



INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Assist. Prof. Anja Mirosljević, PhD

Department of Behavioral Disorders

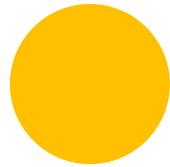
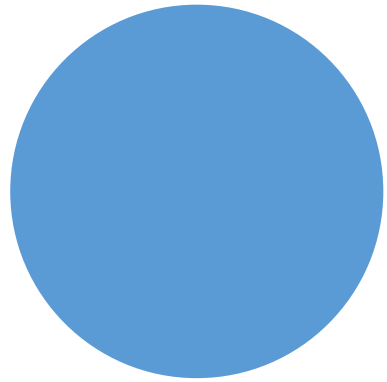
Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences

University of Zagreb

Workshop "The implementation of individual assessment – challenges, international perspective and good-practice examples", Zagreb, December 5th 2019.

Content of presentation:

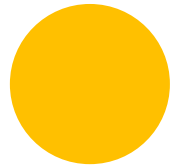
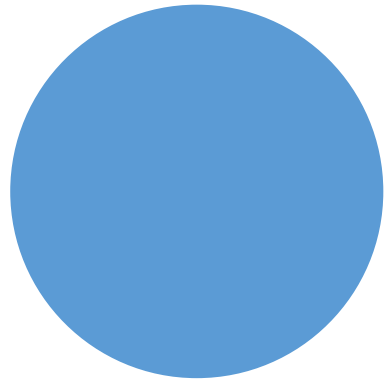
- Goals and purposes of the individual assessment
- Conceptualization of the assessment process:
theoretical background, models, types and levels, principles
- Key characteristics of the individual assessment process
- Result of the assessment process: report of the assessment team
(opinion and suggestions)



