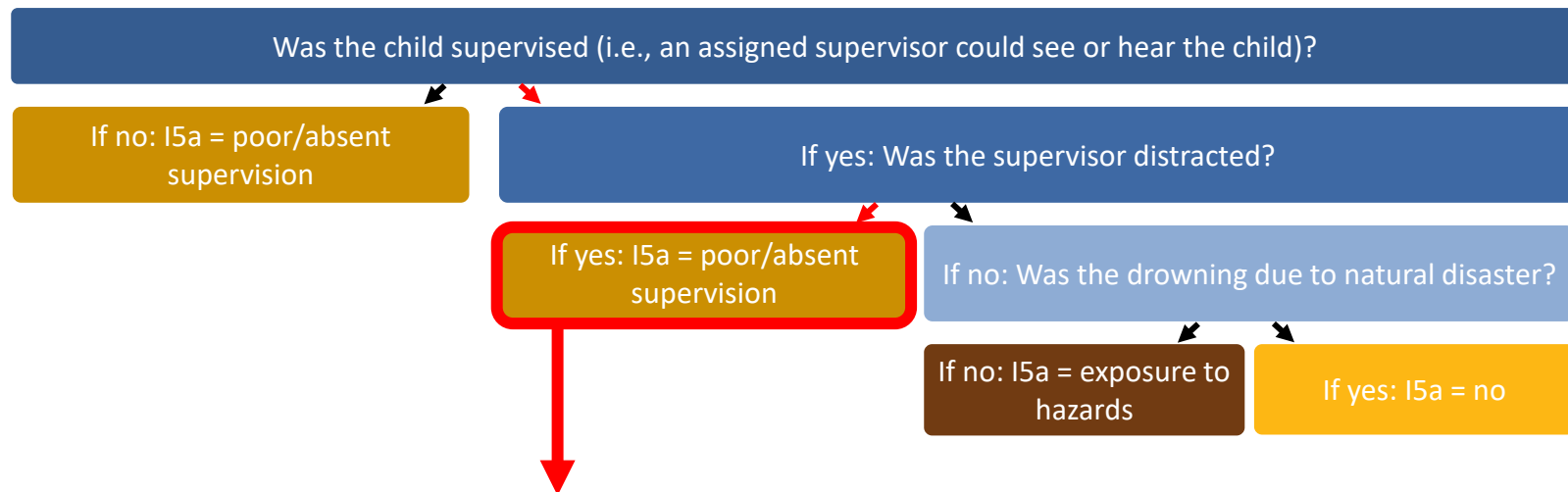
No

Other supervisor impairment?

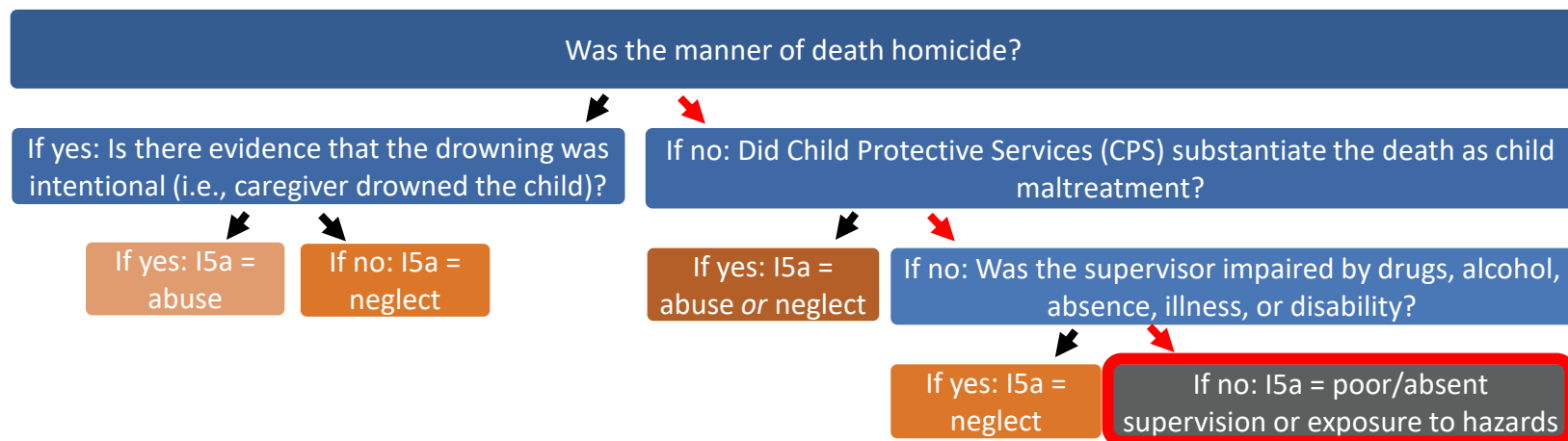
No

STEP 4: Determining Child Maltreatment for Children Ages 1-5

STEP 4a: Determining Poor/Absent Supervision or Exposure to Hazards



STEP 4b: Determining Abuse or Neglect



Poll

Mock Scenario #5



QUESTION: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards



ANSWER: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision**
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards



Mock Scenario #6

Open Water

A 3-year-old child was on a canoe outing with her parents. The child was not wearing a floatation device. The weather changed and the canoe was blown off course into swift water with rapids. The canoe hit some rocks, tipped over, and the 3-year-old was swept away. Child was found wedged under a rock in the river. Parents had not been drinking, and no foul play was suspected.

Poll

Mock Scenario #6



QUESTION: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards

Details

Supervised?

Yes

Supervisor distraction?

No

Natural disaster?

No

Manner of death?

Accident

CPS substantiation?