1. Goals and purposes
of the assessment

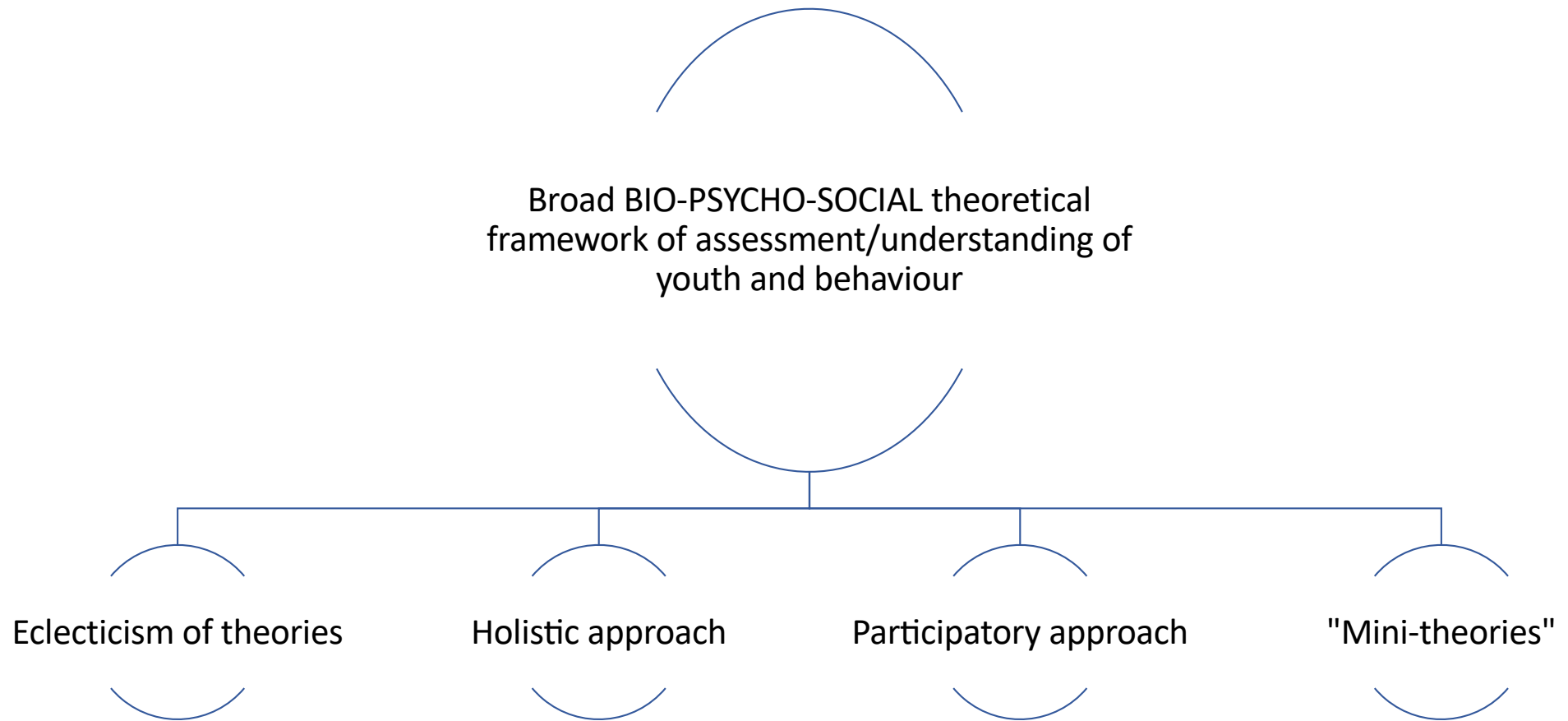
PURPOSES AND GOALS OF THE ASSESSMENT

- **PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT:** to provide an opinion and proposal on procedures or to select an adequate sanction/measure (propose and plan further interventions for juvenile offenders in accordance with the assessed needs for interventions (through sanctions, but also interventions from other systems))
 - **OBJECTIVE:** to collect, analyse and interpret the data on features, risks and strengths of youth with behavioural problems as well as their intervention needs, but also the features, risks and possibilities of their environment to satisfy those needs (Koller-Trbović, Mirosavljević & Jeđud Borić, 2017)
 - The basic objective is, on the basis of the assessment of **phenomenology of (possible) behavioural problems** of juveniles, the **etiology of problems and daily functioning** of juveniles in various areas of life, **to match risks, needs and strengths of a beneficiary and his/her environment with the type, level and elements of interventions.**
- > **GOALS OF THE ASSESSMENT** (Koller Trbović, 2015):
- Screening
 - (Detailed/comprehensive) assessment
 - Treatment projection and prediction (future behaviour, risks, strengths, needs...) and intervention planning
 - (Effect) evaluation of the sanction/intervention



2. Conceptualization of the
assessment process :
theoretical background,
models, types and levels,
principles

Theoretical framework of the juvenile's needs assessment



TYPES/LEVELS OF TREATMENT (therapy) ASSESSMENT: depending on the approach, purpose, objective, diagnostic issues, focus, assessment steps and other elements, broadly speaking, we distinguish:

- **Detection/triage/screening/selection**

- *(dividing juveniles into groups according to the type and urgency of procedure;*
- *identifying problem, development risks and less severe behavioral problems or a greater criminogenic risk;*
- *indications for a deeper, more comprehensive assessment, etc.)*

- **(Comprehensive) assessment**

- *(ample and complex form of the assessment of needs, criminogenic risk, juvenile's strength and environment in relation to the already intense behavioural problems within which there are also differences in the assessment levels;*
- *assessment of intervention needs of juveniles;*
- *etiology and phenomenology of behavioural problems;*
- *mental health assessment,*
- *biopsychosocial component of legal/judicial issue;*
- *intervention proposal;*
- *evaluation of intervention efficiency, etc.)*

Questions (IA for intervention):

(Mueller, 1994, Underwood,
Chapin i Griffin, 2002)

- **What is the problem and how do the various people** involved (who is all connected to the problem) **see the problem?**
- **What supports the emergence, development and persistence of problems?**
- **How is the juvenile functioning** in different areas of life and interacting with the environment, especially with family, school, peers and the community?
- **What are the strengths and competencies** of juvenile and families, community?
- **What is the impact of previous interventions?**
- If nothing is done, what is the **behavioral prognosis?**
- **What are the expectations** of juvenile, parents and professionals?
- **How can a problem be solved, reduced** (who has the power and resources)?
- What can help, and what can make it more difficult?
- **What is urgent** and what are the priorities?
- **Who will do what, how, for how long,** and how will it be evaluated?

Comparison of traditional and contemporary approach to assessment (Koller-Trbović, Mirosavljević & Jeđud Borić, 2017)

TRADITIONAL

- Static nature
- Focus on difficulties/problems
- State of condition
- Isolated approach to juvenile
- Distant relations
- Non-participant observation
- Offering ready-made solutions
- Giving diagnosis/stigmatisation/labelling
- Imposition of ready-made solutions
- To determine „what is (wrong)“

CONTEMPORARY

- Dynamism & processual nature
- Focus on needs and potentials
- Focus on intervention/treatment
- Interactions of the juvenile and environment (systemic approach)
- Communication and relationship with juvenile and family
- Cooperation with juvenile
- Partnership and joint decision making; activity/participation of juvenile/parents
- Intervention/treatment in accordance with assessed needs
- To determine „what he/she/they need“ and how to achieve that

Non participatory and participatory approach to youth in conflict with the law (Koller-Trbović, Mirosavljević & Jeđud Borić, 2017)

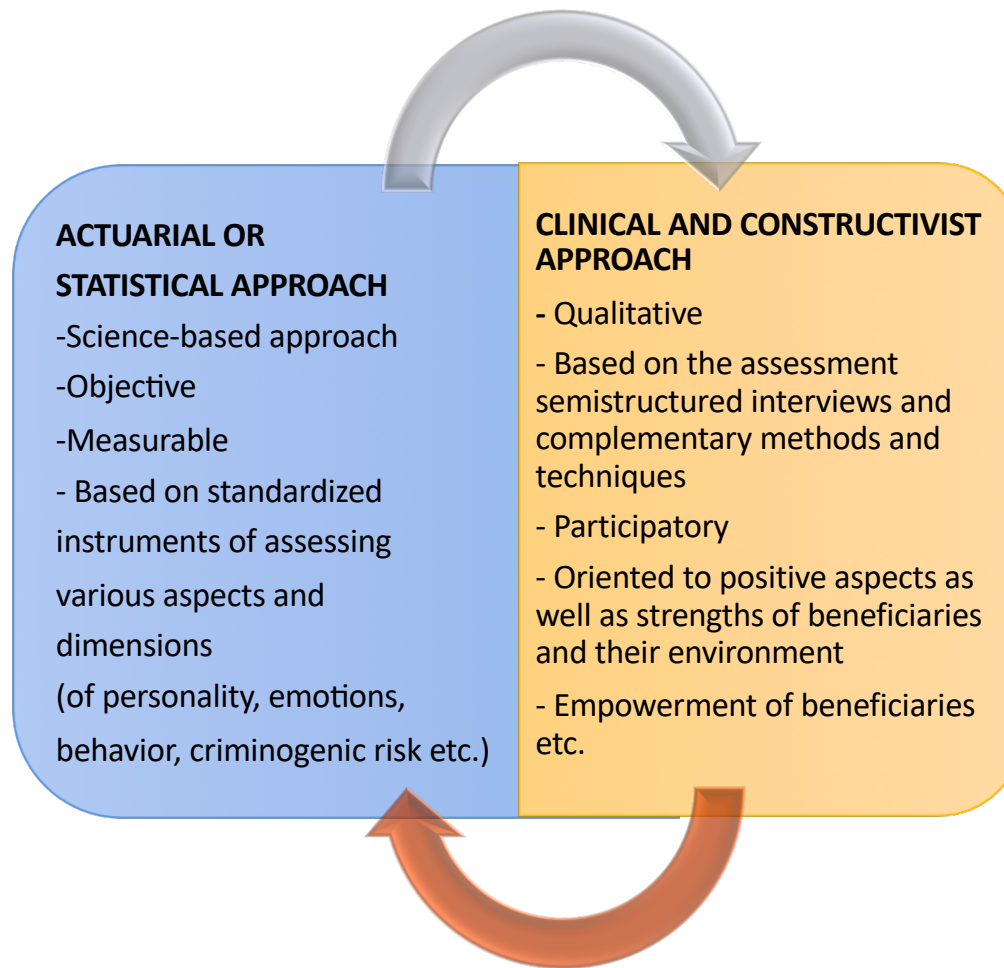
Non-participatory

- Focus on aspects/areas professionals see as important
- Attitude that professionals know best what one needs
- Professionals make decisions by themselves
- Responsibility is in the hands of professionals/adults
- Resistance of the beneficiaries increases
- Involuntariness or indifference
- Official relationships professional/juvenile; without trust

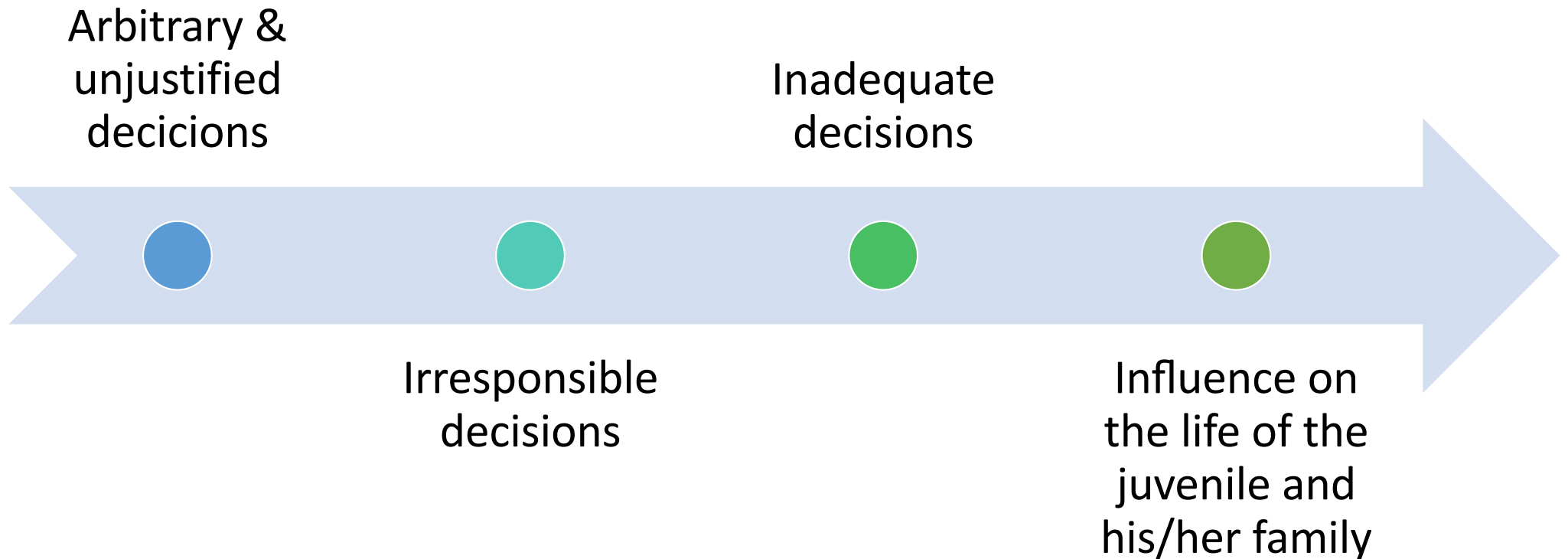
Participatory

- Respect of the juvenile/parent's right to freedom of their own opinion and expression
- Real interest for juvenile/family
- Better understanding of the juvenile/circumstances
- Juvenile can get to know himself/herself better
- Possibility to participate, negotiate in decision making process
- Increases motivation of beneficiaries
- Juvenile takes responsibility for him/herself and the intervention
- Voluntariness
- Better relationships professional/juvenile