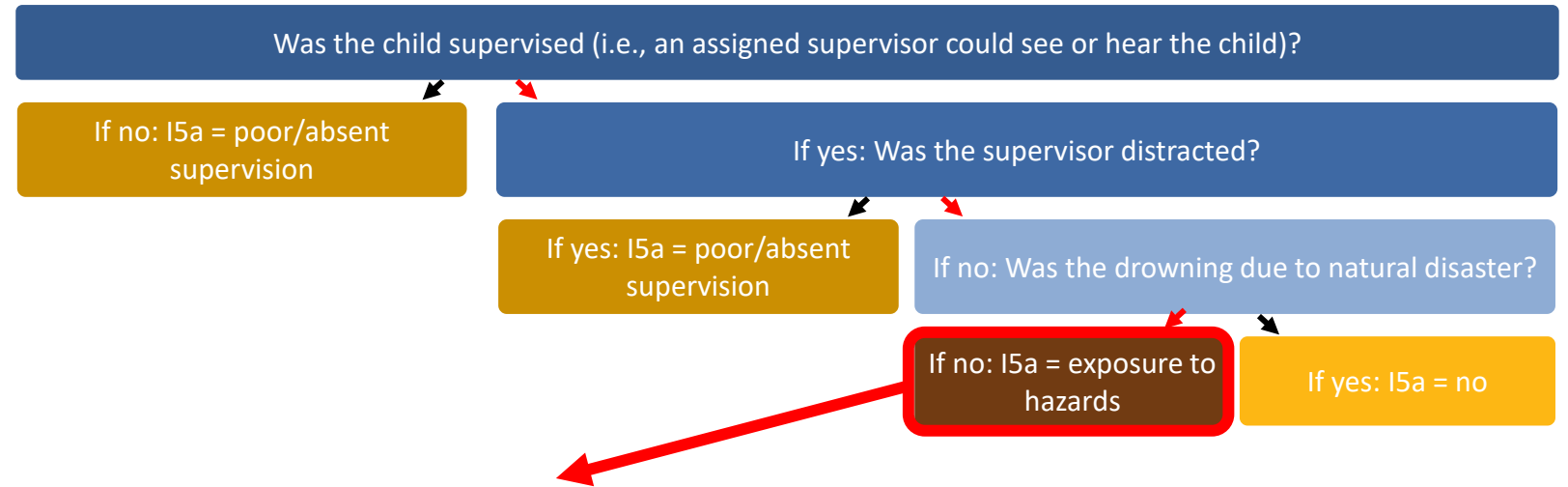
No

Other supervisor impairment?

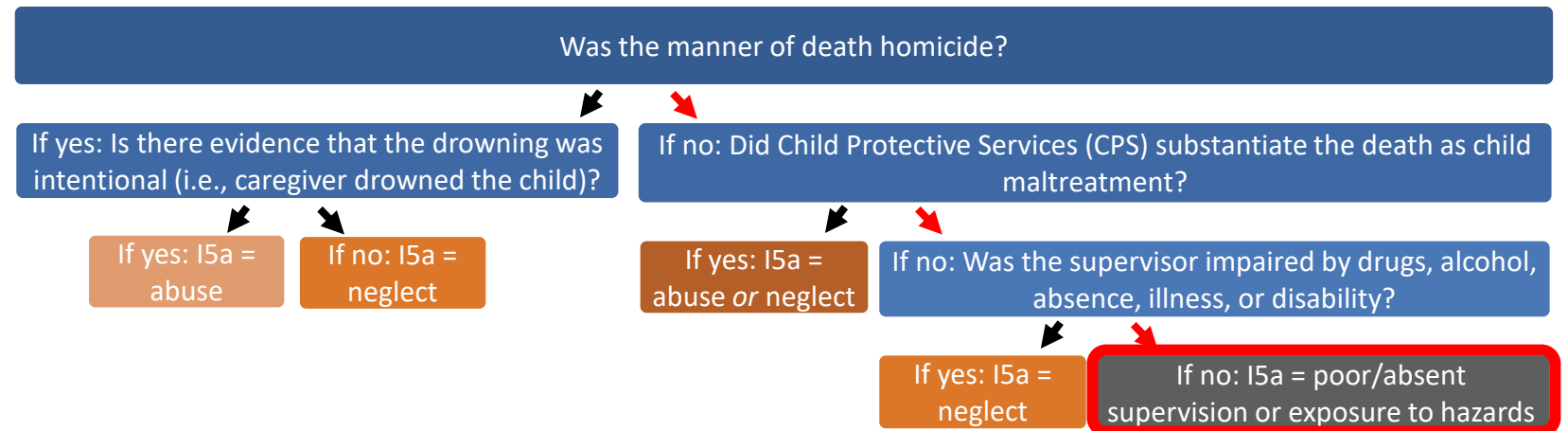
No

STEP 4: Determining Child Maltreatment for Children Ages 1-5

STEP 4a: Determining Poor/Absent Supervision or Exposure to Hazards



STEP 4b: Determining Abuse or Neglect



Poll

Mock Scenario #6



QUESTION: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) Yes, exposure to hazards



ANSWER: Did child abuse, neglect, poor or absent supervision, or exposure to hazards cause or contribute to the child's death?

- a) No
- b) Yes, abuse
- c) Yes, neglect
- d) Yes, poor or absent supervision
- e) **Yes, exposure to hazards**

Summary

And Next Steps

These guidelines will help teams more consistently and objectively determine child maltreatment for drowning deaths. In close collaboration with the Supervision Guidance, begin using these guidelines with your team today and let the National Center know how we can help.





Questions

Q&A For Speakers



Please complete an evaluation using the link in the chat, or by scanning the QR code above.

Thank You For Your Time!

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