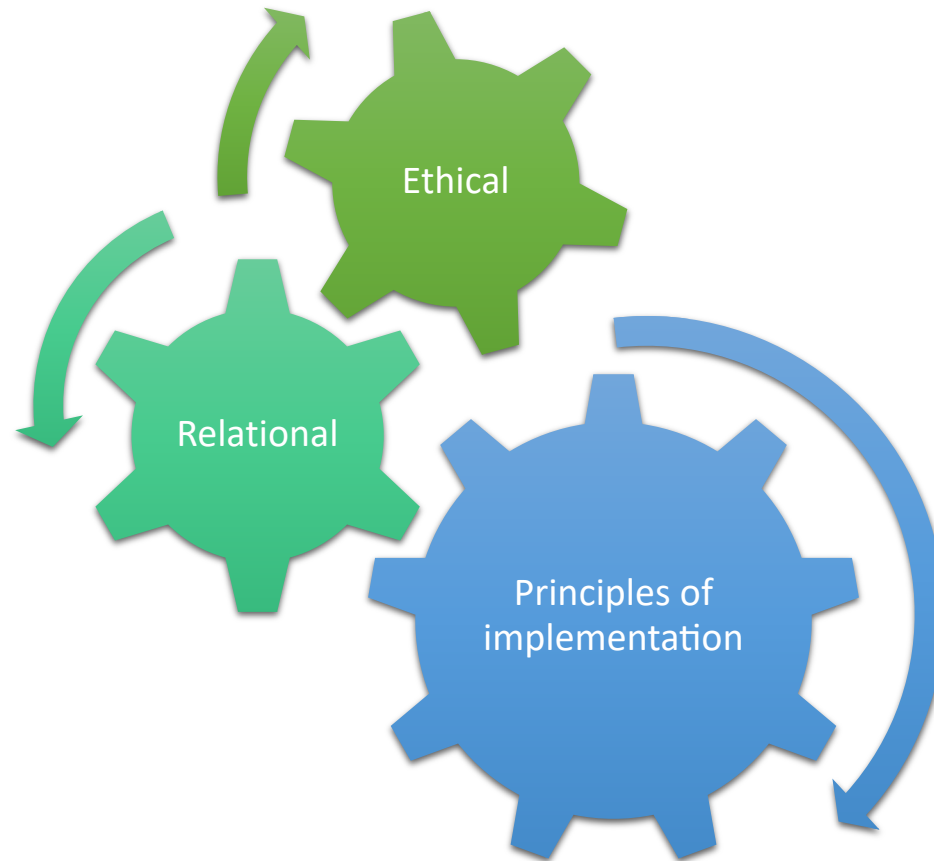
Two basic approaches to assessment are present in practice (manner of collecting and interpreting data on a juvenile and his/her environment)



The importance/**NECESSITY** of the assessment



Overlapping principles of the assessment process



PRINCIPLES OF IA (Koller-Trbović, Mirosavljević & Jeđud Borić, 2017)

Ethical principles

Protecting (best) interests of the child

TIMELY ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

Respect and acceptance of juveniles

Respect for privacy and confidentiality of information

ORIENTATION TO POSITIVE/STRENGTHS

PARTICIPATION

Cultural sensitivity

Principles of implementation

Trans and interdisciplinarity

Dynamism and continuity

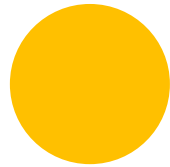
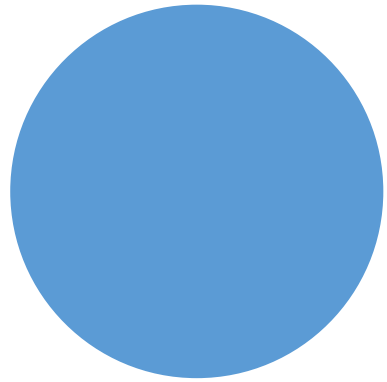
Treatment orientation

Naturalness

Objectivity

Economy

Transparency



3. Key characteristics of the assessment process

Key characteristics of the assessment process

- **LEGAL FRAMEWORK/CONTEXT** (Juvenile Justice Model, Laws, Purposes of assessment/Decision making within juvenile justice system...)
- Professional preconditions: **COMPETENT PROFESSIONALS, TEAM APPROACH**
- **WORKING METHODS** in the process of assessment: sources of data, information/data, areas of assessment, methods and techniques

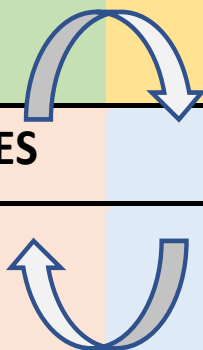
The **essence** of the assessment process:

- ✓ the issue of quality,
- ✓ what will be assessed and how,
- ✓ who will will conduct the assessment

Elements of assessment comprehensiveness

(Koller-Trbović, Mirosavljević & Jeđud Borić, 2017)

SOURCES OF DATA	INFORMATION/DATA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• juvenile• parents• other important persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• facts• assessments• Self-assessment and self-report
ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TECHNIQUES	AREAS OF ASSESSMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gathering relevant documentation• Observation method• Conversation method• Testing method• Assessment and self-assessment method• Complementary methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Previous and current criminal offences and sanctions• Family• Education• Peers• Addiction abuse• Personality/behaviour• Attitude/orientation



Working methods: areas of assessment

(Hoge, Andrews & Leischied, 2002):

- Previous and current criminal offences and sanctions
- Family
- Education
- Peers
- Addiction abuse
- Personality/behaviour
- Attitude/orientation
- + responsivity factors
- + needs, readiness to intervention/change; resilience (individual, family)

IMPORTANT AREAS OF ASSESSMENT OF JUVENILES

(Hoge, 2012)

- **Cognitive development / competencies**
- **Moral development / competencies**
- **Identity and social development**
- **Biological / physiological development**
- **Specific difficulties** (learning, emotional problems, cognitive disabilities, mental illness, addiction...)
- **Past traumatic events**
- **Gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity...**

= **ALL THESE IMPACT ON DECISION MAKING AND JUVENILE BEHAVIOR**

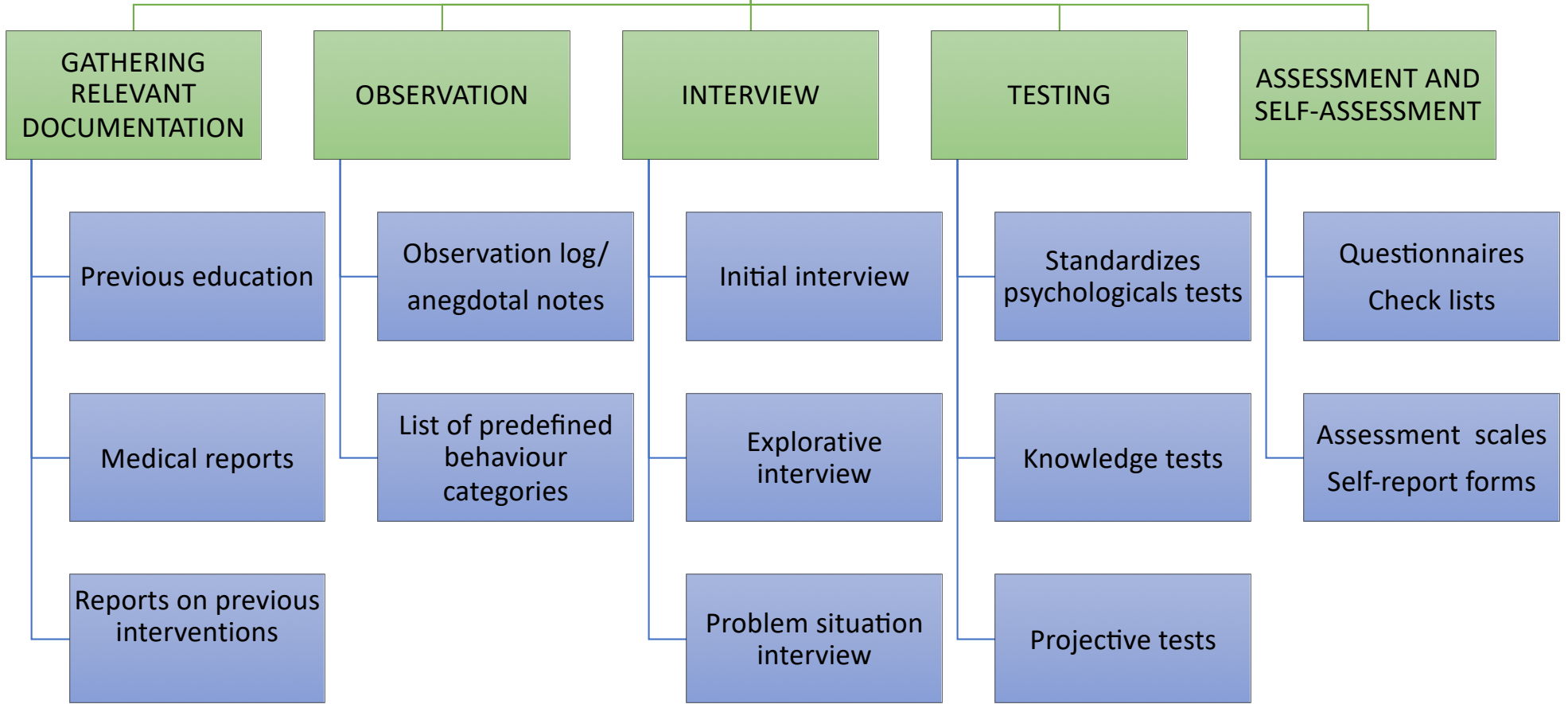
- **Juvenile maturity level**
- **Cognitive and academic competences** (reasoning, memory, reading and writing skills, intelligence, executive functions, logical analysis, short and long term planning...)
- **Emotional and behavioral functioning / competences** (self-control, functioning in interpersonal relationships, responsibility taking...)
- **Readiness to intervention**
- **Risk of recidivism** (static and dynamic factors)
- **Criminogenic needs** (dynamic factors)

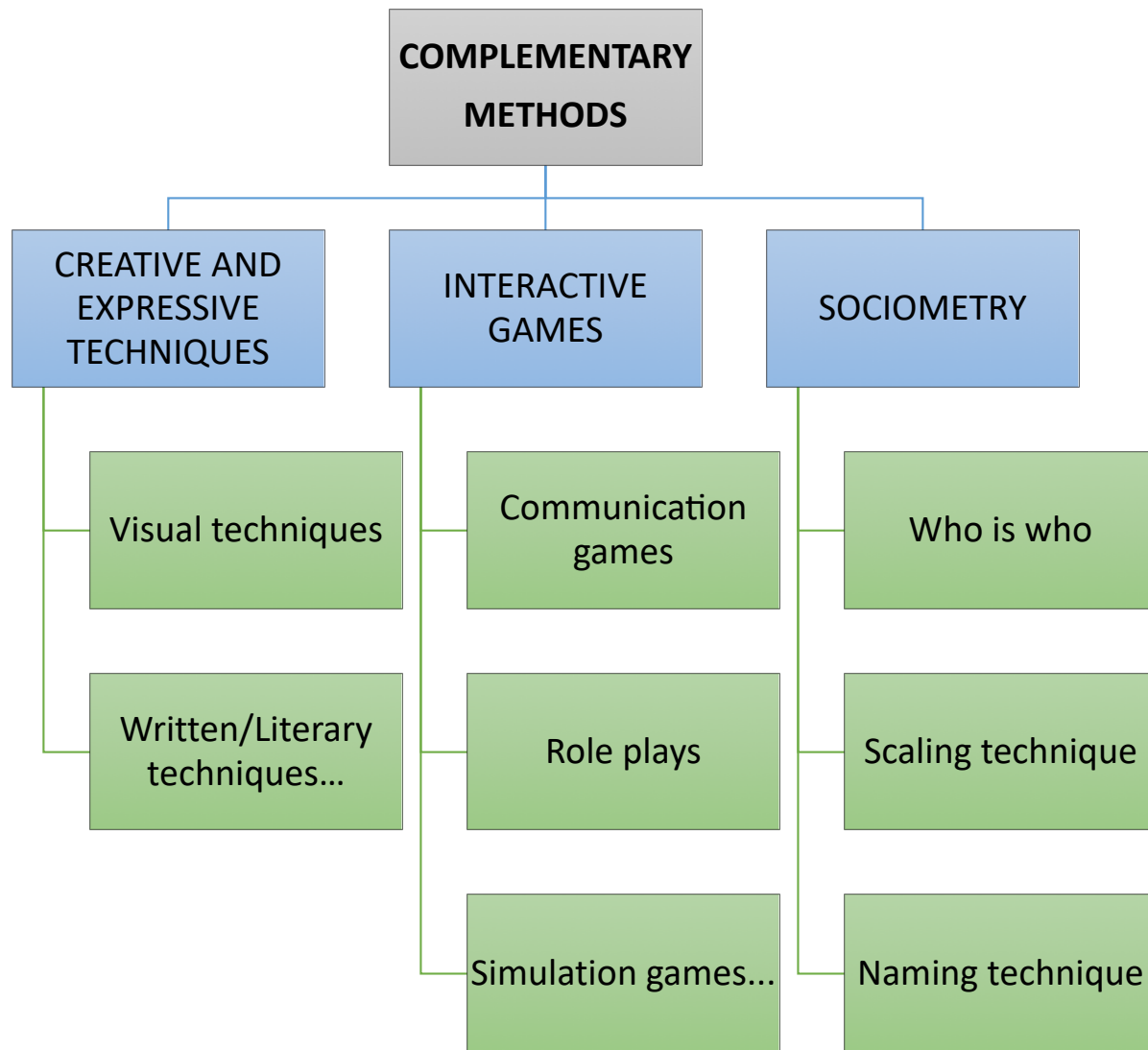
Working methods in assessment process: **juvenile assessment methods and techniques**

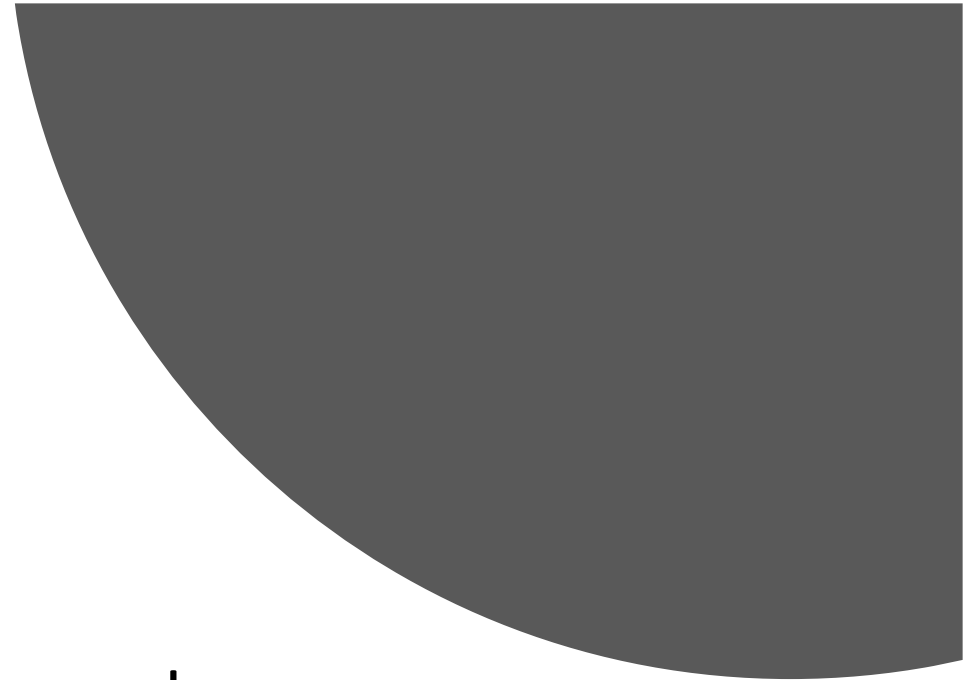
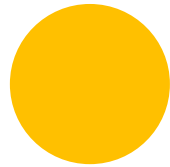
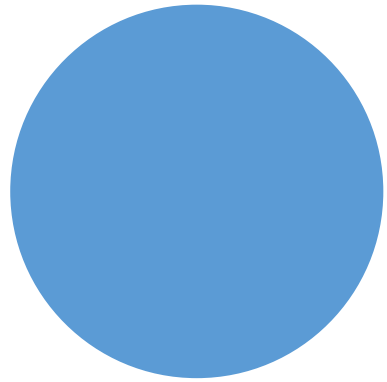
- The **selection and application of the methods and techniques of assessing** the youth in conflict with the law depends on numerous criteria and circumstances; e.g.:
 - What do I want to achieve/**purpose, objectives; level/type of assessment**
 - With whom will I work/**who will I assess?** (Juvenile's characteristics)
 - Expert's characteristics/competencies/**profession/expertise**

 - How to do that?

“OBLIGATORY”/KEY METHODS







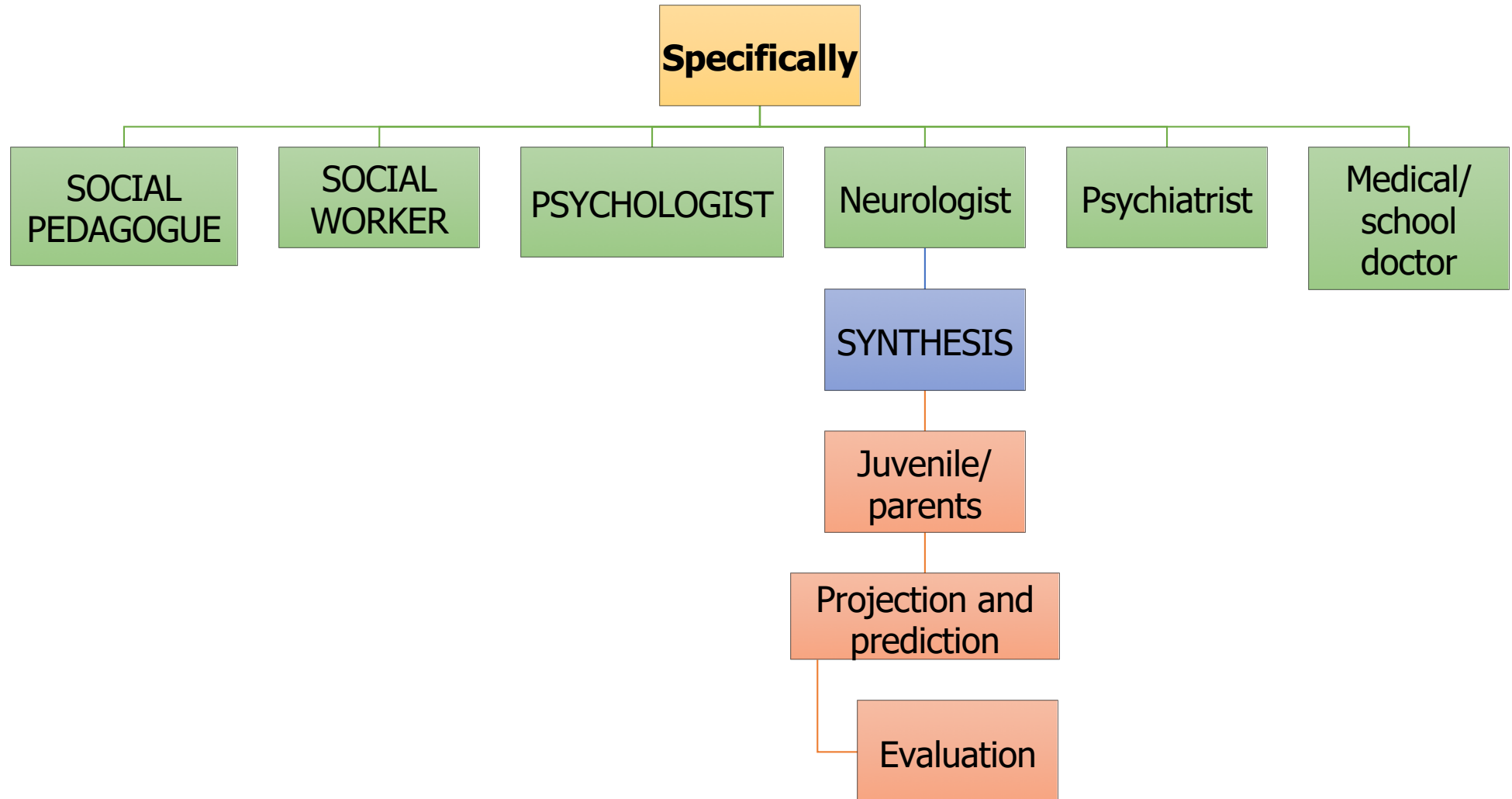
4. Result of the assessment process: report of the assessment team (opinion and suggestions)

Assessment report

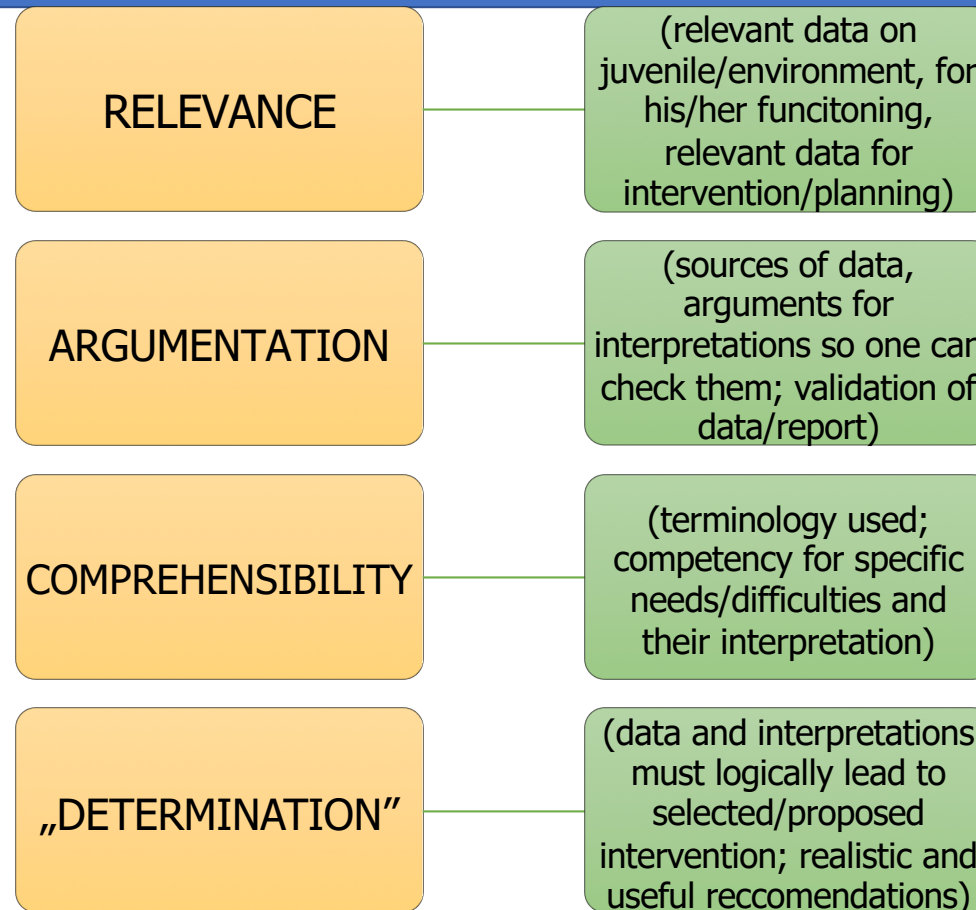
= RESULT OF THE PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT which must contain:

- ✓ All **relevant information**,
- ✓ Integration and **interpretation** of collected data
- ✓ **Type and level of behavior problem/s**
- ✓ **„Causes”** and risk factors
- ✓ **Possibilities and needs** of juvenile/family, as well as
- ✓ Objective circumstances and **possibilities for intervention/treatment**

Assessment written report



Elements of the assessment report (Koller-Trbović, Mirosavljević & Jeđud Borić, 2017)



Minimum Contents of a Good Assessment (Rosado, L.M. (ed.), 2000)

- Inclusion of relevant identifying information (e.g., who referred for assessment, juvenile's involvement with the legal system...).
- Statement of legal question(s) to be addressed/purpose/goals of the IA
- Identification of all sources of information relied upon (e.g., review of medical or school records, interview with juvenile, testing, parent interview, review of police reports).
- Description of relevant mental states, capacities, abilities, knowledge, and/or skills that are relevant for decision making (to the legal question at hand)
- Interpretation/description of the relationship between the mental states, capacities, abilities, knowledge, and/or skills assessed and their causal connection to the youth's abilities or issues about which the state attorney/court is interested.
- Information that contextualizes the conclusions.
- Information qualifying the conclusions drawn. What external limitations (i.e., in the testing conditions, the tests themselves, the amount of time professional was given to interview the relevant parties, in the amount of background information that the professional was able to collect and review, etc.) should be taken into account when relying on the expert's conclusions?
- Specific recommendations for intervention (when appropriate) with a reasonable attempt to identify interventions that are available in the community.

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (Žižak & Koller Trbović, 1999; Koller Trbović, 2004):

Depending on the case:

DOES THE MINOR SHOW THE BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS AND IF YES, WHICH?

IS THE BEHAVIOR MONOSYMPTOMATIC OR IS IT ABOUT MORE SYMPTOMS AND DIMENSIONS OF BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS?

IN WHICH AREAS MINOR SHOWS PROBLEMS?

IN WHICH SITUATIONS, TOWARD WHICH PERSONS, IN WHICH CIRCUMSTANCES ARE THE PROBLEMS OBVIOUS?

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEHAVIOR FOR A MINOR AND / OR FOR OTHERS?

FREQUENCY OF BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS?

INTENSITY OF BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS?

DURATION ANOF THE BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS?

COMPLEXITY AND COMORBIDITY?

WHO SEES THE PROBLEM?

HOW DOES A MINOR SEE IT?

ARE THERE ORGANIC PROBLEMS OR OTHER DISEASES?

DOES THE BEHAVIOR PROBLEM INFLUENCE DEVELOPMENTAL ABILITIES, LEARNING ABILITIES, ACTIONS, DESIRES, MOTIVES, SOCIAL COMPETENCES...?

WHAT ARE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS INCREASING AND SUPPORT BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS?

WHICH INSTITUTIONS AND THROUGH WHICH INTERVENTIONS CAN HELP HIM/HER MOST?

WHAT IS THE TIME FRAME FOR INTERVENTION?

WHAT ARE HIS/HER CHANCES FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE?

Characteristics of poor and good quality reports

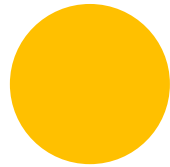
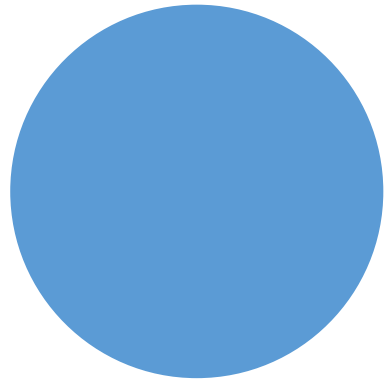
(Turney et al, 2011; Koller Trbović & Mirosavljević, 2017)

Poor quality reports:

- Insufficient and/or incorrect information
- Description instead of analysis and synthesis of the collected data
- Little (or without) specific recommendations for intervention
- Repetition and overlapping of different experts
- Non-involment (exclusion) of parents
- Misunderstanding of the report by parents

Good quality reports:

- Juvenile is in the focus of interest/juvenile perspective
- Contain lot of concise, relevant and accurate information-
- Use information from different sources
- Include an analysis indicating clear links between the collected data and the intervention plan (or decision that no further action is needed)



Thank you for your
attention!

Contact:
anja.miros@gmail.com